Order in Chaos Intra Party Coordination in Open List PR Systems

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1. Introduction

One of the most important distinctions within electoral systems is that between majoritarian and proportional principles. These principles embody two different conceptions of elections and representation, and generate distinct ways in which voters, politicians and governments relate to each other (Powell 2000).

The general goal of proportional representation electoral systems (PR) is to produce outcomes that more or less reflect the distribution of preferences among citizens in a given district. These systems, however, vary remarkably in how voters determine which candidates will be selected to take office. In closed-list PR systems, voters choose from among lists of pre-ranked candidates presented by different parties. Although voters may have a preference for some candidates over others, they affect the chances that a specific individual will win a seat only very indirectly; that is, only to the extent that the party leaders who do the ranking of candidates anticipate voters' preferences for specific candidates. In preferential PR systems voters can directly affect which candidates are elected. These systems are themselves varied. But the most extreme version is the open-list PR system (OLPR), in which parties do not rank their candidates in any way; instead, candidates are ranked *exclusively* by the number of personal votes each one receives.¹

Being able to express a preference for specific candidates in PR systems is relevant for democratic accountability: When voters are directly responsible for the election of specific candidates, they can hold them individually accountable in a way

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¹ In other preferential PR systems, parties present a pre-ranked list of candidates and voters can alter the

they cannot if their only choice were the entire list produced by political parties (Mitchell 2000). Furthermore, preferential PR electoral systems are widely used. They are employed for legislative elections in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia; in Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru; in Indonesia and Sri Lanka. Additionally, citizens are increasingly using their preferential vote in old democracies like Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Netherlands, Norway and Sweden (Marsh 1985, Reilly 2004).

In this paper we examine the effect of the extreme form of preferential PR electoral systems on political parties. Existing scholarship argues that preferential PR generates weak political parties. The main reason is that under these systems politicians must cultivate a "personal reputation" as opposed to a "party reputation" (Carey and Shugart 1995). As much as candidates may want their party to win seats, they need to make sure that one of these seats is allocated to them and not any of their co-partisans. For this reason, competition between and within parties is said to be fierce, electoral campaigns become focused on individuals and not policies, party programs are diluted, and policies are overpowers by local over national concerns. Politics becomes about individuals and not policy and parties are weak.

The intraparty competition that preferential PR systems, particularly OLPR, supposedly foster is considered to be responsible for a number of important outcomes. A non-exhaustive list includes: relatively low levels of public goods provision (Shugart 1999); narrowly targeted public policy (Lizeri and Persico 2001, Persson and Tabellini 2004, Milesi-Ferretti, Perotti and Rostagno 2002); relatively high levels of corruption (Geddes and Ribeiro Neto 1992, Golden 2003, Chang 2005), relatively low levels of

corruption (Kunicova and Rose Ackerman 2005, Persson, Tabellini and Trebbi 2003), or different types of corruption (Gingerich 2013); gender imbalance (Jones and Navia 1999); distributive politics (Franchino and Mainenti 2013); higher budget deficits (Hallerberg and Marier 2004); inefficient public spending (Hicken and Simmons 2008); bilateral investment treaties and foreign direct investment (Garland and Biglaiser 2008, Crisp et al 2010); vote buying (Hicken 2007); agricultural subsidies (Park and Jensen 2007); and economic reform (Bagashka 2012).

We claim that in preferential PR, even under institutions that are considered to maximize the individualization of politics, such as OLPR electoral rules, political parties retain a significant role in shaping electoral competition and the kind of linkages voters establish with their candidates. First, office-seeking parties have a strong incentive to limit competition inside the list, thus preventing the eruption of a war of all against all within their lists. Parties can do so because they control access to their label and are able to deploy financial, logistical and operational resources that are highly desirable by individual candidates. Furthermore, parties can distribute candidates across races and over time, making promises of future support in exchange for current withdrawal or support in alternative races. Second, candidates themselves have a strong incentive to limit competition within the list. Only a small number of candidates are able to get elected on their own, with no support from the votes that are transferred within the party. Given that these votes can only help so many candidates, those who see themselves as being viable want to limit the number of other candidates who will be competing with them for these transfer votes and other resources. For this reason, intra-list competition happens, when it happens, prior to the election. Once formed, these lists are composed in such a way as to reduce the competition among the party's viable candidates.

Thus, the argument we advance in this paper questions the causal chain that we find implicitly or explicitly in work that connects personalization to weak political parties and policy outcomes. For this reason it matters for our understanding of accountability, corruption, public policy design, and budget deficits, among other things. If even in the most extreme form of preferential PR parties play a crucial role in coordinating their lists and limiting competition among their co-partisans, the characterization of preferential PR systems as producing strong intraparty competition and an array of negative outcomes must be reconsidered.

In the next section we develop our argument in detail and show that even tough success depends on votes the candidates personally garner, this does not imply that copartisans will compete for votes during elections or that parties are powerless and incapable of influencing candidates' fortunes. In subsequent sections we highlight empirical implications of our argument and test them on the basis of data for the 2010 Brazilian elections for the national Chamber of Deputies. We conclude by indicating the broader theoretical and empirical impact of this research.

2. Party and Candidate Incentives to Limit Intra-list Competition.

Why would parties and candidates seek to limit intra-party competition in an OLPR system? Received wisdom about these systems is that the parties' optimal

strategy in these cases is to open the list to as many candidates as there are people willing to run. Because in these systems the number of seats a party gets is a function of the sum of the votes obtained by all individual candidates, votes brought in by additional candidates lift everyone's chances of being elected. We argue against this view. We first show that certain candidates will have an interest in opposing the entry of similar candidates into the list. Second, we argue that parties have an interest in heeding these candidates' preferences even if, in an unconstrained world, they would have preferred to allow into the list anyone who wants to run. Finally, we argue that parties have the means to control their list and coordinate who belongs in it.

