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inclusion of the outsiders, messianic leadership and the new
centrality of the northeast in Brazilian politics

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ABSTRACT

In the last decade, after a long period of democratic stability, Brazil lived a process of increased political and social polarization; the country, once considered the new rising star among BRICS, is now going through one of the worst crises of his history, economically, politically and socially.

Two new social cleavages appeared in national politics: on one side, Lulismo versus anti-Lulismo, on the other an increased polarization between different macroregions, based on the historical spatial inequality that characterized the Nation even before its independence.

Over the course of the chapters, we will explain how two main processes are responsible for this outcome: we will focus first on the inclusion of the outsiders, both economic and cultural, and how the “extension” of citizenship to many people previously marginalized can explain Lula’s consensus, in particular in the northeast.

We will also focus on Lula’s personal consensus and the transformation of his personal leadership: we will show how a union leader, member of the only collective mass party in Brazil, was able to be elected first and then embrace the tradition of messianic leaders, typical of Brazilian politics, while at the same time being an example of social mobility and cultivating a process of identification between himself and the poorest voters, in particular living in the northeast.

We will show how Lula took the idea of messianic leader to a new extreme thanks to his personal trajectory and his attitude towards “martyrdom”, becoming a “demigod”.

We will then analyze the consequences of the inclusion of the outsiders and Lula’s messianic leadership for the overall quality of Brazilian democracy, in an era in which many consider the country as one of the best examples of backsliding democracy.

Keywords: Brazil; inclusion of the outsiders; messianic leadership, questão nordeste, Lulismo.

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INTRODUCTION

Latin America had always been one of the privileged areas of interest for many social scientists, in particular coming from countries that shared common history and cultural heritage; the region offers countless opportunity to observe and try to understand complex phenomenon, being part of what we consider “west” and, at the same time, “another west”, different and equal to the rest of the western society.

In particular, during the process of re-democratization, an increasing number of scholars from Europe and North-America started to focus on Latin American politics, once the idea of a “third wave of democratization” started to be use more and more. Then, in the first decade of the XXI century, it was the time of another “wave”, the progressive one, with Latin America as the great example to study left movements’ evolution and future perspective. In the last few year, the region became central inside other two debates: the one about inequality and, in the last few year, about backsliding democracy.

While some scholars have decided to study Latin American country as a specific “case study” inside a bigger theoretical trend, we believe that it could be actually more productive to follow the opposite road.

For this reason, we have decided to study territorial polarization, the process of inclusion of the outsider and the creation of messianic leaderships as a peculiar phenomenon of Brazilian reality.

A quote attributed to Tom Jobim says that “O Brasil não é para amadores”, Brazil is not for amateurs. Being aware of how difficult it is to understand and explain complex social process in a country of continental size like Brazil, I’ve spent the last seven year working on the “Nova Republica”, even before the beginning of my PhD.

I’ve lived almost a year in Brazil; the first time, in 2016, during the uprising against Dilma Rousseff; the second, as a part of the activity of my PhD, over the course of 2019, spending 5 months between the Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA), Universidade de Sao Paulo (USP) and Universidade Federal do Rio

Grande do Sul (UFRGS). I've then lived two months and a half in Chile, mastering my knowledge about Latin American development, and in particular studying Celso Furtado's job, thanks to the participation to the summer school organized by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nation.

As many other before and many to follow, I've started my research focusing on Partido dos Trabalhadores, without any doubt the party that shaped more than any other the history of Brazil after the process of re-democratization, as a ruling party for 14 years and leading the opposition for the rest of the time.

While there are plenty of research about PT and his leader, one fundamental area is still understudied: the importance of spatial inequality in the process of affirmation of the Partido dos Trabalhadores and, in particular, of his historic leader, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva. As we will see, in fact, after 2006 PT's victory were possible only thanks to an unprecedented level of consensus in the northeast, the poorest region of the country. After being neglected during almost all of Brazilian history, the northeast had become a central region in Lula's political discourse. The "questão nordeste", a term introduced by Celso Furtado during the '50s to describe regional inequalities and the "underdevelopment" of the northeast, had become one of the main problems that politics need to face, not only because millions of voters asked for it but because the democratic stability of the country is at stake.

Our hypothesis behind the affirmation of PT, and in particular Lula's one is that, over the course of the years, they were able to build hegemony in the region thanks to the process of inclusion of the outsiders and to Lula's role; PT's historic leader had become more than just a beloved politician, reaching the status of a "demigod", following Brazilian's tradition of messianic leadership and taking the same concept to a new extreme.

To prove our hypothesis, we will show how, over the course of the years, the process of inclusion of the outsider had been the defining characteristics of PT's era; when we are talking about inclusion of the outsiders, we mean both a process of "material" inclusion of the voters into the economic market and a

process of political inclusion of those people into citizenship, thanks to well targeted messages and political narrative.

At the same time, we will analyse Lula's discourses and narrative to show how, over the course of his political career, he "played" many roles, starting as an "operário em construção", becoming another "pai dos pobres" and then a holy figure, accepting to be another "messianic leader" at the end of his career, as the "criança nordestina" who redeem the region guiding people to the promise land of citizenship.

To do it, we will follow the chronologic order of the events, starting from the late '70s; in the first chapter we will focus of the history of PT between the early stages, immediately before the foundation, until 2002, showing how their message and their institutional organization had changed over the course of the years.

The second chapter will be dedicated at the analysis of the same years for what concerns Lula's leadership, and in particular the process of consensus building, the changes and constant element around his figure before the Presidency.

Chapter 3 will start after the first electoral victory of 2002; we will show how Lula, after three defeat in a row, was able not only to be elected President but to end his second term as the "most popular politician on heart", being one of the most popular figures not only in the history of the nation but also internationally. We will see also how the process of inclusion of the outsider thanks to a new political discourse became possible, and how Lula was able to take advantage of a difficult situation to become the undisputed leader not only inside of PT but also in the whole society, and in particular in the northeast.

In the fourth chapter we will focus, instead, on the process of inclusion of the outsiders thanks to the improvement of economic situation for millions of citizens, and we will show how over the course of PT's era the "questão nordeste" had become, for the first time since the late '50s, one of the fundamental political question of the nation.

In the fifth chapter we will talk about the transition between Lula and Dilma Rousseff and about the end of PT's era. We will show how Dilma slowly erode

the social pact build during Lula's era and how the process of inclusion of the outsider, for long the true reason behind PT's hegemonic consensus, became the origin of the downfall.

In the sixth and final chapter we will focus, then, on the true messianic transformation of Lula's leadership; we will see how the last development of his character is well rooted in the tradition of leadership of the whole country and why he is stronger in the northeast compared to the other regions.

We will then see also the consequence of his messianic transformation for the overall quality of democratic institution, in a context characterized by high level of polarization and institutional fragility.

One little caveat needed to be added to Jobim's quote: if is true that "O Brasil não é para amadores", someone else add also a second part to the sentence: "um observador internacional nos jamais entenderá¹".

We believe, however, that there are no reasons why a foreign observer cannot understand Brazil. To do it, however, is fundamental to embrace Latin America's contradiction, the constant tension between modernity and modernization, the idea of "another west". A fundamental part of the process of researching those themes is to be ready to everything, challenging our previous conviction and be open to something "new".

For all those reasons, we have chosen to follow an historic approach, while using at the same time instrument and concept of other social sciences, from political science to sociology and economy, because it would be impossible to take into consideration only one of those aspect at the time, if we really want to understand the true nature of the process described

The reader must forgive us if some times the historic digression may be too long, or descriptive element too present; the knowledge of historical, political and social context in a pre-condition to really understand the real nature of the new Brazilian polarization; only at the end of our "journey" we could "extract" some general concept useful even outside of the specific area of study. Doing

¹ An international observer will never understand us

the opposite would mean “force” reality into our vision of the world, misleading us toward a wrong interpretation of every phenomenon observed.

This research was born not only thanks to the academic interest toward Latin America and in particular Brazil, but as a consequence of a more general interest for the whole region, started many years ago. As you will see, we have based our work mainly focusing on Latin America literature, both historical, social and political. At some point even literature will play a part in our “travel”.

Of course, my background is the one of an Italian, who spend the years of his academic formation in Italy; as a consequence, my approach is inevitably influenced by what I’ve learned over the course of the years; while we have included some “classic” element, we’ve tried to follow a different route here, feeling that Latin American (and in particular Brazilian) literature was more appropriate to reach our goal.

Aside to the literature, over the course of the research we have had access to the archive of the “Fundação Perseu Abramo” and to the official document of the Partido dos Trabalhadores. We have done also an extensive research on the newspaper, both national and local, and we have had access to quantitative data coming from various institution,

Last, but not least, we have done extensive use of semi-structured interview with both politicians, member of PT or of other parties, social scientist and member of grassroot organization.

1. PT'S TRANSFORMATION: 1980-2002

1.1 Introduction

The Partido dos Trabalhadores had been one of the most important actors of Brazilian politics in the last 40 years. Even if, nowadays, we are used to think to PT as one of the traditional parties, especially after four terms running the country, we have to remember that this trajectory is far from being the “natural” outcome for a party with those characteristics. In fact, we can consider PT as an outsider, or better to say as a peculiar party inside of Brazilian institutional system. Even if the country had already had leftist parties, and the so-called “Trabalhismo” had already reached the government, Partido do Trabalhadores was unique due to his nature as an authentic mass parties, born within social movement and not as the product of a well-known leader. To understand how big of a change that was in Brazilian politics, we need to remember that over the course of his democratic history, the country never had a real mass parties build “bottom-up” before; the only exception is the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB), an organization considered illegal for many years, that even when allowed to compete democratically never reached any significant results, and therefore cannot be consider an authentic “mass” party.

Even in the midst of the enthusiasm of re-democratization, the majority of the parties founded (or re-founded) were expression of local leaders, influential groups or well-known politicians or intellectual; on the contrary, PT's “uniqueness” was clear ever since the beginning.

Another impressive characteristic had been PT's ability to stay relevant for that many years, occupying the left and then centre-left of the political spectrum, creating some kind of identification between the party and the electorate, in a system that is characterized by high level of electoral volatility.

Over the course of the chapter, following the chronological order of the event ever since the late '70s, we will see how PT was able to increase his own importance first of all inside of the left and, finally, to reach government. We will show how the party changed and adapt itself since the foundation, but also

if and how it was able to shape the institution and the political system before reaching the Federal Administration.

As we will see, party building wasn't the most important factor among those that allow the left to govern the country for 14 years and to build their hegemony; however, not taking in consideration the institutional changes and, most important, PT's process of adaptation to the institutional and political system, will be a greater mistake than overestimate it.

1.2 PT, from many souls and tendencies to democratic centralism

“O Partido dos Trabalhadores surge da necessidade sentida por milhões de brasileiros de intervir na vida social e política do país para transformá-la. A mais importante lição que o trabalhador brasileiro aprendeu em suas lutas é a de que a democracia é uma conquista que, finalmente, ou se constrói pelas suas mãos ou não virá”². (Manifesto de Fundação do Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1980, 1)

PT's manifesto of 1980 was clear about the basic ideas behind the new party; Partido dos Trabalhadores was created in the wake of the strikes of the late '70s to give political representation to the working class.

The “Carta dos Princípios” and “Movimento Pro PT” became public in 1979, and the link between unions of the new party is pretty clear if we look at the “Comissão Nacional Provisória” of the “Movimento pelo PT”; if, of course, the representatives of metallurgic workers were an important part of the party to come, also numerically, a lot of other different Unions were represented, such as the ones of oil workers, bank employees or professors among the others.

Already in 1979 Commission, some “outliers” to the Unionist “tradition” were present, such as Edson Khair, Federal Deputy elected with the MDB, or Francisco Auto, a journalist from the State of Ceará.

² “The Workers’ Party was born from the need of millions of Brazilians to take part in social and political life of the country, to change them. The most important lesson that Brazilian workers learned in their fight is that democracy is a conquer that, finally, needs to come from their hands or will never be”. (own. transl.)

The first congress was organized in 1980, in São Paulo; the participation wasn't restricted to the working class. Rural associations, Christian organization (such as the Pastoral da Terra and the Pastoral Operaria), intellectuals, member or militant of others parties like the Partido Comunista Brasileiro (PCB), the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB) and even of the revolutionary movements of the '70s took part in PT's foundation. (Lowry, Denner, 1987, 455-456)

Even if, at first glance, this kind of coalition could seem strange, it was pretty common at that time; as Eder Sader wrote in his "Quando novos personagens entram em cena" (1988), almost all the social movement at that time were created inside of three institutions: the catholic church, the unions and leftist group.

Unions and leftist group were a natural "breeding ground" for new parties, especially in opposition to the Military Regime, once repressive measures started to be less strict; what is more interesting, instead, is to look at the participation of various religious group, often close to the Liberation Theology.

First of all, we need to remember that the participation of Catholic Churches, and in particular their relation with working class movement, was already strong before 1964 Golpe. In particular, in Santo André and in the ABCD³ region, the Juventude Operaria Católica was founded already in 1948, while the Ação Católica Operaria was created in 1954 (Machado, 2009, 5). As happened with many other organizations, even the Catholic Church had to reduce his role during the military regime, mostly due to the repressive apparatus.

At the same time, however, Churches reorganize themselves and, even prior to the formalization of the concept of "Liberation Theology", a key element in Brazil was the creation of Basic ecclesial Communities (Comunidades eclesiais

³ The ABC Paulista, o "Região do Grande ABC", also known as ABCD, is the industrial region around the Metropolitan area of the city of São Paulo. The name came from the initial of the three cities that originally formed the area (Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo and São Caetano do Sul). The "D" stands for "Diadema", another city of the region.

de base, CEB), small groups present in many neighbourhoods in which, aside to the participation to religious events, social commitment against injustice and oppression were characterizing elements.

The role of CEB, aside to the one of more formalized organization such as the Pastoral Operaria, was significative foremost because they served as a network of protection for the workers gather during strikes or as a safe “headquarter” to organize rallies. Just to give an example, it was exactly what happened in São Bernardo do Campo in 1979, when the militaries entered in the Union’s headquarter and suspended the strike for 45 days; the workers, however, continued to meet in one of the churches of the city to organize themselves (Tapajós, director, 1982). If in this phase churches were fundamental mainly for strategic reasons, they will have a great impact both on organizational and ideological terms. A lot of the leaders, in fact, were themselves part of religious organization and, even when PT would become a more structured party, churches will continue to serve as gathering places for meeting and reunion. Even most important, this kind of cultural background in which the party was born allow us to better understand his transformation and the attitude shared among his members in relation to Lula’s leadership, once he became the undisputed leader: as we will see, PT became a lot more similar to traditional personalistic parties and, as a consequence, voters and member started to act as “believer” in their relationship with Lula, rather than confront his leadership and take part effectively in the decision-making process.

Due to his peculiar composition, the “souls” represented inside of the party were pretty different one from another; PT’s founding manifesto however was pretty clear about the reasons why the party had been created, the goals that needed to be reached and how they want to reach them:

“O Partido dos Trabalhadores nasce da vontade de independência política dos trabalhadores. [...] o PT pretende ser uma real expressão política de todos os explorados pelo sistema capitalista. Somos um Partido dos Trabalhadores, não um partido para iludir os trabalhadores. Queremos a política como atividade própria das massas que desejam participar, legal e legitimamente, de

*todas as decisões da sociedade.*⁴ (Manifesto de Fundação do Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1980, 3)

The creation of PT was a big news in Brazilian politics, due to his nature and to the process that led to the creation of the party, as Paul Singer pointed out in an editorial published on “Folha de S. Paulo”:

“A fundação, domingo último, do Partido dos Trabalhadores, foi um acontecimento inédito no cenário político nacional. Na verdade, a originalidade da proposta já vem de sua origem: o PT foi iniciado por líderes sindicais, ou seja, parte de figuras representativas da sociedade civil. [...] Os outros partidos políticos são, implícita ou explicitamente, prolongamentos de tendências políticas anteriores. [...] O propósito do PT é outro, ou seja, o de integrar na atividade política legal camadas sociais que dela estavam marginalizadas, sobretudo após 1964⁵”. (Singer, P., 1980)

Interesting enough, according to Singer the “inclusion of the outsider” was already one of PT’s fundamental characteristics; what they intended for “outsider”, however, will change a lot over the course of the history: in 1980 the sector “marginalized” was, mainly, the working class while, in particular at the beginning of XXI century, once PT had a real chance to govern, they have already overcome “classist” approach and class warfare narrative to embrace a

⁴ “PT was born from worker’s will of political independence [...] PT want to be the real political expression of all the people exploited by capitalism. We are a Worker’s Party, not a party to deceive workers. We conceive politics as an activity of the masses who want to take part, legally and legitimately, to the decision of the society. (own transl.)

⁵ The foundation of PT, last Sunday, is unprecedented in national politics. Truly, the peculiarity of the proposal comes from his origin: PT started with unions’ leader, or better to say, from representative of civil society. [...] Other parties are, implicitly or explicitly, extension of previously existing political tendencies. [...] PT’s goal is different, to include into politics social sector that were marginalized, especially after 1964. (own transl.)

different discourse, based on the idea of social mobility, both individual and collective, of the poorest, the real outsiders.

If workers' participation was considered fundamental, democratization was of course one of the most important point highlighted, both on document written before and immediately after the foundation of the party; while is not hard to understand why, due to the historic crossroad that the country was facing at the beginning of the '80s, is important to remember that the idea of democracy shared inside of the party at that time was characterized by the belief that direct democracy was the ideal system in which the working class or, using their vocabulary, the "masses" must have an active role in the decisional process. During the first decades after the foundation, those principles will be applied in the municipalities governed by PT mayor, though the so-called "orçamento participativo"; participation of the masses through forum, public meeting or referendum needed to be encouraged and, as the "Carta dos Princípios" of 1979 stated, "formal" democracy without participation wasn't enough:

"O PT entende também que, se o regime autoritário for substituído por uma democracia formal e parlamentar, fruto de um acordo entre elites dominantes que exclua a participação organizada do povo (como se deu entre 1945 e 1964), tal regime nascerá débil e descomprometido com a resolução dos problemas que afligem o nosso povo e de pronto será derrubado e substituído por novas formas autoritárias de dominação – tão comuns na história brasileira. Por isso, o PT proclama que a única força capaz de ser fiadora de uma democracia efetivamente estável é a das massas exploradas do campo e das cidades.⁶"
(*Carta de princípios, Comissão Nacional Provisória PT, 1979, 4-5*)

⁶ PT understand that, if the authoritarian regime will be replaced by formal parliamentary democracy, born from an agreement between dominants elites excluding organized popular participation (as happened in 1945 and 1964), the new regime will be fragile and uncompromised with the solution of the problems of our people and, suddenly, will be overthrown and substituted by another authoritarian form of domination- so common in Brazilian history. For this reason, PT affirm that the only force able to guarantee a stable democracy is the one of the exploited masses of rural area and cities". (own trans.)

PT's origin led to a disproportionate representation of certain territories compared to others; while the protests were diffused in the whole country, the ones of ABCD region were by far the biggest and the most important, and the idea to found a new party came from that environment. The over-representation is pretty clear when we look at the first "Comissão Diretora Nacional Provisória" of 1980, in which 7 members out of the 11 were from the southeast or the south of the country; in particular, 3 of them (Lula, Jacó Bittar and José Ibrahim) came from the State of São Paulo. The predominance of those territories was even clearer if we look at executive roles, with President and General Secretary both from São Paulo. One year later, when the first "Diretório Nacional" was actually elected, almost 23% of the member elected were from São Paulo, while South and Southeast had 64% of the delegates.

It is important to highlight the over-representation of some region because, even once PT became structured and well rooted in the whole country, their internal democratic institutions would not change, at least for what concern a more representative distribution of members among different States of the Federation, contributing to the detachment between party and voters.

Another factor that needs to be addressed concerns PT's ideology: while there is no doubt about their nature as "leftist" party, they were ranging from revolutionary Marxist to progressive Catholics. It was the same Lula, as newly elected President, the one that firstly addressed publicly the topic in his speech during the "1º Convenção Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores" of 1981:

"Nós, do PT, sabemos que o mundo caminha para o socialismo. [...] O Socialismo que nós queremos se definirá por todo o povo, como exigência concreta das lutas populares, como resposta política e econômica global a todas as aspirações concretas que o PT seja capaz de enfrentar [...] O socialismo que nós queremos irá se definindo nas lutas do dia-a-dia, do mesmo modo como

*estamos construindo o PT*⁷. (Lula, 1ª Convenção Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1981, 9-10)

It may be clear that, even in the words of their leader, neither what “socialism” was nor the way to reach it were well defined. Tendencies characterized PT’s life ever since the foundation, and the Comissão Nacional Provisória of the Movimento Pro-PT was the first to affirm that democratic relations and minorities rights would have been an important characteristic of the party to come.

PT’s internal debate didn’t concern only the kind of socialism to build or how democracy needed to be intended, but was also about the same nature of the party itself. The main distinction was the one between those who saw PT as a “strategic” party, and those who believed in it as a tactical one. But what does this distinction mean?

If both believed that the creation of a new party was needed, in order to have an institutional platform that can be used to reach their goals, the difference was about the persistence of the institution itself and his role; those who thought that PT was a strategic party, believe that it was not only a conjunctural instrument, but a way to obtain power, reaching government and then reform the system, in a socialist way. On the other hand, those who saw the party as a tactical one, believe that PT was a good instrument to be used for conjunctural reasons, as the best form of organization during that specific phase of Brazilian history in order to reach democracy, but at the same time didn’t believe in it as a unitary organization but more as a “front”.

The control of the party was, since the beginning, in the hands of those who believe in it as a permanent strategic institution, but so-called “minorities” were

⁷ We, PT, know that the world is walking toward Socialism. [...] The Socialism that we want will be defined by the people, on the needs of popular fights, as a politic and economic answer to the concrete desires that PT will be able to tackle. [...] Socialism that we want will be defined in everyday fights, in the same way in which we are building PT. (own trasnl.)

not so small; as a consequence, in 1982, the “Secretaria General Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores” felt the urgency to speak out about the situation:

“Outra parte, entretanto, adotou práticas reveladoras de seu ceticismo frente ao PT. [...] O PT constitui, para elas, tão somente em um elemento a mais da conjuntura atual e, portanto, trata-se apenas de adequá-lo a seus interesses enquanto correntes e utilizá-lo da melhor maneira na sua prática política⁸”.
(*Jornal dos Trabalhadores*, 1982, 6)

In the same document, three main attitudes were identified as detrimental to the party:

1. Those who believe that PT was just a leftist front, sum of different tendencies. For them, the party was just a tactical instrument, useful in that political conjuncture, and didn't see the possibility to build a common platform among different tendencies, but only to have pragmatic agreement on specific points

2. The “aparelhistas”, that use the party as an instrument for their own interests. For them, the growth of the party was useful only if they can have control of it, and PT was just an instrument that they can use to affirm their own tendency, or to elect representatives.

3. The “entrismo”, those who want to transform the party in their own party. For them, PT was not a revolutionary party only because it didn't adopt their own views. They accused the party to be a counter-revolutionary one and, sometimes, use it in order to reach the working class. Their position may lead to the fragmentation and dissolution of the party itself.

One year later the “Manifesto dos 113” (from the number of members who signed the document) was launched, and it was the first affirmation of a new tendency, called “Articulação”, created to give stability to the party and allow it

⁸ The others, in the meanwhile, still adopt practices that reveal their scepticism about PT. [...] For them, PT is just another element of the current political conjuncture and, for that reason, they just need to adapt it to their own interests, as tendencies, and to use it as better as they can in their own political practice. (own transl.)

to survive to the tension. The Articulação included the most important leaders, and among them the same Lula, and was created to reject any kind of interpretation of PT merely as a front or against the idea of “parties inside of the party”. Some tendencies, in fact, were even organized as autonomous parties themselves, as in the case of the Partido Revolucionário Comunista (PRC). José Genoïno, at that time member of the PRC and later on President of the PT between 2002 and 2005, is the first one to recognize the importance of regulation and of the decision taken by the party at that time:

“Houve uma discussão importante no PT sobre a regulamentação do direito de tendência. [...] Não era o direito de facção, erro o direito de tendência! Tinha publicação própria, tinha disciplina, tinha sede, tinha representantes no Diretório. O PT ganhou muito. Aquilo que era um guarda-chuva foi se transformando numa imanência política.”⁹ (Genoïno, 2017, 40)

But even if the “Manifesto dos 113” was an important moment, to see any piece of concrete regulation we have to wait until 1986/1987.

During the IV Encontro Nacional of 1986 the party approved a resolution affirming PT’s nature as democratic, of the masses and socialist, refusing any kind of interpretation as an institutional front, while still recognizing the rights of tendencies. The V Encontro Nacional of 1987 was the real turning point, with a resolution affirming that the nature of the party was strategic, for the masses and of the masses, democratic and socialist. Internal democracy was still recognized as a fundamental principle of the Partido dos Trabalhadores.

Probably we cannot talk of proper “democratic centralism” when we are analysing the process inside of PT, but surely the rules and, later on, the role and

⁹ “There was an important discussion inside of PT about how to regulate tendencies’ rights [...] It wasn’t the right to create factions, but the right to have tendencies! We had our publication, we had discipline, we had headquarters, we were represented in the Direction. PT gained a lot. Something that was just an umbrella transformed itself in political immanence”. (own transl.)

the undisputable leadership of Lula, affirm a de-facto “democratic centralism” over the decision of the party in the following decades.

1.3 The first electoral test: 1982 general election

1982 general elections were the first one to be held after the end of the bipartisan system, and also the first one since the instauration of the military regime in which the Governors would have been elected directly by popular vote. Due to the electoral rules, the vote was “bonded”, meaning that the voters must choose candidates of the same party for all the disputed seats, from Governor to city councillor.

Even if ARENA had been officially abolished in 1979, with the same law that legalize the multiparty system, the Partido Democrático Social (PDS) was clearly his heir, even if it tried to publicize itself as more “independent” than they actually were. On the other side, MDB just changed his name in Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB) and continued to exist with a new name. The biggest change was linked to membership: due to his own nature as an “umbrella” or, better to say, quoting Fernando Henrique Cardoso, as a “partido-ônibus¹⁰” (Serra, 1997), many members left the organization; once the creation of new party became legal, in fact, other movements, ideologically cohesive, were founded in order to compete in the election, everyone with their own platform.

Even with all the difficulties that they had to face, the two parties were still the biggest “powerhouses” in Brazilian politics; while many other movements were founded over the course of the previous years, for our analysis is useful to look at least to another one of them, that from an ideologic point of view was

¹⁰ Literally, bus-party. Revisiting Kirchheimer’s definition of catch-all party, Fernando Henrique Cardoso talked about the old MDB and, later on, PMDB, as a “bus”; without ideology or a clear political platform, whose structure served to “take a ride” towards a given “point”, intended as a position of influence and power.

similar to the Partido dos Trabalhadores. We are talking about the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT), founded in Lisbon the 17th of June of 1979; the original idea behind it was to collect the inheritance of the so-called “tradição trabalhista”, in the footsteps of Getúlio Vargas’ “Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro”, the party of João Goulart, the last President elected democratically before 1964 coup. PDT’s leader was Lionel Brizola, who had been part of the original “PTB” ever since his foundation in 1945 and had served first as the responsible for the youth section of the party and, later on, as State Deputy, Federal Deputy, Mayor of Porto Alegre and finally as Governor of the State of Rio Grande do Sul. Brizola, a beloved politician especially in his native state, had been one of the Governor that blatantly opposed the military in the first phase after the coup, helping his brother-in-law, President Goulart, to hide in Porto Alegre, trying to organize the resistance thanks to local military. However, once his plan failed, the same Brizola had to leave the country and auto-exile himself in Uruguay first and later on in Portugal.

PDT, founded by leaders in exile, didn’t have the same grassroots penetration in civil society that Partido dos Trabalhadores had, but this deficit was compensated by the presence of Brizola, a beloved figure, by far less polarizing than Lula, and also most known in the whole country. Looking at political platform, the two movements were not so different one from the other; both shared socialism as their goal, and were deeply involved in the battle to restore democracy in the country. Probably the two main difference were the fact that inside PDT’s Marxist were not represented and, most important, PDT explicitly affirmed that they didn’t reject private property, even if conditioned to social well-being, while PT was in favour of collective property, in particular of the means of production.

PDT was able to capitalize 1982 votes, electing not only 24 Federal Deputies and 2 Senators, but also Brizola as Governor of the State of Rio de Janeiro. His personal result was even more impressive if we think that, previously, no one had been elected Governor in two different States (in his case, Rio Grande do Sul e Rio de Janeiro), showing how popular he was. With those results, the party became the third most-voted, after PDS and PMDB. PT’s results, instead, were

not that good: they elected only 8 Federal Deputies, receiving 3.3% of the votes at national level, the majority of them in São Paulo, with 9,8% of the preferences. Looking at the total number of votes, is even more impressive to look how much PT depended from the State of São Paulo: if the total number of votes were 1.589.645, the ones coming from that State were 1.144.648. (Meneguello, 1989, 124; Nicolau, 1998, 177)

The results of 1982 were even more disappointing if we compare them to the goals of the party during the electoral campaign, when PT announced that it was necessary to reach 5% of the vote at the national level and at least 3% 9 States. Those percentages were not established by the party itself, but part of the rules decided by the military regime, with the criteria that the so-called “marginal party” needed to reach to survive, according to the “lei dos partidos”; the application of those criteria, however, was postponed to 1986 election, so no real harm came to the party for the non-compliance.

There are many explanation for this kind of results: first of all, the bonded vote was one of the reason behind PT’s difficulties, if associated to the fear of “throwing-away” votes that instead could be useful in opposition to the regime; it was clear, in fact, that in the majority of the States PT didn’t have any reasonable chance to elect Governor, maybe with the sole exception of the State of São Paulo, with Lula, and for that reason some voters may have decided to choose the most-organized, better known opposition of PMDB. But this factor alone is not enough to explain the defeat, especially if we compared PT’s vote to the one of PDT.

The lack of leadership and well-known politicians all around the country was one of the most important factors to explain the difficulties faced by the party to make inroads in other regions outside of São Paulo. Another good explanation is the dogmatism of their campaign, more focused on theoretical questions rather than concrete solutions for everyday people’s necessities. As we will see later on, this kind of approach will characterize the party for many years to come, and probably one of the biggest weakness of Lula’s run to the presidency in the ‘90s.

As we have already said, however, 1982 elections were just the first step of a bigger battle; as bad as the defeat was, it was no time for the party to dwell on self-pity or settle the score between tendencies, since unity was much needed in order to keep on with the fight against the military regime.

First of all, the party continued to make inroads in civil society, and two of the most important organization created in the '80s, the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT) and the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST), born respectively in 1983 and 1984, had strong ties with PT.

CUT creation was the natural consequences of the increased mobilization inside of the working class at the end of the '70s, and happened during the "Primeiro Congresso Nacional da Classe Trabalhadora"; even if the Partido dos Trabalhadores was born to guarantee institutional representation to the working class, it could not replace the role of the Union. As already stated in his name, the idea behind the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores was to create a unified union, an ambitious goal due to fragmentation and number of tendencies, as became pretty clear already during the preliminary work before the Congress. Building hegemony in the unions was as difficult as it was in the left in general; CUT was founded in São Bernardo do Campo and, even if it wasn't officially linked with the Partido dos Trabalhadores, the relation with the party was strong:

“O nascimento e a consolidação da CUT só foram possíveis graças a existência, em nível político geral, do programa do Partido dos Trabalhadores, que defendia essa independência de classe. As ligações e relações entre essas duas realidades históricas, nascidas das realidades históricas, serão múltiplas, a ponto que ficou quase automático associar essas duas siglas: CUT e PT”¹¹
(Giannotti, Neto, 1990, 7)

One of the core assumptions behind the creation of the “Central Unica” was political autonomy from parties, and for this reason even many PDT's members

¹¹ The creation and consolidation of CUT was possible only thanks to the existence of PT's programme, that defends class independence. Links and relations between those two historical institutions, born with the same roots, would be multiple, to the point that it was almost automatic to link between the two CUT and PT". (own transl.)

were part of it; however, the relation between CUT and PT was pretty clear, with the same Lula talking about it during I° Encontro Nacional do PT:

*“Hoje, o movimento sindical passa por um momento muito importante: o da criação da Central Única dos Trabalhadores, de cuja comissão executiva preparatória fazemos parte”*¹². (Lula, 1ª Convenção Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores do PT, 1981, 4-5)

If CUT was created to give representation to urban working class, Movimento Sem Terra represent the struggle of workers in rural area, fighting against unequal distribution of the land, one of the main characteristics linked with the process of colonization and economic formation of Brazil as an independent country. The same debate about unequal distribution of the land wasn't for sure something new in the '80s, but had already been central in the public debate during the '60s, with the creation of the “Ligas Camponesas” in the north-east. The Pastoral da Terra was for sure the organization closer to this kind of revendication; MST was actually born inside of the Pastoral with three main goal: “fight for the land, fight for agrarian reform, fight for social changes in the country.”¹³ (MST)

PT became a reference for the landless workers; many PT's member actually begun their political militancy fighting for the redistribution of the land first and join MST later on. The same Lula, even without strong personal ties with those movement, made pretty clear how important the question of the redistribution of the land was during his speech in the first national convention of the party:

“O PT apoia e apoiará sempre a luta pela reforma agrária, pelo direito à terra para quem nela trabalha, pelos melhores preços dos produtos dos agricultores com a eliminação dos atravessadores ou intermediários. [...] Assustam-nos as milhares de famílias sem o pequeno pedaço de chão de onde

¹² Nowadays, the unions are going through a very important moment: the creation of the Central Única dos Trabalhadores, and we are part of his preparatory commission.” (own transl.)

*extrair os frutos necessários à vida. [...] Consideramos que o problema da terra é, sem dúvida, o mais grave em nossa conjuntura.*¹⁴ (Lula, 1ª Convenção Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1981, 4-5)

The relations between PT and MST, however, is actually far more complicated than the one with CUT; if in the case of the Union, we can clearly identify a close relation between the two organization, MST connection are less stable and changed a lot over the years, even if we are talking about movement pretty close one to another from an ideologic perspective, and over the course of the year the process of co-optation of MST leader into PT was pretty strong.

While PT increased his reputation as a “movement’s party” and make inroads in civil society, the battle for democracy continued with “Diretas Já”, literally “direct (election) now”; after the presentation of the Emenda Constitucional nº 5, best known as Emenda Dante de Oliveira, from the name of deputy who presented it, it was time to take politics to the streets once again.

According to the Constitutional Amendments, all the citizens with more than 35 years would have the right to vote to elect directly President and Vice-President every five years. This would have mean, probably, the end of the military regime. For many years, in fact, the election of the President had been made inside of the so-called “Colegio Eleitoral”, an organism controlled by the regime, which role was basically to ratify the name proposed by the military themselves.

When the Emenda nº5 was presented, popular participation in favour of it was not that big; it was only at the end of 1983 that the movement gained support, first of all because the vote in Congress was closer, but also even due to worsening of the economic condition and to increased participation of unions and parties. Even if Dante de Oliveira was a member of PMDB, in fact, almost

¹⁴ PT will always support the fight for the agrarian reform, for the right of those who worked the land to own it, for better prices of agricultural products, with the elimination of intermediaries. [...] We are scared of millions of families without a small piece of land, where they can produce the necessaries to survive. [...] We believe that lands-related problem is, without a doubt, the biggest of our conjuncture. (own transl.)

all the other parties announced their support, seeing the Emenda as a first, fundamental step in order to restore democracy. At the beginning of 1984 popular support reached his apex: in all the most important cities of the country millions of citizens took the streets showing their support; the biggest rally was the one of the 16th of April, when 1.5 million citizens took part of the protest in São Paulo, from “Praça da Sé” to the “Vale do Anhangabaú”, in the larger demonstration of the history of the country.¹⁵ (G1 Globo, 2014)

Aside to politicians, intellectual, writer, singer and even footballer shown their support and take part actively in the protest. Despite popular participation, however, the military regime wasn't ready to step down and when the Chamber had to vote for the proposal, they were able to block the reform. Actually, the large majority of the votes were in favour of the “Emenda”, but the qualified majority of 2/3 wasn't archived, due to the absence of 113 deputies.

Even if the regime was able to slow down the process, they had lost control of the situation, as the indirect election inside of the “Colégio Eleitoral” showed.

Tancredo Neves, governor of Minas Gerais and one of PMDB's leaders, was able to gain popularity over the course of “Diretas Já”, being also the first one to speak in the Vale do Anhangabaú. After the defeat, he started to organize a democratic front to compete against PDS, sensing the difficulties of the party and therefore how fragile the “official” would be. The defining moment of his campaign was José Sarney's decision to leave PSD after a heated debate about the procedure to choose the “official” candidate of the Government. With Sarney gone and the creation of the Frente Liberal, the government didn't have the majority inside of the Colégio Eleitoral anymore; Neves, endorsed by Brizola and Ulysses Guimarães, included Sarney as his vice-presidential candidate, and presented himself not only as the leader of the opposition but also as the favourite for the Presidency.

PT instead, following the “maximalist” attitude of his first years, forbid all of his member to take part in the meeting of the “Colégio Eleitoral”, perceived as illegitimate (Tese para atuação do PT, 1984, 10). Even without PT's support,

however, Neves won with a large majority, becoming the first civilian elected President in more than 20 years; due to an illness, however, he was hospitalized just one day before the Presidential Oath and died one month later, in April. Vice-President elected José Sarney took the oath on behalf of the Government the 15th of March, waiting for an improvement of Neves' condition, and officially became President after his death.

At the end of the same year, Sarney called for a Constitutional Assembly to replace 1967 "military" Constitution, as Neves had promised, following PMDB's historic project, contained already in the "Carta de Recife" of 1971. Once the National Congress approved the project, the "Emenda Constitucional n°26" established that 1986 Chamber of Deputies and Senate elected would serve also as a Constituent Assembly. The decision actually came after a heated debate about the nature of the Assembly itself: if the government's plan, in fact, was for the Congress to serve as a Constituent Assembly, the opposition believed that the people needed to vote to elect a new, completely independent, organism.

Many critiques were raised, especially from PDT and PT, but also from civil society organizations such as the Plenário Pró-Participação Popular na Constituinte, OAB (Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil), CNBB (Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil) and CUT. According to them, a Constituent Congress would have been more conservative, with higher presence of "traditional" politician, with well-oiled political machine at their disposal in order to be re-elected, able to shift the electoral debate from Constitutional principle; according to those who were against Government's plan, on the contrary, a Constituent Assembly created with the sole purpose of writing the Constitutional Chart would lead to a most issue-driven electoral campaign, putting one against another different project for the country.

PT's position against the Constituent Congress was re-affirmed during the 4° Encontro Nacional in 1986, when it was time to identify the strategy for the election of that year:

“o processo Constituinte, que, de bandeira e reivindicação de forças democráticas desde meados da década de 1960, agora se transformou, nas mãos

da Nova República, num projeto de consolidação da hegemonia burguesa sobre e contra o movimento popular¹⁶” (Plano de ação política e organizativa do PT para o período 1987/88, 1986, 110)

Even with all the critiques to the new Constituent, however, all the party decided to take part in it, and the debate about the boycott born inside of the PT was quickly putted aside. As the oppositions supposed, however, the election was characterized mainly by everyday politics, and were highly influenced by the early success of the Plano Cruzado, approved by Sarney at the beginning of 1986 in order to stabilize the economy.

Without going into further details, the Plano Cruzado, whose name came from the new currency introduced, was a stabilization plan to reduce hyperinflation, that in the first two months of 1986 had reached an annual rate of 517% (CPDOC-Fundação Getúlio Vargas). Among other measures, one of the main characteristics was the price freeze; during the first year, the plan seems to be a success, with the reduction of inflation to normal levels; just few months later, however, hyperinflation returned, due to the increasing deficit in the balance of payment, linked with decrease in export, increased import, the decrease of Brazil international reserve and the distortion created by price freeze.

PMDB and the government however had already been able to capitalize the early success of the plan, as ‘86s results shows: the party was able to win 22 out of 23 Gubernatorial races, with the only defeat in the State of Sergipe by the hands of the newly-born PFL (created by PDS’s dissident), still part of Sarney’s coalition.

Similar results are observable even when we look at the composition of the Assembleia Nacional Constituinte: the “Centro Democrático”, also known as Centrão, had a wide majority, that account for more than 80% of the members elected. PMDB alone elected 303 members out of 559, 54.2% of the total. The

¹⁶ “The Constituent process, symbol and demand of democratic forces since the middle of the ‘60s, was transformed, in the hands of the New Republic, in a project to consolidate bourgeois hegemony against popular movements” (own transl.)

second biggest party was PFL, with 135 representatives, 24.1%. Other smaller parties, like PDS and PTB, were part of the Centrão and supporting Sarney's administration, expanding the majority. The President of the Assembly was, as a consequence, expression of the same alliance: Ulysses Guimarães, one of the politicians behind Neves' election and a possible name for the Presidential succession.

The oppositions, on the contrary, were not well represented; PDT basically confirmed their numbers from 1982, with 24 Federal Deputies, and 26 Constituent in the Assembly. As for the Partido dos Trabalhadores, their growth was impressive, with 16 MP elected, doubling '82s results; their contingent however was so small that having a concrete impact in the discussion and, most important, in the final draft of the new Constitution wasn't going to be easy. Nevertheless, PT even presented a whole project of Constitution, called "Muda Brasil", written with the help of Professor Fábio Konder Comparato.

Over the course of the months, after many frustrated initiatives, discontent inside of the party increased; in July, when it was time to vote the first draft, Lula at first announced that they would vote in favour of the project but then, after various meetings among Deputies and inside of the Comissão Executiva Nacional, they decided to vote against the new Constitution. In the meanwhile, the debates about the nature of the party started again, and the tension linked with the process of institutionalization was stronger than ever: on one side those who, appealing to socialist ambitions, refuse to recognize any kind of legitimacy to "bourgeois society" and his own institution, seeing the new Constitution as just another "bricks" inside a wall that needed to be destructed and replaced with a socialist society; on the other side the "pragmatic", who knew that the socialism was an impossible goal to reach at that time, but believed that changes could be promoted within the institution.

The "hard liner" emerged victorious from this internal debate, as we can clearly read both in the resolution approved by the Diretório Nacional and in Lula's discourse in the Chamber:

“O PT, como partido que almeja o socialismo, é por natureza um partido contrário à ordem burguesa, sustentáculo do capitalismo. Disso decorre que o PT rejeita a Constituição burguesa que vier a ser promulgada¹⁷” (Diretório Nacional PT, 7/8/1988)

“O Partido dos Trabalhadores, por entender que a democracia é algo importante – ela foi conquistada na rua, ela foi conquistada nas lutas travadas pela sociedade brasileira –, vem aqui dizer que vai votar contra esse texto, exatamente porque entende que, mesmo havendo avanços na Constituinte, a essência do poder, a essência da propriedade privada, a essência do poder dos militares continua intacta nesta Constituinte. Ainda não foi desta vez que a classe trabalhadora pôde ter uma Constituição efetivamente voltada para os seus interesses. Ainda não foi desta vez que a sociedade brasileira, a maioria dos marginalizados, vai ter uma Constituição em seu benefício [...] É por isto que o Partido dos Trabalhadores vota contra o texto e, amanhã, por decisão do nosso diretório – decisão majoritária – o Partido dos Trabalhadores assinará a Constituição, porque entende que é o cumprimento formal da sua participação nesta Constituinte.¹⁸ (Diário da Assembleia Nacional Constituinte, 1988, 14.313-14.314)

¹⁷ PT, as a party that craves socialism, is naturally against the bourgeois order, that support capitalism. As a consequence, PT rejects the bourgeois Constitution that will be approved” (own transl.)

¹⁸ The Partido dos Trabalhadores, believing that democracy is important- conquered in the street and through the fights of Brazilian society- will vote against this draft, because we believe that, even if some progress had been made in the Constituent, the same essence of power, the essence of private property, the essence of power of the military is still intact in this Constituent. This wasn't yet the moment in which the working class could have a Constitution for his interests. This wasn't the time in which Brazilian society, marginalized people obtained a Constitution that benefit them. For this reason, the Partido dos Trabalhadores will vote against this draft and, tomorrow, according to the decision of our Direction- a majority decision- the Partido dos Trabalhadores will

It will be an error, anyway, to label PT's contribution, and in general the one of progressive parties, as marginal; on the contrary, as Florestan Fernandes wrote, without them, the Constitution would have been poorer, and their mark was clear especially in the most progressive and innovative aspect of the text (Fernandes, 1988. 4). Many critiques coming from the left were probably exaggerated; the Constitution isn't just the expression of conservative sector, but on the opposite was a cornerstone in the process of re-democratization; even more, the idea of State that emerges from the document is closer to social-democracy than to any other regimes, with the vast recognition not only of the human rights but also of social one. The Federal Constitution was the first step of a process of "inclusion of the outsiders" in many areas, starting for example with the health sector with the creation of the SUS (Serviço Único de Saúde). PT's vote against the Constitution was, more than anything, a strategical decision made from the party to re-affirm their position as an anti-systemic, opposition party; while the internal debate about PT's institutional participation was still important, they were building a bigger, better and stronger political machine. While the Constitution was still under discussion and the debate about the same "bourgeois nature" of the institutions was taking place, the Diretório Nacional was already planning the next two electoral campaign, showing their compromise with institutional battle.

Lula was by far the most popular member of the party, so no one was surprised when he was announced as their official candidate. The most interesting thing was the first self-reflection about the strategic approach needed in order to improve the results; it was the same Lula, during his speech at the Encontro Nacional, to point out what needed to be changed:

“Numa campanha como a de 88, nós não poderemos ser vanguardistas, não poderemos fazer um discurso que só nós compreendamos. Às vezes a gente age como carros de corrida de Fórmula Um: vanguarda está a 380 km por hora e a

sing the Constitution, because we believe that this is the formal realization of our participation in the Constituent. (own transl.)

massa está num fusquinha a 60 por hora, sendo multado em cada esquina. Na campanha, o PT tem de ocupar todos os espaços possíveis para educar o povo. Para plantar uma semente, para plantar algo que nunca mais vai morrer”¹⁹. (Lula, 5º Encontro Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1989)

In the same speech, he made pretty clear that he wasn't going to run just as a flagship candidate, but that his goal was winning:

“Não aceitei essa candidatura na perspectiva de disputar por disputar. Não acredito nessa teoria de que o importante é competir: essa é a teoria dos derrotados. O PT vai ter de sair com essa campanha não pensando num segundo turno ou com quem vai se coligar num segundo turno. O PT vai ter de sair nessa campanha na perspectiva concreta de que podemos ganhar a Presidência da República”²⁰. (Lula, 5º Encontro Nacional do Partido dos Trabalhadores, 1989)

Once the Presidential election were postponed to 1989, '88 municipal vote gained importance as the first electoral test after the Constitutional debate; PT's results were even better than expected, with 36 Mayors elected, three of them in State's capital: Vitória (Espírito Santo) with Vitor Buaiz, Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul) with Olívio Dutra and São Paulo (SP) with Luiza Erundina.

The optimism after the results clearly emerge from the document of the VI Encontro Nacional of 1989:

“O País votou claramente à esquerda. A primeira consequência das eleições

¹⁹ In a campaign like the one of 88, we cannot be a vanguard, we cannot have a discourse that only we understand. Sometimes we are like Formula One cars: the vanguard at 380 km/h, and the people in a Beetle (the Volkswagen car) at 60 km/h, fined at every corner. In the Campaign, the PT need to occupy all the spaces available to educate the people. To plant a seed, something that will never die (own transl.)

²⁰ I didn't accept this candidacy to dispute for the sake of it. I don't believe that in this theory, that is important to compete: is a theory for losers. PT need to take part in this campaign without thinking about the second round or about coalitions in the run-off vote. PT need to take part in the campaign with the concrete expectation to win the Presidency of the Republic. (own transl.)

municipais foi a projeção de Lula e de Brizola como as grandes alternativas presidenciais para 1989.²¹” (6º Encontro Nacional do PT, 1989)

From an ideological point of view, in 1989 the party wasn't so different to the one of the previous ten years; even more, '88 results gave strength to the hard liner, especially with the victory of Luisa Erundina, who represents the most “radical” group inside of the party. In order to run as Mayor, Erundina had to challenge the “official” candidate, the one preferred by the direction of the party, Plínio de Arruda Sampaio. She was able to win the primaries first and then, as we have already seen, became Mayor of São Paulo; however, as Wendy Hunter points out, she “battled with local party’s committees for the four year she was in power” (Hunter, 2010, 91), showing how difficult life inside of the parties was due to the huge differences among tendencies.

After the results of 88, in the Presidential Campaign of the following year, the tone of “class-warfare” was pretty clear, as we can see reading the “Carta Aberta ao Povo Brasileiro”:

“O PT tem dito e continua a dizer que sem a participação e a luta dos trabalhadores não haverá saída possível. Por isso mesmo, apresenta como candidato Lula, um símbolo das lutas travadas no Brasil nos últimos anos. Pela primeira vez um trabalhador disputará a Presidência da República. Um trabalhador que representa a luta de milhões de oprimidos na cidade e no campo. O PT chama todos que buscam viver de seu próprio trabalho a contribuir para que, pela primeira vez em quatrocentos anos de nossa história, o governo saia das mãos dos representantes dos ricos, dos poderosos, dos exploradores²²” (CARTA ABERTA AO POVO BRASILEIRO, 1989)

²¹ “The Nation clearly voted for the left. The first consequence of municipal election was the legitimization of Lula and Brizola as great alternatives for the Presidency in 1989” (own transl.)

²² PT said and is saying that without workers’ participation and fights there is no way out. For this reason, we present Lula as candidate, a symbol of the battle fought in Brazil in the last years. For the first time a worker will run for President. A worker that

Both PT's ideological position and the belief that Lula needed to be the candidate for the Presidency, however, made pretty difficult the creation of a progressive front. The Partido Socialista Brasileiro (PSB) and Partido Comunista do Brasil (PCdoB) were the only two other parties that decide to support Lula's candidacy, joining the "Frente Brasil Popular".

A 13-point programme, the "Plano de ação de Governo", was presented to the voters and represented a radical shift from traditional politics; among other things they proposed to default foreign debt, an agrarian reform that would radically change the distribution of the land in favour of small farmers and the nationalization of companies operating in key economic sector.

1989 election was characterized by high level of political fragmentation, with a grand total of 22 candidates. During the process of re-democratization there was a constant growth of both new political parties and leaders, who forged themselves in the struggle against the regime. The fact that the election was not held together with other races reduced the differences between candidates leading smaller or bigger coalition. It was, basically, the opposite to the election for the Constitutional Assembly: if in '86 local networks or clientelist relation between local powerhouses and the voters played an important role, in a Presidential Election local politicians and Congressman's careers were not on the line, so they were less interested to mobilize political machine and personal relations, even because the cohesion inside of the parties was pretty scarce.

If in this first election fragmentation can be interpreted as a consequence of both democratic enthusiasm and lack of advantages from coalition building, soon enough it became a peculiar characteristic of Brazilian's "presidencialismo

represents the struggle of millions of oppressed in the cities and rural areas. PT is calling everyone who is trying to survive thanks to their jobs to participate because, for the first time in more than four hundred years of history, the government will no longer be in the hands of those who represents the riches, the powerful, the "explorers". (own transl.)

de coalizão²³ (Abranches, 1988) and one of the reasons behind the instability of executive power over the course of the year.

While formal coalition were not present, soon enough “conservative” sectors were able to found a common ground, while progressive “front” wasn’t able to do the same, since the three biggest parties were running with their own candidates, two of them with reasonable chances to win.

The first one was Lionel Brizola, who led all the polls for the first half of the electoral year. The one for the hegemony inside of Brazilian left, however, wasn’t just a battle between PT and PDT; during the work of the Constitutional Assembly, a group of politicians decided to leave PMDB and found another party, the Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB). As the name suggest, PSDB was created as a social-democratic party, inspired on European centre-left and willing to be a moderate alternative to PT and PDT. Their candidate was Mario Covas, well known as one of the leaders of PMDB’s left wing; recognizing that the available space inside of the left was highly disputed between PT and PDT, during the campaign Covas tried to portrait himself as a moderate, in a movement toward the “centre” of the political arena, an anticipation of the following PSDB’s trajectory. that will allow the party to became one of two main actors of the “bipolar” system.

Is interesting to highlights how, at the beginning of 1989, the fight for the hegemony of the left seemed to be also the one for the Presidency, as we can see reading an article published on the “Estado de Sao Paulo” the 1st of January:

“Os políticos que se consideram ou são considerados de “centro” estão convencidos de que, se não houver alianças entre partidos afins, estarão abrindo caminho para Leonel Brizola, do PDT, e Luiz Inácio da Silva, do PT,

²³ “Presidencialismo de Coalizão, o dilema institucional brasileiro” is the title of a famous article written by Sergio Abranches in 1988. The term is used to define the combination of a proportional system, multi-party system, an “imperial” presidency and executive based on big coalitions, typical of Brazilian institutional arrangement.

disputarem o segundo turno das eleições presidenciais”²⁴ (Jornal O Estado de S. Paulo, 1989, 4)

Left optimism, however, soon declined as the months passed: the economic crisis of the Soviet Union, Tiananmen Square repression, the revolutionary movement in many countries in central Europe and, last but not least, the fall of the Berlin Wall, caused a deep crisis in many leftist movements all over the world, and criticism from conservative parties.

A crucial election in the midst of this crisis was particularly hard for socialist parties, that had to face criticism for the international conjuncture and, even more, whose economic platform seemed to be defeated by the history in favour of the neoliberal consensus; it was the definitive victory of the Capitalist model against State-planned economy, of the Washington Consensus against socialism and communism.

If the crisis of the left worldwide had consequences in the domestic campaign, PT’s feel also to be victim of the alliance between conservative sectors, mass media and partisan right:

*Anteriormente dividida no plano eleitoral e político-partidário, a centro-direita, conseguiu a unificação dos grupos econômicos, dos meios de comunicação e mesmo da classe política dominante (maioria do PFL, PDS, parte do PMDB e PTB) em torno da candidatura Collor de Mello. [...] As elites dominantes, escaldadas pelas lições de 1985 e 1988, logo se deram conta do risco que corriam na disputa presidencial.*²⁵ (Comissão Executiva Nacional PT, 28/8/1989)

²⁴ The politicians who consider themselves as “centrist” believe that, without alliances, are opening the door for PTD’s Lionel Brizola and PT’s Luiz Inacio da Silva to dispute the ballot of the Presidential Election. (own transl.)

²⁵ Earlier divided on electoral, political and partisan arena, the centre-right was able to unify economic groups, mass media, and even politicians of the dominant class (the majority from PFL, PDS, part of PMDB and PTB) around Collor de Mello’s candidacy.

PT decided to embrace the classic narrative of the “underdog” against an elite unwilling to renounce to their privileges and ready to use every possible means in order to block democratic transition. While they were doing it using “class warfare” as the centre of their discourse, it is interesting to highlight that this kind of narrative will accompany PT over the course of every crisis, even when they will change ideological references.

While the left was under pressure, Fernando Collor de Mello, former governor of the State of Alagoas, became the favourite for the Presidency. At the beginning of the year Collor didn't seem a contender, since he wasn't well-known at national level and because he enjoyed only 5% of the preferences. Even more important, Collor wasn't the candidate of any important party, strong in the whole country and able to obtain large number of votes; on the contrary, he led the Partido da Reconstrução Nacional, founded just that year, and he was supported only by the Partido Social Cristão (PSC), Partido Trabalhista Renovador (PTR) and Partido Social Trabalhista (PST), all three without significant electoral strength. (Coimbra, 2013)

Collor, however, was able to characterize his candidacy as an example of the new mainstream political agenda, following the international trend, with the promotion of neo-liberal principles of the Washington Consensus: he promised a reduction of taxes and public expenditure, with economic liberalization, privatization and deregulation of the market.

Following a peculiar characteristic of Brazilian politics, in which usually programmatic platforms are not so important, especially if compared to the personal traits of the leaders involved, Collor's major strength was his charisma and the way his public figure was built in the months leading up to the election; coming from an affluent and rich family, son of a former Governor and Senator, he was still able to present himself as an outsider, not part of the establishment, but also as an ambitious young politician ready to drastically change the political system, thanks to his previous experience as Governor.

[...] Dominant elites, burnt by the lesson of 1985 and 1988, realized the risk that they were facing in the Presidential Run. (own transl.)

He was known as “Caçador de Marajás”, a nickname “earned” for his fight against privileges of some public servant. He actually started his “fight” just few months before announcing that he was going to run for the presidency, understanding how popular an anti-corruption platform could have been, if associated with the promise of leading the country toward a future of prosperity and economic well-being.

If at the beginning of the year he was the underdog, in June he was leading every poll, with Brizola as the second most-voted. In the months leading up to the election, however, PT’s campaign started to be more effective, and Lula’s candidacy became stronger, while Collor decided to opt-out of the debates, feeling that they could only be detrimental to his run.

After the first round, Collor was leading the election, but his margin was smaller than expected, with only 30,47% of the preferences. Lula’s results, however, were not bad at all: with 11.622.637 votes, he ended with 17,19%, in second place in front of Brizola, with 16.51%, meaning that PT and his leader had gained access to the ballot. For the second round, after difficult negotiations, the left was able to present itself united, with both PSDB and PDT announcing their support for Lula.

In the ballot PT’s leader was then able to recover at least some of the difference in terms of votes, reaching 46.97% of the preferences, but was still defeated. The election, however, can be considered a success both for Lula and his party, able to legitimize themselves as leaders of the progressive front, at least for a brief moment. They also shown that the Presidency was disputable even from a party unwilling to compromise itself or his value in order to compete. PT’s satisfaction was clear:

“Toda a avaliação das eleições de 1989 faltaria com a verdade caso desconhecesse a significativa vitória política do Partido dos Trabalhadores e da Frente Brasil Popular com os resultados do 1o turno. Mais do que uma vitória eleitoral, ela criou condições para a disputa no 2o turno e a unificação de todo o campo democrático-popular e progressista em torno da candidatura Lula [...] apesar de não termos eleito Lula presidente, que mudamos o quadro político do

Brasil e colocamos a luta político-social em outro patamar, mais avançado, mais definido ideologicamente. [...] Sem desconsiderar os erros políticos que cometemos e a derrota no campo eleitoral, é necessário que nossa avaliação qualifique nossa participação na disputa presidencial como importante vitória política²⁶. (Diretório Nacional PT, 27-28/1/1990)

To understand PT's evolution in the following years, is important to look in detail at the results, both using social class and geographical distribution of the votes as instrument of analysis. Starting from social classes, is clear that Collor's biggest advantage was among those who earned less than two minimum wages, a sector in which he obtained 51% of the preferences. On the contrary, when we look at the other "tail" of income distribution, considering only those who earned more than 10 minimum wages, the results were the opposite, with Collor with 40% of the preferences and PT's leader with 52%.

