

1 Nurturing Hope, Deepening Democracy, and Combating Inequalities in Brazil:
2 Lula, the Workers' Party, and Dilma Rousseff's 2010 Election as President

3
4 John French and Alexandre Fortes

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6 In explaining the 2010 election of President Dilma Rouseff, John French and Alex-
7 andre Fortes explore the stunning success of the Brazilian Workers Party (PT) and
8 its leader, Lula, former trade unionist, in winning a third consecutive presidential
9 victory. In historical perspective, the authors examine the ways in which Lula's gov-
10 ernment (2002–10) represented a break with the past while summarizing its substan-
11 tive achievements in redistributing wealth and opportunity. Focusing on the tension
12 between a historic party-centric *petismo* (declared partisan party support) and the
13 broader personal popularity of its leader (*lulismo*), they offer evidence that Lula and
14 the PT have retained their foundational ethos of enhancing popular self-esteem while
15 fostering citizen participation and civil society mobilization, albeit under new condi-
16 tions. They conclude with a diagnosis of the new government's challenges in light of
17 international financial markets, labor mobilization, and the constraints of the Brazil-
18 ian political system.

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Nurturing Hope, Deepening Democracy, and Combating Inequalities in Brazil: Lula, the Workers' Party, and Dilma Rousseff's 2010 Election as President

John French and Alexandre Fortes

Speaking at the First National Conference of Policies for Women in July 2004, Brazilian president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva insisted that “contemporary democracy cannot be limited to economic and political rights. In the world of today,” he declared, “gender equality is an inalienable part of social justice.”¹ At the second conference three years later, twenty-three hundred women gathered in Brasília to hear this former metalworker declare that no country can be considered “modern and developed” unless economic growth benefits “all without exclusion and without perpetuating historical inequalities be they of gender, race, or any other type.” Speaking to feminists and women activists of all backgrounds, colors, and cultures, Lula hailed Michelle Bachelet’s election to the presidency in Chile as “an extraordinary ideological advance,” while mentioning by name women’s candidacies in Argentina (Cristina Kirchner, Elisa Carrió), Paraguay (Blanca Ovelar), and the United States (Hillary Clinton). When the country’s most popular political leader began “I hope that here in Brazil,” he was interrupted by roaring applause, screaming, and shouting at the hint he might support a woman as his successor.²

Less than a year later, Lula began to float the possible candidacy of Dilma Rousseff, his chief of staff. Rousseff won the presidency in 2010 as the nominee of Lula’s Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers’ Party [PT]) and its allied parties. Lula’s

1. *Anais da I Conferência Nacional de Políticas para as Mulheres*, Secretaria Especial de Políticas para as Mulheres da Presidência da República Federativa do Brasil, 2004, www.sepm.gov.br/pnpm/anais.pdf.

2. *Discurso do Presidente da República Luiz Inácio Lula Da Silva na II Conferência Nacional de Políticas para as Mulheres*, Secretaria de Políticas para as Mulheres da Presidência da República Federativa do Brasil, 2007, www.sepm.gov.br/pnpm/discurso-pr-iiicnpm.pdf. The fervent response was attested to by Andrea Dinamarco, a Duke University student in attendance (personal communication, 2007).

decisive support helped a guerilla-turned-technocrat achieve a political triumph that was all the more remarkable because Dilma had never before run for office, yet the election of Brazil's first female president was in keeping with Lula's own rise, which had smashed precedents and rewritten the rules at every step. Lula himself was an improbable occupant of the presidential palace when he won in 2002. Having completed only the fourth grade of primary school, he had gone to work in the streets at eleven years old, and his manual occupation and stigmatized regional origin darkened him considerably in a country with a powerfully racialized class hierarchy. Moreover, Lula's prospects seemed all the more doubtful because his only executive experience had been five years at the head of a large metalworkers' union. He had also served one term as a federal deputy, elected in 1986, in which capacity he showed neither talent nor brilliance.

It seemed unlikely that an incendiary strike leader and self-declared socialist would do a good job of running the world's ninth- or tenth-largest capitalist economy, and it was not clear that this president and his party could successfully manage a political system of notorious complexity and dubious morality, especially given that the Left was a minority in both houses of congress and held few of the important governorships. Facing a deteriorating macroeconomic situation, Lula's first term was marked by substantial continuity and even austerity, which disappointed many on the Left, while a 2005 corruption scandal further damaged the PT and sidelined many of its leaders. Despite these formidable difficulties, buoyed by a successful conditional cash transfer program (*Bolsa Família*), in 2006 Lula won reelection, once again with 61 percent of the second-round votes, while the PT maintained its national strength.³

Lula's second term has been rightly deemed "a much more confident affair" by the British Marxist historian Perry Anderson. While likely an exaggeration to dub it "a radicalization in government,"⁴ there is little doubt that over the next four years Lula fulfilled his postelection pledge: "I was reelected and I do not want to repeat what I have accomplished in my first term. Now we have to innovate. And for God's sake, do not make the error of using the word 'development' or 'economic growth' without adding the phrase, 'redistribution of income.'"⁵ The confluence of positive economic developments and credible government initiatives led to extraordinary and sustained levels of personal popularity for Lula during his second term. After floating in the 60 and 70 percent range, his approval ratings reached 80 percent on the eve

3. Wendy Hunter and Timothy J. Power. "Rewarding Lula: Executive Power, Social Policy, and the Brazilian Elections of 2006," *Latin American Politics and Society* 49, no. 1 (2007): 16–17.

4. Perry Anderson, "Lula's Brazil," *London Review of Books* 37, no. 7 (2011): 3. Like many European leftists, Anderson's ties to Brazil go back to the 1960s, in his case related to an apparently unfinished thesis on Brazilian politics (Gregory Elliott, *Perry Anderson: The Merciless Laboratory of History* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998], 299).

5. Lula interview in *Valor*, December 7, 2006, cited in *Brazil under Lula: Economy, Politics, and Society under the Worker-President*, ed. Joseph L. Love and Werner Baer (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2009), 236.

1 of Rousseff's 2010 victory with 56 percent of the second-round votes.⁶ At the outset
 2 of the campaign, Dilma's opponent José Serra—who had been defeated by Lula in
 3 2002—went out of his way to deny that he was anti-Lula: “Lula is above good and
 4 evil,” he famously declared.⁷ The amazing success of this gruff and engaging sixty-
 5 four-year-old man would lead US President Barack Obama to remark, only half-
 6 jokingly, in April 2009: “That’s my man right here. Love this guy. He’s the most pop-
 7 ular politician on earth.”⁸ Perry Anderson agreed: “By any criterion, Luiz Inácio da
 8 Silva is the most successful politician of his time.”⁹

9 The Brazilian case allows us to explore the role that an individual leader, the
 10 mass vote, and elections can play in the Left’s pursuit of a transformative and demo-
 11 cratic practice. To what extent did Lula’s popularity reflect substantive achievements
 12 by his government? Is Lula a “personalist” leader whose individual preeminence con-
 13 stitutes a danger for institutionalized democratic politics? “” Is Lula’s success as presi-
 14 dent an accomplishment to be hailed by the Left or a dubious deviation from left-
 15 ist principles? After all, Lula’s presidential candidacies in 1994 and 1998 were firmly
 16 anchored in a principled PT rejection of alliances with non-leftist parties (a policy
 17 abandoned in 2002). Has an historic party-centric “*petismo*” (declared partisan sup-
 18 porters of the PT) degenerated, as some fear, into “populism” and an amorphous cult
 19 of personality (“*lulismo*”? And do Lula and the PT still stand by their foundational
 20 ethos of fostering popular participation?

21 These pressing questions are central to the politics of contemporary Latin
 22 America, where anti-neoliberal governments and leaders have swept to power by the
 23 ballot over the past decade, foremost among them Lula, Venezuela’s Hugo Chávez,
 24 and Bolivia’s Evo Morales.¹⁰ Within the wider panorama of these plural Lefts, Lula’s
 25 PT-led government has exercised enormous influence in the region, but the issues at
 26 stake speak to audiences well beyond Brazil at a time when many still see the pres-
 27 ent through the discouraging lens of the past. In Latin America, by contrast, left-
 28 ist parties and leaders are powerfully convinced—as they put it in the fourteenth
 29 and fifteenth conferences of the São Paulo Forum in Montevideo (2008) and Mex-
 30 ico City (2009)—that we are living “not only in an epoch of changes but in a change
 31

32 6. Pedro Barros Silva, José de Souza Braga, and Vera Cabral Costa, “Lula’s Administration at a Cross-
 33 roads,” in *Leftist Governments in Latin America: Successes and Shortcomings*, ed. Kurt Weyland, Raúl Madrid,
 34 and Wendy Hunter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 124–39.

