

Keeping Up with the Souzas: Social Influence and Electoral Change in a Weak Party System, Brazil 2002–2006

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ABSTRACT

Despite weak partisanship and considerable political change in the wake of the 2002 election, three-quarters of Brazilian voters supported a presidential candidate in 2006 from the same party they had backed in 2002. This article assesses the factors causing both electoral stability and electoral change with a transition model, a model testing whether the effects of respondents' evaluative criteria depend on their initial vote choices. Social context—personal discussion networks, neighborhood influences, and the interactions of social networks and municipal context—is the major force promoting stability and change, while the impact of partisanship is limited to a small share of voters.

Stable voting along party lines benefits both voters and elites. It enables politicians to craft legislative programs serving established constituencies and to target vote-seeking strategies. Stable party voting also reduces volatility, allowing incumbents to develop political careers (Converse and Dupeux 1962; Holmberg 1994; Altman and Chasquetti 2007). For voters, stability reduces the information costs associated with each election, simplifying the electoral field (Hamill et al. 1985; Rahn 1993; Russell and Weldon 2007). This article asks why some voters remain stable even as the loyalties of others shift. Since *The American Voter* (Campbell et al. 1964), party identification has been the most important answer to this question in U.S. politics. But what factors produce stability in political systems with weak electoral parties?

Brazil is a classic example of such a system. In October 2006, Brazilians re-elected their incumbent president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, in a second-round runoff. Despite Lula's successive wins, scholars and the popular media spoke of a transformation in his voting base between 2002 and 2006, a transformation they attributed both to dramatic changes in national politics and to a string of highly politicized corruption scandals. However, new data at the individual level, data coming

from a unique, six-wave panel data set profiling 1,300 Brazilians in the 2002 and 2006 presidential elections, raise questions about the common wisdom. In 2006, the great majority of the respondents stuck with the second-round vote choice that they had made four years earlier, either Lula or his opponent from the PSDB, the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (José Serra in 2002 and Geraldo Alckmin in 2006).

How did political loyalties and personal and contextual factors lead to stability and change in vote choices leading up to the 2006 second-round election? This study argues that in Brazil, influences from the social environment fill the vacuum left by weak party identification. Imagine two contextual influences: the effects of the neighborhoods in which respondents live and the effects of the discussion networks in which respondents are immersed. Agreeing family members and friends substitute for party mobilization, insulating voters from forces that might lead them to defect from their original choices. Disagreeing conversation partners motivate preference change. And social influence occurs not only within intimate personal networks; it also occurs in the course of daily activities. Through casual social interactions—at bus stops, at supermarkets, at the *futebol* field—Brazilians gather political information. They learn how neighbors will vote and why. Neighborhoods, we find, sometimes stabilize the vote and sometimes promote change.

In illuminating the relationship between social context and voter volatility, the argument thus draws on previous research on the 2002 election (Baker et al. 2006). But it builds on previous findings in several ways. First, the analysis measures neighborhood effects. We do this not simply by aggregating candidate preferences at the neighborhood level but also by examining specific aspects of the neighborhood context that led some voters to stick with or switch to Lula while other voters preferred the opposition. We argue that voters were strongly influenced by their neighbors' social status and partisan traditions.

Second, we show that social networks have different effects in different urban contexts. Among respondents supporting the incumbent and living in areas where most other voters also do so, networks composed of agreeing members provide redundant information and have little impact on the vote. Networks have the greatest influence when they provide novel information; that is, when they disagree with the respondent or when they express preferences that are outside the mainstream in their urban area.

Third, we extend previous research by taking into account the contingent relationship between prior candidate support and individual and contextual factors. Different political criteria matter to the constituencies of different candidates, and social networks affect supporters of the incumbent differently from supporters of the opposition. In urban envi-

ronments heavily tilted toward one candidate, social networks have a much stronger impact on prior supporters of that candidate's opponent; in more balanced information environments, they affect supporters of both candidates equally.

This study thus advances the use of transition models to study vote choice. Hillygus and Jackman's 2003 study of the 2000 U.S. election showed the usefulness of transition models for understanding how voters' decisions depend on their prior choices. Our long panel and rich data set allow a deeper exploration of vote transitions. The length of the panel enables us to examine effects from one campaign to the next, rather than over a single campaign. Moreover, several waves of repeated measures provide further leverage for evaluating how the prior history of candidate support affects future vote choices.

Our multistage sampling strategy is also innovative. We randomly sampled fifty neighborhoods in two midsized cities, Juiz de Fora and Caxias do Sul, developing a representative sample of households in each neighborhood.¹ Furthermore, we conducted a snowball sample of main respondents' political discussants.² With this design, we explore three levels of social influence: the immediate personal discussion network, the neighborhood, and the city.

The analysis remains methodologically individualist; the unit of analysis is the randomly sampled initial respondent, and network members are treated as properties of the respondent. The two-city sample limits our ability to draw conclusions about national electoral trends, but it enables us to explore social influence in a way that would have been impossible with a national survey. Despite these limits to the generalizability of our results, this research design is a better alternative than a national election study, as our interests focus on the relationship between social contexts and political behavior. National sample surveys are generally biased against the type of analysis we propose here, because by sampling from many different social milieus they disregard political and social contexts (Huckfeldt 1986, 6). In recognizing the limitations of our research design, it is important to mention that the two-city sample does not represent Brazil's most densely populated urban or most sparsely populated rural areas. Still, while candidate support varies across the country, we contend that underlying processes of social influence are similar in most small and midsize urban areas, the parts of Brazil we think are "represented" by Juiz de Fora and Caxias do Sul.³

The following section discusses the Brazilian presidential campaigns of 2002 and 2006. Following this discussion, we develop our theoretical expectations regarding the impacts of partisanship and social context on the vote. We then describe our data and estimate the degrees of stability and change characterizing our respondents. Next, we estimate

models with and without explicit incorporation of prior vote choice. The transition model proves to be superior, as it reveals how stability and change depend on prior vote choice. We conclude with a discussion of our results and their implications.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGNS OF 2002 AND 2006

In his fourth try for Brazil's presidency, Workers' Party (PT) candidate Lula da Silva defeated José Serra, candidate of the Social Democratic Party (PSDB), to win the second-round election of 2002. Garnering 61 percent of the vote, Lula became the first leftist president since Brazil's return to democracy 17 years earlier. Four years later Lula again won 61 percent of the second-round presidential election vote, defeating Geraldo Alckmin, a PSDB candidate widely viewed as an uncharismatic and distant intellectual. While the similarity of the 2002 and 2006 second-round vote totals is noteworthy, their superficial continuity masks major changes in the Brazilian political scene.