Similar results are observable if we look at education, a variable strongly linked to socio-economic conditions, especially in a country like Brazil at the end of the '80s: only 6% of the voters that had attended only the "1º grau" (the first 8 years of basic education) express a preference for PT. On the contrary, the percentage increased to 18% when we look at the ones who had attended the "3º grau", or "escolaridade superior", with PT being by far the party with higher levels of preferences. (IBOPE, 1989)

Looking at those data, is pretty clear that Lula was defeated mainly due to the lack of consensus among popular sectors; Collor presented himself as the

²⁶ Every analysis off 1989 election would be untrue if we didn't recognize the important political victory of the Workers' Party and of Frente Brasil Popular with the results of 1st round. More than an electoral victory, it creates the conditions to dispute 2nd round and to unify the democratic and progressive front around Lula's candidacy [...] even if we didn't elect Lula as President, we changed Brazilian political arena and we put political and social fights on a new level, more advanced, more defined ideologically [...] Without disregards to political errors that we have made and the defeat on electoral arena, we have to consider our participation in Presidential Election as an important political victory. (own transl.)

“saviour”, a man able to solve alone the problems faced by the country, as Murillo de Carvalho wrote:

*“Seguindo velha tradição nacional de esperar que a solução dos problemas venha de figuras messiânicas, as expectativas populares se dirigiram para um dos candidatos à eleição presidencial de 1989 que exibiu essa característica. Fernando Collor, embora vinculado às elites políticas mais tradicionais do país, apresentou-se como um messias salvador desvinculado dos vícios dos velhos políticos”*²⁷. (Carvalho, M. 2002, 203)

The idea of a messianic leaders, that characterized the whole history of the country, was as strong as ever even after re-democratization.

On the contrary, Lula’s class warfare wasn’t as appealing within popular sectors, and he was well aware of it:

*“A minha briga é sempre esta: atingir o segmento da sociedade que ganha salário-mínimo. Tem uma parcela da sociedade que é ideologicamente contra nós, e não há por que perder tempo com ela: não adianta tentar convencer um empresário que é contra o Lula a ficar do lado do trabalhador. Nós temos de ir para a periferia, onde estão milhões de pessoas que se deixam seduzir pela promessa fácil de casa e comida [...]. A verdade nua e crua é que quem nos derrotou, além dos meios de comunicação, foram os setores menos esclarecidos e mais desfavorecidos da sociedade”*²⁸. (Lula in Singer, A. 1990)

²⁷ According to an old national tradition to wait for a messianic figure able to solve our problems, popular expectations were directed toward the candidate that in 1989 had those characteristic. Fernando Collor, while linked with traditional political elites, was able to present himself as the saviour, the messiah, free from the fault of old politicians. (own transl.)

²⁸ My battle is always the same: reaching the segment of society that earn minimum wage. There is a sector of society against us ideologically, and we don’t have to lose time with them: we can’t convince an entrepreneur who is against Lula to side with the workers. We have to go to the periphery, where there are millions of people seduced by the easy promises of house and food [...] The cold hard truth is that we were defeated,

Lula's words are interesting for many reasons: on one side, he identifies "the promise of house and food" one of the reasons behind his defeat; at the same time, is pretty clear that he wasn't ready to renounce to his "class warfare" narrative yet. Those two points are particularly interesting if we take into consideration how much PT's electoral strategy will change over the course of the '90s and especially at the beginning of the new millennium: if in 89, according to Lula, it was useless to lose time to convince entrepreneurs or, in general, the elites, at the beginning of 2000 the main idea behind "Lula Paz e Amor" will be to reassure the market and convince the same sector of the viability of PT's project. At the same time, while in 1989 he was the first one to "accuse" in some way Collor of "buying" the votes of popular sector with electoral promises, in 2006 he will be the one consider responsible of doing the same things, with the distribution of wealth through social programmes, even if we will why we didn't consider it a valid explanation for his consensus.

To understand Lula's defeat, is fundamental to take into account also the geographical variable: while PT was closely linked with urban working class and the intellectual, the party didn't have a strong presence in rural area.

Once again, the composition of the national leadership of the party can be an explanation for this trend: in the first Comissão Diretora Nacional Provisória of 1980, 7 of the 11 members were coming from the south or southeast, three of them being from São Paulo; one year later, when the 1º Diretório Nacional was elected, 67% of the member (62 out of 92) were coming from States of the South and Southeast, with 21 from São Paulo.

While those numbers are linked to the origin of the party, even few years later the situation didn't change: the 4º Diretório Nacional, elected in 1987, still present a similar composition, with an over-representation of the same two regions, that counts up to 66% (54 out of 82) and with 27 of them from São Paulo.

aside that from the mass media, by the sector less enlightened and disadvantaged of society. (own transl.)

The relative lack of strength of PT in all the other region was evident even if we look, for example, at the results of the election for the Constitutional Assembly, with the party able to elect his 16 representatives only from States of the south and southeast.

As we can expect, 1989 election wasn't different: in the first round Lula lead only in the Distrito Federal, with 29.06% of the preferences. The situation was better in the runoff vote, with the victory in four States: the Distrito Federal again and then the States of Pernambuco, Rio De Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul. If we can consider the victory in Pernambuco a consequence of Lula's origin, in the other two States his victory can be easily explained with Brizola's endorsement. However, is more interesting for us to look at the results not per State but per macro region: southeast and the south were basically a draw between Lula and Collor, with the leader of PT that obtain respectively the 49.55 % and 51,89% of the votes.

In the northeast Lula's results were actually better than expected, and for sure better than the ones that will see in the following elections up to the new millennium: even if Lula's defeat was pretty clear, he still obtained 44,32% of the preference. The worst results came from the north and the centre-west regions, in which the defeat was shattering, with Collor obtaining respectively 70,51% and 63.25% of the votes. (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral)

It was pretty clear that, during the first ten years of his own history, PT hadn't been able to make inroads outside of his own traditional States and was still closely linked with his grassroots. Even if they had very good results in the regions that account for almost 2/3 of those entitled to vote, their weakness in the rest of the country was still too much of a burden to overcome. In fact, considering only the vote from the south and the southeast, Lula would have won the election, even if with less than 100.000 votes of advantage; however, when we look at the final results, we can observe that Collor won with more than 4 million votes of advantage.

Despite the defeat and the difficulties, in less than ten year the party had become one of the biggest of the nation and at the beginning of the '90s seemed

ready to contender for executive roles, if able to make inroads in the rest of the country.

1.4 The early '90s: ready to win?

If the '70s were a decade of back and forth between democratic opening and slowly fading authoritarianism, and the '80s the one of political participation, popular enthusiasm and return to democracy, the '90s presented themselves promising an era of democratic stabilization and institutional strengthening, in order to fulfil the promise of democracy and to apply all the principle contained inside of the constitution.

As for the PT, the first test of their newly founded strength was just one year after the Presidential Election, at the end of 1990, with the General Election for both Congress and Governors.

Despite good results, they had to face an important challenge linked to their own ideological position: after the fall of Berlin Wall and the dissolution of Soviet Union, in fact, being a socialist party wasn't easy, especially in the eye of the public opinion. Going into a crucial election, in which they need to make inroads in the Congress, it was fundamental to tackle the question once and for all, not allowing the opponents to take advantage of PT's association with a movement in crisis all over the world.

For those reasons, socialism and the same nature of the party were the most important topics that needed to be addressed during the VII Encontro Nacional of 1990; after many years of vague definition of what socialism really meant, an ambitious theoretical debate took place, leading to the formalization of a new concept: PT was not a socialist party per se, but they believed in the so-called "Socialismo Petista", a Brazilian take on socialism supposedly different to the others. While reaffirming their compromise with democracy, and therefore refusing the so-called "real socialism", the party was still refusing capitalism and, as a consequence, social-democracy. According to their idea, what characterized "socialismo petista" was the coexistence of democracy and the hegemony of the working class. (7° Encontro Nacional do PT, 1990)

In order to reach their goal, direct democracy was the way to be followed. While the debate surged to overcome deadlock of party development, the need of internal balance between tendencies didn't allow any kind of "real" change or solution without risking a break up.

If PT had some internal problem to solve, the nation was not in better condition, especially if we consider the economic situation.

Newly-elected President Collor had to approve an economic plan bearing his name in the very first day of his term; among other measure, the "Confisco da Poupança", a temporary seizure of deposits above a fixed amount (50.000 cruzados) and financial assets was by far the most shocking and less popular one. The economic plan, approved to reduce chronic inflation, failed drastically; the inflation rate for 1990 was 1.476,56%, and in the beginning of the following year the President had to create a new plan, called "Collor II", that ended to be even less effective than the first one.

Collor's administration stability was also threatened by 1990 General Election; at the beginning of his term, the President had to deal with the Congress elected back in '86 being able to negotiate from a position of strength since he was the one with high popular consensus, received just few months earlier. For this reason, at least until the beginning of 1991 he was able to govern through presidential decrees (medidas provisórias), with an "imperial style", showing no attitude for negotiation with the Congress.

At the end of 1990, however, the situation was quite different: Collor's personal consensus was very low, and those election, both for the Congress and Governors, followed a very different pattern, mainly due to the involvement of the local branches of the parties and well-oiled political machines. Collor, member of a smaller party, didn't have nor the personal consensus neither any kind of political structure or local network to use in order to gain support in the Congress through the election of his own "follower"; on the contrary, traditional parties saw the vote as a chance to increase their importance.

Among those who supported him, PFL was for sure one of the most important parties, thanks to his territorial strength in the north-east. PMDB, however, was still expected to be the strongest, even if just one year earlier their

candidate ranked poorly in the Presidential election; the lack of cohesion inside of this party, however was actually a good news for Collor, who didn't see his place threatened by a movement such as PMDB, unable to be united against him, but on the contrary incline to gather around the power.

All the leftist parties, on the contrary, were running with a platform explicitly against the government. That was, for sure, the case of PT, that saw the election as a "referendum about the President and his own economic plan". A similar position was shared by PDT, while PSDB wasn't running explicitly against Collor, even if they had previously refused to support his administration. The creation of a left front for Gubernatorial races, however, was still very difficult; if in the case of PSDB programmatic and political reasons were involved, the alliance between PT and PDT wasn't possible mainly due to the desire, shared by both parties, to be the hegemonic force of the left. In particular, in 1990 PDT was waiting for some kind of "retribution" for their support to Lula's candidacy in the second round of the previous year, asking PT to support some of their own candidates, starting from the same Brizola in Rio de Janeiro.

PT, however, decided to run with their own candidate almost everywhere, at least in the first round, both alone or supported by other parties.

If this strategy was good to establish their position and to present to the public more candidates, turning local politicians into well-known leaders, the results were not good; PT wasn't able to elect any Governor in 1990, a result even more disappointing if we considered that, contrary to the previous elections, many parties were able to elect at least one of their candidates. Looking at Congress election, however, PT's results were a lot better: with 10.2% of the votes, they were the third most-voted parties behind PMDB (19.3%) and PFL (12.4%) (Georgetown University, Organização dos Estados Americanos, 2002). They also were able to elect a Senator for the first time with Eduardo Suplicy, from São Paulo.

Due to the composition of the electoral district, however, the party didn't elect the third biggest group in the Chamber, being behind not only PDT but also

smaller parties such as PDS (Partido Democrata Social), PSDB, Collor's PRN and the Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro (PTB).

Analysed together, the results of 1989 and 1990 show a growing movement, that at the same time was also trying to re-market themselves, in opposition to the mainstream narratives that consider PT unable to lead the country, being too radical and inexperienced.

In order to do that, the "Governo Paralelo" was created, inspired to the British tradition of the "Official Opposition Shadow Cabinet"; composed by 17 "coordinators", each one responsible of a specific area, with Lula as President, the Governo Paralelo was born in order to act as if it was the actual government, facing the main problem that the real administration had to deal with.

This institution had almost no impact on the national political life, nor for the popularity of the party; however, it was useful to boost PT's process of institutionalization, led to the creation of specific programmes in certain area, like the one of regional development, and to the "Instituto Cidadania", a "think tank" fundamental to define policies in the following years. Aside to the creation of Governo Paralelo, the biggest news in 1990 was Lula's decision of not run again in the election to renew his seat, "sacrificing" his own position in order to work on his unofficial role as the chief of the shadow administration and for the growth of the party itself, in order to make inroads in the whole country.

If PT enter the new decade being stronger, from Collor's perspective the results of the election were less than ideal: while conservative forces had control over more than half of the Chamber of Deputy, the biggest parties were not part of the Presidential Coalition. Even in a scenario of increased institutional battle, and without a strong support both at popular or partisan level, Collor still follow the same "imperial" style of the first year, and the tension between executive and legislative reached dramatic levels. His attempt to gain political support, even within the opposition, ended with no results. Once Plano Collor II failed, and the economic results promised during the campaign and the first year of government were not even close to be reached, with high level of unemployment and economic recession instead of growth, his own political support fell down. Even the press, that during the electoral campaign promote Collor's image as the

young rising star of Brazilian's politics, started to attack the President, publishing report about his luxurious life and accusation of corruption involving his family.

The situation reached a point of no return once Pedro Collor, brother of the President, accused Paulo Cesar Farias, the campaign treasurer of '89, of being in charge of a vast corruption scheme, involving the President. In an extreme attempt to save his presidency, Collor asked the "silent majority" in his favour to take the streets wearing green and yellow against the "sindicato do golpe" and the "central unica dos conspiradores" (Collor, 1992), with the two "enemies" clearly identified with non-existing unions not by chance.

His strategy, however, backfired: the next Sunday, the streets were occupied by students, wearing in black as a sign of mourning for corruption and against Collor. It was the visual representation of the end of the Government; at the end of 1992, once the final vote in favour of his impeachment was just few days away, the President resigned.

In typical Brazilian fashion, a political crisis born due to economic difficulties, the lack of political abilities by the President and a fragmented majority, exploded once corruption was introduced into the equation; soon enough, all the parties started their own anti-corruption campaign, trying to differentiate themselves from the executive.

The same was true in PT's case: the party, at first was timid in supporting the impeachment, mainly fearing that it could put at risk democracy, still unstable and young, rejecting both "conservative agreement to save Collor or any kind of "golpe" to solve the crisis" (*1º Congresso PT, 1991*). After Collor's brother revelation and national rallies, however, PT presented a request for a Parliamentary Committee to inquire about the corruption charge and started to be one of the strongest supporters of the impeachment.

The whole process revealed soon enough that the "Nova Republica" wasn't so different from the old ones, in particular for what concerns institutional instability; continuity can be found also about the role of "messianic leadership" and the political use of corruption scandals, that as we will see characterized

even the latest part of our history, even in a scenario drastically different from the one of the early '90s.

While the “front” against the President was bipartisan, PT’s attitude toward the new government, guided by Itamar Franco, didn’t change. Once Collor renounced, many parties decided to support Franco: among those, the most important were for sure PMDB, who obtained the presidency, and PSDB, that in exchange gained key appointment, such as the one of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, first nominated Minister of Foreign Relationship and, later on, after others failed attempt of economic stabilization, Ministry of the Economy.

Cardoso, a well-known sociologist who have lived in exile for few years during the military regime, was involved with politics ever since the early '70s, after being fired from the Universidade de São Paulo due to the so-called “AI-5 das Universidades.”²⁹ At first, Cardoso took part in the creation of PMDB’s programme, and later on became Senator for the same party in 1983; just few years later, however, he became one of the founders and leader in the Senate for PSDB. After his time as Minister of Foreign Relationship, he accepted the role as Minister of Finance (Ministro da Fazenda).

His main goal was, of course, the creation of a stabilization plan to solve chronic hyperinflation and allow the country to reach growth and economic stability; in order to do so, he created a group formed by well-known economist such as Pécio Arida and Andre Lara Resende.

The result was “Plano Real”, officially launched the 27th of February of 1994. The plan was an adaptation of Washington Consensus; it includes both austerity measures to reduce deficit and the creation of new temporary source of income for the State with the “Fundo Social de Emergência”. In the second part of the plan, the creation of a new index, called UVR (Unidade de Valor Real), indexed with the dollar, was the first step for the creation of a new currency, called Real, replacing the newly-created Cruzeiro Real, launched just the previous year.

²⁹ The “Decreto 477” of 26 of February of 1969 allowed the Regime to fire or suspend for five years any professor or student involved in so-called “subversive act” against the government.

Following the mainstream economic agenda, a large programme of privatization was carried on, accompanied by to attract foreign investments, thanks to high returnability of the investments, due to one of the highest interest rates in the world. (Flynn, 1996, 402)

Just few weeks after the approval of the plan Cardoso resigned, in order to run for the Presidency. At that time, however, his chances of winning were very low, and even 3 months after the acceptance of the nomination only 16% of the Brazilians were thinking of voting for him, while Lula that on the contrary had 42% of the preferences in all the polls. (Datafolha, 1998)

Looking in retrospective to the debates, is interesting to point out to the fact that PSDB was still considered a potential allied for the Partido dos Trabalhadores, especially because they lacked both the electoral strength and a well-known leader. The same PT recognized it during the VII Encontro Nacional of 1993, once it was time to identify the strategy for the election of the following year:

“Apesar do crescimento eleitoral em 1992, o PSDB não conseguiu constituir um campo próprio, nem se apresentar como alternativa real de governo. Partido de sustentação ao Governo Itamar, sua trajetória vem sendo marcada por ambiguidades. [...] Hoje, predomina no PSDB a busca da terceira via, mas amanhã pode estar mais próximo de nós. Por isso, o PT deve disputar o apoio da militância e do eleitorado tucano, a começar pelas cidades onde coligamos [...] a partir de um programa democrático e popular.”³⁰(8º Encontro Nacional do PT, 1993)

Funny enough, PT used “third way” with a negative connotation, while just few years later the same Anthony Giddens will consider Lula as one of the

³⁰ Putting aside the elector growth of 1992, PSDB wasn’t able to create their own space, nor to present themselves as a real alternative for the government. Part of Itamar’s government, their trajectory is characterized by ambiguity. [...] Nowadays, PSDB is searching for the “third way”, but tomorrow they could be closer to us. PT need to dispute the support of “tucanos’s” militant and voters, starting with the cities in which we are allied [...] starting from a democratic and popular programme. (own transl.)

leaders belonging to the same “tendency”.

If PSDB’s positions were not clear, the idea of a “left front” in Lula’s support was still strong inside of the party in order to compete in 1994 Presidential election:

“o PT deve-se esforçar para atrair o PSB, o PCdoB e o PPS para uma aliança no primeiro turno. Esforço idêntico deve ser dirigido ao PCB, ao PSTU e ao PV. [...] temos que disputar as bases, militante e social, desses partidos, visando incorporar o PSDB, o PPS e o PSB à oposição ao Governo Itamar e à candidatura Lula-94.³¹” (8º Encontro Nacional do PT, 1993)

Two things emerged clearly from the quotes above: on one side, PT’s “hegemonic” desire inside of the left was pretty clear, and Lula was identified as the centrepiece of any coalition. On the other, PDT, closer from an ideological perspective, was never mentioned: if is true that tension between the two movement rose over the course of the years, the main reason was the inability to reach an agreement about a common candidate, with both Lula and Brizola not willing to step down; the first Presidential election, with the two divided by just one point on the first round, didn’t help to solve the problem and, since they were very similar one from another, the two parties had to dispute their “core votes” in the same fraction of the electorate, leading to less than ideal relations.

Coalition building, however, was just one of the issues that PT had to face before the election; the main one was still his territorial development, anywhere except in the south and southeast. To overcome this problem, in 1993 the party launched “Caravanas da Cidadania”, a series of rallies around the whole country.

The Caravanas were a decisive moment in the construction of Lula’s leadership and to reinforce the party; during the first one, starting from Garanhuns, his hometown in Pernambuco, Lula travelled for more than 3000

³¹ PT need to lure PSB, PDdoB and PPS to first round’s alliances. Identical effort needs to be directed towards PDB, PSTU and PV. [...] We need to dispute their social base and militants, trying to include PSDB, PPS and PSB too into the opposition to Itamar’s government, to support the candidacy of Lula-94. (own transl)

km, stopping in many cities across the northeast, following the route to São Paulo that he, just like millions of other immigrants, travelled to move to the big city searching for a better life.

To gain popular support in the northeast, 1994 programme of the “Frente Brasil Popular” contained, for the first time, a comprehensive 34-pages plan called “O Nordeste e a integração nacional” that include some of the principle that will guide the action of the parties during his administrations:

“a proposta da FBP pela Cidadania [...] opta por um padrão novo de desenvolvimento que conduza a uma gradativa e crescente inclusão dos brasileiros. Que acredita ser viável criar neste país um mercado de consumo de massa calcado na dinamização (e não na compressão) da demanda interna e na gradativa e persistente melhoria do padrão de distribuição da riqueza e da renda nacional. Que buscará superar, ao invés de aprofundar, o atual apartheid social, legado do projeto das elites. Nesse contexto, a FBPC pretende tratar a integração regional como a outra face da moeda da integração social. Nos dois casos, o Nordeste terá que merecer tratamento prioritário. A necessidade de dar destaque ao objetivo de integrar os diversos (e não apenas alguns) sub-espacos do território nacional terá que gerar políticas governamentais explicitamente traçadas para alcançá-lo³². (Campanha Lula Presidente, 1994, 2-3)

A large part of PT’s future economic strategy was already outlined, in particular for what concerns the “inclusion of the Brazilian”, mainly through the

³² Frente Brasil Popular pela Cidadania want a new standard of development that could lead to a gradual and increasing inclusion of Brazilians. We believe that, in this country, we can create an internal market based on the dynamization (and not the compression) of internal demands and in gradual but persistent improvement of the distribution of wealth and national GPD. That want to overcome, not aggravate, the current social apartheid, linked to elite’s project. In this context, FBPC want to tackle regional integration as another side of social integration. In both cases, the northeast deserves to be the priority. The integration is a goal that needs to stand out for the different (and not only some) sub-spaces of the national territory, and need to create policy explicitly drawn in order to reach it. (own transl.)

creation of bigger internal market; while they refused capitalism, the idea of “mass consumption” as a source of inclusion was already present too.

While at the beginning of 1994 Lula was the favourite for the Presidency, the situation suddenly changed once Plano Real shown his effects in July, when the new currency started to be used. The inflation immediately dropped from 48.24% per month in June to just 7.75%, reaching 1.85 % in August (IBGE). Cardoso was able to take advantage of the results, and based his campaign on the success of the Plano Real; he was presented as the most experience candidate, the man able to solve the most important problem of the nation, opposed to an extremist without executive experience, Lula. If at the beginning of July Cardoso’s consensus was only at 21%, just 20 days later PSDB’s candidate and Lula were rated at the same level. (Datafolha, 1994). It was the point of no return for PT’s leader, unable to revert the tendency and slow down Cardoso’s run.

Cardoso won the election already in the first round with a staggering 54.3% of the votes, with almost 30 point of advantage from the second, Lula, who ended with just 27.1% (TSE).

Facing what the PT had described as the “biggest crisis of Brazilian history, being at the same time economic, social, political, cultural, environmental and ethical” (Campanha Lula Presidente, 1994) the citizens had chosen the man who had solved their biggest problem, inflation. Once more a “saviour”, able to defeat “curse” of inflation, became President.

Looking at the detail of the results, contrary to 1989, in 1994 Lula’s defeat happened all around the country, more or less with the same percentages in all the five macro-regions. The only two States in which he was able to defeat Cardoso were Rio Grande do Sul and the Distrito Federal; while Rio Grande do Sul victory is explicable with the progressive tradition of the State, the positive experience of Olívio Dutra as Mayor of Porto Alegre and also due to “useful votes” converging on Lula, since Brizola didn’t have a chance to win, the case of the Distrito Federal is more interesting, because is part of a bigger trend. Once again, PT was unable to gain the support of poorest, less educated voters; even with an agenda that talked explicitly about redistribution of wealth, structural reform that would help the working class and equality, Lula’s consensus was

still bigger among those who have had access to higher level of education. According to all the polls, in fact, only 20% of those who had finished only basic education declared their will to vote for Lula, while the percentage was a little bit higher (24%) among those who had access to Ensino medio and even higher among the most educated, with 33% of those who had been enrolled in a University voting for PT's candidate. (Datafolha, 1994). Knowing those data, the results of the Distrito Federal should not surprise us, due to his nature as an administrative centre for the whole nation, able to attract mostly well-educate, high-paid workers. PT's nature as the representative of a progressive "elites" rather than a real mass party was still confirmed.

While Lula's results were actually better in the first round of 1994 than 5 years earlier, it didn't "fell" that that was true, even due to the "size" of the defeat; at the same time, the situation of the party was for sure better than 5 years earlies, with PT able to reach 12.8%, gaining almost 2 million votes if compared to 1990 and electing 49 Deputies, 14 more than in the previous election. Joining the newly elected deputies, also 4 new Senators were chosen to represent PT. The results were even better when we look at subnational races, for the election of the Governors. For the first time Partido dos Trabalhadores was able to elect even 2 Governors, Cristovam Buarque in the Distrito Federal and Vitor Buaiz in Espirito Santo. Those two victories suggests that, even if Lula was for sure the most popular one, others politicians were ready to step up and occupy leadership roles inside of the party; for the first time, after two defeat in a row, Lula wasn't PT's "natural candidate" anymore.

1.5 The late '90s and the beginning of 2002: overcoming internal struggle and reaching the presidency

If at the beginning of the decade PT seemed ready to take power, Lula's defeat of 1994, accompanied by good results for the party and other executives, threatened the fragile equilibrium found between tendencies.

The X Encontro Nacional of 1995 was the time and place for this debate. Looking at the resolution, we can observe that PT was facing not only a political crisis but even an organizational one; everything was under discussion, from the

role of majority and minority in the Direction to the same existence of the party, as we can easily understand from “Construção partidária”, one of the documents approved during the meeting.

While in the opening it was stated that that internal “revenges” needed to be avoided, and that the meeting wasn’t a chance to settle the score between tendencies, the majority was highly criticized in the whole document:

“A nova direção, marcada pela falta de um projeto coerente e pela carência de solidariedade interna, foi incapaz de elaborar e viabilizar políticas que permitissem ao Partido superar os seus impasses organizativos e políticos. A situação, que em 93 já era preocupante, agravou-se. A tendência à burocratização, à primazia da luta interna sobre a luta política e social contra nossos adversários, a desconfiança e suspeição generalizadas, afastaram ainda mais o Partido da vida e da agenda real de nosso povo.”³³ (Xº Encontro Nacional do PT, 1995)

For the first time, after the X Encontro Nacional, Lula wasn’t re-elected for any executive role inside of the party, even if he was still part of the Diretório Nacional. The newly-elected president, however, was José Dirceu, one of Lula’s allies, part of the same tendency ever since the foundation of the party.

The reorganization didn’t stop there, but concern also the same nature of the majority, with the “Articulação” under attack and unable to bring everyone together. The priority was to keep radical group marginalized and, at the same time, avoid any fracture; other “centrist” group were called to join the majority, that took the new name of “Campo Majoritário”, a tendency that will run the party for the following ten years, until the Mensalão in 2005.

³³ The new Direction, characterized by lack of a coherent project and internal solidarity, was unable to create and make viable any policy that would allow the party to overcome the political and organizational impasse. The situation, already worrying in 1993, is now even worse. The tendency to bureaucratization, the supremacy of internal fight over political and social ones against our opponents, the lack of trust and generalized suspects, pushed away our party from the life and the agenda of our people (own trans.)

While internal stabilization was archived thanks to the inclusion of other moderate groups into leadership, another process of transformation started immediately after the defeat of 1994: an ideological transformation, with the party that slowly started a process of “moderation” and resembled more a social-democratic organization rather than a socialist party, even if in their official narrative they radically refuse any kind of reference to social-democracy as a possible road to be followed by PT.

Cardoso’s success in the economic stabilization paved the road for the neoliberal agenda, weakening PT socialist programme and showing the need of a new economic and social platform to compete against the mainstream economic plans. The party was in search of a new strategy: while they were rejecting both neoliberalism and the old “national-developmentism”, “socialism” either wasn’t anymore the main keywords of their economic analysis (*Xº Encontro Nacional do PT*, 1995).

The “inclusion of the outsiders”, instead, became the core of their strategy:

*“É preciso mostrar à sociedade brasileira que as políticas propostas por FHC não podem constituir um projeto de desenvolvimento que atenda às grandes maiorias nacionais. Elas carecem de uma dimensão nacional e social. Não visam a realização de um processo de integração nacional, a incorporação de todos os brasileiros à cidadania, mas apenas a acumulação de capital e a integração de uma minoria de consumidores ao Primeiro Mundo, enquanto a imensa maioria da população, miserável e pobre, é condenada à privação e à marginalidade, que hoje espantam o mundo nos testemunhos sobre a África, o Leste Europeu e a América Latina.”³⁴ (*Xº Encontro Nacional do PT*, 1995)*

³⁴ We have to show to Brazilian society that the policy proposed by Fernando Henrique Cardoso cannot be part of a developmental plan able to answer to the needs of the majority of the Nation. They lack social and national dimension. They didn’t aim to realize national integration, the inclusion into citizenship of all Brazilian, but only the accumulation of capital and the integration of a minority of consumers into First World, while the large majority of the population, poor and miserable, in condemned to

For the first time, class warfare wasn't the main idea behind their programme, leaving space to a bigger social agreement between social sectors:

“A defesa da Nação exige uma nova política econômica e uma aliança social mais ampla, orientada para um projeto de desenvolvimento baseado no investimento produtivo e valorização do trabalho.”³⁵ (Xº Encontro Nacional do PT, 1995)

Nationalism too started to appear among their ideologic references: the idea of a country stronger on international level and “better” in term on national development will be one of the guiding lights for the party in the years to come.

PT's will to extend their area of influence and try a less dogmatic approach in the election was clear before 1998, once it was time to organize the strategy for the next electoral campaign:

“O 11º Encontro orientou o DN [Diretório Nacional] a adotar tática eleitoral de alianças mais amplas que o campo democrático-popular para as disputas estaduais e nacional, sem cair no sectarismo e na desfiguração do programa partidário, coibindo o oportunismo eleitoreiro e o isolacionismo. [...] Nosso objetivo será unificar o campo democrático-popular – PT, PCdoB, PSB, PDT – em torno de candidaturas comuns à Presidência e Vice e aos governos estaduais. O PT deve continuar a experiência de 89 e 94, mantendo a Frente com o PSB e PCdoB, ampliando-a para o PDT, sem descartar alianças com personalidades do PMDB que se opõem ao neoliberalismo e ao governo FHC. [...] Devemos, portanto, incorporar a questão da soberania nacional na política de alianças de 98 e a ampliação de alianças regionais. A disputa do centro, de setores e personalidades, particularmente do PMDB, e mesmo do PSDB, que vêm se opondo efetivamente à estratégia de cooptação do governo de FHC deve-

marginality and deprivations, that nowadays are scaring the world, as we are witnessing in Africa, Eastern Europe or Latin America. (own transl.)

³⁵ The defence of the Nation needs a new economic plan and a wider social agreement, oriented towards a developmental project based on productive investments and the enhancement of the work. (own transl.)

se dar em torno de uma candidatura única das Oposições.³⁶” (Encontro Nacional Extraordinário, 1998)

Those elements were a real “revolution” of PT’s strategic approach, and a first step in their transition from a “maximalist” party to a more pragmatic one. While PT’s transformation was pretty clear, the same could be said for PSDB, even if in the opposite direction, as a consequence of both their electoral alliances, first of all the one with PFL, and to the policy approved during Cardoso’s government. The four years between 1994 and 1998 create the condition for de-facto bipolarism, characterized by a high number of flagship candidates and even more political parties, but with only two real alternative with any chance to win the election, around which the whole system was shaped and smaller parties tends to gravitate, before or after the elections.

On one side PSDB, social-democratic only in the name and allied with conservative forces of the right, on the other PT, trying to affirm their hegemony in the left, even if the convergence of programme and strategy wasn’t due to a shift of the other parties toward PT but rather to the opposite.

³⁶ The 11th Meeting oriented the DN [National Direction] towards an electoral strategy based on a bigger alliance than the popular-democratic fields, to compete both at States and National level, avoiding sectarianism and disfigurement of our programme, restraining electoral opportunism and isolationism. [...] Our goal will be to unify the popular-democratic front- PT, PCdoB, PSB, PDT- around a common candidate for President, Vice, and Governors. PT needs to continue the experience of 89 and 94, keeping alive the Front with PSB and PCdoB, opening to PDT, without discarding alliances with those who, inside PMDB, are against neoliberalism and FHC’s government. [...] We need to include the question of national sovereignty and the widening of regional alliances in our strategy for 98. The dispute for the centre, sector and characters mainly inside of PMDB but also in PSDB, who are against Cardoso’s strategy of co-optation needs to be made around a unique candidate for the oppositions. (own trans.)

Lula's control over the party was still pretty high after the reorganization; he was the most popular among his peer, having the best possibility to compete for the Presidency in 1998.

As about who his opponent was, the situation was unclear, because the Constitution didn't allow anyone elected for an executive role, being the President of just a Mayor, to run as an incumbent. Cardoso popularity, however, was pretty high, giving him great chances of being re-elected; for this reason, the "Emenda Constitucional nº16", better known as the "emenda de reeleição", was presented, in order to allow all politicians elected for an executive role to run for a second term.

While Folha de S. Paulo published an article denouncing member of the Congress buying and selling votes in order to pass the "emenda" (Folha de S. Paulo, 1997, 1) and PT's accusing Government and the "elites" of being part of a coalition to stop popular and democratic reforms with Lula as President, the constitutional emends passed without strong opposition in the Congress. One year before the election, everyone knew that the Presidential Campaign would be the "rematch" between Lula and Cardoso, with the sitting president as the favorite.

The coalition in Lula's support this time was bigger than in the two previous attempts: the two greatest popular leaders of the left were united, with Brizola part of the electoral ticket as vice-presidential candidate. Even if in 1994 the results of PDT's leader were anything but good, collecting only 3.2% of the votes, he was still very popular in Rio De Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul, in which he had respectively 10% and 15% of the votes. (TSE)

The coalition included also PCdoB, PSB and PCB, but the opposition wasn't united, since Partido Popular Socialista (PPS) decided to run with their own candidate, Ciro Gomes, supported by other smaller parties.

PT's transformation led to a political platform that didn't mention "anti-capitalism" and, even if ideologically speaking the party still consider itself socialist, the message for the voters was radically different.

The best example of the new attitude was the "Carta Compromisso", a "letter" from Lula to the voters, in which he express his commitment to some

principles and goals that needed to be reached to improve not only the condition of the poorest and of the working class, but in general the situation of the country; even if the elites were still accused of being inadequate to lead Brazil and to transform “the country into a great nation”, in the rest of the document it was clear that the recipient of the message was different from the previous election:

“Serei o fiador de um novo contrato social com este país, que se fundamentará numa nova hegemonia democrática, capaz de efetivamente construir a Nação brasileira para todos os brasileiros. Uma Nação sem medo de ser feliz e com coragem para assumir o seu destino. Um país disposto a jogar um papel soberano na nova ordem internacional que está se gestando. [...] Chegou a hora de você também ajudar a mudar a nossa História, transformando esse nosso sonho em esperança; e a esperança na certeza de que juntos poderemos subir a rampa do Palácio do Planalto e devolver a todos os brasileiros o orgulho de haver nascido neste país³⁷” (Carta Compromisso, 1998).

The same name of the coalition was a symbol of this new attitude: “União do Povo- Muda Brasil”, “The People United- Change Brazil.

In the “Diretrizes do Programa de Governo” the “leftist front” was presented as the main strength of Lula’s candidacy, just like the presence of a wider social coalition in his support was identified as the key factor that gave him a real chance of victory:

³⁷ I will be the guardian of a new social contract in this country, based on a new democratic hegemony, able to build a Brazilian Nation for every Brazilian. A Nation that doesn’t have fear to be happy, with courage to accept his destiny, a Country ready to play a sovereign role in the new world order, that is going to be created. It’s time for you to help us change our history, transforming our dream into hope, and our hope into the certainty that all together we will go upstairs to the Palacio do Planalto and give back to all the Brazilian the honour of being born in this country. (own transl)

“Pela primeira vez em nossa história as esquerdas se uniram para disputar a presidência da República. A União do Povo - Muda Brasil é uma efetiva opção de poder. Seu Programa aponta para uma mudança profunda da economia, da sociedade e da política brasileiras em proveito das grandes majorias, em especial dos trabalhadores. A união das esquerdas se amplia conquistando importantes setores comprometidos com o progresso, a soberania nacional, a democracia e a ética na política. Ela expressa o sentimento de todos aqueles que condenam o atual estado de coisas e que querem superar os problemas que afligem nosso país há séculos, sumamente agravados pelo governo FHC³⁸”. (União do povo–Muda Brasil, 1998, 1)

Class warfare left space to the inclusion of the outsider: the goal wasn't anymore the instauration of socialism but rather allowing people to be an “active” part of the society, managing capitalism to avoid the distortion of the market, leading to a fairer system:

“O dia-a-dia da vida do povo brasileiro será substancialmente alterado. As pessoas encontrarão instrumentos para libertar-se do sentimento de impotência e fatalismo e para romper com todas as formas de opressão. O novo governo procura vestir a todos com o manto da cidadania para promover respeito à dignidade do ser humano, em especial no local de trabalho. Nossa meta é acabar com o apartheid social que mantêm fora da produção, do consumo e da cidadania milhões de brasileiros. O novo governo fortalecerá a participação dos cidadãos o controle do Estado pela sociedade. Queremos um Brasil para as

³⁸ For the first time in our history, the left is united disputing the Presidency of the Republic. The Union of the People- Change Brazil is a real option of power. His programme aims to a radical change of the economy, of society and of Brazilian politics, in favour of the majority, in particular the working class. The union of the left is extended to important sectors in favour of progress, national sovereignty, democracy and ethics into politic. Express the felling of everyone who condemn the current status quo and want to overcome the problems that our country had faced in the last centuries, now worst after FHC government. (own transl.)

*imensas maiorias. Um Brasil para os brasileiros*³⁹”(União do povo–Muda Brasil, 1998, 7)

While a part of the left was trying to organize itself around Lula’s candidacy, Cardoso had to face the consequences of two big financial crisis, the Asian in 1997 and the Russian the following year. Between September and November of 1997, Brazil lost 10 billion dollars in foreign investments and, after the recovery at the beginning of the year, the situation was even worst at the end of 1998, when the country lost 39 billion dollars (Abreu, Werneck, 2005).

For a nation highly dependent from foreign capitals the consequences were dramatics: the economy was in stagnation for more than two years, the trade balance, already in deficit, became even worst, the unemployment, already growing during 1995, reach 9% in 1998. (CEPAL)

The Russian Crisis, however, started only in August of 1998, just two months before the first round, and had massive effect on the economy only after the vote. If, generally speaking, economic difficulties tend to work against sitting Government, in this case surprisingly Cardoso started to gain support as soon as the crisis start to affect the country, while Lula was losing ground. According to Marcelo Bolshaw Gomes, the sitting President was able to use the situation as his own advantage, and his experience in solving economic problems was presented as his strongest assets in front of a new crisis. (Bolshaw, 2006, 13)

Even if during the campaign Cardoso was forced to recognize the need for hard fiscal adjustments and of a loan from the International Monetary Fund, he

³⁹ Everyday life of Brazilian people will be radically changed. The people will find instrument to free themselves from being powerless and from fatalism, breaking the chain of oppression. The new government want to “dress” everyone with the coat of citizenship, to promote the respect of dignity of the human being, in particular working related. Our goal is to end social apartheid, that keep millions of Brazilian outsides of production, consumption and citizenship. The new government will reinforce the participation of citizen in the control of the State by society. We want a Brazil for the majority. A Brazil for the Brazilian. (own transl.)

was able to obtain 53% of the votes already in the first round. The candidate of the “União do Povo– Muda Brasil” improved his personal result if compared to 1994, obtaining 31.7% of the votes (TSE), but was still defeated for the third time in a row. The other major candidate of the left, Ciro Gomes, finished third with 10.97% of the votes.

Once again, “messianic” expectations played a role in the election: facing uncertainties, a strong man able to “magically” solve the problem by itself was chosen over a less experienced leader.

Looking at the geographical distribution of the votes, the situation was pretty much the same of 1994, with Lula defeated almost in every State, with the exception of Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul, thanks also to Brizola’s support; in term of social classes, for the first time Lula’s consensus were pretty much equal in every sector of the population, without big differences between poorest and richest voters. The only real difference was linked with the dimension of the cities, with Lula struggling in the countryside and in smallest cities and with better results in larger municipalities, even if still beside Cardoso (Datafolha, 1998).

Looking at the vote from PT’s perspective, the party obtain 600.000 more votes compared to 1994, but at the same time was losing ground in term of percentages, even if it was able to elect more representatives in the Chamber of Deputy, with a grand total of 58 MP, the 5th largest group. In the subnational races for Governors, the results were better than 1994, with the victory in the States of Acre, Mato Grosso do Sul and Rio Grande do Sul respectively with Jorge Viana, José Orcírio Miranda dos Santos (better known as Zeca do PT) and Olívio Dutra, even if they were not able to re-elect the incumbent in the two State that they were guiding already, the Distrito Federal and the State of Espirito Santo.

The effects of Lula’s defeat, however, didn’t last long: once the Russian crisis truly affected Brazilian economy, the popularity of the neo re-elected Cardoso took a hard hit; already in February of 1999, just 4 months after the vote, the rejection for his government was pretty high, with 36% of the Brazilians evaluating his administration as bad or very bad, and only 21% considering it

good or very good. Over the course of 1999 the data got even worse, with the rejection reaching 56% in September (Datafolha, 2002). Cardoso's problems were caused by poor economic performances, with the country facing a two-year stagnation and then, after the growth of 2000, with the effect of the Argentinian crisis too; aside to the lack of growth, the main problem was unemployment, that reached 11,7% at the end of his second term, in 2002. (CEPAL)

The neoliberal agenda that helped the country to attract foreign capital thanks to high-rentability of investments and high volumes of privatization, showed his downside when an economy that had become so highly dependent from speculative funds saw a cut in the capital flow, due to the crisis of other markets; if in his first term, with GDP increasing, privatization and dismissal of workforce didn't affect that much the unemployment rate, since finding a new job wasn't so hard, once there was no more flow of capital many more people started to lose their job; even more, with the State lacking revenues, even public sector workforce started to be affected, and with the fiscal reform of 1999 many people lost their job, due to Cardoso's plan to reduce the size of the State. In order to fully understand the importance of this crisis of consensus during his administration, we have to look at the profile of the new unemployed: according to Marcio Pochmann, aside to the "classic" ones (women, young citizens or part of ethnic minorities, with low level of education) the new unemployed were white, with more than 8 years of school attendance and more than 49 years old, living in the south-east of the country searching for a new job after losing their previous occupation (Pochmann, 2003, 104).

The "victims" of the crisis were not only the "outsiders", the poorest, like had always happened in the history of the country, but also the so-called middle class that for many years had put their trust on the "safest" choice among the available ones in the election, refusing PT's solution because accused of being too radical and that could lead to a level of uncertainty worse than the status quo.

For this reason, the crisis of Cardoso's second term was a once in a lifetime opportunity for the Partido dos Trabalhadores to conquer power. The 2000 municipal election served as a test, and the party was able to capitalize his role as the main opposition, electing 200 Mayor, 187 of them already in the first

round. While other parties obtained better results, PT's improvement was impressive when compared to previous municipal election, also because of the cities in which they were able to win: 6 of them were State Capitals, Acaraju (Sergipe), Belém (Pará), Goiânia (Goiás), Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), Recife (Pernambuco) and São Paulo (São Paulo) (TSE).

While PT celebrate the results and party's consolidation, the other movement of the left, facing a critical election without a clear favourite due to the crisis of the conservative project, were more interested in running with their own candidate than to create a common front. Feeling strong after the good results of 1998, Ciro Gomes announced that he would run again, supported not only by his party, PPS, but also from PTB and PDT, in the so called "Frente Trabalhista". Gomes, former governor of Ceará and Ministro da Fazenda during Franco's administration, was perceived as a moderate, experienced candidate, with greater chances than Lula to win against every PSDB's candidate in the second round, especially because he could obtain support and votes even in from right-wing voters. A similar consideration was made from the Partido Socialista Brasileiro, part of PT's coalition ever since 1989, who decided to support the Governor of Rio De Janeiro Anthony Garotinho, former member of both PT and PDT, a party that he left fighting with Brizola, due to some difference linked with both Garotinho's personal life and administrative decision as Governor of Rio de Janeiro (Folha de S. Paulo, 2002).

Needless to say, being by far the strongest party of the left, PT wanted to lunch one of their own members for the Presidency; for the first time, however, there was some competition inside of the party, and according to the rules established, regular primary election would have been held to choose the presidential candidate. Already in 2000, Folha de S. Paulo published an article suggesting that other politicians were surging as potential PT's leader in the election:

"A quarta candidatura de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva à Presidência da República já não é uma unanimidade dentro do PT. [...] A prefeita eleita de São Paulo, Marta Suplicy, avalia que Lula não é mais o candidato natural do

partido, em razão de suas próprias hesitações. [...] A objeção com maior peso político pode vir de Porto Alegre, cidade que elegeu o quarto mandatário petista consecutivo. O escolhido, Tarso Genro, enfatizou que Lula é, ""até agora", o nome "mais indicado para ser nosso candidato à Presidência". Mas tem ressalvas [...]. Se será o candidato e, se o partido vai recomendar que ele seja, é um processo que começa agora. Nós vamos debater sobre isso e avaliar de maneira profunda esse panorama.⁴⁰" (de Freitas, 2000)

The first one to lunch his candidacy was Eduardo Suplicy, very cautious in presenting his candidacy not as “against” Lula, but as the natural consequence of Lula’s indecision about electoral participation:

“O Lula sugeriu ao presidente José Dirceu que convidasse para um jantar Cristovam Buarque, Tarso Genro, Mercadante, Genoino e eu para um diálogo sobre a questão da sucessão presidencial e o PT. Nessa reunião, o Lula nos transmitiu que ele estava considerando a hipótese de ser candidato à Presidência. [...] Entretanto, queria transmitir a nós que poderia também decidir por não ser candidato. O Lula nos disse: "Vocês são as pessoas que a base do partido considera que poderiam ser também candidatos à Presidência. Quero transmitir essa minha ponderação porque quero que vocês estejam preparados para a eventualidade de eu decidir não ser⁴¹" (Brasil, 2000)

⁴⁰ Lula’s fourth candidacy to the Presidency of the Republic is not unanimous inside of PT. [...] The elected Mayor of São Paulo, Marta Suplicy, said that Lula isn’t the “natural candidate” anymore, due to his own hesitations. [...] The strongest objection can come from Porto Alegre, a city that had elected for the fourth consecutive term a PT’s candidate. The chosen one, Tarso Genro, emphasize that Lula “so far” is the “most indicated to be the candidate for the Presidency”. But there is a caveat [...] He will be the candidate if the party chosen so, in a process that starts now. We are going to discuss it. (own transl.)

⁴¹ Lula suggested to President Dirceu to organize a dinner with Cristovam Buarque, Tarso Genro, Mercadante, Genoino and myself, to talk about PT and presidential succession. Lula told us that he was thinking about running for the Presidency. In the meanwhile, he could decide to refuse to be the candidate. He said: “you are the potential

If at first Lula's indecision was reaffirmed in all his interviews, even endorsing other candidates, just few months later he decided to run again, for the fourth time. His decision was ratified by the party during the XII Encontro Nacional in 2001. Some year later, in an interview with Emil Sader and Pablo Gentili, Lula recalls how he decide to be the candidate:

“De fato, eu relutava muito a terceira candidatura, em 1998, e a quarta candidatura, em 2002, se fosse para fazer a mesma coisa [...]. Pois bem, tinha uma festa de cinquenta anos de vida empresarial do Jose Alencar em Minas Gerais. Eu tinha sido convidado e não queria ir. [...] O Jose Dirceu, então, disse: “Vamos lá, porque ele e um parceira o, ele e senador, vamos lá”. Acabei concordando. [...] E fiquei lá. Aí discursou muita gente, e por último o Zé Alencar. Ele contou toda a história dele e, quando ele terminou de falar, eu falei: “Zé, acabei de encontrar o meu vice. E esse cara aqui”⁴². (Lula in Sader, Gentili, 2013, 16-17

While Lula's recall of the process of decision making is funny, even if probably not historically accurate, the most interesting part of the interview is the first one; saying that he “didn't want to do the same thing again”, Lula admit that he felt the urgency to change both the strategic attitude of the party and the type of campaign.

Postponing his decision about running or not, he put pressure on the party, and as a result he obtained even more power to decide how to organize the

candidates for the Presidency according to our core supporter. I wanted to tell you what I'm thinking, to be ready if I decide that I will not run” (own transl.)

⁴² Actually, I didn't want to run a third time, in 1998, and a fourth, in 2002, if it was just to do the same thing all over again. [...] So, José Alencar organized this party for the 50th anniversary of his career as entrepreneur in Minas Gerais. I was invited and I didn't want to go. Jose Dirceu said: “Let's go, he is a great friend, a Senator, let's go”. I agreed. [...] I just waited there. Many people speaked, and the last was Zè Alencar. He talked about his own story and, once he finished, I said: “Ze (Dirceu), I found my vice-president. Is that guy” (own transl.)

campaign: the biggest change was that, for the first time, the party hired an “independent” publicist to run the campaign, while in all the previous experience the communication was managed by member of the party, in a simpler, more traditional way. The man chosen for the role, Duda Mendonça, was one of the most important publicists of the country, and had already helped to elect Paulo Maluf, one of the historic adversaries of the Partido dos Trabalhadores, as Mayor of São Paulo.

The role of Mendonça cannot be overstated: as we will see in the following chapter, when we will talk about the transformation of Lula as a leader and of his own public image, the publicist had a fundamental role helping him to become President.

For now, since we are talking mainly about party transformation here, is more interesting to analyse the other big change, concerning the vice-presidential candidate. First of all, we have to understand who Jose Alencar was and why the decision to have him as a vice-president in the ticket was one of the reasons that allow Lula to win and, at the same time, a sign of how much the party had changed.

Alencar, a self-made man able to build one of the biggest textile firm of the country, former vice-president of the Confederação Nacional da Indústria and former PMDB’s vice president, was a member of the Partido Liberal (PL), a smaller, centrist, liberal party; even if he wasn’t part of a traditional powerhouse of Brazilian politics, his role as Senator of Minas Gerais gave him a great tactical importance, if we consider that we are talking about a key State, not only from an economical perspective but also in terms of population. Due to his personal trajectory, and particularly his role as vice-president of CNI, many candidates were “flirting” with him to obtain his endorsement. According to the Folha de S. Paulo, pretty much everyone offered him something in exchange to obtain his support:

“Graças ao perfil simples e empreendedor, às críticas ao governo federal e à proximidade com o empresariado, foi muito disputado e alçado à condição de vice ideal de oposição. A posição autodeclarada de centro, facilitaria a

adaptação. Antes de entrar para o PL, em outubro de 2001, Alencar foi assediado também pelo PTB e manteve conversas com Anthony Garotinho, do PSB. O PMDB, do qual se desfilara no mês anterior, ofereceu-lhe a presidência do Senado⁴³”. (Grabois, 2002)

Even if we decide to believe the story reported above, is clear that PT’s leader didn’t attend the event under Dirceu’s “imposition”, but was instead very interested in Alencar support too. The Senator of Minas Gerais was sending signals to Lula’s too, during his own speech, highlight how “honoured he was by the presence of a great Brazilian, Lula” and then inviting him and Dirceu to visit his firms. (Folha de S. Paulo, 2011)

The same was true for Dirceu that, during his speech, was clearly flirting with the host:

“José Alencar, honra de Minas Gerais e o Brasil como cidadão e homem que sonha com o Brasil. [...] Nós temos um sonho para o Brasil, e esse sonho depende muito do empresariado brasileiro. Precisamos de um projeto de desenvolvimento nacional, e esse projeto não existirá sem o empresariado [...] O senador José Alencar representa uma liderança daquela que acreditam no Brasil. Essa é a nossa mensagem aqui, hoje, mensagem de fé no Brasil, uma fé que pode ser muito bem representada pela vida e pela obra do senador José Alencar⁴⁴.” (Folha de S. Paulo, 2011)

⁴³ Thanks to his character of a simple man and entrepreneur, to his criticism toward Federal Government and since he was close to the entrepreneurs, he was disputed and considered an ideal candidate as Vice for the oppositions. His self-declared position as a centrist, would ease the adaptation process. Before joining PL, in October of 2001, Alencar was pursued by PDT, and kept talking with PSB’s Anthony Garotinho. PMDB, that he left one month earlier, offered him the Presidency of the Senate. (own transl.)

⁴⁴ José Alencar, pride of Minas Gerais and Brazil as a citizens and man who is dreaming with Brazil. [...] We have a dream for Brazil, and this dream is highly dependent from Brazilian entrepreneurs. We need a project for national developmental, and this project doesn’t exist without entrepreneurs. Senator José Alencar represents a leader who

According to Lula's recall, Alencar "became" his vice-president that night, while he wasn't officially candidate for the Presidency yet, since he first need to win the primaries against Suplicy; the vote, a mere formality at that point, was held in march of 2002, and Lula won it with 84.4% of the preferences (Agencia Senado, 2002).

But why Alencar, coming from a different political tradition, a man that the same Lula would have considered as a part of the "conservative elites" just few years before, became the chosen one to be part of Lula's electoral ticket?

According to Lula's interview, it was all about love:

"Estamos como Romeu e Julieta. Já declaramos amor profundo e estamos esperando que nossos pais decidam sim ou não", ironizou.⁴⁵" (Grabois, 2002)

Jokes aside, the main reason behind this strange ticket was Lula's need to reassure the voters and presented a moderate version of himself, able to create a new "social contract"; in fact, while he was supported by the Partido Comunista do Brasil, at his side ever since the first election of 1989, the Partido Comunista Brasileiro and the Partido da Mobilização Nacional, Lula needed desperately to gain moderate votes. Even if the Partido Liberal was almost irrelevant in terms of electoral strength, the "symbolic" values behind their participation in the coalition was important; this kind of movement toward the "centre" is the perfect example of PT's new strategic approach, from maximalist of the '80s and the early '90s toward the pragmatism necessary to reach the Presidency.

It was the definitive affirmation of what André Singer called "the second soul" of the PT, the "Espírito do Anhembi" (Singer, 2012), whose name is taken from the place in which the alliance between PT and PL was approved. There is no doubt about the pragmatic nature of this alliance: the difference between the two movements from an ideological perspective are pretty clear just looking at

believed in Brazil. This is our message here, today, a message of faith in Brazil, a faith that is well represented by the life and the work of Senator José Alencar (own transl.)

⁴⁵ "We are like Romeo and Juliet. We have already declared our love, and we are waiting our parents to decide for the yes or no", he said with irony

the names, and even more when we consider that, just few years later, PL would join PRONA (Partido de Reedificação da Ordem Nacional), a nationalist party often accused of being neo-fascist, founding the Partido da Republica. (Rother, 2002)

This tendency toward pragmatic alliances even without common programmatic goals will characterize every PT administration, both at National and subnational level, more and more at every election, reaching the peak during Dilma's era. If, during the first twenty years of his political life, compromise wasn't an option, from 2002 negotiation became the distinctive marks of the "new" PT. The strategical shift didn't concern only Lula's strategy or the process to select the vice-president, but also their program; the most important document of 2002 campaign was without any doubt the "Carta ao Povo Brasileiro", in which Lula and the party expressed their new attitude:

"A crescente adesão à nossa candidatura assume cada vez mais o caráter de um movimento em defesa do Brasil, de nossos direitos e anseios fundamentais enquanto nação independente. Lideranças populares, intelectuais, artistas e religiosos dos mais variados matizes ideológicos declaram espontaneamente seu apoio a um projeto de mudança do Brasil. Prefeitos e parlamentares de partidos não coligados com o PT anunciam seu apoio. Parcelas significativas do empresariado vêm somar-se ao nosso projeto. Trata-se de uma vasta coalizão, em muitos aspectos suprapartidária, que busca abrir novos horizontes para o país. [...] O novo modelo não poderá ser produto de decisões unilaterais do governo, tal como ocorre hoje, nem será implementado por decreto, de modo voluntarista. Será fruto de uma ampla negociação nacional, que deve conduzir a uma autêntica aliança pelo país, a um novo contrato social, capaz de assegurar o crescimento com estabilidade. Premissa dessa transição será naturalmente o respeito aos contratos e obrigações do país⁴⁶" (Carta ao Povo Brasileiro, 2002)

⁴⁶ The increasing support for our candidacy is becoming a movement in defence of Brazil, our rights and expectation as an independent nation. Popular leaders, intellectual, artist and minister of cult of every ideological position already declared their support to

It is interesting to compare the “Carta ao Povo Brasileiro” with 1989’s Government Plan, in order to highlight how big of a change the party had gone through over the course of 13 years:

“O projeto do PT é claro: QUEREMOS CONSTRUIR UMA SOCIEDADE SOCIALISTA neste País. E nossa definição histórica, cujos traços vão ganhando contornos mais nítidos na medida em que amadurece nossa reflexão partidária. Não queremos apenas mais pão, mais terra, mais liberdade, mais escola e moradia. Queremos tudo isso e mais: a posse e o controle de todas as riquezas, de toda a produção e dos meios que a produzem sob o controle dos trabalhadores; queremos a plena democracia e a participação real em todas as decisões importantes. Para isso vamos acumular forças, derrotar os setores que sustentam o capitalismo e construir a sociedade socialista⁴⁷”. (AS BASES DO PLANO ALTERNATIVO DE GOVERNO, 1989, 1-2)

This comparison explains, better than anything, the idea of “two souls”: in 1989 PT wanted to break the status quo, capitalism, and replace it with a new society; in 2002 the priority was a national negotiation in order to build a new social contract, keeping the economic structure intact. The final goal wasn’t

our project to change Brazil. Mayors and Deputies of parties outside of our coalition declared their support. Entrepreneurs joined our project. A big coalition, bigger than parties, that can open new horizons for the country. [...] The new model cannot be product of unilateral decision of the government, like today, and would not be implemented through decree, in a deliberate way. It will be consequence of national negotiations, to guarantee growth and stability. The premise of this transition will be the respect of contract and obligation that our country has. (own transl.)

⁴⁷ PT’s project is clear: WE WANT TO BUILD A SOCIALIST SOCIETY in this country. Our historic definition, whose characteristics are going to be defined thanks to our reflection as a party. We don’t want only more bread, more lands, more freedom, more schools, more houses. We want more: ownership and control of all the richness, production and means of production under control of the workers, full democracy and real participation in all the important decision. To do this, we need to gather forces, defeat the sectors supporting capitalism and build a socialist society. (own transl.)

anymore building the hegemony of the working class, but reach the government in order to guarantee growth and stability and, thanks to the better overall economic situation, give better life conditions to the working class.

As we have already seen, the core idea behind their new strategy was the expansion of the national market, through the creation of new jobs and the increase of salaries, that would lead to more investments in social and economic infrastructure (Brasil para todos, 2002, 34). After many transformations, their plan was finally coherent with traditional “desenvolvimentismo” already applied over the course of the history of the nation, starting from Getúlio Vargas and Juscelino Kubitschek.