35 7. Laura Lacerda, “‘Lula Está Acima do Bem e do Mal’, Afirma Serra,” *Estado de São Paulo*, May
 36 14, 2010.

37 8. Jack Tapper, “The Significance of President Obama Praising Lula’s ‘Good Looks,’” in *Political*
 38 *Punch*, Washington, DC: ABC News blog, April 7, 2009, <http://blogs.abcnews.com/politicalpunch/2009/04/thats-my-man-ri.html>

39 9. Anderson, “Lula’s Brazil,” 3.

40 10. John D. French, “Understanding the Politics of Latin America’s Plural Lefts (Chávez/Lula): Social
 41 Democracy, Populism, and Convergence on the Path to a Post-Neoliberal World,” *Third World Quarterly* 30,
 42 no. 2 (2009): 349–70. For a good introduction, see Maxwell A. Cameron and Eric Hershberg, *Latin America’s*
 43 *Left Turns: Politics, Policies, and Trajectories of Change* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2010).
 44

of epochs.”¹¹ As Brazilian political scientist Juarez Guimarães has noted, we have witnessed momentous changes—including the surprising 2008 election of Barack Obama—and yet we experience these welcome developments as “phenomena that do not yet have proper names. We lack the conceptual grammar to express them and a clear narrative with which to orient ourselves”¹² as we search for a new paradigm appropriate to a post-neoliberal world.¹³

Toward the Abolition of Misery?: The Limits and Promise of Electoral Triumphs

In a 2005 article in *Labor*, we addressed the paradox represented by the elevation of the founder of the Workers Party to the Brazilian presidency without any significant alteration in a political system that was established to reproduce profound inequities. We ended by noting “that Brazil’s problems, although daunting, are not new.”¹⁴ In particular, we quoted an acute and still accurate assessment by the African-descended Brazilian abolitionist André Rebouças:

Slavery was a giant machine for producing proletarians . . . and made possible . . . the most monstrous monopoly of land [which in turn] produced Urban Misery, homes without a floor, without air, without light; people accumulating in pig sties, begging during the day and sleeping at night amongst rubbish. It was slavery that produced Rural Misery, without land (*sem terra*), without wages, without any compensation at all; without the most minimum idea of a just and equitable distribution [of wealth] between capital and labor.¹⁵

11. “Declaración Final del XIV Encuentro del Foro de São Paulo, Montivideo, Uruguay, 22–25 de Mayo de 2008”; “Declaración final XV Encuentro del Foro de São Paulo, Ciudad de México 20 al 23 de Agosto de 2009.” The São Paulo Forum brings together the parties of Latin America’s plural Lefts since it was founded in 1990 by the PT and the Cuban Communist Party (for a list of their meetings and members, see John D. French, *Understanding the Politics of Latin America’s Plural Lefts (Chávez/Lula): Social Democracy, Populism, and Convergence on the Path to a Post-Neoliberal World*, Working Paper 355 (Notre Dame, IN: Kellogg Institute for International Studies, 2008).

12. Juarez Guimarães, “O PT, o governo Lula e a cultura política brasileira” (unpublished presentation, Nurturing Hope, Deepening Democracy, and Combating Inequalities: An Assessment of Lula’s Presidency (international conference), Duke University, Durham, NC, May 27–28, 2008).

13. On post-neoliberalism, see John Burdick, Philip Oxhorn, and Kenneth M. Roberts, eds., *Beyond Neoliberalism in Latin America? Societies and Politics at the Crossroads* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), and Laura Macdonald and Anne Ruckert, eds., *Post-neoliberalism in the Americas* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

14. John D. French and Alexandre Fortes, “Another World Is Possible: The Rise of the Brazilian Workers’ Party and the Prospects for Lula’s Government,” *Labor* 2, no. 3 (2005): 29. This preliminary assessment began as an interdisciplinary project involving fifteen researchers who met at the Latin American Studies Association meetings in Montreal (2007) and Rio de Janeiro (2009) and at the international research conference at Duke University, May 27–28, 2008. Special thanks are due to our research assistant Bryan Pitts, who also provided editorial assistance on this article.

15. André Rebouças, *Diário*, v. p. 318, as cited in Sydney M. G. Dos Santos, *André Rebouças e Seu Tempo* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Vozes, 1985), 348–49.

1 Brazil is deeply marked by the powerful authoritarian traditions generated by
 2 350 years of African slavery (abolished only in 1888). Moreover, the country's domi-
 3 nant class has been remarkably successful in protecting their privileges and extraor-
 4 dinary wealth. Brazil is notorious for the extremity of its inequalities, ranking third
 5 of 150 countries in inequality of income distribution. Given these brutal realities and
 6 desperate needs, we argued that "change under Lula's government is not and will
 7 not be revolutionary." Moreover, we emphasized that Lula's election was not a prod-
 8 uct of mass insurgency or "a triumph of social movements," except in "one limited
 9 sense . . . [as] the triumph of a remarkable generation of leaders that grew out of the
 10 dynamic protest movements that brought an end to the military regime [1964–85]."¹⁶
 11 His election, we insisted, was above all triumph of politics, with both its strengths
 12 and weaknesses, while the mass popular vote was not a conscious repudiation of neo-
 13 liberalism.¹⁷

14 Our muted assessment differed sharply from the one-sided emphasis on conti-
 15 nuity that permeates much political and academic discussion.¹⁸ Whether mobilized
 16 from the center or the Left, critics of the government have been quick to invoke—at
 17 times opportunistically—emotionally powerful tropes of betrayal, disappointment,
 18 and lost illusions to set up provocative questions such as "whether Lula is (or was) a
 19 leftist president"¹⁹ and whether the PT can "still be rightfully regarded as a party of
 20 the left."²⁰ To our mind, the more fruitful question was posed by Joseph L. Love and
 21 Werner Baer in their 2009 edited book on Lula's government: "in what ways does the
 22 Lula government represent a break with the past?"²¹

24 16. French and Fortes, "Another World," 24–25. In a 2007 interview, a key leader of the Movement
 25 of Landless Rural Workers offered a parallel assessment, also starkly realistic, of the demobilized state of
 26 the popular classes leading up to 2002 and under Lula's government: Jeff Garmany and Flávia Bessa Maia,
 27 "Resistance and Social Reform in Latin America: Speaking with João Pedro Stedile of Brazil's 'O Move-
 28 mento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra' (the MST)," *Journal of Latin American Geography* 6, no. 2
 29 (2007): 139–40. The MST backed Lula's reelection in 2006.

30 17. French and Fortes, "Another World," 24–25.

31 18. Alexandre Fortes, "In Search of a Post-neoliberal Paradigm: The Brazilian Left and Lula's Gov-
 32 ernment," *International Labor and Working-Class History* no. 75 (2009): 109–25, offers an assessment of the
 33 debates within the Brazilian Left occasioned by the frustrations, dilemmas, and accomplishments that have
 34 accompanied the PT's role within the national government during Lula's administrations.

35 19. For examples, see Peter R. Kingstone and Aldo F. Ponce, "From Cardoso to Lula," 98, 122, 100,
 36 and Silva, Braga, and Costa, "Lula's Administration at a Crossroads," in Weyland, Madrid, and Hunter,
 37 *Leftist Governments in Latin America*, 124, 136.

38 20. Wendy Hunter, "Partido dos Trabalhadores: Still a Party of the Left?" In *Democratic Brazil Revis-
 39 ited*, ed. Peter R. Kingstone and Timothy J. Power (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 16.
 40 Intended for polemical effect, this charge is also common among disillusioned petistas and leftists, although
 41 empirical studies of the ideological placement of Brazilian national legislators from 1990 to 2005 show a
 42 classic Left-Right alignment with an moderate overall drift to the right on all parts (Timothy J. Power and
 43 Cesar Zucco Jr., "Estimating Ideology of Brazilian Legislative Parties, 1990–2005: A Research Communi-
 44 cation," *Latin American Research Review* 44, no. 1 (2009): 219–20, 231–32.

21. This is the question posed in Joseph L. Love's concluding chapter to the heavily empirical and illu-
 minating collection that Love coedited with Werner Baer, *Brazil under Lula*, 305.