Let us start with the reasons why some candidates want to limit the size of the list. Consider a district D of magnitude M > 1. In OLPR systems, parties present a set of unranked candidates, and voters cast a vote for individual candidates. Once votes are cast, a district quota Q is established, i.e., Q = Valid District Votes/M. This determines the price in votes of one seat. Votes for all candidates in each party are pooled and the party vote P_V is divided by Q to obtain the number of seats each party gets, the party quota $P_Q = P_V/Q$. If the party gets n seats, the n candidates with the most personal votes are the ones who get the seats.²

Assume that a party running in district D can compose a list with m candidates, where m is the district's magnitude. Based on a quite precise estimate of the number of valid votes in the district, and on a less precise estimate of the number of votes

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² This kind of system would also stipulate a procedure for the distribution of remainder seats. For the moment we can leave this aside; we return to it in section 4.4.

candidates will get in the district, a party forms an expectation of the number of seats *n* it will possibly win in the district.

Candidates come in three types: *invincible*, *strong* and *weak*. *Invincible* are the candidates who get personal votes that amount to at least one district quota *Q*; these candidates are assured of election regardless of the party he or she belongs to. *Strong* candidates are those who have a good chance of being elected: they know that they command a sizeable amount of personal votes, but that these votes are unlikely to reach one district quota, thus not sufficient to guarantee their automatic election (for example, they may get 70-80% of the votes necessary to win a seat). *Weak* candidates are those that have little chance of being elected (for example, they may get 15% of the quota or less). They are in the list for a variety of reasons, including an investment in their careers. We leave the definition of "strong" and "weak" purposefully vague. Although candidates know whether they are strong or weak, they are uncertain about how strong they are, i.e., they do not know how strong they are compared to other similarly strong candidates.

Consider a party *P*, which expects to win *n* seats in a district where it can present as many as *m* candidates. Votes are pooled across all candidates to obtain the party's total vote:

$$V_P = \sum_{c_1}^{c_m} c_1 + \dots + c_n + c_{n+1} + \dots + c_m$$

where

$$c_{n+1} - c_n = \varepsilon$$

Canditates c_n and c_{n+1} know that they are strong in the sense defined above, but they cannot know for sure (or even reasonably) whether ε is positive or negative. For example, c_n may expect to garner 65% of a quota in personal votes, plus or minus 10%; c_{n+1} , in turn, expects to get 60% of a quota, plus or minus 10%. Even though the addition of more candidates like c_n and c_{n+1} may increase the number of seats the party as a whole will win, the candidates themselves do not know whether *they* are going to be the ones benefitting from the additional seats. If c_n does exceedingly well in the election, she can be assured that she will be ranked higher than c_{n+1} ; but if c_{n+1} does very well, and c_n not as well as expected, c_{n+1} will actually be ranked higher than c_n and will benefit from the extra seat. Consequently, given an estimate n of the number of seats the party will win, strong candidates in the list have an interest in preventing the entry of additional candidates, in order to reduce the uncertainty of being elected.

Given these conditions, our argument is simple: the greater the number of strong candidates in a list, the greater the uncertainty these candidates face about who will be the top placed candidate and, therefore, who will be elected. Remember that strong candidates are strong enough to be competitive in terms of personal votes (so they know they will be ranked relatively high within the list), but not strong enough to bring in an additional seat by themselves - they are not invincible. Thus, strong candidates know their election depends on votes cast to invincible and weak candidates, which are pooled to determine the party's seat total. But the presence of other strong candidates makes it impossible to know who exactly will benefit from these transfers. For these reasons, strong candidates want to limit the number of similar candidates to

the number of seats the party expects to win in the district. Thus, although candidates in excess may increase the chances that the party will win a seat, they also increase the uncertainty about who will benefit from that extra seat.³

But, why would the party care about which of the candidates get elected? From the party's point of view, if there is a possibility that the entry of a second strong candidate may lead to an additional seat, the party should let that candidate run. Yet, strong candidates can credibly threat to not enter the race or to run under a different party label. Running is costly and some candidates may prefer to avoid paying these costs if the level of intra-party competition is such that there is little or no assurance that s/he will be the one benefiting from the seats gained by the party. Moreover, the party system may contain other parties that could serve as an alternative vehicle for an individual's candidacy. The point is that candidates do have alternatives to accepting the odds of success offered by the list produced by a party. If more than one candidate feels sufficiently uncertain that one's effort will not be rewarded, the party may actually end up with fewer strong candidates in the list than if it had limited the number of strong candidates to begin with. For the party, thus, failure to coordinate may have real costs.

Finally, parties are able to coordinate because they have resources that can be deployed to dissuade some candidates from entering or to persuade others to enter the race. For one, even in the most permissive OLPR system, parties legally control access to the list, even if they cannot rank the candidates in it. The possibility of simply denying

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³ There would be no additional uncertainty if it were true that adding an extra strong candidate would always lead to the party winning an extra seat. In this case, the additional strong candidate would always be the one benefitting from the additional seat won by the party. Yet, it is easy to see that by definition this is not the case: strong candidates are competitive in terms of personal votes but cannot win a seat on their own.

access to specific candidates who want to force their inclusion in the list is always available. But parties have considerably more resources, the use (or withdrawal) of which can be quite persuasive. They control financial resources and can directly help with campaign material, volunteers, and access to radio and television. Parties can also threat reluctant candidates with adding individuals to the list who may actually capture some of their votes. Finally, parties can manage candidates by distributing them across different types of races and in races over time. They may make promises of future support in exchange for current withdrawal and, when multiple races occur simultaneously, they may make offers of support in alternative races.

