

**Patron-Client Relations and Politics in Brazil**  
An Historical Overview

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# Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction	3
Power and Profit: The Patron-Client System in Colonial Brazil (1500-1808)	4
The Seeds of Change: The United Kingdom of Brazil and Portugal (1808-21)	9
Independent Brazil: The Empire and the <u>Coronel</u> 's Power (1822-89)	10
The Old, Oligarchic Republic (1889-1930)	13
Getúlio Vargas: The Rise of the Urban Polity (1930-45)	14
Democracy and Political De-stabilisation (1946-64)	16
The Military out of the Barracks (1964-85)	18
The Interventionist Rhetoric: 'Order and Progress'	
The Alliance with the Technocrats	
The Military Governments and the Form of Intervention	
The Party System and Electoral Manipulation	
The Transition vis-à-vis the Electoral Timetable	
The Transition under Control	
The 'New Republic': Renewed Hopes (1985-90)	29
Conclusion (1500-1990)	33
Notes	35
References	39

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Márcio M. Valença

### Introduction

The history of modern Brazilian politics can only be told by analysing the roots of the country's political formation, which are deeply embedded in today's political life-style.

According to Hagopian (1990):

'Political institutions are molded to suit the regime that they uphold, and state elites and societal organizations build bridges to one another appropriate for the immediate political environment. ... [Individuals] use their positions to perpetuate modes of political interaction that favor them. In this way, political arrangements, once in place, condition future political behaviour and possibilities' (p.148).

Successful arrangements serve as seeds for a system's reproduction, hence the difficulty in changing them, even with changing material conditions.

Esser and Hirsch (1989) write as follows:

'...the history of capitalism on the world scale is characterized by a sequence of specific social developments, which differ from each other greatly, based on an unvarying basic structure (private production, waged labour, the appropriation of surplus production through the exchange of goods), in their forms of production and exploitation, conditions of socialization and class, as well as in the character of the state and the political rule.' (p.418)

Individual politicians follow the rules defined for their posts, but themselves act as vehicles of identification for given ideologies and specific projects. Individuals are, in this sense, repositories of a more complex system of human interaction. That is to say, they reflect the power struggle over the social product. Politicians may come and go but the regime in place does not necessarily change.

Accordingly, overall support for individual politicians may not only stem from their potential to generate votes but from this process of identification. Politicians are at the centre of a complex web of relationships which occasionally may support them for electoral purposes but only *if* they are in tune with the vested interests of those in a position to influence the outcome of elections through financial contributions.

The institution of *Coronelismo*, or patronage<sup>1</sup>, is perhaps as strong today in Brazil as it used to be during the colonial, imperial and early republican periods but with a different make-up. I will present in this paper a review of how past political practices have been incorporated into today's political culture. This paper is particularly concerned with the study of clientelism and how it has survived even in spite of changing political regimes and material conditions.

Much has been said about the patron-client system. Words such as *patronage* and *clientelism* are derived from it. As the first only makes sense with reference to the second, the terms will be used as synonyms, although they refer to the action of each side of a relationship, hence one cannot exist without the other.

The most common definition of clientelism is that of an exchange relationship, of some private and personal nature, where players have reciprocal needs and expectations, but unequal power and status (Cf. Nunes, 1985; Shidlo, 1990; Johnson and Dandeker, 1990). This definition is so broad that it could refer to almost any sort of relationship within a capitalist society. Definitions of this kind often give rise to idealised debates, general in character, of little use for more pragmatic purposes.

More important than drawing on general definitions is to acquire a more dynamic understanding of the concept, that is, an historical understanding in the light of why and how clientelism was established, incorporated to politics, and passed on to future generations. I will, therefore, present here an historical summary of Brazilian politics starting from colonial times and ending with Collor's presidency<sup>2</sup>.

### **Power and Profit: The Patron-Client System in Colonial Brazil (1500-1808)**

Although this term was not coined until three centuries later, the first *Coronéis* originated from Portuguese immigrant families in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Unlike the common view that Brazilian colonisation was based on the many adventurous single males who left Portugal in search of their fortune in the new world (*vis-à-vis* the 'family character' of North American colonisation), the driving economic and political force rested on the wealth and power of traditional families (Freyre, 1964). These were Portugal's main agents of the colonisation and exploitation of the new land. They were first established in the north-east, at first at Pernambuco, one of three 'Hereditary Captaincies' to be successful in the first efforts to colonise the country. The remainder, of a total of 15 captaincies, had faded mainly due to the financial limitations of their captaincy-holders. Some were never actually started.

The captaincies were strips of land of approximately 330 km in length. The borders were straight lines which stretched from the ocean to an imaginary line, the Tordesilhas Line. To avoid bloody disputes between Spain and Portugal, this divided the undiscovered world into two: the Spanish side on the west and the Portuguese side to the east. The meridian was first established by the Pope in 1493 at 100 leagues<sup>3</sup> west of the Cape Verde islands. But the Portuguese knew they would find no land that near and made a treaty with Spain in 1494, the Tordesilhas Treaty, establishing the meridian at 370 leagues from the original point. The Portuguese side of the newly discovered land thus artificially confined by this demarcated artifice, measured approximately one-third of today's Brazilian territory (Andrade, 1989).

The captaincy system was Portugal's attempt to occupy and colonise the newly discovered land at little or no cost to the royal treasury. In addition, the aim was to create a new source of fiscal revenue (Jaguaribe, 1968). The captaincies were concessions given by the Portuguese Crown

to prominent persons who then had to develop the land at their own expense. The captaincy-holders - or *capitães-donatários* - sold and gave out plots of land to colonisers and were also engaged in a number of other businesses (Cf. Baer, 1983). The captaincy-holders were awarded 20 per cent of the land by the Portuguese Crown and extensive judicial and administrative powers by which to govern it. They were responsible for the financial undertakings necessary to exploit the land. Portugal kept 50 per cent of Brazil-Wood, held the monopoly for 'drugs and spices' and charged customs duties.

The families, patriarchal families, established permanent residences in rural areas and engaged in the production of sugar, Brazil's first home grown export product. Unlike Spanish Peru, Bolivia and Mexico, precious metals and stones were not found in Brazil until two centuries later. These were the preferred substances for colonial exploitation in general because of their main features: scarcity, divisibility, intensity of value, maximum liquidity, physical resistance and durability (Cf. Singer, 1990). However, Brazil's native population could not easily be put to work on the land nor were they very abundant.

Portugal, at first, did not know exactly what to do with the newly acquired land. For the first 30 years, there was no effort to explore it. The first expedition to Brazil took place in 1532. The system of captaincies was a strategy to create a fiscal source of revenue for Portugal from businesses started by private initiative in the new land (Jaguaribe, 1968). Export but mainly import duties formed the bulk of colonial revenue for the Portuguese crown in addition to taxes on production, consumption and internal trade, crown 'monopolies', 'voluntary' donations (Bethell, 1985) as well as, indirectly, taxation on businesses established in Portugal itself which were, to a greater or lesser extent involved in colonial enterprises. At first, no precious metals were found. The first export activity in the newly discovered land was the extraction of Brazil-Wood which was mainly used in Europe for the production of dye. However, by the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the number of commercially accessible trees had declined drastically.

Overall, the captaincy system failed to materialise. Portugal decided it was time to undertake direct exploitation of the colony. In 1549, supported by a large company and resources sent by order of the king, the first Governor-General, Tomé de Souza, founded *Salvador*, the colony's new capital in Bahia. Portugal cancelled several concessions given to former captaincy-holders. But the transfer of captaincies from private to public hands was not completed until almost two centuries later (Fausto, 1995).

In 1580, Henrique, king of Portugal, died leaving no heir. As a result, Portugal and Spain became a united kingdom, under Philip II, but remained institutionally apart. The Spanish court did not interfere with Portuguese colonial interests, leaving the administration of Portuguese colonies in the hands of Portuguese personnel. With English help, in 1640, Portugal regained her independence from Spain under the House of Bragança. In exchange, the British were allocated rights to establish a certain number of merchant houses in Portuguese colonies, at the same time, Portugal strengthened her mercantile controls.

Portugal, not having big enough plots of land available in her homeland for the cultivation of sugar cane, introduced sugar production into the territorially vast colony. Used as a substitute for honey, sugar was then an expensive luxury in Europe, and virtually a Portuguese monopoly. Portugal had some expertise in the production of sugar through the experience of her possessions in Africa. Early colonial life was thus ruled by the economics of sugar production and the politics of the sugar bosses (*patrões*).

Brazilian sugar dominated the world market for the 100 years up to the middle of the seventeenth century, at that time losing its share of the market to Caribbean sugar, which had colonial protection from Britain. However, sugar-cane remained one of the country's major crops over the centuries. At first, the sugar economy was established in the north-east in the humid *zona-da-mata* - the strip of land along the coast approximately 50 Km wide - particularly in Pernambuco, where climatic and soil conditions were excellent. The location also offered natural ports protected by coral reefs and a strategic position in relation to Europe. Landowning bosses later spread throughout the country, following economic cycles, producing other primary products (e.g., coffee, cocoa, rubber, cotton, tobacco, meat, etc.).

In parallel, subsistence farms specialised in the production of food stuffs to feed those employed in the sugar plantations and in the few existing towns. The subsistence farms were mostly in the interior, in the case of the north-east - the *Agreste* and *Sertão* - and in the very south of the colony. But some were squatters in marginal areas between or on the outskirts of the plantations. These waste-lands were the most affected at times of the extension of the export crop-growing farms' boundaries, when they had to make way for powerful bosses, either by selling them land or simply abandoning it. Most people in these farms were freemen; whites but also *mestiços*, free blacks and runaway slaves. During the expansion of export markets, these farms provided export planters and towns with food-stuff (e.g., meat, cereals, and other utilities such as hides, oxen, mules, etc.) and other services<sup>4</sup>.

The families' patriarchs were owners of extensive plots of land offered initially to them by Portugal through the captaincy-holders<sup>5</sup>. In return, Portugal required the landowners' loyalty, support in the administration of the colony and military assistance. For instance, for the right to explore Brazil-Wood, the grants required landowners to install fortifications along the coast to deal with pirates, mainly the French. This giving of virtual monopolies over the exploitation of resources in the colony by Portugal, was first known as *Cartórios*<sup>6</sup> (Nylen, 1992).

The *engenhos*, which contained both sugar plantations and sugar mills, became virtually autonomous units. Production on the land was organised around slave labour, first indian (abolished in 1750) and then black (abolished in 1888). The *engenhos* were relatively isolated and independent of each other. They were under the landowners' control and few dared to challenge them, not even Governor-Generals and bishops. The bosses' wealth - land, slaves, mills and other equipment - and their strategic role in Portuguese colonial policy made them increasingly powerful.

'The patriarch was lord, master, and virtually a temporal god in his family and within the reach of the *engenho's* attraction. He was father, husband, master of women and sons, primary overseer of tenants and slaves, and absolute leader for a diverse retinue of followers' (Freyre, 1964, p.161)(his emphasis).

They often appointed police commissioners, members of the magistrature and tax collectors, or kept them under close supervision.

The patriarchal family was, then, a broad concept which extended itself to far distant levels of parentage. The patriarchs were religious and hospitable to allies. In order to strengthen inter-personal links with those not related to them, especially at the client level, the bosses promoted - through the ever-present Catholic Church - the godfather relationship. This 'sacred' institution acted to the bosses' advantage, and through it they acquired godly powers and respectability. Arranged marriages between members of prominent families were also common, if not the norm. As Eisenstadt and Roniger (1984) sum up:

'The local priests were subordinated to the landowners and officiated in the plantation chapels, preaching a sort of popular Catholicism which emphasised the natural helplessness of mankind and the need to rely on divine and human protectors and benefactors' (p.105).

In sum, the autonomous character of the *engenho*, which linked it directly to the foreign market, made the bosses both economically and politically powerful. On the other hand, this was strategic for the metropolitan rule which commanded the whole commercial dynamic.