Overall, we share Perry Anderson's recent judgment of Lula's presidency: "Viewed as a period in the political economy of Brazil, it can be regarded as contiguous with that of [President Fernando Henrique] Cardoso, a development within the same matrix. Viewed as a social process, on the other hand, it has marked a distinct break" with Brazil's past. Attuned to the ambiguity of electoral politics and its anthropological dynamics, Anderson rightly links this to Brazil's utter uniqueness: "The sheer electoral weight of the poor, juxtaposed against the sheer scale of economic inequality, not to speak of political injustice, makes Brazil a democracy unlike any society in the North, even those where class tensions were once highest, or the labor movement strongest. The contradiction between the two magnitudes has only just begun to work itself out."²² As two historians of Brazil have suggested, "lower class political participation" is the key precisely because of "the primacy of politics in bringing about a redistribution of income."²³

The Brazilian Political and Party System in Perspective

Many analyses undervalue the fact that Brazil is currently enjoying the most democratic moment in its history. The 2010 presidential election was the sixth consecutive contest since 1989, a time span that already equals the military dictatorship (1964–85) and exceeds that of the "populist republic" of 1945–64, the country's first brief experience of mass electoral democracy, under which the exploited majority still faced strict limits on its participation and voice. Not only were illiterates (51 percent of the population in 1950) excluded from the right to vote, the Brazilian Communist Party (the largest force within the Left) was illegal, the police were systematically deployed against social movements, and military coups loomed whenever the system's repressive features were called into question by social or political conflicts.

All these restrictions on democracy have been eliminated or undergone significant changes during the current democratic period. The Brazilian new republic after 1985 extended the right to vote to the illiterate (20–25 percent of the adult population in 1988),²⁴ and all political parties have operated legally since 1985. The PT, founded by Lula in 1980, is the country's only party with an active mass membership (between a half million and eight hundred thousand registered members in 2000) and a high degree of internal organization and cohesion, a powerful advantage for its leader.²⁵

22. Anderson, "Lula's Brazil," 11–12.

23. Love and Baer, *Brazil under Lulu*, 312.

24. Leslie Bethell and Jairo Nicolau, "Politics in Brazil, 1985–2002," in *Brazil since 1930*, ed. Leslie Bethell (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 234, also note that Brazil was the last country in the Americas to lift the ban on illiterates. The figure for absolute illiterates was 11 percent in 2005 with an additional 24 percent of functional illiterates, defined as having less than four years of education (Stéphane Monclair, "Lula II, Un Vote de Reconnaissance," *Lusotopie* 9, no. 1 [2007], 19). While voting is obligatory in Brazil, certain groups are exempt, including illiterates. While many illiterates do not register, those who do were found in one study to be hyperparticipative (Zachary Ekins, "Que Iria Votar? Conhecendo as Consequências do Voto Obrigatório no Brasil," *Opinão Pública* 6, no. 1 [2000]: 115).

25. The low figure for 2000 is from André Singer, "A Segunda Alma do Partido dos Trabalhadores," *Novos Estudos* 88 (2010): 92, and the high figure is from David Samuels, "From Socialism to Social Democ-

1 Moreover, it is the only party with a well-established partisan following among voters
 2 as measured by national polls. While most express no party identification, one in
 3 four identified with the PT and even the 2005 corruption crisis reduced that only to
 4 one in five. Thus, the PT far outstrips all other parties in terms of membership and
 5 a mass following. The only other parties with even a modest degree of partisan iden-
 6 tification—the opposition Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB) and the
 7 centrist PT-allied PMDB (Party of the Brazilian Democratic Movement)—were the
 8 declared preference of less than one in twenty voters each in 2003 despite obtaining
 9 46 percent of the national vote in 2002.²⁶

10 The 2010 elections confirmed the consolidation of a party system marked by
 11 a polarization between the PT and the PSDB. Each party can be understood as
 12 the outgrowth of a national leadership that emerged within two segments of São
 13 Paulo civil society during redemocratization: the PT formed by unionists from the
 14 industrial region known as ABC (Lula), named after the municípios of Santo André,
 15 São Bernardo do Campo, and São Caetano do Sul and the PSDB formed by intel-
 16 lectuals from the University of São Paulo (such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso).²⁷
 17 The PT and the PSDB are the only parties capable of presenting viable presidential
 18 candidacies, but other parties play significant roles. Some medium-size parties with
 19 strong support in certain regions and/or significant penetration in specific social sec-
 20 tors maintain a degree of identity and autonomy while gravitating toward one of the
 21 two poles. PT allies include the Brazilian Socialist Party, Communist Party of Brazil,
 22 and Democratic Labor Party. Among PSDB allies are the Democrats, formerly the
 23 Liberal Front Party, Popular Socialist Party, and Green Party. Two other groupings
 24 are central to the “governability” of any elected government. Foremost is the PMDB,
 25 a federation of state-level political machines, with no programmatic identity and the
 26 “cosmic debris” of the so-called dwarf parties (mostly right wing).

27 All these elements combine variously at the state and local levels, which adds
 28 even more complexity to national coalition building. On the one hand, this balancing
 29 act assures the country’s political stability because it permits a high degree of accom-
 30 modation between diverse interests. On the other hand, it carries tangible costs that
 31 extend beyond the endemic corruption that feeds political machines and the personal
 32 fortunes generated by the illegal appropriation of public money. The need to negotiate
 33 with so-called physiological allies, those focused on immediate rewards, severely cur-
 34 tails the capacity of the two major parties to maintain a coherent programmatic line.
 35 At the same time, there has been some recent progress in the long-standing struggle

36
 37 racy: Party Organization and the Transformation of the Workers’ Party in Brazil,” *Comparative Political*
 38 *Studies* 37, no. 9 (2004): 1009. Singer, “Segunda Alma,” 92, provides an undocumented claim that PT mem-
 39 bership had risen to 1.2 million by 2009, an intriguing if not surprising finding if true.

40 26. David Samuels, “Sources of Mass Partisanship in Brazil,” *Latin American Politics and Society* 48,
 41 no. 2 (2006): 5–6; Singer, “Segunda Alma,” 91.

42 27. John D. French, “The Professor and the Worker: Using Brazil to Better Understand Latin Ameri-
 43 ca’s Plural Left,” in *Rethinking Intellectuals in Latin America*, ed. Mabel Moraña and Bret Gustafson (Frank-
 44 furt: Iberoamericana, 2010), 91–113.

to raise ethical standards in political life. The maturation of mechanisms for the social control of political life has now placed some limits on impunity, which favors a certain degree of purification, yet it appears quite unlikely that Brazil will experience a major ethical improvement in the near future, leaving unresolved the contradiction between enhanced demands for democratic accountability and the physiological bases of Brazil's current stability.

Still, as far as political stability goes, there has been remarkable progress over the past two decades. Although Brazilian democracy may appear natural today, significant concerns were raised about the prospects for postdictatorship Brazilian democracy after the first elected president drowned in a tsunami of corruption scandals in 1992. However, the removal of Fernando Collor de Mello through an impeachment process marked by strong social mobilization worked to strengthen the political order. Since then, the only important change in the rules of the political game was President Cardoso's 1997 constitutional amendment that permitted executive reelection, not only for future officeholders but also for the sitting president, a step which paralleled moves by Carlos Menem in Argentina and Alberto Fujimori in Peru. Yet despite Lula's overwhelming support as 2010 approached, the president never entertained the possibility of amending the constitution to allow himself a third term, despite similar initiatives elsewhere in Latin America (Colombia, Bolivia, and Venezuela). Instead, the president chose the riskier option of supporting a little known candidate for his succession, a move in part necessitated by the weakening of other potential PT candidates in the wake of the 2005 scandals.

By now, political continuity and progress toward a more inclusive democracy has begun to produce cumulative political agendas; that is, strong public support for some achievements of each previous government carry over into the next one, even as new concerns arise. To become president, Lula had to convince voters that he was committed to macroeconomic stability before winning their support for his proposed focus on reducing social inequalities. Their successful combination under Lula not only yielded high approval ratings but generated enough political capital to elect his successor. For the first time in 2010, the issue of environmental sustainability achieved a new prominence on the public agenda with 20 percent of the first-round vote for the Green Party candidacy of Marina Silva, a black petista and former minister of the environment under Lula.

Looking ahead, the parliamentary panorama looks promising for Dilma Rousseff. She began her term with a commanding position in the chamber of deputies: 61 percent of the seats are held by her allied parties versus 28 percent held by opposition parties, and 12 percent are not aligned.²⁸ As for the PT, the jump in its representation that occurred in 2002—with elected deputies from all states—had been followed by a dip in 2006, although a surprisingly small one given the scale of the 2005 corruption crisis. In 2010, however, the PT emerged for the first time as the

28. Carlos Pereira, *Brazil's Executive-Legislative Relations under the Dilma Coalition Government* (Washington: Brookings Institute, 2010), 1.