Thus, a free-for-all candidate list is not necessarily in the interest of parties or candidates. Rather, candidates in a position to do so (by virtue of the number of votes they command) have an interest in limiting the competition they face from co-partisans. Parties, in turn, have an incentive to prevent intense competition among its candidates since some of them may choose to refrain from running under the party's label if their position is not sufficiently assured. And parties have the means to limit competition among co-partisans. True, parties in OLPR systems are deprived of one important mechanism to induce cooperation from candidates, which is available in closed-list systems: the power to rank the candidates. Nonetheless, they have other instruments to induce cooperation from candidates, which range from not making the label available to specific individuals to directly helping with a candidate's campaign. For these reasons, we should not conclude from the fact that parties cannot rank candidates in their lists that the level of competitiveness in OLPR systems is higher than in other systems, or

that elections are essentially unstructured affairs. Relatively strong candidates themselves demand structure and coordination, and parties are in a position to offer them.

3. What Should Candidate Lists Look Like?

Our argument, thus, challenges the current view of competition in OLPR systems. It states that the incentive for cultivating a personal reputation that individual candidates face does not obliterate the role political parties play in organizing the election. Parties compose their electoral lists so as to reduce competition among their strong (and viable) candidates, and they target their resources so that they are not wasted on candidates that have little or no chance of being elected. If this is what parties do, we should see the consequences of parties' actions in the lists they present at elections. More specifically, we should be able to detect the result of parties' efforts in the number and type of candidates that compose a list.⁴

To begin with, party lists should not always reach the maximum number of candidates they are legally allowed to present. If, as it is commonly thought, parties play no role in composing the candidates list and allow as many individuals as possible to participate, we should observe long party lists that reach the maximum number of candidates allowed by law. However, if, as we postulate, parties do not necessarily seek to maximize the number of votes given to the list by filling all possible slots they are

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⁴ In this paper we focus on the numeric composition of candidate lists. Space constraints prevent us from addressing the way parties compose their lists with candidates of different types, that is, candidates who draw votes from different, non-overlapping, constituencies. We address this issue in a companion paper.

allowed to by law, then we should observe a significant amount of restraint in the size of the lists parties present. As a result, the difference between the maximum legally allowed number of candidates and the actual number of candidates in party lists should be positive and not trivially small.

Second, the number of viable candidates, defined as the sum of *invincible* and *strong* candidates, will be close to the number of seats the party expects to win. The difference between expected and viable candidates is a measure of the party's ability to limit competition within its list. We hypothesize that this difference will be relatively small.

Third, if parties in fact limit the number of viable candidates they present, we should observe a break in the distribution of votes among the candidates in a list. Lists that are successfully composed will exhibit a sharp discontinuity in the distribution of votes as one moves from the last viable candidate to the first weak candidate.

Fifth, we should observe variation in intra-party coordination depending on the magnitude of the electoral district. District magnitude makes coordination more difficult for a number of reasons: it is harder for parties to form precise expectations about the number of seats they will get; it is harder for candidates to know where they are placed in the list in terms of personal votes; districts of larger magnitude tend to be more politically important and demand for entry into the list may be larger; finally, the addition of one extra strong candidate to the party list has a smaller impact on the

electoral chances of existing candidates. For these reasons, coordination should be weaker as district magnitude increases.⁵

In the next section we present evidence based on the results of the 2010 elections for the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. Brazil is probably the hardest case to use to illustrate our argument and establish the plausibility of our hypotheses. The details of Brazil's OLPR system make it one of the most permissive and competitive electoral systems to be found in new democracies: in 2010, there were 4,887 candidates distributed across 27 political parties competing for 513 seats in the Chamber of Deputies across 27 electoral districts. The received wisdom about elections for the Brazilian national legislature since the return of democracy in 1985 is that they are chaotic: an excessive number of parties, an excessive number of candidates, parties whose labels mean little to candidates and voters alike; in sum, elections that essentially entail a war of all candidates against all (e.g., Mainwaring 1999, Ames 2001, Nicolau 1996).

The institutional and partisan context in Brazil offers a number of advantages that can be used in testing these hypotheses. First, district magnitude in Brazil varies considerably, ranging from eight to seventy. This allows us to test the impact of district magnitude on parties' ability to coordinate their lists. Second, elections for the Chamber of Deputies are concurrent with elections for President, Senators and Governors; they

⁵ We might also hypothesize that the type of political party would have an effect on list coordination. For example, coordination should be more successful in centralized than in decentralized parties simply because of the autonomy the leadership in the former has to allocate candidates. We leave the analysis of this hypothesis for future work given that, in spite of recent efforts, complete indicators of party structure across districts are yet to be generated.

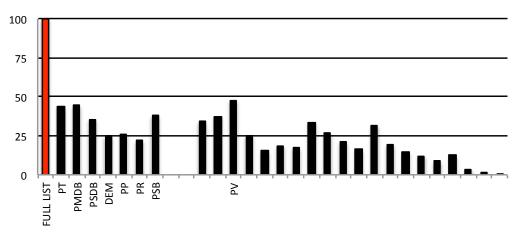
are also concurrent with elections for 27 state-level unicameral legislative assemblies, all chosen under rules identical to the ones employed for the national Chamber of Deputies. Additionally, municipal races (for mayors and local legislative chambers) occur every two years after the national elections. The large number of posts under dispute in any election provides ample opportunity for parties to strategically allocate candidates. Finally, the Brazilian party system, in spite of its almost legendary instability, does provide lasting examples of party organizations, which allows us to explore the impact of party type status (incumbent vs. opposition) and size and institutionalization (variously defined) on the parties' ability to coordinate their candidate lists.

4. Extreme preferential PR: evidence from Brazil

4. 1. Number of Candidates in party list

According to the Brazilian electoral legislation, the number of candidates each party can present depends on the magnitude of the district. In districts with magnitude smaller than 20 (of which there are 19), parties can present up to twice the number of seats under dispute. In districts with magnitude larger than 20 (the remaining 8), parties can present up to 1.5 times the number of seats under dispute. Overall, if every party competed in all 27 districts, each party would be allowed to present up to 868 candidates, distributed across the states according to the their magnitude. They are, however, far from doing this. Figure 1 displays the number of candidates presented by each party as a proportion of the maximum allowed number of candidates, averaged for all districts.