'...Portugal governed through the local dominant class which was directly involved in at least the implementation if not the formation of policy; entrenched colonial interests were rarely challenged' (Bethell, 1985, p.164).

Although power was centralised in the Portuguese Crown, which sent Brazil Governor-Generals<sup>7</sup>, Portugal could not afford to send representatives everywhere because of Brazil's huge territory. Portugal thus had to trust and empower local landowners. As Freyre (1964) explains:

'Since the Portuguese kings depended upon these enterprising landholders for both the economic productivity and the military security of their colony, one readily understands the vast power enjoyed by the great patriarchal families, the owners of sugar mills, immense tracts of land, and large numbers of slaves' (p.164).

And Boxer (1969) writes:

'...the *senhores de engenhos* ... came to be recognized as the rural aristocracy and were awarded corresponding privileges and immunities. Gubernatorial and royal decrees exempted their sugar mills, technical equipment, and slaves from being seized or distrained for outstanding debts. Their creditors were only allowed to take a portion of the cane ground at harvest time' (p.348)(his emphasis).

Economic cycles, sharp oscillations in the foreign market as well as constant conflicts caused the fall and rise of many bosses, depending on their agility to adapt and/or face up to the new economic and political circumstances which arose.

The colonial population, being essentially a rural population, was highly dependent on the land. But accessible land was unequally distributed. Moreover, security and justice were not universally provided by the colonial 'state'. Only those involved in the colonial administration could count on the protection of the relatively few royal troops. The landowner's authority thus depended on his capacity to impose his rule. This depended, among other things, on having his

own private militia, a number of armed men to offer protection to his clients and protect his own property and interests against the incursions of competing landowners and other threats.

The patron-client relationship was based on mutual exchange and the expectation of both sides that it would provide future yields. The *patrão* provided resources, protection and links to the outside world (e.g., access to goods not produced locally; the foreign market and higher political arenas, etc.). The 'client' offered support and obedience. At the patron's command, for instance, they could provide a constant source of labour, occasional services and/or members for his private militia. The patron-client system depended on the interaction between individuals and favoured informal flexible relationships.

The extent to which local bosses had access to other political and economic arenas (e.g., at the captaincy, provincial and, later, state level) depended on alliances they established with other political chiefs. These formed a hierarchical network of patrons in which the weaker links more or less acted, this time, as clients themselves. As Cintra (1979) writes:

'The weakest, ..., must seek shelter from the stronger, thereby reinforcing the system of dependency which links the peasant population to the landowners, and the smaller and weaker landowners to the more powerful' (p.142).

In sum:

'A Brazilian planter relied on an astute combination of force and promised rewards or protection in order to manipulate both his workers, free or slave, and his dependent neighbours. Through careful attention to his honour and social status - sometimes requiring conspicuous consumption or displays of open-handed generosity - he attempted, on the whole successfully, to legitimize the deference he received from others lower down the social hierarchy' (Graham, 1985, p.762).

The gold strike in the 1690s (and a little later the diamond strike), in what later became Minas Gerais State, meant that Portugal had to tighten her administrative control on the flux of goods within the colony as well as between the colony and overseas markets. Up until then this had not been necessary due to the nature of the products circulating both within the country and overseas. Sugar, for instance, was taxed at the ports. Transportation was made in Portuguese vessels and Portugal had a monopoly over trade. Virtually all Brazilian exports had to pass through Portugal before reaching other markets. There were also a number of control points along the coast.

Gold, however, could easily be smuggled or hidden. The system of taxation had to change. The method of collecting the 'royal fifth' (i.e., through the establishment of smelting houses, assessment, or fixed-rate per mine, among other methods) was a constant source of conflict between miners and the colonial administration. In order to strengthen mercantile control over gold mining and trafficking, Portugal set up banks, mercantile houses and other support services. Most activities related to the gold trade were concentrated in Rio de Janeiro, the natural gateway to the sea, which became a major port. In 1763, Rio was made capital of Brazil.

By the end of the eighteenth century, the Portuguese economy was heavily dependent on revenue generated by colonial enterprises, particularly that collected in Brazil. Portugal had a huge



revenue from Brazilian gold. With the decline of the gold cycle in the 1750s, controls were tightened even harder.

### **The Seeds of Change: The United Kingdom of Brazil and Portugal (1808-21)**

In 1808, the Portuguese Court was established in Rio de Janeiro, after fleeing from Napoleon. The royal convoy, under British protection, brought to Brazil 15,000 people, including the royal family, members of the Council of State, ministers, advisers, officials, the Treasury personnel, upper echelons of the Army, Navy and Church, members of the aristocracy as well as professionals, businessmen and servants. In addition, the royal treasury, government files, a printing press and whole libraries were brought. The convoy first reached Salvador, where the first measures towards trade liberalisation were set up, and then headed for Rio. This event was followed shortly by an immigration wave. Nearly 25,000 Portuguese entered the colony. Rio de Janeiro then became the capital of the Portuguese Empire. In 1815, Brazil was elevated to the same status as Portugal herself. The Portuguese Empire of Brazil, a united kingdom, was born.

The installation of the Portuguese court in Brazil brought innumerable benefits to the colony's highly controlled and fragile economy. The Portuguese king<sup>8</sup> abolished controls over commerce and foreign trade, promoting the production of goods which had thus far been forbidden. The restrictions on manufacturing were lifted. Until then, Brazil had not been allowed to produce products in competition with those produced in Portugal. An exception was the royal shipyards in Bahia, but for strategic reasons (Bushnell and Macaulay, 1988). The establishment of a printing press, the first *Banco do Brasil*, a stock exchange, the promotion of the arts, education, scientific expeditions, the setting up of research institutions were also important developments dating from D. João VI's stay in Brazil.

'The profound and lasting consequence which so distinguished Dom João's government was the fact that the new outlook he adopted gave the Brazilian process, at a stage when it had become capable of assuming its proper form, a political center of gravity, a machinery of government and administration, and an economic and social orientation' (Jaguaribe, 1968, p.114).

With the Court's settlement in Brazil, the previous colonial fiscal policy had to be changed.

The growth of economic activity, brought about by the 'opening of the ports', benefited local bosses involved in the production of export goods but local bosses of subsistence farms and in the early stages of manufacturing were badly affected by competition from British imports, which latter included food and other consumable goods.

Great Britain gained preferential access to trade with Brazil - especially after treaties formalised in 1810 - in exchange for naval protection for Brazil's lengthy coastal line as well as Portugal's possessions elsewhere. Britain saw Brazil as a major market (eventually Brazil became Britain's third largest single market abroad behind the US and Germany) and an open door to the rest of Latin America. Britain's special interest in Brazil was also because she had been blocked out of important markets in Europe. Britain held a virtual monopoly over Brazilian trade and finance during the first half of the nineteenth century<sup>9</sup>.

The Portuguese king established new directions for local bosses activities by appointing outsiders to key positions in their localities. This often caused protests from the bosses channelled through furious addresses and threats in the local councils. Notwithstanding this fact, it was common for unknown representatives sent by the king to quickly establish clientelistic links with local bosses. However, despite the generally friendly relationship between the Portuguese court and Brazilian landed interests, tensions built up. The extra burden of the court's expenses was entirely carried by Brazil and the king gave in to British pressure to gradually abolish slavery too easily and too fast, from the point of view of most landowners and slaveowners. They felt abolition was not possible without a viable substitute for slave labour. For them, slaves were an asset as valuable as land, especially in view of increased demand after the imposition of restrictions on the slave trade and the increasing voluntary liberation of slaves.

On his return to Portugal, D. João VI was followed by 4,000 Portuguese. After the court's return to Portugal in 1821, D. Pedro, D. João VI's son, was left behind in the country as prince regent. On 7 September 1822, D. Pedro I - D. João VI's legitimate heir - declared Brazil to be an independent state as Portugal had given clear signals of its intention of returning Brazil to its former colonial status. He then made himself Brazil's first Emperor in December of the same year. He was followed some years later by his own son D. Pedro II.

### **Independent Brazil: The Empire and the *Coronel's* Power (1822-89)**

D. Pedro I introduced Brazil's first Constitution in 1824. The Constitution centralised the national government, which was divided into four branches. The Legislature had a Senate, appointed for life from a list of three provided by the provinces<sup>10</sup>, and a lower house - the *Assembléia Geral* - elected for four years. There were two deputies for each senator. The Emperor was head of the Executive, and delegated power to his Council of Ministers or Cabinet. The Judiciary had a Supreme Court as well as lower courts. Finally, there was the Moderating Power. In brief, the Emperor used it to arbitrate when there were conflicts. For instance, this allowed the Emperor to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies.

For purposes of giving advice in his role as moderator, the Emperor appointed for life a Council of State formed of 10 members. The Emperor appointed provincial presidents, chiefs of police, police commissioners, county judges and others following the Cabinet Ministers' advice. The *Conselhos Gerais de Província* were elected by indirect vote for four years but had limited powers. In sum, the imperial government determined the election and the Emperor appointed the government.

The provincial president's duty was to follow the Cabinet's policies and make sure election results were favourable, making use of patronage schemes for this purpose. The Empire held two sets of elections. First, eligible voters (eligibility included minimum income requirements) chose an electoral college. Second, the electoral college chose the members of the Chamber of Deputies.

Police officials were not paid salaries. On the contrary, they were required to earn an established minimum income. Landowners cherished these positions for the authority they added

and in order to have direct links to the government. The Justices of the Peace (*Juízes de Paz*) and the local councils (*Câmaras Municipais*) were elected by direct vote (Bethell and Carvalho, 1985; Graham, 1985).

It is worth mentioning that all positions required their holders to have a minimum income per year, for instance, \$800 *milréis* for Senators and \$400 *milréis* for Deputies. By the same token, voters were required to have a minimum income of \$200 *milréis*. In addition, women, slaves, men under 25, beggars, vagrants as well as personal and domestic servants were not allowed to vote. Literacy levels were very low, even among the better-off, and literacy was not a requirement for electoral purposes. A common practice was thus for voters to deposit ballot-papers handed to them by the local political chiefs. Income requirements limited the electorate in favour of the ruling classes as the majority of the population - increasingly made up of free blacks and *mestiços* - had no vote. Brazilian-born slaves were not even considered Brazilian nationals under the 1824 Constitution.

D. Pedro I was seen as having allegiance to Portuguese interests. A royal succession in Portugal could suddenly combine the two countries into one kingdom again. For many, he meant the continuity of Portuguese political and economic domination in Brazil. He had problems with local bosses who thought he imposed too much centralism. Although he managed to co-opt some bosses with positions and titles, pressure mounted. In 1831, he faced a revolt in which the Liberal Party had its origins. He abdicated from power in favour of his five-year old Brazilian-born son in April 1831 and returned to Portugal. Following his abdication, a three-man Regency was installed and a transition arrangement established to last until D. Pedro II reached the age of majority (Bethell and Carvalho, 1985).

The 1834 Additional Act, which made amendments to the Constitution, was the result of a Liberal manoeuvre. In the absence of an Emperor, the Council of State was abolished. A one-man Regency chosen by electors nationwide was established. Liberals (1831) and Conservatives (1837) - the only two parties - were alternately in power but made little difference as both had support from the same social and economic constituency. On the whole, Conservatives were in favour of centralisation whereas Liberals supported a looser federation. Parties were not ideologically defined movements. They reflected political networks supporting individual leaderships. Some liberals, however, had read Adam Smith and were in favour of the abolition of slavery (but not necessarily for humanitarian reasons).

In 1840, although D. Pedro II was just 15 years of age, the Conservatives promoted his majority, crowned the prince, and re-established the Council of State. D. Pedro II's Empire lasted nearly 50 years. Unlike his father, he did not interfere with established interests. He followed the Constitution and declined in practice to be the head of the Executive. In 1848, he created the post of head of the Council of Ministers with executive powers. During his long-lasting Empire, interests were more or less accommodated. During the so-called the conciliation period, both Conservatives and Liberals shared power.