In a country with increasing unemployment and still characterized by high inequality, the inclusion of the outsider became the key elements of their campaign. Even more, in 2002 PT’s discourse was by far more specific, talking not only about removing material conditions that didn’t allow people to be “citizens” but also held the State responsible to create “affirmative actions” in order to promote equality:

*“O combate às desigualdades econômicas e sociais é condição necessária para que seja garantido a todos os brasileiros e brasileiras o status de cidadãos, homens e mulheres realmente iguais perante a lei. Mas também é preciso um esforço político e cultural para que se afirme no País o princípio da igualdade. Não basta que sejam combatidas as causas econômicas das múltiplas formas de desigualdade. São necessárias ações positivas para que se ponha fim às formas de discriminação existentes.”*⁴⁸ (Brasil para todos, 2002, 3-4)

“A ênfase no desenvolvimento social articulado com a retomada do desenvolvimento econômico fundamenta-se nos princípios éticos e nas

⁴⁸ The fight against social and economic inequalities is a pre-condition to guarantee citizenship to all Brazilian, men and women equal in front of the law. Political and cultural fights are necessary to affirm equality as a principle. Fighting against the economic reason for inequality is not enough. Affirmative actions are needed to end any kind of discrimination (own transl.)

prescrições constitucionais relacionados com o direito à vida, à dignidade da pessoa humana e à justiça social e com compromissos cívicos e patrióticos. Impossível conceber um futuro para nosso povo sem integrar os 53 milhões de brasileiros excluídos da cidadania.⁴⁹” (Um Brasil para todos, 2002, 41)

While the left reached the election more divided than ever, the same was true for the majority; after long negotiation, PSDB and PMDB reach an agreement around the name of José Serra, leader of "Grande Aliança", an experience in the footsteps of Cardoso administration. Over the course of the whole year, however, his chances seemed to be pretty low, while according to the polls Ciro Gomes was Lula's biggest rival.

Leading up to the election, however, the real question seemed to be not if Lula would be President, but if he would have been elected already in the first round. As expected, he received almost 40 million votes, 46.44% of the preferences; even if it was a shattering victory for PT's leader, the result wasn't enough to avoid the ballot, with José Serra as an opponent, thanks to the 29.19% of the votes obtained. (TSE)

Voters' behaviour was pretty similar to previous election; Lula was stronger within more educated ones, who lived in bigger cities; no regional differences were registered, with more or less the same percentages in all the macro-region. The main difference was, of course, the fact that Lula was leading for the first time in all the regions and in every social classes. (Datafolha, 2002)

The second round was almost a formality for PT's leader for two reasons: on one side, the third and the fourth most-voted, respectively Anthony Garotinho and Ciro Gomes, were left-wing politicians, more prone to support Lula than his opponent; on the other side, according to a common trend, typical not only of Brazilian politics, bandwagon started to be strong already in the weeks leading

⁴⁹ The emphasis on social development, linked with the return to economic development, is based on ethical principle and on Constitutional prescription related with the right to live, to dignity for human being, social justice, civic and patriotic compromises. Is impossible to think about the future for our people without the integration of 53 million of Brazilian excluded from citizenship (own transl.)

up to the ballot, with many politicians ready to support Lula, hoping to receive something in exchange after his victory.

In the second round, Lula ended with almost 53 million votes, 61,27% (TSE). After three defeat in a row, he was ready to move to the Palácio do Planalto, starting the most important political cycle after the re-democratization.

The Partido dos Trabalhadores was, without any doubt, the winner of the election, receiving 17.7% of the votes. However, while it was the party with the biggest representation in the Congress, Lula didn't have a solid majority, due to the results of PFL (16.3%), PMDB (14.2%) and PSDB (14%). If we sum to the count also the votes of PPB (9.5%) counting only the four biggest parties, the "conservative front" reach the 54% of the representation in the Chamber of Deputy. The day after the election was already clear that if in order to win the election Lula and his party had to change strategy and some of their goals, in order to govern the compromises needed to be even greater.

1.6 Conclusion

As we have shown, in the first twenty-three years of his history, "Partido dos Trabalhadores" had to change strategy many times to become a real contender and reach the Presidency.

The "outsider" of the '80s, the first real mass party born from social movement, went through a long process of institutionalization, controlled by a majoritarian group able to maintain unity in a highly fragmented party even before reaching the Federal Government.

Born to represent workers and create a new society, when PT reach the Presidency, in 2002, they had become a social-democratic party, similar to those belonging to the so-called "third way". For an organization created after the strikes of late '70s, reaching the Presidency with José Alencar, former vice-president of the Confederação Nacional da Indústria, as the most important ally was the biggest change possible. As we have showed, the process of adaptation was slow, provoked mainly by a series of electoral defeat and didn't happen without fight and internal struggle to choose the strategy that the party need to follow, to survive and obtain the popular support necessary to win.

If during the first phase PT operate as a collegial entity, in which internal democracy was the golden standard, over the course of the direction gained control at first, and later on started to be dependent from Lula's decision. As we will show in the following chapters,

this trajectory will be even more accentuated once he was elected President and the so-called "Lulismo" was born.

Over the course of the years, one of the most important goal for PT was to create his own hegemony not only within the working class or the left, but in the whole society. As we have shown, however, in the first twenty years of his life, the institutional arena shaped the party far more than the opposite, and even if Lula became President, he wasn't able to do it on his own term, but rather after a process of adaptation that pushed him to act more and more as a "traditional politician".

Last, but not least, we have shown how for many years, the struggle of the party was linked to his own territorial development; PT would be forced to reorganize itself in order to survive only after 2005 crisis, but unequal party development in different region will remain one of the characteristics of their era as a ruling party.

2. LULA'S LEADERSHIP BETWEEN THE 70'S AND 2002

2.1 Introduction

“Não adiante tentar evitar que eu ande por esse país, porque tem milhões de Lula, de Boulos, de Manuela, de Dilma Rousseff para andar por mim. Não adianta tentar acabar com as minhas ideias, elas já estão pairando no ar, e não tem como prende-las. Não adianta tentar parar meus sonhos, porque, quando eu parar de sonhar eu sonharei pela cabeça de vocês e pelos sonhos de vocês. Não adianta achar que tudo vai parar o dia que o Lula tiver um enfarte. É bobagem, porque o meu coração baterá pelo coração de vocês, e são milhões de corações. Os poderosos podem matar uma, duas ou três rosas, mas jamais conseguirão deter a chegada da primavera⁵⁰” (Lula, Discurso Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos do ABC, 2018)

Even in one of the darkest hours of his life, waiting to be arrested, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva was delivering a passionate speech to his supporter, and to the whole nation, as his last act as a free man. Those words, among many others during his own political trajectory, are a perfect example of what the former President represents not only for PT's supporter, but for many people in Brazil; over the course of the years, the historic leader of Partido dos Trabalhadores was able to create a unique relation with the citizens, not only during his terms as President but in his whole trajectory as a Union and political leader. Lula's approach and communication have gone through great changes over the course of the years, starting from his first battle as a union's leader, reaching the status of popular hero at the end of his second term as a President, when he was

⁵⁰ There's no point trying to stop me traveling this country, because there are millions of Lula, Boulos, Manuela, Dilma Rousseff who can travel for me. There's no point trying stop my ideas, because they are already in the air, unstoppable. There's no point trying to stop my dreams, because, when I won't dream anymore, I will be dreaming through your heads and your dreams. There's no point trying to think that everything will stop with Lula's hearth attack; is stupid, because my hearts will beat through your hearts, and there are millions of hearts. The powerful can kill one, two or three roses, but they will never be able to stop springs arrival. (own trasnl.)

the “most popular politician on earth” and becoming a “messianic leader” during the latter stage (until now) of his political career, while incarcerated.

We will analyse some of his most important political speeches, both directed to the general public or to smaller audiences inside of PT. We will also look at the official communication during the electoral campaign, such as official advertising or public debate with other candidates.

In this chapter, we will show how, over the course of the years, the perception of Lula as a leader has changed a lot, even before reaching the presidency. In the following ones, we will instead show how the President became a “messianic leader” for a particular fraction of the electorate, the poorest one, mainly coming from poorest States in the north and northeast, once he was elected. Defining how much this change was planned or happened “naturally” over the course of the decades isn’t easy; we are talking of a leader that, during the course of his career often refused to be viewed as another “pai dos pobres” like Getúlio Vargas, but whose main goal was, at least for the first 20 years of his public career, to build a special relation between himself and the working class.

However, Brazilian politics and his persona history have pushed Lula toward a different leadership style, personalistic and, in a way, based on a peculiar cult of personality; as Emilio Gentile wrote in one of his book talking about the “fideistic interpretation” of political religions “*the leaders are not always the only responsible of the artificial production of myth and political ritual, to trick and govern the masses; myth and rituals can be also the spontaneous expression of the masses, produced by their need of faith and beliefs, that they meet with the dedication toward the leader or an ideology that promise well-being and salvation*”.⁵¹(Gentile, 2007)

But in order to understand how Lula became a messianic leader, a demigod, a holy figure thanks to the myth of his self-affirmation of “everyday people”,

through work and socio-political battle, we need to look first at the transformation occurred before the presidential victory, starting from his own biography.

2.2 Lula, “operário em construção”

Luís Inácio Lula da Silva was born in Caetés, Pernambuco, in 1945. Raised by a single mother in the semi-arid of the northeast, is not hard to imagine how hard life was for a big family at that time. As Richard Bourne wrote in one of the many biographies about the President, “when Lula was born the region wasn’t hospital. There was no electricity in rural area. People heated their houses and cook with coal and woods. They take water from the wells and wash their clothes in the river. Entire families were squeezed in two-room houses. Lula’s one was built by his father and uncle, with wooden roof, concrete floor in the main room and dirt in the others” (Pinto, 2011)

His family left the region, following the long-gone father, when Lula was only 7 years old. Like many others, they travel to the seaside region of São Paulo, where he started to work as a peddler and shoe-shine boy to help the family. At 14 he was hired as metallurgic and later became a mechanic turner, a job that few years later will cost him a finger in a job-related accident. The time spent working there is important because back then he developed his interest in politics and joined to union.

The “responsible” for his political participation was one of his older brothers, militant of the Partido Comunista Brasileiro. In 1969 Lula was invited to be part of the union; before his 30th birthday, he was already President of the “Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos de São Bernardo do Campo e Diadema”. Quoting a famous poem from Vinicius de Moraes, he was “an operário em construção”

*Mas tudo desconhecia
De sua grande missão: [...]
Que a casa que ele fazia
Sendo a sua liberdade
Era a sua escravidão [...]
De fato, como podia
Um operário em construção
Compreender por que um tijolo
Valia mais do que um pão? [...]
Mas ele desconhecia
Esse fato extraordinário:
Que o operário faz a coisa
E a coisa faz o operário.
De forma que, certo dia
À mesa, ao cortar o pão
O operário foi tomado
De uma súbita emoção
Ao constatar assombrado
Que tudo naquela mesa
- Garrafa, prato, facão –
Era ele quem os fazia [...]
Foi dentro da compreensão
Desse instante solitário
Que, tal sua construção
Cresceu também o operário. [...]
E foi assim que o operário
Do edifício em construção
Que sempre dizia sim
Começou a dizer não.*

*But he didn't know anything
Of his own great mission [...]
That the house the he was building
Being his freedom
Was his own slavery [...]
Indeed, how can he
A working constructor
Comprehend that a brick
Worth more than bread? [...]
But he didn't know
This extraordinary fact:
That the workers make things,
And things make the worker.
Such as, one day,
At the table, while cutting bread
The worker felt
A sudden emotion
Realizing, haunted
That everything on that table
-Bottle, plate, knife,
He was the one who made it [...]
And while he understood it
In that lonely moment
That, just like his construction
The workers grow too [...]
And just like that the worker,
Of the building under construction
Who always said yes
Started to say no*

We didn't choose the poem written by Vinicius de Moraes by chance; the same Lula, talking about his own life, use it as a reference in many speeches. It is important to highlight, however, that his trajectory wasn't neither exceptional nor unique at that time, not only in Brazil but all over the world.

If internationally the end of the '60s and the beginning of the '70s were characterized by an increased role of workers, through union's representation, in politics, the situation in Brazil was more complicated due to the regime ruling the country. The military were in charge since 1964 and, especially after General Artur da Costa e Silva promulgated the infamous AI-5, political repression was largely used by the government. Just to make a couple of the example out of tens of thousands of cases of torture or homicide, we can remember two particularly famous: the deaths of a journalist, Wladimir Herzog, in 1975 and the one of Manuel Fiel Filho, a metallurgic, both arrested by the DOI/CODI.⁵²

In the same years, however, Geisel's government started a slow process of democratic opening, easing censorship and political surveillance.

"In the eyes of President Geisel and his principal political advisor, General Golbery do Couto e Silva, transferring power to reliable civilians and institutionalizing a limited democracy, free of leftist radicalism and populist demagoguery, seemed preferable" (Hunter, 1997, 36). Geisel announced his strategy to the media the 29th of August of 1974, when he described the project as a "*processo de lenta, gradativa e segura distensão, desejado pelo Executivo*".⁵³ (*Acervo O Globo, 2016*)

In 1974 election, the first one with "reduced" control over media, ARENA suffered their first defeat: the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro won 16 of the

⁵² Literally "Destacamento de Operações de Informação- Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna", was the Brazilian Intelligence and repressive apparatus during the military regime, officially created to fight against the communist threat. It became sadly famous for his large use of torture and the number of victims.

⁵³ "a slow, gradual and safe process of detente, desired by the executive" (own transl.)

22 seats disputed in the Senate and elected 165 deputies, almost two time more than 1970, not allowing ARENA to have a 2/3 majority in the Chamber, necessary to approve Constitutional emends. (Carvalho, A. 2012)

The military react to the defeat with the “Lei Falcao”, imposing new rules for political communication, closing the Congress in 1977 and creating an indirect election for 1/3 of Senate seats, in order to guarantee majority for ARENA (Agencia Senado, 2014). The most important change during Geisel’s presidency however was the abolition, in 1978, of AI-5.

It was in this context that the so-called “new unionism” was born; the term is used to talk about the movements that started with the strikes of ‘78, first in São Bernardo do Campo and then in all the country.

Lorenzo Zanetti gave us a good definition of the phenomenon:

“Trata-se de um movimento de classe, centrado na autonomia e liberdade sindical, democrático, de massa, organizado nas bases e por isso mesmo, anticorporativo, e não burocrático. Por estas características, é um movimento que rompe, radicalmente, com a estrutura sindical, atrelada ao Estado, imposta pela ditadura de Vargas aos trabalhadores brasileiros que, mesmo questionada no passado pelas lideranças do movimento operário, nunca foi superada, nem seriamente combatida”⁵⁴. (Zanetti, 1994, 17)

During the strikes of ‘78 the workers were asking for higher wages, since their purchase power had fell down after the end of the “economic miracle”. Those rallies were only the beginning of a new season of mobilization, whose peak was 1980, when more than 300.000 metallurgic worker take part of the protest in São Bernardo, guided by the President of the Union, Lula. The strike lasted 41 days and was the biggest since 1968; it was followed by similar

⁵⁴ A classist movement, focused on autonomy and freedom of the Unions, democratic, of the masses, organized at base level and for this reason anti-corporative, non-bureaucratic. For those characteristics, is a movement that radically breaks union’s structures, linked with the State, imposed during Vargas’s dictatorship and that, while criticized, was never overcomes nor challenged. (own transl.)

demonstration in other cities and, even if not directed linked with Metallurgic Unions, many citizens took part in it, showing support and protesting against the government.

After the first seventeen days, Lula was arrested and kept in jail for 31 days, accused of being the leader of an “illegal movement”. He recalls this episode as a big mistake by the military regimes, rather than a hard moment in his life, because his arrest didn’t stop the protest but, on the contrary, strength the movement, now fighting even for the liberation of their leader. It was in this occasion that Lula became one of the most known public figures of the country. The relation between himself and the workers was already pretty unique:

“Naquele momento eu tinha muita força na categoria, tinha virado uma espécie de símbolo. Então era muito fácil convencer as pessoas por causa da relação que eu tinha com eles, era uma relação muito fiel, era uma relação de “duas mãos” em que eu confiava em eles e eles confiavam em mim”⁵⁵ (Lula, Comissão Nacional de Verdade, 2014)

Many of the characteristics of his leadership were already present, especially for what concerned faith and the kind of relation he was able to build with “his” people. A “fideistic” relation between the leader and his follower was already present, even if at that time he was “only” a union leader, without any previous political experience through institutional or illegal parties.

Thanks to the enormous success of the strikes, in 1979 many union’s leaders felt that it was time to create a party to represent their instances; during an interview included in “Linha de Montagem”, a documentary about the strikes in the ABC, Lula was the one to explain how and why PT was born:

“Agora o saldo mais importante que nós tivemos, na minha opinião, foi a descoberta da necessidade da organização política da classe trabalhadora [...]

⁵⁵At that time, I was really strong within the category, I was like a symbol. It was really easy for me to convince people, due to the relation that I had with them, a faithful relation, biunivocal, in which I trusted them and they trusted me. (own transl.)

Eu tenho afirmado do que sindicalismo a gente faz pra tentar melhorar o relacionamento capital-trabalho, e politica a gente faz pra transformar a sociedade⁵⁶”. (Tapajos, Director, 1983)

Lula became the first temporary President of the National Directing Committee of the newly-founded party and, one year later, was confirmed in that role during the I^o Encontro Nacional in 1981. His speech was, of course, the most important of the convention; however, he acted as a spoke-person rather than a leader, with the “collective” nature and equality as the most important messages of his discourse:

“Tínhamos consciência de que, independentemente do setor social a que pertencessem, os que acreditavam na classe trabalhadora, mais cedo ou mais tarde, estariam ao nosso lado. [...] Aqui, é preciso que se diga com toda a clareza: o Partido dos Trabalhadores não pede atestado de ideologia ou carteira profissional a quem quer que seja, mas sim disposição de luta, fidelidade ao nosso programa e ao nosso estatuto. Dentro do Partido, somos todos iguais, operários, camponeses, profissionais liberais, parlamentares, professores, estudantes etc.⁵⁷” (Lula in Tapajós, 1983)

1982 general elections were the first chance to measure PT and Lula’s political strength; PT’s campaign reproduced the approach of the unions, praising conflict between working and “ruling” classes and using class warfare as the core element of their narrative:

⁵⁶ The most important result was, in my opinion, discovering that political organization of the working class was needed [...] I’ve said that unionism serve to improve relations between capital and labour, politics is what people do to change society. (own transl.)

⁵⁷ We knew that, independently from the social sector to which they belong, those who believed in the working class, sooner or later, would be at our side. [...] We have to say it clearly: Partido dos Trabalhadores didn’t ask for ideologic certificate or professional card, but willingness to fight, fidelity to our program and our statute. In the Party, we are all equal, workers, farmers, freelancers, MP’s, professors, students ecc. (own transl)

“O banqueiro, o latifundiário, o industrial, o grande comerciante, independente do partido a que pertencem, exploram o trabalhador. Para nós, o que importa é definir quem está contra os trabalhadores e quem está ao lado dos trabalhadores⁵⁸” (Pela unidade dos Trabalhadores, 1982).

If PT’s general goal was just elect some representative to gain strength, the biggest expectation were for sure linked with Lula’s candidacy as Governor of São Paulo, where many believed that he had a shot to win or, at least, to dispute the victory. Two of his slogans, “Trabalhador vota em Trabalhador” (Worker vote for worker) and “vote no três, porque o resto é burguês” (vote nº3, because the rest is bourgeois) resumed the attitude of his campaign, based on the logic of differentiation from all the others candidate. His public image followed the same strategy: in the first debate on the television, while all the others were dressing with formal outfit, he was wearing a blue long-sleeve shirt.

According to Bernardo Kucinski, prejudice about Lula’s figure characterized the election:

“Esses preconceitos perseguem Lula desde sua primeira campanha para governador de São Paulo, em 1982, quando ele se apresentou ao eleitor como “Um trabalhador igual a vocês”. Numa cultura de dominação em que o título de ‘doutor’ é o atestado de autoridade e de status, a falta de escolaridade de Lula era internalizada pelos trabalhadores como falta de autoridade e de valor⁵⁹”. (Kucinski, 1998, in Bezerra Guedes, 2011, 127-128)

If as a union leader, trust was his main source of power, as a politician, who need to speak to a larger audience, the same kind of discourse wasn’t that

⁵⁸ Bankers, landlords, industrials, great traders, independently from the party to which they belong, exploit the workers. For us, is important to define who is against the workers and who is ad their side. (own transl.)

⁵⁹ Those prejudice follows Lula ever since his first campaign as Governor of São Paulo, in 1982, when he introduced himself as “a worker just like you”. In a culture of domination, in which the title of “doctor” certifies authority and status, Lula’s lack of education was perceived by the workers as a lack of authority (own transl.)

effective, as the results of the election showed. He ended in the fourth place, with 10.77% of the votes. The result actually wasn't that bad, and put Lula "on the map" as a political leader, even if at that time it looked like a great setback for PT's projects. If running for Governor increased his reputation at the State level, the next step was becoming a well-known national leader: "Diretas Já" was the perfect chance to do it.

Lula's discourse and previous battles gave him strength and credibility, since his public life had been characterized by democratic revendication, both inside of the plants and against the regime. While, as we have said, the Emenda Dante de Oliveira was defeated in Congress, Lula was one of the politicians that emerged "victorious" from 1984, becoming one of the most popular leaders of the nation; when two years later he decided to run for Congress, in fact, he was elected Federal Deputies with 650.000 votes, the most in the whole country. While PT's battle inside of the Assembly wasn't successful, Lula started to be known as one of the stronger voices of the opposition, being able to reaffirm his status both inside and outside of the party, and guaranteeing for himself the Presidential Candidacy, a decision ratified at the end of 1987, during PT's V Encontro Nacional.

Looking at the speech made in that occasion, we can clearly see how class warfare was still the core element of his discourse:

*"Agora uma coisa eu peço para o meu Partido: a gente não pode fazer uma campanha com dúvidas sobre qual segmento social a gente representa. Não podemos querer agradar a classe média alta, o grande empresário, o médio empresário. Temos de fazer uma campanha classista, falando dos interesses da classe trabalhadora. E precisamos marcar posição. Precisamos acirrar as contradições. Se não for assim, a peãozada não vai entender a nossa campanha. Vamos à luta. [...] Estou convencido de que a gente pode chegar lá. Até a vitória, se Deus quiser."*⁶⁰ (Lula, 1987)

⁶⁰ I'm asking one thing to my Party: we cannot do a campaign doubting which social segment we represent. We cannot please the upper middle-class, great and medium

The same concepts were reaffirmed two years later, just three months before the election:

“Mário Covas, Collor, Afif, Ulysses querem representar a classe média alta, e quem é que quer representar os miseráveis que amanhã vão cobrar? Somos nós da FBP. E somente nós poderemos falar em nome deles. Nós não podemos vacilar sobre qual é o povo que está do nosso lado. Quem está junto com a gente é um setor da classe média comprometido com a luta da esquerda, um setor da intelectualidade comprometido com a luta da classe trabalhadora. Mas, sobretudo, quem está comprometido com a gente é a classe trabalhadora.”⁶¹ (Lula, 6º Encontro Nacional do PT, 1989)

The ideologic character of his run was even clearer if we take in consideration some symbolic aspects; for example, in his speech during the VI Encontro Nacional, Lula dedicated the official start of his campaign to “Carlos Marighella⁶² e Lamarca⁶³”, both revolutionary leaders, respectively a Marxist

entrepreneurs. We have to make a classist campaign, talking about the interest of the working class. And we need to take a stand. We need to stir up contradiction. If that isn't the case, the people will not understand our campaign. Let's fight [...] Until the victory, God willing. (own transl.)

⁶¹ Mario Covas, Collor, Afif, Ulysses wants to represent the middle-upper class, and who want to represents the miserable that tomorrow will ask questions? We, FBP. And we are the ones that can speak on their behalf. We cannot have hesitation about who is on our side. With us there is a sector of the middle class compromised with the fights of the left, an intellectual sector compromised with the fights of the working class. But, mainly, the one compromised with us are the members of the working class. (own transl.)

⁶² Carlos Marighella was a politician, member of the Communist Party, tortured during the “Vargas Era”. After 1964 Golpe, he joined the armed revolution, founding the Ação Libertadora Nacional. He was killed in 1969 during a DOPS operation

⁶³ Carlos Lamarca was a Captain of the Brazilian Army, who defect the army in 1969, joining the Vanguarda Popular Revolucionária (VPR). He became an icon of the socialist revolutionary left, before getting killed in 1971.

and a socialist icon. While the ideological aspects of his campaign were not under discussion, after almost ten years of electoral participation, Lula had already identified some of the problems of his previous runs: being “just like the voters” was actually detrimental in his candidacy, in a society in which poor, uneducated people, were not used to have an opportunity of social mobility:

“Não será fácil convencer que uma pessoa que tem apenas o 4º ano primário esteja pleiteando um cargo hoje ocupado por um cidadão que tem um título na Academia Brasileira de Letras. Em 1982, quando fui candidato a governador por São Paulo [...] eu dizia: Lula, candidato a governador nº 3, ex-ajudante de tintureiro, ex-torneiro mecânico, ex-sindicalista, ex-presos, ex-não-sei-o-que-lá, um brasileiro igualzinho a você.” Eu imaginava que a classe trabalhadora iria compreender: puxa-vida, esse cara é isso e é candidato, nós também podemos ser. Mas parece que os trabalhadores entenderam exatamente o contrário: ninguém queria ser um brasileiro igual a mim. Eles queriam ser um brasileiro com diploma universitário, queriam ser um brasileiro com melhores condições de vida, com melhor formação intelectual, com melhor qualidade de vida.”⁶⁴ (Lula, 5º Encontro Nacional do PT, 1987)

To really understand this discourse, we need to introduce first few notion about the social formation of Brazilian society; as José Murilo de Carvalho wrote in his “Cidadania no Brasil”, when Brazil became independent there was no

⁶⁴ Is not going to be easy convincing people that someone with only four years of school attendance could run for a position currently occupied by a citizen awarded by the Academia Brasileira de Letras. In 1982, when I was candidate as Governor of São Paulo [...] I said: Lula, candidate for governor nº3, ex dry-cleaner assistant, ex mechanic turner, ex unionist, ex prisoner, ex I don’t know what, a Brazilian just like you. I believed that the working class will understand: oh my God, this guy is all that and he is the candidate, we can be as well. But it seems that the workers understood the opposite: no one wanted to be a Brazilian just like me. They wanted to be a Brazilian with a degree, they wanted to be a Brazilian with better life condition, with better intellectual formation, with better quality of life. (own transl.)

Brazilian citizens, neither a nation, because slavery and the distribution of lands (the most valuable property, by far) didn't create the ideal habitat for citizenship. The fact that Brazil was the last Christian country belonging to the western world to abolish slavery, tell us a lot about the hierarchic and classist nature of the society. While Diretas Já gave to the people the impression to be part of an historic process of democratization, and the "Nova Republica" born with Tancredo Neves and the new Federal Constitution represented a process of inclusion into politics of millions of citizens, we don't have to forget that Brazil was still a nation divided between "Casa Grande e Senzala", quoting the title of Gilberto Freyre's most famous book.

Freyre's work is a cornerstone of Brazilian literature, a classic about the process of formation of Brazilian identity and for his description of class/racial relationships, even if they are often described with more sympathy that they deserved, and that according to many critiques the idea of "racial democracy" sits behind the book. While well aware of the debate, we have decided to make reference to it mainly for his descriptive power, and because the division between "Casa Grande e Senzala" is a good way to describe racial and class relationship in Brazil, with those belonging to less privileged sectors used to stay in "slave quarters" and not to have access to the "casa grande", intended as the place in which power is exercised.

If the effects of the economic formation of the nation were still affecting national development, the same was and is true from the cultural point of view; only if we understand Brazil true nature as society divided around races or social condition, we can really understand why "being like the people" didn't help Lula to win, because those "belonging" to the "senzala" were not supposed to have access to the "casa grande." Knowing that, we can also understand why, as we will see later on, he needed to introduce other elements to his own biography in order to make it more "appealing" for the voters.

In 1989 however the logic of differentiation was still perceived by PT as one of Lula's strength, and his uniqueness as a candidate, in a context in which anyone else was coming from traditional families of privileged social sectors, was often presented as one of the reasons of his strength; the same was true for

the “collegial” nature of his candidacy, and the shared belief that everyone’s efforts were equally important, both in the party and in the campaign.

“Vocês têm clareza que esta não é uma campanha do Lula, não é a candidatura do Lula: a campanha é do PT. Se essa campanha não conseguir colocar na rua nossos militantes, se não conseguir fazer com que cada militante seja um candidato, a gente poderá fracassar antes do tempo”⁶⁵. (Lula, 5º Encontro Nacional do PT, 1987)

The one reported above are not just “empty” words spoken by the leader in order to mobilize the militancy; on the contrary, the idea of “collective effort” was so strong inside of PT at that time that Lula even spend almost a full “slot” of their “Horário Eleitoral Gratuito” on the television to thanks militancy, that represented the “better part” of the new society that needed to be created, the one with political consciousness, characterize by their moral values and dignity. (*Horário de propaganda eleitoral gratuita*, Lula 1989).

Lula’s discourse during the first round revolved around class warfare, logic of differentiation and praising his own supporters; in the ballot, however, he tried to highlights another aspect of his personality, linked to his previous experience as a union leader: the great negotiator, a “character” that he will play more and more over the course of the year.

This new attitude was pretty clear especially when we look at the Presidential Debate televised before the ballot, while Lula was discussing with Collor:

“O comportamento que eu espero dos 145 milhões de Brasileiros, é o comportamento normal de alguém que na hora que há os acertos parabenizes os acertos, na hora que há critica faça a crítica, na hora que tiver que ir pra ruas fazer manifestação vai fazer manifestação, grite, berre, chore, como é normal em uma democracia. Na minha parte não haverá repressão, na minha parte haverá conversações, na minha parte haverá maturidade pra tentar criar

⁶⁵ You know that this isn’t Lula’s campaign, isn’t Lula’s candidacy: this is PT’s campaign. If in this campaign we are not able to see our militant in the streets, if we are not able to transform any militant in a candidate, we will lose before time. (own transl.)

*um conselho político pra toda vez que o movimento sindical precisar, e precisar chamar, terá a gente dá maior competência pra negociar [...] eu penso que negociar, é preciso ter competência pra negociar, é preciso saber negociar, é preciso ter compromisso pra negociar [...]*⁶⁶ (Horário de propaganda eleitoral gratuita, Lula, 1989b)

While Lula “the union leader” was an important part of his character, Lula “the poor kid leaving the northeast” wasn’t a narrative that either him or the party feel was important in order to win the election. We are not suggesting that his biography wasn’t known at that time, but for sure, if compared to what will happen later on, there is no doubt that the “criança nordestina” was still in the background. Olívio Dutra, for sure one of Lula’s closer friend at that time inside of the party, confirmed us this version in an interview, indirectly suggesting also that, maybe, Luiza Erundina’s difficulties could have played a role in the kind of campaign Lula decided to run:

“Nos elegemos a primeira prefeita de São Paulo em Luiza Erundina, nordestina. E era discriminada por ser nordestina, enfrentou uma barra pesadíssima. E eu acho que o partido não deu uma sustentação maior por aquela mulher valorosa, nordestina, da mesma região do Lula. Ela já estava em São Paulo há mais tempo, o Lula também.... e ele vai se tornar o líder sindical, o

⁶⁶ The attitude that I hope to see from 145 million of Brazilian, is the normal attitude of those who say “well done” when we do something good, who critique when is time to do it, who take the streets if needed, who shout, cry, how it should be normal in a democracy. If is up to me, there will be no repression, if is up to me there will be only conversation, if is up to me there will be ripeness to create a political council to give to unions, if needed, someone to talk with... and they will find experts in order to negotiate [...] I believe that to negotiate, competence is needed, you need to be able to negotiate, you need to have a compromise in order to negotiate. (own transl.)

líder político, referência de um lutador lá em São Paulo.... Então é evidente que tinha gente aqui no Sul que achava que o Lula era paulista⁶⁷” (Dutra, 2019)

This is clear even watching the debate against Collor, in which the former Governor of Alagoas was the one “using” his origin as a strength, trying to reinforce his image as an outsider against the political elites; is in one of those occasions, during the last debate, that Lula makes his only significant reference to his origin, but just to answer to Collor:

“Este Brasil nos vamos criar, este Brasil da decência, esse Brasil que vai acabar com a fome, com o desemprego. Este Brasil de alguém que saiu do Nordeste, mas não saiu pra ir a morar em um palacete no Rio de Janeiro para estudar na escola mais fina do Rio De Janeiro. Este Brasileiro saiu do Nordeste pra não morrer de fome, e vai voltar pra o Nordeste pra, junto com os nordestinos, acabar com a fome do nordeste e acabar com a fome deste Brasil.⁶⁸” (Debate na Band, Lula, 14/12/1989).

One last factor needs to be taken address: the difficult relation between Lula and the media, and in particular Rede Globo, the most important network of the nation, that between 1988 and 1993 had an average audience of 78% (Hartog, 1994). Already involved in the so-called "Caso Proconsult" (Folha de S. Paulo, 2003), accused of trying to manipulate 1982 Gubernatorial election in Rio de

⁶⁷ We elected the first women Mayor of São Paulo with Luiza Erundina, from the northeast. And she was discriminated for her origin, she had to face tough opposition. I believe that the party didn't give enough support to that valiant women, nordestina, coming from Lula's same region. She was already living in São Paulo from many years, such as Lula... who became the Union leader, the political leader, a reference as a fighter, in São Paulo... So, it's clear that many people here in the south believed that Lula was from São Paulo. (own transl.)

⁶⁸ We are going to create this Brazil, a Brazil of decency, a Brazil that is going to end hunger, unemployment. A Brazil of someone who left the northeast, not to live in a palace in Rio de Janeiro and to study in the best schools of Rio de Janeiro. This Brazilian left the northeast to escape hunger, and is going to return to the northeast to end hunger in the northeast and in Brazil as a whole. (own transl.)

Janeiro against Leonel Brizola, the channel did the same during 1989's Presidential election, once Marinho decided to support Collor. After the last debate the channel presented an edited version, in which the former Governor of Alagoas appeared as the undisputed winner of the debate, as the director of the network at that time, José Bonifácio de Oliveira Sobrinho, better known as Boni, admitted in his biography many years later.

While it is important to mention this factor, it is not our goal here to say how much that could have contributed to Lula's defeat; however, to better understand some of the changes that would happen later on over the course of the following campaign, it was important to highlight the role of communication experts into Collor's run, while PT's was still more "naïve", with a campaign managed by a militant of the party. It is impossible to demonstrate that the lack of a well-known advertising expert was a decisive factor in Lula's defeat; there is no doubt, however, that PT's campaign went through some shortcomings also for the inability of reaching their audience. Once again, using Lula's word:

"O que eu queria era fazer com que o povo pobre entendesse que não é possível melhorar de vida se não tirar um pouquinho de quem tem muito, que é preciso haver uma distribuição de renda mais justa. De qualquer forma, a gente não conseguiu atingir esta parcela. Desde o início da campanha, eu ponderei ao partido – e o pessoal achou que não era importante – que, nos dez primeiros dias do horário gratuito, era importante trabalhar a minha imagem, colocar gente de peso na sociedade falando, dando uma dimensão da luta que nós travamos nesse país. Temos de lembrar uma coisa: as primeiras greves foram feitas em 1978, o cara que está com 22 anos hoje tinha dez na época. Nós tínhamos de recontar a história, para lutar contra o preconceito, que não era da classe alta, mas do pessoal de nível de renda mais baixo⁶⁹" (Lula in Singer, A. 1990)

⁶⁹ I really want to make people understand that it is impossible to improve someone's life without taking something from those who have a lot, that we need a fair distribution of wealth. Anyway, we were not able to reach this sector (the poorest). Since the beginning

While Lula's interpretation was linked mainly with the age of the voters, we believe that, instead, the campaign wasn't effective because it wasn't able to create a coherent narrative and target voters, while Collor was running a stronger, better campaign in terms of media exposure and penetration of his message into his desired audience.

The paradox is clear: while Collor was part of the establishment, being the son of a former Governor and Senator, he was able to present himself as an outsider, a bright young newcomer that would change politics. His victory had a lot to do with his communicative strategy and his personal image, rather than with his electoral program. On the other side Lula, who truly was the outsider among the candidates, wasn't able to fight against the narrative imposed by his opponent, who first drew him as a dangerous, inexperienced revolutionary and then even as an "old" politician, endorsed by the elites in the figure of President Sarney, and willing to make compromise in order to reach the Presidency.

Collor won the election thanks to the support of less educated, poorer voters; while at stake there was the same model of State and the kind of development proposed by the two candidates, he was able to "depoliticize" the campaign or, better, to shift the focus of the antinomy modernization/moralization against traditional politics.

The first democratic campaign for the Presidency set the tone for the one to come: starting from there, Brazilian election would be characterized by a high level of professionalization and by increasing importance of economic resources needed to compete, a factor that would lead parties to seek also for illegal way of financing the campaign, posing a serious threat to the quality of democracy.

of the campaign, I said to the party- and the people believed it wasn't important- that in the first ten slots of the horario gratuito, it was important to work on my image, that we need to put important people speaking, giving a different "dimension" to our fight in this country. We need to remember one thing: the first strikes happened in 1978, the 22 years old guy was just 10 at that time. We need to remember the story, to fight against prejudice, that wasn't coming from higher classes, but from the poorest. (own transl.)

In 1989 Collor was perceived as the better candidate, reassuring the voters, while Lula seemed by far too radical to govern, praising division instead of unity, not able or willing to change the narrative that surround him, the leader that would revolutionize the country.

Lula's image was by far the most "authentic", coherent not only with who he was but also with his political trajectory, while Collor acted as the "right man for the job", even if the narrative built around his candidacy was totally incoherent with his own political history.

While Lula was promising to change Brazilian politics, increasing popular participation in the decision's making process, Collor's model was quite the opposite, in line with the tradition of the "saviour of the nation", offering easier solution to complex question, promising that he alone would be able to change the nation. In the first crucial election of the "Nova Republica", an old trend was as strong as ever: messianic leaders were still really appealing to the voter.

2.3 The '90s: different elections, same results.

While defeated, Lula's credibility and popularity didn't suffer after 1989; on the contrary, thanks to the participation in the ballot, he immediately became the "face" of the opposition, a reference for those who didn't agree with Collor's policy.

Inside of the Partido dos Trabalhadores his leadership wasn't under discussion, and during the V Encontro Nacional of 1990 he was confirmed President of the Party and, at the same time, appointed as the leader of the Governo Paralelo. The goal was to build around him the image of a well-prepared leader, much needed after 1989 campaign, in which Collor and the others adversaries had attacked Lula mainly for his lack of experience.

Even if Lula's leadership wasn't under discussion at that time, we have to remember that, at least until his election as President, he wasn't in control of the party; even if he was by far the most popular politicians among his peer, Partido dos Trabalhadores was still an organization in which tendencies played an important role and no one could say to have a real "control" over the party.

Knowing that, we can understand why, when asked about his own future immediately after the election, Lula reaffirmed the centrality of the party and of internal procedure to choose the future candidate for the Presidency, praising at the same time the good results obtained in 1989. (Lula in Singer, A, 1990)

While, officially, his candidacy was still under debate, in 1993 Lula started the “Caravanas da Cidadania”, probably the biggest series of rally in the history of the nation. If the Governo Paralelo was rather ineffective, without any concrete goal reached, the Caravanas on the contrary were a defining moment not only in the process of consensus building but also in Lula’s personal and professional growth.

The first “Caravana”, organized in 1993, had a great symbolic value; six others followed between 1993 and 1994, reaching 25 out of 26 Brazilian States and travelling for almost 30000 km. Lula visited smaller, peripheric cities and villages, the so-called “grotões”, places far away from State’s Capital or bigger cities. According to “Folha de S. Paulo”, the idea of the Caravanas surged in 1989, but was quickly abandoned due to the lack of time to travel that much during the campaign; few years later, in 1993, Ricardo Kotscho, director of Lula’s press office, suggested again to organize the first Caravana, and that time the idea became reality (Trevisan, 1994).

The first advantage linked to the Caravanas was that PT started them more than one year before the official campaign; in this way, Lula could speak to the voters first and go anywhere he want in the country, especially in all the places where he had obtained less votes in 1989, without being “received” by the local committee of his opponents, since no one else had announced his candidacy yet. While, of course, the Caravanas were organized with electoral purposes, the second advantage linked to the early travel was the chance to create a different perception of the rallies. While visiting different places was, of course, pretty common as in any electoral campaign all over the world, going to smaller municipalities wasn’t common at all for Brazilian politics; even more, the absence of an imminent election helped to create a different perception of Lula, as a politician willing to speak with the voters and know their stories not just to

gain one more vote, but because he “cared”. This was the attitude that emerged also from his speeches and interview at that time:

“Querer governar o Brasil a partir do Palácio do Planalto é cometer o mesmo erro que historicamente a elite cometeu. Ou seja, eu acho que o Presidente da República ele tem que ir em Brasília pra cumprir as suas funções diplomáticas, pra fazer as coisas formais, mas ou Presidente da República. Precisa colocar o pé na estrada, ir e andar este país, conviver com este povo, a final de contas como é que você vai governar um povo que você não conhece? como é que você vai cuidar de problemas que não conhece? Então é preciso conhecer a fundo, porque não basta ver no mapa o Brasil, não basta ler num livro o Brasil, não basta ver na televisão. E’ preciso pegar nas mãos da pessoa, é preciso olhar nos olhos da pessoa, é preciso ver as pessoas pra você ter compromisso moral, compromisso ético, compromisso de irmão para irmão.”⁷⁰
(Lula, *Caravana da Cidadania*, 1993)

Lula was trying to present an “humanitarian” version of himself; in the first part the discourse is similar to the ones of the first decade of his political career, with indirect references to “elites” that doesn’t understand the truth about the “real” Brazil, in the second part he was creating the condition for his newer version, a man compromised with the well-being of his “brothers and sister”.

The same attitude is even clearer in another interview, realized in 1994:

⁷⁰ Govern Brazil from the Palacio do Planalto means making the same historical mistakes that our elite made. I believe that the President of the Republic needs to be in Brasilia to fulfil his obligation, his diplomatic function, but the President of the Republic need to walk the streets, travel the country, live together with the people, because at the end of the day how can you govern people that you don’t know? How can you take care of the problems that you don’t know? So, you must know them well, because isn’t enough to look Brazil in the map, isn’t enough to read about Brazil in a book, isn’t enough to watch it on television. You need to take people by the hand, you need to look into their eyes, you need to see the people in order to have a moral compromise, an ethical compromise, a compromise from brother to brother. (own transl.)

“Hoje eu sou um homem arrependido porque deveria ter feito esta viagem algum tempo atrás. Eu penso que dos dirigentes políticos brasileiros [...] eu sou possivelmente o brasileiro que mais tinha viajado dentro do Brasil, mas eu nunca tinha me embrenhado em uma viagem como essa, ou seja, tentar ir onde possivelmente poucos políticos brasileiro comparecem. Conversar com o povo é como se eu estivesse visitando um companheiro que tivesse internado em um hospital... você sente nas pessoas o sofrimento, a angustia, até um certo desespero, mas as pessoas tem esperança que eles vão melhorar de vida [...]uma grande parte desse todo (o Brasil) está marginalizada, só entra nas estadísticas da seca, na estatística da fome, na estatística da miséria [...] Eu peço a deus que me de saúde, que eu quero neste tempo que eu tenho de vida dedicar a minha vida pra plantar essas sementes em vários lugares deste país pra ver se a gente conquista a cidadania por 150 milhões de brasileiros”⁷¹ (Lula, Caravana da Cidadania, 1994)

We can observe a slow transformation of Lula’s character; the man travelling the country with the “Caravanas” wasn’t just the metallurgic running for the Presidency, but someone who wanted to represent the poorest, marginalized, and not only the working class. Class warfare was still present, in some terms, but Lula was talking less to the working class in a classic socialist sense and more as another “pai dos pobres”, putting in first place those excluded from society. There is also an interesting reference to “conquer citizenship”,

⁷¹ Today I’m a man who regrets not making this trip before. I believe that, among Brazilian politicians [...] I’m the one who travelled the most inside of Brazil, but I never made a trip like this, in which I went where few other politicians appears. When I speak with the people, is like visiting a comrade hospitalized... you feel his pain, his distress, even desperation, but the people still hopes that someday their life is going to be better [...] A big part of this country is marginalized, only enter in the statistic about drought, hunger, misery. [...] I ask to God to give me health, because I want to dedicate the rest of my life to plant seeds in many places in this country, to see if we are able to conquer citizenship for 150 million of Brazilians. (own transl.)

something that will become one of the most important narrative during his own administration.

The risk behind this strategy was, of course, to be seen as another messianic leader, and the same Lula was the one to recognize it already during the Caravans, but didn't do anything to solve the problem; on the contrary, he continues to push forward with his new strategic approach.

The first reference to him as a potential "messianic leader" appeared in 1994, in an article published on "Folha de S. Paulo", to which Lula answer opposing their will to govern "with popular participation" (Alves, 1994).

Funny enough, becoming a "messianic leader" was actually perceived as a risk by both PT and Lula, since their priority was to change the same nature of politics; when Lula spoke about "conquer citizenship", popular participation was perceived as the most important step of this process.

Once the campaign officially started the Caravanas became more "election-driven"; as a consequence, while the focus was still on those excluded from society, for the first time Lula's discourse include also the idea that, in order to govern, the "hegemony" among marginalized voters wasn't enough:

"Após a campanha de 1989 eu descobri que [...] a gente não tinha discurso para os chamados excluídos da sociedade. Não tinha contato com milhões e milhões de brasileiros...Então nós resolvemos fazer a Caravana da Cidadania para atacar os dois opostos. Primeiro para conversar com os descamisados, os excluídos, aqueles que não estão organizados em Sindicatos, Partidos Políticos e que às vezes são presas fáceis. (...). Do outro lado nós fomos conversar com vários setores empresariais, pequeno, grande e médio. Fomos conversar com general, padre, bispo e leigo. Vou conversar com quem for necessário porque nós queremos ganhar estas eleições⁷². (Lula, 5ª Caravana da Cidadania, 1994)

⁷² After 1989 Campaign I discovered that [...] we didn't have a discourse for those excluded from society. We were not in contact with millions of Brazilians... So, we started the Caravana da Cidadania to do two things. First, speak with the descamisado (literally, shirtless), the excluded, those who are not part of Unions, Political Parties and

If in 1989 Lula was clear with his supporter, saying that they shouldn't "please the upper-middle class and entrepreneurs", in 1994 he was ready to "speak to everyone" if that was what he needed to do to win the election. However, we didn't have to overestimate the magnitude of this change, since PT was still a maximalist party, not willing to compromise his identity to win. What we can observe, however, are the firsts "opening" made by Lula, who suggested also to contract an expert to manage his campaign, Duda Mendonça.

The party was divided on this issue, mainly because previously Mendonça had worked with conservative politicians like Maluf. While the negotiation didn't lead to any practical result, it is important to highlight the fact that Lula was aware of the fact that a "professionalisation" of his campaign was needed, even if that meant "outsourcing" the management.

If the "Caravanas" had a great impact not only on Lula's perception in the public opinion but also in his own "formation" as a politician, their electoral effect was surely slowed down due to the electoral rules of 1994; after the controversy of 1989, briefly mentioned above, with edited debates and the participation of people not directly involved in the campaign (such as the participation of a woman who had had an affair with Lula, speaking against him in Collor's advertising) the rules imposed for 1994 were more strict. According to the Lei 8713/93 the ads of the "horário eleitoral gratuito" needed to be realized in a television studio, and the use of any outdoor record or video editing was strictly prohibited. While Lula wasn't, of course, the only one affected by those new rules, part of his strategy became unavailable; all the footage recorded during the Caravanas, that could have served greatly for promoting his new image, became basically useless during the campaign.

If in 1994 Lula tried to present a calm, moderate version of himself, capable of putting class warfare on the background in order to bring together different social sectors, his new attitude didn't help him so much, since his

who, sometimes, are easy preys. (...) On the other side, we spoke with entrepreneurs, small, big and medium ones. We went to speak with generals, priests, Bishop and laic. I'm going to speak with everyone to win this election. (own transl.)

opponent was another moderate who also happened to be the exact definition of an “anti-Lula”.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso, in fact, was everything that Lula wasn't: on one side the son of a General and former Federal Deputy, on the other someone coming from humble origin and left alone by his father at a very young age; Cardoso was a Professor, expelled by Brazilian University due to the persecution of the Regime, who had worked for many years at the Sorbonne, while Lula left school at an early age; Cardoso was an experienced member of the “establishment”, being part of MDB ever since 1974 and serving as a Minister during Franco's administration, Lula started as an outsider and, even if he was elected Federal Deputy in 1986, never had any executive role.

Even more, while Lula had to fight within the party to run a “professionalized” political campaign, being defeated by the hardliners, Cardoso hired James Carville, a political consultant from the United States who, just two years before, had helped Bill Clinton becoming the U.S. President.

If 1993 and the beginning of 1994 served to present a “new Lula”, once Cardoso started to lead in the polls, the “old Lula” returned. He started to be more aggressive, spending his time attacking his opponent and, most importantly, Plano Real.

The Plan was the decisive factor of the election: if Cardoso was the creator of the Plan, Lula and his party were the biggest critiques of the stabilization programme. During the IX Encontro Nacional they defined the economic programme as “antipopular, submitted to the interest of great capital and international financial system”. Cardoso, on the contrary, presented himself as the “father” of Real, and his success fighting inflation was presented to the voters as the living proof of his ability to solve other historical problems affecting the country, as he affirmed during one of the ads of his campaign:

“Durante muitos anos, o Brasil criou um monte de bichos de sete cabeças: coisas como a reforma agrária, o aumento do salário mínimo, a distribuição de renda, a reforma da previdência, a educação de boa qualidade, coisa que durante anos e anos as pessoas rotularam de impossível, que não dava pra

fazer, que não tinha solução. Pois estas coisas são tão possíveis de serem feitas como foi possível baixar a inflação e nós fizemos. [...] Se alguém lhe disser que isso é impossível, você sabe que não é. Na verdade com o Plano Real nós fizemos a primeira coisa que os outros diziam ser impossível, nós acabamos com o primeiro bicho de sete cabeça”⁷³ (Horário de propaganda eleitoral gratuita, Cardoso, 1994)

If Lula needed to attack, Cardoso was able to play the role of the appeaser, while responding to Lula’s social programme with similar recipes. Being sure of the support in the upper class, thanks to the economic programme already launched and to his liberal plans, based on privatization and deregulation, he spent his campaign speaking to poorest sector of society, to obtain their support. Most importantly, if Lula was fighting against the risk of being seen as another messianic leader, Cardoso was the latest “saviour of the nation”, the “father” of Plano Real.

Cardoso won the election in the first round, while Lula ended second.

Once again Lula obtained better results among the most educated, living in bigger cities, even if, compared to Cardoso, he was losing in every social sector and region. Most importantly, while Fernando Henrique (as the voters referred to him, using only his name) was completely different from others historic leader, being a scholar first rather than an “populist leader” like Collor, the power of “messianic” promise was still confirmed, with the voters searching for a “saviour”.

⁷³ For many years, Brazil created a lot of “seven-headed monsters”; things such as agrarian reform, increase of minimum wages, wealth redistribution, pension reforms, good quality education, things that for many and many years people thought were impossible, that couldn’t be done, without solution. Those things are as possible as reducing inflation, as we did. [...] If someone told you that this is impossible, you know that it isn’t. The truth is that with Plano Real we have done the first thing that the others told was impossible, we ended with the first “seven-headed monsters” (own transl.)

One year after the election, during the X Encontro Nacional of PT, Lula ended his term as President of the party, and was not re-elected. During an episode of “Roda Viva” he was presented as someone “searching a new path”, who had “left the Presidency of a party divided by internal struggle, going through an identity crisis ever since the failure of socialist country, who left the right without a project” (Lula, Xº Encontro Nacional do PT, 1995)

When asked about his future, he reassured everyone that his relationship with the Partido dos Trabalhadores was far from being over, but that he felt it was time to leave space to young new leaders.

The most interesting thing of the interview was, however, the shift between the appeaser of the first half of the campaign and the leader unwilling to compromise, still following the same “maximalist” attitude of the beginnings:

“Eu, sinceramente, quero deixar muito claro para você, que eu não tenho nenhum interesse de virar um social-democrata conservador para ser presidente da República, ou seja, eu só tenho interesse de ser presidente da República se eu puder fazer as reformas estruturais que eu imagino que são necessárias para o Brasil. Ganhar, para depois ficar dizendo que não dá para fazer nada, eu não posso fazer nada. É difícil, não dá, não sei das quantas, eu não tenho interesse⁷⁴ (Lula, Roda Viva, 1995)

We can clearly identify two Lula: the negotiator willing to reach a compromise in order to govern during the electoral campaign, and the hardliner immediately after the defeat.

Another change, happened between 1994 and 1998, need to be noted: if, until the beginning of the ‘90s Lula played the role of the appeaser publicly, while he was articulating an internal front to control the party, before 1998 he started to use his own personal influence and strength publicly as a tool to force

⁷⁴I want to say clearly that I’m not interested in being a conservative social-democrat to be President of the Republic, I want to be President to make structural reforms that Brazil need. Win, just to say that you cannot do anything, I’m not able to do it. It’s hard, I don’t know how, I’m not interested (own transl.)

PT, and in particular the minorities, to accept his line. We have a clear example of this process during the XI Encontro Nacional, when Lula announced that he was willing to run again for the Presidency, while imposing his own conditions:

"Eu não tenho cara de candidato para marcar posição", afirmou, sobre o sentido de sua possível postulação. Como condição para o sim, Lula insistiu em alianças mais amplas, nas quais os diretórios estaduais petistas teriam que se subordinar à orientação da cúpula nacional do partido. Essa tese é rejeitada pela "esquerda" petista. [...] A interpretação mais corrente no PT é que Lula, agora, decidiu que pode ser candidato, mas desde que o partido lhe dê autonomia para conduzir a campanha, o que, pela tradição da legenda, é duvidoso⁷⁵. (Alves, Tosta, 1997)

Party's cohesion, however, wasn't that strong anymore; just few days later, Luiza Erundina announced her departure from PT to join PSB, accusing her old party of being "less effective as a fighting instrument", and suggesting that Lula wasn't the natural candidate anymore, and many other leaders could be the "face" of a project against neoliberalism. (Alves, 1997a). In the next few days, many other followed Erundina, opening an internal crisis. Few days later, however, Aloizio Mercadante, one of the vice-presidents of the party, affirmed that Lula would have been the candidate only if alliances were established both at national or states level, while the party was still discussing Brizola's proposal of being part of Lula's ticket as vice-president. Once his conditions were accepted, Lula announced his candidacy at the beginning of December. (Neri, E. 1997)

⁷⁵ "I don't have the face of a flagship candidate", he affirmed, about his chance of running. As a condition to accept, Lula insisted in having larger alliances, in which States' directions of the party needs to be subordinated to the will of the national executive. This thesis is refused by the "left" of the party [...] A large interpretation inside of PT is that Lula, now, is willing to be candidate, but only if the party will give him autonomy to run his campaign, which seem doubtful according to the tradition of the party. (own transl.)

1998 election saw the repetition of the script of 1994, with one big change: the vice-presidential candidate happened to be a well-known politician, Leonel Brizola. Going outside of his traditional area and reaching an agreement with one of his adversaries, allow Lula to reinforce his perception as a great negotiator, able to create alliances. At the same time, this move was made to stop the process of co-optation started by PSB and to keep control over Brazilian left.

Lula's electoral strategies was pretty much the same followed during the second part of his campaign of 1994: the idea was to attack Cardoso for his results as a President, showing the "dark sides" of his economic plans and reforms.

Once again, the idea was to show Lula to the voters as "one of their own"; however, for the first time, the campaign followed a slightly different route: the message wasn't "Lula is just like the people", but the opposite, "I am Lula, Lula is the people"; the slogan of the campaign was "Meu Brasil è gente primeiro", "my Brazil is people first".

To overcome one of the biggest critiques, linked to his inexperience, during one of his ads a voiceover presented all the results in favour of the working class that PT's leader helped to reach during his political careers, such as the reduction of working hours from 48 to 44 per week, increased maternity leave etc. Lula, however, had to run a campaign based on promise and the perspective of change; Cardoso on the other side, being the first President able to run for re-election, could take advantage of what Fiorina called "*retrospective vote*" (Fiorina, 1981), the situation in which citizens are more incline to vote for the incumbent thanks to the job already done during his administration and to the results that he can show. To resume the definition in easier way, we can just look at the lyrics of Cardoso's official song for the campaign, "Levanta a mão", that actually was just an updated version of the jingle already presented in 1994:

"E vamos lá que o Brasil está caminhando ele não pode parar, e vamos a seguir em frente reeleger Fernando Henrique Presidente. Ele plantou a semente do futuro, é o pulso firme nesse tempo turbulento, está fazendo um Brasil pra

todo o mundo, mas felicidade é construção que leva tempo”⁷⁶ (HPEG, Cardoso, 1998).

1998 campaign, if compared to the previous two, was for sure the less disputed; if in 1989 and 1994 during the electoral year the polls showed an early lead for Lula, who then suffered the recovery of his opponent, in 1998 Cardoso led during the whole campaign. The only brief moment of tension for the incumbent President happened during the months of May and June, when Lula reduced his disadvantage to just few points. In order to revert the trend, Cardoso’s campaign, mainly thanks to some of his allies such as Antonio Carlos Magalhães, started to suggest that Lula’s victory would mean the instauration of chaos in the country (Murauskas, 1998). It is important to highlight the fact that, over the course of Cardoso’s first term, the influence of conservative groups increased a lot, creating the pre-condition for a bipolar system, in which PSDB started to occupy the “centre-right” of the political arena while PT was disputing for the hegemony inside of the left.

It was, however, a pretty strange bipolarism, due to the absence of real right-wings leaders to dispute the Presidency, while at the same time conservative sectors were still those who enjoyed larger representation in the Congress.

After a short setback, however, Cardoso recovered his advantage and at the beginning of August was seen as the obvious winner. It is interesting to look at the reasons behind the decision between Lula and Cardoso; according to José Roberto de Toledo’s columns, the personal profile of the candidate was one of the biggest factors:

“Para seus próprios eleitores, é justamente a origem humilde de Lula e o tom incisivo de seu discurso que despertam admiração e funcionam como uma garantia de que, uma vez eleito, o petista não abandonaria o compromisso

⁷⁶ Let’s go, Brazil is moving ahead and cannot stop, let’s continue and elect Fernando Henrique President. He planted the seeds of the future, he is the steady hand in this troubled time, he is creating a Brazil for everyone, but the pursuit of happiness needs time. (own transl.)

declarado com as questões sociais. Há uma identificação entre eleitor e candidato. No caso de Fernando Henrique, as pesquisas qualitativas mostram que ele é uma projeção da imagem que os eleitores fazem do presidente ideal: culto, inteligente, "representa bem o Brasil lá fora". É como se FHC elevasse a autoestima de seus eleitores⁷⁷". (Toledo, 1998)

Another element needs to be added: as we have already seen in the previous chapter, in 1998 it was clear to everyone that, due to the international economic crisis, Brazil would face soon enough difficult times; if Cardoso was the “ideal Brazilian”, as Toledo suggest, and he had been able to solve an economic crisis once, why not trust him again with the job?