Figure 1
Number of Candidates as Percent of Maximum Allowed
List (Country Average)



Each black bar represents the average number of candidates in a party's list as a proportion of the maximum allowed number of candidates. The seven largest party in terms of national vote are labeled, as well as the *Partido Verde* (PV), which is the party with the largest share of all parties.

As can be seen, no party presented more than 50% of the candidates they could have presented. The party with the largest share of candidates was the *Partido Verde* (PV): 366 candidates competing in 26 of 27 districts, for an average share of 43% of the maximum allowed number of candidates. The next highest was the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), the party of the incumbent president, who presented on average 39% of the maximum allowed number of candidates. The seven largest parties singled out in figure 1 received together just over 70% of the national vote; these are, presumably, the most competitive parties (almost all of them presented candidates in the 27 districts) and the ones who would be in a better position to attract large numbers of candidates if doing so were what they sought to do. Yet, on average, these parties filled only 30% of the places they could have filled in their lists. Clearly, this does not suggest a strategy of granting access to everyone who wants to run.

Note that the pattern of opening the list to as many candidates as there are individuals willing to run is observed in the PV, arguably one of the most ideological parties, as well as in other small ideological parties. In these parties, the average ratio of candidate per seat the party obtained is quite large: 244 for the PTC (obtained 1 seat), 149 for the PSL (1 seat), 86 for the PSOL (3 seats), 82 for the PHS (2 seats), 56 for the PRTB (2 seats), 52 for the PMN (4 seats) and 28 for the PV (13 elected). This contrasts with the number of candidates per seat for the large, more competitive parties: 4 for the PT (86 seats), the PMDB (78 seats), the DEM (43 seats), and the PR (41 seats); 5 for the PSDB (54 seats) and the PP (44 seats); and 8 for the PSB (35 seats). Thus, it is the smaller parties that seem to be opening theirs lists to a large number of candidates, while the large, competitive parties seem to have lists that are much more efficient in terms of the number of seats they get per candidate presented. Complete information for all parties can be found in table 1. The appendix contains a list of all parties, their names and acronyms.

Table 1
Parties Competing in the 2010 Elections: General Characteristics

Party	Party Vote	Personal Vote	Total Vote	# Districts w/ vote	# Districts w/ Cand	# Districts w/ Elected	Candidates	Elected	% Max Num Cand	Cand/Elected	% Nat Vote
DEM	368751	6932420	7301171	27	26	21	191	43	22.00	4.4	7.5
PC do B	203011	2580925	2783936	27	27	10	119	15	13.71	7.9	2.9
PCB	34627	22936	57563	16	12	0	15	0	1.73		0.1
PCO	5235	1425	6660	4	2	0	3	0	0.35		0.0
PDT	367122	4579006	4946128	27	27	15	264	27	30.41	9.8	5.1
PHS	43169	720154	763323	27	25	2	164	2	18.89	82.0	0.8
PMDB	844868	11867988	12712856	27	27	27	342	78	39.40	4.4	13.1
PMN	60375	1052218	1112593	27	27	4	206	4	23.73	51.5	1.1
PP	342392	6862846	7205238	27	27	20	202	44	23.27	4.6	7.4
PPS	160334	2376475	2536809	27	25	7	145	12	16.71	12.1	2.6
PR	261381	6758034	7019415	27	27	19	169	41	19.47	4.1	7.2
PRB	100423	1659973	1760396	27	25	7	134	8	15.44	16.8	1.8
PRP	74658	231282	305940	27	23	2	94	2	10.83	47.0	0.3
PRTB	26733	291341	318074	25	21	2	113	2	13.02	56.5	0.3
PSB	297720	6151486	6449206	27	25	17	293	35	33.76	8.4	6.6
PSC	90832	2951537	3042369	27	26	11	194	17	22.35	11.4	3.1
PSDB	1979118	9481252	11460370	27	27	21	274	54	31.57	5.1	11.8
PSDC	14062	177773	191835	22	16	0	66	0	7.60		0.2
PSL	42473	464180	506653	24	19	1	149	1	17.17	149.0	0.5
PSOL	174262	969954	1144216	26	25	2	259	3	29.84	86.3	1.2
PSTU	47868	54252	102120	19	16	0	29	0	3.34		0.1
PT	2332484	14198833	16531317	27	27	25	340	86	39.17	4.0	17.0
PT do B	36654	605768	642422	23	17	3	126	3	14.52	42.0	0.7
PTB	229593	3788190	4017783	27	27	15	289	22	33.29	13.1	4.1
PTC	30238	565409	595647	26	21	1	244	1	28.11	244.0	0.6
PTN	29154	155434	184588	25	16	0	97	0	11.18		0.2
PV	823733	2885915	3709648	27	27	7	366	13	42.17	28.2	3.8
Total	9021270	88387006	97408276				4887	513	42.17	9.5	100.0

This variation I behavior between small, ideological parties and large, office-seeking parties makes sense under the argument we presented in the previous section. It the party's strong ideological nature – which translates into a low level of personalism – that allows it to adopt a strategy of maximizing the number of candidates in the list. Given the strong ideological inclination of candidates in these parties, they accept to run in order to maximize the number of votes *for the party*, knowing that there is little chance that s/he will be the one elected. Because of its ideological nature, the individual candidate matters less than the fact that there is *someone* from the party elected. The same kind of reasoning, however, cannot be applied to the larger, more competitive parties. Yet, in many analyses of the Brazilian party system, the behavior we observe in the small parties is attributed to the so-called catch-all, purely office-seeking parties (Mainwaring 1999).