By the time of the second Empire, the coffee economy was booming. The very nature of the coffee enterprise brought plantation interests closer to town-based interests. Coffee farmers had closer links with merchants and exporters in towns than had been the case with sugar producers and others. Often, they maintained a residence in town as well. Coffee 'factors', who served as intermediaries between coffee merchants and farmers, were often the latter's relatives and partners. They transported goods to and from the farms, stored them, negotiated the best price, and even imported machinery and financed the production of coffee. Most merchants were foreigners though this was more the case in the sugar trade.

The Coffee economy grew consistently during the second-half of the nineteenth century, providing the imperial state, and later the republican governments, with their main source of tax revenue. Custom duties made up the bulk of fiscal revenue. Central politics thus became the domain of the coffee interests; at first, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, and later, São Paulo and Minas Gerais.

The title *coronel*, or colonel, was given to local bosses during the Empire. At first, it referred to the highest rank in the old National Guard, created in August 1831, as a separate unit from the Imperial Army and a substitution for the private militias (made up of landowners and their men) and municipal guards. In its early years, the National Guard had some 200,000 troops compared to just 5,000 Imperial Army troops (Roett, 1984). The National Guard was put under the Ministry of Justice while the Army remained under the Ministry of War. The Army had proved unstable and undisciplined following the insurrections scattered around the country after independence. The ranks were still mixed and divided and anti-Portuguese sentiment flourished among the *mestiço* troops. The Liberals, then in power, thought the Army inspired popular radicalism after the rebellions.

Landowners were made colonels, majors and captains, according to the extent of their wealth and influence. The National Guard was given a 'peace-keeping' role, that is, street patrol, protection of public buildings and keeping order. The titles so entrusted the '...defense of the country to its propertied citizens' (Bethell and Carvalho, 1985, p.697). At first, the officers were elected following minimum income-earning requirements. In 1850, the guard was reformed and brought under more central control. Officers were no longer elected but appointed by the central government, then a locus of influence of the coffee interest in Rio.

The National Guard was abolished in the 1870s after the Paraguayan War. National Guard officers had proved of little use and experience for war purposes. From this date, National Guard titles became honorific (Graham, 1985). Local bosses continued to be known as colonels although this no longer referred to any institutional position (Cf. Cintra, 1979).

During the Empire<sup>11</sup> the bosses extended their influence and included merchants, the military, the government bureaucracy, bankers, exporters, professionals and early industrialists (Valença, 1989). During the colonial period many had been selected by the Portuguese Crown to hold key positions in the administration of the colony as well as in Portugal. Several crown magistrates, even Governors appointed by the king, were Brazilians (Bethell, 1985). With the

inauguration of the Empire, following Brazil's independence from Portugal in 1822, they became the main political leaders (Freyre, 1964). As Graham (1985) puts it:

'The government of the empire, responsive to the class interests of planters and merchants, had become an instrument in their efforts to maintain political and social control' (p.747).

A new, growing state bureaucracy was recruited by these elites as the colonels had a strong say in the local councils, now with greater powers. Local politics continued to dominate the country's political scenario until the advent of the Republic when state-based politics became more prominent.

### **The Old, Oligarchic Republic (1889-1930)**

The declining Empire received its final blow with the abolition of slavery in 1888, which followed pressure from Britain and economic liberalism. The Republic was proclaimed on 15 November 1889, following a bloodless military coup; the military having been strengthened after the Paraguayan War. Marshall Deodoro da Fonseca headed the provisional government (1889-94).

The 'Old Republic' (1889-1930) marked the apogee of the *coronel's* rule. Greater autonomy and revenue meant that central and state governments could now promote various interests through employment, fiscal benefits, public works, etc. Fiscal incentives were often offered to promote business interests<sup>12</sup>. Thus, it was essential to be able to dominate the government apparatus.

The Republic also meant the expansion both of suffrage and the electorate. States, instead of provinces with presidents appointed by the Emperor, now had their own elected governors. The governors chose the President of the country who, in turn, supported them. This became known as the 'policy of the governors'. By this time there were 20 states, each corresponding to a province of the old Empire. Rio de Janeiro remained the capital of Brazil, now the Federal District.

Coalitions of colonels dominated state politics with the support of local colonels, who ultimately controlled the supply of votes. The old patron-client system of favours and obligations, mainly in the private sphere, had now definitely overspilled into politics but little political participation was involved on the part of the client (Cf. Cintra, 1979). Those few in the coalition became known as oligarchs and the new regime, because it was common to all states of the republic, as the 'Oligarchic Republic' (Carvalho, 1992).

Carone (1975) sums up:

'Since colonial times the "coronéis" had dominated the land, and since the Empire they had commanded politics. The republic amplified their dominion because the end of the Emperor's moderating power allowed them to choose their own representatives at all levels' (p.153/154)(my translation).

During the Old Republic the central government had fewer resources and power than would increasingly be the case from the 1930s. Brazil was still an essentially agrarian society. The local bosses had become the mediators of interests between local populations - clienteles whose votes they controlled - and the states with their new functions. The states could count on their own

sources of revenue or promote their own policies (e.g., railway work, immigration and colonisation policies, etc.).

The 1930s saw the role of local bosses decline, altering the nature of the clientelistic structures in operation. Increasing industrialisation, migration<sup>13</sup>, urbanisation, etc., which took place before and after that date, fostered the formation of an urban polity which grew apart from the oligarchic structure previously in place.

Increasingly, there was pressure from lower, more radical ranks in the Army to break with the oligarchic political system, to modernise the country and install a democratic regime. Several unsuccessful revolts in the 1920s sowed the seeds of change, dividing the oligarchies. The only party at the national level at that time was the Republican Party.

The October 1930 'the lieutenant's movement', which deposed President Washington Luís, had the intention of breaking up the colonels' mediation at the political level and end privileges at the economic level. The years thereafter increasingly saw the centralisation of government power at the federal level. The central government became the focus of policy-making.

### **Getúlio Vargas: The Rise of the Urban Polity (1930-45)**

Getúlio Vargas, former Rio Grande do Sul State governor, was a defeated opposition presidential candidate. But as leader of the *tenentes* movement, he was made provisional President in November 1930.

From 1930 to 1934, Getúlio had to balance in government difficult antagonistic and destabilising forces. Not only inter-regional conflicts had to be reconciled - in opposition to São Paulo's and Minas Gerais' domination of the Central Government<sup>14</sup> - but also the growing urban sectors were increasingly becoming dis-articulated from the rural economy<sup>15</sup>. Unlike landowners, rising urban middle-class sectors had no institutionalised vehicle of representation, a party, for instance.

Vargas governed by means of executive decrees while a new Constitution was approved in 1934. In that same year, delegates elected Vargas President of Brazil and renewed the 'state of emergency'. Although the 1934-37 period saw the return of constitutional rule, Vargas often manipulated the opposition by suppressing the more radical sources of opposition (e.g., the communists in 1935; the extreme right-wing *integralistas* in 1937). The urban society, which had revolved around the coffee economy, had to make way for new circumstances arising.

Brazil was thus far a follower of economic liberalism. The country produced primary products, mainly coffee, for the external market and imported other consumer goods and manufactures of all kinds. The 1930 revolution caused a rupture in this state of affairs, which was in the hands of an agrarian oligarchy. Vargas meant the decline of economic liberalism and the increasing presence of the state in the economy - also economic nationalism. By this time, due to the industrialisation which had occurred in the preceding decades - mainly in the textile sector - the domestic market was growing and the first groups of proletarians gathered in towns, a result of the immigration policy and urbanisation.

For Vargas, because the Brazilian model of development depended on world markets, the previous advances of industry had been both created and destroyed by fluctuations in these markets. The 1930s worldwide depression forced Brazil, among others, to carry out an import-substitution policy in order to provide for the domestic market. Vargas took the opportunity to change the nature of the state's role in the economy.

On 10 November 1937, backed by the military, Getúlio Vargas led a dictatorship, the so-called the New State, or *Estado Novo* (1937-45), cancelling the planned presidential election of 1938. Elections at all levels were abolished and all political parties were banned. The President concentrated power in himself which made him the focus of interest. Vargas could then control supporting but often antagonistic forces with a mix of traditional and 'populist' policies. The articulation of heterogeneous interests was mediated personally by Vargas through a complex system of alliances. He had to consider the interests of the rising working class and middle class in the more industrialised urban areas in order to maintain control. Here, he counted on help from his union activists, or *pelegos*. He had to reconcile demands from business, professional circles and other pressure groups. But he also had to court the traditional political machinery of the interior. He chose to do so by making use of patronage.

The most important measures dating from the period 1930-45 were the CLT (*Consolidação das Leis do Trabalho*), the expansion of state enterprises and regulatory agencies, and an embryonic welfare state. Vargas set up compulsory syndicates under the Ministry of Labour, which took over the union structure dominated by the Communists and Anarchists. The National Insurance Companies, which the military made into a single system in the 1960s, date from this period. Although the government machine and state intervention in the economy grew at an exponential rate during this period, this was less a result of government planning than of the current of the time.

The period became known for its populist content with measures to co-opt the masses, and the development of a corporate state. The growth of a state bureaucracy and of state corporations generated a great number of jobs which were filled following clientelistic practices (Carvalho, 1992). Here, Vargas made use of posts on offer to co-opt and make political settlements with the leaders of several sectors. The Vargas *autarquias* were dominated by these interests. They formed a new network of interests within the state through holding strategic positions and having access to state policy-making and its resources. In general, the allocation of investment flows followed the logic of clientelism<sup>16</sup>. In addition to opening doors to corrupt schemes, state patronage also resulted in poor co-ordination and lack of integration within the government machine (Jaguaribe, 1968; Nylén, 1992; Roett, 1984). Vargas's proclaimed populism was, though, partial and fragmented, and consisted mainly of protective labour legislation.

Vargas' most notorious legacy was thus the CLT, the institutionalisation of a protective labour legislation targeted at the growing urban working class in 1943. Vargas' populism thus attempted to replace - even if only partially - local bosses' political intermediation, centralising this function in government, mainly at the federal level. The growth of the state was meant to

counteract the private nature of agrarian oligarchies (Weffort, 1989). The technique was basically the same: support in exchange for certain protective measures.

The values of the old system of 'mutual' - however uneven - assistance were in this way passed on through the way the Vargas government operated. Therefore, neither of these developments entirely destroyed local elites, who, in varying degrees, continued to dominate local politics and, one way or another, to influence the upper levels.

The Vargas period as a whole (1930-45) saw a movement from a state-centred oligarchic system to the federalisation of patronage practices. This brought about the 'floating' of political elites up and down, from local to state and federal levels. Not surprisingly, the way that local politicians had played the political game in the past was incorporated into the way that locally-based, state-based and nationally-based politicians played the political game in later periods. The reason why this happened seems to be quite clear: the technique was so successful that it passed on to new generations through repetitive imitation. The appointment of key positions within the government was, therefore, established as a keystone to the control of investment flows, which were often scarce.

### **Democracy and Political De-stabilisation (1946-64)**

Getúlio Vargas was deposed on 29 October 1945 by the mobilisation of both civilian and military factions. The coup against the dictator arose out of sentiments which had intensified after the defeat of fascist and nazis forces in WWII (Ianni, 1977 - also Skidmore, 1977). The core of the movement was the UDN, or *União Democrática Nacional*, founded in 1943, which struggled for the 're-democratisation' of the country. The movement countered Vargas's nationalist economics and intended to restore economic liberalism by opening up the Brazilian economy to foreign capital. This was the tone of the 1946 Constitution.