Consider the context of Lula's long political career and the history of the PT. When Lula entered the 2002 campaign, he was already one of the most stable features of Brazilian politics. Lula had been a major candidate in every presidential election since the return to democracy. Even before democratization, he was well known as a labor leader, as the founder of the PT, and as a prodemocracy activist. And by 2002 the PT had developed a strong following independently of Lula (Baiocchi 2003; Kinzo 2005; Samuels 2006). At the beginning of the 2002 campaign, then, Lula counted on stable personal and partisan bases of support, bases that certainly did not predetermine the outcome but did ensure a serious candidacy.

To conquer the electoral territory that had eluded him in previous elections, Lula's 2002 campaign executed a delicate balancing act, positioning him as the most viable and vocal opponent of the unpopular incumbent, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, while simultaneously moving toward the center (Hunter 2003, 2007, 2008; Oliveira 2006; Samuels 2004). Public reassurances of Lula's moderation were important to assuage the fears of the international financial community and to counter the electoral success, since democratization, of candidates on the right (Carreirão 2002; Singer 1999).

By 2006, Lula was a dealmaking incumbent whose term had been marked by centrist policies and major corruption scandals. Strictly following his predecessor's macroeconomic policies, Lula had overseen strong economic growth in the final years of his first term. While the Bolsa Família cash transfer program, which consolidated and expanded previous welfare programs, had reached nearly all of the poorest families, strong disappointment with Lula among leftists created electoral

space for the first-round candidacy of Heloísa Helena, a former *petista* (Bearak 2004; Bresser-Pereira 2006; Hochstetler 2008; Hunter 2008; Oliveira 2006). How did Lula's electoral base shift from 2002 to 2006? Research examining change between these years has largely relied on data aggregated at the municipal or state level (Hunter and Power 2007; Nicolau and Peixoto 2007; Zucco 2008).⁴

One conclusion is clear: while Lula's 2002 vote was strongest in wealthier and more developed localities, his 2006 support was concentrated in lower-income, less developed ones. This pattern holds even across neighborhoods within urban areas. In our data, the relationship between neighborhood socioeconomic status and the aggregate percentage of vote for Lula was moderately positive in 2002 but strongly negative in 2006.

A THEORY OF SOCIAL CONTEXT AND ELECTORAL CHANGE IN BRAZIL'S 2006 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Do these aggregate electoral results hold at the level of the individual voter? What factors produced stability and change in the Brazilian electorate? No previous research has convincingly answered these questions, and inferences from aggregate-level data are inadequate. What are the microfoundations of observed contextual effects? Does the relationship between neighborhood status and the vote result simply from individual material interests? Are neighborhood-level measures merely proxies for individual-level ones? Or might Brazilians be affected by the interests of neighbors, family, and friends, even after accounting for their own individual traits?

We show that Brazilians vote as their neighbors do not simply because they have similar backgrounds or work in similar places. Instead, they talk to, learn from, and persuade their neighbors. We view contextual influences as sources of information, both factual and persuasive. In some cases, this information reinforces prior preferences, while in others it leads to change.

Consider two sources of electoral stability and change: partisanship and social influences. In Brazil, the latter will be more important than the former. While partisanship plays a dominant role in vote choice in countries with more institutionalized party systems, party identification should have only moderate explanatory power in Brazil. True, Brazil's party system is coalescing at the elite level (Braga 2006, 2007; Figueiredo and Limongi 2000; Lyne 2008; Melo 2006; Zucco 2012), but parties' roots in the masses remain shallow, and partisanship remains low and fickle (Ames 2001; Kinzo 2005; Mainwaring 1999; Nicolau 2006; Zucco 2012). While the PT has historically been an exception, with the party's assumption of the presidency and place in the legislative major-

ity, its electoral profile has come to resemble that of other Brazilian “catch-all” parties (Carreirão 2007a; Paiva et al. 2007; Samuels 2006; Veiga 2007). In our data, we find party identification to be unstable: identification with the PT starts at 23.7 percent, climbs by a third to 31.3 percent at the height of the campaign in wave 3, and falls to under 20 percent in the following three waves. PSDB identification fluctuates between 2 and 5 percent. Only 5 percent of respondents identify with the PT in every wave, while only one person consistently identifies with the PSDB.

Partly because partisan ties are weak, we expect social context to be more important for the vote in Brazil than in many advanced industrialized democracies. While scholars have taken network approaches to understanding Brazilian activists and elites (Abers and Keck 2006; Candler 2000; Frank 2001; Keck and Hochstetler 2007; Lemos and de Oliveira 2004; Rodrigues 2003), research on electoral behavior in Brazil has almost entirely neglected social context (but see Baker et al. 2006). Nevertheless, we expect Brazilians to be highly attuned to electoral cues from their social environments. Cross-cultural psychology shows Brazilians to be collectivists, prioritizing in-group over individual interests; this trait affects many social and ethical behaviors (Beekun et al. 2003; Bontempo et al. 1990; Hofstede 1984; Hofstede et al. 2010; Pearson and Stephan 1998). It also leads Brazilians to be especially aware of and responsive to persuasive and factual information regarding politics from in-group members.

Social influence works through several channels. One is social networks, defined as individually constructed interpersonal interactions. Networks affect behavior when people exchange information. Here, contextual influence depends on interpersonal interactions, and the intensity of contacts defines the strength of contextual influence (Weatherford 1982). Studies find that people who discuss politics tend to experience opinion changes consistent with the views prevalent in their immediate environment (MacKuen and Brown 1997; Mutz 1997; Huckfeldt 1986). Information from network members directly and strongly influences vote choice, partisan affiliation, and political participation (Baker et al. 2006; Levine 2005; Kotler-Berkowitz 2005).