As one can foresee on the basis of the figures just presented, the vast majority of the candidates running in elections for the Chamber of Deputies are far from being viable in any sense of the word. To begin with, *invincible* candidates, those whose personal votes exceed the district quota, are extremely rare: less than 1% in 2010 (34 out of 4,887 candidates). Among then, only four had more votes than two times the district quota. Twelve strong candidates had votes that just barely exceeded the electoral quota (< 1.1) and 26 had votes below 1.5 times the electoral quota. So, it is plausible to say that even a large number of *invincible* candidates could not be sure that

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⁶ The candidate with the highest number of votes was the infamous "Tiririca," who ran as a candidate from the *Partido Republicano* (PR) in São Paulo and obtained 4.3 times the electoral quota. The other three were Anthony Garotinho (PR/RJ, with 4 times the quota); Manuela D'Avila (*Partido Comunista do Brasi*/RS), with 2.43 times the quota; and Ana Arraes (PSB/PE, with 2.18 times the quota).

they were so before the election. As for the remaining candidates, 549 had personal votes between one and 0.3 district quotas and 4,210 had personal votes below 0.3 district quotas. As a matter of fact, 3,554, or 73% of all candidates, received less than 5% of a district quota in personal votes. This means that it would take at least 20 such candidates in a list for them to contribute, together, one extra seat for the party. Thus, the overall level of competition expressed by the number of candidates in the race per seat under dispute (4,887/513 seats) considerably overestimates the real competition relatively strong candidates face.

4.2. Targeting the Number of Strong Candidates I

Our claim is that although party lists are large, the largest parties limit the number of strong candidates they present. They seek to target the number of such candidates around the number of seats they expect to win in a given district. If this is true, then the difference between expected number of successful candidates and the number of viable candidates presented should be relatively small. Small differences indicate successful coordination: the party presents only as many viable strong candidates as the number of seats it expects to win. Uncertainty is minimized for the strong candidates who run in the list.

We use the effective number of candidates (ENC), based on the votes received in 2010, to indicate the number of viable candidates. We use the average of candidates elected in the past four elections (1994, 1998, 2002 and 2006) as an indicator of the

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⁷ To compute ENC we use the well-known formula for computing the effective number of parties.

expected number of successful candidates in 2010.⁸ To illustrate, consider the case of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) in the state of Paraná, which elects 30 representatives. Eleven candidates ran under the PT label in 2010, out of the 60 that could have been included. Figure 2 presents the distribution of votes for these candidates. The average number of candidates elected between 1994 and 2006 was 4, which we consider to be the number of candidates the party would be expecting to elect in 2010. The effective number of candidates in that year's list, that is, the number of viable candidates, was 5.72. The difference between the two estimates indicates the deviation from the assumed target number of viable candidates.

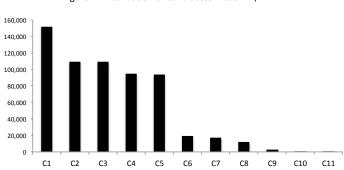


Figure 2 - Distribution of Candidates' Vote - PT/PR

In 2010 PT elected 5 candidates in the state of Paraná, one of whom was elected through the remainder distribution of seats. In this sense, the party underestimated the number of seats it could have gotten. There are many reasons for the discrepancy, but we not two here. The first is that our measure is at best a limited indicator of party

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⁸ Using the number of candidates elected in 2006 does not change the results substantially. Using the number of candidates actually elected in 2010 considerably strengthens the result.

expectation of success; although it is sufficient to provide a broad picture of the attempts at coordination, it far from being ideal. The second reason, related to the electoral system itself, is that the distribution of seats based on remainders is significant in the Brazilian system: 67 out of 513 seats in 2010, or 13% of the total. This considerably complicates the formation of precise expectations by parties, leading them to overshoot by about 1 (as we argue below). The point, however, is that the number of candidates that were actually competitive in PT's list in Paraná was considerably closer the party's expectation based on past performance than to the actual number of candidates who competed under it. Moreover, the distribution of votes across the 11 candidates show that the share of the party vote obtained by the sixth candidate was considerably smaller than the share of vote obtained by the fifth candidate. It could well be the case that the party actually expected to elect five and not four candidates.

Successful coordination depends, among other things, on the degree of uncertainty surrounding the performance of strong candidates. Large districts make it harder for parties and candidates to form a good expectation of their performance. Moreover, as we have seen, the number of seats distributed in the remainder stage of seat distribution is relatively large, inducing parties to add candidates who may be able to get a seat at that stage. Coordination, therefore, should be weaker in larger districts. The second panel in Figure 3 illustrates this for the *PT* in São Paulo, where district magnitude is 70. As before, the party presented a number of candidates considerably below what it could have presented: 57 out of 140. In the past four elections the PT in São Paulo elected 15 candidates on average; the effective number of candidates in the

2010 list was 22. In the end, the party elected 15 candidates, none of whom was elected in the distribution of remainders. The party, thus, presented 7 more strong candidates than what it "should" have expected to receive. We can still see some evidence of list coordination: most importantly is the fact that there is a marked drop in the number of votes of the sixteenth candidate, whose votes, in turn, are almost identical to the votes of the seventeenth candidate.

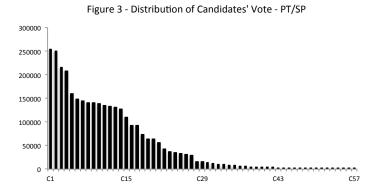


Figure 4 shows the level of coordination among the seven largest parties, averaged across all districts. The average difference for these seven parties is 1.4, ranging from 2.1 for the PT to 0.6 for the PP. Thus, on average, the seven largest parties presented 1.4 more candidates than they should have presented if they had perfectly targeted the number of candidates in their lists. As expected, parties' ability to coordinate their lists diminishes as district magnitude increases. In districts with a magnitude of 18 or less the average difference between the number of viable and expected candidates is 1.4 (standard deviation equal to 0.5). In districts of a magnitude

larger than 22, the average difference between the number of viable and expected candidates is 2.9 (standard deviation equal to 1.2.