1 single largest party in the chamber of deputies (88 seats) followed by the PMDB (79
 2 seats), which provided Dilma's vice-presidential running mate. If the PT did well, the
 3 two largest opposition parties (PSDB and Democratas [DEM]) suffered significant
 4 declines, falling by a quarter (from 131 seats to 96), with the largest losses suffered by
 5 the more conservative DEM (from 65 to 43).²⁹ These further losses of deputies by the
 6 Center and the Right, parties supported by those of high incomes and education, con-
 7 firm a tendency visible as early as 2002: the reduction of the number of deputies from
 8 the upper classes and a small but steady increase by those from the middle and popu-
 9 lar classes (often via participation in trade unions or Pentecostal churches).³⁰

11 **Economic "Orthodoxy," Political Will, and Improving Lives:** 12 **The Challenges Facing Rouseff's Government**

13 In Lula's first term, the PT leadership conducted macroeconomic policy in a cautious
 14 and conservative manner along the neoliberal lines established in the 1990s, yet the
 15 government also introduced a redistributive emphasis through what would become
 16 its flagship program, the Bolsa Família (family allowance or grant) conditional cash
 17 transfer program.³¹ Designed to replace the faltering "Zero Hunger" initiative and to
 18 consolidate existing targeted programs, Bolsa Família was rolled out and scaled up
 19 with ruthless efficiency to reach 11.1 million families with 45 million members by the
 20 2006 presidential election (an estimated 77 percent of those eligible nationally). In con-
 21 trast to payments to the government's creditors or its relatively expensive pension sys-
 22 tem, the program costs an infinitesimally small percentage of the federal budget (2.5
 23 percent).³² As Lula likes to say, "nothing is cheaper than taking care of the poor."³³

24 At the same time, Lula's government began to implement a variety of pro-
 25 grams and incremental initiatives whose impact was increasingly felt as economic
 26 growth accelerated in his second term. The growth of social expenditures included
 27 subsidized access to credit for low-income citizens, enhanced support for the elderly,
 28

29 29. Wendy Hunter, "The 2010 Elections in Brazil," *Electoral Studies*, forthcoming.

30 30. Leôncio Martins Rodrigues, *Mudanças Na Classe Política Brasileira* (São Paulo: Centro Edelstein
 31 de Pesquisas Sociais, 2009), 21, 23.

32 31. The literature on the Bolsa Família is vast and ever expanding. For a good introduction, see Kathy
 33 Lindert, Anja Linder, Jason Hobbs, and Bénédicte de la Brière, "The Nuts and Bolts of Brazil's Bolsa
 34 Família Program: Implementing Conditional Cash Transfers in a Decentralized Context" (Social Protec-
 35 tion Discussion Paper No. 0709, Washington: World Bank, 2007). For a detailed insider's examination of
 36 the planning and implementation, see Ana Fonseca, "Transferência de Renda: Continuidades e Rupturas
 37 na Experiência do Programa Bolsa-Família," paper presented at the Nurturing Hope, Deepening Democ-
 38 racy, and Combating Inequalities: An Assessment of Lula's Presidency conference, Duke University, May
 39 27–28, 2008.

40 32. Hunter and Power, "Rewarding Lula," 19; Edmund Amman and Werner Baer, "The Macro-
 41 economic Record of the Lula Administration, the Roots of Brazil's Inequality, and Attempts to Overcome
 42 Them," in Love and Baer, *Brazil under Lula*, 36–37. For the budgetary allotments and trends, see Anthony
 43 Hall, "From Fome Zero to Bolsa Família: Social Policies and Poverty Alleviation under Lula," *Journal of*
 44 *Latin American Studies* 38 (2006): 692–94.

33. Cited in and discussed by Anderson, "Lula's Brazil."

increased support for family agriculture, a program to provide universal access to electricity, the expansion of subsidized access to college education (*Prouni*), and the enlargement of the federal university system. Most decisively, the government's ongoing policy of increasing the minimum wage—perhaps as much as 67 percent higher in real terms in 2010 than 2003³⁴—would have a decisive impact on income distribution. During his second term, infrastructure investments also soared through the Program of Accelerated Growth (*Programa de Aceleração de Crescimento*, or PAC), while per-capita gross domestic product (GDP) between 2003 and 2009 grew on average by 2.9 percent annually.³⁵

The Lula government was not, of course, the first administration since 1989 to generate real improvements in well-being. By ending the hyperinflation that especially hurt the poor, the 1994 Plano Real currency stabilization—the economic and electoral anchor of the neoliberal government of Cardoso—had generated real if discontinuous improvements,³⁶ and Lula, long before 2002, had acknowledged that that his party's opposition to the Plano Real that catapulted Fernando Henrique Cardoso into the presidency in 1994 was a mistake. Under Lula, however, improvements for the majority became continuous and accelerated considerably, including a dramatic reversal of the 1990s trend toward increasingly precarious employment relations (“labor market flexibility” in neoliberal jargon).

Despite its inherited economic fragility, Lula's modest first term in office had nonetheless produced striking results even while maintaining orthodox economic policies. The government's new social policies had at that point reduced absolute poverty by 15 percent, a significant achievement.³⁷ Most important, these positive results ran against the expectations of many scholars during his first term—whether from the right, center, or left—who had doubted the feasibility of reducing inequalities while guaranteeing basic subsistence for every citizen. For supporters of neoliberal policies, the short-term suffering from their “bitter but necessary medicine” had always been justified as good for the long-term health of the patient (the economy) while “handouts” were deemed pernicious. However, even many Marxist economists shared the mistaken assumption that, barring structural reforms, the “prospects of material improvement in the short term are not good” for the “fifty million people [that] currently live below the poverty line.”³⁸

34. Lecio Morais and Alfredo Saad-Filho, “Brazil beyond Lula: Forging ahead or Pausing for Breath?” *Latin American Perspectives* 38, no. 2 (2011): 35.

35. Amaury de Souza, “The Politics of Personality in Brazil,” *Journal of Democracy* 22, no. 2 (2011): 82.

36. Marcelo Neri, “Income Policies, Income Distribution, and the Distribution of Opportunities in Brazil,” in *Brazil as an Economic Superpower? Understanding Brazil's Changing Role in the Global Economy*, ed. Lael Brainard and Leonardo Martinez-Diaz (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 233–36.

37. Hunter and Power, “Rewarding Lula,” 17, 16; Ricardo Paes de Barros, Mirela de Carvalho, Samuel Franco, and Rosane Mendonça, “A Importância da Queda Recente das Desigualdades na Redução da Pobreza,” in *IPEA Textos para Discussão 1256* (Brasília: Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, 2007).

38. Alfredo Saad-Filho, “New Dawn or False Start in Brazil? The Political Economy of Lula's Election,” *Historical Materialism* 11, no. 1 (2003): 5, 11. This opinion was also shared by centrist economists

1 Given Brazil's historically entrenched regional, racial, gender, and class dis-
 2 parities, the positive results were all the more striking by the end of the second term.
 3 With up to 15 million new jobs created, 21.5 million people moved above the pov-
 4 erty line between 2003 and 2009 while 29 million reached "lower middle class" sta-
 5 tus (the "C" as opposed to "D" or "E" segments, as it is known in Brazilian mar-
 6 keting classifications).³⁹ Unemployment fell to the lowest levels ever recorded while
 7 formal waged employment boomed compared to the vast and precarious informal
 8 sector. Moreover, the ongoing increase in the purchasing power of the minimum
 9 wage—which affects formal and informal sector remuneration as well some govern-
 10 ment benefits—increased workers' income by 4.6 percent annually between 2003 and
 11 2009.⁴⁰ With an administration favorable to social dialogue and former labor lead-
 12 ers holding key positions in the government, the bargaining environment for trade
 13 unions—unionization stands at about a fifth of the formal workforce—has been
 14 favorable, with 78 percent of 2008 salary negotiations resulting in raises above infla-
 15 tion, 80 percent in 2009, and 89 percent in 2010.⁴¹

16 While the Brazilian GDP has grown less quickly than China's, growth in
 17 Brazil has been associated with significant decreases in income inequality, unlike
 18 its counterpart. Indeed, the country could be said to have "Chinese-like growth" in
 19 terms of real increases in income by the popular classes since 2003, with the great-
 20 est gains for those at the bottom, significant but lesser improvements in the middle,
 21 and the smallest increases going to the top 10 percent of income recipients.⁴² This
 22 outcome has legitimated the Left's argument that enhanced popular consumption
 23 provides the best foundation for economic growth while proving the effectiveness of
 24 government-directed redistribution. In their attack on poverty and social inequality,
 25 Lula and his government have shifted public discourse so that "poverty reduction is
 26 now at the center of the political debate."⁴³ Today, far fewer Brazilians fatalistically
 27 (or conveniently) believe that "the poor will always be with us," although most now
 28 believe that the Bolsa Família will be. Although still criticized by some wealthier citi-
 29 zens, the opposition presidential candidates in 2006 and 2010 all declared their alle-
 30 giance to this program and other antipoverty initiatives, and most non-poor Brazil-

31
 32 Edmund Amman and Werner Baer, "Economic Orthodoxy versus Social Development? The Dilemmas
 33 Facing Brazil's Labour Government," *Oxford Development Studies* 34, no. 2 (2006): 223, who shifted position
 34 by 2009; Amman and Baer, "The Macroeconomic Record," in Love and Baer, *Brazil under Lula*, 35.