The second mechanism of contextual influence refers to the social conditions external to individuals that directly affect political behavior by limiting the information available in the environment. Structurally imposed contexts (Huckfeldt 1986; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987) include factors such as a neighborhood’s socioeconomic composition, its distribution of political preferences, or the diffusion of a political message. Such contexts operate at both the neighborhood and city levels. Self-selection into neighborhoods based on political preferences is unlikely in Brazil, where residential mobility is lower than in the

United States (Mutz 2006). In their daily interactions with their neighbors, people pick up political information and cues. Some information comes from casual conversations at the bus stop, bakery, or neighborhood bar. In the midst of a campaign, even the least interested cannot escape overhearing such discussions. Other cues come from campaign paraphernalia: buttons, stickers, banners, parades. Neighborhood effects may occur even without discussion, as people respond to such nonverbal cues. Some are directly persuasive; others serve as a heuristic for candidate viability (Burbank 1997).

In different structurally imposed contexts, citizens bump up against people of different social status, political traditions, and ideological positions. If one of these neighborhood characteristics affects vote choice—in addition to or instead of the individual effect—we conclude that contextual processes center on that characteristic. If social status matters, neighbors may say to each other, “We’re poor, Lula is for the poor, vote Lula”; or they may simply observe the preferences of people of similar status and conclude that Lula is pro-poor. This is the most basic instrument of contextual influence, as all individuals are exposed to information from the social milieu; but its effects may depend on individual characteristics (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1993; Weatherford 1982).

Structurally imposed context and social networks are connected: where you live affects whom you know (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987).⁵ Many people choose conversation partners and friends from among their neighbors or school colleagues. Even family members living in the same neighborhood channel neighborhood influence. Studies on the ways structurally imposed contexts affect political behavior can be traced back to the 1950s. Researchers at Columbia University showed that political preferences were more likely to be socially constructed than individually determined (Berelson et al. 1954). Similarly, social psychologists highlighted the effects of social circumstances on individuals’ perceptions, choices, and actions (Zuckerman 2005a). Structurally imposed contexts affect electoral participation, vote choice, partisanship, and political opinions; socioeconomic conditions are the most studied contextual determinants of political behavior (Giles and Dantico 1982; Kenny 1992; Mondak et al. 1996).

We argue that vote intentions are affected by these various social contexts. Thus, interpersonal networks, neighborhood and municipal contexts, and the interaction of social networks and structural contexts all influence stability and change in the Brazilian electorate. These relationships should be interactive, such that the influence of one channel of social influence depends on the type of information flowing in other social channels. Moreover, contextual effects vary based on individual-level characteristics, especially respondents’ prior vote choices. Accordingly, we present a series of hypotheses related to the impact of differ-

ent contexts on vote intentions in the second-round election of 2006. These hypotheses also predict how prior vote choice will mediate the context–vote intention relationship.

Social Context: Networks

Brazilians are particularly affected by the factual and persuasive information received from their closest discussants, the family and friends with whom they talk most often (Baker et al. 2006). For respondents surrounded by significant others with whom they agree, this information insulates them from other pressures. Those whose friends and family members disagree with their candidate choices, however, are exposed to messages contradicting their initial leanings. Absent strong partisan ties, such individuals should manifest low stability.

Social Context: Neighborhoods

Brazilians should also be affected by the social status of their neighbors. To the extent that political information travels through the neighborhood grapevine, higher-status neighbors will transmit information from different sources (print media and the Internet, rather than television and radio) and employ different frames (focusing on corruption rather than the economy). Moreover, they will convey political norms, such as intolerance of corruption (Almeida 2007; Hunter and Power 2007). Thus we expect residents of higher-status neighborhoods to move away from Lula if they voted for him in 2002 and to continue to oppose Lula if they voted for Serra in 2002.

Historically, the PT has had a highly participatory, activist base (Baiocchi 2003; Hunter 2007; Meneguello 1989; Samuels 2004). In neighborhoods that were highly *petista* in 2002, even non-*petista* residents received information pushing them to vote for Lula. As *petistas* in these redoubts—disappointed with Lula’s administration—began to abandon him, we should observe their non-*petista* neighbors moving away from Lula in waves. In other words, controlling for individual-level party identification, people living in highly *petista* neighborhoods in 2002 should be more likely to transition away from Lula in 2006.

Social Context: Municipal Environment

Though similar in size, wealth, and demographic composition, the two cities of our study are politically quite distinct. Juiz de Fora (in Minas Gerais state) is a typical Brazilian midsize city of the Center-South. The centrist PMDB (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party) is the largest party in the municipality, but overall partisanship is low, and politics is

clientelistic. Caxias do Sul (in Rio Grande do Sul) differs sharply: by 2002 the PT had governed the municipality for two consecutive terms, partisanship was much higher, and voters were split between a fiercely partisan PMDB on the center-right and the PT on the left.⁶

Did Lula roll to victory with big margins in *petista* Caxias? Just the opposite. In 2002 Lula captured Caxias's second-round contest with a 55–45 advantage, while in Juiz de Fora he garnered 80 percent. True, Caxias had a large PT, but it also had a large anti-PT. Through the first round of 2002, anti-Lula voters searched for a viable alternative to Lula. Very few voters switched from any losing first-round candidate to Lula in the second round. Juiz de Fora, by contrast, witnessed a classic bandwagon effect, with Lula gaining huge slices of the supporters of the third- and fourth-place finishers (Anthony Garotinho and Ciro Gomes) after their first-round defeats. PT self-identification between March and August of 2002 climbed from 20 percent to over 40 percent of the electorate in Juiz de Fora, while in Caxias it hardly grew at all.

Explaining political behavior in Juiz de Fora and Caxias do Sul is a question of replacing system names (JF and CS) with variable names. First, let us try to eliminate the systemic difference altogether. Suppose, for example, that the difference in the two cities' percentages for Lula stems from differing levels of partisanship: partisans vote the same way in the two cities, but one city has more partisans than another. Or perhaps ideological rightists vote the same way in each city, but one city has more rightists than the other. These are compositional effects, and this research strategy works if, after the inclusion of such variables, the dummy variable for a city has no impact.

But suppose this strategy fails, either because we fail to identify the relevant variables or because the municipal context really does affect all voters. Perhaps old struggles over municipal power still affect the cities; perhaps immigration changes the politics of old residents as well as newcomers; perhaps the central government treats Juiz de Fora very differently from Caxias do Sul. These explanations are municipal in level, and they will be reflected in the strength of the city dummy variable even after compositional effects are included. Unfortunately, rigorous statistical testing of such alternative municipal-level hypotheses is impossible; our n , after all, is only 2. Ultimately, we begin with the expectation that support for Lula will be much stronger in Juiz de Fora than in Caxias do Sul.