Figure 4 - Difference between Effective Number of Candidates

in Party Lists and the Number of Expected Successful
Candidates in the Seven Largest Parties
(Country Average)

10
8
6
4
2
DT PMDB PSDB DEM PP PR PSB

4.3. Targeting the Number of Strong Candidates II

One limitation of the method above is, of course, the estimate of how many seats the party expects to win. Another is that it does not allow us to identify who are the viable candidates in a list. As an alternative we can identify as strong all candidates who received at least 15% of a district quota in personal votes. This threshold establishes a relatively low bar for identifying strong candidates. Since we want to argue that intra-party competition is not as intense as the absolute number of candidates suggests, a low bar for the identification of strong candidates runs against what we want to show.

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⁹ Note that what could have been reasonable focal points for a threshold, e.g., the average quota share or the share obtained by the median candidate, produce an exceedingly and unreasonable low bar. This is so because the distribution of personal votes is highly skewed. The average candidate gets 9% of a share in personal vote; the median candidate gets 0.8% of share!

Table 2 provides an alternative way to see how party lists are frequently not free-for-all collections of individuals. The unit of analysis in the table is a party-district. Some parties competed in all 27 districts; others competed in fewer districts. Overall there were 608 party lists presented across the 27 districts. The entries in the table are the number of lists by the number of strong candidates they presented and the number of candidates that were elected. For example, throughout the country there were 290 lists that contained no strong candidates and did not elect any candidate. That is to say, almost half of all lists were inflated and non-competitive.

Grey cells represent the number of lists that elected all the strong candidates they presented: 96 of them presented one strong candidate, and that candidate was elected; 19 presented 2 candidates, both of whom were elected; five presented three candidates, and all three were elected; etc. Blue cells are the cases in which a party elected at least one weak candidate in addition to the strong candidates they presented. This is possible because of two circumstances, which may operate together or in isolation. The first is when the number of personal votes a strong candidate gets is two or more times the district quota. In this case that candidate pulls the second (or third, etc.) candidate in the list, even if the candidate being pulled is a weak one. The second possibility is due to the coalition that parties celebrate for elections to the Chamber of Deputies (discussed in section 4.5). Sometimes the number of seats allocated to the coalition is larger than the number of strong candidates in it, which means that some weak candidates will be elected. These possibilities are often raised as negative features of OLPR systems in general and of Brazil in particular since they represent distortions in

representation. Yet, as the table demonstrates, they occurred in only one list presented in 2010.

Table 2

Number of Party Lists by the Number of Strong Candidates Presented and Candidates Elected

Number of Candidates	Numb	er of St	rong C	andidat	tes Pre	sented											
Elected	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	14	15	21	23	Total
0	290	50	17	1	2	1											361
1		96	32	11	2												141
2		1	19	15	7	4	2										48
3				5	5	4	5	1									20
4					4	7	1	1	1								14
5						1	1	2	4	1							9
6							1		1		2						4
7								1	1			2					4
8											1	1	2				4
10														1			1
13																1	1
15															1		1
	290	147	68	32	20	17	10	5	7	1	3	3	2	1	1	1	608

Cells above the diagonal are the cases in which a list elected fewer candidates than the number of strong candidates it contained. These are the cases where intraparty competition could have been intense since equally viable candidates would have be vying for the relatively few seats the party won. Yet, not all cases in this category represent intense intra-party competition. Arguably, lists that presented *n* strong candidates but elected *n-1* do not exemplify failure to limit intra-party competition. If we consider, thus, that failures of coordination are the cases in which a list presented at least 2 more strong candidates than the ones it was able to elect (the darker red cells in table 2), we find that there were 79 such lists, representing 13% of all the lists that competed in the 27 districts. More than half of these 79 instances of more intense intraparty competition (44) involved lists with two "extra" strong candidates, that is, two more than the number of candidates elected. These are not unreasonable "mistakes"

given the importance of the second-round of seat distribution (after the seats obtained through full district quotas are allocated)¹⁰ and the uncertainties introduced by the coalitions. In these cases, parties overshoot as a way to capture one or two extra seats. In turn, 22 out of the 35 remaining lists, that is, lists in which three or more strong candidates failed to be elected, were in one of the six "mega-districts:" Paraná (magnitude M = 30 seats), Rio Grande do Sul (M = 31 seats), Bahia (M = 39 seats), Rio de Janeiro (M = 46 seats), Minas Gerais (M = 53 seats), and São Paulo (M = 70 seats). This, thus, underscores our argument that list coordination is harder to be accomplished in districts with very large magnitudes.

4.4. Discontinuity in the Intra-list Vote Distribution.

One final piece of evidence in support of the notion that parties coordinate their lists by limiting the number of strong candidates competing in them comes from the fact that the intra-list distribution of votes is often characterized by a sharp discontinuity between the last elected candidate and the first or second non-elected candidates. This indicates that parties do not see all individuals in their lists equally: there are those who have a chance of being elected (the strong candidates in our terminology) and those whose chances are for all practical purposes close to zero (the weak candidates).

To see this, define the following positions in a party list: the last winner (LW) and the first loser (FL). To LW's left, we find the next-to-last winner (NLW); to FL's right we

¹⁰ In 2010, 67 seats in the Chamber of Deputies (13%) were allocated in the second-round of seat distribution.