35 39. An illuminating discussion with detailed statistics can be found in the work coordinated by Mar-
 36 celo Neri, *The New Middle Class: The Bright Side of the Poor* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV, 2010), 12. Additional data,
 37 videos, and reports can be found at www.fgv.br/cps/ncm.

38 40. Neri, *New Middle Class*, 18.

39 41. Marli Moreira, "Ganhos Salariais Acima Da Inflação Tiveram Recorde Em 2010, Segundo O Die-
 40 ese," Agência Brasil, <http://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/noticia/2011-03-17/ganhos-salariais-acima-da-inflacao-tiveram-recorde-em-2010-segundo-dieese>.

41 42. Neri, "Income Policies," in Brainard and Martinez-Diaz, *Brazil as an Economic Superpower?*,
 42 229–31.

43 43. Cesar Zucco, "The President's 'New' Constituency: Lula and the Pragmatic Vote in Brazil's 2006
 44 Presidential Elections," *Journal of Latin American Studies* 40, no. 1 (2008): 49.

ians now feel good about the country's significant amelioration of the most extreme manifestations of poverty.

In May 2011, President Rousseff launched the National Plan for the Eradication of Extreme Poverty under the slogan that "a rich country is a country without misery." The ambitious goal is to reach the 1.5 million families who qualify for but have not been enrolled in the Bolsa Família, whether because of where they live or a lack of information as to the benefits.⁴⁴ Even while cutting the federal budget, the new administration has also vowed to deepen the country's efforts to redistribute opportunity by radically improving the poor quality of Brazilian public education (most children now attend school). In doing so, they hope to take advantage of Brazil's current "demographic bonus" marked by a sharp drop in the birth rate and a more modest increase in life expectancy. Combined with a massive expansion of higher education, they hope to achieve sustained economic growth while enhancing social mobility and creating a more educated, productive, and creative society.

However, President Rouseff's administration faces crucial difficulties in achieving this vision. From a macroeconomic point of view, Brazil has long maintained the world's highest interest rates, which were increased again in the first part of 2011 to combat inflationary pressures linked to increased public spending, which resulted from both the anticyclical stimulus programs begun in 2008 and the pressures of a presidential election year (including raises for federal workers). While high interest rates under Lula did not prevent internal market dynamism, it has had an unfortunate by-product in the context of global capitalist crisis. With a vast inflow of foreign financial applications attracted by high interest rates, the Brazilian currency has experienced a significant increase in its value compared to the US dollar, which threatens the international competitiveness of the Brazil-based manufacturing sector that survived the neoliberal era of the 1990s. Both high interest rates and the threat of inflation have been hammered at by the opposition and the media to justify their demand for vast cuts in public spending, while ignoring its positive contribution to well-being and economic growth in recent years.

The opening months of President Rousseff's administration has also seen a new effervescence among sectors of the work force and in parts of the country that have not benefitted as fully as others. In particular, protest and strikes have emerged among public workers employed at the state level (health, education, and public security) and workers employed in the large construction projects throughout the country, whether linked to PAC or to preparations for the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics, which are being hosted by Brazil.

Public workers employed by state governments—including teachers, police, firemen, and health workers—have long received miserable salaries and labored under deplorable conditions for governments that have too often done little to priori-

44. Daniella Jinkins, "Plano Para Erradicar Pobreza Extrema Incluirá 1,5 Milhão De Famílias, Diz Ministra," *CartaCapital*, 2011, www.cartacapital.com.br/politica/plano-para-erradicar-pobreza-extrema-inclui-15-milhao-de-familias-diz-ministra.

1 tize quality service. While the current protests are not aimed at Rousseff's administra-
2 tion, the broadening and persistence of these state-level struggles—strongly backed by
3 public opinion—could lead to impasses that could only be resolved by a new model
4 of financing the public sector as a whole. However, the austerity that has marked the
5 outset of Rousseff's government makes it unlikely that the demands of these workers
6 could be resolved by the federal government without radical changes in the prevail-
7 ing economic model. Moreover, these state level mobilizations—combined with the
8 absence of new salary increases at the federal level—might possibly lead to a wave of
9 strikes among federal workers.

10 The protests and labor struggles by workers on large-scale construction proj-
11 ects—such as hydroelectric dam projects and the building and renovation of stadi-
12 ums—highlight the social impacts of the vast and mostly needed new investments
13 being poured into infrastructure. Brazil today has seen the multiplication of vast con-
14 struction projects on a scale not witnessed since the so-called economic miracle under
15 the military regime from 1968 to 1974. Both the construction workers employed on
16 these projects—and the communities and environment impacted by them—are
17 treated by the large-scale construction companies with brutality and disdain. Whether
18 on or off the job, old patterns prevail, especially in less developed regions: precarious
19 employment, low pay, authoritarian treatment, industrial accidents, and disdain for
20 health and safety while producing heedless environmental damage and the destruc-
21 tion of local social networks. Especially in remote areas, these workers and the com-
22 munities they come from often lack effective organization, but they have grown up
23 in a very different society in which decent pay and treatment have begun to be estab-
24 lished as a societal norm. Given Brazil's dense web of nongovernmental organizations,
25 trade unions, leftist politicians, and alternative media, their denunciations have been
26 projected nationally and received ample solidarity as they struggle for voice.

27 These new waves of labor struggle, as well as the pressure of the trade union
28 movement on Rousseff for a greater minimum wage than she favored in January 2011,
29 demonstrates that the progress achieved under Lula, however modest, has not served
30 to demobilize working people. It is possible that demands for a deepening of redis-
31 tribution and its universalization could mark the administration of Rousseff. While
32 in principle compatible with the economic model sought by the president, it will be a
33 challenge to administer these popular pressures, especially if they become more force-
34 ful and radical, since the path followed by Lula's second term was marked above all
35 by a cautious gradualism. Even with the PT's executive experience of the past eight
36 years, governability under the new president still depends upon a heterogenous polit-
37 ical coalition in parliament, large swaths of which are interested mostly in opportu-
38 nities for enrichment. (She has already had to fire the minister of transportation and
39 his underlings from an allied party with forty congressional deputies.) Moreover, Bra-
40 zil's freedom of economic action is still subject to the international financial markets
41 with its vast potential to destabilize both the economy and the government. While
42 Lula overcame these contradictions through his charisma and negotiating capacity,
43
44

Dilma's talents lie more in her proven administrative skills and a capacity to oversee the execution of policy.⁴⁵

Lulismo Plus Petismo:

Lula's Role in Promoting Popular Self-Esteem and Civil Society Mobilization

During its first quarter century, the PT enjoyed a unique combination of strengths. Originating within mass movements, its committed members enjoyed strong ties with the organized sectors of civil society while benefiting from a strong partisan identity and a plural but meaningful ideological outlook. With an explicitly non-Leninist and non-Social Democratic self-definition, it had an active internal life—including recognized factions—and a collective process of decision making that was not marked by the sway of a single leader, even Lula. To many, it was the quintessential modern mass party based on principle and ideology and thus the antithesis of Brazil's catch-all electoral vehicles. This idealized image contributed to growing voter identification with the PT during the 1990s (petismo) as its local and state administrations won admiration for their relative honesty, social commitment, and innovative forms of popular participation.

One key element of petismo's success went unexamined: the extraordinary importance of its founder as a figure whose appeal reached far beyond that of his party. In the early years, petistas had their own well-elaborated dismissal: "We are a political party and a collective derived from social movements. We are not a mere vehicle for a leader," in contrast, they would say, to their on-and-off ally Leonel Brizola of the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT), who was deemed "populist" and "personalist." As a party whose membership (as opposed to sympathizers) was heavily weighted toward the middle class,⁴⁶ it is not surprising that petistas saw themselves mainly in terms of party and campaign platforms, ideology, and principles, while their high appreciation of *companheiro* Lula was deemed "nonpersonalist" on principle. However, the four presidential contests from 1994 to 2006 demonstrated that the PT vote never came close to approximating Lula's appeal at the ballot box. The vote for PT candidates constituted 35 percent of Lula's vote in 1994 and rose to 41 percent in 1998 and 2002 before falling to 30 percent in 2006.⁴⁷

This unreflective petismo began to fade as the party, facing the decline of mass movements in the 1990s, realized that Lula's story, personality, and unquestionable charisma held the keys to winning the presidency.⁴⁸ Once he assumed office, it quickly became evident that Lula's popularity and influence (lulismo) outstripped not

45. Gilberto Calcagnotto, "Dilma eo Problema de Seguir Mudando o Imutável: Novas Perspectivas para a Reforma Política no Brasil?" *Iberoamericana* 11, no. 41 (2011): 169–74, touches on Dilma's role in Lula's cabinet while offering an interesting discussion of how she constructed her own.