Cardoso won the election again in the first round, being the only President able to do it not only once, but twice; Lula’s was able to “defeat” the President only in two States, Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro. The former union leader ended his third electoral campaign defeated once again, and his political career, at least as PT’s undisputed leader, seemed to be over; unexpectedly, this was just another setback on the road to the Palácio do Planalto.

2.4 The revolution will be televised: Lula Paz e Amor

How can one of the most important public figures of a nation, under the spotlight since the late ‘70s, change his image after more than 20 years? And how can someone defeated three time run again and not only became president once, but be re-elected and leave office in 2010 as the “most popular politician on the planet”?

While for sure it wasn’t the kind of revolution that Lula and his friend expected when they started their political career, a revolution really happened at

⁷⁷ For his voters, Lula’s humble origins and the tone of his discourse are the reasons behind his admiration, and guarantees that, if elected, the “petista” would not betray the compromise with social questions. There is an identification between voters and candidate. For what concerns Fernando Henrique, qualitative research shows that he is the ideal President for many voters: well-educated, smart, “he represents well Brazil abroad”. FHC elevate the self-esteem of his voters. (own transl.)

the beginning of 2000 in order to make his victory possible, and this time, contrary to a famous song, it was televised; even more, television played a big role in making the revolution possible.

But like every revolution, some preconditions were necessary to making it possible: in this case, the preconditions were a series of economic crisis at the end of Cardoso's first term and at the very beginning of his second one, causing a deep economic crisis in Brazil and, as a consequence, an even bigger crisis of popularity of the sitting President.

Those factors lead to an election that, such as the one of 1989, was perceived as crucial by the voters; while in 1998 the campaign started to be discussed on newspaper and television only in the electoral year, with Cardoso trying to "depoliticise" the vote and normalize it as a mere gesture of "reconfirmation" in his favour, 2002 election actually "started" at least two years before the vote, and the political debate was central on the media. Just to make an example, Rede Globo, who for sure played in favour of Cardoso's attempt to "eliminate" the election as a topic in 1998, radically changed the attitude, leading to the "biggest electoral coverage of their own history" (Rodriguez, 2002).

Only looking at the last part of the campaign, the data presented by Luiz Felipe Miguel are impressive:

[Em 1998] no período mais "quente" da campanha – as doze semanas entre a final da Copa do Mundo e a data da votação –, o Jornal Nacional dedicou ao todo 1h16min34s à cobertura das eleições, ou 4,6% do seu tempo total. Em 2002, foram quatorze semanas entre o término da Copa e o primeiro turno; as eleições presidenciais ocuparam 12h55min50s do noticiário, isto é, 29,4% do tempo total do jornal; as eleições nos estados consumiram mais 46min11s. Ao todo, portanto, o processo eleitoral ficou com 31,2% do tempo do noticiário⁷⁸. (Miguel, 2002, 293-294)

⁷⁸ [in 1998] during the "hottest" part of the campaign- the twelve weeks after World Cup's finals and the day of the vote- Jornal Nacional dedicate 1 day 16 minutes 34 seconds to electoral coverage, 4,6% of their airing time. In 2002, fourteen weeks passed

This “Discovery of Politics”, as Miguel called it, gave to all the candidate a chance to present themselves to the voters, in some case even rebrand their own image. Lula for sure take advantage of this opportunity, and probably was the candidate that did it better; over the course of 20 years under the spotlight he had already tried different electoral strategies, from “trabalhador vote em trabalhador” to the humanitarian leader willing to improve the condition of the poor, and in 2002 there was few things about Lula that the people didn’t know; however, as we will show, starting from this election Lula’s history started to play a much larger role in describing who he was and, thanks to the help of advertising expert, he was finally able to create a new narrative people could buy in. The identification process didn’t stop just to the fact that everyday people could see Lula as one of their own, but portrait Lula as one of their own who was able to make it. 2002 was the construction of a new narrative, the one of a man able to socially advance, thanks to his personal quality, but also to the few chances that life presented him.

Finally, Lula wasn’t only “Lula light”, as the media called him joking about his “softer” posture in 1994 and 1998, he wasn’t anymore just the great negotiator able to build a new social contract for Brazil, neither the political leader coming from the working class; Lula had become the incarnation of a dream that everyday people didn’t even know that they have, used to live in a society in which ascendent social mobility was almost impossible, the dream of changing their life.

This new posture was also accompanied by a new leadership style: if in 1989 Lula was praising party’s importance and the effort of the militancy, in 2002 he was using his own political strength to force Partido dos Trabalhadores to ratify his decision, threatening to not participate in the election without “total freedom” in the campaign management, in order to run with the participation of

between the end of the World Cup and the first round; the election occupied 12 hours 55 minutes 50 seconds of the journal, 29.4% of the gran total; States’ election occupied 46 minutes 11 seconds. Joined, the electoral process occupied 31,2% of the airing time of the journal. (own transl.)

professional figure chosen outside of the party. Ricardo Kotscho gives us some insights on how Lula imposed the “rules” to the party:

"Em 1994, o Lula conheceu o Duda Mendonça e queria que ele fizesse sua campanha, mas o PT vetou. Para 2002, Lula aceitou ser candidato, mas impôs condições: fazer campanha com o Duda e contratar bom profissionais, não mais fazer aquela campanha romântica.⁷⁹" (Paiva, 2002)

We have named Mendonça for his role in 1994, when Lula tried to hire him; but who he was? Born in Salvador, he started working in real estate ads, and just later on in political marketing; he first won the campaign for the Mayor of Salvador, but became well known at national level helping Maluf becoming Mayor in São Paulo. In 2001, when PT hired Mendonça for some electoral ads, he was known as the best in his field; for all those reasons, he was the obvious choice for Lula’s fourth run, even because the party could not risk to throw away their big shot for the presidency. Mendonça too was interested in working with Lula from a long time, and is worthy to look at his analysis on PT’s electoral strategy, that gave us some hints about what he was adamant to change:

“É visível, desde antes da virada do milênio, a transformação por que tem passado o PT, tornando-se um partido mais maduro, mais moderno, de mais propostas e menos críticas. Isso tem feito com que uma parcela cada vez maior da sociedade, não politizada, que é a que elege, comece a perder o medo do PT. [...] O PT começou a se modernizar no “conteúdo” – disso ninguém duvida. Mas continua se equivocando na “forma”. No modo de se comunicar com a população. Nos seus discursos, por exemplo, permanecem clichês como “a luta continua”, e “vamos à luta companheiro” – slogans de um tempo passado [...] O PT precisa mudar um pouco o seu discurso, comunicar-se de forma mais clara com a população, apresentando propostas concretas para os problemas

⁷⁹ In 1994, Lula met Duda Mendonça and wanted him to make his campaign, but PT vetoed it. For 2002, Lula accepted to be the candidate, but imposing his conditions: Duda’s making the campaign and hiring good professionals, not doing again that “romantic” campaign. (own transl.)

brasileiros, para que a sociedade possa entender e confiar no seu projeto.”⁸⁰. (Mendonça, 2001, 13)

Mendonça was the perfect man for the job, since his main ability was, as he said, “transform the content into form”. Who better than an advertiser for an organization that, in the previous ten years, had already tried to rebrand their “product” (Lula) in every possible way without succeeding? Of course, as for every good professional, Mendonça kept some “secrets” for himself, but we can analyse some of the decision taken during Lula’s campaign thanks to his book. For what concern attitude and strategy that the ideal candidate needed to follow, Duda was pretty clear:

“Uma reação autêntica vale muito mais do que um discurso conceitual, repetitivo, cheio de números. Esta é uma das lógicas que ditam o meu raciocínio na elaboração da estratégia de uma campanha política. [...] Se o meu candidato usa a emoção como linguagem básica, se está sempre atento a forma, falando calmamente, de modo sincero, sem demagogia ou ataques pessoais, sem gestos agressivos, convidando o eleitor a raciocinar com ele, tem mais chances que os outros de se fazer notado e admirado. As suas propostas são mais facilmente memorizadas, chegam mais rápido ao coração do eleitor, mesmo que seu adversário venha com um discurso mais enfático e preciso⁸¹. (Mendonça, 2001, 17-18)

⁸⁰ Even before the beginning of the new millennium, PT’s transformation was clear, becoming a mature party, modern, with more proposal and less critiques. A larger part of the society, not politicized, the one who elect, started to lose fear for PT [...] PT modernize his content, there is no doubt about it. But the “form” is still wrong. The way in which they are communicating with the people. In their discourses, for example, cliché like “the fight continues” or “let’s go fighting with our comrades”- slogan of an ancient time. [...]PT need to change his discourse, communicate clearly with the people, presenting concrete proposals for Brazilian problems, to allow society to understand and trust their projects. (own transl.)

⁸¹ An authentic reaction means more than a discourse, repetitive, full of numbers. This is one of the logics that guide my rationality when it’s time to elaborate the strategy of

We can also see which was the most important quality that the candidate needed to have, according to Mendonça:

*“Esta é a palavra mágica: admiração. Se o candidato consegue conquistar a admiração da população, ele está muito próximo do seu sucesso. Porque, quando você admira uma pessoa, duas coisas costumam acontecer. A primeira é que você confia muito mais nela. Como consequência, acredita mais em suas propostas, em seus projetos. A segunda, você está muito mais propenso a não acreditar em acusações feitas contra o seu herói, a esquecer e a perdoar os seus eventuais defeitos. Nesse sentido, a admiração é um sentimento elevado. Superior.”*⁸² (Mendonça, 2001)

Looking at the actual strategy followed by Lula in 2002, the influence of those two quotes is clear: on one side, Lula presented himself as a mature, calm candidate, as the nickname “Lulinha paz e amor” used by the press suggested, avoiding to attack to the adversaries, “the elites”, the media or any other of his previous “enemies”. As about the use of emotion as a language, some of the electoral ads made for the campaign and pre-campaign are the perfect example of this kind of communication; one, in particular, exemplify perfectly this trend.

We are talking about “A Mendiga”⁸²: in this ads, two couple are leaving what seems to be a restaurant, or a club, to drive back home; suddenly, one of the girls look out of the window and see a woman, sleeping in the street, cuddling a baby.

a political campaign. [...] If my candidate use emotion as a basic language, if he is always careful to the “form”, speaking calmly, in a sincere way, without demagogy or personal attacks, without aggressive gesture, inviting the voters to reason with him, he had better chances than some others to be noted and admired. His proposal is easily memorized, reach faster the “heart” of the voters, even if his opponent had a most emphatic and precise discourse. (own transl.)

⁸² This is the magic word: admiration. If the candidate conquer popular admiration, he is a lot closer to success. Because, when you admire a person, two things happen. First, you trust him more. As a consequence, you believe in his proposal, his project. Second, you are less prone to believe any accusation made against your hero, and to forget or forgive his defects. Admiration is a high felling. A superior one. (own transl.)

The girl suddenly looks sad. while a man appears on the screen to say that “*se cenas como essa tocam você, você pode até não saber, mas com certeza, no fundo você também é um pouco PT.*”⁸³ (HPEG PT, 2002)

This kind of ads respond very well to the electoral strategy identified by Mendonça in his book: in one minute, PT transmit the idea of a party that cared about social justice, fight against inequality and is deeply saddened by poverty in the streets, without saying any of those things.

Lula’s biography was “used” too in order to create the same feeling in the voters; in one of the first ads aired on television, the 9th of May of 2002, spend almost 20 minutes speaking about Lula’s personal history, starting from his difficult childhood in the northeast, the courage of his mother raising the family, his travel to the south-east and the chances of socially mobility, thanks to professional opportunity. Lula remembered how he was the first one in his family to own a house, a tv, a car, thanks to one opportunity. He presented himself as someone “able to make it”. The same kind of narrative, the importance of opportunity, the possibility of socially advance was reaffirmed in another ads, in which a young kid is speaking in front of the public:

“Eu acabei de entrar na faculdade, não foi fácil, mas eu consegui e agora eu tenho uma oportunidade. Nada nunca foi fácil para mim, estudei em escola pública, foi criada pra minha mãe, nunca tive pai, nunca tive nada. Minha mãe mal sabe ler, mas confie em deus e em mim, eu vou realizar os seus sonhos custe o que custar. Mas quantos iguais a mim, melhores do que eu, mas inteligente do que eu, nunca tiveram uma oportunidade na vida, estão nas ruas, nas drogas, no crime? Ninguém nasce mal, ninguém nasce bandido, é toda uma questão de oportunidade, oportunidade! O jovem na favela também quer tem um tênis novo, uma camisa nova e o direito de sonhar, como todo o mundo. Este é o país de todos, de todos! Meu nome é João, eu sou brasileiro, amo o meu país, viva o

⁸³ If scene like this one “touch” you, you may not even know it, but surely, deep down inside, you are PT too.

*Brasil, viva São Paulo, viva o cristo redentor, viva a amazonas, viva Luís Inácio Lula da Silva.*⁸⁴ (HPGE, Lula, 2002a)

An attentive reader must have already noticed how the history of João (probably the most common among Brazilian manes) is basically Lula's one, just placing University instead of the technical course attended by PT's leader, in order to give to the character an history of personal redemption even larger than Lula's one. The characters ever "betray" his real identity saying that "he will realize the dreams" of those who are listening, something that obviously is more appropriate if told by a presidential candidate rather than a teenager. Tragic aspects of Lula's biography were also included into the narrative, like the death of his first wife when she was pregnant. But just few instants are reserved for compassion, and mainly just to remember once again to the voters that he went through the same things that millions of Brazilians had to face.

The ads than move fast to his experience as Union leader; Lula, however, even in those moment is not speaking as the representative of a specific social class, but the message that he wanted to convey is linked to his quality as a leader. Vincentinho, one of his comrades at the time and former President of the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores is the one speaking to the public:

"Éramos ali 100 mil, 120 mil pra seguir aquele caminho, aquela orientação tinha que ter alguém para dar uma palavra. Eu me lembro que outros

⁸⁴ I was just accepted at University, it wasn't easy, but I succeed, and now I have an opportunity. Nothing was easy for me, I studied in a public school, was raised by my mother, never had a father, never had anything. My mother is almost unable to read, but trust in God and trust me, I will realize your dreams, whatever it takes. But how many just like me, better than me, smarter than me, never had an opportunity in their life, are now living in the street, drugged, or involved with crime? Nobody was born bad, nobody was born a criminal, everything depends on opportunity, opportunity! Young people in favelas wants a new pair of sneakers too, a new shirt and the right to dream, like everyone elses. This country is for everyone, for everyone! My name is João, I'm Brazilian, I love my country, long live Brazil, long live São Paulo, long live the Cristo Redentor, long live Amazon, long live to Inácio Lula da Silva (own transl.)

*companheiros, até eu mesmo falávamos para pequenos grupos, outros falavam para grupos maiores, diretores de sindicatos falavam para grupos maiores ainda, mas a palavra que pegava e que valia e que marcava era a palavra do Lula*⁸⁵. ((HPGE, Lula, 2002b)

The video continues with other PT's member retracing the history of the country, magnifying Lula's results over the course of the years of his political career. It ends with a voiceover, drawing the image of Lula as a statesman and a well-recognized political leader both at national and international levels:

*“e foi assim que o grande líder sindical se transformou no maior líder popular da história do Brasil, conhecido, admirado e respeitado nos quatro cantos do mundo; viagem, debate e conferências internacionais na França Alemanha Portugal Cuba Estados Unidos, Rússia, China, Japão, deram a Lula durante estes 22 anos uma outra dimensão. Durante todo este tempo ele acumulou enorme experiência e notável conhecimento. Um líder sempre presente onde que é que o PT governe, sugerindo, aconselhando e apontando caminhos.*⁸⁶ (HPGE, Lula, 2002c)

If the first part of the video is made exactly to create empathy with the voters, the second one responds to the other criteria indicated by Mendonça: a candidate who is admired by the voters. The main reason to admire Lula was that he had been able to achieve social mobility; but in order to keep also his image as “a man of the people”, the focus is not on how good he was in order to

⁸⁵ 100.000/120.000 person were at that rally, and we need a speaker. I remember many other comrades, even myself, speaking to smaller group, other speaking to larger ones, director of the unions speaking to even larger groups, but in the end the last word, the one that lasted and had an impact was Lula's one (own transl.)

⁸⁶ Just like that the great union leader transform himself in the biggest popular leader of Brazilian history, known, admired and respected in the “four corners” of the world; travel, debates and international conferences in France, Germany, Portugal, Cuba, United States, Russia, China, Japan, gave Lula another dimension in those 22 years. He was able to gain experience and knowledge. A leader always present wherever PT governs, giving advice and showing the right way. (own transl.)

do it, but on how unequal the reality was, since opportunity were not given to every citizen.

On the other side, however, Lula was someone to admire due to his own quality: he was presented as a natural leader when, even without any kind of experience or training, he was already the one that everyone looks up to during the strikes; his colleagues speak highly of him, presenting Lula not only as the best man for the job but also as a protagonist of Brazilian history, giving him even more credit than he deserves (for example, Dirceu affirmed that Lula was the responsible of the creation of the party, in a time in which Brazilian needs democracy, while in previous electoral run the party had always been presented as a collective enterprise, as it actually was). The campaign wanted to build even Lula's profile as an international leader, speaking clearly to Brazilians' middle and higher classes.

Is important, however, to highlights one big difference between Lula's and Cardoso's ability to obtain admiration: the sitting President was the "ideal" candidate for many Brazilians, the stereotype of the intellectual and someone that can well represent the country abroad, but "different" from the people, coming from a rich family; Lula, instead, was admired not because he was perfect, but exactly for his defects, his difficulties and, most important, for the brilliant way in which he was able to overcome them.

In other terms, with the right discourse. it was easier from Lula than from everyone else to create an emphatic relation between himself and the median voters, coming from popular sector, and start a process of identification between the candidate and the people.

If emotion, admiration and identification were needed to give Lula a chance, another feeling that he need to transmit to the people was security. The dichotomy fear/hope was present in PT's campaign ever since 1989, even in the jingle of the campaign, with the lyrics talking about a country "sem medo de ser feliz", without the fear of being happy. On the other side, every Lula opponent had used, sooner or later, fear as an instrument to disqualify PT's leader: it was the fear of socialism in 1989, the fear of inflation and economic destabilization in 1994 and 1998, and the fear of Lula in general on both occasions, with the

former union leader portrayed as a treat to nation stability. In 2002 Lula decided, rather than playing defence, to “normalize” his figure, spending a large part of his campaign to reassure voters and the markets, and especially the ones that he identifies as “almost Lula”.

This strategy came from a diagnostic that was pretty common inside of the party about the composition of Brazilian electorate: while Lula’s “core voters” amounted more or less to 1/3 of the total, there was another 1/3 of the population against him, that would never ever think about vote in his favour. This mean that more or less 33% of the voters could be considered as “swing voters”, who would decide the election in favour or against Lula.

While dividing the electorate in three equal sectors in term of percentages is too simplistic, there is no doubt that, in particular in a country characterized with low party affiliation and in which, with the exception of PT, ideologic identification between voters and parties was (and still is) pretty scarce, swing voters represent a large part of the population. If is true, as a general principle, that in many democracies the results of any close election depend from the “conquer” of swing voters, this process is even more important in a nation characterized by low partisanship.

Lula’s strategy, of course, take into consideration this factor and as a consequence he focused on this sector more than in any other election; this was clear in particular in one of the ads recorded for the Horário Eleitoral, probably the best examples of the “new Lula”, willing to reassuring the voters and de-politicize conflict instead of using it as an instrument to conquer more votes:

“Hoje, quero pedir sua permissão pra não falar de projetos. Quero apenas conversar com as mulheres e os homens do Brasil que estão quase votando em mim, mas que ainda não se decidiram. [...]. Vejam, meus amigos e meus amigas quase Lula: sei que vocês também querem a mudança do nosso País, sei que você compreende a necessidade do Brasil ter um governo que vai se preocupar com desenvolvimento, com futuro, mas que não vai esquecer os pequenos, os mais fracos, os famintos, sempre tão esquecido. Eu preciso do seu voto de confiança, e sinceramente eu mereço esta oportunidade pela qual tanto me

*preparei. Veja, minha amiga quase Lula, do mesmo modo que você deseja ser feliz e não quase feliz, o Brasil precisa de uma mudança e não uma quase mudança. Porque temos de enfrentar uma crise, e não uma quase crise, e você precisa de um emprego, e não de um quase emprego. Não é verdade? Tem hoje um grande apoio pra governar o país, dos empresários, dos sindicatos, dos maiores economistas, de dois ex-Presidentes da República, Itamar Franco e José Sarney, de políticos de todos os partidos, de importante liderança de forças armadas, Só falta o seu voto; pense em isso com muito carinho. Até porque, no dia de eleição não existe na maquininha o botão do quase”.*⁸⁷ (HPEG, Lula, 2002d)

Let’s look closer at the message: first of all, the tone used by Lula in the video, that of course we cannot show here, was calm and persuasive; he is even “asking permission” to speak with the voters, in a clear attempt to create “personal relation” with the audience and have a “chat” with them. The idea to scale back conflict is evident too: there are no reference to “elites”, to any kind of “power” behind his opponent, but just respect. Then, he moved back to the

⁸⁷ I’m asking your permission because I don’t want to speak about projects. I just want to have a chat with the men and women of Brazil that are almost voting for me, but are still undecided. [...] Look, my friends “almost-Lula”: I know that you want changes too, I know that you understand that Brazil needs a government worried with development, with the future, but that doesn’t forget the little guys, fragile, dealing with hunger, always forgotten. I need your trust, and honesty I deserved this opportunity, for which I am so prepared. Look, my friend almost-Lula, as you want to be happy and not almost happy, Brazil needs a change and not almost a change. Because we need to face a crisis, not “almost a crisis”, and you need a job, not almost a job. Isn’t it true? Today, there is a great support to govern the country, entrepreneurs, unions, the most important economist, two former President of the Republic, Itamar Franco e José Sarney, politicians from all the parties, important leaders of the military. Your votes are the only one missing; thing about it with love. Even because, on election day, the button “almost” doesn’t exist on the machine. (own transl.)

strategy of admiration, presenting himself as someone “who had worked really hard to deserve the opportunity to be President”.

One last big change that deserves to be noted is the attitude towards endorsement: in 1989, over the course of the debate, Collor used Sarney’s endorsement in Lula’s favour as an attack, trying to portrait PT’s leader as part of the establishment, while the same Lula was trying to disassociate himself from the sitting President; in 2002, on the contrary, Lula was the first one to bring up endorsements in his official ads, showing that he was the consensus “pick” for the Presidency and that he was respected by many important figures. Not by chance one of the first document launched by Lula’s campaign was the “Carta ao Povo Brasileiro”, made to reassure stock and financial markets, stating that his new economic plan will not impose any major macroeconomic adjustment or radical economic reform against, in opposition to what he had affirmed over the course of the previous campaigns.

If Lula was trying to dismantle the power of fear, his opponents were still following the winning strategy of previous elections. In particular, is worthy to mention one ad in particular, part of Serra’s campaign, aired before the second round, with Regina Duarte, a famous actress known at the “namoradinha do Brasil” (the girlfriend of Brazil), as protagonist, in which she tried to convince the voters that Lula’s presidency would lead to an economic crisis and the return of inflation, saying that she was feeling “fear, something that she wasn’t used to feel anymore” (HPEG, Serra, 2002)

Lula’s response, however, followed the same strategy of the rest of the campaign, praising the victory of hope over fear, and leaving the “dirty job” to answer to Duarte’s attack to another actress; the last sentence of his electoral program resumes this attitude:

“27 de outubro de 2002: se Deus quiser, esse dia entrará para a história do nosso país como o dia em que a esperança venceu”⁸⁸ (HPEG, Lula, 2002e)

⁸⁸ 27th October 2002: God’s willing, this day will enter in the history of our nation as the day in which hope won.

The dichotomy hope versus fear was present even immediately after Lula's victory, in his first interview, in what will become one of the most iconic sentences of Brazilian politics:

"mais importante, a esperança venceu o medo e hoje eu posso dizer para vocês que o Brasil mudou sem medo de ser feliz".⁸⁹ (Folha de S. Paulo, 2002)

While, as we have seen, Mendonça's contribution was fundamental to elect Lula, we also need to recognize that no "creative" process was needed in order to present him to the voters. The "popular leader", the symbol of social mobility and the great negotiator were all figures already there, that just needed to be showed to the people. While Lula was already a potential "hero" for many Brazilians, his "superpowers" were still well hidden behind the labels, self-inflicted or collocated around his figure by the press or ideologic barriers.

In 2002 we cannot talk yet of a messianic leader, neither we can say that he was elected thanks to expectation that he would be able, by itself, to solve the problem of the citizens; anyway, there is no doubt about that the uniqueness of his own personal history, when presented in the right way to the voters, was the difference between being elected and losing.

If, for many years, PT had believed that their chance to elect some depended on the ability to present themselves as different from "traditional politics", being the expression of a collective project that would make every citizen part of the decision-making process, in the end they were able to elect the President when they decided to rely mainly on Lula's leadership

While there is no doubt that the new strategy had worked, we still need to analyse the results in different social sectors and regions. The first interesting data are those about consensus and social classes: while the future President was by far outperforming any other candidates, he was still stronger among those with higher level of education than among those who have attended only the first years of education. If he was to candidate chosen by 52% of those who had

⁸⁹ More important, hope defeat fear and today I can say to you that Brazil changed without having fear of being happy.

attended University, the percentage drops to just 42% for those who had been enrolled only in the “1° grau”.

As for the geographical distribution of the votes, Lula defeated Serra pretty much everywhere, with the sole exception of the State of Alagoas. His percentage were in line with national average in all the macro-regions, with slightly better results in the northeast and southeast. Lula’s candidacy was still stronger in the metropolitan areas and bigger cities in general, while he was struggling a little bit more in small municipalities in the countryside.

Even if this data seems to suggest that nothing was changed in relation with Lula’s perception among the voters, since he was still performing better among his traditional voters than in relation to the rest of the population, we need to be able to interpret the numbers and not being deceived by them.

There is no doubt that his “core” voters were still mainly well-educated, coming from bigger cities and worried about reduction of inequality. Anyway, if we look at marginal gains, making a comparison between 1994 and 2002, Lula’s vote among the less educated rose from 20% to 46%, with an increase of 26 percentage point, while he was already accounting from 33% of the votes among the most educated back in 1994, reaching 52% in 2002. So, if in 1994 there was a 13 percentages point differential of his consensus between those less and more educated, in 2002 he was able to reduce the gap just to 6 point. Similar numbers can be drawn when we are talking about the size of the municipalities: if in 1994 there was a 10 points differential between smaller and bigger cities, in 2002 Lula this gap was reduced to just 5 points.

2.5 Conclusion

As we will see in the next chapter, “Lulinha Paz e Amor” was far from being the last “characters” interpreted by Luis Inácio da Silva; we have shown Lula’s ability to be “a man of his times”, capable of transforming himself according to the circumstances. At the same time, at least as the leader of the opposition, we have shown how he stayed loyal to some basic principle, guiding his career.

If at the beginning of the ‘80s Lula was just another leader coming from the union, like many others all over the world at that time, there is no doubt that

during the first two decades of his political militancy his belief evolved year after year. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the crisis of socialism might have helped him, since due to his personal formation he didn't belong to any kind of Marxist tendencies neither revolutionary group.

Once socialism wasn't anymore a viable option, in fact, he was "freed" by some of the ideological constraint of the firsts phase, and his ability as a negotiator stood out. The '90s represented the constant tension between the "original" souls of the party and Lula's leadership style, for sure more personalistic and oriented towards a direct relation between himself and the voters. In this sense, 2002 election represented the turning point of his career, not only because he became President but for the personal revolution that he had to face. Naturally, is pretty hard to measure the importance of the "Mendonça effect" in Lula's election, as we cannot have any counterproof to say how the election would have gone without him; however, the mechanism identified above were something new in Lula's self-promotion, and became a fundamental part of his consensus building, started once he reached the Presidency and that will guide him towards the recognition as the "most popular politician on earth."

The real electoral realignment, however, wasn't the one of 2002, but will start three years later, as we will show in the next chapter. For now, Lula was "only" the new President; while in order to win in 2002 he and the party had recognized that the idea of leadership as a collective process didn't work in Brazilian politics, Lula's "messianic transformation" was still at his very beginning; the first and decisive step, however, had already been made the day he entered in the Palácio do Planalto.

3 THE PROCESS OF INCLUSION: LULA PRESIDENTE

3.1 Introduction

“Quando olho a minha própria vida de retirante nordestino, de menino que vendia amendoim e laranja no cais de Santos, que se tornou torneiro mecânico e líder sindical, que um dia fundou o Partido dos Trabalhadores e acreditou no que estava fazendo, que agora assume o posto de Supremo Mandatário da Nação, vejo e sei, com toda a clareza e com toda a convicção, que nós podemos muito mais. E, para isso, basta acreditar em nós mesmos, em nossa força, em nossa capacidade de criar e em nossa disposição para fazer. Estamos começando hoje um novo capítulo na História do Brasil, não como nação submissa, abrindo mão de sua soberania, não como nação injusta, assistindo passivamente ao sofrimento dos mais pobres, mas como nação ativa, nobre, afirmando-se corajosamente no mundo como nação de todos, sem distinção de classe, etnia, sexo e crença. Este é um país que pode dar, e vai dar, um verdadeiro salto de qualidade. Este é o País do novo milênio⁹⁰” (Lula, Discurso de Posse, 2003)

“Este Palácio precisa se habituar, a partir do meu governo, a receber aqueles que vivem nas ruas catando o papel que nós jogamos, para reciclar e fazer desse trabalho penoso a sua sobrevivência com dignidade. Este Palácio precisa aprender a receber as minorias marginalizadas deste País. Este Palácio

⁹⁰ When I look back at my own life as an immigrant from the northeast, as a kid who sell peanuts and oranges on Santos’ docks, who became a metallurgic worker and union leader, who founded the Partido dos Trabalhadores and believed in what he was doing, who now became the leader of this Nation, I see and know, with all the clarity and conviction, that we can do a lot more. To do it, we have to believe in ourselves, in our strength, in our ability to create and our disposition to do. We are starting a new chapter of the History of Brazil, not as a submitted nation, renouncing his sovereignty, not as an unequal nation, looking passively to the pain of the poorest, but as an active nation, noble, self-affirming ourselves with courage in the world as a nation for all, without differences based on social class, ethnicity, sex and belief. This is a country that can, and will, improve a lot. This is the country of the new millennium. (own transl.)

precisa aprender a receber os negros, os índios, as mulheres. E este Palácio precisa aprender a receber aqueles que, muitas vezes, não conseguem nem passar perto do Palácio, quanto mais entrar nele⁹¹”. (Lula, Discurso de Posse, 2007)

We started this chapter with two quotes, taken from fundamental speeches made during Lula’s career: the first one when he became President, in 2003, the second one, from the speech made for the swearing-in ceremony of 2007;

Both discourses are paradigmatic of the kind of narratives followed by Lula during his Presidency: in 2003, the discourse was based on his biography of redemption, and the idea of social mobility, both individual, collective and of the whole nation. In 2007, Lula was speaking of “the people” as a category that need to “get use” to power; minorities needed to be included not only into citizenship, but get use to govern.

The process of inclusion of the outsiders characterized his two Presidential terms; first, we will look at the symbolic values of this inclusion, at the role that those previously marginalized started to play in Lula’s narrative in particular and in national politics as a whole. We will show how 2006 electoral realignment could be traced back to 2005, with the Mensalão, and how Lula was able to react to the crisis, building his leadership in some sector of civil society, and in particular among the poorest voters from the northeast.

While the majority of scholars have focused on material elements to explain Lula’s consensus, we will show how the same process was due also to a symbolic inclusion of the outsiders into a broader political discourse. While Lula’s messianic transformation was still far away, the mythopoesis started while he was President, and the inclusion of the outsiders was the fundamental factor behind it.

⁹¹ This Palace need to get use receiving those who lives on the streets collecting garbage, to recycle it and make a living with dignity out of this job. This Palace needs to get use to receive marginalized minorities of this country. This Palace need to learn to receive blacks, native populations, women. This Palace need to learn to receive those who, many times, cannot even walk close to this palace, let aside enter it. (own transl.)

3.2 Lula, “um herói em construção”

“Não sou resultado de uma eleição, sou resultado de uma história, sou o sonho de uma geração e de gerações que vieram antes da minha”, disse, lembrando os “companheiros que morreram pela democracia e pelas liberdades”⁹² (Cantanhêde, 2003).

Once elected, Lula represented the victory of a whole generations, of those who had fought for democracy coming from left-wings cultural background.

Looking in retrospective at the same sentence, we can observe how he was already pushing on the symbolic values of his victory. This, however, wasn’t just a partisan interpretation, but the general reaction from Brazilian society and media: three movies about the history of the newly-elected President started to be produced, and even newspaper exalt the symbolic values of his election and personal myth. Due to the enthusiasm surrounding Lula, as traditional in Brazilian politics, bandwagon started very soon; former President José Sarney, who actually endorsed him already during the campaign, was one of the most enthusiastic supporters in the establishment, as his column published at the end of December shown:

“Lula chorou pela sua vida. Suas lágrimas vêm do sofrido povo nordestino, gente de andantes cuja dor começa naquilo que lhe é negado pela lágrima dos céus: a chuva. Elas passam pela figura de sua mãe, tão forte em seu lembrar -e como as mães marcam as vidas de retirantes! [...] Quando vejo as tias de Lula e seus irmãos, aquela gente rija e sofrida, tenho orgulho do Brasil. Em nenhum país do mundo isso poderia ocorrer. [...] a sua (história) é um símbolo para os brasileiros⁹³” (Sarney, 2002)

⁹² I’m not the result of an election, I’m the result of a story, I’m the dream of a generation and of many generations who came before mine”, he said, remembering the “comrades who died for democracy and freedom” (own transl.)

⁹³ Lula was crying for his life. His tears came from the struggle of the people of the northeast, wandering people whose pain start from what they didn’t receive from the tears of the sky: rain. The tears came from the figure of his mother, a strong presence in

Lula's origin and the fact that he was a migrant coming from the northeast, was highlighted and became one of the most important part of the narrative surrounding the new President; after many "Caravanas", he was reaffirming his proud heritage as a man from the northeast, asking his colleague to visit the region, in order to see misery with their own eyes.

While the attention toward the northeast was unprecedented, and even if "change" was the first word of his inauguration speech, Lula's first two years as a President were characterized by continuity in relation to Cardoso's administration. This, of course, provoked tension inside the majority, but Lula's "honeymoon" with the voters allowed him to avoid strong criticism at least until the approval of the pension reform, when some members of the Partido dos Trabalhadores voted against the government as then founded a new party, PSOL

The famous "tripé macroeconômico", the economic matrix created during Cardoso's second term, stay untouched. The biggest change introduced by Lula was to place fight against hunger as the main goal of the government. Bolsa Família, that we will analyse in further details in the chapter about the "Questão Nordeste", was of course one of the cornerstones of PT's strategic approach to the topic; for now, we are interested to the narrative surrounding the programme, the inclusion of the outsider and the creation of the new image of President Lula.

During the press release of the Programme, Lula's words were pretty clear:

Milhões de pessoas no nosso país sobrevivem em condições desumanas e até passam fome. Temos o compromisso, assumido desde o primeiro dia de governo, de acabar com essa situação. Nós, que estamos entre os que têm cidadania, sabemos que se o Brasil incluir socialmente essa grande parte da população secularmente excluída, o nosso país vai melhorar e, não tenho dúvida, melhorar muito. É preciso construir uma ponte entre esses dois mundos. E o nome dessa ponte chama-se oportunidade. Toda a Nação vai se beneficiar

his memory- and how much mothers mark the life of migrants! [...] When I see Lula's uncle and his brothers, those tough people who had suffered, I'm proud of Brazil. In no other countries of the world this could have happened. [...] his own (story) is a symbol for all the Brazilians. (own transl.)

*com isso. [...] Milhões de famílias brasileiras, até hoje excluídas dos direitos mínimos de cidadania, estão sendo protegidas para que possam olhar para si mesmas e descobrir suas próprias forças de emancipação. Para que possam olhar para os seus filhos e enxergar um futuro melhor. Para que possam pensar e sentir o Brasil como um país do qual fazem parte. Um país de todos brasileiros e brasileiras*⁹⁴. (Lula, Programa Bolsa-Família 2003)

The discourse followed campaign's one: the inclusion of the outsider into citizenship was the "mission" of his administration; while at first it might look close to some paternalistic views of social policies, or to previous populist experiences, the main difference in Lula's narrative was the importance of individual trajectory and emancipation, inside of a larger process of social mobility. At this point, he was still rejecting to play the role of the "saviour"; on the contrary, fight against hunger, inequality and social exclusion were presented merely as an "obligation" of the Government.

The absence of radical changes of the economic system, while the administration focused instead on social programs, lead us to consider PT as a social-democratic party, rather than a socialist one. Even Anthony Giddens, one of the most influential scholars behind the idea of a "Third Way" and one of the fathers of Tony Blair's "New Labour", when asked about Lula's administration in 2003, affirmed that "Lula fits into Third Way theoretical thought because he

⁹⁴ Millions in our country survive in unhuman conditions and suffer hunger. I'm compromise, ever since the first day of the government, to end this situation. We, those who have citizenship, know that if Brazil would be able to socially include this large portion of the population historically excluded, our country is going to improve, I have no doubt about it. We need to build a bridge between those two worlds. And the name of this bridge is opportunity. All the Nation is going to benefit from it [...] Millions of Brazilian families, excluded from basic citizenships' rights, are going to be protected to allow them to discover their own emancipatory strength. To allow their sons to see a better future. To allow them to think and feel Brazil as a country that they belong to. A country for all the Brazilians. (own transl.)

is a social democrat who wants to help the poor and, at the same time, promote economic growth”. (Giddens, 2003)

If Lula’s new attitude was clear in domestic policy, internationally his focus on fighting inequality and hunger was even clearer; while nationally he avoided any kind of confrontation with economic powers, internationally he was fighting to promote incremental changes in the economy; contrary to what he wanted just ten years later, when he was asking for radical reforms, this time Lula was willing to play by the rules given by the international system, A perfect examples of his posture came from two important speeches made in 2003 and 2004, during G8 meeting and General Assembly of the United Nations:

*“Necessitamos forjar um novo paradigma de desenvolvimento que combine estabilidade financeira com crescimento econômico e justiça social. Hoje queremos crescer com financiamento sustentável, distribuindo renda e fortalecendo a democracia. [...] Olhando a história contemporânea, sobretudo nos períodos que se seguiram a graves crises econômicas e sociais, vejo que o desenvolvimento se deu a partir de profundas reformas sociais. Essas reformas incorporaram milhões de homens e mulheres à produção, ao consumo e à cidadania e criaram um novo e prolongado dinamismo econômico. Foi assim nos Estados Unidos a partir dos anos 30. Foi assim no pós-Segunda Guerra, na Europa. O Brasil e muitos países em desenvolvimento fizeram, na última década, o esforço exigido pelas estratégias econômicas predominantes. Mas não houve avanços importantes no combate à exclusão social. [...] não queremos o olhar piedoso dos países ricos. Necessitamos soluções estruturais que devem fazer parte de um conjunto de mudanças na economia mundial”.*⁹⁵ (Lula, G8, 2003)

⁹⁵ We need to forge a new developmental paradigm that combines financial stability with economic growth and social justice. Today, we want to obtain growth with sustainable financing, distributing wealth and strengthening democracy. [...] Looking to contemporary history, following deep social and economic crisis, I see that development started from profound social reforms. Those reforms included millions of men and women into production, consumption and citizenship, creating a new and long economic dynamism. Is what happened in the United States from the ‘30s. It was like that post

As exortações do grande artífice do “New Deal”, Franklin Roosevelt, ecoam com atualidade inescapável: “O que mais se necessita hoje é de audácia na experimentação.” “O que mais se deve temer é o próprio medo”. [...] Se fracassarmos contra a pobreza e a fome, o que mais poderá unir-nos?”⁹⁶ (Lula, ONU, 2004)

With his international discourse, Lula tried to reach two goals: led the reforms of the international system and make a good “first impression” as President, since he was still perceived as an exponent of Latin American anti-Americanism and anti-imperialism. Lula presented a moderate version of himself, while advocating for changes, in a remarkable balance between appeasement, praise and critiques. Quoting Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his New Deal or, indirectly, the Marshall Plan, served both purpose: on one side, his reference to “good practice” coming from the United States were useful to reassure listeners about the direction that he wanted to follow; on the other side, he used the two plans to criticize mainstream economic agenda of the Washington Consensus and the idea of States’ role in economics needed to be minimum. Even the way in which he decided to present what his administration was doing in Brazil served the same purpose: when he was talking about what we have called “inclusion of the outsiders”, he spoke first about their inclusion into production and consumption, or better to say, market economy, obtaining a “lasting economic dynamism” as a consequence.

War World II, in Europe. Brazil and other developing countries in the last decade went through the effort requested by mainstream economic strategy. But there was no important progress fighting against social exclusion. [...] We don’t want merciful gaze from the rich countries. We need structural solution, part of a structural plan in the global economy. (own transl.)

⁹⁶ The exhortations of the great creator of the “New Deal”, Franklin Roosevelt, echoes more than ever: “What we need more is being audacious in our experiments”: “What we have to fear the most is fear itself”. [...] If we fail in our fight against poverty and hunger, what could unite us? (own transl.)

If Lula's attitude, both internationally and on domestic politics, was characterized by continuity and incremental reforms rather than disruptive changes, it was also due to the nature of Brazilian system and to the peculiar balance of power produced by 2002 election.

While Lula's legitimacy and strength were very high, the same cannot be said about PT, or at least not in same proportion. Even if the party had been able to elect the biggest group in the Chamber of Deputy, with 91 MP's, the coalition in Lula's support could count only with 130 Deputies. Even considering other parties of the left, as traditionally intended, Lula was still far from having a stable majority in his support in the Congress. Bandwagon and pragmatic alliances came in his support, but the price to pay was a different "balance" of the coalition, "pushed" toward the centre, especially once PMDB accepted Lula's invite to support the administration.

Knowing the characteristics of "Presidencialismo de coalizão", is easy to understand not only Lula's attitude and communicative style during the first years, but also what happened in 2005. We are talking, of course, about Mensalão: at the beginning of 2005 the newspaper "Veja" published on his website a video in which the director of the Departamento de Administração de Material Mauricio Marinho accepted a bribe, revealing the existence of a corruption scheme leaded by PTB's Roberto Jefferson, part of the majority in Congress. One month later Jefferson released an interview to the "Folha de S.Paulo" in which he denounced the existence of a monthly payment scheme (and from there, the name "Mensalão") involving PT's leaders, responsible to pay other deputies to vote in favour of the government; among the others, the Ministro da Casa Civil Dirceu, the President of the Party Genoino, the coordinator of Lula's campaign between 1989 and 1998 Gushiken, and the Ministro da Fazenda Palocci were the biggest names involved in the scandal. Few months later even Mendonça admit that, for 2002 campaign, he was paid on an off-shore bank account. (Flynn, 2005)

While some newspaper, like Veja, started a campaign for the impeachment, the scandal never reached Lula; the same Jefferson, in his interview, swear that when he informed the President about the existence of the scheme, he was caught

unaware and started to cry; the 12th of August, during a press conference, Lula asked for forgiveness, sweating that he didn't know anything about the scandals prior to "Veja's" revelations.

But why the "Mensalão" is so important for our analysis? First of all, there is no doubt that the revelation of the corruption scheme was a point of no return for the Partido dos Trabalhadores, and for the government. While many historic leaders had to leave the party, a new group took control of the administration. Dilma Rousseff took advantage of this "revolution", became Ministro da Casa Civil and the most precious ally of the President. At the same time, the Mensalão is the moment in which Lula's electoral realignment started: while it became tangible only one year later, with the results of 2006 Presidential election, the polls following the scandal showed that Lula's popularity was highly affected by Mensalão in the south and southeast, while stayed intact in particular in the north and northeast.

Looking at the periodical evaluation of the government made by Datafolha, in July Lula had the worst one of his administration, with only 35% of citizens who considered it "great or good", while for 23% it was "bad or really bad". Looking at disaggregated data, however, we can observe different trends: if in the south the majority of the people consider the administration as bad or really bad, while in the north and northeast Lula's popularity was still high.

If we compare those data with the one of 2002 Presidential Election, we can observe another big change, a shift of his "core" supporter: for the first time, his results were better among those who earned less than 5 minimum wages, rather than among middle class, well-educated voters. (Datafolha, 2005).

How can we explain those two trends?

For what concerns the difficulties among middle class and richest voters, there is no doubt about the importance that corruption plays in their own evaluation, as we will see better in the following chapters; for now, is enough to remember that already in 1954, in an article published on "Cadernos do Nosso Tempo", political moralism was considered "the ideologic superstructure of the middle class", and we have to remember that corruption played an important role

in almost all the important political crisis in the history of the nation, starting from the Vargas Era to Collor's one.

As about the region in which Lula was stronger, the majority of the newspaper and even the scholars at that time focused on Bolsa Familia and in general on welfare policies to explain the success in poorest regions; without any doubt, as we will show in the chapter about the "northeast question", the inclusion of the outsider through social policies and improvement of material condition was a fundamental factor to explain Lula's consensus. Here, however, we are suggesting a different interpretation, without refusing to acknowledge the importance of the welfare system implemented; we want to focus, first, on the way in which Lula was able to build his personal consensus.

The President was well aware of the difficulties to regain the support of middle-class voters, prevalent in the south and southeast; as a consequence, he decided to "invest" on poorest sectors, and in particular focus on his relation with the people of the northeast. He wasted no time in his communicative shift, as the newspaper reported during his first visits in the northeast after the scandals:

"Ontem, ele fez questão de repetir que é nordestino e que é o primeiro presidente "em muitos anos" a se preocupar com a região. [...] aos nordestinos "que como eu sabem o que é sobreviver nesta terra muitas vezes abandonada, governada por gente do Sul ou do Sudeste do país, que viu o Nordeste apenas como um celeiro de pobreza ou de desgraça", disse, ovacionado. E citou que, no passado, governantes achavam que o nordestino "nasceu para trabalhar de servente de pedreiro". "Quando criticam os nordestinos, fico imaginando o que seria o Brasil nos primeiros três séculos de descobrimento se não fosse o Nordeste sustentar o restante do Brasil."⁹⁷ (Flor, 2005)

⁹⁷ Yesterday, he repeated that he came from the northeast and that he is the first President worried about the region "in many years". [...] north-eastern that "like me know how it is to survive in this land, often abandoned, governed by the people of the south or the southeast of the country, that saw the northeast as a barn of poverty and disgrace" he

On the following day, during another speech, he was still remarking his origin and his identity as a man from the northeast:

“Convivi com minha mãe até 1980, quando ela morreu, e nunca vi, em nenhuma situação, nenhuma, por pior que fosse, ela perder a esperança. Não tinha jeito de você ver a minha mãe sentar numa mesa, mesmo quando não tinha o que comer [chora], e perder a esperança. [...] Digo isso porque cada vez que venho para o Nordeste a gente olha a cara do povo e a gente percebe o povo sofrido, e muitas vezes as pessoas perdem a esperança, muitas vezes desanimam e vão para São Paulo. E quem chega a São Paulo hoje não tem a mesma sorte que eu tive em 50. Naquele tempo era menos violência, a gente tinha mais oportunidade. Não era hoje, que chega a São Paulo e, se não tem parente, vai para baixo de uma ponte.” (Victor, 2005)

While, as we have seen, Lula’s biography had been already used to build his consensus, looking at the coverage in the newspaper is pretty clear that the references to his origin and to the fact that he “belonged” to the northeast increased a lot. The two quotes reported are just an example of the kind of discourse chosen by Lula: he praised the people from the region, highlighting their qualities and their resistance in face of difficulties; while it could look just a standard way to please the audience, we need to remember that, over the course of Brazilian history, negative stereotypes about the inhabitant of the region were pretty common in the mainstream narrative. For an Italian reader, economic inequality leading to negative stereotypes about the people coming from one particular region must feel like a well-known history; there are many parallels that can be traced between the southern question and the “questão nordeste” in Brazil, and actually those who first introduced the concept in Brazil “borrowed” it from Gramsci’s work, of course adapting it to their reality.

said, while being cheered. And he said that, in the past, those who governed thought that the north-eastern “was born to work as hodman”. When they criticize the north-eastern, I imagine what this country would have been during the first three centuries after the discovery if the Northeast wasn’t there to sustain the rest of Brazil. (own transl.)

The stereotypes about the people of the northeast are directly linked with racial relations: we cannot forget, in fact, that the northeast is the region with higher concentration of afro-descendant and “pardo”, a term used to talk about those who have mixed ethnic ancestors, and that racism is still strong in the country.

While other President had already made reference to their origin as people from the northeast, none of them shared any characteristics with the majority of the population of the region. Is not by chance that, one years later, in the months leading up to 2006 election, when asked about the quality of the Presidential candidates, the voters highlight Lula’s origin as his main strength:

*“A “afinidade com os pobres e a origem humilde” são as duas principais qualidades do presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, destacadas entre 2.828 eleitores entrevistados pelo Datafolha em 177 municípios, em todas as unidades da federação [...] A identidade de Lula com os pobres é lembrada sobretudo no Nordeste”.*⁹⁸ (Delgado, 2006)

The strategy of “identification” between Lula and the voters was remarked even in the official song of the campaign, that not by chance followed one of the traditional musical rhythms of the northeast:

*“O Brasil quer seguir em frente, com primeiro homem do povo Presidente; [...] E o primeiro presidente que tem a alma do povo e a cara da gente: São milhões de Lula povoando esse Brasil, homens e mulheres, noite e dia, a lutar por um país justo e independente, onde o Presidente é povo e o povo é Presidente. E’ Lula de novo com a força do povo”*⁹⁹ (HPEG, Lula, 2006)

⁹⁸ The “affinity with the poor and humble origins” are two of the main qualities of President Lula, according to 2828 voters interviewed by Datafolha in 177 municipality, in all the State of the Federation. [...] Lula’s likeness with the poor is remembered mainly in the Northeast. (own transl.)

⁹⁹ Brazil wants to continue going forward, with the first man of the people as a President; [...] He is the first President with the soul and the face of the people. There are millions of Lula living in this Brazil, men and women, night and days, fighting for a Nation fair

But Lula's new communication didn't stop there; he started also to suggest that the northeast must become the priority of his, or of any administration:

“O Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva defendeu que a União priorize as regiões mais pobres na hora de fazer investimentos e disse que isso só não acontece por causa da "mediocridade política do Brasil"”¹⁰⁰ (Fernandes, K, 2005a)

“Lula disse que está lendo a biografia do ex-presidente e que quer fazer no Nordeste, com a transposição de águas do rio São Francisco, o mesmo que o norte-americano fez no Tennessee, na década de 30, com as obras da TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority), no rio Colorado. [...] “Ele [Roosevelt] tomou a decisão de priorizar o desenvolvimento daquela região, hoje uma das mais ricas dos EUA. Por que não dar essa oportunidade ao Nordeste brasileiro?”¹⁰¹”(Fernandes, K., 2005b)

The “run for the northeast”, to “conquer” the region, was not a peculiarity of the sitting President; as a reaction to Lula's strategy, even his most important rival, Geraldo Alckmin, was using the same instruments, trying to present himself as a man from the northeast too:

and independent, where the President is the people and the people are the President. Is Lula again, with the strength of the people. (own transl.)

¹⁰⁰ President Lula suggested that the Union need to prioritize the poorest region when making investments, and affirm that this didn't happened only because of Brazilin's politic mediocrity (own transl.)

¹⁰¹ Lula said that he is reading the biography of the former president and that for the northeast he wants to do, with the transposition of the waters of Rio São Francisco, the same thing that the north-American did in Tennessee, during the '30s, with the works of TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) with Colorado's River. He [Roosevelt] decided to give priority to the development of that region, nowadays one of the richest of the United States. Why we cannot give the same opportunity to Brazilian northeast? (own transl.)

“E, na tentativa de conquistar popularidade no Nordeste, disse ter origem nordestina e que o presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva “é de São Paulo”. “Quero deixar claro o seguinte: a minha origem é nordestina”, repetiu em várias entrevistas o governador, que nasceu em Pindamonhangaba (SP). “Quando a minha família veio de Portugal, da Espanha, ela veio para a Bahia, para Carinhanha”, afirmou. “Eu nasci em São Paulo, mas minhas raízes são nordestinas. Eu sou baiano”¹⁰²”. (Guibu, 2006)

Alckmin foi a João Pessoa para receber o título de “cidadão paraibano” concedido pela Assembleia Legislativa do Estado, “por serviços prestados à Paraíba”. Em seu discurso de agradecimento, o governador paulista lembrou que nasceu em Pindamonhangaba, que fica no Vale do Paraíba. “De certa forma, eu já era paraibano”¹⁰³. (Fernandes, K, 2006)

While Alckmin probably said the second sentence as a joke, even if the journalist didn’t report it in that way, his attempt to create some kind of resemblance between himself and the people of the northeast looks at least clumsy for a man born and raised in the State of São Paulo, whose tie to the region can only be traced back to the experience of the first migrants, that of course often arrived in the country in the northeast due to obvious geographical reasons.

The simple fact that a man like Alckmin, whose identification with the traditional establishment of the south and southeast was as strong as it could be (his uncle had been a Minister of the Supremo Tribunal Federal and his great-

¹⁰² In an attempt to conquer popularity in the northeast, he said that he has north-eastern origins, and that President Lula is “from São Paulo”. “I want to make it clear: my origins are from the northeast”, he repeated in many interviews. The Governor, born in Pindamonhangaba (SP). “When my family arrived from Portugal, from Spain, they arrived in Bahia, in Carinhanha” he affirmed. “I was born in São Paulo, but my roots are on the northeast. I am from Bahia”. (own transl.)

¹⁰³ Alckmin visited João Pessoa to receive the title of “citizen of Paraíba” granted him by the Legislative Assembly of the State for “his service to Paraíba”. In his acceptance speech, the Paulista’s governor remembered that he was born in Pindamonhangaba, in the “Vale do Paraíba”. “In a way, I was already paraibano” (own transl.)

uncle had been vice-President of the Republic) tried to gain consensus in that way, show us that, maybe for the first time ever, the northeast had become a centrepiece of Brazilian politics. In this sense we can start to talk about a “new centrality of the northeast” from this moment: once the outsiders started to become insiders, they “gained” citizenship and, therefore, started to be “interesting” for politics too. They were not anymore just “object” of politics, a “voto de cabresto” in the hands of local oligarchy.

Lula’s strategy to conquer popular support in the region of course was far more complex than just portrait himself as a man from the northeast or to compare the region to one of the most developed of the United States; Kennedy Alencar gave us some insights about PT’s strategy leading up to 2006 in his column of the Folha de S. Paulo:

“A retomada de uma teoria conspiratória para inviabilizar o governo do PT é uma “arma secreta” que o presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva guarda para usar na campanha eleitoral [...] Nesse contexto, Lula e o PT deverão radicalizar a estratégia de tentar opor pobres à elite. As acusações de corrupção contra o PT e o governo seriam tratadas como manobras de uma elite insatisfeita com um governo voltado para os mais pobres. [...] Lula deverá centrar suas forças ainda mais no eleitorado pobre da região Nordeste e das grandes periferias urbanas.¹⁰⁴ (Alencar, 2006)

What Alencar defined as a “conspiracy theory” was just the reprise of Lula’s old discourse, the opposition between people and elites that they have already used over the course of the electoral campaign at the end of the ‘80s and during the ‘90s. This time, however, Lula’s advantages in comparison with the previous runs was his chance to use “retrospective votes” in his favour. Lula’s campaign

¹⁰⁴ The resumption of conspiracy theory to make unviable PT’s government is the “secret weapon” that President Lula saved for the electoral campaign [...] In this context, Lula and PT will radicalize their strategy to oppose the poor to the elite. The accusation of corruption against PT and the government are treated as a strategy of the elite, unsatisfied with a government for the poorest. [...] Lula will focus on poorest voters from the northeast and from the periphery of the urban areas. (own transl.)

recovered some elements of class warfare too, but in a different fashion: ideology was out of the picture, and the working class was replaced by “the people”, especially the poorest, against a small fraction of the elite. His discourse was a well-balanced mix of two elements: Lula as the man of the people, who fought to reduce inequality and against a small fraction of greedy elite, and Lula the man able to negotiate and to build a strong social agreement between classes.

During the campaign, references to the “pequena elite preconceituosa” (small elite with prejudice), (Epaminondas, 2006) reference to himself as “vítima do ódio da elite paulista contra restante do país” (victim of the hate of Paulista’s elite against the rest of the country) (Spitz, 2006) or to the fact that he was criticized because he was giving priorities to lower income voters were frequent. (Guerreiro, 2006)

While this kind of narrative could look like traditional class warfare or resemble populism, Lula’s ability was to identify as “elite” only a small fraction of the establishment, the one expressed by PSDB and his allies. Is not by chance that he talks about the “elite paulista”, since Alckmin was from there; and is not by chance also that, while his communication seems to suggest confrontation with some sectors, his political agenda and policy promoted in the meanwhile were still the same, in order to strength the social agreement created over the course of the first term. For this reason, while 2006 election represented a difficult moment for the survival of the social agreement, the breaking point was far from being reached; the overall economic performances, in fact, kept it alive and actually made it even stronger in Lula’s second term than in the first one.

While some “old” habits of previous campaign reappeared, some new trends were “born”; for the first time, Lula started to compare himself and his trajectory to the ones of other historical figures, not only “national” but international, outside from socialist or purely leftist “pantheon”. We have already seen, for example, the reference to Roosevelt, but the most shocking comparison made by

the President were the one with Tiradentes¹⁰⁵ and in particular with Jesus. (Pagnan, 2006)

The reason behind the comparison was the supposed “treason” made against him by his colleagues with Mensalão. In his narrative, Lula, like Jesus and Tiradentes, was betrayed by a friend; the first “germs” of a messianic view of his own figure were already present. To say it simpler, is not so usual for someone to compare himself to Jesus, especially in a culture profoundly characterized by his religiousness, and the fact that Lula was willing to do it can be seen as a first “trace” of a bigger trend. Even more, both Tiradentes and Jesus ended their life with a sacrifice for “their” people, an attitude for martyrdom that the same Lula will show later on in his career.