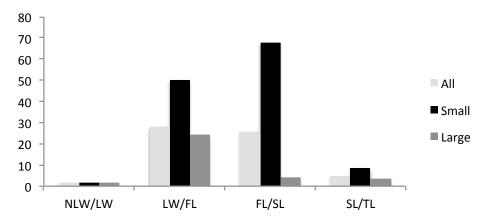
¹¹ We say "first or second" because, as explained above, we believe parties overshoot the number of strong candidates because of the coalition rule (which we discuss in the next section) and the desire to compete in the second round of seat distribution.

find the second loser (SL) and the third loser (TL). If parties limit the number of viable candidates in their lists we should observe a break in the distribution of votes between the last winning candidate in the party and the first loser. As a matter of fact, if we consider the ratio of the votes between any pair of the candidates just defined, we should observe a curvilinear distribution: small ratios between two winning or two losing candidates; large ratios between a winning and a losing candidate. These ratios were computed for every list with a sufficient number of candidates. ¹² As displayed in figure 5, the overall pattern conforms with our expectations: on average, the last winner in a list gets a little over 28 times as many votes as the first loser; when compared to the second loser, the first loser gets 26 times as many votes. This means that in some lists the first loser is still a competitive candidate. The discontinuity between the first and second losers is actually stronger in smaller districts (M < 12) than in the larger ones (M > 15): while in these districts the last winner receives 50 times as many votes as the first loser, the first loser receives 67 times as many votes as the second loser. Larger districts display the expected pattern: the sharpest break in vote distribution happens as one goes from the last winner to the first loser. The magnitude of the ratios, however, is considerably smaller than the one observed in small districts. In our view, this underscores the fact that coordination in larger districts, although present, is not as successful as coordination in small districts.

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 $^{^{12}}$ Note that some lists display remarkable coordination but they cannot contribute to this computation. In 18 lists, for example, parties presented only one candidate, who was elected. In general, parties that present n candidates and elect n of them display coordination but do not allow the computation of the LW/FL ratio. Note that these lists $are\ not$ identified in table 2 since in that table we only consider the strong candidates present in the lists.

Figure 5 - Average Vote Ratios for Pairs of Candidates According to Their Position in the Party List (By District Magnitude)



NWL/LW: Ratio of the votes obtained by the next-to-last winning candidate to the last losing candidate.

LW/FL: Ratio of the votes obtained by the last winning candidate to the first losing candidate.

FL/SL: Ratio of the votes obtained by the first losing to the second losing candidate.

SL/TL: Ratio of the votes obtained by the second to the third losing candidate.

We do not interpret the high ratio between the first and second losing candidates lack of successful coordination by the parties. As we discussed earlier, remainder seats are both important in the districts and hard to predict and it could very well be the case that, under these circumstances, a party's optimal strategy would be to compete for the remainder seats by adding to their lists at least one extra candidate, that is, over and above the number of candidates they expect to elect. In this sense, the fact that the real break in the distribution of votes intra-list happens when we move from the first to the second loser should not be surprising.

4.5. Electoral Coalitions for Legislative Elections.

Candidate lists for elections to the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies are often composed of parties in coalitions. These lists are normally large and display none of the patterns that we have shown exist for individual party lists.

The frequency of electoral coalitions, thus, raises the possibility that our analysis focuses on the wrong actor: we should study what coalitions of parties and not individual parties do to compose their candidate lists. We argue that this is not the case: in spite of the widespread formation of coalitions of parties for national legislative elections, the individual political party, and not those coalitions, is the proper unit of analysis.

The first piece of evidence in support of this claim is the fact that the legislation treats a coalition as a single list *only for purposes of seat allocation*. Coalitions are allowed to present more candidates than individual parties. The number of seats they receive is determined in the same way as it is determined for individual parties: the sum of votes given to all the candidates who are members of the parties belonging to the coalition are pooled and divided by the district's electoral quota. The allocation of seats to candidates is also identical to what happens in individual parties: coalition candidates are ranked according to the number of preference votes they received and the top-*n* candidates in the list, regardless of their party affiliation, are the ones to receive the *n*-seats allocated to the coalition.¹³ However, and this is very important, coalitions for

12

¹³ This aspect of the electoral system has been widely criticized. The fact that the coalition seats are not allocated in proportion to the votes received by each party is thought to distort voters' intentions, since

proportional elections only matter after the election, strictly for the counting of the votes and distribution of seats. Parties and candidates do not compete as members of a coalition and voters are rarely aware that a candidate for Federal Deputy belongs to a party that is in coalition with another party. As a matter of fact, the legislation explicitly indicates that, when competing for the Chamber of Deputies, parties should only use their own name and/or acronym during the campaign (Lei das Eleições, art.6, paragraph 2).

Second, in part for this reason, parties in the same coalition do not need to negotiate anything about the conduct of the campaign for Federal Deputies. the list of candidates s are not the result of a process of bargaining among parties seek to optimize their own lists. Rather, they are simply the addition of lists independently generated by the parties that compose the coalition. The rules are such that coalitions can present a higher number of candidates than individual parties. And the maximum number of candidates is sufficiently large that parties face no constraints. In 2010, no coalition list reached the maximum number of candidates they could have presented.

Third, coalitions are formed with executive elections in mind. Presidential and gubernatorial elections are the main reason parties enter into coalition. Rare is the case, if such case exists at all, that two parties coalesce exclusively to compete for seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The relevance of this fact is that candidates for the Chamber are unlikely to be able to affect the decision about whether his or her party should coalesce for the Chamber elections. As a matter of fact, there is no entity that represents the

their vote may help elect individuals from parties they do not like (Nicolau, Tafner, Guist Tavares, Ames, Power).

coalition as such and with whom the candidates could try to negotiate in the process of list formation. The closest to such an entity is the candidate for Governor since the same parties that coalesce to support him will also coalesce for the Chamber of Deputies. But, as someone engaged in a majoritarian contest, the Governor is unlikely to advocate imposing numeric limits to the list of candidates who could bring additional votes to her. And as someone who is clearly identified as the candidate of one of the parties in coalition, he does not have the power to impose a strategy over the parties with whom she is coalescing. For these reasons, candidates running for the Chamber of Deputies simply design their electoral strategies taking the existence of coalitions as a given.

The upshot of this discussion is that candidates for federal deputies face, in fact, a highly competitive environment within the coalition, over which they have no control; they no say over whether or not they are formed, and they have no way to limit the number (or type) of candidates who will appear in the final coalition list. Candidates for Federal Deputies, thus, face a process of seat distribution that is extremely uncertain: whether one will be the last candidate to be elected or the first to lose is impossible to be known in advance.