The 1946 Constitution reacted against Vargas' centralism, returning certain powers to the legislators. With the re-establishment of elections between December 1945 and March 1964 - with four presidential elections taking place - a succession of governments more or less followed the same pattern, keeping the practice of giving favours as both a means and an end in public policies (i.e., Enrico Gaspar Dutra, 1946-51; Getúlio Vargas, 1951 to 25 October 1954; Vargas' Vice-President João Café Filho, 1954 to 31 January 1956; Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira, or JK, 1956 to 31 January 1961; Jânio Quadros, January to 25 August 1961; Ranieri Mazzilly, August to 7 October 1961; and finally João Goulart (or Jango), 1961 to 1 April 1964). Entirely new parties were set up, the main ones being UDN, PSD and PTB.

This period witnessed the proliferation of political machines established around notable professionals (e.g., physicians, lawyers, etc.) working in close contact with voters. It also witnessed the emergence of the *cabos eleitorais* - literally 'electoral cables' - who acted as intermediaries between the political machines and voters, bargaining and distributing favours and votes.



The government of Enrico Gaspar Dutra, 1946-51, drew on the country's foreign reserves accumulated during the war to promote a loose exchange policy with incentives to import consumer goods. In a short period, the reserves had been reduced to a critical level. The government missed the opportunity to renew existing industrial plants by offering incentives for the importation of equipment and up-dated technology. This period was notorious for the opening of the Brazilian market to foreign capital. It was also during the Dutra period that obsolete railways and equipment, the property of British companies, were acquired.

This time directly elected, Vargas (1951-54) made use of both the PSD and PTB for support from the interior of the country as well as that of the urban workers and professional classes. The PSD was the more conservative group, with key politicians being drawn from the traditional agrarian sector. The PSD dominated the coalition. The PTB was founded by Vargas' key personnel in the *Estado Novo*, that is, those who managed the new corporations and government agencies.

For Laclau (1979) Vargas' populism was thus both inadequate and fragmented:

'Varguism was never, therefore genuinely populist. On the contrary, it oscillated in a pendular movement: at moments of stability its political language tended to be paternalistic and conservative; at moments of crisis on the other hand, when the conservative elements abandoned the coalition, it swung in a "populist" direction - that is to say, one that developed the antagonism latent in democratic interpellations' (p.192).

But in view of the growing economic crisis, the advance of the left, and rising popular unrest, Vargas was fighting a 'war of nerves', under pressure from the military to resign. On 24 August, 1954, he was deposed, committed suicide and kindled an even worse crisis (Jaguaribe, 1968). João Café Filho, his Vice-President, completed the last 16 months of his term assisted by the president of the Chamber of Deputies, Carlos Luz, and the president of the Senate, Nereu Ramos.

JK, or Juscelino Kubitschek, Minas Gerais State's former governor, was elected President of Brazil on 3 October 1955. He took office on 31 January 1956 under the protection of the Army, which saw the defeated forces as a danger to JK and the constitution. The JK government was notorious for the profound changes brought about to the country's economy<sup>17</sup>. During this period, industrialisation intensified greatly. It is also from this period that the Target Plan emerged, seen as the starting point of well-structured government economic planning in Brazil (Ianni, 1977).

The period 1961-64 witnessed the development of new complications, and impending instability. The economy was put on hold while the political crisis developed. Two antagonistic tendencies became exacerbated. On the one hand, the Executive represented urban, industrial sectors - at that time a symbol of progress; on the other hand, the Legislature was dominated by agrarian interests. One interest tried to circumvent the other. In parallel, another scenario of conflict developed: those who supported nationalist capitalism (with backing from certain socialist groups), and those who wanted dependent capitalism (which they called 'associated') integrated into world markets.

Jânio Quadros' term of office began on 31 January, 1961. After dealing with the IMF, Jânio launched an attack on inflation which cost him his high degree of popularity that he had had at the

time of the election. Quadros resigned on 25 August 1961, less than seven months later. The most common view on this matter is that Jânio expected - in view of the difficulties he encountered in government<sup>18</sup> - to be reconducted to power by the hands of 'the people' (who had overwhelmingly elected him in 1960) but this time with full power. However, Jânio's (unarmed) coup failed.

In the 1960 presidential election, that of Jânio Quadros, the Vice-President was elected independently. The PTB leader, João Goulart (or Jango), should have taken over from Jânio but the military ministers did not allow him to take full control. Of greater populist content, the PTB was seen as an ally only while it remained as the weaker partner in coalition with the PSB, which had a more conservative background. A resistance movement for constitutional rule, headed by Leonel Brizola, then governor of Rio Grande do Sul State, and supported by the Third Army, allowed Goulart to take over office after a short period.

A provisional parliamentary system, in which Jango shared power with a Prime-Minister, was agreed with the military. The system did not work as expected, and the Prime-Ministers resigned after being rejected by Congress. A plebiscite in 1963 re-instated Goulart to full presidential power.

At the economic level, Jango abandoned the recessive monetary policy set by Jânio and concentrated on basic reforms (e.g., redistribution of land and income, nationalisation of production, economic nationalism, etc.). Naturally, Goulart tried to gather ample support for the reforms through the mobilisation of the masses. The President himself headed a street gathering on 13 March 1964<sup>19</sup> - which included the participation of leftist groups - to strengthen his powers. Several strikes and riots took place. His proposed 'labourism' was unacceptable to the dominant interests.

### **The Military out of the Barracks (1964-85)**

#### *The Interventionist Rhetoric: 'Order and Progress'*

The military ascended to power on 31 March 1964. The coup encountered no resistance and was successful only through the movement of troops from Minas Gerais State in the direction of Rio. To start with, one important distinction to be made is that, unlike several other examples throughout the world, Brazilian military intervention did not constitute a one-man dictatorship but dictatorship by the military forces as an institution (Collier, 1982). From the start, there was an agreement within the officer ranks that no one should be set up as dictator<sup>20</sup>. This became clear with a succession of five different military Presidents and a military commission (for a short period) chosen from inside the institution and *pro forma* backed by the National Congress (i.e., Marshal Humberto de Alencar Castello Branco, 15 April 1964 to 15 March 1967; Artur da Costa e Silva, 1967 to 31 August 1969; commission of military ministers (or *Junta Militar*), 1969 to 30 October 1969; Emílio Garrastazu Médici, 1969 to March 1974; Ernesto Geisel, 1974 to March 1979; João Baptista Figueiredo, 1979 to March 1985). All the military Presidents were Generals.

This movement (so-named by the military themselves), became known as 'The Revolution of 1964'.

As Skidmore (1977) comments:

'The revolutionaries never faltered in their verbal commitment to democracy; to them, those were merely extraordinary short-term measures [the purge of Congress and politicians] designed to make democracy more viable in the future' (p.9).

The movement was committed to liberal ideas, to free trade, but also to expelling the communist 'danger'. In this way, policy-making was very sensitive to officer opinion, but final policy was the prerogative of the higher command, with disagreements being kept out of sight of the public eye.

Lamounier (1989) writes that the military's legitimisation process was phased, starting with anti-Jangonism, which the military believed was associated with populism, clientelism, corruption, subversion, disorder in the administration and finance, and so on (see also Skidmore, 1977). Thus, did João Goulart become a symbol of 'irresponsibility'. The military meant to neutralise the Executive's 'populism' and the Legislature's clientelism (Souza and Lamounier, 1990). The doctrine of national security and national development underlay the whole project from start to finish (Baloyra, 1986). The next step was economic growth to trigger the 'it works' perception. For the military, in view of the latter, there was no question of representation. The military housing programme, for instance, started with the foundation of the National Housing Bank in 1964 and came to constitute an integral part of the military's economic plans as well the military's legitimizing process, by encouraging home ownership and through it, the ideology of the private ownership of property.

In the wake of the military's economic projects, the working class was increasingly marginalised by economic policy. To start with, the Roberto Campos-Octávio Gouvêia Bulhões orthodox, anti-inflationary and recessive programme of economic stabilisation, introduced a freeze of the LMW. Because the results of the programme came later than expected<sup>21</sup> and because the military lost the election in two states in the 1965 gubernatorial elections, the presidential election, scheduled for 1966, was cancelled by the AI-2. But, with a high degree of control, elections were seen as a good alternative to uncertain situations.

During the military period, the National Congress was used to legitimise actions and decisions which had been taken by rule of decree ('Decreto-Lei'). This condition was necessary, among other things, to keep up appearances abroad. After all, the military were 'legitimate', 'lawful' governments, ruled by the Constitution (although this was produced in 1967 and amended in 1969 by the military themselves and imposed on the Congress). The President was elected 'directly' by the people's representatives in the electoral college. The latter was formed, at first, of the two houses in the Congress and later with the addition of the members of the states' legislatures. By controlling Congress, the military neutralised the old 'arm twist' between the two sources of power, the Legislature and the Executive. Power was now in the Executive's hands, the military's.

Be that as it may, this new historic configuration brought about the development of different alliances establishing different power correlations. Because of intense popular mobilisation in the period prior to the 'revolution', the propertied class was very receptive to the military hard-liners' anti-communist rhetoric. The military, representing those groups anxious for economic growth and for industrial development, held a 'modernising' and 'moralising' platform against populist practices and were in favour of centralising decisions about the best technical choices.

In Ianni's (1977) view, the military had the backing of economic interests, born of the expansion of the industrial and financial sectors at the time of JK's Target Plan<sup>22</sup>. The new alliance included the new rising middle class, multinational corporations, those with the financial capital, certain other holders of national capital, and also the acceptance by the military and strategic integration of groups that were once at the core of the former regime (e.g., traditional primary export producers), plus the co-opting of other groups (e.g., factions of the working-class), but excluded several other groups.

Certain groups were excluded from political participation in the new alliance. For political reasons, in the name of 'order and progress', use was made of force - i.e., expatriation, torture, murder, intervention, etc. - over whoever constituted (or whoever it was thought would constitute) a challenge to the new regime. Here, the establishment of a wide network of ideological 'watchers', as well as the construction of a whole range of new norms, regulations, laws, acts, a new constitution, and so on, was central. Workers' movements and leftist forces (particularly those involved with Marxism) were consequently strongly harassed or brought under control. Trade unions suffered intervention and had their elected personnel dismissed in favour of government appointees. The students' federation was closed. In sum, the media, the academics, the 'arts', the unions, and so forth, after being 'laundered', were effectively and constantly policed. Many had to leave the country and were only allowed to return in 1979 after an amnesty was declared as part of the 'gradual' transition to democracy<sup>23</sup>.

In view of generalised use of various forms of political coercion, the only opposition to the regime were sections of the Catholic Church and clandestine, para-military groups.

The military coup employed the same modernising rhetoric which Collor adopted many years later and which had been the 'tonic' of the early 1930s. This, it seems, is a recurring theme in Brazilian politics following long periods of predominantly patron-clientage politics. The military claimed to have ended the general practice of the 'traffic of influence' which had always dominated the government machine. This, it was argued, made the government counter-productive and backwards. To solve this problem, they proposed to modernise the state and insulate the decision-making and policy-making spheres. This gave rise to the 'technocrat' era during which many government policies were managed by allegedly technically competent professionals from various areas. They were appointed by the military and their posts were devoid of political demands, on a 'strictly' technical basis<sup>24</sup>. Political expediency occurred, no doubt, but for a while in a less pungent manner and away from the public eye.

Souza (1989) suggests that the military did not actually destroy existing institutions but 'distorted' them. For instance, the electoral process was continued in order to legitimise the system but under government control to guarantee favourable results. The military made use of the corporative labour structures developed in the 1930s and 1940s and the newly created structures reflected the military's own corporation (Lamounier, 1989). In this way, the so-called technocrats dominated the existing machine.

### *The Alliance with the Technocrats*

Sola (1991) argues that the military insulated decision-making arenas from competitive politics, giving autonomy to the technocracy (Cf. Nunes, 1985). The military's alleged 'bureaucratic insulation' was, though, selective. It meant excluding parties, the National Congress, popular demand from the decision-making and policy-making processes, only allowing them access to key national and international interests. 'The legislature and political parties became accessories to the Government machine, operating mainly as its legitimizers' (Cintra, 1979, p.155).