The success of Lula’s strategy, trying to appeal to less educated voters, mainly located in the poorest regions of the country, is pretty clear when we look at the data: the sitting President was the preferred candidate for 53% of the voters who had just attended the “Ensino fundamental”, while receiving only 28% of the consensus from those who had higher level of education. The same pattern is observable if we look at income distribution, with Lula obtaining 55% of the preference from those who make less than 2 minimum wages, and with his percentages decreasing as the income increase, with only 25% of the votes among those who earn more than 10 minimum wages. Once again, however, a classic “classist” approach cannot be enough to understand the situation; once we look at the data about geographical distribution of the votes, in fact, the results are even more impressive: Lula obtain more than 63% of the votes among the people living in the northeast, and almost 51% of those in the north. At the same time, the results were pretty bad especially in the south and in the centre-west of the country, where Alckmin received 52 and 55% of the votes in the first round. Even more, in the ballot Lula lost in all the State of the South, traditionally

¹⁰⁵ Joaquim José da Silva Xavier, better known as Tiradentes, was the leader of the Inconfidência Mineira, a separatist movement seeking independence from Portugal during the colonial era. Tiradentes was first imprisoned and then killed. He is recognized as one of the most important national heroes.

those in which he and his party were stronger since the foundation, while he was winning with at least 60% of the votes in the States of the northeast, with impressive results such as the 84,6% in Maranhão or the 82,3% in the State of Ceará. The results were basically a confirmation not only of the polls made after the scandals, but the proof that Lula's electoral strategy worked, since he won the with more than 65% of the preferences. Lula's consensus, however, was not followed by the one of his party: for the first time, in fact, PT lost ground when compared to the previous election, being able to elect "only" 83 deputies, with PMDB becoming the first party in Congress, with 89 deputies.

Even more, the sitting President's consensus was not translated into more votes for his party neither in the States in which he was stronger; just to make few examples, if in the State of Amazonas Lula received 78.10% of the votes but PT ended only in fourth place, with 11,3%; in the State of Bahia, where for the first time PT was also able to elect a Governor with Jaques Wagner and Lula had 66,65% of the votes in the first round, PT ended with only 19,7%; in Maranhão, where Lula had 75,56% of the consensus, his party only had 7,8% of the votes in the race for the Chamber of Deputy.

The so-called "Lulismo" had become by far stronger than "Petismo" at that point, and is not hard to understand why: first of all, the scandals that involved the party didn't reach the President; second, and most important, his personal communication was completely different than the previous one, with almost all the references to PT suddenly disappeared from his electoral ads and with red of PT replaced with the yellow and green of the flag.

2006 represented the "death" of the old Partido dos Trabalhadores: if Lula's leadership was getting bigger years after years, reaching a point in which in 2002 he was able to impose his own rules to the party, at least until the Mensalão he had to share power with others, in particular José Dirceu, often referred as the "mastermind" behind Lula. From 2006, on the contrary, Lula became by far bigger than the party, that ended his slow transformation from a collective organization, founded from society-based movement, into a personalistic one. The word of Olívio Dutra can help us understand the belief shared inside of the "first" PT, but also to highlight the situation changed over the course of the years:

“Não elegemos o Lula e a Dilma de cima para baixo. Eles foram eleitos por conta das experiências que o partido vinha demonstrando ter na administração pública municipal e estadual. Então é o Lula que foi eleito? Não, foi um projeto que ele representava, um projeto social político que tinha um histórico. [...] se não fosse essa inserção do partido nessas áreas importante evidentemente não se teria condições de apresentar um Presidente da República, mesmo com a história que tem o Lula¹⁰⁶. (Dutra, 2019b)

While there are no doubts about PT’s collective nature in the first phase of his story, and about how much the same nature of the Partido dos Trabalhadores helped Lula to become a viable candidate for the Presidency, we have to disagree with Dutra here; as we have seen already in 2002 Lula’s leadership was far more important than the role of the party, while PT still occupy a central role in national politics; in 2006 then, Lula was elected for being Lula, the popular hero, rather than for being the working-class leader, expression of PT’s social battles, as the party was really fragile at that moment.

The same Dutra, over the course of the same interview, gave us another interesting insight about regional differences in the country, that can help us understand why Lula the popular hero worked better in some region than in others:

“nunca deixamos de entender que o partido é um projeto coletivo, não é um projeto pessoal de alguém. Mesmo que Lula seja uma liderança importantíssima, além inclusive do PT. Mas o PT não é um partido de um homem só, não é um partido de um caudilho, não é um partido do personalismo..., mas tem uma cultura popular, particularmente no centro-oeste, nordeste do país...tem essa visão quase messiânica da política. O que não é o caso nosso,

¹⁰⁶ We didn’t elect Lula and Dilma top-down. They were elected thanks to the experiences and to what the party had been able to demonstrate in our administration at municipal and states level. Was Lula the one elected? No, it was the project that he represented, a social-political project that had his story. [...] without this integration of the party in important areas, clearly, we wouldn’t have the condition to present a President of the Republic, not even one with Lula’s history. (own transl.)

embora tivesse também na história do Rio Grande do Sul figura caudilhistas; mas o PT sempre teve claro que não era assim, a política é a construção do bem comum com protagonismo das pessoas e o patrimônio público está acima de um interesse privado particular das pessoas, quem que seja¹⁰⁷” (Dutra, 2019c)

While, on principle, Dutra would not agree with our analysis about the transformation of the party, since he still believe that PT can be considered a collective enterprise, his evaluation about the “messianic” culture in some regions support our theory about Lula’s transformation. And, even believing in his theory about PT as a collective party, there is no doubt about Lula’s importance on overall predominance over the organization that he helped to found at the end of the ‘70s, as the same Dutra seems to recognize when he said that “Lula goes beyond the party”

Similar interpretation about Lula’s leadership over the party were made by two important scholars, Francisco de Oliveira (who left PT in 2003) and André Singer (press secretary of the President of the Republic during Lula’s first administration.

“Lula distanciou-se ostensivamente do PT. Somente recorreu ao partido, e a setores de esquerda fora do PT, no segundo turno, quando viu sua reeleição ameaçada. Proclamados os resultados, logo fechou um acordo com o PMDB para, juntos, dominarem a Câmara dos Deputados e o Senado [...] o governo terá maioria no Congresso, mas é quase certo que o balcão de negociações entre as várias siglas e o Executivo será mais amplo do que no primeiro mandato. [...]

¹⁰⁷ We never stopped believing that the party was a collective project, not someone’s personal project. Even if Lula is an important leader, who goes beyond the party. But PT is not the party of a man, is not a party of a “caudillo”, is not a party of personalism... but there is a popular culture, particularly in the centre-west, northeast of the country... they have this vision of politics that is almost messianic. Which is not our case, even if there are some “caudillos” in the history of Rio Grande do Sul; but PT always had clear that it wasn’t like that, that politics is the construction of collective well-being with the people as protagonist, and public heritage is above any private interest of a person, whoever he might be. (own transl.)

ao elegermos Lula, parecia ter sido borrado para sempre o preconceito de classe, e destruídas as barreiras da desigualdade. Ao elevar-se à condição de condottiere e de mito, como as recentes eleições parecem comprovar, Lula despolitiza a questão da pobreza e da desigualdade. Está-se frente a uma nova dominação: os dominados realizam a “revolução moral” [...] que se transforma, e se deforma, em capitulação ante a exploração desenfreada.”¹⁰⁸. (Oliveira,2007)

“O lulismo, que emerge junto com o realinhamento, é, do meu ponto de vista, o encontro de uma liderança, a de Lula, com uma fração de classe, o subproletariado, por meio do programa cujos pontos principais foram delineados entre 2003 e 2005: combater a pobreza, sobretudo onde ela é mais excruciante tanto social quanto regionalmente, por meio da ativação do mercado interno, melhorando o padrão de consumo da metade mais pobre da sociedade, que se concentra no Norte e Nordeste do país, sem confrontar os interesses do capital. Ao mesmo tempo, também decorre do realinhamento o antilulismo que se concentra no PSDB e afasta a classe média de Lula e do PT, criando-se uma tensão social que desmente a hipótese de despolarização da política brasileira pós-ascensão de Lula¹⁰⁹” (Singer, 2012, 9-10)

¹⁰⁸ Lula distanced himself from PT. He only recurred to the party and to extra-PT left in the second round, once the re-election seemed under jeopardy. After the results, he made a deal with PMDB to dominate the Chamber and the Senate together. [...] the government will have the majority in Congress, but is almost certain that negotiations between different parties in the Executive will be larger than in the first term. [...] electing Lula, class stereotype seemed to be deleted forever, and the barrier of inequality destroyed. Elevating himself to the status of “condottiere” and myth, as recent election proved, Lula depoliticized the questions of poverty and inequality. We are facing a new domination: the dominated realized a “moral revolution” [...] that transform itself, deform itself, and surrender in front of unstopped exploration. (own transl.)

¹⁰⁹ Lulismo, that emerges with the realignment, is, from my point of view, the meeting between a leadership, Lula’s one, with a fraction of a class, the underprivileged, thanks to the programme outlined between 2003 and 2005: fight against poverty, mainly where

While both scholars agreed on Lula's centrality over the party, their analysis of the victory was pretty different, even due to their starting point: on one side, Oliveira, a Marxist speaking from the "left" of the party and on the other Singer, still a member of PT and really close to the President.

While Oliveira highlights the fundamental role of right-wing parties and the difficulties to criticize the administration "from the left", Singer, while recognizing that Lula decided to avoid conflict with the "capitals", focused on the contraposition between Lulismo and anti-lulismo and, as a consequence, between PT and PSDB.

The main difference between the two analysis, however, was the one about "politization" or "de-politization" of Brazilian politics: on one side, Oliveira point out to the "corruption" of the administration in front of the interests of the "capital", on the other Singer believed in a confrontation between higher and lower classes that would last over the course of the years.

This debate will be central even to understand the evolution of Lula's character and of his party over the course of his second term and Dilma's one term and a half.

3.3 The most popular politician on earth: Lula and the "complexo dos vira latas"

"Quatro anos atrás, nesta Casa, em um primeiro de janeiro, vivi a experiência mais importante de minha vida --a de assumir a presidência do meu país. Não era apenas a realização de um sonho individual. O que então ocorreu foi o resultado de um poderoso movimento histórico do qual eu me sentia --e

is more excruciating, both socially and regionally, thanks to the activation of domestic market, improving consumption standards of the poorest half of the society, which is concentrated in the North and Northeast of the country, without colliding with the interest of the capital. At the same time, another realignment happened and the "anti-lulismo" revolved around PSDB and pushed middle class away from Lula and PT, creating a social tension that denies the hypothesis of de-polarization of Brazilian politics after Lula's ascension (own transl.)

*ainda hoje me sinto-- parte e humilde instrumento. Pela primeira vez, um homem nascido na pobreza, que teve que derrotar o risco crônico da morte na infância e vencer, depois, a desesperança na idade adulta, chegava, pela disputa democrática, ao mais alto posto da República. Pela primeira vez, a longa jornada de um retirante, que começara, como a de milhões de nordestinos, em cima de um pau-de-arara, terminava, como expressão de um projeto coletivo, na rampa do Planalto*¹¹⁰. (Discurso de Posse, Lula, 2007)

*“Quero dizer para vocês que sou Presidente de todos, sem distinção de credo religioso, sem distinção de compromissos ideológicos. Sou Presidente de todos sem me preocupar com a origem social de cada um. Mas não se enganem, mesmo sendo Presidente de todos eu continuarei fazendo o que faz uma mãe, eu cuidarei primeiro daqueles mais necessitados, daqueles mais fragilizados, daqueles que mais precisam do Estado brasileiro*¹¹¹” (Discurso de Posse, Lula, 2007b)

Lula’s second term started exactly as the first one ended, with the President speaking mainly to the poorest, and in particular those from the northeast, his new core voters.

¹¹⁰ Four years ago, in this House, January 1st, I lived the most important experience of my life -assuming the Presidency of my country. It wasn’t just the realization of a personal dream. What happened was the results of a powerful historical movement in which I felt- and I’m still feeling- part and humble instrument. For the first time, a man born in poverty, who had to defeat the chronic risk of death during childhood and won, later on, the lack of hope as an adult, reached, at the end of a democratic dispute, the highest position of the Republic. For the first time, the long day of a migrant that started, as the one of millions of people from the northeast, on a truck, ended as an expression of a collective project, on the Planalto’s ramp. (own transl.)

¹¹¹ I want to tell you that I’m everyone’s President, without distinction of religious belief or ideologic commitments. I’m everyone’s President, without being worried about everyone’s social origin. But don’t get me wrong, even if I’m everyone’s President, I’ll still continue to do what a mother would do, I’ll take care first of those who needed it the most, the most fragile, those who need more the Brazilian State. (own transl.)

Politics however was pretty different from narrative: Lula started to build pragmatic alliances exactly since the beginning, in particular with PMDB, Being the leader of a weaker party if compared to his first term, coalition building and negotiation became even a bigger part of his everyday job.

The economic situation, however, helped him to keep his popularity and to negotiate from a position of strength; the years between 2003 and 2010 were characterized by one of the best economic performance of the history of the nation: GDP was constantly growing, with an average rate of more than 4% per year, while 40 million people improved their life, being protagonist of an upward social mobility without precedent. At the same time, the PAC (Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento) launched by Lula and his Ministro da Fazenda Guido Mantega at the beginning of the second term represented a change in the economic strategy, finally closer to the so-called “neo-desenvolvimentismo” and less to the “neo-liberalism” of Cardoso’s era, even if fundamentals of the economy were not changed.

While the economy was one of the explanation behind Lula’s popularity, the “ammunition” for his own self-promotion and propaganda came from other key moments that defined his second term. In the domestic debate, the discussion about Brazil as a “middle-class country” was for sure the most important source of legitimacy. On the international level, four moments were fundamental for the new international role of Brazil: we are talking about the election of Brazil to host 2014th FIFA World Cup, the moment in which the country was chosen to host 2016 Olympic Games, the following cover on “The Economist” about Brazilian take off and, last but not least, the quote chosen as the title of our paragraph, the moment in which the newly-elected United States President Barack Obama greeted Lula as the “most popular politician on earth” before a G-20 meeting.

Let’s start our analysis with the two sport events, 2014th FIFA World Cup and Rio Olympic Games of 2016. For those who are not sports fan, it could seem meaningless to talk about sports events in this context; however, as we know, at least ever since the beginning of the XX century sports competition were used by politicians to reinforce their leadership, or as a “PR stunt” to promote their

country around the world. 1936 Olympic Games are known worldwide as the biggest example of the close relation between propaganda and sports; in Brazil, a strong tie between sports, politics and nationalism was already present in 1950, when the country organized the FIFA World Cup, using the event as a “self-presentation”, trying to give an example of Brazil greatness with the construction of the Estadio Maracanã, the biggest stadium in the world at the time, able to host more than 100000 people. With the national team defeat in the final, the experience of 1950 is remembered as a failure for the country, and the relation between nationalism, politics and sports suffered a strong setback; the nation didn’t host any big events for many years, even if football remained an important way to promote national identity and strength, in particular once the “Seleção” won the World Cup.

Before going further and see how Lula’s administration recover sports as an instrument to affirm Brazil as an international power, we have to explain why, theoretically, we are suggesting that sport events can play an important role into politics. The main reference came from Joseph Nye and the concept of “soft power.” According to Nye, considering power as “*the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants*”, while traditionally we are used to think about it as hard power, there is another source of power not linked with military strength or economic ones.

A country, or an individual, could obtain his desired outcome in global politics thanks to the ability to “co-opt people rather than coerce them.”

Soft power is strongly linked with the ability to attract someone, and in a way is similar to seduction; the final goal is to use this “weapon” to shape someone else preferences, leading to the desired outcome in the interaction without having to use the force, but rather because the others want to reach it too. Soft power rests mainly on three factors: culture, political values and foreign policy (Nye, 2004). There is no doubt that football plays a big role in Brazilian culture, and that can be seen as a potential source of soft power, if used correctly. If football per se can be seen as one of the most important aspects of Brazilian culture, the organization of a mega sports event is by definition a chance to exercise soft power, if we consider that the proof of their economic viability and

rentability are scarce, but we are still seeing nowadays a “run” by many emerging countries to organize them¹¹². This is the context in which we need to discuss Brazilian project to host both the World Cup and the Olympics between 2014 and 2016.

Brazil’s election to host the World Cup was actually undisputed, since no other country present his candidacy; once FIFA officially announced that the candidacy was approved, Lula’s official speech was very revealing about Brazilian attitude, and mainly about the true reason why they were adamant to host, linked with national perception of Brazil worldwide:

*“Nós estamos aqui assumindo uma responsabilidade enquanto nação, enquanto Estado brasileiro para provar ao mundo que nós temos uma economia crescente, estável, que nós somos um dos países que está com a sua estabilidade conquistada. Somos um país que tem muitos problemas, sim, mas somos um país com homens determinados a resolver esses problemas. [...] a coisa que mais irá empolgar os jogadores, os jornalistas e os dirigentes [...], mas será o comportamento extraordinário do povo brasileiro. O tratamento que esse povo dará, estejam certos que marcará a história das Copas do Mundo”.*¹¹³ (Lula, World Cup 2014th assignation, 2007)

Few weeks after FIFA’s announcement Marta Suplicy, Minister of Tourism, presented an even more ambitious: World Cup wasn’t enough, Brazil wanted to host the Olympics in 2016, in Rio de Janeiro,

¹¹² Just to give few recent examples we can remember both 2010 and 2022 FIFA World Cup, hosted respectively by South-Africa and Qatar, and also 2008 Beijing Olympics, or the increasing number of middle-eastern country hosting various sports events ranging from Formula 1 Grand Prix to Wrestling shows.

¹¹³ We, as a nation, accept the responsibility to prove to the world that we are a growing economy, stable, that we are one of the countries that was able to conquered its own stability. We are a country with many problems, yes, but we are a country determined to solve them. [...] the thing that will thrill players, journalist and executives will be the extraordinary behaviour or Brazilian people. The welcome of our people will give you, be sure about it, will mark the history of the World Cups. (own transl.)

Brazil's candidacy was presented at IOC meeting of 2009; in two years the international affirmation of the Nation had made enormous steps forward, with the economy still growing after the great economic crisis and his position among the "BRICS" stronger day after day. We can see this difference looking at Lula's speech when it was time for the President to officially present Rio's candidacy to host the event:

“Entre as dez maiores economias do mundo, o Brasil é o único país que não sediou os Jogos Olímpicos e Paraolímpicos. Entre os países que disputam hoje a indicação, somos os únicos que nunca tivemos essa honra. Para os outros, será apenas mais uma Olimpíada. Para nós, será uma oportunidade sem igual. Aumentará a autoestima dos brasileiros, consolidará conquistas recentes, estimulará novos avanços. Essa candidatura não é só nossa. É também da América do Sul, um continente com quase 400 milhões de homens e mulheres e cerca de 180 milhões de jovens. Um continente que, como vimos, nunca sediou os Jogos Olímpicos. Está na hora de corrigir esse desequilíbrio. [...] Para a América do Sul, será um momento mágico. Para o movimento olímpico, uma oportunidade de sentir o calor de nosso povo, a exuberância da nossa cultura, o sol da nossa alegria. E de passar uma mensagem clara para o mundo: as Olimpíadas pertencem a todos os povos, a todos os continentes, à humanidade inteira. [...] Acabo de participar da Cúpula do G-20, em Pittsburgh, na qual se desenhou, por consenso, um novo mapa econômico mundial. Esse mapa reconhece a importância de países emergentes como o Brasil no cenário global e, sobretudo, na superação da crise mundial. Tenho o orgulho, como brasileiro, de ter participado desse processo e de ver o Brasil como parte da solução. A parceria que a candidatura do Rio propõe à família olímpica leva em conta esse novo cenário, no qual nosso país conquistou o seu lugar.¹¹⁴” (Lula, IOC, 2009)

¹¹⁴ Among the ten biggest economy of the world, Brazil is the only one that never hosted Olympics and Paralympics games. Among the countries competing, we are the only ones who have never had this honour. For the other, it will be just another Olympics. For us, it will be a unique opportunity. It will increase the self-esteem of Brazilians, will consolidate recent conquer, will stimulate new advances. This candidacy is not just ours.

Lula's attitude in 2009 was radically different from 2007; of course, we are talking about two speeches made in different moment, with the first one being an "acceptance" speech and the second one to "boost" Rio's candidacy. Nevertheless, we can still compare the two pronunciations, that give us a good example on how both Brazil international perspective and posture had changed over the course of the years.

In the first one, we can clearly see Lula being grateful for the opportunity given to the country, highlighting the unique things that Brazil could provide to the World Cup, but at the same time recognizing the "problems" faced by the country, as a response to the critiques made about the lack of infrastructure and security. Just two years later, however, we can observe another Lula; without any doubt, the need to "fight" against other candidacy is one of the key factors behind the speech, with the President using rhetorical arguments; anyway, "his" Brazil presented in the speech was already pretty different from the one of 2007.

He is not "asking permission" to host the event, he doesn't feel the need to justify some of the shortcoming of his country; is evident that the President was speaking from a position of strength, demanding to host the Olympics because it was the right thing, since the country and the region never had the chance to do it and, most importantly, because Brazil deserved it, being one of the biggest economies in the world.

It belongs also to South America, a Continent with almost 400 million men and women and almost 180 million young people. A Continent that never hosted Olympic Games. Is time to correct this imbalance. [...] For Latin America, will be a magic moment. For the Olympic movement, an opportunity to feel the warmth of our people, the exuberance of our culture, the sun of our happiness. And to give a clear message to the world: the Olympics belongs to all the people, all the continents, to the whole humanity. [...] I was part of the leadership meeting of G-20, in Pittsburgh, in which, by consensus, a new world economic map was drawn. This map recognized the importance of emerging country like Brazil in the global scenario and, mainly, to overcome the global crisis. I am proud, as a Brazilian, of being part of this process and to see Brazil as part of the solution. The partnership that Rio's candidacy propose to the Olympic family considers this new scenario, in which our country conquered his place. (own transl.)

2009's Lula was, without any doubt, a bolder actor in the international arena if compared to the one of just two years earlier. Once Rio was selected as the hosting city of the Olympics, the reaction in Brazil and the legitimacy gained by the President was impressive:

“A sexta-feira, 02/10/2009, marca duas comemorações para o Brasil: o dia em que o Rio bateu Madri, Tóquio e Chicago para hospedar as Olimpíadas de 2016 e também o dia em que o Lulinha brasileiro venceu Barack Obama, presidente da maior potência mundial, o primeiro negro a presidir os EUA, ainda envolto numa estupenda aura internacional. [...] A sensação de que Lula é "o cara", e ainda por cima um cara de sorte, passou de mente em mente no Brasil e deve ter corrido o mundo¹¹⁵” (Cantanhêde, 2009)

Even foreign press recognized the strength of Lula's discourse, and how he was fundamental in order to allow Rio's victory:

“Their X Factor was the passionate advocacy of Brazil's charismatic president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who argued the case for the IOC to break new ground and take the Games to South America for the first time, moving away from the endless round of Olympics in North America, Europe and the Far East”. (Radford, 2009)

“Rio had the emotion,” said Livingstone, who just before the voting began Friday, posted a story headlined “President Lula Stirs More Emotion Than President Obama in Final Presentation.” (Vogel, 2009)

¹¹⁵ Friday, 2/10/2009, was a moment that needs to be celebrated in Brazil: the day in which Rio defeat Madrid, Tokyo and Chicago to host 2016 Olympic Games, and also the day in which Lulinha the Brazilian defeated Barack Obama, President of the biggest international power, first African American President of the United States, still surrounded by a wonderful international aura. [...] The feeling that Lula is “the man”, and even more the man of destiny, was present in every mind in Brazil and must have “run” also all over the world. (own transl.)

Newspaper published both in Brazil and in the United States place two of the biggest political figures of the time, Lula and Obama, one against the other, due to Chicago's defeat in the same run; the President of the United States even decide to participate in the meeting of the International Olympic Committee to endorse the candidacy with an official speech, that of course backfired one Chicago was eliminated. While, of course, Lula didn't "defeat" Obama, the participation of both Presidents and the victory of the Brazilian city was an enormous source of pride for the whole nation, a matter of self-esteem for the country. The importance of Rio's victory was highlighted by the foreign press, who recognized it as the definitive affirmation of both the country and his President:

"Lula will be rewarded with yet another venue to showcase Brazil and to signal the country's growing international influence. In short, the Olympic Games will reaffirm the government's international reputation as a leader among emerging nations. [...] International sports tend to mirror politics. Friday's decision will reveal, yet again, that Brazil is an emerging power, and that it has the talent, infrastructural capacity, and political commitment needed to play competitively in global political (and athletic) games. Such an endorsement will only boost Lula's ability to shape international discussions and forge closer ties with other foreign leaders." (Gomes, 2009).

"The vote of some 100 committee members could stamp an exclamation point on his legacy (Lula's) as one of Brazil's most popular presidents this century" (Barrionuevo, 2009).

As we will see later on, is ironic that one of those big sports events, the Confederation Cup hosted in 2013 as a test before the FIFA World Cup, will start, rather than Brazil affirmation as a superpower, the beginning of the end of the hegemony build by Lula and his party. But in 2009 being selected to host the two biggest sports events of the world was the concrete representation of a bigger trend, the one of self-affirmation of the country.

The international legitimation became possible because Brazilian economy was finally growing in what seemed to be a sustainable and inclusive way; if

Lula's strategy was based on reduction of inequalities and the creation of a strong internal market, the natural consequence was that many people were able to improve their own way of living, with poverty rate reduced from 36% to 24.9%.

While, of course, many articles and reports talked about it, especially focusing on the early results of government programme such as Bolsa Familia, the one published on "The Economist" about "new middle class" in Latin America had a massive impact on national debate.

Brazilian middle class became one of the main topic of discussion, first among scholars and, one year later, on the mass media, after the publication of "A nova classe media", a research coordinated by Marcelo Neri and published by the "Fundação Getúlio Vargas"

The basic idea behind Neri's work was that, between 2002 and 2008, the so-called "classe C", the middle one of income distribution, had become the one in which the majority of the Brazilian could be collocated; if, in 2002, 44,19% of the population could be considered part of the "middle class", in 2008 this percentages was up to 51.89%.

While we are not discussing Neri's results here, is important to remember that the definition of middle class chosen need to be explained; in fact, he decided to use a pure economic definition of what could be considered middle class, setting a certain level of income per capita, and calling all of those who belong to that range as member of the middle class. It was, in other words, an economic definition of social classes that didn't account for other social or cultural variables; for that reason, in the following years, many others published their own interpretation of similar data, talking about an affluent working class, reduction of working poor or in general about better paid workforce. (Souza, 2010, Pochmann, 2012 and 2014) While we believe that the definition of affluent working class is the most appropriated one for what happened in Brazil, what is really important here is to see how the public debate was shaped by the "news" of Brazil as a "middle class country".

Lula was, of course, the first one to exploit the results, and he did it in the grandest stage possible, during his speech in the General Assembly of the United Nation, hosted while the effects of the Great Recession of 2007 were already

evident all over the world. Brazil's economic performances and the "middle class country" were not just a matter of pride for the President, but were celebrated by all the media, domestically and internationally:

*"No governo Lula, progressos para os mais pobres têm acontecido com relativa velocidade. O petista é beneficiado por esse processo geral de melhora, por políticas que nasceram nos anos tucanos e por acertos próprios. Lula conduziu a economia com responsabilidade e acelerou o ritmo de redução da pobreza. Ele tem feito um ajuste fiscal mais duro do que o de FHC, apesar de os tucanos baterem na tecla de aumento de gastos, algo que realmente aconteceu no segundo mandato do petista. Lula massificou programas sociais tipo amostra-grátis. O Bolsa Família apanhou e apanha muito, mas tem muito mais acertos do que erros. [...] No Brasil sob Lula, a economia vai bem no geral. No entanto, os mais pobres vivem melhor do que viviam antes da chegada do petista ao Palácio do Planalto. Algum mérito Luiz Inácio deve ter tido. A classe média virou maioria da população economicamente ativa."*¹¹⁶ (Alencar, 2008)

While we will talk later about the crisis of Lula's hegemony, it is worthy to already introduce the idea that those social progress were, in some ways, the beginning of the end of PT's administration, both due to the lack a credible discourse and policies for middle class and to some kind of "culture of privilege" that his administration faced. In retrospective, an article published in 2009

¹¹⁶ During Lula's Government, progress for the poorest happened relatively fast. The "petista" is the one who benefitted from this general process of improvement, for the policies created during PSDB's years (literally, toucan, from the mascot of the party) and for what he did right. He did a fiscal adjustment harsher than Cardoso's one, even if the toucans harshly criticize the increase of social expenditure, that actually happened during the second term. He massified social program like free samples. Bolsa Familia was and still is criticised, but it did far more goods than wrong. [...] Brazil under Lula the economy is doing good. In the meanwhile, the poorest are living better than before his arrival to the Palacio do Planalto. Lula must have some merit. The middle class became the biggest part of the population that is economically active. (own transl.)

talking positively about social changes in Lula's administration contain also a reference at one of the reasons of the crisis that will come in 2013:

*“TV de tela plana, celular com câmera, carro usado, passagem aérea mais barata que viagem de ônibus -são ícones de consumo da era Lula. A contrapartida são aeroportos cheios, trânsito demais nas ruas -o país que se descobre maior e mais apertado. A velha classe média vê seus privilégios e sonhos de exclusividade frustrados pelos emergentes”.*¹¹⁷ (Barros e Silva, 2009)

For now, however, we still want to talk about positive aspect of PT's era; to do it we need to look, once more, to another article published on The Economist, that boost both internal and international legitimacy of the administration; we are talking about “Brazil Take Off”, published on the cover of the journal of November 12th of 2009:

“Brazil outclasses the other BRICs. Unlike China, it is a democracy. Unlike India, it has no insurgents, no ethnic and religious conflicts nor hostile neighbours. Unlike Russia, it exports more than oil and arms, and treats foreign investors with respect. Under the presidency of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a former trade-union leader born in poverty, its government has moved to reduce the searing inequalities that have long disfigured it. Indeed, when it comes to smart social policy and boosting consumption at home, the developing world has much more to learn from Brazil than from China. In short, Brazil suddenly seems to have made an entrance onto the world stage”. (The Economist, 2009)

While the portrait made by the journal wasn't 100% positive, with the indication of some of the problems that Brazil still needed to solve and “hubris” presented as the biggest threat for the future of the Nation, the genal tone of the report was celebratory, with the South American country recognized as the “best” among the BRICS, ready to play a decisive role on “global arena”.

¹¹⁷ Flat screen Tv, mobile phone with camera, used car, flight tickets cheaper than bus ones- are all icons of consumption in Lula's era. The counterparts are busy airports, bad traffic, a country that discover to be bigger and with less “space”. The old middle class saw his privilege and dream of exclusivity frustrated by the emergent one. (own transl.)

On the very same days of November, another international media, Forbes, celebrated the country, and in particular Lula, placing him as the 33rd most powerful man on the planet. 2009 was the “golden year” for both the country and his leader; the number 1 on Forbes list was, of course, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, and the last event that we need to consider for our analysis about Lula’s definitive affirmation see him as a protagonist.

We are talking about a small gesture made by the US President during the G20 in 2009: while Lula was talking with other leaders, Obama, in front of the cameras, emphatically shake the hand of the Brazilian, saying that he was “his man”, that he “loved him” and that Lula was the “most popular politician on earth”. The scene is pretty funny to watch, with Lula speaking with others as the US President coming back two times to talk with him. Compared to the other elements discussed, this one didn’t have any “practical” consequences for Brazil, but was important on symbolic terms.

The reaction in Brazil was stunning, as we can read on this article:

“A adulação do político mais adulado dos últimos tempos deixou Lula feliz da vida. De excelente humor e cheio de piadinhas em entrevista de meia hora na Embaixada do Brasil em Londres, o presidente agradeceu ao “gesto de gentileza” e deu a receita: “Eu trato as pessoas muito bem, eu gosto de ser companheiro”. O brasileiro chegou perto de dizer que era torcedor de Obama desde criancinha. [...] O presidente também foi todos elogios à “humildade” do colega americano, sem discussão o homem mais poderoso do planeta: “Você acha que é fácil um americano dizer isso?”, disse Lula, contando que Obama falou que era “o mais novo” e estava ali “para aprender”. [...] O vídeo com Obama é o maior sucesso de marketing de uma longa campanha para ampliar a presença do Brasil no cenário internacional, que conseguiu alguns resultados positivos nas últimas semanas¹¹⁸”. (Folha de S. Paulo, 2009)

¹¹⁸ The adulation of the most adulated politician of recent times, made Lula happy. With excellent mood, joking, in a half-hour interview in the Embassy of Brazil in London, the President thanks the “kindness” and gave his recipe: “I treat people with kindness, I

To fully comprehend the magnitude of the factor enlisted above, we need to introduce another concept or, better to say, another theory that can help us to understand something more about Brazilian culture.

To “find” it, we need to go back to the ‘50s, and in particular to the work of Nelson Rodrigues, one of the most important journalist and writer of his generation.

Writing about football and Brazilian national team, Rodrigues created the idea of the “complexo dos vira-latas”, literally mongrel complex:

“Por “complexo de vira-latas” entendo eu a inferioridade em que o brasileiro se coloca, voluntariamente, em face do resto do mundo [...] O brasileiro é um narciso às avessas, que cospe na própria imagem. Eis a verdade: não encontramos pretextos pessoais ou históricos para a autoestima.¹¹⁹” (Rodrigues, 1958)

This idea served to talk about the national team, reaching 1958 World Cup without self-esteem after the humiliation of 1950; soon enough, however the metaphor started to be used to define a general characteristic of the Brazilians. If the “seleção” had been able to overcome this complex with 1958 victory, Brazil as a nation never reached the same kind of international legitimation that the country deserved, due to continuous back and forth in the process of development.

like to be a good companion”. The Brazilian was close to say that he was an Obama’s fan since he was a kid. [...] The President praised the “humility” of his American colleague, undoubtedly one of the most powerful man on the planet: “You think that is easy for an American to say something like that?”, Lula said, recalling that Obama said he was “the newest” and was there “to learn”. [...] The video with Obama is the biggest marketing success of a campaign realized to increase Brazil’s presence on international scenario, that already obtained good results in the last few weeks. (own transl.)

¹¹⁹ With “mongrel complex” I mean the inferiority in which Brazilian placed themselves, willingly, in front of the rest of the world. [...] The Brazilian is a “reversed narcissus”, who spit in his own reflection. This is the truth: we didn’t find any reason, personal or historical, for self-esteem (own transl.)

While the concept of “mongrel complex” disappeared for many years in the public debate, the inferiority complex continued to characterize the nation, willing to play a larger role but unable to reach it, and as a consequence looking to “developed” countries with envy and intimidated.

Is not by chance that the idea of “vira latas” reappeared in the second half of the first decade of the century, once Brazilian affirmation seemed real.

Some newspaper published columns about Rio 2016 as a chance to leave the “mongrel complex” to the past. Clovis Rossi went even forward, suggesting that the country, finally overcoming the complex, had already reached the other “extreme”:

“É inegável que o presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva foi relevante para que o Brasil espantasse o complexo de vira-lata que Nelson Rodrigues via incrustado n'alma do brasileiro. Pena que o seu governo tenha trocado esse complexo pela megalomania, sem nem sequer passar por algum estágio intermediário mais consentâneo com a realidade do poder brasileiro¹²⁰.”
(Rossi, 2009)

As the concept became popular, Lula wasted no time to incorporate it into his narrative and to use the “complexo dos vira latas” as the symbol of the “old Brazil”, that his administration inherited; according to the President, thanks to the job done during his administration, Brazil had finally been able to find reason for self-esteem. One speech deserved to be mentioned, made during the campaign in support to Dilma Rousseff:

“Cada coisa que nós conquistamos em este país foi a custo de muito trabalho. A doença pior que existe na humanidade é o preconceito [...] A ignorância de algumas pessoas que só achavam que tinha valor aquilo que vinha

¹²⁰ Is undeniable that President Lula was important to allow Brazil to defeat the mongrel complex that Nelson Rodrigue saw as “encrusted” in the soul of Brazilians. Unfortunately, his government changed this complex with megalomania, without even passing through an intermediary stage, more commensurate with the reality of Brazilian power. (own transl.)

de fora. E' americano, é maravilhoso, e europeu, é extraordinário, é chinês, é fantástico, é japonês, é não sei o que lá, e se comportavam coe se fosse cidadão de segunda classe, o verdadeiro vira latas que não se respeitavam e que não tinha autoestima por si mesmo. [...] Vocês tiveram consciência de eleger um metalúrgico que tinha perdido muita eleições por ser igual a maioria do povo... e o povo não acreditava que fosse capaz de dar a volta por cima, o povo não acreditava porque nós aprendemos a vida inteira que nós éramos seres inferiores, Que pra governar este país tinha que ser usineiro, tinha que ser fazendeiro, tinha que ser advogado, tinha que ser empresário, tinha que ser doutor e mais doutor, um igual a gente não poderia governar o país, nós não sabemos governar. [...]Porque este mundo não é pra ser governado por aqueles que moram no andar de baixo, mas por aqueles que moram no andar de cima".¹²¹ (Lula, Discurso Campanha 2010)

The new narrative pursued by Lula mixed two elements of his previous communication; the idea that social mobility needed to be the main goal of an administration, and the fact that “elites” were keeping the people away from power. The “mongrel complex” was, basically, the perfect combination of those two elements: national and international elites were responsible of keeping

¹²¹ Everything we conquered in this country, was due to a lot of work. The worst disease of humanity is prejudice. [...] The ignorance of some people, who believe that the only things with value were those coming from abroad. Is American, is wonderful, is European, is extraordinary, is Chinese, is fantastic, is Japanese, is “I don’t know what”, and they acted like second-class citizens, the true “mongrel” who doesn’t have self-respect and self-esteem. You had the consciousness to elect a metallurgic, who had already lost many elections because he was just like the majority of the people... and the people didn’t believe that they were able to be on top, the people didn’t believe it because for all our life we have learned that we were inferior human being, that in order to govern this country you need to be mill owner, you need to be a landowner, you need to be a lawyer you need to be a doctor, because someone like us couldn’t govern the nation, we were not able to govern... because this world is not made to be governed by those who lived in the lower floors, but from those who live on the attics. (own transl.)

power away from the people and, thanks to their cultural hegemony, to convince the citizens that they didn't even deserved to occupy leading role in the society; as a consequence, social mobility was impossible not just for the lack of opportunity, but also because the people didn't even believe that they life could be different. Up to this point, the concept is not so different from the ones that, as we have already seen, shaped his communication in 2006 electoral campaign, with the exception of the cultural reference to Rodrigues; the real difference concerns the reason why Lula was admired and the introduction of self-esteem as a fundamental part in the construction of national identity.

If in 2002 Lula was admired mainly for an individual effort, his personal social ascension and status reached starting from the bottom, at the end of his second term he was even more admired by the people, but for a completely different reason: he was perceived as the reason behind the biggest process of social mobility in the history of the Nation.

While Lula's ambition of a national revolution had been sacrificed in favour of stability and governability, a "redemption"¹²² was happening in the country for millions of citizens. If at the beginning of his first term as a President including people into citizenship was presented as the duties of the administration, at the end of the second one Lula was recognized as the responsible for the process: he was another "pai dos pobres", the "saviour" of millions of citizens.

3.4 Conclusion

Lula's Presidency was characterized by reformism rather than revolution. The inclusion of the outsider was the core element of his administrations, declined both at national and international level. In this chapter we have focused mostly on symbolic elements, and on the inclusion through political narrative; at the same time, we have shown how Lula's transformation from popular leader

¹²² We are using the concept of redemption as defined by Loris Zanatta in his book "Il populismo gesuita", as the ambition to save the "people", in a world pervaded by sacred presence, opposed to the concept of revolution, that in his vision is typic of populism.

to another “pai dos pobres” happened over the course of his two terms, but also how a new social agreement, based on the extension of citizenship to millions of people without triggering social conflict over the distribution of resources, seemed to be the fundamental principle behind his success. As we will see later, however, the new “social contract” wasn’t based on a real agreement between social sectors, but mainly due to the absence of distributive conflicts thanks to the great overall economic performances.

At the time, however, the country seemed to have overcome the “mongrel complex”: for the first time, being Brazilian was a good reason to be proud. Brazil wasn’t anymore just the country of Carnival and football, but a growing nation, ready to play an important role in international politics, while every citizen felt that he had a chance to improve his or her life, thanks to countless economic opportunities and due to Lula’s living example: if he had been able to become President, they could do the same.

Lula ended his term as a popular hero. With a World Cup and Olympics soon to be hosted and a leader widely recognized as one of the most important all over the world, citizens had plenty of reasons to be optimistic for the future; the reality, however, was far more complex than this and the country would pay soon enough the consequences of Lula’s fragile and timid reformism.

4 SPATIAL INEQUALITY AND INCLUSION OF THE OUTSIDERS: “QUESTÃO NORDESTE”, FROM THE ORIGINS TO PT’S ERA

4.1 Introduction

If it is true the inclusion of the outsider was one of the most important elements behind Lula’s leadership, and political discourse and symbolic variables matters when we talk about consensus building, it will be naïve, however, to ignore the importance of the “material” of this process; while the inclusion of the outsider towards a specific political discourse was one of the fundamental characteristics of Lula’s era, to fully understand why 2006 electoral realignment was possible we need to analyse the process of inclusion toward the improvement of the overall economic performances.

Even more, since we want to focus on the new centrality of the northeast in Brazilian politics, in this chapter we will start from the structural inequality among different regions and the so-called “questão Nordeste”, to see how spatial inequality changed between 2002 and 2016.

During PT’s era, development with reduction of inequality was one of the main goals. Brazil was able to archive not only great economic results, but also to improve all social indicator; If we have already talked about the idea of a “middle class country”, what still needs to be discussed are the impacts in the northeast, one of the poorest regions of the country, where millions of people drastically improved their condition during Lula’s era. To understand the importance of this phenomenon, we need to look back at the historical condition of the region. We will start with a brief analysis of the economic formation of Brazil, following Celso Furtado’s researches. While it is beyond our goal cover all the history, we will focus on few important moments: starting from the colonial era, to the proclamation of the Republic, we will then talk of the ‘50s, the formalization of the concept of “questão Nordeste” and the role of SUDENE. After that, we will move to the core of our analysis, the era between 2002 and 2016, showing both PT’s strategic approach and macroeconomic results.

4.2 The origin of spatial inequality in Brazil

Spatial inequality, that was and still is one of the most important problems in Brazil, is linked with the economic formation of the country.

The Portuguese created their first settlement in the Northeast, and at first the economic system of the colony was mainly based on sugar production; to be more precise, it was an economy based on export and slavery.

As Celso Furtado wrote, sugar economy “*resistiu mais de três séculos às mais prolongadas depressões [...] sem sofrer nenhuma modificação estrutural significativa*”¹²³. (Furtado, 1959, 61)

Two main factors affected the economy of the region: from one side, the sugar market allowed the resources necessary to defend the settlement and created the condition to expand the exploration of the rest of the country; on the other side, the northeast was so closely linked with sugar production that, when at the end of XVII century the price decreased due to other tropical colonies joining the same market, it was impossible to change the vocation of the region.

When sugar economy started the stagnation, a lot of people found new occupations, or at least a way to survive, as breeders, leading to a peculiar situation. Again, Furtado’s words are useful to understand this phenomenon:

“No Nordeste brasileiro, como as condições de alimentação eram melhores na economia de mais baixa produtividade, isto é, na região pecuária, as etapas de prolongada depressão em que se intensificava a migração do litoral para o interior teriam de caracterizar-se por uma intensificação no crescimento demográfico. [...] A expansão da economia nordestina durante esse longo período consistiu, em última instância, num processo de involução econômica:

¹²³ Resisted more than three centuries to the longest recession without any structural changes. (own transl.)

*o setor de alta produtividade ia perdendo importância relativa e a produtividade do setor pecuário declinava à medida que este crescia*¹²⁴” (Furtado, 1959, 71)

The introduction of cotton plantation in the semi-arid didn't improve the situation, since the sector was characterized by low productivity; on the contrary, increased the concentration of land property and the importance of latifundium.

Once gold was discovered in the southeast at the end of XVII century, mining became the most attractive sector of the economy; however, since no other sector were developed in the region, when the production of gold declined the region roll back to subsistence economy.

As we can see, at the end of the XVIII century we couldn't talk about great differences among the regions; it was only at the beginning of the XIX century that two events created the condition for spatial inequality. First of all, with the arrival in Brazil of the royal family the capital was moved from Salvador de Bahia to Rio de Janeiro. This by itself wouldn't be enough to explain structural changes in economy, but had a great impulse for the development of the southeast, that became the centre of political and economic life, especially after the Independence and the creation of the Brazilian Empire in 1822; as a consequence. larger part of tax revenue started to be used to develop the region.

As Murillo de Carvalho wrote “*Desde a independência e, particularmente, desde o início do Segundo Reinado, quando se deu a consolidação do governo central e da economia cafeeira na província adjacente a cidade passou a ser o centro da vida política nacional*¹²⁵” (Carvalho, M, 2002, 13s)

¹²⁴ In Brazilian northeast, since food security was better in low-productivity sector, the breeding system, the stage of a long depression, in which migration from the coast to the rural area increased was characterized by a demographic increase. [...] The expansion of northeast economy during this period was, at the end, a process of economic involution: the sector with higher productivity lost his importance and productivity of livestock decreased due to the increase of the sector itself. (own transl.)

¹²⁵ Since independence, and especially from the “second reign”, when the consolidation of central government and coffee economy in the near provinces, the city became the center of national political life, (own transl.)

Another change, more important, was the increasing importance of coffee, that started to be cultivated in 1830:

“no primeiro decênio da independência o café já contribuía com 18 por cento do valor das exportações do Brasil, colocando-se em terceiro lugar depois do açúcar e do algodão. E nos dois decênios seguintes já passa para primeiro lugar, representando mais de 40 por cento do valor das exportações”¹²⁶ (Furtado, 1959, 115)

But what were the main differences between coffee and sugar economies?

Aside from productivity and technical ones, the most interesting difference for our analysis are the circumstances in which the two ruling classes were raised: if in the sugar economy the owner of plantation were linked to the “motherland”, coffee ruling class increased his power after the Independence and looked at the State as an instrument to increase their power and influence.

During XIX century this new ruling class increased his power and was able to play an important role at the end of the Empire and after in 1889, when Dom Pedro II was deposed and Brazil became a Republic.

One last factor that needs to be taken into consideration is the “Lei Aurea” of 1888, that abolish slavery. While buying and selling slave was illegal since 1850, but the State didn’t enforce the law, and trade inside the country, mainly from the northeast to the south and southeast, continued until 1888. Abolition had a great impact in an economy in which the main source of labour force in the plantation were slaves. Massive immigration from Europe, highly “sponsored” from cultural elite and government to pursuit the “branqueamento” (racial whitening) of the country, didn’t really affect the reality of the northeast, since Europeans immigrants, mainly from Italy, Portugal and Spain, went to the south and southeast. At the same time, many people emigrated from the stagnant economy of the northeast to reach the Amazon Forest, to work in the newly production of rubber.

¹²⁶ During the first decade after independence coffee contribute up to 18% of the exportation of Brazil, in third place beside sugar and cotton. In the next two decades, became the first, covering more than 40% of the exportation. (own transl.)

When the Republic was born, some regions were a lot more powerful, ready to take advantage of the situation and establish their role in national politics: it was of course the case of Minas Gerais and São Paulo.

The period between 1889 and 1930 is often referred as the politics of “café com leite”, indicating the coalition of coffee producers and farmers. During this period, the oligarchy of the two regions had great influence and was able to choose the President with little to none consideration of the ruling classes of other regions; even in the few cases in which the President wasn’t from one of the two provinces (States as we know didn’t exist at that time), they had a fundamental role in the selection process. In exchange for their support, the oligarchy of the Province had massive autonomy in local politics and the President didn’t interfere in Governor decisions. For the ruling class of the time development means developing their own business.

“Café com leite” came to an end in 1930 with the “Revolução do 1930”, the coup guided from the ruling class of Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul and Paraíba that gave the presidency to Getúlio Vargas. One of Vargas’ goal after the creation of the “Estado Novo”, was the centralization of the State, to reduce the influence of local oligarchies. Again, there were no policies to deal with regional inequality; on the contrary, the period between the proclamation of the Republic and the ‘50s was the one in which spatial inequality increased more.

Collection of economic data at the end of XIX century was very scarce, and therefore is hard to describe the actual situation; however, due to what we know historically about “café com leite” and the economic system of the northeast, we can say that the importance of the second one decrease during that era. We have some data from the 1920; as Alexandre Barros showed, between 1920 and 1953 we can see a constant pauperization of the citizen in the northeast, looking at GDP per capita: if in 1920 GPD per capita in the region was 52% of the national average, 23 years later it was only 37%. (Barros, 2012, 87)

The process of industrialization, that took place in the big cities of the south and mainly in São Paulo, exacerbated the differences among regions even if, at least until the ‘20s, his importance inside national economy was very low.

The period between 1830 and 1920 was the one in which the level of regional inequality increased the most; after Independence the economy was driven mainly by interest of the new ruling class, living in the southeast, and there wasn't any political initiative to reduce this trend.

4.3 Celso Furtado, “questão nordeste” and SUDENE: the revolution that never was

Even if almost no one cared about spatial inequality, we cannot say that both scholars and politicians were not aware of the problem. Since the beginning of the XX century, in fact, the problems of the northeast were a topic of discussion:

“não e’ de hoje que se luta no Brasil por uma solução construtiva para o problema do Nordeste. [...] Pode-se dizer que, nos três últimos quartos de século, o Nordeste tem constituído uma preocupação constante para os homens de governo deste país e também que, tão antigo quanto essa preocupação, tem sido o descrédito que existe na região com respeito a capacidade do governo para enfrentar o problema¹²⁷” (Furtado, 1962).

Until the end of the ‘50s, however, a comprehensive explanation of this phenomenon was still missing: at first the discussion focused mainly on the “semiarid”, one part of the northeast, and the consequences of climate and frequent drought have on the economy.

The “revolution” happened in 1959, with the publication of “A Formação Econômica do Brasil”, a book that is still fundamental to understand Brazilian economic structure. In the same years President Juscelino Kubitschek created SUDENE (Superintendência de Desenvolvimento do Nordeste) following Furtado’s suggestion and giving him the direction of the organism.

¹²⁷ The struggle to find constructive solution to solve Northeast’s problems didn’t start now. [...] We can say that, in the last three quarters of a century, Northeast was a constant worry for the man who govern this country and that, as old as our preoccupation, has come the disbelief about the capacity of the government to challenge the whole problem. (own transl.)

Furtado actually started his “plan” at least one year earlier, with the creation of GTDN (Grupo de Trabalho para o Desenvolvimento do Nordeste).

Four main area of intervention were identified to develop the region:

1. Promoting industrialization in the north-east
2. Change agricultural product in order to guarantee food for urban areas
3. Increase productivity and the resistance to drought in the semi-arid
4. Expanding the “agricultural frontier”

But why at the end of the ‘50s politics start to deal with the problem of the northeast? First of all, the main reason were two droughts, one at the beginning of the decade and the other in 1958, that affected agriculture of the region.

Political context also needed to be taken in consideration: Kubitschek firmly believed in the necessity to implement an economic plan for development, an attitude that he resumed as “50 anos em 5.”¹²⁸ It was the golden era of “desenvolvimentismo”, that will return to play a larger role as economic strategy after the Mensalão. To understand why politics was worried with the northeast in those years, we cannot forget both the role of the “ligas camponesas” (who fought to create unions of rural workers and were perceived as a threat due to their link with the Partido Comunista do Brasil) and of some journalist, like Antonio Callado, who published various report at the end of 1959 on “Correio da Manhã”, one of the most important newspaper at the time, denouncing the oligarchy in the northeast and the so-called “indústria da secas.”¹²⁹

SUDENE, however, was highly criticize since his creation. The biggest came from the oligarchy of the region, who saw their position endangered.

¹²⁸ Kubitschek’s promise was to reach the results of 50 years of economic development in the 5 of his term. To do that, he elaborates an historic plan of industrialization and modernization of the country, the “plano das metas” that contained 30 point concerning different areas of action during his government.

¹²⁹ With “indústria das secas” Callado was talking about the behavior of various politicians, that use the drought as a way to receive more money from central government, but didn’t really spend them helping the population but to foster their own position or the one of their allies.

Looking at the debate following the presentation of the first plan of action to the Congress in 1960, it was clear that reaching the goals established would be pretty difficult. One of the Congressman even affirmed that *“Celso Furtado elaborou um verdadeiro plano subversivo para o Nordeste, fazendo eclodir através da Sudene a atmosfera social explosiva de uma guerra civil”*¹³⁰. (Cardozo, 1960, 38)

Furtado was criticized also in the newspaper, with various accusation:

*Assim prossegue a dança fatal sobre o abismo! Se a missão do sr. Celso Furtado é promover a rebelião das massas camponesas, levar os nordestinos ao desespero, semear a fome na região, “comunizar” o Nordeste e o Brasil, rendamos homenagens ao grande artista que soube hipnotizar dois governos.*¹³¹ (Figueiredo, 1963)

*Essa Aliança [para o Progresso] não pode ser instrumento de avanço para o progresso do Brasil enquanto a economia brasileira estiver nas mãos do dr. Celso Furtado, porque ele é um tipo de comunista chinês que não quer entendimento com o Ocidente. Se fosse possível trazê-lo até Kruchev ainda havia esperança de um diálogo com a Casa Branca. Mas Furtado é da espécie asiática.*¹³² (Chateaubriand, 1963)

¹³⁰ Celso Furtado create a subversive plan for the northeast giving space (literally, making visible) through SUDENE an explosive social atmosphere of civil war” (own transl.)

¹³¹ We are still dancing on the brink of the abyss! If Mr. Celso Furtado’s mission is to promote mass rebellion of rural workers, drove north-eastern to hopelessness, plant hunger in the region, communize the northeast and Brazil, we need to tribute the great artist who was able to hypnotize two government” (own transl.)

¹³² This “Aliança para o Progresso” cannot be an instrument to improve and develop Brazil if the economy is still in the hands dr. Celso. Furtado, because he is like Chinese communist that didn’t want anything to do with Occident. If it was possible to move him to Kruchev’s position, maybe there was some possibility to talk with the White House. But Furtado is an Asian species. (own transl.)

Criticism, however, didn't affect neither SUDENE's work nor Furtado's career: when Jânio Quadros became President, his role was confirmed, actually with more importance since he became an official member of the government, who took part in all the ministerial meeting. In 1961 SUDENE's experience founded a good partner in the "Alliance for Progress", a ten years plan for Latin America created by President Kennedy.

Furtado's importance continued to increase in the following years, and in 1962 President João Goulart appointed him as the first "Ministro do Planejamento do Brasil". When the "revolution" seemed to be on his way to be realized the government was overthrown with the military coup of 1964; Celso Furtado, like many others, lost his political right with the AI-1 (Ato Institucional N°1) and left the country. SUDENE as conceived by his intellectual creator came to an end, even if the institution survived. Few years later, in an interview published on "Le Monde", asked about the situation of the northeast Furtado said that "*o problema do Nordeste e' atualmente tão grave, e mesmo mais, do que há quinze anos, quando se instalou o regime autoritário*"¹³³ (Furtado, 1979)

4.4 Re-democratization and the '90s: lack of social policies and PT's first program for the northeast.

After this long historic introduction about the "questão nordeste", some reader might feel lost, not understanding why we have chosen to go back centuries from the focus of our analysis. To understand the peculiar relationship between Lula and the northeast, however, was fundamental to understand the context in which Lula created his hegemony in the region, and which pre-conditions allowed it; last but not least, we must understand first how and why spatial inequality was one of the key questions concerning the quality of democracy in Brazil.

The period between 1964 and the early 2000 was characterized by a general disinterest for the region. If we exclude a brief period at the beginning of the

¹³³ The problem of the northeast is as serious, if not worst, then it was 15 years ago, when the military regime took power (own transl.)

“economic miracle”, during the military regime the situation of the northeast only got worst. At the beginning of the “Nova Republica” the “questão Nordeste” wasn’t perceived as an important topic of discussion; the focuses were the stabilization of national economy and the fight against inflation, especially during Collor and Franco’s governments.

After the Plano Real, Fernando Henrique Cardoso’s neoliberal agenda didn’t include any plan to reduce spatial inequality. The only initiatives of the government in relation to the northeast were focused on the punctual problem of frequent drought, as the name of the two mains programs implemented suggest: “Projeto Áridas” and “Programa Federal de Combate os Efeitos da Seca”.

Looking to the Partido dos Trabalhadores, the first plan for the northeast was created only after the first election of 1989, as a programmatic document from the “governo paralelo”

The “Projeto para o Nordeste”, published in December of 1990, was a 28 pages platform including structural economic reform to archive growth and social inclusion. The “governo paralelo” started his analysis from the problematic debate about the region:

*“A questão do Nordeste, que nos anos 50 elevou-se ao nível de uma das grandes questões nacionais, foi durante o largo do período autoritário e na “Nova República”, conduzidas em segundo plano, despolitizada, e transformada num mero problema regional. [...] A ditadura e a “Nova República” mantiveram, das inovações produzidas pelo vasto movimento democrático e popular que culminou na criação da SUDENE, apenas os incentivos fiscais que se transformaram em privilégios, favores e conluio da burocracia com o empresariado privado”*¹³⁴ (Governo Paralelo, 1990, 4)

¹³⁴ The Northeast question, that in the ‘50s was one of the great national questions, during the authoritarian era and the “New Republic” was placed on the background, depoliticized and transformed in a mere regional problem. Dictatorship and “New Republic”, among the innovations produced by the vast democratic and popular movement that ended with SUDENE’s creation, kept only tax relief, transformed in privileges, favours and collusion of bureaucracy with private entrepreneurs (own transl.)

The vision that will guide all social policies implemented from PT as a ruling party was already present in this first plan: the problems of the region were not unique, but affected, in different way, all the country:

“O primeiro ponto de uma concepção estratégica para a transformação do Nordeste consiste em elevá-lo ao nível das grandes questões nacionais. Não apenas pelas necessidades do Nordeste, mas pelo fato de que todo o país se “nordestiniza”, como mostra o Desenvolvimento brasileiro desde os anos 60. A concentração de renda, a vasta existência de pessoas em atividades precária, a privatização das políticas sociais públicas, a queda real e persistente dos salários e rendimentos da larga massa da população brasileira apontam no sentido dessa nordestinização”¹³⁵ ((Governo Paralelo, 1990, 4)

The inspiration to Furtado’s work was pretty clear, with various references at the “original” SUDENE as a result of participatory democratic experiences, and even in the content of the plan of action.

The plan of the “governo paralelo” consisted in:

1. **Agrarian Reform**, changing traditional agriculture and the rules for occupation and use of the land, distributing them in order to fight against excessive concentration of property.

2. **New financial plan for development**, that want to change the system of tax relief and the role of BNDES (Banco Nacional do Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social) and BNB (Banco do Nordeste Brasileiro)

3. **Transformation of propriety and Socialist Project**, creating public propriety and dividing it among entrepreneurs, workers or the State itself.