The Interaction of Urban Context and Social Networks

Social networks influence members' political choices by conveying information. Information that is redundant to other messages in the social environment is less influential. Supporters of the incumbent who live in urban areas where most residents share their preferences will be

less affected by agreeing social network members, as the larger social context will substitute for the role of family members and friends. Thus we hypothesize that social networks supporting Lula will have more impact on the stability of respondents who supported Lula in 2002 in Caxias do Sul than in Juiz de Fora.

DATA AND METHODS

Our data come from a six-wave panel study of eligible voters conducted between 2002 and 2006 in Juiz de Fora and Caxias do Sul. The first three waves, implemented in April, August, and October 2002, examined the presidential election campaign of that year. The fourth wave was implemented in May 2004, several months before midterm local elections. The last two waves were implemented in August and October 2006. The August wave came at the start of the official, highly regulated television campaign season; the October wave took place a few weeks before the second-round election.

Over the course of the six waves, the survey interviewed 6,970 people, split evenly between the two cities. Because of sample attrition and replacement, however, only a fifth of these people were interviewed in all six waves. The sample analyzed here includes the 1,310 individuals interviewed in every wave.⁷ Did those who stayed in the study for six waves differ from those who did not? Statistical comparison of individuals who responded in all six waves and individuals who did not revealed a few differences, but almost entirely demographic ones. Specifically, those present in all six waves are older, more likely to be female, and lower in educational and income levels. However, we find few statistically significant differences in political traits. While partisan identification in the first wave was slightly higher among individuals who responded in all subsequent waves than among those who later desisted, there were no statistically significant differences in variables such as first-round vote intention, ideology, or political knowledge.⁸ Since we are ultimately concerned about relationships among political variables, we conclude that the differences between six-wave and non-six-wave respondents are unlikely to affect our ability to draw valid statistical inferences.

The probability that a respondent supported Lula in 2006 is a function of demographic, political, attitudinal, and contextual variables. The study measured second-round presidential vote intentions in August and October of 2002 and 2006. A binary variable measures support for Lula in October 2002 (excluding those who planned to vote for “no one” or who reported no vote choice). In all models, the dependent variable is support for Lula in October 2006. Social context involves political discussion networks, residential neighborhoods, and municipality. Respon-

dents named up to three political discussants and reported those discussants' vote choices. "Social network supporting Lula" captures the number of discussants the respondent reported as supporting Lula in wave 5.⁹ Similarly, "Social network opposing Lula" measures the level of support among a respondent's discussants for candidates other than Lula. To construct each index, we created two dummy variables for each discussant, assigning the first a value of 1 if the discussant (in the main respondent's view) supported Lula and the second a value of 1 if the discussant supported someone other than Lula. We then summed these dummies, creating two indexes running from 0 to 3.¹⁰

Neighborhood education and neighborhood identification with the PT are simply neighborhood-level means of individual-level variables, calculated after removing each respondent's own score from the mean.¹¹ A dummy variable tests the effects of residence in Juiz de Fora. An interactive variable tests the effects of social networks in each city.

We further tested the effects of a series of other variables that the literature on vote choice in Brazil leads us to expect may influence the vote. PT and PSDB identification are dummies coded 1 for party sympathizers, measured in wave 1.¹² "Education" measures each respondent's years of schooling. "Ideology" is a five-point scale from wave 4; higher values represent closeness to the ideological right.¹³ "Time of Lula vote decision" is a 0 to 3 scale representing timing of support for Lula in first-round elections. We assigned a value of 0 to respondents reporting, in the October wave of 2002 (after the first-round election), that they had supported a first-round candidate other than Lula. Respondents who reported a first-round Lula vote in the third wave but had not decided to support him in the second wave received a value of 1. Those choosing him in both the second and third waves but not the first received a value of 2, while those supporting him in all three waves received a value of 3.

"Sociotropic assessment" captures retrospective evaluations of the Brazilian economy, measured on a five-point scale in which 0 means "a lot worse" and 5 represents "improved a lot." "Perceptions of privatization" and "evaluations of Lula's social programs" and "corruption performance" are based on feeling thermometers. Higher values on the corruption thermometer indicate disapproval of the government's performance on corruption. A measure for "social policy performance" is the mean of three items capturing opinions of the government's performance on job creation, the fight against poverty, and the welfare program Bolsa Família.¹⁴ "Media consumption" captures the degree to which individuals utilize four different mass media sources (television, magazines, newspapers, and radio).¹⁵

We imputed missing data for independent variables, creating five complete data sets via the Multiple Imputation by Chained Equations

routine in Stata (Royston 2004). Multiple imputation improves over traditional missing data approaches, including listwise deletion or mean imputation, which assume that data are “missing completely at random”; that is, that “missingness” is unrelated to any other variable, measured or unmeasured. When this assumption is violated, such approaches bias estimates, misrepresent statistical power, and produce invalid conclusions (Rubin 1987). Multiple imputation, by contrast, requires only the (empirically untestable) assumption that data are “missing at random”; that is, that a variable’s probability of missingness is unrelated to its own value. It typically produces approximately unbiased parameter estimates and appropriate standard errors, and it has been widely accepted in statistics and in the social sciences broadly, as well as in political science (Allison 2001; Gelman and Hill 2007; King et al. 2001). Still, multiple imputation produces invalid estimates when the analytical model fails to correspond to the imputation model (Fay 1996; Meng 1994; Robins and Wang 2000) and when the imputation model is underspecified (Allison 2001). The large number of political and demographic variables included in the imputation, including variables’ values in other waves, bolsters our confidence that the model was fully specified.

MODELING THE 2006 VOTE: DOES THE TRANSITION MODEL MATTER?

Let us first test our theoretical arguments in the traditional way; that is, a simple logit model of Lula’s 2006 vote. The results are clear and seemingly powerful (see table 1).

Although about 50 percent of first-wave respondents identified with a political party, levels of identification with Brazil’s most powerful political parties, apart from the PT, are quite low; this is especially true of the PSDB. While about 23 percent of the sample identified with the PT in the first wave, only 3 percent identified with the PSDB.¹⁶ Among the minority of respondents with long-term allegiances to these two parties, partisanship was an important stabilizing force. Those who identified with the PT in the first wave supported Lula in 2006, while wave 1 PSDB identifiers supported his opponent.