46. Samuels, "Sources."

47. Zucco, "President's 'New' Constituency," 32.

48. Irllys Alencar F. Barreira, "Um Operário Presidente? Ideologia e Condição de Classe no Universo da Representação Política," in *Como Se Fazem Eleições no Brasil*, ed. Beatriz Maria Alásia de Heredia, Carla Costa Teixeira, and Irllys Alencar F. Barreira (Rio de Janeiro: Relume Dumará, 2002), 170.

1 only his party but the organized social movements out of which his leadership had
 2 emerged. During his first term, the gap between the government's policies in office
 3 and the PT's historic program strained petista identities. When corruption scandals
 4 in 2005 brought down top PT leaders, deputies, and ministers, it was Lula's standing
 5 with the general population that would have to carry the day in the 2006 elections.

6 The 2006 results have been rightly dubbed a stunning, emphatic, smashing
 7 victory for Lula and a crushing defeat for his PSDB opponent.⁴⁹ In its aftermath, the
 8 discussion of lulismo intensified because, although his 2006 victory was by the same
 9 margin as in 2002, the distribution of his votes had shifted significantly in terms
 10 of region, class, and level of education. For the first time in five presidential races,
 11 "the greater the income, the lesser was the likelihood of someone casting a vote" for
 12 Lula in 2006. More starkly, there was a "big rupture" when measured by educational
 13 attainment. In the three elections prior to 2006, "the higher the educational level,
 14 the greater the probability that an individual would cast a ballot" for Lula. In 2006,
 15 by contrast, Lula "lost ground among college-educated voters" and experienced his
 16 "greatest growth coming among Brazilians with fewer years of formal education."⁵⁰
 17 As captured in polling, Lula's second-round vote also showed disproportionate sup-
 18 port for Lula from self-identified blacks (74 percent) and browns (67 percent) com-
 19 pared to whites (52 percent), although Lula's support was only mildly stronger among
 20 men than women.⁵¹

21 While the 2006 results were the grist for political debate, many scholars who
 22 analyzed the electoral impact of the Bolsa Família concluded that "a fairly straight-
 23 forward 'pocketbook' explanation goes a long way toward accounting for Lula's victo-
 24 ry. . . . Put simply, the poor are significantly better off now than they were when
 25 Lula assumed the government in January 2003."⁵² Others echoed the conclusion that
 26 the Bolsa Família played a decisive role in the party's growth in "less populated and
 27 poorer *municípios*" and among populations that had not been traditional centers of
 28 PT support.⁵³ However, others, such as Cesar Zucco, argued that Lula's new vote is
 29 better understood as part of a long-established tendency for "poorer regions to support
 30 the incumbent [presidential] candidate."⁵⁴ In Brazilian parlance, their support is an
 31 expression of the dependence of economically peripheral regions (*grotões* or grottos, as
 32 they are known) on federal handouts and thus a classic example of clientelism.

33 An emphasis on simple economic gain meshes easily with well-established
 34 Brazilian ideas about the lack of independence of the country's poorest voters, tra-

36 49. Hunter and Power, "Rewarding Lula," 1, 2, 24, 20; Souza, "Politics of Personality," 78.

37 50. Simone R. Bohn, "Social Policy and the Vote in Brazil: Bolsa Família and the Shifts in Lula's Elec-
 38 toral Base," *Latin American Research Review* 46, no. 1 (2011): 66–68.

39 51. Hunter and Power, "Rewarding Lula," 5.

40 52. Hunter and Power, "Rewarding Lula," 1, 2, 24, 20.

41 53. Gláucio Ary Dillon Soares and Sonia Luiza Terron, "Dois Lulas: A Geografia Eleitoral da Reelei-
 42 ção (Explorando Conceitos, Métodos e Técnicas de Análise Geoespacial)," *Opinião Pública* [Campinas] 14,
 43 no. 1 (2008): 298; Zucco, "President's 'New' Constituency," 33–34.

44 54. Zucco, "President's 'New' Constituency," 35.

ditionally seen as ignorant and backward by their social superiors. Ill-informed, easily fooled, and cheaply bought, they have long been viewed as peculiarly susceptible to charismatic leadership, demagoguery, and clientelism. As one political sociologist has observed, this “elitist *illuminismo*” was common among the educated long before Lula, whether from the Left or Right.⁵⁵ In an excellent analysis of the 2006 election, French political scientist Stephane Monclaire criticized the derogatory stereotypes of the half of the electorate with four years or fewer of education who are characterized by some for their “lack of a political position, their alienation, or irrationality.” It is true, he observed, that the political connotations behind abstractions such as “Left” and “Right” escapes them and they cannot place parties within such a spectrum, unlike the more educated.⁵⁶ The analytical flaw lies in devaluing their decisions at the ballot box in light of a norm set by politicized intellectuals and an educated middle- and upper-class minority. For voters from the popular classes, he insists, “political life is not above or beyond the day-to-day” nor does it operate in an abstract sphere with its own separate logic. The key to their experience of the political revolves around “the necessary relation between politics and the everyday,” in both its material and symbolic dimensions.⁵⁷

Having lead massive strikes by the “peons” of the metalworking industry, Lula understands that the decisive battle is always for the mass of a constituency, not its politicized minority. In a postmortem 1991 election interview, he reiterated that the PT’s goal must always be “to reach the segment of society that earns one *salario mínimo*” or less.⁵⁸ This was precisely the group that he did not win in his first run for the presidency in 1989. A year earlier, he laid out his understanding of how they should be reached to a group of intellectual petistas. We cannot, he said, “wait for socialism to happen.” Rather, “we have to present solutions that give the *povo* [the common people] a chance to begin believing in us, that give them a chance to eat, to work, and to live” while “advancing step by step.”⁵⁹

In a country that originated Paulo Freire’s “pedagogy of the oppressed” and liberation theology, Brazil’s party and social movement Left has advanced since the 1970s precisely because it came to grasp the empirical contours of mass consciousness in all its diversity. They could be said to have arrived at an ethnographic approach to politics that begins by recognizing the integrity and diversity of popular understandings, logics, and discourses.⁶⁰ The political analyses offered by intellectuals, as one

55. Gláucio Ary Dillon Soares, *A Democracia Interrompida* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2001), 238.

56. Monclaire, “Lula II,” 26, 31. In 2002, 50 percent of Brazilian voters could not even name the party of President Cardoso, who had been in office for eight years (27).

57. Antoniádia Monteiro Borges, “Tanto Azul, Quanto Vermelho.” In *Como Se Fazem Eleições no Brasil*, 222. Monclaire, “Lula II,” 27.

58. Luis Inácio da Silva, “Entrevista: Lula: Mãos á Obra,” *Teoria e Debate* no. 13 (1991): 8.

59. Deputado Federal Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, interview, in *Visões da Transição*, vol. 2 (São Paulo: CEDEC, 1989), 29, 47.

60. Monclaire, “Lula II,” 32, 35, 36–37, 43–44. This is the greatest problem with the provocative and much discussed essay by an important petista, André Singer, “*Raizes Sociais e Ideológicas do Lulismo*.” *Novos*

1 Brazilian anthropologist has noted, are too often rooted in an impoverished “theory
2 of interests” that derives from a “muscular and reductionist sociology,” a utilitarian
3 bent also common to political scientists and many Marxists. In their systematic study
4 of popular electoral behavior, Brazil’s political anthropologists have rightly insisted on
5 the fecund role of the symbolic. We must pay close attention, they suggest, to “the role
6 of figurative elements of discourse” by both politicians and voters, including the use
7 of “metaphors, ironies, ambiguity, paradox, and hyperbole.”⁶¹ The poor and less edu-
8 cated, in other words, do not simply reproduce inherent dispositions at the ballot box,
9 and their votes reflect lessons learned from their own political experiences. By disag-
10 gregating the poor and understanding them as part of local communities, it is possi-
11 ble to show how more and more of the poor changed their minds about Lula, step by
12 step, as part of an evolving dialogue going back to 1989 (the elderly among the poor,
13 for example, were among the last group to shift decisively toward Lula in 2006).⁶² Just
14 like the highly educated, they are actors in their own right, with their own histories,
15 and their thinking and decisions change in response to events.