The alliance with the technocrats was meant - through recourse to bureaucratic insulation - to protect the economy from 'political interference', or from the political interference the military judged detrimental to economic development. For the technocrats, the military period was a necessary step in order to remove certain barriers to policy-making and economic development<sup>25</sup>, one being growing popular demands (Skidmore, 1989).

Through this recourse - justifiably because of technical reasons - the military was increasingly able to eliminate political bottlenecks through the introduction of 'automatic devices' such as monetary correction, indexation, exchange rate devaluations, etc. It so happened that it was always politically stressful to realign relative prices when differences mounted up. The 'devices' introduced a fixed formula, known *a priori* by every economic agent and operated automatically when contracts became due or on a timed basis.

A comprehensive tax reform was operated which centralised most revenue and investment capacity at the federal level. In the first three years alone, the number of income-tax payers increased threefold. The federal government received over 50 per cent of all public revenue. Allocation of resources was then made automatically through institutionalised mechanisms, and investments followed the so-called PNDs (*Planos Nacionais de Desenvolvimento*), with five-year forward planning, operated yearly through disbursements from the federal Budget (Castro, 1988). This was meant to end clientelism but ended up by further centralising clientelistic structures at the federal level. Here, state and municipal executives had to negotiate with the federal government either directly or via their constituency Congress members - perhaps whose only function was now this - for more resources for their regions (Cf. Jobim, 1992).

The military's attempt at insulation excluded - and to a certain extent destroyed - some existing political and traditional patronage schemes. Notwithstanding, it opened doors to welcome new groups as well as to maintain old established interests in the power coalition<sup>26</sup>. The military continuously found shelter in the traditional political elites associated with landed interests. This

sector could not be ignored. They were one of the major foundations supporting the capitalist ideology of private property as well as nationalist ideologies. Their ownership of extensive plots of land could not even be a little threatened without jeopardizing the alliance's support for military projects. They were allowed to remain in the coalition although they were no longer economically hegemonic. In addition, acting through their clientele, landowners exerted certain controls over public opinion. Traditional interests thus managed to penetrate the government machine and regain access to state clientelism at all levels, but subject to new circumstances<sup>27</sup>.

Nunes (1985) regards clientelism as a channel for communication and representation which remained the only way to get demands passed on to the military governments. The need for politicians in the government party to ensure they and/or their allies were re-elected created the need to consider these demands in order, ultimately, to favour the election of the appropriate representatives to Congress<sup>28</sup>. The military intended to destroy a well-established network of patronage within the state machine only to establish their own or subjected the established one to a new order.

The 'gradual' return to democratic rule - from 1974 onwards - also meant that the military and supporting groups had to expand their electoral basis in order to make sure that they would remain in power for some time thereafter. This period of time was required to slowly adapt civil society to a new situation, guaranteeing a 'smooth' transition to civil rule. This was also necessary to ensure that the military themselves suffered no retaliation - which could have followed a revisionist phase - for crimes and violence or/and human rights abuse which had been perpetrated in the past. The unrestricted political amnesty (for those imprisoned or in exile for political crimes since 2 September 1961, the date of the previous amnesty), which was decreed in 1979 ensured that both those harassed by the military (e.g., exiles returning to the country) - some 5,000 people benefited - and the military themselves (for 'connected crimes' like torture) were pardoned for 'their' crimes. Therefore, following their 'gradual' programme, which took over a decade, the military had to re-integrate interest politics into the country system of rule. This culminated in a civilian being made President and empowered in 1985.

### *The Military Governments and the Form of Intervention*

Through 17 successive 'Institutional Acts', or AI, and tens of Complementary Acts, the Presidency became the most important single institution of the military regime. The AIs introduced changes ('on a temporary basis') to the 1946 Constitution and later to the military's own 1967 Constitution and the Constitutional Amendment n.1 of 1969.

The AI-1 of 9 April 1964 gave Humberto de Alencar Castello Branco special powers as President of Brazil for 90 days. The same act purged communists and those guilty of corruption. These included former Presidents, governors, over 50 members of Congress, politicians from all states, and so forth. Castello Branco (1964-67) was leader of the moderate Sorbonne group and retained the military's 'constitutional role' of guarantor of the 'public order'. Indeed, as seen above, this had been the main justification for the intervention.

At first trying to resemble a provisional government, the military went ahead with the planned elections for 11 state governors in October 1965. Following the government's defeat in two states (two PSD candidates, backed by the former President, the exiled JK, were elected in Minas Gerais State and Guanabara State), and pressed by the military hard-liners, the Castello Branco government issued AI-2 on 27 October 1965 (valid until the end of Castello's term). This gave him power to rule by decree, suppress individual political rights (for 10 years) and established indirect Presidential election through Congress.

AI-2 abolished the multi-party system<sup>29</sup> - which was replaced by a two-party system - and cancelled the presidential election scheduled for 1966. The elected governors were allowed to take up office but in the middle of AI-2, which transferred further powers to the federal executive, which was in the hands of the military. The National Congress was suspended only to re-open under strict supervision by the Executive and under new rules.

The party system, which already came under new statutes in July 1965 (although these had not been put into practice), was regulated by Complementary Act n.4 of November 1965. This established harder minimum requirements whereby a party should have at least 120 Federal Deputies and 20 Senators. The new parties, the governing ARENA (Aliança da Reconstrução Nacional) and the opposition MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro), were formed in December 1965.

### *The Party System and Electoral Manipulation*

Brazilian history is full of episodes during which the party system was disbanded. This happened every time the system in vogue threatened, or even less, was a nuisance to the regime in place. Generally speaking, the party system has, in this way, been an adjunct to the political system, serving as an institutionalised channel of control for dominant interests.

The military's electoral rules were meant to benefit the government party, ARENA. There were three party systems plus several changes to the election rules in the country during the time of the military governments (Kinzo, 1990). Legitimation through elections was only worthwhile if the military managed to keep control of Congress. In any case, Congress had its powers drastically reduced *vis-à-vis* the federal executive. New legislation was passed through executive decree and often approved by Congress within 30-60 days or by *decurso de prazo*. Even so, Congress was closed several times and, under pressure, re-opened in order to approve the government's proposed actions. Thus, election rules were proposed and carefully manipulated in order to grant the government victory in each election (Cf. Sadek, 1990). The government party formed the majority in both houses of Congress.

On 3 September 1966, AI-3 established that the next elections for President, governors of 11 states and mayors of capital cities were to be carried out indirectly through the legislature. The President was to be proposed by the military corporation for election by Congress (Skidmore, 1989). On 22 January 1967, Castello Branco issued a new Constitution. AI-4 required Congress to vote to accept the new Constitution. The aim was to give the military government constitutional

backing and to limit the next President's power in order to give continuity to the economic policy. Here, only the President, Vice-President and governors were to be indirectly elected. On 23 May 1968, the Municipal Security Law determined that over 700 municipalities were to have mayors and officials appointed by the military. The government in office was now that of Artur da Costa e Silva, a declared 'constitutionalist'. Indirect elections obviously involved negotiation with regional elites and other major interests supporting the military's project.

As a result of the student demonstrations, industrial strikes and leftist action, there was a major political crisis in 1968. The military hardened the rules of the political game. The regime, less violent from 1964 to 1968, now saw a descent to a much harder dictatorship (Baloyra, 1986). On Independence Day (7 September), in 1968, an opposition congressman - Márcio Moreira Alves - gave a speech highly critical of the military. The military demanded that Congress suspend his parliamentary immunity so that he could be prosecuted. Congress refused to do so and several ARENA politicians threatened to move to the MDB.

After closing Congress<sup>30</sup> on 13 December 1968, the Costa e Silva government imposed the AI-5, the harshest blow to Brazilian hopes of restoring democracy. AI-5 gave the President full powers, this time under and over the law<sup>31</sup>. AI-5 also gave the President permanent powers to suspend Congress, state and municipal legislatures as well as intervene in the state and municipal executives. On 17 October 1969, the Constitutional Amendment n.1, seen by several authors as a new constitution, sanctioned the new dictatorial phase and created mechanisms to secure party loyalty<sup>32</sup>. The power of the National Congress was further reduced as well as its size.

Costa e Silva suffered a stroke in August 1969, triggering a succession crisis. Pedro Aleixo, his civilian Vice-President (from Minas Gerais State), was prevented from taking office by the military ministers. Through AI-12, the ministers of the War, Navy and Aviation acquired executive powers on behalf of the President. The military hard-liners were now in direct control of the country. The military commission issued AI-16, declaring the post of President vacant and calling for an election on 25 October 1969 in Congress. The elected President would take office on 30 October 1969 until March 1974. Emílio Garrastazu Médici implemented the hardest and most violent measures of the whole period during which the military held the presidential office. During his period, the intelligence network was extended and the guerrilla movement was neutralised.

On 3 October 1970, indirect elections for governors took place. ARENA was successful in all but Guanabara State. All ARENA candidates were selected by Médici in person.

The two-party system proved a double-edged sword, though. It favoured the strengthening of, and unified the opposition under the MDB. A series of electoral defeats for the government followed. In 1970, for instance, there was the blank-ballot protest; in 1974, the government's majority was narrowed. MDB candidates claimed 16 of the 22 senate seats on offer (one-third of the Senate), the majority in 6 state legislatures, and 43 per cent of the Chamber of Deputies (Fleischer, 1986). The MDB expanded enough to acquire some executive positions.

The next government, in 1974, was headed by Ernesto Geisel, another *Castellista*, president of PETROBRAS, Brazil's oil company. Once again, the planned gubernatorial elections were



suspended. An MDB victory in 1978 could, from the military's point of view, have put Geisel's planned 'gradual and controlled' political liberalisation at risk. Governors were to be elected by state legislatures. The next President was to be elected by an electoral college, now formed of the 66 Senators, 310 Federal Deputies and 126 members of state legislatures (six delegates per state)<sup>33</sup>.

On 14 April 1977, Geisel issued a comprehensive package of measures, the so-called *Pacote de Abril*, or April Package<sup>34</sup>. Among other things, municipal councillors<sup>35</sup> were required to participate in state electoral colleges, which, in 1978, would elect 18 (thus one-third of Senate) new Senators (all for a eight-year term) as well as the new governors. Soon, the Senators elected in that way were humourously named 'bionic senators'. The presidential term was now six years. ARENA having faced defeat in the 1974 senate elections, these senators were needed by the government in order to strengthen their position in the upper house of Congress. As the measures were not enough to control the growth of the opposition, the manipulation continued.

Although purges and controls continued throughout his term, Geisel is considered to be the starting point for the transition to democratic rule. His term saw the return of the moderates to power with several hard-liners being sacked or retired. Geisel also abolished AI-5 and lifted censorship on TV and radio. Geisel imposed his successor upon the electoral college as well as the military corporation. João Baptista Figueiredo, at first assisted by Golbery do Couto e Silva, completed the planned return to the rule of law.

In short, while the two-party system, introduced in the wake of AI-2 in 1965, worked as a 'one-and-a-half-party' system, it was maintained. With the continued cessation of political rights applied to anyone offering any sort of political resistance, the out-numbered opposition party, the MDB, gathered the names of those who were seen by the military as part of a 'tolerated opposition'. These people were allowed to remain politically 'active', but had to be co-operative. The MDB struggled with difficulty and was almost extinguished, at least on one occasion, due to a lack of minimum number of members in Congress, as required by the new party legislation. ARENA, the governing party, held an overwhelming majority, benefiting from purges, controls, and the manipulation of the electoral rules.

Therefore, with the growth of the opposition, the actual 'one-and-a-half-party' system threatened to become a two-party system. In 1979, when this happened - in view of the erosion of support even with the increased use of clientelism - the military 'conceded' and agreed to the re-establishment of a multi-party system. The move, attributed to General Golbery, a moderate *Castellista* of the Sorbonne group<sup>36</sup>, was meant to benefit the governing party by causing electoral fragmentation so that the opposition would split into several more or less radical factions. The idea was to keep the government party united and have multi-party opposition. However, this failed to materialise in the way it had been planned.