What can a candidate do in such a situation? Given the impossibility to know where in the ranking of coalition candidates she will end up, the candidate's strategy is to simply try to get as many votes as she can. The best strategy to do so, we argue, is for the candidate to control the things he can control, namely, the number of similarly strong candidates competing in his party's list. This prevents the pulverization of the resources – and the votes that come with them – the party can provide.

Thus, when it comes to list composition, the action happens at the level of the political party. Because seat distribution happens at the level of coalitions and not parties, individual candidates face a high degree of uncertainty regarding their ranking in the post-election list. Given that they cannot influence whether the party will enter into coalition or not, and if they do, what the coalition list will look like, the candidate seeks to limit competition where he can: in his own party. Thus, intense competition happens inside the coalition, an entity that does not have any political existence before, during or after the election. Intra-party competition, however, is highly restrained.

5. Conclusion.

The evidence we presented raises a number of questions, which we are unable to address here. As we were interested in showing the existence of a pattern, we naturally focused on averages. Yet, it would be interesting to explore the variation in intra-list coordination across parties, across districts and across time. In addition to district magnitude, what other factors influence the parties' capacity to successfully limit the number of strong candidates in their list? How do parties coordinate across the different simultaneous elections, that is, presidential, gubernatorial, senatorial and legislative at the national and state levels?

Another question has to do with the presence in the race of a large number of small, essentially irrelevant candidates. To some extent, these candidates can be explained in terms of career investments: people who want to pay their dues for advancement in the party and/or who plan to run for local elections in the municipal

cycle that occurs two years after the national cycle. Yet, the number of such candidates is staggering, even though they count virtually nothing for the election of national legislators. Their existence, and persistence over several elections, needs to be explained.

Additionally, it is important to consider alternative ways to measure the party's estimate of its strength. In this paper we used the average over the past four elections. We have experimented with the number of candidates the party elected in the previous election, as well as the number of candidates it elected in the current election. The latter is, of course, problematic since it is endogenous to the strategies adopted by the parties. At the same time, however, the relatively small difference between the number of candidates parties elect and the effective number of candidates they present is striking. We should not observe such a pattern had the lists been put together by simply opening them to everyone who wished to run under the party's label.

Finally, there is the existence of so many small political parties and their persistence over time. Unlike other new democracies that have adopted preferential PR systems, the number of parties in Brazil has displayed no signs of going down. As a matter of fact, they have been increasing, reaching a number in the 2014 legislative elections that grants Brazil the dubious honor of having the most fragmented national legislature in the world. If parties are able to coordinate their intra-party list, the question arises as to why they are unwilling or unable to coordinate among themselves and become stronger as a party. [Currently there is no rationalist explanation for this inertia in the party system fragmentation, which goes counter to what happens in most

other new democracies.] Some explanations blame the large magnitude of the districts, the ballot structure itself (open- versus closed-list), or federalism. Other invoke the individualism of the political class. More recently Calvo et al. suggest... We find that all these explanations are, ultimately, limited and unable to explain the dynamic that we observe in the Brazilian party system: namely, not only that the number of parties is large, but that it is increasing. Existing attempts to account for it tend to focus on only one aspect of the so-called structure of incentives parties and candidates face and end up suggesting that the whole system is ultimately irrational. Other explanations evoke a pervasive and strong sense of individualism in the political class, which would prevent reforms seeking to strengthen political parties and other organizations institutions from being approved. As we alluded to earlier, we are currently developing an explanation that is based on the incentives of large parties – the ones who can ultimately pass or block reforms – for keeping the system legally permissive.

Notwithstanding these open questions, we believe that the argument and the evidence we provide make a compelling case for starting to look differently at the relationship between political parties and personalist electoral systems in general, and preferential PR systems in particular. Our analysis suggests two conclusions, one of interest to those primarily concerned with Brazil, and the other of interest to those concerned with the role political parties play across different electoral systems

Regarding Brazil, part of the sense of chaotic electoral competition that exists among analysts of virtually every persuasion comes from the habit of projecting the dynamics that is observed in São Paulo and other "mega-districts," to the country as a

whole. Political parties matter in elections for the Chamber of Deputies even in São Paulo. Yet, the magnitude there is so large that it is hard for parties to form a good estimate of their strength and virtually impossible for candidates to have a good sense of where they stand in terms of votes when compared to their co-partisans. Moreover, the relative impact of one additional strong candidate in a list competing in a district as large as São Paulo is smaller than that impact in a list competing, say, in Acre, where district magnitude is 8. Finally, seats in São Paulo and other larger districts may be more desirable than seats in other districts, thus attracting a larger pool of interested candidates. Limiting intra-list competition in smaller districts is easier and, therefore, more likely to be successful. In these districts, political parties display a surprising degree of numerical restraint in composing their lists and often win with only the smallest possible number of candidates. In our view, the sense of chaotic competition that pervades analyses of Brazilian electoral politics emerges from the observation of what happens in the largest districts, which is them projected onto the smaller ones. This is, as we hope to have demonstrated, a mistake. Successful limitation of intra-list competition is the norm in the vast majority of districts, and can be observed even in the large ones. One implication of these findings is that the difficulties of coordination are not intrinsic to the ballot structure. Rather, they are mostly the product of a few mega-districts. To the extent that open-list PR has merits – and we believe it does – it is prudent to consider that it can be improved by the adoption of reforms that are not as drastic as the complete overhaul of the electoral system.

At a more general level, our paper suggests, in line with papers that have focused on other electoral systems, that electoral systems that cultivate incentives for candidates to emphasize the personal vote do not necessarily obliterate any meaningful role for political parties. Yes, OLPR (and other forms of preferential PR) does make elections more focused on individual candidates — votes must be given to them as individuals and not someone else. But this does not mean that the role political parties play in organizing elections is trivial; they provide resources that candidates require in order to win and, because of that, they are in a position to prevent a generalized war where each candidate competes with everyone else.

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