At the neighborhood level, we find strong effects for education, our proxy for social status: respondents in higher-status neighborhoods transitioned away from Lula. Neighborhoods with strong PT partisanship in 2002 also turned against Lula in 2006. As pro-Lula organization in traditionally *petista* neighborhoods fell apart, residents in these neighborhoods moved away from him *en masse*.

At the municipal level we find, as expected, that residents of Juiz de Fora voted significantly more for Lula than residents of Caxias do Sul. As the model includes an interaction between pro-Lula networks

Table 1. Logit Model: Predictors of a Vote for Lula in 2006

	Coefficient	Standard Error
Individual Effects		
PT identification (wave 1)	0.882***	0.237
PSDB identification (wave 1)	-1.024*	0.550
Education	-0.035	0.024
Ideology (rightist) (wave 4)	-0.029	0.024
Time of Lula vote decision	0.598***	0.083
Sociotropic evaluation (wave 5)	0.147***	0.040
Evaluation on social policy (wave 5)	0.108***	0.040
Evaluation on corruption (wave 5)	-0.142***	0.034
Privatization attitudes (wave 6)	-0.139***	0.034
Media consumption (wave 5)	0.007	0.033
Contextual Effects		
Social network supporting Lula (wave 5)	0.743***	0.152
Social network opposing Lula (wave 5)	-0.445***	0.086
Neighborhood education	-0.100**	0.046
Neighborhood PT identification	-2.096**	0.820
Juiz de Fora	1.906***	0.198
Juiz de Fora X social network supporting Lula (wave 5)	-0.537***	0.190
Constant	0.126	0.613
Number of observations	1,215	
Pseudo R-squared	0.452	
Proportional reduction in error	65.11%	

Coefficients are significant at * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Note: Analysis is based on five multiply imputed data sets using micombine in Stata. Robust standard errors are clustered in 50 neighborhoods.

and Juiz de Fora, the coefficient for pro-Lula networks captures the effect of this variable only for residents of Caxias.¹⁷ Thus, a positive and significant coefficient for pro-Lula networks indicates that discussion networks favoring the incumbent pushed residents of Caxias toward the winner. In Juiz de Fora, however, the strongly pro-Lula tendency of the entire urban social milieu substituted for social networks in bolstering support for the incumbent. As explained above, network influence operates through information transfer; in urban environments where almost all available information supports a single candidate, personal discussion networks supportive of that same candidate provide little new information.

Results for other variables are mixed. Social status (measured by education), left-right ideology, and media use are all irrelevant. Time of Lula vote decision has a positive effect on supporting the incumbent, as

Table 2. Change in Support for Lula, 2002–2006

	2002 Support		
	Lula	Non-Lula (PSDB-Serra)	Total
2006 Support			
Lula	71.70% (557)	15.60% (69)	100% (626)
Non-Lula (PSDB-Alckmin)	28.30% (220)	84.40% (370)	100% (590)
Total	51.50% (777)	48.50% (439)	100% (1,216)

do sociotropic evaluations and opinions on social programs. Conversely, opinions on corruption and privatization work against Lula.

Although these results seem powerful, they assume that initial supporters of Lula respond in the same way to social context and the events of Lula's term as do initial supporters of his opponent. We now drop that assumption, developing, instead, a first-order Markov Chain transition model to test the impact of a set of covariates on the probability of supporting Lula in October 2006 while conditioning on the initial choice. That is, these models assess the conditional effects of a group of independent variables on the likelihood of voting for Lula, allowing the impact of each variable to vary by the respondent's initial choice of Lula or his opponent (Hillygus and Jackman 2003, 58).

What proportion of respondents switched candidates between 2002 and 2006? Table 2 reveals that more than three-quarters of the respondents remained with their 2002 vote choice in 2006. Among 2002 Lula voters, 72 percent planned to vote for him again in 2006; among those voting for Lula's challenger, José Serra, 84 percent planned to remain in the opposition in 2006. But 28 percent of Lula's 2002 supporters planned to abandon him in 2006, and he attracted 16 percent of former non-Lula voters.

Transition models assume the existence of two groups of individuals: "stayers" and "movers." Stayers remain in their initial category for the length of the study with probability 1. They follow a Markov process, with the transition matrix equal to the identity matrix. Movers have a chance of switching to another category at each wave of the panel. They follow a pure Markov process, with a constant transition matrix having diagonal elements less than 1 (Morgan et al. 1983, 347). Following Diggle et al. (2002), we consider a first-order binary Markov chain transition matrix

$$\begin{pmatrix} \pi_{00} & \pi_{01} \\ \pi_{10} & \pi_{11} \end{pmatrix}$$

where $\pi_{ab} = \Pr(Y_{ij} = b \mid Y_{ij-1} = a)$, $a, b = \{0, 1\}$, i denotes individuals, and j denotes waves. For example, π_{01} is the probability that an individual will support Lula in 2006 ($Y_{ij} = 1$) when that individual did not support Lula in 2002 ($Y_{ij-1} = 0$).

In the regression setting, we model the two transition probabilities as a function of a vector of independent variables, using separate logit models for $\Pr(Y_{ij} = 1 \mid Y_{ij-1} = y_{ij})$, $y_{ij} = \{0, 1\}$. Thus, we assume that

$$\text{logit } \Pr(Y_{ij} = 1 \mid Y_{ij-1} = 0) = \mathbf{x}_{ij} \boldsymbol{\beta}_0$$

and

$$\text{logit } \Pr(Y_{ij} = 1 \mid Y_{ij-1} = 1) = \mathbf{x}_{ij} \boldsymbol{\beta}_1$$

In this context, $\boldsymbol{\beta}_0$ and $\boldsymbol{\beta}_1$ may differ, as this model assumes that the effects of the independent variables change depending on respondents' 2002 presidential vote. These transition equations combine to form the conditional model

$$\text{logit } \Pr(Y_{ij} = 1 \mid Y_{ij-1} = y_{ij-1}) = \mathbf{x}_{ij} \boldsymbol{\beta}_0 + y_{ij-1} \mathbf{x}_{ij} \boldsymbol{\beta}_1,$$

so that $\boldsymbol{\beta}_1 = \boldsymbol{\beta}_0 + \boldsymbol{\alpha}$.