With the end of the two-party system, ARENA and MDB were re-named the PDS and PMDB. In 1979, under the Figueiredo government, several parties were reinstated as legal or created from dissidents from the two former official parties and people returning to the country after the amnesty of 1979. Parties were also created from other organised interests. For instance,

the workers' party, the PT (1979), grew out of the metallurgical trades union movement in São Paulo State. A new package of measures, on 25 November 1981, introduced the *voto vinculado* for the 1982 elections<sup>37</sup>.

The '*voto vinculado*', or straight ticket voting, as well as the synchronisation of votes at all levels<sup>38</sup> obliged voters to choose candidates belonging to only one party. Parties had to nominate candidates for all posts on offer. Coalitions of parties were forbidden, but *sub-legendas* were allowed. Here, a party could run with more than one candidate, the sum of votes for one party benefiting the party's candidate with the most votes. In the ballot-papers, the voter had to write down the names of all the candidates or their numbers, instead of choosing from a list. Due to low levels of literacy<sup>39</sup>, this measure was meant to benefit the government party which had a larger structure at the national level. The manoeuvre was meant to link local votes to those of the upper levels. It so happened that the government held control of most local offices except those in Rio de Janeiro State. The move worked satisfactorily in the Northeast. Even so, in 1982, the opposition parties had 10 governors.

Having all this on their side, but also being prepared to use violence, the military governments attempted - in most cases successfully - to control the National Congress and all other levels of government.

Accordingly, constitutional rules were manipulated to reflect the size of the government's majority in Congress. An example is the quorum to introduce constitutional changes. Following the 1967 Constitution, changes to the constitution could only be made if approved by two-thirds of Congress. This was kept in the 1969 constitutional amendment. Due to the growth of the opposition and the risk that the government could lose the over two-thirds majority it held in Congress, this requirement was changed (in the wake of the April Package of 1977) to an absolute majority. When there was a possibility that the government could lose its absolute majority, the two-thirds requirement was reintroduced in 1982 so that the opposition could not, on its own, make constitutional changes. In this case, the government bench held a virtual power of veto over the matter<sup>40</sup>.

Another point of interest is whether the size of the state benches in Congress was a function of the size of the electorate or the population. The Constitutional Amendment n.1 of 1969 changed this function from the latter to the former. In the middle of the Brazilian 'economic miracle'<sup>41</sup>, the move favoured the most industrialised states. But in 1977, in the April Package, the criterion was changed again. The return of the population as the basis for the determination of the size of state benches in Congress benefited states in the North, Midwest and Northeast regions (Jobin, 1992), where, in general, the military government was finding greater electoral support from a destitute, poorly educated population.

Last but not least, it is worth mentioning that the military took advantage of the proportionality rule of the state benches in Congress in order to build a comfortable majority. The uneven distribution of seats between states (in relation both to the size of population as well as the electorate) favoured the less populated states, thus the less industrialised ones. The problem

originated in the reform of the electoral system dating from 1932 (Souza and Lamounier, 1990). This was kept in the Constitutions of 1934, 1946 and 1967, and the 1969 Constitutional Amendment. Following the 1988 Constitution, all states have three seats in the Senate; the number varies from 8 to 70 in the Chamber of Deputies<sup>42</sup>. This makes the Brazilian system one of the most unrepresentative systems of proportional representation in the world<sup>43</sup> (Mainwaring, 1991).

One argument is that there has been no revision following the greater concentration of population in the south, especially the Southeast region, the result of fifty years of intense migratory movement from the north, especially the Northeast region. This population, in whose name these politicians claimed that the reform of the proportionality rule should be made, consists of the very people who have been kept at the margins of any economic reward in poor living conditions.

The problem is exacerbated in view of the creation of new states in the North and Midwest regions. In the Southeast, the military merged the states of Rio de Janeiro and Guanabara into one: Rio de Janeiro. Rio was perhaps the main centre of opposition to the military. In the Midwest, in 1977, the military divided Mato Grosso State into two: the south is now called Mato Grosso do Sul State; in the North region, the federal territory of Rondônia gained statehood in 1981. In the case both of Mato Grosso do Sul State and Rondônia State, each gained 3 Senators and 8 Federal Deputies<sup>44</sup>. The greater number of states in the North, Northeast and Midwest regions outnumbers those of the South and Southeast. State benches do not reflect the size either of the population or the electorate<sup>45</sup>. The military saw in the northern constituencies a constant source of support and tried to reinforce this tendency.

Each time the political system was changed, be it the party system, or the election system, it meant the breakdown and disarticulation of organised movements, whether parties as such, or political alliances, or other channels of political representation. Discontinuity helped the military to fragment organised movements in order to remain in power. It is worth mentioning that these artifices were calculated changes made to ensure the government party had the majority in Congress, the state legislative assemblies and the municipal chambers.

### *The Transition vis-à-vis the Electoral Timetable*

With Geisel's (1974-79) project to gradually return power to civilians, political pressures had to be accommodated piecemeal. Just as the military sought to find legitimacy through elections, unfavourable election results presented them with an acceleration of the erosion of legitimacy and increasing opposition.

Ever since the installation of the Geisel Government in the mid-1970s, Brazil had witnessed democratic rule return slowly with the Executive losing its direct grip over the Legislature and the re-establishment of direct elections for representatives at all levels. The military appointed the state governors from 1966 onwards. From 1968, formally appointing the mayors of the capital cities had been the prerogative of state governors with the approval of the state Legislative Assemblies. But elections for state governors were reinstated in 1982. The opposition gained ten state

governors. In this case, these opposition governors should have appointed the respective mayors of capital cities. It followed that, in 1985, there were elections for the mayors of capital cities.

By 1985, then, only the President was still to be elected by indirect vote. In Lamounier's (1989; 1990) view, the transition to civilian and democratic rule had to follow the electoral timetable. This was necessary in order to allow the process the proper timing. In Geisel's own words, the opening up of Brazil's 'relative democracy' was to be 'slow, gradual and secure'. Here, 'secure' means well controlled by the military. The Geisel period became notorious for its 'two steps forward, one back' approach (Fleischer, 1986). The transition followed no blueprint but the tide of events, accommodating pressures from inside the military, the electoral system, the international setting and mounting popular dissatisfaction. The deceleration of economic growth completed this unfavourable scenario for continued military rule.

The opening up of dictatorial rule followed elections to the legislature, which had been deprived of power, and state and municipal executives, which constrained by financial difficulties, were thus dependent on the federal government. (This was most pronounced until the 1988 Constitution.) This helped the government of Geisel, Figueiredo and later Sarney to make clientelistic deals with governors and mayors through their party (sometimes state) benches in the National Congress. Therefore, although directly elected in 1982,

'The opposition governors quickly found themselves needing support (especially financial support) from the federal government. Their circumstances could hardly have been worse. In March 1983 the Figueiredo government had already been forced to subordinate all economic policy to servicing the foreign debt. The resulting austerity policies meant that the opposition governors found themselves without enough money to meet urgent needs. By early 1984 their popularity had plummeted, as their citizens now faulted the PMDB and PDT governors for the austerity which national policy had imposed' (Skidmore, 1989, p.30).

General João Baptista Figueiredo (1979-85) promised 'to make Brazil a democracy'. Figueiredo was Geisel's personal choice. Geisel managed to out-manoeuvre the other factions among the military in order to give continuity to the liberalisation project. For this to materialise, the hard-liners had to be 'under control'. Back in power, the moderates had to face problems from within the corporation. Between 1979 and April 1981, rightist terrorism increased with 41 bomb attacks taking place, culminating in the RioCentro attack. The targets were newspapers kiosks selling leftist papers, the OAB in Rio<sup>46</sup>, which campaigned for human rights and an end to hostilities, etc.

In order to capitalise on the growth of the opposition, the Figueiredo government, coordinated by General Golbery, anticipated measures long pressed for which sooner or later would have to be introduced: an amnesty, a new party system, the return of exiles, a programme to counter excessive bureaucratic procedures, the freedom to strike, etc. But the measures were not simply a package to return rights to civil society. They were part of an articulated political strategy for the military to retain control - if not of the government - of developments affecting the role of the military corporation and their allies in the future 'democratic' Brazil. (The *voto vinculado*, as seen, dates from this period.) As seen above, although they manipulated the election game, the military 'only just' managed to retain its majority in Congress from 1974 onwards.

### *The Transition under Control*

In Zaverucha's (1991; 1993) view, the military held a high degree of political autonomy during and after the transition. In Geisel's term, as seen, this was an explicit target. Zaverucha considers the transition to have been incomplete: there had been a return to a democratically elected government but not a transition to a democratic regime. While this argument is by no means new, the author, in support, has added a great deal of empirical material. There had been no civilian control over military policy whatsoever. Furthermore, the military have continuously influenced the course of Brazilian politics, if not intervening directly, as a psychological threat. This explains why there has been little effort, even on the part of civilians, to propose policies altering the nature of military action in Brazil (in the making of the 1988 Constitution, for instance).

Superficial changes to certain agencies associated with the military - e.g., the closure of SNI by Collor - were made but these have had little, if any, impact on the prestige and power of the military. In the case of the SNI closure, all the files were transferred to CIE (*Centro de Informações do Exército*), the Army's intelligence centre. Although the military ministries were reduced from 6 to 3 in the wake of the administrative reform, by the end of Collor's term all the ministers had been changed, sometimes more than once, except the three military ministers. The military also kept control of strategic civilian areas such as in the production of military equipment, the licensing of the merchant fleet and leisure boats (by the Navy), the control of air traffic (by the Air Force), and the country's space programme (by the Army). They also kept their judicial jurisdiction and their role as guarantor of 'law and order', the interpretation of which was at their discretion<sup>47</sup> (Zaverucha, 1993).

When on 8 November 1988, the military intervened in the Volta Redonda strike, resulting in the death of three workers and several others being seriously wounded, no civilian investigation was allowed to take place. The Sarney government tried to cover up the situation, arguing that the movement was unlawful and that several workers were, in fact, urban guerrillas. A monument erected in homage to the dead workers was bombed. Later, the officers in charge of the intervention were awarded a decoration.

In sum, the several manipulatory devices designed to favour the military in power and keeping up a minimum appearance of 'relative democracy' in the country remained only while this served to benefit the government party. Not even increased use of clientelism - for instance, through the BNH's housing programme - saved the military from losing control of the government. But, to what extent did the military wish to retain this control? Be that as it may, the transition to civilian rule coincided first with the imposition of increased oil prices by OPEC and new rules in the international financial market, despite the expansion of private lending; and later, with the paralysis of financial flows from the international community, the most important financial pillar of the military's economic plan.

### **The 'New Republic': Renewed Hopes (1985-90)**

On 25 April 1984, under pressure from the military, the National Congress failed to pass a proposal - the Dante de Oliveira Amendment - to re-establish direct democratic elections for the President of Brazil. The proposal had full popular support with the *Diretas Já* campaign. The campaign caused millions of people to demonstrate on the streets all over the country. Due to the inability of the military to forecast and ensure a favourable result in the voting of the amendment, a state of emergency was declared. Access to Brasília, where several pressure groups were heading, was blocked and live TV and radio coverage was forbidden.

The movement to return power to civilian authority and put an 'end' to the military rule did not end with the *Diretas Já*. It culminated in the so-called '*Aliança Democrática*', or Democratic Alliance. The alliance was an elite coalition, conservative in character, formed around the governing parties and well-behaved sectors of the opposition. Tancredo Neves, the alliance's candidate for the post of President, was a centre-left politician linked in the past to Vargas, Kubitschek and Jango. He was accepted by the left but also by the right, especially after he founded the PP, the Popular Party, in 1980, with PMDB dissidents and backing from the banking community<sup>48</sup>. The negotiations, behind closed doors, excluded the left-wing parties as well as popular participation. However, it was built on the foundations of the *Diretas Já* movement; in the absence of direct elections, the Democratic Alliance gained legitimacy as the second-best option. The alliance promoted several street gatherings, from September 1984, to gain legitimacy for the election through the electoral college.