16 In a deeply divided society like Brazil, the president has always served as a vec-
17 tor for popular desires for material improvement, recognition, and inclusion. Rather
18 than pitting a false lulismo against an idealized petismo, we need to better under-
19 stand what lulismo (the societal interpretations of Lula manifested in his mass popu-
20 larity) adds to petismo (a more focused partisan loyalty) and how both have altered
21 the consciousness of the electorate, poor and not poor alike. Lula’s longtime collabora-
22 tors such as Minister Luis Dulci have recognized his personal charisma but insist that
23 it is “inextricably tied to a collective project of social emancipation, not a personalist
24 one” (i.e., a selfish or self-centered one by Lula).⁶³ While true, this should not obscure
25 a striking aspect of Lula’s public discourse that seemingly has little to do with collec-

26
27 *Estudos* (November 2010),” 83, 99. He posits the existence of a poorly defined lulismo that is then directly
28 linked to an abstract category (the subproletariat) defined by its structural insertion into the labor market
29 and, apparently, its geographic origin in the Northeast. He then imputes to this group a characteristic con-
30 sciousness (“the maintenance of stability with state distributive action”) without empirical evidence, while
31 loosely associating them with peasants in France in 1848 and Lula with Napoleon III. Reflecting New Left
32 Marxist understandings of Brazilian populism, the author would gain not only from plunging into the
33 rich new Brazilian literature on the populist era but from exposure to our current understandings of how
34 working-class movements, even Marxist ones, emerged in Europe.

34 61. Barreira, “Operário Presidente,” in *Como Se Fazem Eleições no Brasil*, 167–68. The excellent intro-
35 ductory essay to a systematic compilation of Lula’s statements on different key terms offers a sophisticated
36 analysis of Lula’s discursive strategies and tactics, including the use of metaphor, repetition, and the invoca-
37 tion of his origins: Ali Kamel and Rodrigo Elias, *Dicionário Lula—Um Presidente Exposto por Suas Palavras*
(Rio de Janeiro: Editora Nova Fronteira, 2009).

38 62. In excellent article, Bohn, “Social Policy,” disaggregates voting behavior to the individual level via
39 polling across elections while suggesting varied timings for the shift to Lula within the popular classes, lead-
40 ing to growing unity within these communities as a whole.

41 63. Saul Leblon, “A Elite Chama de Populismo a Democratização das Decisões—Entrevista Com
42 Luiz Dulci,” Agência Carta Maior, www.cartamaior.com.br/templates/postMostrar.cfm?blog_id=6&post_id=612. (accessed November 11, 2010). A top PT leader, Dulci was ex–secretary general of the presidency
43 of the republic.
44

tive action. From the outset, he has insistently developed motifs and arguments that aim to promote the self-esteem of the dominated while affirming their capacity for individual social mobility, a symbolic dimension central to lulismo as we noted in our 2005 article.⁶⁴ After his defeat by the internationally renowned sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1994, Lula observed:

It is not easy to get it into the head of someone that a lathe operator (*torneiro mecânico*) has the competence to govern Brazil. People have a cultural formation of thinking that power is something for very polished people (*requintada*), that the poor are meant for work and that's the end of the story. When those people show prejudice against me, fundamentally the prejudice is against themselves. He thinks that because he works, say, in a gas station that he has no competence to be anything else. . . . He confounds political capacity with intellectual knowledge.⁶⁵

As a living repudiation of the country's entrenched prejudices, Lula's upward mobility and personal success empowers the weak by encouraging their pride, even if vicarious, in the success of one of their own.⁶⁶ In 2010, Lula spoke in this tenor to the metalworkers of ABC. Recalling when he came to office, he declared, "I could not possibly allow myself to fail. If I had, a worker would never again be able to seek the presidency because they would say that a factory peon doesn't know how to govern. I had to prove that we could do better than those who ruled us before."⁶⁷

Impossible to read from election results (and seldom the focus of public opinion polls), Lula's personal success story has contributed decisively to a "cognitive transformation" among the country's "little people" (as they think of themselves).⁶⁸ This sense of identification with the man stood at the core of Dilma's endorsement by the talented Brazilian rapper Mano Brown, a black *favelada* from the periphery of São Paulo. Speaking on behalf of Brazil's "suffering people," tired of being treated like cattle, Brown recalled that his generation saw the rise of Lula. It has changed me,

64. We called this psychological impact "the likely long-term impact of Lula's victory" (French and Fortes, "Another World"). Luis Felipe Miguel, "From Equality to Opportunity: Transformations in the Discourse of the Workers' Party in the 2002 Elections," *Latin American Perspectives* 33, no. 4 (2006): 122–43, offers an excellent discussion of the heightened emphasis on this theme in Lula's television campaign in 2002 while recognizing that "in a country like Brazil, where a significant portion of the population lacks access to the most basic goods and services, the theme of 'opportunity' can be understood as an extension of all of the minimal material requirements for the exercise of citizenship" (137).

65. Lula cited in Barreira, "Operário Presidente," in Heredia, Teixeira, and Barreira, *Como Se Fazem Eleições no Brasil*, 180.

66. John D. French and Antonio Luigi Negro. "Politics, Memory, and Working Class Life in the Commercial Biopic *Lula, Son of Brazil*," *A Contracorriente: A Journal of Social History and Literature* 8, no. 3 (2011): 377–94, explores this theme—which stood at the core of this film—while observing that it is insufficient in itself without rooting Lula's behavior and politics in working-class life.

67. Leandro Amaral, "Os Metalúrgicos do Abc Não Vão se Livrar de Mim," *Avisa Lula*, *Repórter Diário*, June 1, 2010.

68. Monclair, "Lula II," 31–35, discusses this "cognitive transformation" that Lula's success has had among the country's "little people," those in the popular classes.

1 he said, to see “a worker, a northeasterner, a man of the *povo*, become all that which
2 we wished he could be.” Things really got going in Lula’s second term, he went on,
3 which was “almost a dream, a miracle.” In the end, “Lula has achieved and honored
4 everything I believed in since I was an adolescent.”⁶⁹

5 This politics of identification and recognition is central at a mass level. It
6 does not, however, run counter to popular mobilization and struggle as so many
7 believe when they use the term *lulismo*. The government of Lula and the PT has not
8 neglected the participatory element of their constitutive DNA, although its forms
9 reflect a different context. As Minister Dulci noted, Lula has always been committed
10 to the “arduous, daily labor of building awareness among the popular classes” (con-
11 sciousness raising or altering) while helping to give popular participation an orga-
12 nized form.⁷⁰ While the game of elite politics is central to his government’s capac-
13 ity to produce achievements, Lula has used the office and prestige of the presidency
14 to convene an unprecedented series of national civil society conferences involving, at
15 all levels, close to 5 million people around a broad array of public policy foci.⁷¹ These
16 gatherings have included national meetings on women’s rights (2004, 2007),⁷² the fight
17 for racial equality (2004, 2009),⁷³ and even a First National Conference of Gays, Lesbi-
18 ans, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals (2008).⁷⁴ While receiving little critical
19 attention, this systematic process of mobilizing civil society has been, as was noted by
20 a Brazilian PSDB supporter, a strategic move by the Lula administration to encourage
21 “nongovernmental organizations to use national policy conferences and other social-
22 communications methods to pressure Congress.”⁷⁵

23
24 69. “Mano Brown Declara Apoio a Dilma: ‘Povo Não Quer Ser Gado,’” *Terra*, October 18, 2010.

25 70. Leblon, “A Elite.”

26 71. Leblon, “A Elite.”

27 72. Simone R. Bohn, “Feminismo Estatal Sob a Presidência Lula: O Caso da Secretaria de Políticas
28 Para as Mulheres,” *Revista Debates* 4, no. 2 (2010): 92, notes that 120,000 participated in the preparatory confer-
29 ence leading up to the First National Conference on Policy for Women, held July 15–18, 2004, in Brasília,
30 with 60 percent of national conference participants from civil society, 30 percent from municipal govern-
31 ments, and 10 percent from state governments. See also Cecilia Maria Bacellar Sardenberg, “With a Little
32 Help from Our Friends: ‘Global’ Incentives and ‘Local’ Challenges to Feminist Politics in Brazil,” *IDS Bul-
33 letin* 35, no. 4 (2004): 125–29.

34 73. The process leading to the first racial equality conference (I CONAPIR) involved 95,573 persons
35 through twenty-six state conferences and one the Distrito Federal, as well as municipal and regional ones.
36 Secretária Especial de Política de Promoção da Igualdade Racial (SEPPPIR), *Subsídios À II Conapir (Confe-
37 rência Nacional de Promoção da Igualdade Racial [CNPIR])* (Brasília: SEPPPIR/CNPIR, 2009), 31; “1a Con-
38 ferência Nacional da Promoção da Igualdade Racial, Realizada Em Brasília Por Seppir, Reuniu Negros,
39 Índios, Judeus, e Ciganos Para Debater e Festejar,” *Revista Raça Brasil* no. 89 (2004). It was also attended by
40 sambista Leici Brandão and the São Paulo rapper Mano Brown of Racionais MCs.