¹³⁵ The first point of a strategic idea to transform the northeast consisted in elevating it as one of the great national question. Not only for northeast necessities, but because all the country was “northeasterized”, as Brazilian development shows since the ‘60s. Concentration of wealth, the large number of people working precarious jobs, privatization of social public policies, the continuous decrease of real wages and income of a large part of the population, point to this “northeasterization” (own transl.)

4. Industrial development, strengthening and increasing the role of the State as entrepreneur, stimulating the creation of different industrial production, not linked with raw material, to overcome the dependence from agriculture.

5. Science and technology, with a program to save the only two Federal University in the whole region and to create new research centre.

6. Energy, with an increasing role of hydroelectric production aside from the use of natural gas

7. Role of social sector in the transformation strategy, a point in the program that comprehend various topic, starting from the necessity of better education and an increased role of the State in social policies.

The second part of the document, called “compensatory action, emergently and unavoidable”, contained the idea of social policies, not better defined, that needed to be created and managed with the help of social movements to break clientelism, and some measures to deal with the high importance of informal sector, with the creation of a social pension system. The last section of the document was instead dedicated to the frequent drought.

The program of the “Governo Paralelo” of course was never implemented; however, some of the point contained in this program were still part of Lula’s program when he became President in 2002.

4.5 Lula’s government: the inclusion of outsider

Is time to turn back to the core of our analysis: Lula’s era. If we have already talked about inclusion of the outsider, in this chapter, considering mainly economic factors, we can start from Marta Arretche definition of the same process: “*a incorporação à titularidade de direitos de aposentadoria, saúde e educação*”¹³⁶ (Arretche, 2018)

Following her approach, we will focus mainly and the extension of well-defined rights, but trying to include in her definition the idea of inequality as a multidimensional phenomenon, as intended for example in the Multidimensional Poverty Index

¹³⁶ “The ownership of retirement, health and education” (own transl.)

A natural consequence of the creation of any right is the division between those who saw it recognized and those excluded. Every public policy creates, as a consequence, insiders and outsiders.

According to Arretche, the process of inclusion during the Nova Republica happened in two phases, the first one with the Constitution and the second due to the changes of the rules created during the constituent process; in her interpretation, during the Constituent, the force of the left cannot explain this movement of inclusion, since the “progressive” sectors were only 48 out of 559. As for the process of inclusion “inside” of the rules created, she affirms that due to the high number of poor voters, conservative and the left tend to converge to similar program in order to dispute the votes¹³⁷.

However, even if the Federal Constitution of 1988 was an important moment for the “inclusion of outsider” we cannot forget that, looking at almost all social indicators, until 2002 the real extension of the rights was very limited. If is true that the electoral competition pushed conservative parties toward “more progressive” positions in relation to social programs, it was only with Lula’s first term that comprehensive initiatives against inequality became fundamental for the Federal Administration.

Social policies, of course, didn’t start with Lula; during the last years of Cardoso administration, some programs were implemented: is the case of the PGRM (Programa de Ingresso Mínimo Garantido) of 1998, substituted three years later by Bolsa Escola and Bolsa Alimentação; if during Cardoso’s presidencies social programs where a small part of his plan, implemented in a residual way, for Lula were the defining characteristics of the administration.

He made his compromise with eradication of poverty clear already during the inaugural speech:

“Em quanto houver um irmão brasileiro ou uma irmã brasileira passando fome termos um motivo de sobra para nós cobrir de vergonha. Por isso defini entre as prioridades do meu governo o programa de segurança alimentar que leva o nome de fome zero. [...] Se, ao final de meu mandato, todos os brasileiros

*tiverem a possibilidade de tomar café da manhã, almoço e jantar, terei cumprido a missão da minha vida.*¹³⁸ (*Discurso da Posse, Lula, 2003*)

In the first year of his administration, “Fome Zero” (Zero Hunger) was implemented, based on a project created by the “Instituto Cidadania”.

The program had an ambitious goal: guarantee food security to all. The potential beneficiaries were 9.3 million families, more or less 44 million people, who make less than 1 dollar per day. Even if PT recognized that in the northeast the situation was worst than in others regions, poverty was diffused in the Nation: it was the idea of “northeristization” of Brazil. The data, taken from PNAD (Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios) and from 2000 Censo Demográfico support their theory: even if in the northeast 48,8% of people were poor, the national average was still alarming, with 27.8%.

PT’s “Fome Zero” was a multidimensional plan, comprehending both structural economic reforms and specific policies to improve life conditions and local economies. The structural reforms included historical PT’s principle, such as agrarian reform or the creation of a social pension. Basic income was another historic battle, coming from Eduardo Suplicy; the idea included in the program was a universal basic income as a right for all the citizens, linked with educational program and microcredit. (Projeto Fome Zero, 2001)

The whole plan was conceived as a structural policy: they wanted to create a welfare system, not a measure to solve punctual problem. This intuition is in line with André Singer’s idea of Lula’s era as the Brazilian version of Roosevelt’s New Deal, and to Timothy Power and Wendy Hunter intuition to compare Bolsa Familia to the Social Security Act of 1935. (Singer, 2012)

Fome Zero, created in 2003, was actually unified with other programs in Bolsa Familia, to make it more efficient, less bureaucratic and easier to control.

¹³⁸ Until there will be brother and sister hungry in Brazil, we will have reasons to be ashamed. So, among the priorities of my government there is a programme of food security called “Zero Hunger”. [...] If, at the end of my term, all the Brazilian could eat breakfast, lunch and dinner, I’ll have reached the goal of my life.” (own transl.).

Let's just look at some very basic data: the beneficiaries are people in poverty or extreme poverty; in 2020 were considered in extreme poverty people with less than 89 R\$ per capita per month, and in poverty the one with less than 178 R\$ per capita per month. The families need to be inscribed in the "Cadastro Único para Programas Sociais do Governo Federal" and, after that, the Ministério do Desenvolvimento Social (MDS) select, automatically, the family that can be part of the program.

The cash transfer, made on a credit card on the name of the woman in the family, is composed by various parts (a basic one, equal for all, and an amount that depending on factor as the number of children or their ages).

There are some conditionalities: children need to be enrolled in school and attend at least a certain percentages of school's hours (85% under 15 years old, 75% between 16 and 17); they also needs be vaccinated, and the same is true for breastfeeding mothers, who also need to do periodical medical check up.

In 2004, just few months after his creation, 6.571.842 families were already beneficiaries of the program, with an estimation of 29.434.905 individuals. Eight years later, in 2012, the program reached his peak, with 58.158.900 beneficiaries, 28.36% of Brazilian citizens. The number of households actually continued to increase until 2014, reaching 14.003.411 families, but the number of people and the percentages among citizens decreased, probably showing the inclusion of less numerous households among the beneficiaries. One of the most interesting things about this program is the financial part: in order to be effective, the program need a large budget; we are talking about 29.974.727.387 R\$ in 2017. But we look at it as a percentage of Brazilian GDP, it cost only 0.44% of it. Even more, as many studies point out, targeting a population so poor, all the money invested within the program are immediately spent into real economies, since beneficiaries need the money received to survive. As we can imagine, due to difference in development among the various part of the country, the impact of the program was bigger in some region: of the 13.826.716 family beneficiaries, 6.998.996 of them live in the northeast. (Faulbaum, 2014)

In 2011 Bolsa Familia was included into Dilma Rousseff's new plan, "Brasil sem Miséria", created to reinforce social programs created in Lula's administration. Dilma's principles were the same of the previous administration:

"A luta mais obstinada do meu governo será pela erradicação da pobreza extrema e a criação de oportunidade para todos. Uma expressiva mobilidade social ocorreu nos dois mandatos do presidente Lula, mas ainda existe pobreza a envergonhar o nosso país e a impedir a nossa afirmação plena como povo desenvolvido. Não vou descansar em quanto houver brasileiros sem alimentos nas mesas, em quanto houver famílias no desalento das ruas, enquanto houver crianças pobres abandonadas à própria sorte [...] esta não é tarefa isolada de um governo, mas um compromisso a ser abraçado por toda sociedade. [...] A superação da miséria exige prioridade na sustentação de um longo ciclo de crescimento. É com crescimento que serão gerados os empregos necessários para as atuais e as novas gerações".¹³⁹ (Discurso de Posse, Dilma Rousseff, 2011)

"Brasil sem miséria" created an official line of extreme poverty for the country, try to universalize the access to social security measure with the active research of the beneficiaries, increasing the resources for social program like Bolsa Familia and "Benefício de Prestação continuada" (a social pension for elder citizens or people with disabilities) and focusing more on active to create opportunities for poorest people, to archive social mobility.

¹³⁹ The most stubborn fight of my government will be for the eradication of extreme poverty and creation of opportunity for everyone. An important social mobility happened during Lula's two terms, but poverty still exist and is a shame for our country, preventing our affirmation as a developed nation. I will not rest until there will be Brazilians without food on their table, until there will be discouraged families in the streets, until there will be poor children abandoned at their own luck. [...] This is not an assignment just for the government, but a compromise that all the society need to embrace. [...] Overcoming misery need to be a priority based on long term growth. With growth we can create the jobs needed for current and future generations. (own transl.)

Bolsa Familia is one of the most studied social programs not only in Brazil but all over the world, both as a good practice and for his political results. As we will argue in the next chapter, there are no evidence of the clientelist nature of Bolsa Familia, but on the contrary the program can be seen as a way to “free” people from traditional clienteles and “discretionary” social program managed by local politicians and leaders. While it will be impossible to talk about the material inclusion of the outsider without Bolsa Familia, it would be a mistake to ignore other measures that led to the decrease of poverty, the improvement of life condition and in general the reduction of spatial inequalities; to see how that happened, we will show some macroeconomic data about the northeast and then, using different indicator and talking about various programs, we will show how much more complex was PT’s strategies to reduce inequality. At the same times we will show how the strategies implemented help in particular the north-east, creating the precondition to make Lula’s discourse so effective there.

4.6 The role of the northeast in national economy

Let’s start with the importance of the northeast in the national economy; as we know by now, it was pretty low at least from XIX century. According to IBGE data, between 2002 and 2016 this trend actually changed: Brazilian GDP increased on average of 2.5% per year, while the northeast recorded a 2.8% growth.

Spatial inequality in Brazilian Federalism, however, is far from being solved: in 2016 the 5 richest States (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul and Paraná, all located in the south and southeast) were still responsible of 64,4% of the national GDP, with São Paulo that, by itself, account for 32,5% of the GDP. (IBGE, 2018) When we look at the participation of the northeast in the national GDP from an historical perspective, we can see that the situation was pretty stable since 1939, the first year for which we have official data about GDP for every State.

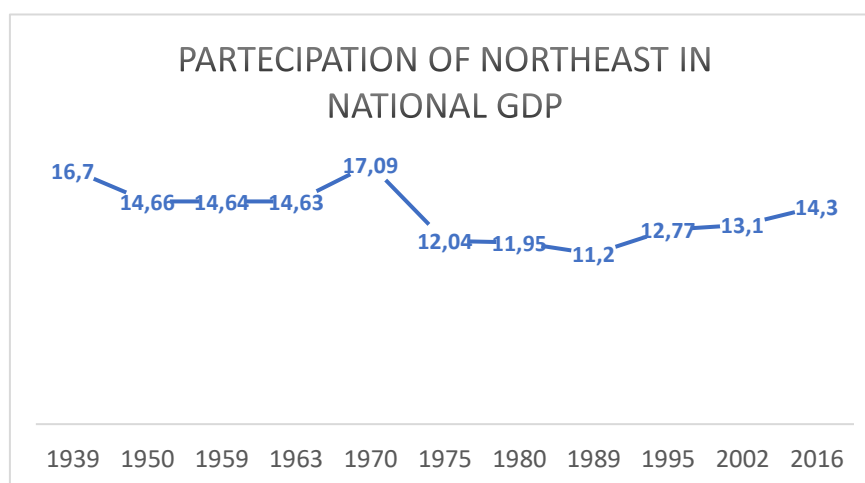


Figure 1 Participation of Northeast in National GDP, Self-elaboration from IBGE, Contas nacionais do Brasil.

Current data are actually worse than those of 1939; even if the best results are from 1970, it doesn't mean that the military were trying to reduce structural inequality. Actually, 1970 was only the beginning of the "economic miracle" and the data are linked mainly to two specific infrastructural programs, the "Rodovia Transamazônica", that crossed many States of the region, and an housing projects in many cities, like Salvador de Bahia. The increased participation of the northeast in the national economy wasn't part of any project to fight spatial inequality, as we can see looking at 1975 data, with the northeast's participation that had already decreased of 5 percentage points.

Interestingly, when the first election of the "Nova Republica" were held, we can observe the lowest level of participation of the region in the national economy, with only 11.2% of GDP. If during Cardoso's two term the situation was stable, with a small increase of less than 0,4%, Lula and Dilma's presidencies are characterized by an increase from 13.1% to 14.3%.

Even if we can observe an increasing participation of the northeast in national GDP since the re-democratization, the process was really slow, even with PT as ruling party; from a macroeconomic point of view the "questão nordeste" is far from being solved.

4.7 Some economic indicator about inequalities in Brazil

If we have said that from a macroeconomic perspective Lula's administration was characterized more by continuity rather than changes in relations to Cardoso's one, to understand if we can talk about an inclusion of the outsider, we need to look to social development.

The first good indicators are of course poverty and extreme poverty; starting from 2003 both decreased in a significant way until 2014, when the crisis started to affect Brazil.

According to CEPAL's data, in 2003 38,8% of the people were poor and 7,6% were in extreme poverty; 11 years later, in 2014, poverty rate was more than halved, reaching 16,5%. The trajectory of extreme poverty was similar, from 7,6 to 3,3%.

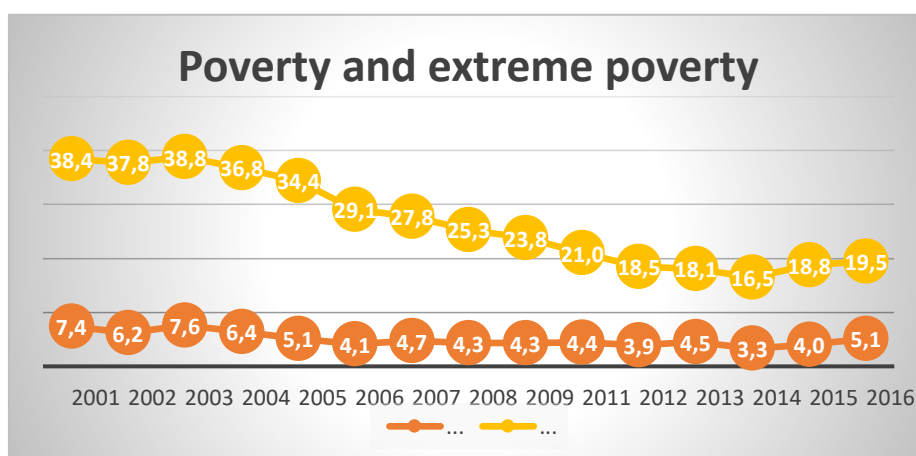


Figure 2 Poverty and extreme poverty, self-elaboration, CEPALSTAT

If we expand our time span, including also the '90s, the reduction of poverty is even more impressive: in 1990 48% of Brazilian were in condition of poverty and 23,4 % in a situation of absolute poverty. In that decade, however, the improvements were made mainly before 1996; it was the results of the "first inclusion" of outsider, following the approval of the Federal Constitution.

Another good indicator, for which we can observe a similar trend, is unemployment rates, that increased a lot during the economic crisis at the end of Cardoso's second term, and then decreased in the following years, reaching his lower point in 2011 and then rising once again after 2014 crisis.

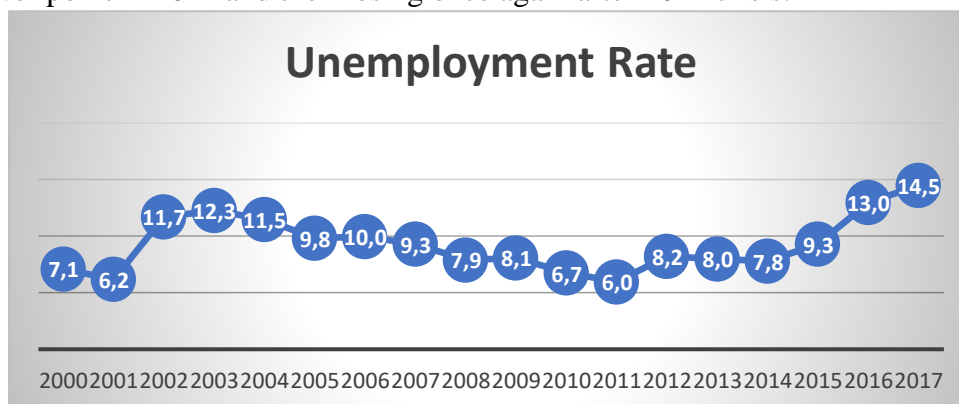


Figure 3 Unemployment rate, self-elaboration. CEPALSTAT

Formal jobs are related also to social rights; for this reason, another important factor is the increasing numbers of formal workers. If in the '90s informality increased (ILO, 2012), in the following decade the trend changed radically, in particular after 2002.

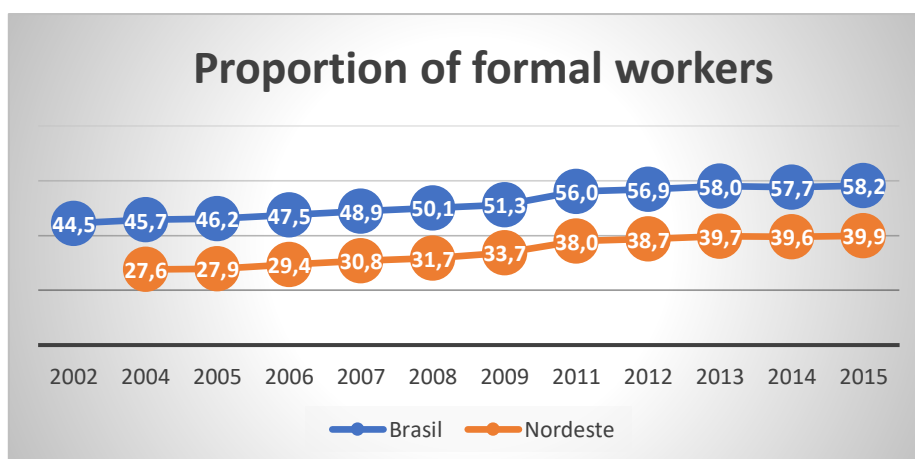


Figure 4 Proportion of formal workers, self-elaboration, SIS IGBE

The decrease of poverty and unemployment, associated with better working condition and implementation of social programs, led to an increase of the average income per capita of the households

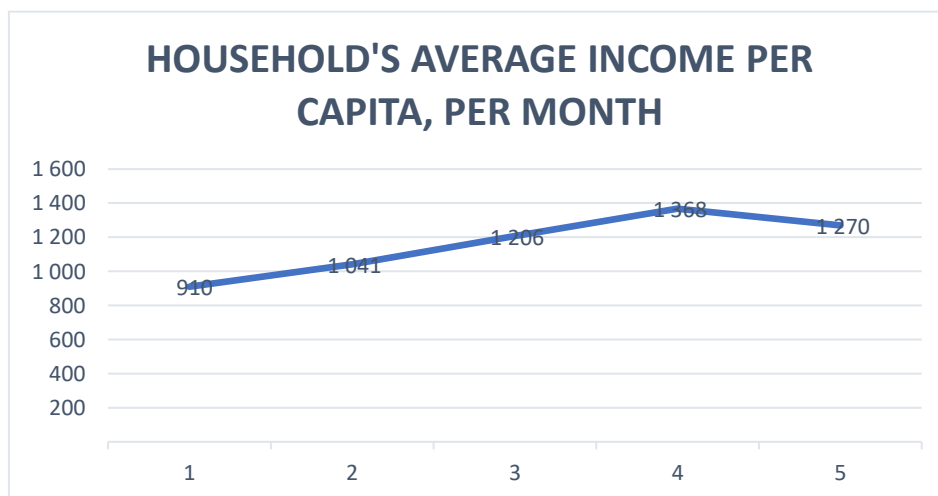


Figure 5 Household's average income per capita, per month, self-elaboration, IPEA

If at the national level, the average income per capita of the households has increased of more the 450 R\$ per month, the data is ever more interesting when we compared it among different regions:

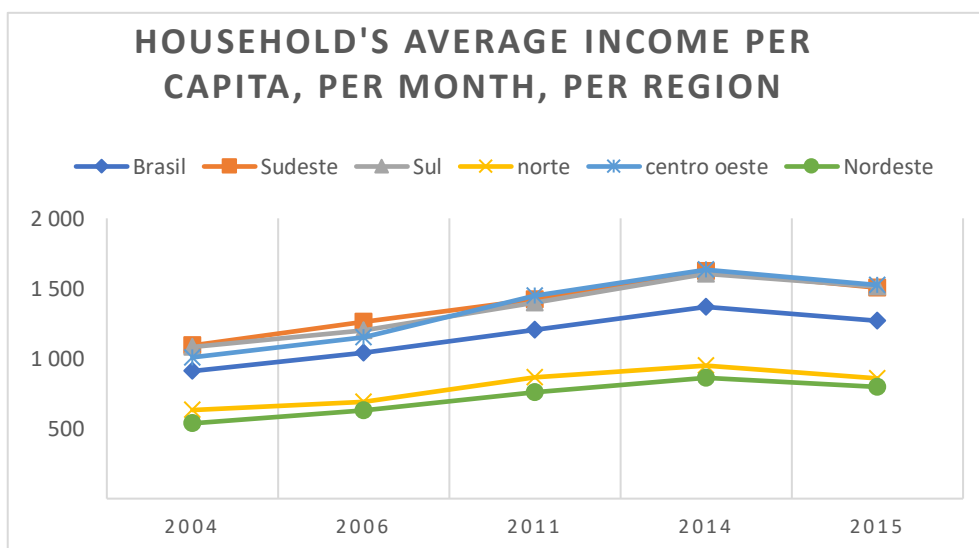


Figure 6 Household's average income per capita, per month, per region, self-elaboration, IPEA

While the income per capita increased in all the regions, the differences between them didn't vary, and the northeast is still the region with lower income per capita.

Adding another indicator to our analysis, we can look at Gini Index to see if, aside from the reduction of poverty, we can observe a reduction of inequality.

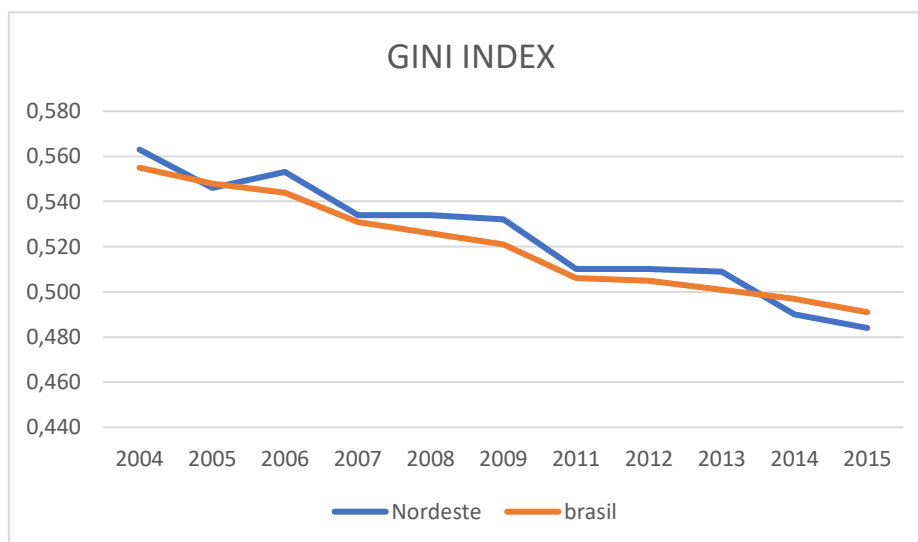


Figure 7 Gini Index, Self Elaboration, CEPALSTAT

The Gini Index decrease from 0,555 in 2004 to 0,491 in 2015; looking at the data from the northeast, in 2004 the region was more unequal than the national average (0.563), while at the end of our observation it records a lower Index than the national one, with 0,484.

Talking about inequality, however, we need to take in consideration that, according to the World Bank data, even when the economy was performing very good, Brazil was still one of the countries with the highest Gini Index of the world; in 2012 it was still the second worst among those who belongs to the G20, after South Africa (Gower, Pearce, Raworth , 2012).

Looking at poverty rate, household income and the Gini Index, combined with Bolsa Familia's effect, we can already see greater improvement on the social development of Brazil during the era between 2002 and 2016.

This, however, is not enough to allow us to affirm that a "second wave" of inclusion happened during those years, especially if we take in consideration the fact that inequality is a multidimensional phenomenon.

To see if a second wave of inclusion happened, we need to take in consideration multiple elements that affect the perpetuation and the reproduction of inequality, such as the education, access to potable waters, electricity, basic sanitation, credit and durable goods. In many of those areas the government had an important role during the period of time considered, as we will see.

4.8 Infrastructural program

1) Electricity and Luz para todos

The access to electricity is a factor that greatly affect the quality of life.

At the beginning of 2000, electricity didn't reach many places, especially in rural areas. According with the "Atlas da energia elétrica no Brasil", in 1999, 2.8 million households, more or less 11 million people, didn't have access to electricity. If in urban areas 99,2% of the people had access to electricity, in rural ones the coverage dropped down at 70%, (Atlas da energia elétrica no Brasil, 2002, 120). The most critical situation was the one of the North, with some States like Pará, Acre, Amapá and Roraima in which the coverage in rural area range between 15% and 23%.

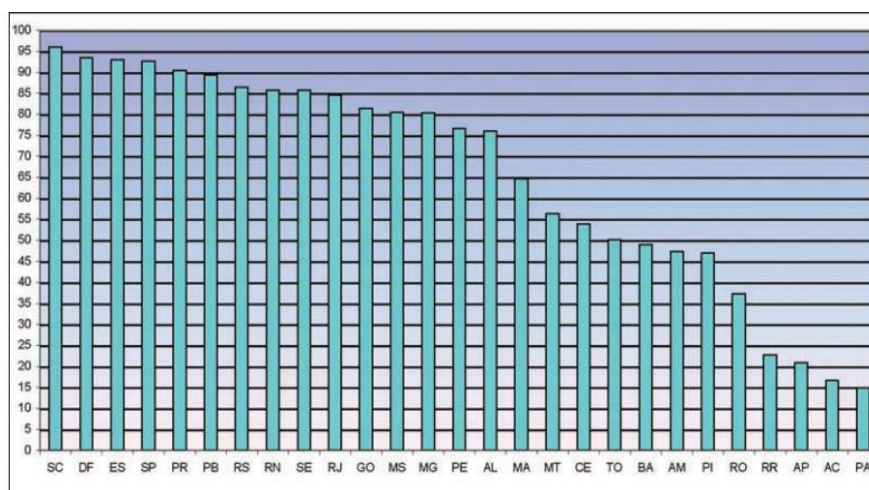


Figure 8 Access to electricity in rural area, 1999, Atlas da energia elétrica no Brasil, 2002, pp 121

To extend the coverage in rural areas, in November of 2003 Lula's government created "Programa Nacional de Universalização do Acesso e Uso da Energia Elétrica-"LUZ PARA TODOS", to universalize the access to electricity. In 2015 the program had allowed 3,1 million families, more or less 15 million people, to have access to electricity.

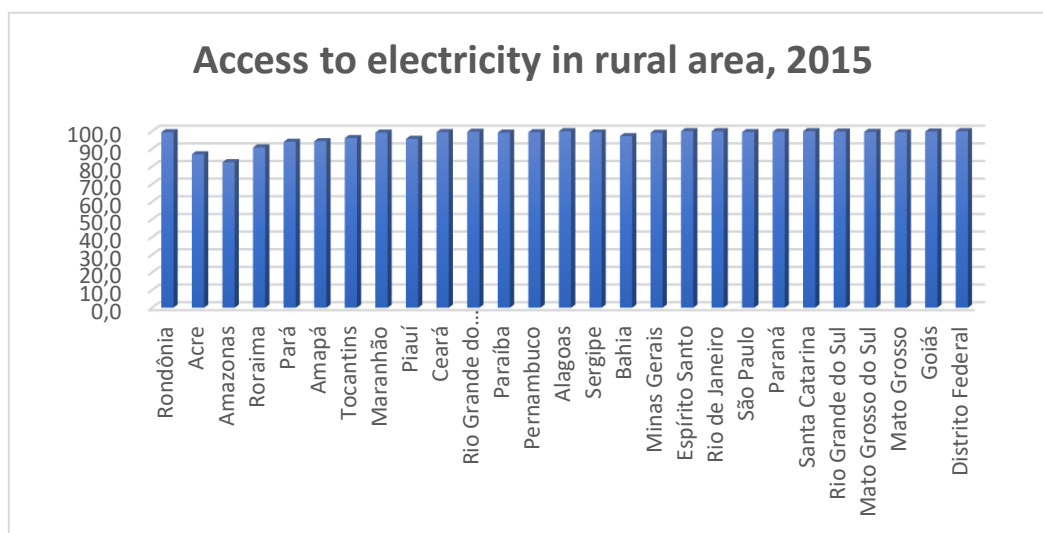


Figure 9 Access to electricity in rural area, 2015, self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

In 2015 the coverage in rural area had reached high level in almost all of the States; the only two with less than 90% were Amazonas and Acre, respectively with 82,4% and 86,9%. If we look at the evolution of the situation over the years, is evident that Luz Para Todos was really effective even in the early stages:

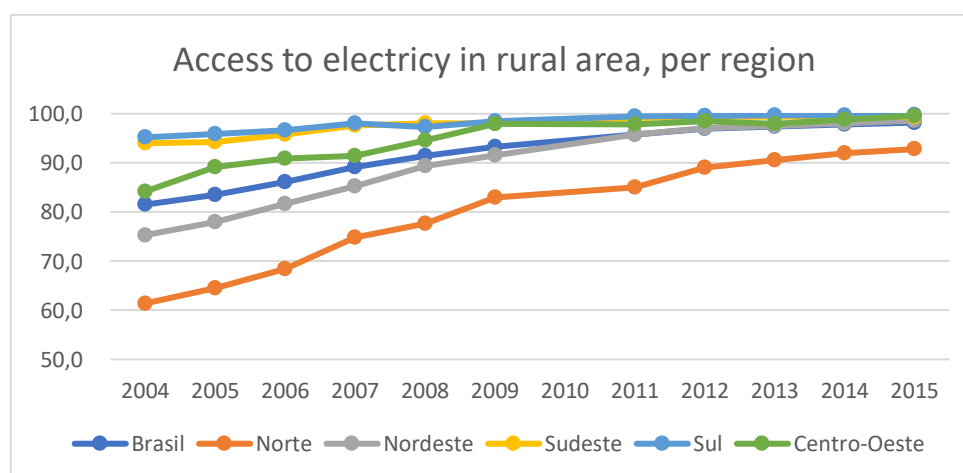


Figure 10 Access to electricity in rural area, per region. SIS IBGE

2) Access to water and sewage network

The access to potable water increased a lot during the '90s and in the first years of the new millennium. If in 1990 83% of the people had access to potable water, in 2004 this percentage had increased to 90%, close to the 91.5% established by the “millennium development goal”. In the following ten years, we can observe an ulterior increase of access to potable water in all the region of the country, reaching almost a full coverage: in 2015 97.9% of the population had access to potable water, with small differences among regions

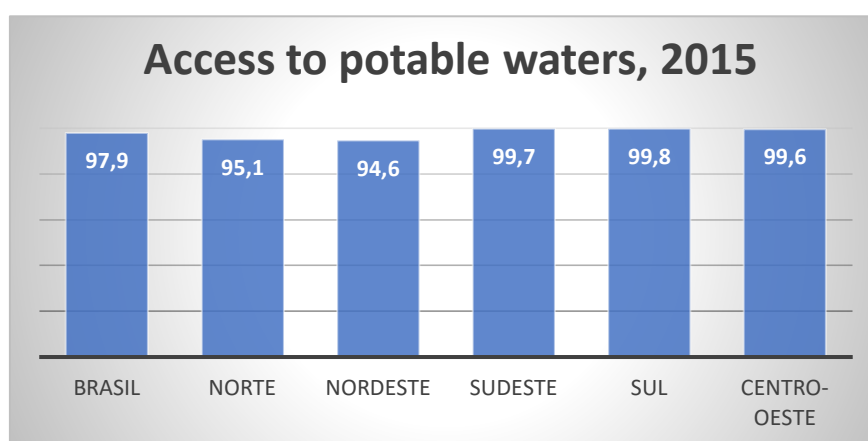


Figure 11 Access to potable water, 2015, self-elaboration, SIS, IBGE

Is interesting, however, to look closer at the data. First of all, we need to make a distinction between urban and rural area: in the first one almost everyone had access to potable water, with a percentage of 99.3%, but in the rural one the coverage was only 90%. We also need to look how the increasing access to water happened; first of all, we can look at the households in relation to their income.

Between 2002 and 2015 households' access to water was expanded especially in the poorest 5% of the population, with an increase of 26.4 %; a similar pattern is observable if we look at the first quintile of the distribution, with an increase of 22.1%

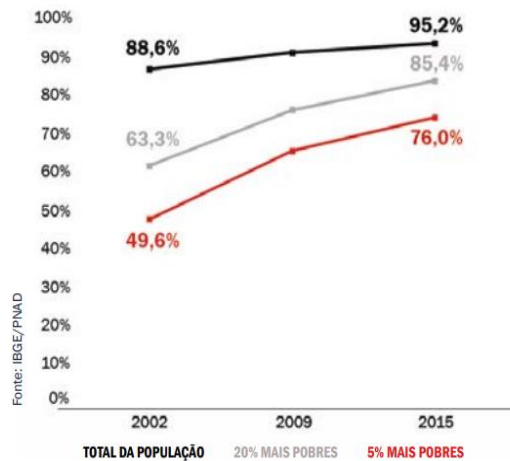


Figure 12 Percentages of permanent private households with access to water by network, well or source with internal channelling, by income, Faces da desigualdade, pp 27

Is also important to note that the increment happened trough different processes, rather than with the expansion of general water supply trough pumps and pipes; the access to this kind of technology is still low, especially in the rural areas.

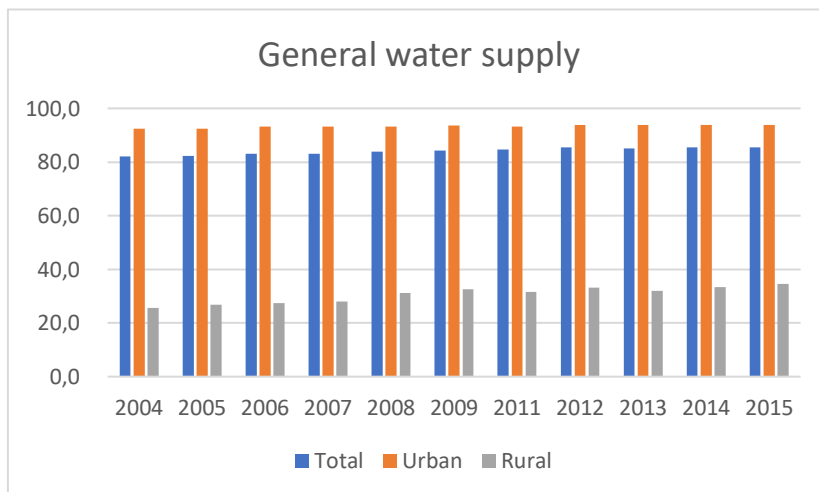


Figure 13 General Water supply through pumps and pipe, self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

Even talking about general water supply, however, there was an increase both in rural and urban area. This process was more accentuated in the rural ones of the northeast, where in 2004 the coverage was only 26.5%; eleven years later, however, the situation was very different, with a coverage of 42.7% of the households, becoming by far the better region of the country

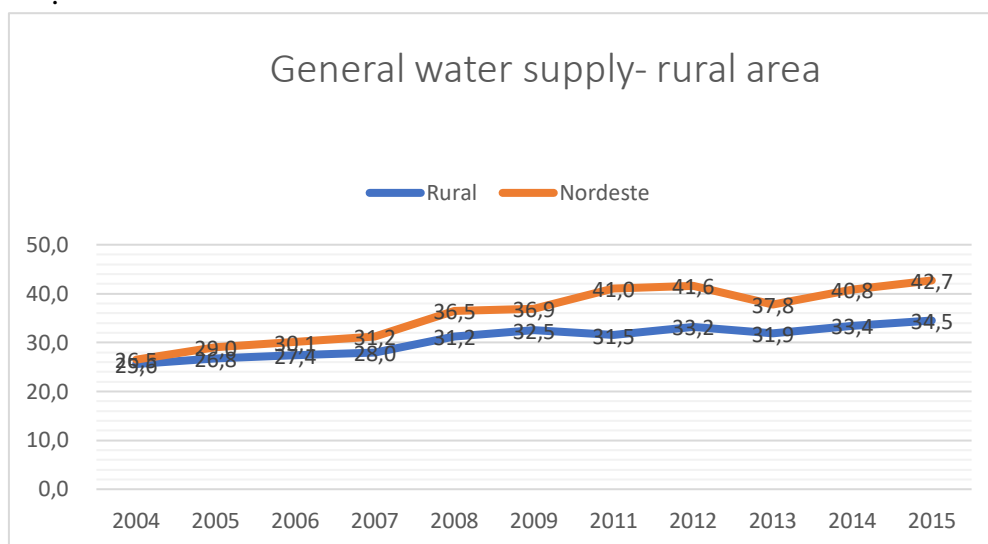


Figure 14 General Water supply through pumps and pipe, rural area, self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

Different kind of technologies were introduced to reach the most difficult parts of the country, through the action of the government.

The most interesting for our analysis was the “Programa Nacional de Apoio à Captação de Água de Chuva e outras Tecnologias Sociais” better known as Programa Cisternas, created in 2003. The beneficiaries were low-income families living in the semiarid and affected by frequent drought, with priorities for traditional communities. The idea was to install cisterns capable of collect rainwater, that can be used during the eight-months-drought that typically affect the region.

Looking at 2017 data, thanks to the program, almost 1.2 million cisterns were installed, the vast majority of them for domestic use, giving access to water to more than 4,6 million people.

If the access to clear water was vastly diffused in the whole country, the same is not true for sewage network, still is one the of less efficient infrastructure. At the national level only 65% of the households had access to it.

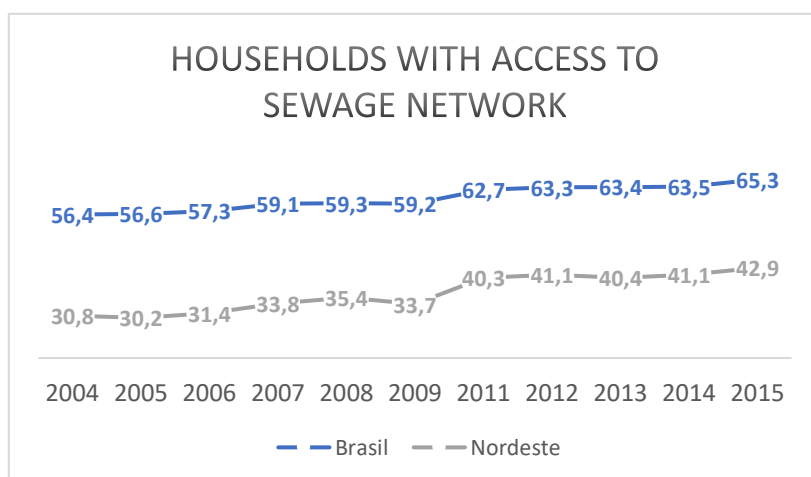


Figure 15 Households with access to sewage Network, self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

The situation is even worst looking from a regional perspective, since in 2004 only 30.8% of the households had access to sewage network in the northeast; even if the data are far from being good, there was some improvement even in this area during PT’s era, reaching a coverage of 42.9%. One of the main reasons of the improvement both in access to general water supply and to sewage network was PAC (Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento) launched in 2007 with a budget of R\$ 503,9 billion to stimulate and increase Brazilian growth, with the priorities of investment in infrastructure. According to government’s data, between 2007 and 2015 50 million of Brazilian obtain access to water and sewage network due to this program, with an investment from the government of R\$ 104,26 billion. (Ministério da Cidadania, 2016)

4.9 Durable goods

The increased access to water and electricity, accompanied by the increasing of employment and income, create the right condition that allow many families to buy durable goods to improve their life.

We are talking of things such as washing machine, refrigerator and even vehicle of transportation.

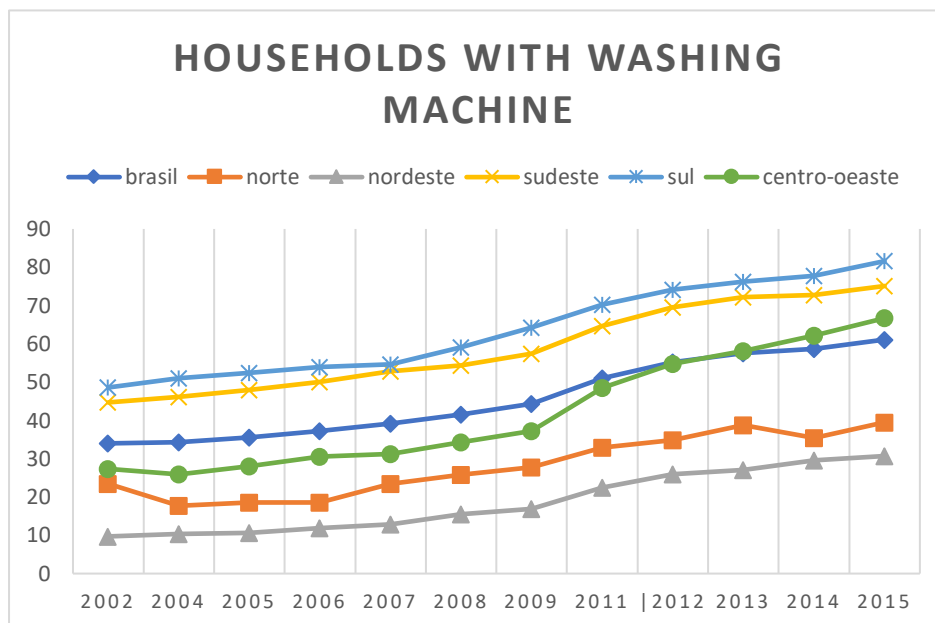


Figure 16 Households with washing machine, self-elaboration, SIS IGBE

In 2002 having a washing machine was not so common; in 2015 the situation was very different, with a substantial increase in all the region: the number of households with a washing machine almost doubled at national level, passing from 34% to 61.1%.

Again, the biggest increase was the one of the northeast, starting from only 9% of the household with a washing machine and reaching 30.7%. This led to a drastic improve of life condition in particular for women, who traditionally were in charge of this duty.

The diffusion of refrigerator followed a similar pattern: already present in almost 95% of households in the south and the southeast at the beginning of the millennium, refrigerator wasn't really common in the northeast.

Over the course of the years the number of families with it rapidly increased, reaching almost 95% even in the northeast in 2013, the last year in which "PNAD" published that information divided for every region.

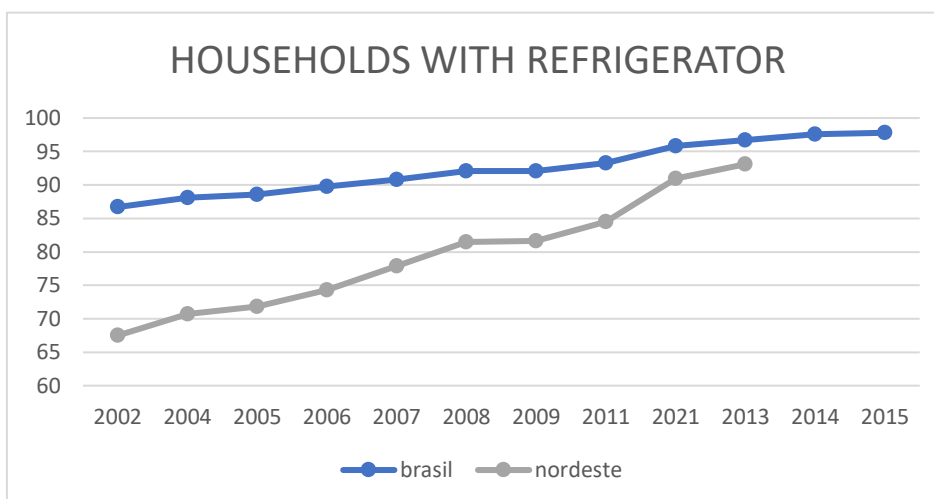


Figure 16 Households with refrigerator, self-elaboration, PNAD and SIS IGBE

This data is even more impressive if we combine it with another variable, income distribution. In 2015 the refrigerator had become a mass consumption goods even in the poorest 5% of the population, when just 13 years later his presence in the poorest households was really scarce.

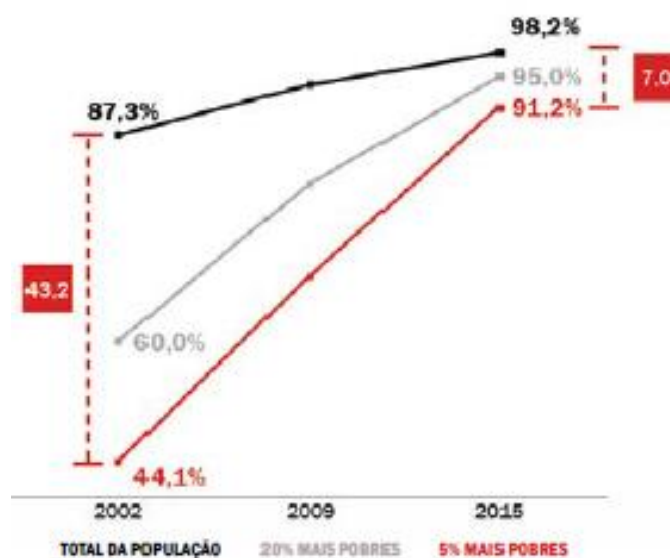


Figure 17 Percentage of permanent private housing units with refrigerators or freezers by income, Faces da desigualdade, pp 40

Clearly, the introduction of a refrigerator in the households was a fundamental part of the strategies to guarantees food security.

One last durable goods that we would like to look at are vehicles of transportation, and in particular cars; even if we can observe a small increase in the percentage of households with cars, the situation didn't really change between 2008/2009 and 2015. Unfortunately, using PNAD data, we cannot go back further than 2008, because the question wasn't asked before.

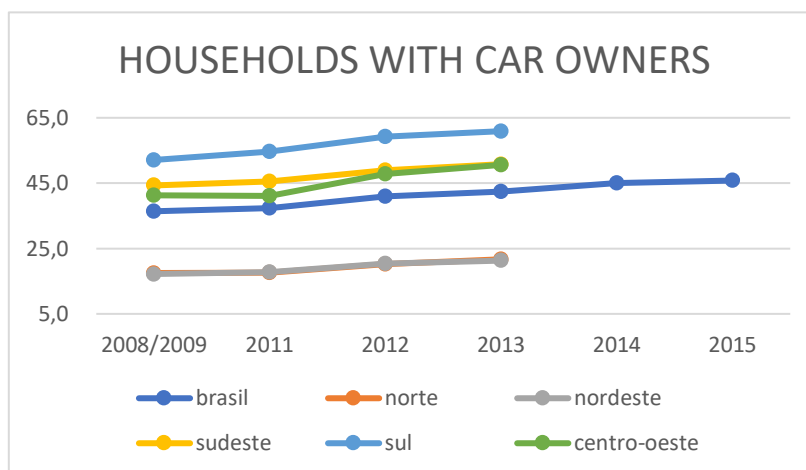


Figure 18 Households with car owners, self-elaboration, PNAD IBGE

We know, however, that according to the data of the Departamento Nacional de Trânsito (Denatran), in 2017 there was a car every 4,4 inhabitants. Only 10 years earlier, according to the same institution, the ratio was of one car every 7.4 inhabitants (DETRAN, 2017). However, looking at the data we can say that, even if the total number of cars increased, there wasn't a similar trend in the whole population; is more likely that some families were able to buy a second car, for example.

We have just looked at some goods that became more diffused in Brazil over the course of the years, and while access to water, electricity, and better income distribution was for sure fundamental to make it possible, another policy created in the first year of Lula's government needs to be presented, credito consignado.

With "credito consignado" formal workers could have access to short term loans from financial institution; the idea was that banks could borrow money with more safety, since it became easier for them to recover the amounts directly from salaries, that served as a collateral. The introduction of credito consignado had two main effect: from one side, allow to expand the internal market and gave

access to credit to many people; from the other, it was an incentive for the workers itself to be employed in “regular”, formal, job and not stay in the informal sector, since in that case it was a lot harder, if not impossible, to have access to any kind of loan. On the other side, credito consignado unfortunately expand a lot the indebtment of Brazilian families and their fiscal exposure.

4.10 Education

We have already seen many of the ways in which life improved for the citizens; if we want to talk about social mobility and inclusion of the outsiders, however, we also need to take in consideration some “immaterial” aspects.

The main area that we can look at is education. This kind of analysis is even more important because according to many critiques, the inclusion was only material, linked with the expansion of credits but not followed by cultural improvement for the poorest.

When we are talking about education, at the beginning of 2000 the challenge wasn't to guarantee basic education for all, something that even with big qualitative difference among schools had already been achieved; according to the data from IBGE, in 2001 school attendance of the “ensino fundamental” (between 6 and 14 years old) was already at 95.3% (RELATÓRIO EDUCAÇÃO PARA TODOS NO BRASI, 2014). If we look more closer to this data, however, is interesting to note a massive improvement of school attendance in the rural area, that over the course of the years almost reach the same level than in the urban one.

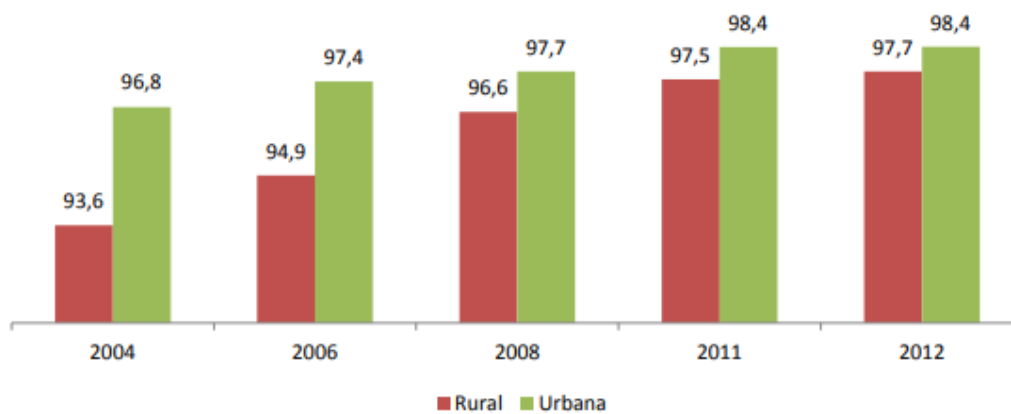


Figura 19 School attendance, rural and Urban Area, *RELATÓRIO EDUCAÇÃO PARA TODOS NO BRASIL 2000-2015*, Ministério Educação e Cultura, 2014, pp. 30

A similar pattern is observable even when we compare school attendance among the poorest and the richest 25% of the population, with the reduction of the gap between the two percentiles.

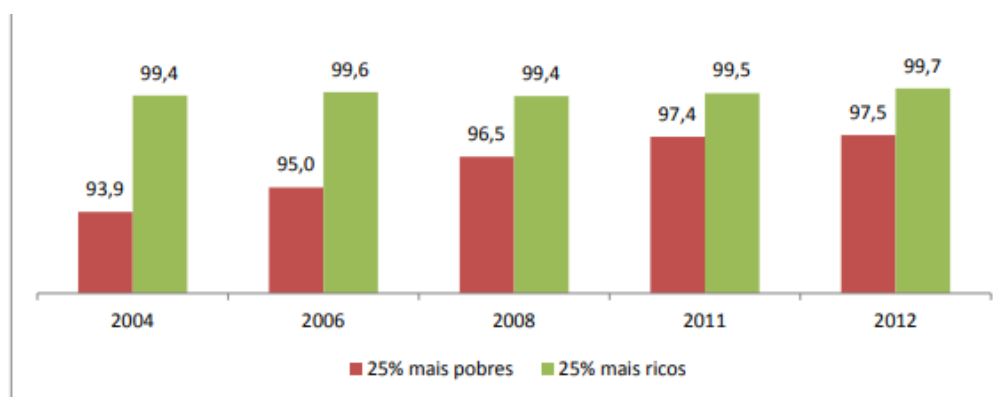


Figura 20 School attendance, 25% poorest and 25% richer *RELATÓRIO EDUCAÇÃO PARA TODOS NO BRASIL 2000-2015*, Ministério Educação e Cultura, 2014, pp. 30

PT's goal concerning education was to guarantee better education, allowing people to stay longer in school, and, when possible, have access to University. As we have already seen looking at Bolsa Familia, is clear that education played a big part in fighting against inequality, providing a possibility of intra-generational mobility; basically, the idea was to incentivize poorest families to keep their son in school at least until 17 years old, receiving the cash transfer of the program.

As a consequence, younger people could continue their training, to be more qualified once they enter the job market and have access to better paid positions. School attendance between 15 and 17 years increased, even if probably less than expected, from 81.4% in 2004 to 85% in 2015

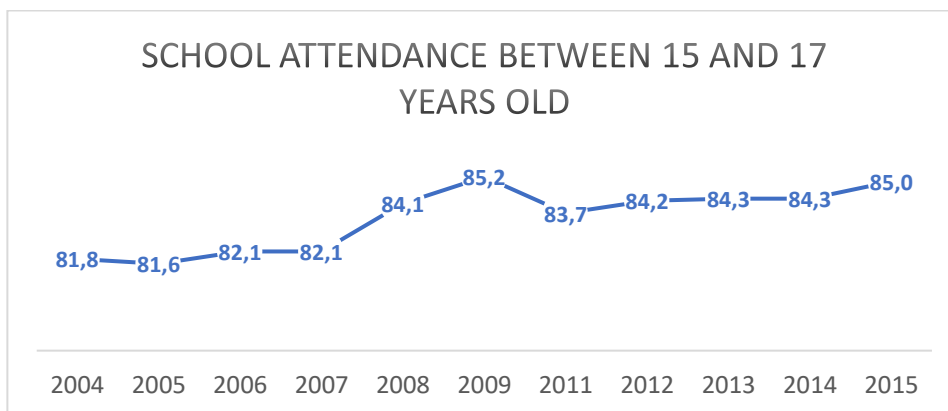


Figure 21 School attendance between 15 and 17 years old, self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

Looking at the same data on a region bases, however, we can see an improvement especially in the north and northeast regions, starting from an attendance below the average, respectively of 78.3 and 78,9 %, and reaching 84,8 and 83,1 %, in line with the national average of 85%.

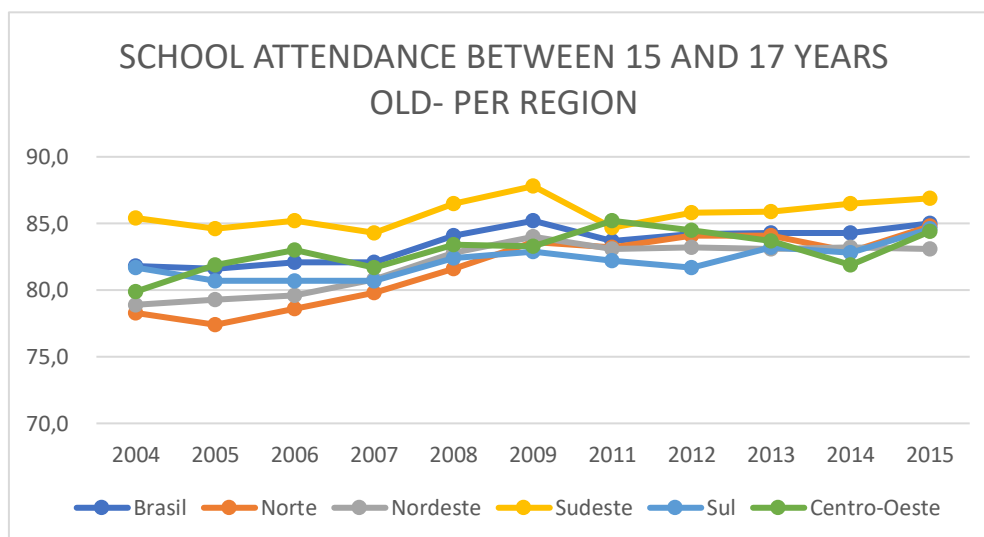


Figure 22 School attendance between 15 and 17 years old, Per region, Self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

To fully understand how important this change in education was, we need to look not at geographical information but at income distribution.

In the following graph, we can look at people between 15 and 17 years old enrolled in the class that they were supposed to follow due to their age.

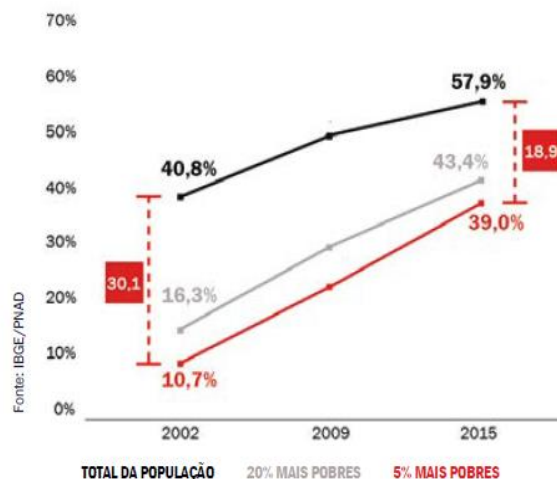


Figure 23 Percentage of population 15 to 17 years old attending high school or stage of further education by income, Faces da desigualdade, pp 20

To clarify the difference among data, the national numbers reported here is very different from the one that we have already shown, because a lot of the people attending school were not enrolled in the “right” class, the one that they should attend if they didn’t lose any years over of education. The most interesting thing, however, is the reduction of the breach between poorest people and national average. As we can see, in 2002 the access on time to “ensino medio” for the poorest 5% was really low; in 13 years the breach among their participation and the average was almost halved. The conditionalities of Bolsa Familia of course had a great role in this. Another success of the PT’s administrations in education was linked with the acesso to university: over the course of the years many public policies were implemented to increase the percentage of people enrolled in the higher level of education.