The alliance was a pact between regional elites, monitored by the military. The alliance was articulated through PDS dissidents in opposition to Paulo Salin Maluf, the party's own candidate. Although gaining his nomination at the party convention, Maluf was unacceptable to some of his colleagues who formed the Liberal Front and later founded the PFL, or Party of the Liberal Front. The Liberal Front (with the participation of key names such as the PDS's former president Marcos Maciel, Figueiredo's Vice-President Aureliano Chaves, and the would-be vice-presidential candidate José Sarney) joined forces with PMDB, agreeing, among other things, on the allocation of positions in government.

In January 1985, the alliance formed a majority in the electoral college, electing Tancredo Neves as President of Brazil<sup>49</sup>. The government's official candidate, Maluf, was defeated after the coalition's careful machination and negotiations with the military. The alliance also benefited from the suspension, by the TSE, in November 1984, of the party loyalty requirement for the purpose of elections by the electoral college. It was decided that the legislation applied only to the National Congress.

The new civilian period was called the 'New Republic'. But Tancredo fell ill on the eve of the start of his term. He died on 21 April 1985 even before taking office. José Sarney, his Vice-President, of more conservative leanings, came to power in his place. Taken by surprise, without any clearly defined aims or clearly articulated projects - political or economic - Sarney had to

follow Tancredo's plans and appointed Tancredo's chosen Cabinet. The new civil government had the task of completing and guaranteeing the slow restoration of democracy in the country.

Tancredo's death forced Sarney to commit himself more effectively to the plans for the New Republic. But this also reflected the increased influence of Ulysses Guimarães<sup>50</sup>, president of PMDB, the party with the majority in Congress (Fleischer, 1986). The symbiosis between José Sarney and Ulysses Guimarães was, though, a mere formality. In reality, there was constant shuffling between the two for increased influence in the new government. To maintain his independence, Sarney slowly distanced himself from the movement which had given him the position of President of Brazil. He gambled with highly risky alternatives in order to gain some legitimacy.

Sarney needed to adapt to the new circumstances. This meant making alliances and building a parliamentary base. The '*Aliança Democrática*' had broken down even before the failure of the Cruzado Plan, engineered by PMDB nominees to economic-related policy-making posts. After the 1986 elections, the National Congress was overwhelmingly dominated by the PMDB but Sarney turned towards the *Centrão*, a centre-right coalition in the National Congress formed mainly from the PFL and a group of traditional politicians in the PMDB<sup>51</sup>. From this moment, state governors increasingly became the government's target. Sarney knew they had ascendancy over their parties' representatives in Congress. The justification for this is quite simple. Both governors and members of the National Congress were elected in electoral districts formed from the states, thus drawing on the same *electoral support system*.

According to Flynn (1986), the launch of the Cruzado Plan in February 1986 had profound political consequences. 'The Plan, ..., tied Sarney to the PMDB rather than to the PFL in the crucial run up to the elections, at least in the short term, it tied the PMDB to the President' (p.1171). The plan was launched as a complete surprise nine months before the election of the Constituent Congress. By the time the plan was launched, almost one year after Sarney took office, he was facing increasing opposition. He replaced his Cabinet with a new 'right-wing' Cabinet based on the PFL. The PMDB remained in the firing line, with Dilson Funaro in charge of the economy and Almir Pazzianotto at the Ministry of Labour. Also, there were demands for an early election for a new President. Therefore, the plan was crucial for the survival of both the PMDB, increasingly being dislodged from government, and Sarney, heavily criticised and facing opposition.

Although made by PMDB nominees, the plan was sold as a personal project of the President. Sarney's direct appeal to the population, whom he named the *fiscais do Sarney* (Sarney's price supervisors), gained him valuable points in the popularity rating. In view of 90 per cent of popular support, there was virtually no open opposition to the plan, except that of the CUT and Brizola<sup>52</sup>.

For many students of Brazilian politics, Sarney's was an illegitimate government. Unpredictable circumstances took him to office. His being vice-presidential candidate was part of an accord with the Liberal Front and an extra assurance to the military. While President, he had little party support. He had been affiliated to the PDS, later the PFL, but, at the beginning, the

New Republic was mainly formed from the PMDB. He then tried to acquire legitimacy through the promotion of economic growth and redistribution of economic rewards through the launch of a series of very visible economic packages (i.e., the Cruzado Plan, the *Cruzadinho*, the Cruzado II, the Bresser Plan and the Summer Plan).

In Sarney's first year as President up to the time of the Cruzado Plan, his government maintained the tendency - re-started in 1984 - of wage growth in real terms. In February 1986, Sarney called for a Constituent Assembly to write the country's new constitution. In November 1986, in the wake of the highly optimistic environment of the Cruzado Plan, the Constituent Congress was elected. Despite Sarney's reassertion that the Cruzado would be maintained, only a few days after the ballot, and even before it was completely counted, the government launched the Cruzado Plan II. This move was all too clearly perceived by the public.

The Constituent Congress was questioned for several reasons. Sarney had not been elected by direct suffrage, thus had no legitimate power to call for a new democratic constitution. Sarney manipulated the election of the Constituent Congress, if not directly, at least by the timing of the launch of the Cruzado Plan as well as the Cruzado Plan II<sup>53</sup>. There had been suspicions that the manoeuvre was part of a deal with the military - or rather a condition - in order to restore the democratic regime under the control of the military. An independent Constituent Assembly, that is, one which was separated from the National Congress, was discarded as too risky. Directly elected, a Constituent Congress was more easily formed of more traditional politicians. A new constitution was seen as a strong institutional barrier. Once in place, as the Legislature was once again to be at the core of policy-making, its basic foundations would be very difficult to tamper with in the foreseeable future. Written under these circumstances, the 1988 Constitution granted the military independence. In this way, the Constitution can be seen as a mere facade to conceal the continued influence of the military over Brazilian politics for several years to come and guarantee the military 'the peace of mind' they wished for.

During the Constituent Assembly, Sarney granted himself a five-year term and strongly blocked the proposal to change the form of government to a parliamentary system. In January 1989, prior to the election which would determine his successor, Sarney launched the last of his 'shock' plans, the Summer Plan. The plan abolished the *Cruzado* which lost three zeros to the *Cruzado Novo* (the New Cruzado), introduced a freeze on wages and the prices of 170 items (for 45 days), ended the indexation of salaries, etc. Again, the plan had a strong political connotation. As Flynn (1989) explains:

'General Leônidas Pires Gonçalves warned Sarney that continuing inflation would further strengthen the left, so that just as Sarney's fifth year in office had been conceived as a device to keep out Brizola, the Summer Plan was intended to counter act November's shift to the left' (p.61).

The Sarney Government thus acted as a 'buffer' between the military era and the complete reconstitution of democratic rule in the country. As Souza (1989) writes:

'It is well known that the Brazilian transition established the New Republic on the institutional foundations of the authoritarian regime rather than on its ruins, allowing most of the political



elites and administrative personnel of the former regime to remain in control of the country's political course' (p.354).

The political pact, which gave rise to the so-called New Republic, with the re-instatement of a civilian as President of Brazil, allowed the military to retain power over strategic areas and civilian elites to reinforce the practice of clientelism (Hagopian, 1990). The pact succeeded in avoiding confrontation with the military, in which case, the entire liberalisation process could have been put at risk. Accordingly, during the New Republic, the military retained six ministries out of 22 over which no civilian organisation (not even the National Congress) had the power to interfere (Zaverucha, 1993). The military continued to monitor the transition process, making use of threat tactics to impede reforms as well as actual force (e.g., intervening in strikes on many occasions)<sup>54</sup>.

The Sarney Government was the last phase in the transition to democracy. The next President would inevitably be elected by universal suffrage. Elections at all the other levels had already been restored. In October 1988, the Constituent Assembly completed the new Constitution. Although conservative in character, it was democratic in format. In October-November 1989, Brazil's first election for President in 30 years took place. Following the 1990 elections, there were nearly 40 parties in the country, 20 with representatives in Congress.

### **Conclusion (1500-1990)**

To sum up, the first Portuguese families who arrived in Brazil participated in the export-driven production of sugar. They were allocated land, bought slaves, eventually becoming the colony's virtual rulers. They established an intricate network of interest mediation. Portugal needed them to keep the colonial enterprise going as well as for peace-keeping and defence reasons. They needed Portugal mainly to keep their businesses overseas and protect the colony against invasion from other nations (which Portugal did with help from the British). They established close links with local populations who needed them for economic, political and security reasons.

The patriarchal families provided their clients with the protection that the colonial 'state' could not supply. They provided jobs, allowed them to settle within the boundaries of their property, promoted social gatherings (most of which had a religious content), etc. The locals needed them because they were the only help they could resort to. The families owned the land and resources. The families needed the population to run the sugar estates and other plantations, to look after slaves, be part of their private militias.

Things remained mostly the same throughout the Empire, with the power of local bosses expanding in direct proportion to suffrage and the growth of the government apparatus. During the early Republic, with the end of the Emperor's 'moderating power', local bosses expanded their influence and dominated state-based politics. This period saw the apogee of their power. Getúlio Vargas (1930-45) had to balance pressures from the landed and the new, rising urban interests. The period saw the growth of the state machine and the centralisation of power at the federal level. Although elections were abolished at all levels (1937-45), Vargas (with backing from the military) had to ally himself to local political chiefs in order to guarantee his continuation in government.

During the following democratic period (1945-64), politics was run in the same manner: a mixture of 'traditional' politics and populist manoeuvres. The return of powers to the Legislature, though, meant that clientelism in this phase was fragmented and disarticulated. From 1964, the military governments, while manipulating the election rules, made increasing use of clientelistic machines in order to acquire greater chances of winning elections. And: 'Facing a Congress controlled by the opposition, both Sarney and Collor engaged in patronage exchanges with individual politicians in order to secure support for the government's initiatives' (Melo, 1992, p.43). Often, despite this artifice, these two governments were unsuccessful.

In particular, identifying Collor as a *Coronel*, if anything, would not be original. However, Collor was a '*Coronel* of a new kind' (Cf. Krieger et al, 1992). He mixed modern 'looks' and information technology in order to support his 'modernising' rhetoric behind which he hid his, in reality, old-fashioned managerial, 'manipulative' techniques in upholding rather conservative policies as well as the promotion and protection of allied interests. The expression *new labels for old recipes* may well summarise Collor's projects and those of his few more permanent supporters.

As far as constitutional rules allowed, the ultimate result of the Collor government's actions was intended to benefit specific economic and political interests while acceding to some popular demands which remained mostly at the discourse level. Most certainly, the beneficiary's interests were not the hegemonic interests of the power bloc - which may partly explain why he was dismissed from government before the end of his term<sup>55</sup>.

In short, since the 1930s, local bosses have enjoyed varying degrees of influence, depending on the extent of suffrage, the electoral legislation, the party system and, therefore, the relative importance of local votes, or clienteles, in state and federal politics. During 'more' democratic periods, they provided the basis for an electoral support system; in fact, a network of politicians and financial supporters branching out from the very local level to and from the state and federal levels. During less democratic times, they remained strong, exerting influence over local politics and at least offering support for elections to the legislature at the state level, if this was being practised at the time. Some links may have been temporarily discontinued during dictatorial rule but could be quickly re-established, if necessary.

The now weaker position of local bosses in politics is also a consequence of their having lost their primary economic role. They once dominated the economics of the country, which was based on the production of export crops, slave labour and extensive work on the land. Now their businesses are no longer dominant, and account for a tiny fraction of Brazil's economy<sup>56</sup>. In some cases, businesses generated locally by small prefectures are crucial to the economic survival of local political chiefs. The locality is crucial to them to provide them with certain privileges without which their backward enterprises could not survive.