The combined equation expresses the separated models presented above as a single logit regression, one including (as predictors) vote for Lula in 2002, interactions of this variable and all explanatory variables, and a vector of noninteracted independent variables. The $\boldsymbol{\alpha}$ coefficients express the contrast between $\boldsymbol{\beta}_0$ and $\boldsymbol{\beta}_1$. A test of the joint null hypothesis $\boldsymbol{\alpha} = 0$ asks whether there are statistically significant differences in the effects of the covariates between respondents who voted for Lula in 2002 and respondents who did not (Diggle et al. 2002; Hillygus and Jackman 2003).

Table 3 displays results from the transition model. The $\boldsymbol{\beta}_0$ coefficients represent the effect of the independent variables on the probability of supporting Lula in 2006 among those who voted for his opponent Serra in 2002; the $\boldsymbol{\beta}_1$ coefficients represent the covariates' effects on the probability of supporting Lula in 2006 among those who had supported him in 2002. In other words, positive results in the $\boldsymbol{\beta}_1$ vector promote stability, while positive ones in the $\boldsymbol{\beta}_0$ vector promote change.

Consider now the results, highlighting only those results in which the transition model changes the patterns revealed in the simpler model above.¹⁸ The coefficients of wave 1 PSDB identification become insignificant in the transition model. However, of the 16 respondents who identified with the PSDB in wave 1 and voted for Serra in the second round

Table 3. Transition Model Predicting Vote for Lula in 2006,
Conditional on 2002 Vote

	2002 Serra (β_0)	2002 Lula (β_1)
Individual effects		
PT identification (wave 1)	1.209*** (0.444)	0.694** (0.292)
PSDB identification (wave 1)	-12.456 (10.074)	-0.536 (0.779)
Education	-0.062 (0.047)	-0.028 (0.030)
Ideology (rightist) (wave 4)	-0.022 (0.046)	-0.035 (0.032)
Time of Lula vote decision	0.005 (0.414)	0.431*** (0.094)
Sociotropic evaluation (wave 5)	0.157** (0.075)	0.129*** (0.049)
Evaluation on social policy (wave 5)	0.189*** (0.071)	0.091* (0.052)
Evaluation on corruption (wave 5)	-0.079 (0.057)	-0.153*** (0.042)
Privatization attitudes (wave 6)	-0.069 (0.068)	-0.151*** (0.042)
Media consumption (wave 5)	0.033 (0.076)	-0.011 (0.035)
Contextual effects		
Social network supporting Lula (wave 5)	0.594** (0.267)	0.806*** (0.187)
Social network opposing Lula (wave 5)	-0.434** (0.190)	-0.412*** (0.104)
Neighborhood education	-0.204* (0.108)	-0.078 (0.060)
Neighborhood PT identification	-1.535 (1.428)	-2.306** (0.950)
Juiz de Fora	1.482*** (0.386)	1.723*** (0.268)
Juiz de Fora X social network supporting Lula (wave 5)	-0.026 (0.357)	-0.665*** (0.228)
Constant	-0.595 (1.275)	0.971 (0.811)
Number of observations	1,215	
Pseudo R-squared	0.473	
Proportional reduction in error	65.49%	

Coefficients are significant at * $p < .1$; ** $p < .05$; *** $p < .01$.

Note: Analysis is based on five multiply imputed data sets using micombine in Stata. Robust standard errors are clustered in 50 neighborhoods.

of 2002, all but one, or 94 percent, voted for the PSDB candidate four years later.¹⁹ Thus, partisanship is an extremely powerful predictor in this highly limited subpopulation.

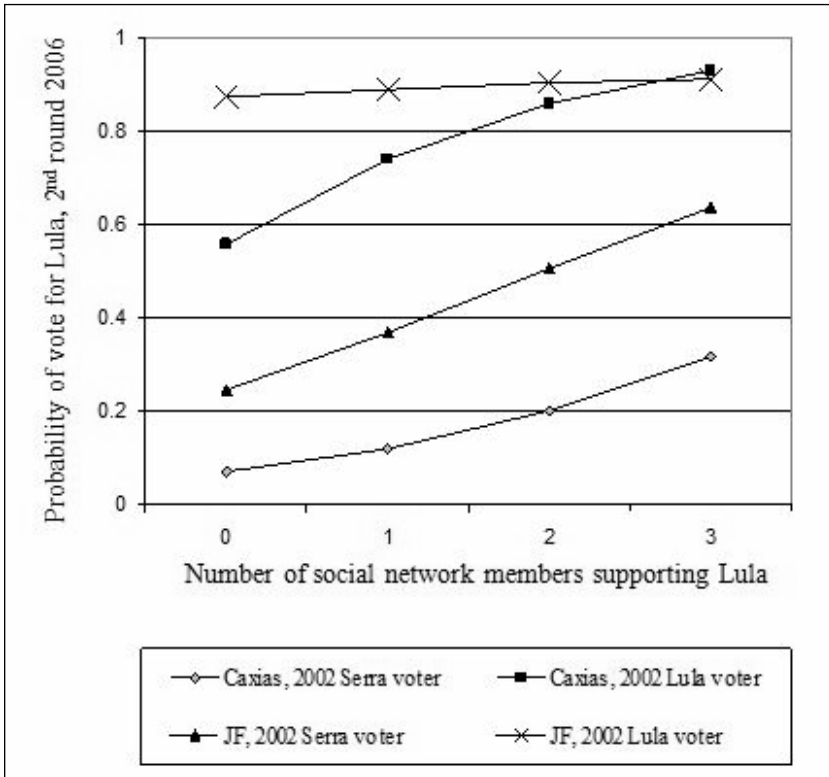
The most interesting differences from the no transition model, however, are found in the effects of social networks and local context. In the no transition model, immersion in a pro-Lula network increased 2006 Lula support, while immersion in an anti-Lula network had the opposite effect. Impacts of pro-Lula networks were stronger in Caxias, where the broader information environment was more balanced than in strongly *lulista* Juiz de Fora. But when we consider prior vote, we find that Serra supporters from 2002 in both cities were strongly affected by network members (see figure 1). Among 2002 Lula supporters, however, pro-Lula networks bolster support for Lula only in Caxias do Sul. The probability of a 2006 vote for Lula among prior *lulistas* in Juiz de Fora is close to 90 percent even without network influence. For those already predisposed toward Lula and living in cities where almost everyone they bump into on a daily basis also supports Lula, the probability of choosing him is very high regardless of the closest personal discussion network; pro-Lula messages from the urban environment substitute for the network.