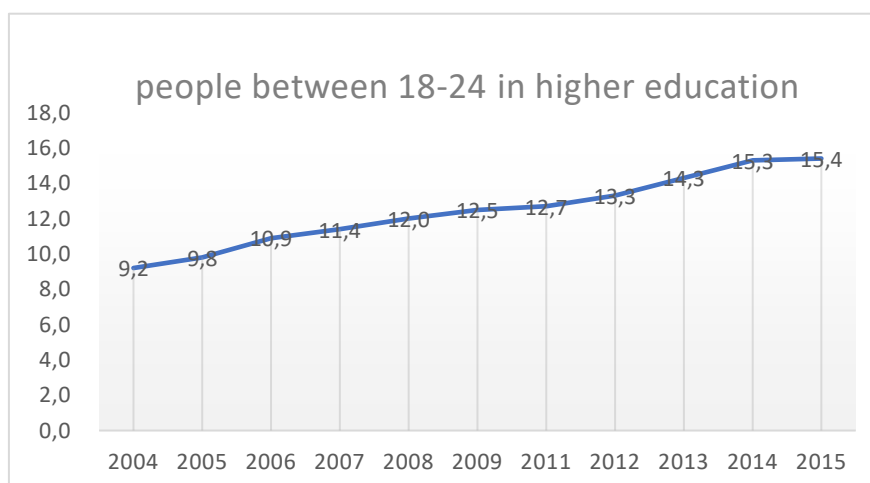


Figure 24 People between 18-24 enrolled in higher education, self-elaboration, SIS IGBE

In some region, like the south, the percentage reached 19,2%, 7 percentage point more than 2004; the biggest increase was, once again, the once of the north and northeast, where the number of people enrolled more than doubled.

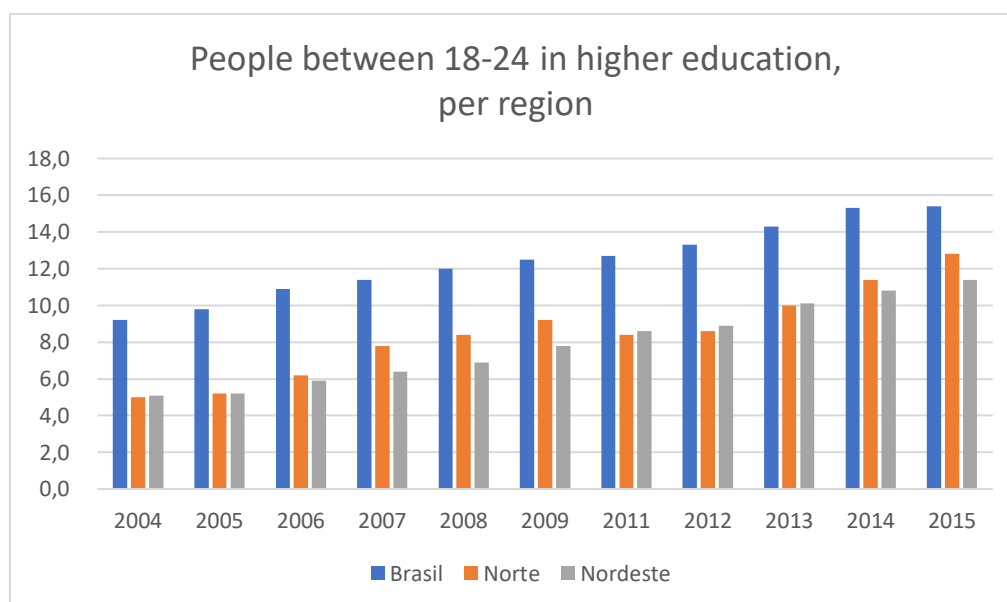


Figure 25 People between 18-24 enrolled in higher education, self-elaboration, SIS IBGE

Once again, the administration had a important role in this process; looking at the data from “Censo da Educação Superior” between 2002 and 2016 the number of institutions qualified as “educação superior” increased of the 47% (Censo Escolar). If we look only at public institutions, we can see that in 2002 they were 195 and in 2016 were 296.

The creation of 40 new IF (Instituto Federal) and CEFET (Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica) increased the possibilities to receive technical education at the highest level in many parts of the country.

We need to remember that Federal Universities in Brazil are free and that the access is reserved to the better student in ENEM, a national test taken at the end of the “ensino médio”; however, not all the students are able to be accepted in federal institution, due to the limited number of vacancies. For this reason, in 2004 the Government created “ProUni” (Programa Universidade para Todos), to give scholarship for private universities for students coming from families who earns less than 3 minimum wages, enrolled in public school or private ones with scholarship.

According to the Ministério da Educação, between 2004 and 2018, ProUni beneficiaries had been 2,47 million, 69% with full scholarship (ProUni). FIES had a similar role; created in 1999 during Cardoso’s government, gave access to student’s loans with low interest rate. One last interesting policy that we need to take in consideration it “lei das cotas”, created in 2012, that reserves 50% of the vacancies in Federal Universities to people coming from public schools, considering also the percentage of black and indigenous people in the States. The 50% of those vacancies “reserved” are intended for people coming from families with less than 1.5 minimum wages per capita, to allow even the poorest students to have access to University. Even if the law started to be implemented only in 2013, looking at the percentage of poorest people inside of the Universities, we can already see some improvement:

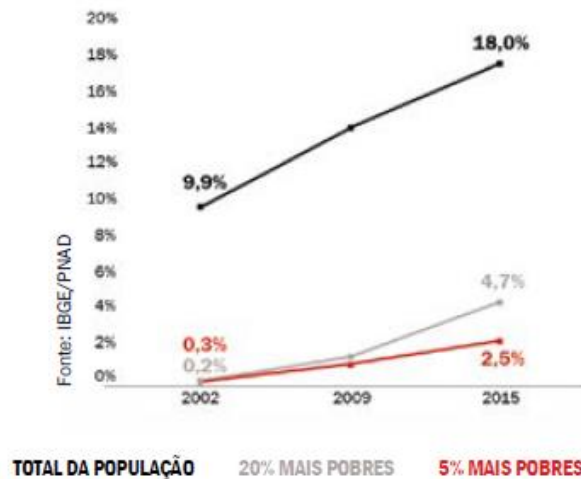


Figure 26 Percentage of population between 18 to 24 attending school in higher education (including PhD), by income, Faces da desigualdade, pp 22

If the regulatory mark will not change, we should expect an increase in the participation of the poorest 5% in the highest level of education.

4.11 Conclusion

The northeast question characterized Brazilian history since the arrive of the Portuguese court. If in the early stages of colonization, we could talk of dual development, at least from the end of the XIX century we can identify the origin of the spatial inequalities. Over the course of the years, many plans were implemented, from the punctual ones against drought to more complex like the Celso Furtado's SUDENE. After re-democratization, the regional question started to be taken in consideration once again; without any doubt PT was the most important actor in this process, starting to elaborate a plan since the beginning of the '90s and then implementing policies that greatly affect the quality of life of the people, in particular in the north and northeast region of the country. If we have to identify one main difference from the strategies implemented from the PT to the others, we can say that the Partido do Trabalhadores actually didn't implemented the policies discussed above with a regional focus; the idea of "northeristization" of Brazil, that appeared in the programmatic document of 1990, led the party to a different approach that had

to do mainly with reduction of inequality as a whole than to the reduction of geographical difference between regions. From 2002 to 2016 we can identify a clear improvement in the condition of life for the people all around the country; this kind of approach led to a reduction of the spatial inequality as a consequence, mainly due to the higher concentration of beneficiaries in the northeast.

The breach between the northeast and the rest of the nation is for sure smaller now than how it was at the beginning of the millennium. The participation of the region in national economy is bigger, access to electricity and clean water are now in line with the rest of the country, the access to durable goods is more “democratic” than ever and the increasing participation in education could lead us to think that, in the next generations, the situation can be even better.

We cannot say that the “norther question” is no longer a problem in Brazil; social programs are still a fundamental part to guarantee decent life conditions to the people in the region, income distribution is still unequal and any change toward less distributive policies can lead to a very different picture than the one that we have just drawn. However, the process of inclusion of outsiders is something that is here to stay and had already radically changed the perception of the problem and its own importance. In the years to come, putting the “norther question” once again in the background will not be as easy as it was in the past.

Even more interestingly for our research, it may be clear now which were the preconditions that make Lula’s discourse possible; if, for many years, the people of the northeast felt that their problems were not heard nor solved, once he became President a series of social policies, thought as national ones, radically changed the landscape in the region, producing an improvement of the living condition of many citizens. Once Lula decided to embrace the role of “pai dos pobres” and later on the one of “messianic leader”, the material inclusion of the outsiders of the northeast had already created the perfect condition to make his transition possible.

5 THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AND THE END OF PT'HEGEMONY

5.1 Introduction

If the defining element of Lula's Presidency was the inclusion of the outsider, both in symbolic and material terms, it will be naïve to ignore the role that other characteristics of Brazilian politics had played during his two terms. We need to discuss the role of "politics as usual", intended as a peculiar combination of the traditional malfunctioning of the national systems, during an important moment of PT's hegemony, the Presidential succession. If in the first part of the chapter will be dedicated to the transition, the second one will analyse Dilma's Rousseff strategies and the reasons behind the crisis; while the process of impeachment will not be cover in details, we will focus instead on the motivation behind to the end of PT's era, taking in consideration both Dilma's personal characteristics and why Lula's social agreement collapsed.

The peculiar combination of economic crisis, corruption scandals, a political strategy that tried to challenge power structure and "politics as usual" led to the uprising of some social sector. We will see how the inclusion of the outsider, source of strength for PT's leaders at first, became also one of their weakness: the new middle class, created during their government, became protagonist of the mobilization that ended with the impeachment.

We will also discuss how PT reacted to the crisis, going even further in their transformation into the party of the northeast, in an attempt to survive; this process, accompany with the return to a narrative of conflict rather than appeasement, led to an increasing polarization, or the first time in the history of the country based not only around ideologic reasons or fideistic dispute among leaders, but linked with geographic factor too.

5.1 Some insights from Presidential succession

“A imagem da capa talvez seja o aspecto mais sugestivo e intrigante da edição da revista. Quem “decola” como um foguete, deixando um clarão atrás de si, é o Cristo Redentor. Não é preciso ir longe para imaginar que pode ser o próprio Lula quem se desprende e descola da cidade (ou do país) que abençoa com os braços abertos. Enquanto a paisagem (o país) permanece na penumbra e em segundo plano, o presidente-redentor se projeta de modo fulgurante no espaço sideral¹⁴⁰. (Barros e Silva, 2009)

At the end of his second Presidential term, Lula was “taking off” nationally and internationally. Datafolha certified that his administration was considered good or great by 87% of the population, while only 4% of the voters had a negative opinion about it. Needless to say, it was the better result in the history of the nation, at least ever since the data were collected. While Lula’s consensus was higher in the northeast, the results were pretty good everywhere, with the “lowest” results being 77% of the south.

Three areas stood out in the evaluation of the administration: fight against hunger and misery, overall economic performances and job creation/reduction of unemployment; the administrations results were considered worst concerning health, security and education. Lula’s shortcoming, according to the voters, are important because three years later the rallies of 2013 would focus mainly on those areas (Datafolha, 2010).

While Lula’s personal success was undisputable, he wasn’t allowed to run again for the Presidency; the debate about his heir started in 2006, as we can see from “O Brasil que queremos”, the resolution approved at the 3º Congresso do PT:

¹⁴⁰ The cover (of the Economist) may be to most suggestive and intriguing part of this edition of the journal. The one “taking off” like a rocket, leaving behind the blue sky, is the Cristo Redentor. Is easy to imagine that it can be the same Lula the one who is taking off from the city (or the country), that he is blessing with open arms. While the landscape stays on the background, the President-redeemer is projecting himself as a dazzling figure in sideral space. (own transl.)

*“O PT deve se colocar como dirigente da condução do processo sucessório presidencial. [...] O PT deve organizar um amplo processo de debate interno para formular, a partir de nossas experiências no governo federal e nos avanços até lá alcançados, um programa para o mandato 2011/2014 e, a partir dele, apresentar uma candidatura petista [...] e, assim, formar uma aliança programática.”*¹⁴¹ (3º Congresso do PT, 2007)

While PT’s majority felt that they would choose the next candidate, not everyone agreed, starting from the same Lula, ready to leave space to someone coming from another party of the coalition. PMDB, of course, was a real contender for the spot, due to his national and subnational strength.

While we have focused of the inclusion of the outsiders, the Presidential succession give us a unique opportunity to look back at traditional politics; it may sound as a stereotype coming from an “older” form of social organization that no longer exist, but “coronelismo” as defined by Victor Nunes Leal still plays a role in Brazilian politics. Let’s start from the definition of the author:

*“Coronelismo como resultado da superposição de formas desenvolvidas do regime representativo a uma estrutura econômica e social inadequada. Não é, pois, mera sobrevivência do poder privado, cuja hipertrofia constituiu fenômeno típico de nossa história colonial. [...] Por isso mesmo, o “coronelismo” é sobretudo um compromisso, uma troca de proveitos entre o poder público, progressivamente fortalecido, e a decadente influência social dos chefes locais, notadamente dos senhores de terras.”*¹⁴² (Nunes Leal, 1948, 22-23)

¹⁴¹ PT need to lead the process of Presidential succession. [...] PT need to organize an internal debate, starting from our experience in the Federal Government and the progress reached, with a program for 2011/2014 term and, starting from that, present a “petista’s” candidacy [...] and create a programmatic coalition (own transl.)

¹⁴² Coronelism as the results of an overlap between developed representative institution and inadequate economic and social structures. Is not just survival of private power, whose hypertrophy represent a typical phenomenon of our colonial history. [...] For this reason, “Coronelism” is mainly a compromise, an exchange of advantages between

In Leal's book, first published in 1948, references to the land as main sources of power are linked to the era in which the author wrote it; nonetheless, in rural areas, lands ownership is still a useful concept to understand power. To fully understand the importance of "coronelism" nowadays, however, we need to update Leal's definition; we didn't believe that it depends only from an overlap between archaic social and economic structure and representative democracy; over the course of the years, in fact, the process of economic modernization represented, for both old landlords and politicians, a chance to increase their power in different sectors, and then to use their economic strength to manage the democratic process.

The idea of "conservative modernization" (Moore, 1966, Vianna, 1978) didn't exclude coronelism; on the contrary, we have to consider that many coronels were able to take advantage of their economic and political strength to control technological innovation, such as the telecommunication system, as in the case of the Sarney's family in Alagoas, just to mention the most famous example. Said that, the second part of the definition of what "coronelism" is can still be applied: when, in the first chapters we were talking about "well-oiled political machines" playing important role in the election, there is no doubt that coronelism was a factor involved. The main "service" that the coronel can offer to politicians is, of course, the so-called "votos de cabresto", basically the control of a relevant number of votes at disposal of one or another candidate.

We need to remember that the majority of the parties in Brazil shared one characteristic: they were and still are personalistic, born to represent local oligarchies or individuals; is this the case of PFL in the northeast, but also the one of PMDB after re-democratization, once they role as "democratic umbrella" ended and they survive merely as the "ônibus party" defined by Cardoso. The third element of traditional politics that play a role is "bandwagon", the tendencies to converge toward the Presidency and the government if he is successful and to "jump off" as soon as the situation start the be worse. There is

public power, who is getting stronger progressively, and the decadent social influence of local bosses, notably landlords. (own transl.)

no doubt that those three elements played an important role in the process of consensus building during Lula's era; as we have said, bandwagon started already in 2003, once the President realized that there wasn't any majority in Congress based only on programmatic elements; during his second term and in particular after the "golden year" of 2009, once Lula's became "the most popular politician on earth", entire parties or just local leaders decided that bandwagon was their best chance to succeed.

While PT made no real effort to co-opt local leaders directly into their organization, this process was still massive especially in some regions. Entire party structures "moved" from the right to the left, guided by local leaders, and became part of the new electoral base of the President. Usually, they have done so without joining PT, whose internal rules and procedures remain unchanged and stricter than in any other party, but rather creating or entering in other smaller parties closer to the left. One of the better examples of this trend is the State of Bahia, traditionally under the control of the powerful Antônio Carlos Magalhães. There, two things happened almost at the same time: on one side the crisis of Carlismo after the death of his historic leader, on the other Lula's affirmation. The movement made by some of the most important "traditional leaders" in the State could be seen as an example of a larger trend, that happened in many other States. Is not by chance that in 2006 Geddel Vieira Lima, historic leader of local PMDB, reached out to Lula and his party and became one of the Ministers of his second administration; even more interesting, once Geddel decided to leave the coalition in 2010, to run for as Governor, another well-known politician of the State, Otto Alencar, supported Governor Wagner in his re-election. Both Geddel and Alencar did not care about programmatic issue; their only goal was to share power, and they both could offer many votes that they were able to "control", especially in rural area.

While the reality described might suggest that "traditional politics" is the true explanation behind Lula's success, we cannot be deceived by it: if bandwagon and the availability of "voto de cabestro" were the only explanations of Lula's success in the region, we should have expected a radical shift in voting behaviours as soon as PT lost control of Federal Government.

On the contrary even in 2018, when it was almost impossible for PT to elect the President, and all the major party previously part of PT's coalition had already "jumped off" from the wagon, the percentages obtained by Haddad were impressive, as we will see in the following chapter.

That being said, it should be clear why we are introducing traditional politics as an important factor now, talking about Lula's succession; with the "natural" leader out of the picture, everyone saw an opportunity to increase their importance at Federal level, and the role of "politics as usual" increased too, as a consequence. If the President had been able to force other parties to "comply" with his will, using his popularity and strength with the allies, his successor would need to face the fragmentation of power in Congress without having the same strength.

As always, however, everything came down to Lula's decision. If the era between 2006 and 2010 was the apex of his hegemony, the downside was that no one else was able to affirm himself or herself as a national leader during the same times, at least not inside the leftist front. When Dirceu was forced to resign, São Paulo's branch lost control over PT, and with the electoral realignment the power shifted even more; for this reason, some "obvious" early choices like Marta Suplicy were not favourite anymore while other names gained traction, as in the case of the newly elected Governor of the State of Bahia Jaques Wagner. Other historic names were part of the conversation too, such as Tarso Genro; however, the name that stood out was an "outsider", at least from PT's perspective: Dilma Rousseff.

Ministro de Minas e Energia first and Ministro Chefe da Casa Civil after 2005, Dilma's importance in Lula's administration increased a lot after the Mensalão, such as her power. Dilma could be considered an outsider for the presidential run because in her political career she had never took part personally in any election as a candidate, and was known mostly for her "technical" profile.

Even more, Dilma's trajectory was totally different from the majority of PT's establishment: part of the guerrilla in the late '60s with the Comando de Libertação Nacional (COLINA), one of the two groups that later on founded the well-known *Vanguarda Armada Revolucionária Palmares (VAR-Palmares)*, she

was arrested and tortured in 1970; once freed, she moved to Porto Alegre, where she obtained her degree in Economy and return to political activism. In the '90s Dilma was chosen as President of the Fundação de Economia e Estatística do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul and, later on, named Ministro de Minas e Energia of the State during Alceu Collares' administration first and then, 10 years later, with Olívio Dutra as Governor.

When she joined Lula's administration, in 2002, she had a lot of experience in executive roles, but almost none as a pure politician. Another factor that characterized her as an outsider among PT's establishment was the fact that she joined the party only in 2001, after twenty years spent as a member of Brizola's PDT; as a consequence, Dilma wasn't perceived as "one of their own" by many other members of the Partido dos Trabalhadores.

One aspect more than anything suggested that she wasn't likely to be a Presidential candidate: if Lula's biggest strength were his personality and charisma, those were the aspects in which Dilma completely differ from the President. If Lula was a natural-born leader, able to compensate technical shortcoming or lack of knowledge with his ability to listen others, negotiate and end up with his personal solution to the problems, Dilma on the contrary was well prepared on almost every technical question, thanks both to her experience, personal and cultural formation and dedication to the job; however, very soon she started to be known as the "professora de Deus" (Santana, 2019), due to her tendencies to play a leadership roles in all the meeting, acting as if she knew everything about everyone else's topic, giving suggestion or better solutions t.

According to multiple reports coming from PT's Deputies, in interviews made both when she was still in charge and after the impeachment, she didn't like politics that much, if for politics we intend discussion, negotiation, the ability to delegate and reach agreements.

Despite the critiques, over the course of the months Dilma's candidacy gained strength, and at the end of 2007 many newspapers appointed her as the most probable candidate for the succession. The international context played in her favour too: we have to remember that at the time, the debate about women's participation in politics was finally gaining importance, both in Latin American

ad all over the world; while Michelle Bachelet became President in Chile in 2006, one year later it was the time for Cristina Kirchner to be elected President of Argentina after her long-gone husband.

If the “giro a la izquierda” was the first big revolution of the decade, the “Presidentas” represented the second one. While defeated, we have to add also Hillary Clinton’s candidacy in the primaries of the Democratic Party as a defining moment of those years. According to the newspaper, at the end of 2007 Dilma was “enthusiast” of the “women’s wave” in politics, and even Lula suggested that it was time to have a woman as President. (Lo Prete, 2007)

It seems likely that Lula was determined to choose a woman not only because Dilma was highly qualified for the job, but also to “make history” once again: after the first man coming from the working class, without a degree, elected President, it was time to elect the first woman. The only two names available, in that case, were Marta Suplicy and Dilma Rousseff, once Marina Silva left the party in early 2008. When Marta announced her candidacy as Mayor in 2008, it became clear that Dilma would be the chosen one to run for the Presidency two years later; it was another proof of Lula’s control over PT: Marta was, without any doubt, the favourite among PT’s member, while many doubts were raised about Dilma and her attitude.

Looking in retrospective, is easy to criticize Lula’s choice, as pretty much everyone inside and outside of PT do; as an example, we can quote Tarcisio Zimmerman, former PT’s Federal and State’s MP, who had worked with Dilma in the early stages of her career:

“Dilma nunca foi uma pessoa que demonstrou um espirito coletivo, nunca construí nada a nível de base política. Porque Lula a escolheu? Eu acho que foi uma prepotência, o erro da vida dele, que faltou de respeito com a história do Partido. Naquele período tinha pessoas dentro do partido, que não eram no nível do Lula, porque tem poucas pessoas como ele na história, mas a PT tinha várias pessoas capaz de lidar um processo coletivo. Talvez Lula achou que ele ia ter influência no Governo, o que é impossível, sem transformar o chefe de governo em um príncipe, um rei, sem poder. Em um regime presidencial

*ninguém pode substituir o líder do governo. Mas tem que lembrar que naquela época o partido já era submetido ao executivo, de fato quem dirigia o política do país já não era o PT, que depois do mensalão perdeu a capacidade de dirigir. A direção do partido já não representava mais o partido real. Com Dilma nós tivemos um partido sem capacidade de dirigir o um executivo sem capacidade de dirigir... a crise foi inevitável.*¹⁴³ (Zimmermann, 2016)

While Dilma was a cornerstone of Lula's second term, and her ability and knowledge are undisputable, she wasn't popular neither among her colleague, nor among journalist or the voters; even if she represented the traditional middle class of the south and southeast, she wasn't a beloved public figure. Her main strength was Lula's confidence, but no one knew if the "transfer" of votes would happen and how effective could be.

PT's strategy had to change once again: if Lula could run even with smaller coalition in his support, being able to create majority and negotiate once elected, Dilma needed to co-opt local leaders to be sure to get the votes necessary to win. This is how we can explain the formation of the ticket: if in 2002 and 2006 PT run with the support of smaller parties, negotiating with larger ones such as PMDB after the vote, in 2010 the Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro joined the coalition before the election, indicating Michel Temer as Vice-

¹⁴³ Dilma wasn't a person with a collective spirit, never build anything in grassroot organizations. Why Lula chose her? I believe it was arrogance, the mistake of his life, he didn't respect the history of the Party. At that time, many others inside of the party, not at Lula's level, because there are few people in history at his level, but PT had many people able to lead a collective process. Maybe Lula thought that he would be able to influence the Government, which is impossible without transforming the leader of the government into a prince, a king, without power. In a Presidential regime, no one could replace the leader of the government. But we have to remember that back then, the party was already submitted to the executive, the one that truly led national politics wasn't PT, that after the Mensalão had his ability to lead. The direction of the party didn't represent anymore the real party. With Dilma, we had a party unable to lead and an executive unable to lead... the crisis was inevitable. (own transl.)

President. It was at the same time the recognition of the hegemony of Lulismo from other parties, and PT's admission of their inability to govern without the support of conservative sectors. The biggest traditional party of the nation was willing to accept a candidate "imposed" by Lula, knowing that it was not worthy to run against the sitting President, because it could cost themselves their centrality and their participation in the distribution of "wealth", both material or in terms of government positions; at the same time, PMDB's participation in the coalition signal how the pragmatic nature of PT had reached his peak: the party, born to change Brazilian politics, had to "surrender", leaving ideals aside to form an alliance with the core of the so-called physiologic characters of politics.

We are not suggesting that the transition between Lula and Dilma was the turning point of the relation between PT and the institutional system; on the contrary, there are plenty of signals of this transformation even before the beginning of Lula's era, when PT accepted the "informal" rules of politics, for example paying Mendonça's salary in 2002 on off-shores bank accounts through the so-called "Caixa dois" funds, coming from illicit financing of the campaign or to the Mensalão.

If we have avoided the discussion until now, we are obliged to face the elephant in the room: corruption. We left corruption on the background of our analysis because we believe that is not a defining factor to understand both Lula's success nor the "conquer" of the northeast. As we have said before, talking about "coronelismo" and "clientelism", politics as usual never stopped, even during Lula's era; on the contrary, as the Mensalão showed, traditional politics was as strong as ever even during PT's administrations. At the same time, however, we don't have to make to opposite mistake, considering PT's hegemony as the result of corruption or the party responsible of corruption in Brazil. Mensalão first and the Operação Lava Jato later are just signals of how bad the system really is; while corruption and scandals "reappear" periodically in mainstream political narrative, as we seen during Collor's impeachment, often in time of profound crisis or as an "instrument" to delegitimize the administrations, they are not just sporadic episodes, but rather one of the defining characteristics of Brazilian politics. This is also the main reason why we have

decided not to talk about corruption in our research: if we consider it as “natural” element of Brazilian politics, is not worthy to treat corruption as something peculiar of PT’s era, neither as one of the variables introduced during Lula’s era that could have produced his consensus.

We are not suggesting that is not worthy to study corruption and his importance for the Brazilian system, on the contrary, but is not our goal here.

If we recognize that corruption is a structural phenomenon in Brazil, when we analyse PT’s transformation is important to remember that, even in relation to this topic, we can observe a shift in the attitude of the party; if André Singer talked about PT’s “two souls” (Singer, A, 2012), the same reasoning can be applied when we talk about the party adaptation to informal institutions and unhealthy political mechanism. Is harder, in this case, to identify the turning point, at least with the information that we currently have; maybe, in 50 years, historians will have access to documents and memoire with precise timeline. However, is clear that in order to “play” the game of politics, PT decided to renounce to the “moralization” of the system. In other terms, knowing that they were part of a game that in some way was “rigged”, they were facing a dilemma: the first option was quitting the game, as some internal tendencies wanted, and follow other ways rather that the democratic and electoral ones to take power; the second was to play a rigged game with “official” rules, knowing that probably they would have never been able to win and have a real political impact; this, probably, is what happened during the ‘80s and at the beginning of the ‘90s. The third and final option was to play the game according to the informal institution, and in particular to the set of rules known as “politics as usual”; this mean being part of the system and make incremental changes, without any “revolution” or “moralization” of politics. Is clear that, in particular from 2002, the party chose this third option, joining the establishment that they have criticized for many years. Is important to consider another factor: if at the beginning they were almost “obliged” to play by the given set of rules, during Lula’s second term his political hegemony was as strong as it could get; if we usually talk about “honeymoon” at the beginning of an administration, Lula was

living his personal honeymoon with the voters at the end of his second term, and had unprecedented power in the democratic history of the country.

In this moment, however, he decided that the most important thing was to make inroads in the system and electing his heir rather than reforming the institutional system. PT's hegemony was placed in front of a more ambitious (and fundamental) process of reforms. We are not talking only about the institutional arrangement, with the *Presidencialismo de Coalizão* that clearly needed to be changed to allow governability and create a more stable and fair system; we are also speaking about the informal institution that governed the country, and the role that traditional politics, means and strategies used to build (or buy) consensus played, even before the beginning of the "Nova Republica".

Ten years later, we could say that if choosing Dilma wasn't the best strategy, Lula's worst mistake was believing that the "social agreement" built during his administration was stronger than it actually was; when he came to an agreement with PMDB, in 2002 first and 2006, he was also implicitly saying that he would not use his power to change the country and the set of rules that govern politics, and at the same time was creating the pre-condition for the following political crisis that the country would face.

If Lula, the master of negotiation, was able to move in the grey areas of politics thanks to both his personal ability and the overall positive economic trend, Dilma wasn't ready, able and willing to manage "traditional politics", and had to face the real effect of the economic crisis.

As soon as the crisis came, other politician such as her vice-president Michel Temer, were free to take advantage of the characteristics of the political arena, leading to the end of PT's hegemony in 2016.

5.2 Dilma Rousseff: from social contract to extreme polarization

"A comunidade chama o Lula de pai, porque realmente foi um homem que se preparou pra isso, pra dirigir o seu país, mas pensando na igualdade, pensando na classe lá em baixo. Ele entrou com essa luz pros pobres. O pai do

povo é ele, eu espero que Dilma Rousseff seja a mãe do povo”¹⁴⁴ (HPEG Dilma Rousseff, 2010a)

“Deixo em tuas mãos o meu povo e tudo o que mais amei. Mas só deixo porque sei que vais continuar o que fiz. E o meu país será melhor, e meu povo mais feliz. [...] Agora as mãos de uma mulher vão nos conduzir, eu sigo com saudade, mas feliz a sorrir, pois sei o meu povo ganhou uma mãe, que tem um coração que vai do Oiapoque ao Chuí.”¹⁴⁵ (HPEG, 2010b).

The two quotes above, taken from 2010 Campaign, exemplify best the strategy used to present Dilma to the voters. The fact that she wasn't well known or beloved was, at the same time, a challenge and an opportunity: on one side João Santana, the advertising expert chosen already by Lula in 2006, had the chance to “create” a candidate almost from scratch, on the other she had to face more popular opponents.

Dilma's campaign followed the “safest” road, presenting her as the natural follow-up to Lula's administration. It was a peculiar form of “retrospective votes”, highlighting continuity; not by chance during Lula's second term she was presented first as the “mother” of the Programa de Aceleração do Crescimento (PAC) and later on of “Minha Casa Minha Vida”, an important social housing programme. When Lula decided that she would be the Presidential candidate, he started to give her more time on the “spotlights” in the administration, to increase her popularity.

¹⁴⁴ The community calls Lula father, because he truly was a man who prepared himself for that, to “direct” his country, thinking about equality, about the class “down there”. He entered with this “light” for the poor. He is the father of the people; I hope that Dilma Rousseff could be the mother of the people. (own transl.)

¹⁴⁵ I'm leaving in your hands my people and everything that I loved the most. But I'm leaving everything because I know that you will continue what I did. And my country will be better, and my people happier. [...] Now in the hands of a women that will guide us, I will miss it, but I'm happy, smiling, because I know that my people “won” a mother, that have an earth that goes from Oiapoque (the norther place of the country) to Chui (the southern place of the nation). (own transl.)

The reference to Dilma as a “mother” is one of the most interesting elements of their strategy; if after 2005 Lula’s core voters were the poorest, living in the northeast, Dilma’s personal history and her character didn’t reason that well with them. If Lula was the “filho do Brasil”, as in the title of one of the movies dedicated to his biography, Dilma, daughter of a lawyer and entrepreneurs and of a professor, was part of the traditional middle class; present her as the “mother” of the nation, with Lula as “father of the people”, seems a good strategy to transfer Lula’s leadership and consensus.

The idea of Dilma as a mother was the cornerstone of her communication: the first quote that we have used to open the paragraph, is taken from the testimony of Marilane, a woman beneficiary of Bolsa Familia living in the northeast, who tell her story during one of the ads of the campaign; according to the story presented, she was ready to “renounce” to the programme, to “give it” to someone else who needed it, and she remember that in her city “Lula is a father figure, so Dilma could be the mother”.

The second quote, instead, is taken from one of the songs of the campaign, and represent an ideal conversation between Lula and Dilma; the sitting president is the one talking, and the song said more about his new relationship with the voters rather than about Dilma. If Lula as a human being was already a character “larger than life”, Lula as a political leader had become it too; in 2010 he had become the “saviour”, a man able to “rescue” people from misery and gave them a better life.

His leadership, however, was different than the one of other popular leaders; while, at first glance, he could look like a populist or, better to say, part of what Zanatta call “Populismo gesuita” (Zanatta, 2020) talking about figures such as Peron, Castro, Chavez and even Bergoglio, in Lula’s discourse there isn’t any kind of “romanticization” of poverty. While in the early stages of his career, as many other socialist leaders, he wanted to replace capitalism, he was still fascinated by what Brazilian calls “sonho de consumo”, intended as consumption goods that served as a status symbol.

This relationship with “materialism” is clear listening to the same Lula speaking during two scenes of *Entreatos*, a documentary that followed the “backstage” of 2002 campaign:

“Eu sempre gostei de andar bem vestido, é que peão não pode comprar muita roupa, mas eu sempre achei bonito o cara de terno e gravata, sempre achei muito elegante [...] Passei 30 anos na fábrica e não me acostumei de macacão, três dias de gravata e...”¹⁴⁶ (Salles, director, 2004)

Esses dias um companheiro do PT falou assim... eu prefiro o Lula de macacão! eu não estava na reunião, quando cheguei me falaram. Eu falei: tem um companheiro aqui que diz que ele prefere o Lula de macacão vamos fazer o seguinte, eu dou meu macacão de grassa pelo terno e gravata dele e vai trabalhar na fábrica pra saber se é bom trabalhar na fábrica. só fala isso quem não conhece o que é trabalhar de macacão numa telha de bracelete depois do almoço, aquela porra esquentada e você fica suando até três horas da tarde [...] você tem saudade? Não, saudade de ambiente de fabrica não, eu estou com saudade dos meus amigos, mas de fabrica não”¹⁴⁷ (Salles, director, 2004)

In Lula’s narrative there is no cult of “holy poverty”, rather the opposite; material goods are not bad, the ownership of material status symbols is a sign of emancipation.

¹⁴⁶ I always liked to dress well, but workers cannot buy a lot of clothes... but I always believe that they guy in suit and tie was beautiful, I always believed it was very elegant. [...] I spent 30 years in the plant and I never get used to jumpsuit, but three days with the tie and... (own transl.)

¹⁴⁷ One of those days, a comrade said... I prefer Lula in a jumpsuit! I wasn’t there, they told me what I arrived... and I said: there is a comrade here who said that he prefers Lula in a jumpsuit; let’s do one thing, I give him my jumpsuit for free in exchange of his suit and tie, and he can go to work in the plant, to know if it’s good to work there... the only one who said that kind of things are those who doesn’t know what it means to work in a jumpsuit under asbestos in the afternoon, when that “shit” gets hot and you are sweating until 3 P.M. [...] If I miss it? No, I don’t miss the plant, I miss my friends there, but not the plant. (own transl.)

Differently from many populist experiences, PT didn't exercise power in a neo-patrimonial way; the goal of their social programmes was long term sustainability, without the creation of "beneficiaries" depending from the government. Social mobility, both inter and intra generational in the key. In this sense the words of "Marilane" are important, when she says that she's ready to renounce to Bolsa Familia, because she represents the emancipatory power of the welfare states in that context. Last, but not least, even if in his discourses Lula talks many times about "the people", using it as a category to represents everything that is good, collectivism didn't define his vision of the world, in which individual improvements are still an important part of the narrative. Here lays one of the biggest ambivalences of his discourse: from one side, the people interviewed are often talking about Lula as a saviour, on the other at least until 2016 crisis, he reaffirmed at any chance possible that he had just "recognized" to the people their rights.

He was recognized at the same time as the leader responsible for improving the life of millions and millions of Brazilian but, despite the narrative, during his two terms rich people didn't lose any of their privileges, and were still considering him as one of the best President of the history of the nation.

This was, perhaps, the biggest success of his administration: the new "social contract" allowed him to be the most popular President since Getúlio Vargas among the "people" (o povo), without upsetting the so-called "elites" but, on the contrary, being beloved even in the richest sectors.

In Dilma's presentation, the same ambivalence is still present: she is at the same time the "mother", in an attempt to create a personal relationship between her and the voters, mimicry Lula's leadership, and the daughter of the southern middle class, someone with technical and economics capabilities that would allow her to improve the economic performances of the nation and to reinforce the social contract looking at the new middle class.

Joao Santana express best the difficulties besides her candidacy:

"Tínhamos uma candidata que era uma pessoa de grande valor, enorme potencial, porém muitíssimo pouco conhecida. Tínhamos o desafio de

transformar em voto direto, e apaixonado, uma pessoa que chegava à primeira cena por força de uma escolha indireta, quase imperial. Tínhamos que transformar a força vulcânica de Lula em fator equilibrado de transferência de voto, com o risco permanente de a transfusão virar overdose e aniquilar o receptor. Tínhamos a missão de fazer Dilma conhecida e ao mesmo tempo amada; uma personagem original, independente, de ideias próprias e, ao mesmo tempo, umbilicalmente ligada a Lula; capaz de continuar o governo Lula, mas capaz de inovar.”¹⁴⁸ (Santana, J, 2010)

To overcome Dilma’s lack of charisma and experience, in many occasion Lula travelled with her and took part of the ads of the campaign. The need to “build from scratch” a candidate is clear when we look at the polls before and after the official beginning of the campaign: if, at the beginning of the year, PSBD’s candidate Serra had 10 points of advantages, in August, after the first ads aired, Dilma enjoyed a 17-points lead.

Serra was able to force to election to the ballot, with Dilma reaching “only” 46.9% of the votes in the first round. Looking at the results, is clear that if to transference of Lula’s personal consensus had worked, Dilma hadn’t been able to unify the country and “conquer” votes in “her” region, south and southeast, and neither in the middle class. Talking about the geographical distribution of the votes, Dilma’s results follow the one of 2006, being a little bit worst.

If Lula obtained 77% of the votes in the northeast, Dilma ended with “only” 70,5%; similar results were registered in the north, with Lula’s 62.6% of 2006 followed by Dilma’s 57.4% in 2010.

¹⁴⁸ We had a valuable candidate, with great potential, but almost unknown. The challenge was to transform the “direct” votes, passionate, and a person that reached the spotlight thanks to a indirect choice, almost imperial. We need to transform Lula’s volcanic strength in a stabilizing factor by vote transmission, risking that the transfusion could became an overdose and annihilate the receiver. Our mission was to make Dilma knew and at the same time beloved; a character that at the same time was original, independent, with her own ideas, while umbilically linked with Lula; able to continue Lula’s government, but also to innovate. (own transl.)

The first woman elected President was able to “keep” the south, but with only 51.9%, while just four years earlier Lula was re-elected with 56.9%; the centre-west, instead, was “conquered” by the centre-right, joining the south, where even Lula had already lost in the second round of 2006.

If Lula was defeated in 7 States, two of them with a one-point margin, Dilma lost 11 of the 27 States. Even more, if we exclude the northeast, her advantage compared to Serra was of only approximately 1.3 million votes out of the 75 million casted. When, however, we include the northeast, her advantage rose to more than 12 million votes.

2010 was the year in which the northeast became central to keep PT in power. The day after the election, newspapers started to look once again on Bolsa Familia, suggesting the existence of causal relationship between the votes and the beneficiaries of the programme. Academic and non-academic literature had already focused enough on this topic, and is not our goal to join the debate; is just worthy to remember that some scholars have already proven empirically that many interpretations about Bolsa Familia’s effects are actually misleading: as for any other public policies, BF cannot be taken in consideration by themselves to explain voters behaviours and, even more, the effects are not present only in the northeast; on the contrary, paradoxically, the relation between consensus and Bolsa Familia is stronger among the electors of the south (Simoni, 2017). Even more interesting, Bolsa Familia interpretation as a clientelist system is misleading; first of all, due to high level of bureaucratization, transparency and Federal Control, Bolsa Familia is consider a good practice at the international level; the programme could be even considered as an instrument to “free” the poor from their dependence from traditional patronage network (Sugiyama, Hunter, 2013); once welfare start to be seen as a fundamental rights, linked with citizenship, and not as a “merciful” concession of some local politician, the voters are less dependent from local patron to survive.

If we have shown why Bolsa Familia cannot be seen as a good enough explanation of PT’s consensus in the northeast, we need to take in consideration also another possible interpretation, linked with the role of traditional parties and their “political machines”.

There is no doubt that 2010 (and later on 2014) elections were the ones in which PT pragmatism reached his peak: to build the coalition in Dilma's support, that could count with the participation of ten parties (PT, PMDB, PCdoB, PR, PDT, PRB, PSC, PSB, PTC, PTN) PT was willing to give support to many gubernatorial candidates whose characteristic were not in line with their ideology or programme. We could mention the case of the State of Maranhão as an example, in which PT's local section at first supported Flavio Dino (PCdoB), being then obliged by the "Diretório Nacional" to withdraw their commitment to join Roseana Sarney's run. From a mere electoral point of view their strategy worked perfectly; PT was able to elect 5 Governors, and was part of the winning coalition in other eight States. Is pretty clear that there was a "quid-pro-quo" between parties: while, of course, many wanted to take part in the national administration, their commitment was not "for free", and PT needed to give something in exchange for their "loyalty" to Dilma.

If we considered that, compared to 2006, the only States in which Dilma improved Lula's electoral performance was Rio Grande do Sul, we can understand how important the support of smaller and bigger parties was to secure consensus, and even more to avoid other candidate's growth. At the same time, Haddad's results in 2018 Presidential Election, when he was not supported by traditional parties, didn't differ that much from those obtained by Dilma.

What does this mean? We are suggesting that, while coalition building is important, mainly from the time available on tv ads and to the important of "voto de cabresto", those elements played only a marginal role in Presidential Campaign in the northeast, at least for what concerns PT's candidate. Those finding are in line with what we have suggested until now: if we have shown how Lula's administration was characterized by a process of inclusion of the outsider, both economically and politically, we should expect massive return in his favour, in term of votes; there was a "shift" in the loyalty of the voters, "freed" from traditional network and now loyal Lula's follower.

The idea of Dilma's election as Lula's third victory might be pretty evident by now, since she "inherited" the votes in the poorest sectors of the society, mainly among those who earned less than two minimum wages,

Dilma was elected both against the “will” of the most important States of the Federation, with the exception of Minas Gerais, and thanks to poorest voters, mainly coming from the northeast. While the distribution of votes might seem trivial to some, is not: in a scenario characterized by high level of inequalities, both among social classes and regions, the votes traditionally didn’t “weight” the same. The principle of “one man, one vote” of course was respected: however, without the support of the traditional political stakeholders, Dilma had to face a unicum in the history of the nation; while for large part of her first term this didn’t play an important, the crisis started in 2013 will be characterized by the retreat of traditional elite and of popular sector of the south and southeast from the social agreement, while the “strength” of the northeast wasn’t enough in order to secure the administration.

Dilma’s Presidency was also undermined by the increasing number of allies in the coalition, each one demanding something. If we consider her personal trait and her unwillingness or inability to negotiate, it was the recipe for a disaster.

She started her term following the footsteps of her predecessor.

“Venho para abrir portas para que muitas outras mulheres também possam, no futuro, ser presidentas. Venho, antes de tudo, para dar continuidade ao maior processo de afirmação que este país já viveu nos tempos recentes. Venho para consolidar a obra transformadora do Presidente Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, com quem tive a mais vigorosa experiência política da minha vida e o privilégio de servir ao país, ao seu lado, nestes últimos anos¹⁴⁹” (Discurso da Posse, Dilma Rousseff, 2011).

¹⁴⁹ I’m here to open doors, to allow many other women, in the future, to be President; I’m here, first of all, to guarantees continuity to the biggest process of affirmation that this country had lived in recent times. I’m here to consolidate the transformative work of President Lula, with who I shared the strongest political experience of my life and the privilege to serve the nation, at his side, in the last few years. (own transl.)

Probably, she isn't familiar with an old quote taken from an Italian book, "Il Gattopardo", in which one of the characters says that "everything must change so that everything can stay the same".

While she wanted to follow Lula's strategy, and give continuity to the job done during his administrations, everything surrounding the government was rapidly changing: the economic crisis, labelled by Lula as a "marolinha" (little wave) was still showing his effects on the global economy, even if apparently Brazil had bounce back. The country that she inherited from Lula was different, and so the voters that she was talking to; redistributive policies in favour of the poorest were not enough in a "middle class" country. Third, but not less important, Michel Temer was not Josè Alencar, both in terms of personal ambitions and political experience.

Before going into detail, a premise is needed here: Dilma Rousseff administrations, and in particular her second term and the following process of impeachment, deserved to be studied in detail. Some scholars have already done it, many others will do it for the foreseeable future. We will not focus neither on the "day to day" of her Presidency, neither on the process of impeachment per se; too many are the thing that needed to be said, and a full Ph.D. Thesis about it would be hardly enough to discuss it. Even more, it will be impossible to do it without taking into consideration the "Operação Lava Jato" and the consequences of the biggest corruption scandals in the history of the nation, and since we still need to know many things about it, we leave this role to future researches. Here, we will be talk about how Dilma's impeachment became possible from a political perspective and why it was a fundamental step of the larger process of transformation of both Lula's leadership and PT's roots. We will need, of course, to introduce the topics mentioned above, but we will do it without any claims of completeness.

Going back to the first few years of her administration, continuity was the keyword; important Minister were confirmed, such as Fernando Haddad as Ministro da Educação and most importantly Guido Mantega as Ministro da Fazenda. Having a better understanding of macroeconomic principle that Lula, and being less incline to negotiation and compromises, however, Dilma was

more than willing to intervene on the famous “tripé macroeconômico” established by Cardoso. Even if over the course of the campaign the topic wasn’t addressed, Dilma wanted to implement the “Nova Matriz Econômica” (New economic matrix) strongly based on her “neodevelopmental” attitude.

If Lula’s economic plan was characterized by the will to create a bigger internal market, thanks to the inclusion of the outsider, the expansion of credits and an increased access to consumption goods, Dilma’s strategy comprehend all of those elements, while being far more daring. First of all, she decided to intervene on SELIC, the interest rate, to reduce it; then, she affirmed that the exchange rates needed to be controlled too, because the Real was hyper-valued. She then started to increase public investments into the economy, in particular in favour of the industrial sector, giving subsidies and controlling prices.

The idea was to increase the importance of industrial sector in the economy, while at the same time reducing the one of banks and financial institutions. In her plan, those measures would have allowed national industry to benefit from subsidies (in particular on electric energy), controlled prices (as in the case of petrol) and fiscal renounces made by the State, to boost their competitiveness, nationally and internationally. Dilma’s plan was inspired on the same ideas behind the classic “desenvolvimentismo” of the ‘50s. What she didn’t consider was, however, the peculiar structure of power of Brazilian capitalism; over the course of the years, in fact, interest rates and in general wealth gained through the financial sector had reached a really high level of participation in national GDP. The same was true also for the distribution of wealth: the role of industrial sector was marginal in both cases and, as a consequence, the financial system was by far more important in the process of decision making too. While her economic plan aimed to increase her consensus among the richest, she didn’t take in consideration the importance of Brazilian “rentier capitalism”: a series of policies realized to re-establish the “social agreement” and boost economic growth, produced discontent among “rentier elites” and started to erode Dilma’s consensus.

Even worst, the plan wasn’t even able to produce a real change in the industrial sector, due to various factor such as low level on innovation and low

productivity, but was still very costly for the State. Basically, the ambitious plan implemented by her administration failed both economically and politically; on the contrary, challenging the same nature of “rentier capitalism”, that characterized Brazilian economy, she started to break the “social agreement”.

Dilma was also having problem on the “other side” of the social agreement, in her relation with popular sectors and civil society organization; everything started in the first few months of her term, when the new minimum wages was under discussion.

Tension increased both between CUT and other unions, and between unions and the administration. If in the previous eight years we can observe a period of relatively low tension between government and unions, with almost 370 strikes per year, in 2011 then number rose up to 554, reaching 877 in 2012, before the “explosion” of 2013, with 2050 strikes. (Viera Campos, 2019).

Social tension, however, had increased before the beginning of Dilma’s term, in the last two years of Lula’s administration, due to the global economic crisis. Looking at the number, is pretty clear that the idea of “unexpected” mobilization in 2013 is not adequate, while, of course, that was the year in which social tension “exploded”, reaching unprecedented levels.

While Dilma was publicly asking for a “social pact”, a new contract for development, she was slowly consuming the one build by Lula over the course of the years, if it has ever existed.

Is interesting to see how the public image of the two leaders didn’t match their political behaviours, in many ways: Lula, long seen as an anti-systemic leader, ready to wreck national economic structure, was the appeaser, following the road already traced by Cardoso, without challenging the structure of power of Brazilian society. Dilma, who on the contrary seem to be harmless, considered Lula’s mannequin when her candidacy was announced, was by far more daring in her attempt to change Brazilian economy, promoting heterodox reforms. The lack of political experience, however, played against her: to promote a change that big, in fact, she needed a large social and political consensus, that she didn’t have. On the contrary, the coalition in her support, created of pragmatic

compromise rather than based on a programme, was ready to bail on her as soon as the ship sink.

The difficult relation between Dilma and the Congress became clear already in the first semester when Palocci, Ministro da Casa Civil, was investigated again; he was one of the few members of PT with the experience and personal network to deal with political articulation in the Congress and, once removed, Dilma choose Gleisi Hoffman as the new Minister, a women with almost no experience in the Federal Government, since she had just been elected for her first term as Senator one year earlier. To overcome the difficulties, Dilma asked the help of Michel Temer, to reinforce the relation with Congress (Folha de S. Paulo, June 2011). His loyalty to the President, however, was at least questionable, and while he officially started to play the role of intermediary between Congress and Federal Government he was working on his own relations with congressman, rather than to help Dilma.

If the allies were not happy, even inside of PT the feeling toward the new administration were not totally positive. One of the first to give voice to the malcontent was Governor Jaques Wagner (Folha de S. Paulo, August 2011).

Another factor that didn't help the transition of power was Lula's cancer, that kept him far from politics for few months during Dilma's first year as President.

While municipal election is not an adequate proxy for the national strength of the parties, 2012 results for sure didn't play in Dilma's favour; while PT was able to elect Mayors in more than 600 cities, the most important being São Paulo with Fernando Haddad, PMDB and PSB come out of the election a lot stronger, convincing in particular the leaders of the second that it was time for an independent run for 2014.

While the pre-condition for the end of PT's cycle were already present, at the beginning of 2013 no one believed that a crisis was near to come. Dilma's consensus was still pretty high, with 65% of the voters with a positive evaluation of the Government, while only 7% had a negative opinion (Datafolha, 2013).

In June, however, the tension exploded over the increase of prices of public transportation. The protest, organized by Movimento Passe Livre ever since

January, reached their peak mainly as a reaction to São Paulo's police brutality during the rallies of June 13th, when many people were arrested and severely injured. (UOL, 2013).

The revendication of the protestors changed radically after that day: the focus shifted from transportation prices to freedom of protest and safety; other movement joined and organized rallies, such as the Movimento Brasil Livre.

It was the beginning of new phase of protests, asking for better public services, political reform and fight against corruption. For the first time, PT was caught unaware and on the “wrong” side of a protest, unable to react quickly. While Dilma Rousseff tried to face the problem in an “institutional” way, securing her political consensus, right-wing movement were able to make inroads. The international stage offered from the Confederation Cup served perfectly the purpose of the protestors. André Singer suggest that TV airing the judgment on Mensalão in 2012, may have created the “right” political atmosphere to boost the anti-corruption narratives (Singer, A, 2018); Confederation and World Cup served also as a perfect example of wasted money, taken away from “everyday peopled” and as an opportunity for corrupted politicians to enrich themselves; for example, Lula was accused of promoting the construction of the Estádio de Itaquera for his favourite team, Corinthians, even if no proof were presented in favour of this theory.

During the Confederation Cup, in June and July, protests happened daily in the whole country, with the biggest one close to the arenas on match-day.

To better understand the characteristics of those rallies, we need to look at the profile of the citizens who took part in it; 30% of them, earned between 2 and 5 minimum wages, and 26% between 5 and 10 minimum wages. The large majority of the protestor were really young, between 14 and 24 years old, (43% of the total) while another 20% was represented by those between 25 and 29 years old. The protestor considered themselves “very interested in politics”, but didn't feel represented by any politician nor party: 96% of the protestor were not member of any party, 86% wasn't part of a union or student organization. (Ibope, 2013)

What those data tell us? First of all, it was the political “debut” of a new generation, never involved before. It is also clear that the middle class was the protagonist of the protest; if we consider that the majority of the citizens involved in the “jornadas de junho” came from families that earn between 2 and 5 minimum wage, it is reasonable to believe that many of them were part of Lula’s “new middle class”, while the poorest sectors didn’t take part in the movement.

Dilma (and, as a consequence, Lula) had lost “power” over their own “product”, the new middle class. If, as we have seen before, Dilma’s indication could be seen as an attempt to win back the votes of the middle class, 2013 was the definitive failure of that strategy.

On the contrary, 2013 showed the “dark side” of the process of inclusion of the outsiders: while economically speaking there is no doubt that they were the beneficiaries of the process, from a cultural point of view very few attentions were now dedicated to them; Lula’s narrative of “redemption” didn’t have the same appeal anymore for those who had already improved their life, and the attention for the poorest didn’t make them “protagonist” of any ulterior process of mobility.

They were “stuck in the middle”: rich enough to be “outside” of the beneficiaries of the most important public policies, but too poor and without the right cultural instrument to be considered part of the traditional middle class, that they want to mimic. If, as we have said, the process of social mobility had been presented as an individual one, thanks to “opportunity” and merit, the natural consequence was that those citizens didn’t feel any kind of “moral debt” with the administration and were ready to criticize it as soon as their need wasn’t attended anymore. While they had become insiders, both economically and politically, they have done it without any tie with traditional parties, nor with cultural identification with an ideologic movement.

The results of the protest were tragic for the administration, in terms of consensus: if at the beginning of June Dilma was still evaluated positively from 57% of the voters, just three weeks later she enjoyed only 30% of the consensus (Datafolha, 2013).

After the first three years of her administration, there was no trace of any social agreement: for what concerns “core voters”, a part of the unions and new middle class were the two sectors that bail out on the government; looking at swing voters, rejection towards PT was rapidly increasing among traditional middle class too. If in 2005 we have identified the first “electoral realignment” of the PT’s era, 2013 mark the second one; it wasn’t a radical shift as the one that we have seen 8 years earlier, but a more subtle one.

If before 2013 Lula and Dilma were still trying to represent different social classes and regions, trying to promote a new social contract, after the protest they were pushed only towards poorest voters, mainly located in the northeast.

Keeping their consensus in the northeast and among the poorest became fundamental to guarantee continuity. While in many capitals in the northeast people took part in the protest of June, the numbers never reached the ones of São Paulo, Porto Alegre or Rio de Janeiro.

Looking at Dilma’s approval rate, it is clear that the “jornadas de julho” and the final judgment over Mensalão had very different impacts on the voters in different regions: if, on average, after few months Dilma recovered at least a big part of her popularity, with 41% of the voters having a positive evaluation, in the northeast her approval rate was up to 52%, while in the southeast it was only 34% (Datafolha, 2013b).

2014¹ FIFA World Cup was the “second round” of the protest: the main difference was that, this time, corruption had become the main reason behind them. The overall situation was even worse for the Government, because in the meanwhile Operação Lava Jato had officially made its first arrests, and over the course of the following years the investigation will turn upside down the whole political system; if, as we know by now, Lava Jato will hit PT harder than any other party, at least in 2014 the focus was still on Petrobras, some Governors, and Federal Deputies, by not on the Federal Government itself.

While the protest during the World Cup were not as big as the ones of the previous year, the political system was being delegitimized day after day, with a trend that we know very well from other western democracies. Fight against

corruption became the core idea behind the protest, accompany by a general feeling of distrust in relation to party politics and the institutional system.

PT was identified as the main responsible for the situation. The most alarming thing however wasn't Rousseff's approval rate, neither PT's popularity, but the relationship between citizens and politics. If, for many years, PT had run with the idea of "participatory" democracy, actually never truly implemented at national level but always identified as "gold standard", after 12 years of their administrations the citizens were actually less involved in politics than before: in a poll taken in May of 2014, 61% of the interviewed declared to be against compulsory voting, and 57% affirmed that, without it, they would not participate in the election. (Datafolha, 2014)

Knowing that Dilma was confirmed President at the end of that year, a reader could believe that we are drawing a "darker" picture than the actual reality, and that the idea of an administration already failed in 2013 must be wrong. The number of votes obtained by Rousseff in 2014, and also the size of the coalition in her supports apparently could validate this theory.

There is no doubt that Dilma won the election in 2014 fair and square, even if her opponent, Aécio Neves, started to talk about electoral fraud on election night. At the same time, is also true that she was confirmed President with the smaller margin after re-democratization.

There are many reasons behind her victory, even in the dramatic scenario described above: the first one is linked with the economic results: in 2013 GDP was still growing, with 2.3% that was one of the better results in the world, compared for example to 1,9% of the United States or the -0.4% of the European Union (IBGE, 2014). While other countries had faced and were still facing the consequences of the economic crisis, Brazilian was growing, and the anti-cyclical economic strategy of the government appeared to be the right one.

Coalition building, and in particular the ability to keep stable the alliance with PMDB was a second important factor in an election so contested. Over the course of 2014, PMDB's leaders send mixed signals to PT, with local executive in many States (as Rio de Janeiro) announcing their support to PSDB's candidate. Two figures emerged in this scenario: Vice-President Michel Temer,

and Eduardo Cunha, PMDB's leader on the Chamber of Deputy and the biggest critics of PT-PMDB alliance.

If Temer was still supporting the necessity of PT-PMDB coalition, Cunha was advocating for an approximation with PSDB, in support to Neves; while, in perfect PMDB's fashion, neither of the two expressed publicly strong political belief or ideologic position, Cunha was expression of conservative sectors, closer with evangelic movement, uncomfortable with the electoral alliance with PT; he was by far bolder than the average PMDB's member, not scared of the spotlight, but still very able to move "in the dark" and organize consensus through legal and illegal instrument. Temer, on the other side, was known mainly for his pragmatism and for his long tenure as PMDB's President; his career had been characterized by a constant attempt to stay as close as possible to power, to have the resources necessary to negotiate and share his own personal success with those who supported him, without being too exposed.

Cunha was very vocal over the course of the whole 2014 calling for a new strategy both on interview and on social media:

"A cada dia que passo me convenço mais que temos de repensar está aliança, porque não somos respeitados pelo PT"¹⁵⁰ (Cunha, 2014)

Temer was still stronger thanks to his roles as Vice-President and President of PMDB; Cunha's role, however, cannot be undervalued: in 2014 he was already considered the leader of the so-called "bloco", a pragmatic coalition of more than 250 Deputies. His strength became pretty evident when it was time to approve the coalition in PMDB's national meeting; if in 2010 Dilma-Temer ticket was approved by almost 85% of the party, in 2014 only 59% of the members voted in favour. (Passarinho, 2014)

This long digression on PMDB's internal process is important to understand what happened at the beginning of Dilma's second term; while PT was able to secure the alliance, the nature of the "pact" was completely different in 2014,

¹⁵⁰ Day after day I'm more convinced that we have to rethink this alliance, because we are not respected by PT (own transl.)

with Dilma that soon would become “hostage” of PMDB and in particular of Cunha’s will.