However, the system of patron-client exchange, which was initiated at the local level, climbed the ladder of power and established itself at the heart of the country's political centre, branching out to all levels of government and policy-making agencies.

Although local politicians are relatively less important to Brazilian economics and politics today, the way that local politicians operated in the past is present in the way that politicians in general play politics today. In the absence of strong political institutions, clientelism acts as a channel of control and interest intermediation.

In short, patronage politics was born out of an authoritative, hierarchical system mainly in the private sphere which later dominated the state, and grew in direct relation to the growth of the state and its revenue.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Classic studies on clientelism in Brazil include Gilberto Freire's *Casa Grande & Senzala*, of 1933, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's *Raízes do Brasil*, of 1936, Raymundo Faoro's *Os Donos do Poder* (in 2 volumes), of 1957, and Vitor Nunes Leal's *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*. *Coronelismo* is a reference to the *Coronéis* of the old National Guard, a title which was awarded to wealthy individuals during the Empire (see further below).

<sup>2</sup>The Collor term itself is seen in more detail separately together with a more prolonged discussion of the concept of clientelism (Valença, Forthcoming).

<sup>3</sup>One Portuguese league was equal to 6,179.74 metres.

<sup>4</sup>Planters also used slaves during non-harvest time or lows in the export market to grow food crops (Graham, 1985). Another way to provide for the slaves on the plantations was to allocate small plots of land and time during which the slaves could work on their own crops.

<sup>5</sup>During the colonial period, the acquisition of land was mainly made through royal and gubernatorial grants; later, during the Empire by imperial grants. A land law in 1850, during the second Empire, recognised the customary rights of squatters and called for the registration of land legally acquired. From this point, the law determined that public land had to be sold rather than allocated. The law attempted to put an end to conflicts. Many royal grants overlapped each other and many included the squatter land used for subsistence farms. Conflicts, though, remained with landowners registering, in most cases, the limits of their land by providing the names of their neighbours, rather than providing any measurements.

<sup>6</sup>The system of state concessions which continued throughout the centuries and the 'schemes' which formed around them became later known as sinecure state (Roett, 1984).

<sup>7</sup>Governor-Generals were directly responsible to Lisbon, so were district (*comarca*) and county (*município*) judges - *ouvidores* and *juízes de fora* - who held power at the expense of the local councils (*senados da câmara*).

<sup>8</sup>D. João VI was prince regent when he arrived to Brazil, being made king in 1816 when his mentally incapacitated mother died.

<sup>9</sup>This was also very 'pronounced' in the second half during which other European capital flew to the country. At the beginning of the twentieth century, North American interests dominated Brazilian trade. This shift is mainly explained by the lack of complementarity in the early Brazilian-British trade. Britain was not a major market for Brazilian products, only serving as intermediary (Abreu, 1985). For instance, the British policy of colonial preference excluded Brazilian coffee and sugar from Britain's imports; however, not cotton which on at least two occasions - the American war of independence and later the civil war - saw American supplies decline drastically, benefiting Brazilian producers.

<sup>10</sup>With the Empire, captaincies became provinces. During the seven decades of the Empire, only two new provinces were created: Amazonas, out of Grão-Pará and Paraná out of São Paulo.

<sup>11</sup>Not surprisingly, the *coronel* of imperial times had an obsession for the 'new'. They formed an influential rural aristocracy and were the main consumers of the small but growing imports to Brazil. They were fascinated by the fluent speaking 'doctors' - physicians and bachelors-of-law - and priests, educated in the main Brazilian towns, especially the capital Rio de Janeiro, or in Europe, where the colonels - almost by law - sent their children to be educated to be like the

‘doctors’.

<sup>12</sup>For instance, in the modernisation of sugar production at the end of the nineteenth century, the new *usinas* could count on tax exemptions in order to import equipment.

<sup>13</sup>It is worth noting that from 1850, and even before, the imperial government, and later the republican governments, promoted an immigration policy to support colonisation. In particular, towards the end of the century, São Paulo State intensified this effort in order to feed the coffee farms with free workers. The immigrants were mainly Italians but also Portuguese, Spanish, German, etc.

<sup>14</sup>Interests based in these two states dominated the central government with delegation from the other states insofar as the central government did not interfere with state politics and vested interests. This arrangement was known as *política dos governadores*, or as mentioned above, the 'policy of the governors'.

<sup>15</sup>Several authors see the Vargas period as the onset of a bourgeois revolution in the country (Ianni, 1977; Oliveira, 1985)(Cf. Mello, 1988).

<sup>16</sup>The creation of government agencies with budgetary autonomy gave rise to what is commonly known as *Estado Cartorial*, or the sinecure state, that is, the attachment and traffic of business interests within specific government agencies. Fernando Henrique Cardoso also defines the system as 'bureaucratic rings' (Cardoso, 1989).

<sup>17</sup>JK also built Brasília which replaced Rio de Janeiro as the country's new capital city.

<sup>18</sup>Legislators now held more than veto powers.

<sup>19</sup>Thus shortly before the military coup of 31 March 1964.

<sup>20</sup>The Superior War School, or *Escola Superior de Guerra*, was the military's think tank.

<sup>21</sup>The government had plans to use it in its favour for electoral purpose. Delfim Netto, who succeeded Campos, saw the problem of inflation not as 'demand-led' but 'cost-pushed'. So, he loosened credit. The LMW, though, was kept as low as possible.

<sup>22</sup>The *Instituto de Pesquisas de Estudos Sociais*, or IPES (Institute of Social Studies Research) played a fundamental role in mustering civilian support for the military coup (Nylen, 1993).

<sup>23</sup>In d'Souza's view (1987), Brazilian exile was not massive but selective. It was less obvious than in countries like Argentina and Chile not only because it followed political persecution and physical coercion but because other, less obvious, forms of violence and marginalisation, such as compulsory unemployment and deprivation of political rights for ten years, constant bullying and threats, etc. were used. This form of exile 'within the country' forced hundreds of people to decide 'by themselves' to try a better, more secure life abroad. The longed for political amnesty promised by Geisel - presented as an act of 'generosity' - was finally passed by Figueiredo in August 1979.

<sup>24</sup>Outstanding examples were the Campos-Bulhões hold over economic-related ministries and later, the finance minister, Dr. Delfim Netto, and his team.

<sup>25</sup>On bureaucratic-authoritarianism see also Cardoso (1982), Collier (1982), Martins (1988), Melo (1987) and O'Donnell (1986; 1987; 1988).

<sup>26</sup>An outstanding example is the National Monetary Council, the CMN or *Conselho Monetário*

*Nacional*, chaired by government officials and private enterprise representatives. The CMN decided on monetary and certain economic matters. Factions of national and multinational interests were, through this mechanism, but not exclusively, incorporated into the military project.

<sup>27</sup>It is also the case that in certain areas they were never dislodged from their positions.

<sup>28</sup>Only through an intricate network of interest intermediation - and during periods of great distress - have the masses been allowed access to the system.

<sup>29</sup>The 13 existing parties were abolished.

<sup>30</sup>The Congress remained closed until March 1970.

<sup>31</sup>For instance, *habeas corpus* was abolished.

<sup>32</sup>This was never used *de facto* but worked as a constant threat. Once elected, a politician was kept under surveillance. Through this mechanism, the military now controlled their own party members.

<sup>33</sup>The government party held proportionately more seats in state legislatures than in Congress. The addition of six delegates per state, drawn from state legislatures, would reinforce the government's majority in the electoral college at the election of the next President.

<sup>34</sup>The package was not approved by Congress, to which Geisel responded by declaring a recess of the Congress and imposing the package in the form of a decree.

<sup>35</sup>The government party held the majority of local offices.

<sup>36</sup>Golbery was Castello's Chief of Civilian Staff, with ministerial status.

<sup>37</sup>Posts for 22 state governors, 23 senators (one-third of the house), 479 federal deputies, 947 state deputies, 3,857 mayors and over 60,000 municipal councillors were on offer (Roett, 1984).

<sup>38</sup>For the synchronisation of elections to materialise, the 1980 municipal elections were postponed until 1982.

<sup>39</sup>Voting was and is compulsory in Brazil. Illiterates were not allowed to vote until 1985 and the 1988 Constitution also granted 16-18 year-olds the right to choose whether or not to vote. This expanded the Brazilian electorate even further. However, it should be said that the military literacy programme, MOBREAL, taught millions of people to sign their names, a sufficient condition then to prove literacy, thus made them able to vote.

<sup>40</sup>For instance, in 1984, in voting in the Dante de Oliveira Amendment to re-establish direct elections for President.

<sup>41</sup>From 1968 to 1974, Brazilian GDP grew at above 10 per cent a year.

<sup>42</sup>In view of this limitation, if Roraima State, the least populated of all 26 states in the federation, with 8 federal deputies, is taken as a reference zero, São Paulo State lacks 54 federal deputies (Nicolau, 1992).

<sup>43</sup>Studies of this issue proliferated prior to a constitutional plebiscite on the form of government early in 1993 (i.e., whether parliamentary, monarchy or presidential - as has been the case since the republic). Southern-based Congress members pressed for reassessment of the proportion of their seats in both houses of Congress (see also Veja, 17 March 1993).

<sup>44</sup>The 1988 Constitution created three new states. Goiás State, in the Midwest, where the Federal District is located, was divided up. The new state is Tocantins, now belonging to the North region. In the North, the former federal territories of Amapá and Roraima became states.

<sup>45</sup>While this is a legitimate claim, it had hardly worried southern-based politicians and entrepreneurs until the referred plebiscite as they could count on politicians across state and regional boundaries.

<sup>46</sup>The secretary was seriously wounded by a letter-bomb.

<sup>47</sup>Collor's first Minister of Justice, Bernardo Cabral, had been the military's spokesperson during the Constituent Assembly. Jarbas Passarinho, Collor's second Minister of Justice, was one of AI-5's signatories (Zaverucha, 1991).

<sup>48</sup>In view of the *voto vinculado* in 1982, the PP was re-united with the PMDB.

<sup>49</sup>On 11 June 1984, Sarney resigned as president of PDS, meeting with Ulysses Guimarães, president of PMDB, the next day. On 15 June 1984, Tancredo Neves announced he would be a candidate if nominated by the PMDB, which he was. In this case, he had to resign from the government of Minas Gerais State.

<sup>50</sup>Ulysses Guimarães and Fernando Henrique Cardoso co-ordinated the nominations to key posts in the New Republic.

<sup>51</sup>Due to a loose affiliation policy, the PMDB, once a stand for democratic demands, was soon full of opportunistic politicians who had been associated with ARENA and later the PDS. Because of this, in 1988, a group of dissidents formed the PSDB (*Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*).

<sup>52</sup>However, the plan was to be boycotted - a silent opposition was made to it - by bankers and other powerful interests as well as speculators who all of a sudden had been forced to operate under less favourable conditions. Due to the imminent election, there was also resistance from within the government, even by the PFL's own ministers, to implementing the planned cuts in the Budget.

<sup>53</sup>Adjustments to the Cruzado Plan were long needed. By the time of the Cruzado Plan II, after the election, Brazilian foreign reserves were already at a critically low level and the exchange rate lagged behind inflation. While domestic demand was high, exports dropped and imports grew.

<sup>54</sup>In order to find themselves a more visible role, a professional role, one of the military policies during the Sarney government was the development of the *Projeto Calha Norte*, a programme to defend the northern border of the country and national interests in the Amazon (JB, 9 November 1992). The de-politicisation of the military also reflected increasing tensions within their ranks: there were conflicting demands from the military in the barracks and those in government, who were often accused of being involved in or at least conniving with corrupt schemes.

<sup>55</sup>This assertion draws on the Gramscian notion that any individual interest should not remain 'dominant' (in opposition to hegemonic) for too long without putting long-term accumulation at risk (Cf. Carnoy, 1984).

<sup>56</sup>I am not referring here to the highly technological agro-industry of the south and few other spots.

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