At the neighborhood level, the no transition model found people in upper-status and highly PT neighborhoods moving away from Lula in 2006. Strong pro-Lula organization in such neighborhoods in 2002 led many residents to follow their more activist neighbors in voting for Lula. In 2006, however, as activists abandoned Lula, their neighbors moved away from him in droves. The transition model shows that the effect of neighborhood education occurs only among 2002 Serra voters. By contrast, partisan realignment affected only 2002 Lula voters. Serra voters from 2002, of course, were rarely found in highly *petista* neighborhoods. Once again, we see the importance of the prior vote, which can reinforce or counter such forces as partisanship, depending on the direction of the earlier vote.

At the municipal level, the transition model again improves our grasp of voter behavior. Juiz de Fora is still Lula territory, but the effect of municipality on the vote is much stronger for 2002 Lula voters than for 2002 Serra voters. Respondents from Juiz de Fora who had resisted the strong pro-Lula tendency of their fellow city dwellers in 2002 were also more resistant to the bandwagon effect four years later. Among 2002 Lula voters, however, networks attenuated the effects of municipal context.

Our measure of the time of vote decision was a very strong predictor in the earlier no transition model, but now the picture is more complex. Time of decision affects only the 2006 vote choices of 2002 Lula voters. These results confirm what others have suggested (Bearak 2004; Coimbra 2007; Rennó 2006): loyalty toward Lula accrued over a long

Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities of a Second-Round Vote for Lula, by City, Prior Vote, and Social Network Composition



Note: Predicted probabilities are calculated using Clarify (Tomz et al. 2001). All variables except those for municipality, social network composition, and prior vote are held at means estimated for the subsample of respondents with the respective 2002 vote.

period and continued to pay dividends among firm *lulistas*. For those who had previously been loyal to Lula but defected in the second round of the 2002 election, however, such previous loyalty did not serve to bring them back in 2006.²⁰

The effect of issue attitudes also varies across different groups of voters. Assessments of Lula's performance on antipoverty initiatives mattered a lot in the no transition model. Such assessments matter here as well, but the impact is much greater for 2002 Serra voters, who were impressed with Bolsa Familia and other social initiatives; 2002 Lula voters, by contrast, took them for granted. Corruption and privatization also affected the 2006 vote, but the effects were significant only for 2002

Lula voters. The corruption result presumably comes from the defection of more educated Lula voters, for whom corruption was more salient. Lula's emphasis on privatization in the campaign did serve to shore up his own base, but it failed to attract new voters.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the weakness of parties in the Brazilian electorate and the major changes in Brazilian politics between 2002 and 2006, 76 percent of the respondents supported the same party in the second round of 2006 that they had supported four years earlier. But how high is 76 percent? In the United States, 86 percent of voters (according to the 2000–2004 NES panel study) supported the same party for president in 2000 and 2004. In Canada—a very different institutional context—73 percent of voters interviewed in the Canadian Election Study supported the same party in the parliamentary elections of 2004 and 2006. Thus, stability levels are surprisingly close to those found in long-established democracies.

What produces such stability? Our results eliminate some usual suspects and support intriguing alternatives. Partisanship stabilizes the electorate only among the small proportion of voters who identify with a party contending in the presidential election, and ideology plays no role. But the time of decision to vote for Lula matters. Lula's long history on the national political scene and his presence as a major presidential contender since 1989 created stable attitudes toward him, perhaps akin to the "psychological tie" of party identification (Campbell et al. 1964; Coimbra 2007). This raises questions, of course, about the stability of voting after the end of Lula's second term.

Most important, social context turns out to be a major source of stability and change. Political discussion among ordinary Brazilian citizens is perhaps the most effective source of interpersonal mobilization. Respondents embedded in social networks in which they agree with their discussants are much more likely to remain faithful to their original choices, while those whose discussants disagree with their original choice are highly likely to switch. Moreover, we find that when the urban social milieu is very strongly slanted toward one candidate, the municipal environment largely substitutes for personal networks, at least among those who also support that candidate. Municipal context also has a strong independent effect on the vote. If we place two identical voters in Juiz de Fora and Caxias do Sul, respectively, the former will have a much higher probability of sticking with or transitioning to Lula between 2002 and 2006. And while personal education matters little, the social status of the neighborhood has quite strong effects, especially on Serra supporters. Meanwhile, after controlling for individual-level PT

identification, respondents living in neighborhoods with traditions of PT organizing tend to transition away from Lula.

We also find that different groups of voters responded to different issues and elements of Lula's performance, producing varied patterns of stability and change. All voters were sensitive to the strong performance of the economy, which became the central retrospective criterion by which the electorate judged Lula (Rennó 2007). Previous Lula voters were more sensitive to corruption charges and to attempts to frame the campaign in terms of privatization. And surprisingly, though all voters cared about social policy, it was more important to previous Serra voters.

The long panel of this study contributes to the understanding of stability and change over the course of a presidential term. But when did changes occur? Some effects may have been slow processes gradually developing over the course of the four-year term. Others may have been concentrated during the presidential campaign. Figure 2 breaks down stability and change in vote choice into two periods: one period between the end of the 2002 election and the beginning of the 2006 campaign, and another period over the course of the 2006 campaign. Again we observe fairly high stability: more than half of the respondents never changed their minds in either period, while 70 percent of the respondents had chosen a candidate in August 2006 and remained with that person until October 2006. Among those with their minds made up in August 2006, stability is even higher. Nine of ten August Lula supporters continued supporting him in October; and 84 percent of individuals planning in August to vote for Alckmin stayed with him in October. But a minority either defected in August 2006 and then returned to the original candidate by October, or changed candidates for the first time during the 2006 campaign.²¹

Two-and-a-half decades after Brazil's third wave transition to democracy, the nation's political system remains complex. On the one hand, clientelism, corruption, and voter disenchantment are still pervasive; on the other, many political institutions and even the party system itself are becoming increasingly consolidated. As one measure of this consolidation, over the past five presidential elections (1994–2010), political competition at the presidential level has crystallized around the PT and the PSDB. This is striking, given the latter party's very small base in the electorate; it is symptomatic both of the low salience of party to many voters and of the flexibility of a party system functioning around loose and constantly shifting coalitions. We find that party identification contributes to this growing stability in presidential competition among a minority of voters. For a great many more, what matters is loyalty to Lula and social influence.