41 74. The president’s appearance is always the high point of the culminating national event. See Luiz
42 Inácio Lula da Silva, “Speech of the President of the Brazilian Republic at the Opening of the First National
43 Conference of Gays, Lesbians, Bisexuals, Transvestites, and Transsexuals, Convention Center, Brasília, D. F.,
44 5 June 2008,” in *The Politics of Sexuality in Latin America: A Reader on Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
Rights*, ed. Javier Corrales and Mario Pecheny (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008), 265–69.

75. Souza, “Politics of Personality,” 81.

This transformative and mobilizing dimension has also been central to the government's role in fostering the "solidary economy," a network of cooperatives with central government support. One of the most symbolically powerful and successful examples has been with the country's estimated eight hundred thousand trash pickers who live in and around the major garbage dumps. The result is the creation of a national movement with an exalted environmental mission as pioneering recyclers. During his presidency, Lula spent a night with them right before Christmas, and he brought Dilma along on December 23, 2010, to meet the two thousand attendees from around the country. The hall where they met was bedecked with slogans: "The fight is good, the fight is hard, the fight continues" and "The street picks, the street sings, the street enchants with struggle" ("a rua cata, a rua canta, a rua encanta com luta"). In interviews, they recalled *companheiro* Lula as the first president who ever cared about them, hailed their individual material gains (buying their own homes), and insisted that "his government was better for the poor than others. He gave food and work. The poor are happy with what he has done." Coming from a position as societal outcasts, they hailed their new autonomy and insisted "we don't ask for things. We demand that which is ours by right."⁷⁶

Conclusion

In giving Lula three consecutive presidential victories, Brazilians have registered their satisfaction with the choices made with their votes. "The achievements of the Lula administration are in no way revolutionary," as a published critic from the left noted in March 2011, "but they are real enough" to be consequential.⁷⁷ The Lula years have seen tens of millions integrated into fuller citizenship as waged working people, more active consumers, and persons more fully endowed with and assertive about their rights.⁷⁸ The common people have learned that their lives can be made better by politicians if that is in fact the politicians' real priority, and they have learned that at least some politicians can speak their language, explain complex political and economic issues in ways that touch their hearts, and help them make decisions at the ballot box in defense of a better Brazil. No matter which parties govern over the coming decades, the consequences will be felt in the future by rulers and ruled, by the old and (especially) the young, and by women, blacks, and working-class people as they make their needs and voices heard more forcefully.

The deeper impact of Lula's success is to enhance the self-esteem of the popular majority by challenging the internalized prejudices and self-inhibiting behaviors bred by an authoritarian society based on domination and paternalism. However,

76. José Henrique Lopes, "Catadores se Despedem de Lula e Agradecem por Vida Melhor: Trabalhadores Celebram Avanços dos Últimos Oito Anos e Esperam Continuidade com Dilma," *R7 Notícias*, December 24, 2010.

77. Morais and Saad-Filho, "Brazil beyond Lula," 38.

78. This increasing self-assertion is a major theme of James Holston's excellent recent book on São Paulo's popular classes since the 1970s: *Insurgent Citizenship: Disjunctions of Democracy and Modernity in Brazil* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).

1 the advances made, while significant and substantial, fall far short of what is needed
 2 to resolve the social sores and ills (*mazelas sociais*) denounced so eloquently by André
 3 Rebouças. While Brazil has now made history by electing a woman president, the
 4 country still ranks 142nd worst in the percentage of women in national legislative
 5 offices (only 9 percent versus a worldwide average of 18 percent).⁷⁹ The government's
 6 commitment to broaden opportunity for individuals from the popular classes and the
 7 African-descended population will not yield its fruits until today's first-generation col-
 8 lege students rise within the country's established economic, political, and administra-
 9 tive structures,⁸⁰ yet a symbolic down payment was achieved in 2010, however modest,
 10 when the number of self-identified blacks doubled in the chamber of deputies to 43
 11 (8.5 percent of seats in a country almost half African-descended).⁸¹

12 Having now administered a nation, the larger project of Lula, the PT, and
 13 the Brazilian Left is also more clear: on the domestic level, to achieve a truly nation-
 14 wide project of inclusive, and more participatory, development; and internationally, to
 15 interject the country—on a new and sovereign basis—into a rickety global capitalist
 16 economy still governed in an unjust, unequal, and predatory manner. Today “neo-
 17 liberalism is no longer the only game in town,”⁸² whether in Brazil or Latin Amer-
 18 ica, although this emerging post-neoliberal era should not be understood as coming
 19 *after* neoliberalism and replacing it “entirely. As Macdonald and Rucker suggest,
 20 it involves “a search for progressive policy alternatives arising out” of neoliberalism's
 21 many contradictions: “neoliberal policy has lost its dominance but is not [yet] annihila-
 22 ted” while the emerging alternatives themselves contain “remnants of the previous
 23 neoliberal model.”⁸³

24
 25 79. Ana Bittencourt, “Mulheres na Política: Entraves e Conquistas,” *Democracia Viva* no. 41 (2009):
 26 84–89. An issue of the PT's high-quality journal *Teoria e Debate* 24, no. 81 (2011) contains three articles
 27 assessing the new state in the fight for women's advancement after Dilma's election.

28 80. The political appointees holding top administrative positions during Lula's first term demon-
 29 strated substantial continuity with Cardoso's government in their demographic, occupational, and educa-
 30 tional profile (three quarters or more male, white, and university educated). The distinctiveness of these PT
 31 appointees lies in their political and trade union experience and higher level of participation in clandestine
 32 opposition to the military dictatorship as in the case of Dilma (Maria Celina Soares D'Araújo, ed., *O Governo*
 33 *Lula: Contornos Sociais e Políticos da Elite do Poder* [Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC, 2007]). This is not to say that
 34 the rise of Lula and the PT to national power has not been accompanied by significant social mobility, but
 35 the influx of less elite individuals is felt far more strongly at lower levels within ministries, while varying
 between ministries, and is far higher at the state and municipal levels where the PT or the Left has come
 to hold power.

36 81. União de Negros Pela Igualdade, *Balanco Eleitoral do Voto Étnico e Presença dos Negros no Par-*
 37 *lamentamento* (Belo Horizonte: Unegro/UFOP, 2011). Leftist parties accounted for 56 percent of the total (PT,
 38 PDT, PSB, PCdoB, PSOL).

39 82. Burdick, Oxhorn, and Roberts, eds., *Beyond Neoliberalism in Latin America?*, 1, 230.

40 83. Macdonald and Ruckert, *Post-neoliberalism in the Americas*, 6–7. The term thus captures “the dis-
 41 continuity within the continuity,” with the latter “predominantly in the realm of macroeconomic policy,”
 42 and the discontinuity is found in the fight against international asymmetries, efforts to deepen democracy,
 43 and the steps to rebuild state capacity and carry out redistribution while fostering national development.
 44

The construction of “another world” has progressed more quickly in Brazil than elsewhere. This evolving leftist project and vision, however, has never been the product purely of subaltern actors. Both the Brazilian Left and its largest party originated out of a unification between the activist generation of 1978–80—anchored in the working and popular classes—with the radical 1968 generation of students, nuns, and priests of which Dilma Rousseff was a part.⁸⁴ Like her predecessor as Lula’s chief of staff (José Dirceu), Dilma became a member of a worker-oriented Marxist group committed to armed struggle in the late 1960s. Charged with teaching revolutionary theory to workers,⁸⁵ she was subsequently arrested, tortured, and spent several years in jail, experiences that differentiated her from her middle- and upper-class peers. “Because of what I went through,” she told a reporter from the opposition newspaper *Folha de São Paulo*, “I came to understand many things, [including] the value of democracy.” In a tricky interview after she was first suggested as a candidate, Rousseff refused repeated attempts to get her to apologize for the militant tactics of her youth: “I don’t have the same mindset that I had then. It would be strange if I did. It would even be pathological. People change during their life, we all do. [But] no, I didn’t change sides. That’s a matter of pride for me. I only changed my methods and vision.”⁸⁶ ■

84. An excellent 2008 collection of interviews with PT founders captures this diversity: Marieta de Moraes Ferreira and Alexandre Fortes, *Muitos Caminhos, Uma Estrela: Memórias de Militantes do PT* (São Paulo, SP: Editora Fundação Perseu Abramo, 2008).

85. “Na Ditadura, Dilma Deu Aulas de Política à Trabalhadores,” *Folha de São Paulo*, www1.folha.uol.com.br/poder/837387-na-ditadura-dilma-deu-aulas-de-politica-a-trabalhadores.shtml.

86. Fernanda Odilla, “Dilma Diz Não Ter a Mesma Cabeça da Época em Que Era Guerilheira: Veja a Íntegra da Entrevista,” *Folha de São Paulo*, April 5, 2009.