The third, and most interesting reason behind Dilma’s victory is linked with the same characteristic of the population, and with the hegemony built in the northeast. If, as we have seen, in all the election until 2010 the President-elected emerged victorious in almost all the States, with few exceptions, 2014 presented us another outcome, with Dilma winning “only” 15 States against Neves’ 12.

The distribution of the votes among regions shown us that Brazilian bipolarism was following a geographical pattern that we have identified before. Dilma won all the States in the Northeast, with impressive majorities: on the second round, she obtained 70,96% of the preferences. She was also able to “conquer” part of the north too, and the two key State of Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais. On the other side, Aécio Neves won in all the States of the South with almost 60% of the votes, in centre-east with 57.5%, and in São Paulo with 64.3%. (TSE)

The country was more divided than ever, and the polarization was based on two new factors: on one side, after many failed attempt of being the party “of the people” during the ‘90s and even at the beginning of the 2000, and after an era in which PT had been able to emerge as the party of the “national conciliation”, in 2014 they had finally become the true representative of poorest voters; among those earning less than 2 minimum wages, Dilma led with 63% of the preference (Datafolha, 2014); on the other side, geographical factor, largely ignored at least until 2010, were fundamentals, and the northeast, the second biggest region in term of population, had become the most important one for an elected government for the first time. While there is, of course, a relation between the structure of northeast society in term of class distribution and the vote, we are suggesting that the attention given by PT’s leader to the region was an important factor to explain their success.

The data related with class structure tell us a lot also about how much Brazil had changed over the course of the years: in previous election, a candidate enjoying 63% of the consensus among the poorest nationwide, and more than 2/3 of the votes in the second most-populated region of the country, would have

won the election easily. On the contrary, Dilma obtained only 3.5 million votes more than his opponent, 3% of the total. The election was a representation of the progresses made by the country over the course of Lula's two and Dilma first term: it may look strange to say it, but the fact that PT was almost defeated by a candidate very popular not only among the richest, but also with the middle class, while ineffective among the poorest, was a "testament" of PT's success in the inclusion of the outsiders into citizenship, emancipating the voters at the same time.

Lula's and Dilma "creature", the new middle class, had become the main problem for their administration; their biggest pride had become one of their biggest weakness and will play a fundamental role in the uprising of 2016, siding on the opposition in respects to PT's administrations.

While Dilma emerged victorious, the political situation didn't leave her any time to celebrate. Looking at the composition of her majority in the Chamber, PT only had 70 Deputies, PMDB 66 and other smaller parties, belonging to the "conservative" sector of her coalition, sum up to 138 (TSE).

According to the newspaper, Cunha just by itself had control over more than 1/3 of the Chamber, with his informal coalition that could count on 180 MP's (BBC Brasil, 2015). The results of the re-composition were evident since the beginning of the second term; Eduardo Cunha, stronger than ever being "responsible" of the election of many of the "conservative" deputies belonging to the majority, was able to be elected as the new President of the Chamber; Dilma had an opponent rather than an ally as President, and if her relationship with Congress was difficult in the first term, it didn't even exist in the second one. Cunha undermine the Federal Government from within: at first with the so-called "pautas bombas", a series of costly amendments approved while Dilma was trying to implement austerity measures, and later on using his control over the process of impeachment as a bargaining chip to ensure his self-protection in front of Lava Jato, allowing than the Chamber to proceed once PT decided to permit the investigation against him (Passarinho, 2015).

If institutionally Dilma's consensus was really scarce, the situation was even worst in civil society, due to the policy implemented: while Dilma was elected

to give continuity to her administration, just one month later she replaced Mantega with Joaquim Levy as Ministro da Fazenda.

It was an unpredictable turn, since Levy was an orthodox economist who had served previously as part of Cardoso's team during his second term. A bad economic situation, in particular for what concerns public expenditure and debt, led to a desperate attempt to "win back" the support of richest sector.

Levy's new economic plan was going in that direction: the government announced radical austerity measures, after 15 billion of Real in debt registered in the first 9 months of 2014 (Magalhaes, 2014). It was the definitive renounce of anticyclical policy and of neo-developmentism. This new economic agenda, however, didn't serve to please right-wing sectors of the Government, while millions of people were still protesting in the street, with anti-politics stronger than ever and revelation of "Operação Lava Jato" on the frontpage of every newspaper daily.

Dilma's achieved the only outcome that she didn't wanted: austerity reform hit hard popular sector and the new middle class, and the Government was criticized even by CUT after the approval of the "*medidas provisórias nº664 e 665*", that among other things established harder criteria for workers to obtain unemployment subsidies and survivors' pensions.

Dilma was accused of "estelionato eleitoral", "electoral embezzlement", since she had presented a programme to the voters during the campaign and, immediately after the election, started to implement reforms in the opposite direction. In June of 2015, just 6 months after the inauguration of her second term, her administration was considered "bad or really bad" by 65% of the citizens (Datafolha, 2015).

PT's hegemony was officially over: at the end of 2015 Eduardo Cunha, feeling "betrayed" by PT once they voted in favour of the investigation against him, decided to allow the process of impeachment against Rousseff.

Accused of "pedaladas fiscais", a form of creative accounting, considered "responsible" of the worst economic results of the last 25 years, with -3,8% of growth for GDP in 2015, Dilma Rousseff was unable to recover the trust of the people or any form of political support in the Congress.

March of 2016 was the point of no return: Sergio Moro, the Federal Judge of Curitiba, allowed the Federal Police to enter Lula's house, to take it to the delegacy for his testimony. According to the Prosecutors, he was responsible of money laundering and corruption; few days later, on the 10th, another Public Prosecutor even asked to arrest him, to avoid tampering.

On the 13th, it was the time of another defining moment; 3 million people took part in the rallies against the Government in more than 200 cities, asking for Dilma's impeachment and Lula's prison; the centres of the protests were, naturally, São Paulo and the south in general. The tension between powers of the State reached a new peak just few days later, when Rousseff announced Lula's role as Ministro da Casa Civil and, as a response, Sergio Moro sent to the media a wiretap between Dilma and Lula, in which they were talking explicitly about the Ministerial appointment as a "weapon" useful "in case of need", to avoid further investigations or judgment (Nunes, 2016).

The next months were characterized by increasing tension, that reached the peak in the days in which Chamber and Senate voted for the impeachment. It was the end of PT's era, at least in the Federal Government.

Dilma's successor was Michel Temer, that over the months had emerged as the men behind the impeachment, "recruiting" MPs against Dilma.

2016 crisis could be the subject of a whole PhD thesis; here, we have just highlighted some key element behind it. We avoided the endless discussion between "golpe" and impeachment, that serves more for political reason than as an academic debate. There is no doubt that a "palace intrigue" took place over the course of 2016, leading to Dilma's removal. At the same time, is also true that everything happened "inside" of the set of rules established by the Constitution, even if they forced the definition of "high crimes and misdemeanours" against the President. Knowing how Brazilian institution (mal)function, we shouldn't be surprise by this outcome: while we are talking about a Presidential System, in fact, the "Presidencialismo de Coalizão" is defined by the needs of large coalition to Govern; even more, historically we know that while Presidentialism was approved during Constitutional Debate, Ulysses Guimaraes, actually wanted to implement a Parliamentary system.

The impeachment could be considered as a “vote of no confidence” against the Executive, that of course doesn’t exist in a Presidential system. The impeachment was basically the results of a series of processes, ranging from Dilma’s characteristics to the importance of “old politics”, in a context in which the social agreement supposedly built by Lula fall apart due to the economic crisis and the increasing importance of anti-corruption narrative in public debate.

The role of anti-corruption narratives, in particular, is the most interesting factor that further studies needs to clarify; as we have already said before, in fact, while always present as a defining characteristic of Brazilian politics, every now and then, during critical juncture and political transition, corruption re-emerges strongly enough and serve as an instrument, in the hands of the opposition, to delegitimize the government.

At the same time, is also clear that this tendency is detrimental for the overall quality of democracy, being also a large part of the description of Brazil as a “backsliding democracy” that emerged over the course of the last years.

5.3 Conclusion

Dilma Rousseff’s era was characterized by an attempt to be a more radical version of Lula’s reformism, actually challenging the structure of power of Brazilian society, while the two terms of her predecessor were characterized by a constant process of negotiation. While Dilma inherited from Lula a better country from an economical point of view, the institutional system was still the same and, due to Dilma’s characteristics, some of the element of “old politics” that Lula had been able to master represented an insurmountable obstacle.

The social agreement of Lula’s era collapsed in just few years, showing that if a pact had existed, it was mainly due to pragmatic reasons rather than on collective ideas for the future of the country; while Lula had been able to build his hegemony politically, culturally his vision of a more equal national fell down as soon as the resources started to be scarce and the conflict about “how” to distribute them became central in the economic decision.

To say it even clearer, while it was easy to Govern “for all” when global economy, and in particular Latin American ones were having the best performance in decades, when the crisis affected the nation, distributive conflict among social sector re-emerged.

In this context, increased social polarization started to characterized politics; if Dilma’s first term was already characterized by a slow decline of the consensus, the electoral victory of 2014 didn’t serve to reinforce her position; on the contrary, trying to regain the support of the right-wings sector, she instead ended losing even popular support.

The historical problem of national politics re-emerged as strong as possible, starting from the political use of corruption scandals to delegitimize the administration, to the role of traditional politics and negotiation to keep or gain power. If 2016 represented the end of PT’s era leading Federal Government, it was just the first step of a new, stronger political battle, characterized by high level of polarization and the importance of geographical and social variable. Once more, it was Lula the one in charge of leading this new phase.

6 CONSENSUS BULIDING, MARTYRDOM AND MESSIANISM: LULA’S “HOLY” TRANSFORMATION

6.1 Introduction

If PT’s control of Federal Institution ended dramatically in 2016 with Rousseff’s impeachment, the party didn’t follow Dilma’s trajectory; while she “disappeared” from the public scene, PT fought back to regain control over the Presidency, once again guided by Lula.

While they were not able to win the election again in 2018, the results obtained after 2016 are still impressive if compared to other “traditional parties”: PSDB, the other “half” of Brazilian de-facto bipolarism, was almost destroyed in the immediate aftermath of Lava Jato, unable to recover consensus at national level, ending only with the 9th larger group in the Chamber and with their Presidential candidate with less than 5% of the votes.

PMBD’s situation was even worst, confirming only 50% of the seats in comparison to 2014, losing their role as the most important party of the nation.

The impeachment procedure and Temer’s government were a hard hit for the popularity of those who benefit the most from those process in the months immediately after Dilma’s removal.

In this context, the fact that PT was able to lose “only” 13 Deputy in 2018 election, in comparison to 2014, becoming the first party in the Chamber, is impressive, especially if we consider that at that time their leader was in jail, and in a large part of the public opinion they had been identified as the responsible of the economic recession.

If the return to a more polarized political arena might have helped PT to recover part of the “progressive” votes lost after 2005, the most important factor behind their growth was, once again, Lula and his leadership.

Over the course of this final chapter, we will explain how Lula’s transformation reached his peak after the impeachment, suggesting that through his personal martyrdom he had become even something more than a messianic leader, reaching the status of a holy figure, a demigod.

We will explain why this transformation was possible and which are the elements that could explain his consensus, in particular in the northeast, the only region in which he and the party still enjoy an impressive popular support nowadays; in other terms, we will see how the northeast had become central for both Lula and the whole left. To conclude, we will see how Lula's success could shape political debate for the years to come and, potentially, affecting the overall quality of democracy.

6.2 Lula's martyrdom, increasing polarization and 2018 Presidential election

The idea of "exceptionalism" behind the relation between PT's leaders and the voters, and in particular with those of the northeast, is reinforced by the events unfolded in 2016 and after the end of Dilma's administration.

Let's start with some data: if March of 2016 represented one of the most dramatic months in the recent history, the polls made during that same month showed us that distrust regarding the administration wasn't equally distributed in the whole country. In the immediate aftermath of the protest against Dilma, in fact, the majority of the voters in the northeast were not against the government, with 21% believing that Dilma's administration was good or great and 30% labelling it as "regular".

The data, of course, were not flattering even in the northeast, but to put them in perspective, in the other regions the large majority of the voters believed that the government was bad or really bad, with 70% of the southeast, 68% in the south and 74% in centre-west.

The most impressive data, however, didn't concern Dilma's administration, but Lula. The former President was already under investigation, with the prosecutor asking for his arrest to avoid tampering and mass media talking about a plan to make him the new Ministro da Casa Civil as a way to avoid judgment and, potentially, prison. Even in that context Lula was still considered the best President of the history of the Nation by 40% of the citizens interviewed, a data even more impressive in the northeast, where he reached 61%. (Datafolha, 2016)

In 2016 Lula returned as the “face” of PT. Travelling the country in Dilma’s support, he returned to Brasilia to conduct personally the negotiation to stop the impeachment; while both attempts ended in a failure, it became immediately clear that Lula was back “to stay”, and that he would be one of the frontrunners for the Presidency in 2018.

The immediate aftermath of 2016 impeachment and, in particular, the progress made by “Lava Jato” toward his condemnation, served as the perfect chance for Lula to complete his messianic transformation; he started to present himself as victims of a giant conspiracy from the “elites”. At first, he used some classic tricks of Latin-American populism: on one side he and his followers, described as righteous, who believed in a better country, against mean elites unwilling to share their privilege and “tired” of democracy after four electoral defeat in a row. Cult of personality played a role too: after being an example of social mobility first and another “pai dos pobres” later on, he started to portrait himself as a fearless leader, who had already faced powerful “enemies”, being entrepreneurs or the Military Regime, without fear.

A new element appeared into his narrative, the one that lead us to talk about a sublimation of messianic leadership: the attitude to martyrdom.

We are not suggesting that Lula was happy to be under investigation or arrested, of course; however, he embraced the situation and use it to his advantage. As many other leaders fallen in disgrace, he could have easily walked away, moving to another country, ending his life in a self-inflicted exile. On the contrary, once his situation started to look worst day after day, instead of scaling back the conflict, he started to hit back, harder, refusing to submit. Lula was ready to accept his destiny, swearing on his own innocence and affirming the injustice that he was victim due to judiciary persecution:

“Provem uma corrupção minha que irei a pé para ser preso [...] Inventaram uma mentira e tornaram essa mentira verdade aos olhos da opinião pública¹⁵¹. (Lula, 2016)

An article that he wrote in October contained the “manifesto” of this new phase:

“Sei o que fiz antes, durante e depois de ter sido presidente. Nunca fiz nada ilegal, nada que pudesse manchar a minha história. Governei o Brasil com seriedade e dedicação, porque sabia que um trabalhador não podia falhar na Presidência. As falsas acusações que me lançaram não visavam exatamente a minha pessoa, mas o projeto político que sempre representei: de um Brasil mais justo, com oportunidades para todos. [...] Estão à procura de um crime, para me acusar, mas não encontraram e nem vão encontrar. [...] Tento compreender esta caçada como parte da disputa política, muito embora seja um método repugnante de luta. Não é o Lula que pretendem condenar: é o projeto político que represento junto com milhões de brasileiros. Na tentativa de destruir uma corrente de pensamento, estão destruindo os fundamentos da democracia no Brasil. [...] Tenho a consciência tranquila e o reconhecimento do povo. Confio que cedo ou tarde a Justiça e a verdade prevalecerão, nem que seja nos livros de história. O que me preocupa, e a todos os democratas, são as contínuas violações ao Estado de Direito. É a sombra do estado de exceção que vem se erguendo sobre o país¹⁵². (Lula, 2016)

¹⁵¹ If they can prove my corruption, I will walk to the prison to be arrested. They invented a lie, and they transformed it into truth to the eyes of public opinion (own transl.)

¹⁵² I know what I’ve done, before and after being President. I never did anything illegal, neither something that could stain my image and my story. I govern Brazil with seriousness and dedication, because I knew that a worker could not make mistakes in the Presidency. The false accusations against me are not directed towards me, but to the political project that I’ve always represented: a Brazil more fair, with opportunity for all [...] They are searching for a crime to accuse me, but they will not find it. [...] I understand this hunt as part of a political dispute, even if this is a disgusting way to

Many factors played in favour of the transformation of his leadership: first of all, he could portray the investigation as an attempt to keep him away from power, since the “Lei da Ficha Limpa” didn’t allow someone condemned in “segunda instancia” (after the appeal) to be candidate.

Lula’s process about the infamous “triplex de Guarujá” was judged surprisingly fast, giving ulterior strength to “conspiracy” theory; Sergio Moro reached his verdict already in July of 2017, and the appeal was completed in January of 2018, leading to Lula’s condemnation to 12 years and 1 month of prison for corruption and money laundering.

The courts were highly criticized not only from Lula’s supporter, but also by some of his historic opponents: even Reinaldo Azevedo, a journalist well-known for his historic “antipetismo” affirmed that Lula’s was condemn without proof. (Azevedo, 2018).

The recent pronouncement of the STF about Moro actuation, considered responsible at first of being not the “competent” Judge for that process due to territorial reason, and later on the have acted as a “biased” (STF, 2021), demonstrate how Lula’s one wasn’t just an attempt to use “conspiracy theory” against him as a form of defence, but that his reclamations were actually motivated. At the same time, however, is unlikely that he was unaware of all the scandals surrounding PT and in general Brazilian politics; while is hard to say if Lula was innocent, is true that the judges were not able to frame him beyond any reasonable doubt. In this context, pose as the victim was not only too easy, but also legitimate: Temer and Cunha were clearly perceived as shady political figures who had articulated a palace intrigue to obtain power, the process went

fight. They didn’t want to condemn Lula: is the political project that I represent, with millions of Brazilian. While they are trying to destroy a way of thinking, they are destroying the foundations of Brazil’s democracy [...] I have clear conscience, and people’s recognition. I hope that sooner or later justice and truth will prevail, even if on history book. What scare me, and all democrats, are continuous violation of rule of law. And the shadows of this State of exception descending on the country. (own transl.)

surprisingly fast for the standard of Brazilian Justice and the sentence was highly disputed not only by his follower but even from some opponent.

Even more, when he was arrested, Lula was leading in all the polls, being the favourite for the Presidential election. One last factor needed to be added to the analysis: while it didn't play a role in 2018 Presidential election, the fact that in the immediate aftermath of the vote Sergio Moro accepted Jair Bolsonaro's offer and became Ministry of Justice, gave strength to those who believed in a conspiracy against Lula.

For Lula's supporter, the whole "plan" was clear, with Moro responsible of "taking out" Lula from the competition to allow the far rights to win the election. This kind of discourse, of course, was not working in the same way with all the voters, due to the high level of polarization, and to the insurgence of "echo chambers". Behind the concept of "echo chamber" lies the assumption that individuals tend to gather with people and collect information from sources sharing the same belief and vision of the world. While we shouldn't overstate the importance of echo-chambers in a multi-media environment, in a system like the Brazilian one of recent years, they played without any doubt an important role; in a society characterized by low level of trust, in particular for what concern the party system but also about the role of mass media, is hard to find sources that enjoy widespread legitimacy. It was easy for different narrative to gain strength and then reproduce themselves inside of various echo chambers, increasing polarization. Basically, society was divided between "lulismo" and "antilulismo", that reproduced themselves in two different echo chambers. Social classed of course played a role in this distinction; among the richest and traditional middle class, in fact, Partido dos Trabalhadores is perceived as the main national problem, who had produced the biggest corruption scandal in the history while governing and had "broke" the country during Dilma's administration. For them, Lula is the man who "destroyed" the county, stealing money and being corrupted, rather than for his two terms as a President.

When we look at the other two macro-segments, the "new middle class" and the poorest, the picture is far more complex.

For what concerns the new middle class, we are talking of a social sector so diversified that is impossible to trace a precise “profile” of those voters; among them, there are many people that have already lost what they have gained during Lula’s administrations. We are talking in particular about those who improved their life thanks to “material” benefit and larger access to credit, but were not part of a true process of social mobility in terms of their “status”.

Those who, on the contrary, were able to improve their status, directly or through the “eyes” of their sons and daughters, belongs to another category; we are talking about families that, for the first time, saw someone having access to higher level of education, obtaining University Degrees and being able to improve their social position.

Tracing down the electoral preferences of those two sectors is almost impossible: while those who really achieved social mobility might close to PT, being “long term beneficiaries” of the social policies, they are also less prone to accept conspiracy theory or in general to search for a “saviour”, having had access to better education and skills to understand politics and society.

For those impoverished during the crisis, while Dilma is one of (if not the main) responsible of the crisis, Temer first and Bolsonaro later were not able to revert the trend; instead, they could link Lula’s figure to a better time, when their life was easier and improving daily. At the same time, being less-educated, they are more incline to “buy” narratives proposed rather than actively “search” one. The role of corruption during PT’s administrations occupied mainstream media between 2014 and 2016, leading many of those people to embrace anti-politics or candidates proposing radical changes, able to cast themselves as outsiders.

The new middle class, highly diversified and with a troubling self-perception of their place in class structure, cannot be consider as a real “collective” group, but rather as a political “creation” that didn’t even exist as a true “social class”; probably, is useless to trace down their electoral preferences as a group and, interesting enough, it might not even be so important anymore, because due to crisis this particular sector is rapidly shrinking.

The last group that we need to talk about, and the most interesting one, is poorest voters. As we can expect, those are the one most loyal to Lula.

This should not surprise us: if we believe that the inclusion of the outsider, both through material goods and to a specific ideologic discourse, was the core of his political strategy in particular after 2005, is obvious that among those previously excluded he enjoyed his larger consensus. Wealth distribution isn't a good enough explanation, however; to understand Lula's leadership, we need to take in consideration the complex relations between those people and the State.

Traditionally the "povão" was considered as "massa de manobra", easily manipulated by politicians; if they were barely recognized as citizens, we can understand that their relation with the State or, better to say, with the "res publica" was marginal: their interest in politics was low, and so was their perception that politics could be an instrument to improve their life.

The inclusion of the outsider is an incremental process: if, as a concept, we can define outsider and insider precisely, reality is more complex. If, talking about their own rights, the perception of the role of the State became clearer years after years, and the "welfare state" widely accepted as a duty of the State, the same is not true for the role of politics in general.

A traditional concept embedded in Brazilian politics is still very diffused: "rouba mas faz", "he's stealing, but he's doing things".

The slogan, created during the '50s in an electoral campaign against Adhemar de Barros, reveals a lot about the relation between citizens and the "republic": the "normalization" of corruption as a natural part of politics.

At least among popular sectors, this kind of feeling was and still is pretty common, even if they can finally be considered "citizens". For them, corruption isn't a shocking factor that affect the quality of democracy, public services or the overall efficiency of the State, but a physiological element of politics.

What really matter, instead, is how effective politics is; "doing things", realizing policies able to improve the life of the people is enough.

If a politician is "doing good" for the people, corruption can be forgotten.

Based on "rouba, mas faz", we could look back at the consensus enjoyed by Lula and Dilma, even during most critical times, Mensalão and the protest of 2013: in both cases, when corruption was the centrepiece of the protest, the participation of popular sectors was almost irrelevant. Both President were able

to bounce back for the crisis thanks to the support of poorest voters, who still put their trust in the administration because the Federal Government was finally doing something for them, thanks to social programme, and the administration seems to put them “first”, finally.

We can also understand why social programme and the supposed “clientelist” relation between PT and his voters was overstated, while “cultural” reasons undervalued. The difference might seem trivial, but is not: PT’s wasn’t “buying” popular votes creating patronage network; marginalized sector feel that finally an administration was doing something for them, and therefore voted for their candidate, not caring about the scandals.

We have finally reached the core of our explanation: Lula’s hegemony was built around both the idea of inclusion of the outsiders and social agreement, in a context in which conflict was artificially kept low due to good economic performances, high level of consensus that he enjoyed and to the difficulties that right wings parties were facing in the aftermath of the military regime. Once the administration started to face difficulties, however, the “oppositions” took advantage of corruption scandals to delegitimize the administration.

While this narrative was effective in some sector, an in particular within traditional middle class and part of the “new middle class”, it was ineffective among poorest voters. For them, used to be excluded by the distribution of any kind of wealth, benefit and even basic rights, corruption doesn’t need to be “unveil” to understand inequalities.

While the middle classes, looking to Europe or the United States, saw corruption and clientelism as the “original sins” that impoverish society and took wealth away from them, popular sector had always felt that that they were a “natural” element embedded in the nature of Brazil.

Following the same explanation, we can understand also why Dilma had to “disappear” after the economic crisis and, on the contrary, Lula was still very popular once arrested. She wasn’t judged for the accusation against her administration or the party, but for the economic crisis; the problem was not “stealing”, but “not doing” good things anymore. The opposite was true for Lula:

being innocent or guilty was not so important, what really matters was what he had been able to do over the course of his administration.

This is a better explanation about Lula's and PT consensus, rather than the traditional ones that focus on "clientelist" electoral relation or the use of traditional politics resources. Data supports this theory, if we look at Haddad's results in 2018 election, once PT's hegemony was over, other parties had no real advantage to associate their name to PT, neither Lula or Dilma had anymore any control over State's resources as a (direct or indirect) way to "buy" votes.

Polarization between "petistas" and "antipetistas" was the main cleavage of Brazilian society and, as a consequence, was reflected in the electoral dispute. While incarcerated and not allowed to take part in the election personally, Lula's presence characterized the election more than in any other Presidential run.

"Lula livre" became the keyword of PT's campaign, aside to the "defence of democracy", supposedly under threat after the "golpe of 2016". Fernando Haddad, chosen to replace Lula as candidate, depended only on "transfer" of vote, and the campaign was built around the identification between himself and Lula. While PT presented their candidacy as the only chance to "save" democracy, it is pretty clear that they were thinking to their hegemony first.

They didn't even take in consideration the idea of a large "democratic front" to run against the authoritarian menace represented by Jair Bolsonaro.

The same Bolsonaro is the best example of the centrality of Lulismo and Antilulismo in Brazilian politics.

He was a politician who had lived an "uneventful" political career as Federal Deputy for the State of Rio de Janeiro, being better known for his controversial opinions about democracy and human rights. Being part of the so-called "baixo clero", long course politicians moved mainly by personal interest and self-perpetuation, he was able to turn into a well-known national figure posing as the greatest representant of the "anti-petismo" and "antilulismo", even if he and his party had been part of the coalition in their support.

25% of those who declared their support in Bolsonaro's favour in the election, in fact, express as their main reason behind their vote their "rejection"

to PT, while another 30% chose him to “change”, which can be seen too as the reflex of 14 years of PT’s administration. (Datafolha, 2018)

Once Lula’s candidacy was declared inadmissible, Bolsonaro immediately became the favourite to win; even if, surprisingly enough, Haddad was able to reach the second round, the shared feeling was that revert the tendency was almost impossible, with almost 20 million votes of disadvantage after the first round. If in 2010 and 2014 many attributed Dilma’s results with the role of “traditional politics”, well-oiled political machines and clientelism in general, the same could not be true in 2018, when if the bandwagon effect happened (in particular in the ballot) it wasn’t for sure in favour of Haddad, the “underdog” of the election. Haddad led only among those who make less than 2 minimum wages, while losing in all the other sector, showing how the “poorest” were still supporting Lula’s candidate not because they were just “massa de manobra” in the hands of traditional oligarchies, but for ideologic or personal conviction. The data of the northeast are even more impressive in this sense: in the second round Haddad obtained 68,5% of the preference in the region. (TSE)

Traditional interpretation linked with the effect of Bolsa Familia or of “politics as usual” cannot explain those results; unequal distribution of wealth and larger concentration of poorer voters in the region of course play a role, but to fully understand those results, and the new centrality of the northeast in Lula’s consensus we need to take into consideration two factor already mentioned many times and that finally we can explain better. We are talking about the process of identification between Lula and the voters and his messianic transformation, combined.

6.3 Who want to live forever? Lula’s path toward politics immortality

Lula’s consensus might sound illogical and even incomprehensible looking at Brazil for the first time; just being remotely associated with corruption scandals is enough to end the career of many politicians, let alone being condemned to 12 years of prison and being incarcerated.

Lula's popular support is not so common even for Brazilian standards: while there are other examples of messianic leaders, very few of them can enjoy the same kind of trust, love (and even hate) that Lula had.

We have shown that Lula's career was characterized by a constant process of transformation, starting from a "collective" approach and slowly transforming him into another "saviour". One element more than any other characterized his transformation: the process of identification between him and the voters.

In this new phase of his life, Lula as the "filho do Brasil" was still a recurring figure in his narrative, but declined in a new version: he became the "criança nordestina", the kid of the northeast, able to overcome hunger and desperation, as many of those who were born in the region.

We have seen those kinds of references increasing at least since 2005, while at the beginning of his career he was identified as a union leader from São Paulo. Lula "flirting" with the voters of the northeast isn't something new of the post-impeachment era; anyway, after 2016 he started to use the same element more and more, and to repeat some sentences like a mantra:

"eles sabem que tem aqui um Pernambucano teimoso, eu digo sempre: quem nasceu em Pernambuco e não morreu de fome até os 5 anos de idade, não se curva mais a nada"¹⁵³ (Lula, 2019)

A simple sentence like this one, the he repeated almost in every discourse after 2016 and in particular in every interview while he was in prison, contain a clear message: if during his administration Brazil had defeated "mongrel complex", founding reason for self-esteem, being from the northeast was, in his narrative, another source of pride rather than something to be ashamed of.

This was something new in the history of Brazil; the "questão nordeste" wasn't just economical, but had also social and political consequences, such as for the "questione meridionale" in Italy.

¹⁵³ They know that here there is a stubborn man from Pernambuco, and I always say: those born in Pernambuco who didn't die for hunger before turning 5 years old, will never bend to anything in their life (own transl.)

If, for example, the people of the south found pride in their European origins or on the Revolution of the XIX century, or those in Sao Paulo because they were living in the most “international cities of the country”, being from the northeast, often obliged to migrate to survive, didn’t provide any reason of being proud “per se”. While northeast had always been a region characterized by an incredible cultural life, being “home” of some of the greatest artist in the history of the nation, they represented “exception” to the rules of marginalization, able to emerge for their incredibly talented. Lula, on the contrary, was the “face of the region”, a citizen like many others who had been able to reach success thanks to his effort and political participation. With his discourse he was affirming the “heroic” nature of those living in region, able to survive against all odds; his personal life served both as an example and a source of pride and self-esteem for many.

This idea is pretty close to the one of messianic leaders, well rooted in every catholic society, for obvious reason; while everyone agrees about a basic definition of what can be consider a messianic leader, intended as a “saviour” ready to redeem the people and conduct them to the promise land, very few things are said about the characteristics of those kind of leaders.

As in the case of the concept of populism, even the idea of messianic leadership was used to talk about leaders very different one from another; just talking about Brazilian history, as we have seen, Collor could be consider a messianic leader too, but he and Lula couldn’t be more different. We have slowly described Lula’s messianic evolution during the chapters, analysing his transformation over the course of the years; is now time to define which are the key element of the new status reached at the end of his career.

Lula’s leadership is the results of a mythopoetic process: starting from his undisputable charisma and a fascinating biography, Lula was able to establish himself almost as a “demigod” To do it, the right cultural background was necessary: while we have suggested that Lula’s era is characterized by the process of inclusion of the outsiders into citizenship, we mustn’t forget that the starting point was what Murillo de Carvalho defined as “estadania”, basically

citizenship given “from above”, conceded by the State and not conquered by the people through fights, revolution or any concrete act. (Carvalho, 2001).

If this is true, the preference for strong executive shouldn't surprise us, in particular considering the lack of “democratic experience” of the nation.

This is the perfect political realm for the affirmation of messianic leaders, who promise to solve all of the problems. In this sense, Lula belongs to this tradition: while at the beginning of his career the focus was on participatory democracy and involving people in the “res publica”, the extinction of rights happened “from above” and the State (Palermo, Malamed de Mendez, 2013)

Another pre-condition for Lula's mythopoetic process, is linked with another characteristic that Brazil shares with many other nations: the role that religion plays in national identity.

While in the last few years the boom of Evangelic churches is undeniable, Catholic Church still enjoyed an undisputed leadership at least during the first two decades of the XXI century. Brazilian Catholicism, as the one of many other Latin country, is characterized by a particular devotion to a plurality of saints. Even more important, “messianic movement” and leaders who reach the status of “holy figures” are particularly common in the history of the country:

“O Brasil tem sido especialmente pródigo na geração de movimentos messiânicos. Desde o primeiro século colônia, índios guaranis puseram-se em busca da “terra sem males” e indígenas destribalizados constituíram os chamados “movimentos de santidade”, mas a maioria deles [...] transcorreu entre populações sertanejas, do nordeste ao sul do país, no período de pouco mais de um século, a partir de cerca de 1820¹⁵⁴. (Negrão, 2001)

¹⁵⁴ Brazil was particularly productive in the creation of messianic movements, Since the first century of the colony, the índios guarani were searching the “land without sins”, and other indigenous detribalized create the so-called “holy movements”, but the biggest ones [...] happened among rural population, from the northeast to the south, in a century from 1820. (own transl.)

A significant example is the one of Antônio Conselheiro, whose story is well told inside of two famous books, “Os Sertões” by Euclides da Cunha and “La guerra del fin del mundo” from Mario Vargas Llosa. At the end of XIX century Conselheiro guided the uprising of thousands of marginalized people from the northeast against the Republic, considers the “anti-Christ” and whose affirmation he perceived as a sign of an upcoming apocalypse. Promising salvation for those who followed him, he found his city and challenged the powers of the region, putting at risk the hegemony of local landlords; the tragic end of his project was the “Guerra de Canudos”, in which Conselheiro and the majority of his follower were killed.

There are no similarities between Lula’s messianic leadership and the one of figure such as Conselheiro, or Padre Cicero in Ceará, but the existence in the history of those kind of movements show how the cultural background was particularly receptive for those leadership. This is true in particular in the “sertão”, and in general in rural areas, while the cities are an environment less prone to the insurgence of those kind of messages for their multicultural nature.

Founding the right cultural background, over the course of the years Lula had become one of those “holy” figures, a demigod. His characteristics are, of course, pretty different from the ones of the leaders of the late XIX century: very few people in XXI century would believe in the apocalypse coming, or in the reincarnation of the Messiah “strictu sensu”. But there is no doubt that one of the key elements behind his success is the popular devotion that he was able to mobilize, that could only be possible in a certain kind of culture; if we have already talked about Collor and Cardoso as leader with some messianic elements, none of them was able to play the role in the same way than Lula.

While both Collor and Cardoso had lived the decline of their administration when they were still governing, Lula left office as “the most popular politician on earth”; even more, after Dilma’s impeachment he was denied the chance to take part in the election, a fact that gave him the chance to talk about a persecution not only against him, but against what he represented and, as a consequence, against “the people”. Being willing to go to prison instead of running away abroad then, he “accepted” his martyrdom.

One discourse better than any other, made in the most dramatic moment of his career, while he was waiting to be arrested, his paradigmatic of this tendency:

“Eu sonhei que era possível um metalúrgico, sem diploma universitário, cuidar mais da educação que os diplomados e concursados que governaram esse país. Eu sonhei que era possível a gente diminuir a mortalidade infantil levando leite feijão e arroz para que as crianças pudessem comer todo dia. Eu sonhei que era possível pegar os estudantes da periferia e colocá-los nas melhores universidades desse país para que a gente não tenha juiz e procuradores só da elite. Daqui a pouco vamos ter juízes e procuradores nascidos na favela de Heliópolis, nascidos em Itaquera, nascidos na periferia. Nós vamos ter muita gente dos Sem Terra, do MTST, da CUT formados. Esse crime eu cometi. Eu cometi esse crime e eles não querem que eu cometa mais. É por conta desse crime que já em uns dez processos contra mim. E se for por esses crimes, de colocar pobre na universidade, negro na universidade, pobre comer carne, pobre comprar carro, pobre viajar de avião, pobre fazer sua pequena agricultura, ser microempreendedor, ter sua casa própria. Se esse é o crime que eu cometi eu quero dizer que vou continuar sendo criminoso nesse país porque vou fazer muito mais. Vou fazer muito mais¹⁵⁵” (Lula, Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos, 2018)

¹⁵⁵ I dreamt that a metallurgic, without a degree, could care more about education than graduated and public servants that governed this country. I dreamt that we could reduce child mortality, giving milk and rice to allow kids to eat every day. I dreamt that it was possible to take students from the periphery and place them in the best university of the country, allowing our nation to have Judges and Prosecutors who didn't came from the elite. Sooner, we will have Judges and Prosecutor coming from the Favela of Heliopolis, born in Itaquera, born in the periphery. There will be many people coming from the Sem Terra, MTST and CUT with a degree. That was my crime. I committed that crime, and they didn't want me to do it again. And is for this crime that there are ten process against me. And if those are my crimes, placing poor in University, black in the University, poor people eating meat, poor people buying car, poor people travelling with airplane, poor people as small farmers, small business owners, owning their house. If this is the

The transformation into a secular “demigod” was completed once the leader announced that he was ready to sacrifice himself for his follower, as a true “messiah” would do.

Messianic leadership tend to work better with poorer, less educated voters; this is, without any doubt, a fundamental reason behind Lula’s consensus among those who make less than two minimum wages, but didn’t help us to understand why he is still stronger in the northeast rather than in any other region. The process of self-identification between voters and their leader, that we have already presented, come to our help to understand it, but we need to take into consideration once again some historical fact.

It would be wrong to think that the northeast is the only region of the country incline to the insurgence of messianic leaders; just few years later after the Guerra de Canudos, a very similar movement was born in the south, in the States of Paraná and Santa Caterina, under the guide of José Maria de Santo Agostinho, leading to the so-called Guerra do Contestado.

While between the end of XIX and the beginning of XX century this kind of “culture” was pretty common in the whole nation, the different pattern followed by Brazilian regions during the process of growth first and modernization later on lead to very different outcome in term of social and cultural organization.

The economic growth, and the creation of a middle class in the south and southeast regions created a multiplicity of interest among the voters, made it more difficult for any leader to present himself as the “saviour” of the “people”, since the same definition of what was “people” was particularly difficult in a more complex society, characterized by diversity not only from the economic point of view but even due to the cultural melting pot that characterize Brazil. We are not suggesting, however, that the insurgence of messianic leaders in impossible in the south of the country; on the contrary, while those kinds of leaders marked the history of the whole nation, their origin and their discourse

crime that I’ve committed, I want to say that I will continue to be a criminal in this country, because I will do a lot more. I will do a lot more! (own transl.)

would vary a lot; Rio Grande do Sul, in particular, was a State that produced the “greatest” messianic leader in the history of the nation: Getúlio Vargas.

Vargas, however, had very few things in common with other m coming before him; first of all, he was the “son” of the elite of the State. While being, during a certain phase, a beloved popular hero, he was first and foremost another “caudillo”, with a corporative view of the State and extending “benefits” to the citizens “from above”. Is not by chance that even Leonel Brizola, the “last caudillo”, came Rio Grande do Sul too; we have already seen how important he was over the course of the whole XX century, and how is leadership was similar to Lula’s one for many aspects, while still different due to his early affiliation with Vargas.

The example of Getúlio Vargas and Brizola, however, suggest us that the kind of “saviour” that the people are searching is pretty different in the various regions; if in the northeast the idea of a messianic leader is still closer to the one of the first year after the Independence, in the south and southeast the profile of messianic leaders had changed greatly over the course of the decades

If Vargas was the “pai dos pobres”, someone able to save the people in patrimonial fashion, Lula is a saviour coming from within popular sector, part of the same process of redemption that he is leading.

Lula was the first politicians in many years to place the northeast under the spotlight; if, for many years, they have lived marginalized, like true outsiders, dealing with misery and struggling to survive, during Lula’s administration they became “subject” of politics for the first time, “chosen people” marching through the promise land of citizenship, or, if we believe in Carvalho’s definition, toward “estadania”

We return here to the definition of “fideistic interpretation” by Gentile, already mentioned at the beginning of our research: is not important if Lula’s wanted to become “demigod”, what matters is just the final results of the process.

The creation of a messianic leader that serves as a “demigod” in not something peculiar of Brazil, neither something that exist only in politics; to better understand what we are talking about, allow us to make a reference to pop-culture, to make our concept clearer even to a larger audience.

We can talk about a figure with very few things in common with Lula: Diego Armando Maradona and his role in Naples.

While Brazilian northeast and Naples are very different one from another, they shared the role of “marginalized” regions of a country and a particular kind of popular religiosity, prone to the cult of personality and to the creation of “demigods”. The recent event concerning Diego Maradona’s death showed to everyone how, for the people of Naples, he was for more than a football player. The display of love showed in the immediate aftermath of the tragic events are the one that characterized popular devotion toward saints, with people choosing a place to present “offers”. In Maradona’s case, the fan even used the term “football’s God”, and they really mean it when they say it. In many ways, we can analyse his role in the same way: someone with a gigantic charisma and strength, with his own personal myth witnessed by millions every Sunday on the football field, who enjoy a personal devotion. And, as in the case of Lula, without the right cultural background, Maradona would have been only one of the best football players in history, but would not be even close to the popular saint that he is right now. A city incline to the veneration of saints, and at the same time a figure that was perceived as “one of their own”, even being from Argentina, because he had chosen Naples over other places and was the example of the “social climb” of an entire city against football’s elites.

If football is linked with most profound emotion of the people, the same is not true for politics; this mean that, while Maradona will always be a “demigod” in the heart and minds of the people of Naples, the same might not be true for Lula.

One last thing needed to be taken in consideration: as many might have noticed, the examples of messianic leader and “demigods” mentioned above weren’t exactly champions of democracy, with the sole exception of Brizola, whom however had begun his career as the “protégé” of a former dictator.

While we have talked about Lula as a champion of democracy in the early stage of his career, as the leader of the first and only collective mass party of the nation, as the President that have done the most to extend citizenship to millions

of people, there is no doubt that the last part of his career could cast some clouds over his own personal history.

Messianic leaders are often dangerous for democracy: they might not pose a direct threat to the institution, but the belief that a saviour would come in order to take the people to the promise land is actually the exact opposite of what democracy really is, if we consider it not as the mere gesture to vote but as a collective process of participation in the “res publica”.

While Lula have included many people into citizenship, improving their relation with the State recognizing social rights and with the creation of a welfare system, posing as another messiah didn't help the overall quality of the democratic process. There is no doubt about the exceptionality of the political context in which Lula is playing his part. His transformation into a demigod is a consequence of the political environment in which he lived, of the process of impeachment and in general of the fragility currently faced by the institutional system due to an imperfect equilibrium among different branches of the States, with the judiciary that at least ever since 2014 had become an “actor” of politics, extending his area of influence and his power over both the Executive and Legislative Power.

All being said, there is no doubt that when Lula and PT are posing as the only chance to save democracy, they are contributing to the general backslide of Brazilian democracy as well as their opponent.

Is not a matter of who is right or who is wrong, and is not our role to decide it; but there is no doubt that right now, praising polarization and social conflict, both Lula and his opponents are playing a dangerous game for the future of the already unstable Brazilian democracy.

6.4 Conclusion

A famous quote attributed to Enoch Powell affirm that “all political lives, unless they are cut off in midstream at a happy juncture, end in failure, because that is the nature of politics and of human affairs” (Powell, 1977)

For many years Brazil was considered, particularly abroad, as a case of a low polarized country, ready to be one of the most important nations over the course of XXI century.

The end of PT's hegemony however had produced a more radical crisis of national democracy, with the insurgence of anti-systemic forces, scandals and a wide sense of uncertainty for the future of the nation. In this scenario, unsurprisingly, Lula is the only constant factor ever since the beginning of the Nova Republica.

Many people, in particular in the south and the southeast of the country, consider him as the responsible of almost everything that has gone wrong in Brazilian politics. The Partido dos Trabalhadores face enormous difficulties in the organization process and is the party with the highest level of rejection among the voters. At the same time, Lula's control over the whole organization is stronger than ever and, day after day, it seems less likely that the party could survive after his departure, at least as one of the centrepieces of national politics.

We have to remember that, however, if allowed to compete, Lula would have probably won the election back in 2018, and his personal consensus is as strong as ever in the northeast.

Over the course of this Chapter, we have shown how both the process of identification between Lula and the voters, and his messianic transformation into a demigod had contributed to his political immortality. We have seen also how this kind of phenomenon isn't new in Brazilian history, but on the contrary is a well rooted characteristic of many leaders.

In a scenario characterized by high level of volatility is impossible to foresee what will happen in the next few years; Lula is still as strong as ever; probably he would not be remembered as one of the "founding fathers" of the nation, even if his time as President would allow him to be considered as one.

But his role as "demigod" might have guaranteed him a different kind of political immortality: Lulismo and anti-Lulismo are nowadays the most important elements of Brazilian politics; this is true ever since 2014, and everything suggests us that this will be the most important cleavage around which national politics will be articulated for many years.

When we combine the role of Lulismo with the geographical polarization and unequal development among different region of the nation, the potential outcome for the stability of the political system might be disruptive, in a country already characterized by a really unstable political system.

If the concept of “Peronismo” is still determinant in order to understand Argentinian politics many years after the death of Peron, we could expect that even in Brazil, for the foreseeable future, that the traditional dichotomy between left and right will still be on the background of another division between two “fronts”, one inspired by the same Lula and the other against him.

The only way to avoid this kind of situation, whose outcome are potentially very dangerous for the democratic stability of the country, could be a spontaneous decision taken by the same Lula, that however doesn't seem ready to step down and renounce to his role as a popular saint.

CONCLUSION

Lamento Sertanejo, published by Gilberto Gil and Dominginhos in 1975, inside of “Refazenda” expressed the discomfort of a migrant, obliged to live in a bigger city, unhappy and frustrated in his new environment, where he didn’t fit it. The song is one of the better artistic expression of the feelings of a generation; his “lament” (lamento) is the ones of millions of citizens, who had to leave their hometowns, unable to survive.

The “lamento” of many migrants remained unheard for years to come; the lament of another man from the northeast, this time not concerning psychologic discomfort but rather the economic development of the Nation, was heard in the ‘50s, just to be suddenly putted aside once the military regime took power and exiled him; we are talking, of course, about Celso Furtado.

For a long part of Brazilian history, the “questão nordeste” became just another structural characteristic of the national underdevelopment, one of those elements that found their “home” inside of electoral programs and rhetorical discourses but were never addressed seriously.

As a consequence, another “lamento sertanejo”, of those leaving marginalized in the poorest region of the Nation, wasn’t addressed by politicians; as we have seen, everything changed with Lula.

Born in the sertão of Pernambuco, he had experienced the consequences of spatial inequality and the experience of migration on his own skin. His mission to “conquer” the northeast started in 1993 with the Caravanas da Cidadania; however, he truly gave voice to the “lament” only after 2005, after the Mensalão, to be re-elected.

Lula answers was what we have defined as a process of inclusion of the outsider, intended as the inclusion into citizenship of millions of Brazilian previously marginalized.

If the “Nova Republica” was born under the premises of the extension of fundamental rights to the citizens, in the early stages of re-democratization the governments had to focus mainly on macroeconomic stabilization; the real process of inclusion started after Lula’s election in 2002, and became possible

firstly thanks to the extension of material benefits, thanks to both the economic agenda of the government, who focused on reduction of inequality, and to the positive regional economic trend.

Aside to the economic inclusion, however, we have shown how Lula's political strategy after the Mensalão had been based on a specific political narrative, directed toward the poorest voters, and in particular those living in the northeast. Those people, whose "lament" was unheard for many years, considered just as "massa de manobra", a disposable mass under control of local "coronels", became citizens during Lula's era, thanks to the extension of a welfare system, that guarantees their survival without depending from the will of local politician controlling jobs market or social benefits.

The inclusion into citizenship, however, is not a binary variable, and we are not using the word "process" by chance. While Lula used the idea of a "middle class country" as the living proof of his success, we have shown how many of those people just took advantage of a good economic period, mainly through access of credit (and indebtedness, as a consequence), while others were able to archive real ascendent social mobility, and could be considered long term "beneficiaries" of the economic growth of the decade 2003-2013.

Talking about political inclusion of the outsiders, is harder to trace the line among those who have just found a new "patron" and those who were really able to emancipate themselves. There is no doubt, however, that if we decide to use a strict definition of democracy, similar to the one shared inside of PT during the earlier stages of his story, as a process build "bottom-up", with "participatory democracy" as the golden standard, the kind of citizenship obtained by many Brazilians during PT's era is totally insufficient.

In relation to the "starting point", however, there is no doubt that great advances had been made. Social programs, previously seen as a "benefit" extended from kind leaders, have become fundamental right, as in the case of Bolsa Familia; Lula's example of social mobility was fundamental to challenge the same class structure of Brazilian society, to tear a hole in the national "culture of privilege" (CEPAL, 2018) and to dismantle the historic "mongrel complex" that afflicted the nation for decade.

If the process of inclusion of the outsider was fundamental for Lula's affirmation as the "most popular politician of earth", his leadership, and the way in which fits in the national tradition of messianic leaders, is the fundamental reason behind new political polarization, based on two cleavages: the geographical one among different regions, and the confrontation between Lulismo and Anti-Lulismo.

But since Lula's trajectory was characterized by a constant process of adaptation, an attitude that the critiques could describe as transformism, to fully understand the characteristics behind it we must followed an historical approach, starting from the beginning of his public life.

For this reason, we've started with PT's process of institutionalization, similar to the one of many other former socialist parties all over the world, with slow transition toward the centre of the political realm, and a transformation from a true collective, ideologic mass party to a personalistic, pragmatic, almost catch-all one.

Showing the evolution of Lula's character and the mechanism behind it was the next step necessary; while he was "charismatic leader", according to Weber definition, ever since the beginning of his career, over the course of the years he was able to "smooth" divisive trait of his personality to reach the Presidency, and was able to govern in the environment of "Presidencialismo de Coalizão", characterized by high level of instability and political fragmentation, supposedly through a new social agreement. At the same time, we have seen how this famous "social agreement", central not only in Lula's discourse but also in the academic debate for more than a decade, wasn't the consequence of a common strategy for development, but just a pragmatic convergence of interest between different actors, made possible thanks to the economic performances of the Nation and, in general, of the whole region.

In fact, if Lula's era was sometimes described as an era of "depolarization", Dilma Rousseff's Presidency was the proof that the tensions between powers of the States and social sectors wasn't extinguished during Lula's two terms, but was only on "stand-by"

The re-emergence of some of the historical problems of Brazilian democracy, was the demonstration of some of the shortcomings of Lula's administrations.

The decision to avoid confrontation, renouncing to challenge the structure of power and the institutional arrangement, formal or informal, was for sure detrimental to the overall quality of democracy; in a country characterized by high level of inequality and by a fragile political system, with high level of instability, in which bargain and pork-barrel plays a fundamental role, Lula decided to give priority to the inclusion of the outsiders, without challenging the status quo, renouncing to much needed ambitious reform. In this sense the "Lulismo" could be characterized as a "weak reformism" (Singer, 2012)

While he had many chances to change politics once and for all, being one of the most beloved and respected President in the history of the nation, he decided that his political priorities were different, ranging from the reduction of inequality to the affirmation of PT's hegemony, with Dilma's election as President.

If the original PT wanted to "revolutionize" politics, including the people into the decisional process through direct democracy, after more than 40 years they had embraced the most "traditional" elements of national politics; among them, the most important was for sure the nature as a personalistic party guided by a saviour, the only one able to save the Nation.

If for many years Lula had refused to be seen as another "pai dos pobres" like Getulio Vargas, when the crisis became inevitable, due to the economic and political fragility, facing the end of PT' hegemony, he embraced both his old narrative of conflict and the newly founded "messianic leadership".

While other politicians had played the role of the messianic leader, both during the "Nova Republica" and in the old one, Lula was able to sublimate the concept like few others, reaching the status of a "demigod", a "holy" figure that through his personal "martyrdom" was able to conquer political immortality.

Being by far the most polarizing figure of the nation, and having built his hegemony in popular sector, and in particular in the northeast, it was just a

question of time before the new political and social cleavages will undermine the quality of democracy.

In an era characterized by the increasing number of backsliding democracies, liberal democracy as we know it is under constant threat of authoritarian uprising. While, at least in western countries, traumatic authoritarian uprising, in the form of violent coup, are very unlikely, this doesn't mean that the overall quality of our democratic institutions isn't under threat.

“Democracy still die, but by different means” (Levitzky, Ziblatt, 2018). Nowadays, Brazil is often used as one of the classic examples of backsliding democracy; since 2014 the Nation had faced economic recession, a process of impeachment and the rise of anti-systemic forces, that led to the Presidency of a man who, over the course of his career, had always shown nostalgia for the military regime and little to none loyalty towards democratic institution.

If, according to the same Levitzky and Ziblatt (2018, 77), we believe that “two norms stand out as fundamental to functioning democracy: mutual toleration and institutional forbearance”, is pretty clear that none of the two element is present in Brazil anymore.

While Jair Bolsonaro is without any doubt the most boisterous symptoms of the “illness” of Brazilian politics, PT's era had produced some of the germs that made possible for the disease to show its devastating consequences.

When Lula decided to play “politics as usual”, adhering to the informal institutional arrangement that had guided the political life of the Nation for many decades, and renounced to a more ambitious plan of reform, he placed democracy under threat; when, facing the end of PT's hegemony, he decided to embrace the role of the national saviour, the only hope for the Nation, the only one able to “save” Brazilian democracy, he didn't represent a champion of democracy at all.

There is no doubt that Lula's decision was, at least partially, dictated by the attacks that PT had to face since 2014, not only on political but also on judicial arena, some of them unjustified, as the recent sentence about Sergio Moro's work had shown. In this sense, it will be a mistake to condemn Lula as the responsible of the national polarization.

However, if he will continue to play his role as the undisputed protagonist of Brazilian politics, praising conflict, there are no doubt that tension between “Lulismo” and Anti-Lulismo”, former outsiders and traditional insiders, poorest and richest region will rise, producing disruptive effects on the social contract that lays behind the functioning of any democracy, in particular in a context of scarce resources typical of the current economic recession.

At the same time, the importance of the northeast for both Lula and the left creates a chance for the people living there and for politicians to put in motion an even larger process of inclusion of the outsiders, being it in order to reduce Lula’s influence from one side or as an attempt to make the hegemony there even more stable.

In any case, Lulismo vs Anti-Lulismo and the new centrality of the northeast in Brazilian politics seems to be the elements that will characterize the future of the nation; in a public and academic debate usually characterized by opposite “supporters”, whose loyalty sometimes is placed in front the necessary academic rigour, with this work we have tried to the contradiction that characterised, more than anything, Lula’s trajectory as the most influential man in Brazil at least in the last four decades, whose legacy will be as complex to unpack as it can be.

The results are important only for Brazil, but in general for all western society. The inclusion of the outsider, that without any doubt represent the best part of Lula’s political life, could serve as an example for many others, in particular in an international context in which inequality are constantly increasing from decades; the difference between citizenship and “estadania”, and the perception of rights “extended” from above, is not something that characterize only Brazil, but that we are seeing in many western democracies, in which populist leader tend to play the role of “pai dos pobres” too. As a consequence, inclusion of the (new) outsiders, whose life had got worst in particular in the last decade, could be the fundamental way to avoid social conflict and the risk of backsliding democracy.

Having explained the mechanism behind Lula’s leadership and the reason of his messianic transformation, without any doubt the worst element of his trajectory, could allow us to better understand the mythopoetic process that lays

behind the creation of particular form of leadership, even if every nation goes through different process due to different historical patterns and culture.

If, during the last decade, we have seen a process of “latin-americanization” of the politics in many European Country, for the worst, with Latin American populism and messianic leadership replicated, and if the world is leading toward more inequality, having the right instrument to understand what truly happened in Brazil is fundamental

What still remain to be studied, that could serve not only to understand better Brazil but in general western societies, is the role of corruption in political crisis; we weren’t able to fully address that discussion here, because it was out of our area of investigation, but further studied on the topic are surely needed, in particular in an era in which anti-politics had become one of the defining characteristics of many countries.

The process of inclusion of the outsiders, the insurgence of a new, polarizing, messianic leadership during PT’s era and the newly founded importance of the northeast in national politics are elements that we have tried to explain in this research, as well as their consequence in the greater debate about the overall quality of democracy, hopefully with enough clarity. We believe that Brazil, due to his size, the incredible number of historical contradictions and the complexity of his society could serve as one of the world’s greatest “laboratory” for social scientist.

Two caveat needs to be added, however: Brazil will never stop to teach political and social scientist something unexpected day after day because, according to Jobim, “não é pra amadores”,

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INTERVIEWS

- 1) Prof. Benedito Tadeu Cesar, 16/03/2016, Porto Alegre
- 2) Dep. Pedro Ruas, PSOL-RS, 24/03/2016, Porto Alegre
- 3) Prof. Maria Izabel Mallmann, 28/4/2016, Porto Alegre
- 4) Former Vice-Presidential Candidate Manuela d'Avila, PCdoB, 29/4/2016, Porto Alegre
- 5) Prof. Adalmir Antonio Marquetti, former President of the Fundação de Economia e Estatística-RS 29/4/2016, Porto Alegre
- 6) Prof. Cecilia Rutkoski Hoff, 4/5/2016, Porto Alegre
- 7) Prof. Ronaldo Herrlein Junior, 5/5/2016, Porto Alegre
- 8) Prof. Marcelo Milan, 9/5/2016, Porto Alegre
- 9) Tarson Nunez, 10/5/2016, Porto Alegre
- 10) Prof. André Ricardo Salata, 12/05/2016, Porto Alegre
- 11) Dep. Tarcisio Zimmermann, 25/05/2016, Porto Alegre
- 12) Prof. Celina Souza, 13/03/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 13) Prof. Paulo Fabio Dantas Neto, 22/03/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 14) Gabriel Oliveria, Secretário de Comunicação PT-Bahia, 02/04/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 15) Prof. Carla Galvao, 13/04/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 16) Prof. Sue Iamamoto, 19/04/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 17) Former Dep. Luiz Alberto, PT-Bahia and Movimento Negro, 23/04/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 18) Dep. Zê Raimundo, PT-Bahia 24/04/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 19) Dep. Joao Santana, PMDB-Bahia 26/04/2019, Salvador de Bahia
- 20) Dep. Fernando Marroni, PT-Rs 9/5/2019, Porto Alegre
- 21) Prof. Sergio Simoni Jr. 16/05/2019, Porto Alegre
- 22) Rodrigo Dilelio, President PT-Porto Alegre, 17/05/2019, Porto Alegre
- 23) Former Minister and PT's founder Olivio Dutra, 19/06/2019, Porto Alegre
- 24) Prof. Marta Arretche, 5/6/2019, São Paulo
- 25) Prof. André Singer, spokesperson of Lula's Presidency, 7/6/2019, São Paulo