These findings leave many questions unanswered. How will Lula's transition out of the presidency—at least over the next four years—

Figure 2. Trajectories of Voting Stability and Change Between 2002 and 2006

<i>October 2002</i>		<i>August 2006</i>		<i>October 2006</i>	<i>% of 2002 Lula voters</i>	<i>% of 2002 Serra voters</i>
(A)	Stable	(A)	Stable	(A)	52%	63%
(A)	Change	△ B	Return	(A)	8%	4%
(A)	Undecided	◇ ?	Return	(A)	12%	17%
(A)	Stable	(A)	Change	△ B	4%	3%
(A)	Change	△ B	Stable	△ B	16%	10%
(A)	Undecided	◇ ?	Change	△ B	8%	3%
					100%	100%

Note: For 2002 Serra voters, stability refers to continued opposition to Lula and support for the PSDB (i.e., voting for Alckmin in 2006), and change means switching to Lula and the PT.

affect presidential politics? Although he managed to transfer much of his popularity to his successor in the 2010 election, will the increasingly stable system of presidential electoral competition collapse once Lula leaves the presidential palace? What aspects of municipal context most affect vote decisions, and what factors affect the influence of social networks on voting behavior? Furthermore, how does social influence interact with campaign events? These questions present opportunities for both “large-N” cross-municipal research and “small-n” qualitative observation of political discussion.

NOTES

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anonymous reviewers; Jay McCann; María Mata Machado de Castro; participants in the comparative politics workshop at the University of Texas, Austin; Andy Baker; and Lucio Rennó for thoughtful comments. Needless to say, we bear full responsibility for remaining problems.

1. In each neighborhood, streets were randomly sampled, and interviews were conducted at every fifth house or, in the case of apartment buildings, at the first apartment on certain preselected floors.

2. In this paper, we rely only on data from the primary sample.

3. The two-city research design has intellectual roots in scholarship on both the United States and Brazil. A pioneering study of political behavior in Brazil in the 1970s examined our two cities, along with Niterói (Rio de Janeiro state) and Presidente Prudente (São Paulo state) (Reis 1978). Furthermore, several pivotal studies on the impact of social context on U.S. political behavior have taken this approach. This intellectual tradition begins with seminal studies of the 1940 presidential election in Erie County, Ohio (Lazarsfeld et al. 1948) and of the 1948 campaign in Elmira, New York (Berelson et al. 1954). Huckfeldt and Sprague's (1995) and Huckfeldt et al.'s (2004) important studies of processes of social influence in the 1988 and 1996 presidential campaigns focus on South Bend, Indiana, and on the Indianapolis and St. Louis metropolitan areas, respectively.

4. For research on voting in 2002, see Baker et al. 2006; Carreirão 2007b; Carreirão and Kinzo 2004; Kinzo 2003; Nicolau 2007. For voting in 2006, see Bohn 2007; Carreirão 2007a; Holzacker and Balbachevsky 2007; Hunter and Power 2007; Nicolau 2007; Rennó 2007.

5. Indeed, there is a moderate and significant correlation between neighborhood and network vote, as well as between city and network vote, in our data.

6. For a study focusing on the differences in political behavior between the two cities, see Ames and Rojo-Mendoza 2010.

7. The study actually interviewed 1,401 individuals in all six waves. In this data set, in order to avoid imputing on the dependent variable, we drop those respondents with a missing value for their second-round vote choice in the last wave of the study.

8. Analysis is available on request.

9. Social network members' preferences were measured in waves 2, 3, 5, and 6. Preferences in 2002 are largely irrelevant for 2006 vote choice, since network composition and preferences changed between 2002 and 2006. We use wave 5 measures of preferences to improve causal inferences, since main respondent preferences in wave 6 might influence network members' preferences in that wave, rather than the reverse.

10. We utilized the respondents' perceptions of discussants' vote choices, rather than discussants' self-reported vote choices, because we interviewed only a subsample of discussants. For respondents whose discussants were interviewed, 77 percent of those perceiving agreement in vote choice were accurate, while 79 percent of those perceiving disagreement were accurate. In other words, main respondents were correct in their assessments of discussant preferences almost 80 percent of the time, and there was no bias toward perceiving agreement when there was actual disagreement.

11. This reduces multicollinearity with the individual-level variable and provides a more conservative test of contextual influences. Since this is a mul-

tively imputed data set and each respondent is associated with five observations, we actually removed all five imputed observations from the neighborhood-level mean calculated for each respondent. Correlation between neighborhood-level and personal education is .45. The correlation between personal and neighborhood-level PT identification is .26.

12. Measuring partisanship *before* the start of the campaign season is crucial to our design, because in the plastic Brazilian party environment, respondents often change their party identifications to match their vote choices.

13. As with partisanship, we measure ideology before the start of the campaign season to avoid reverse causal influences from vote choice to ideology (Ames and Smith 2010). We chose a wave from the middle of the study to account for possible real change in ideology over the course of the study.

14. Unfortunately, this survey did not ask respondents whether they received Bolsa Família.

15. Effects reported for media remain substantively unchanged when we disaggregate media exposure by TV and radio versus print.

16. In addition, 18 percent of the wave 1 sample identified with the PMDB. These percentages are for interviewees who responded in all six waves. Across the entire wave 1 sample, the percentages for the PT and the PSDB were 23 percent and 2 percent, respectively.

17. In other words, its coefficient captures the effect when *Juiz de Fora* takes the value of 0. For a discussion on how to interpret interaction terms, see Kam and Franzese 2007.

18. Ceiling effects are a possible concern, since almost 90 percent of those who supported Lula in 2002 did so again four years later. However, the statistical significance of so many variables in the model boosts our confidence that such effects are not a major problem.

19. PSDB identification among 2002 Serra supporters thus has a very high coefficient and standard error because it is a nearly perfect predictor of 2006 Lula vote.

20. Over 90 percent of 2002 Serra supporters have a 0 on this variable. Only a small number supported Lula in the first round of 2002, but defected to Serra in the second round.

21. Defectors included those supporting other candidates, along with the undecided: people intending to vote for “no one,” those who did not know for whom they would vote, and nonrespondents. Since voting is mandatory in Brazil, turnout at the polls is high, but in the privacy of the voting booth, some voters choose not to vote for president.

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