

Ideological classification of Brazilian parties

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The dataset of elections and party ideology provides data on Brazilian parties' ideology, legislative contingent and share of the vote in lower chamber elections. The dataset relies on surveys with parliamentary elites and experts, as explained below. You will also find in this document a description of the variables included in the dataset.

The dataset as well as the ideological classification of Brazilian parties were created for my research on the reorganization of the Brazil's political right. The table with the list of parties by ideological bloc and the explanation of the procedures utilized to create the ideological classification have originally appeared in the 2023 book I have coedited with Robert Vidigal. To quote the dataset and/or the ideological classification you should make reference to our book on the Brazilian new right:

Borges, André; Vidigal, Robert. (eds). *Para Entender a Nova Direita Brasileira: Polarização, populismo e antipetismo*. Porto Alegre: Editora Zouk, 2023.

Sources and operationalization criteria

The ideological classification of parties was constructed mainly by relying on the scores estimated by Zucco and Power (2020) based on legislators' responses to several editions of the Brazilian Legislative Surveys (BLS) from 1990 to 2017. However, since the Brazilian Legislative Surveys do provide information for some parties and/or legislative periods, I have utilized two additional sources: the 2006, 2011, 2015 and 2018 waves of the Political Representation, Executives and Political Parties (PREPPS) expert survey (<https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/prepps>) and the 2020 V-Party expert survey.

Although the ideological scores obtained for each party and election differ slightly between these three sources, the correlation between the measures is extremely high (around $r=0.9$), which suggests that both the data from the surveys with federal deputies and the scores obtained from the experts' evaluation are consistent with a single underlying distribution of the parties in the ideological space. I calculated average party ideology scores across the available sources. Then I estimated an overall ideology score for each party considering all the elections for which there was a valid ideological classification.

To calculate the ideological position of União Brasil (UB), a party that did not exist at the start of the 2019-2023 legislature, a simple average of the scores given to PSL and DEM by the V-Party 2020 and PREPPS 2019 expert surveys was calculated. This seems justified considering that UB resulted from the merging of these two parties, and approximately 80% of the legislators that joined UB in 2021 were originally from the

DEM or the PSL. Finally, I classified a remaining group of small parties based on the categorical classification developed by Codato et al (2018).¹

The left, centre and right categories were defined by building equally sized, 7-point intervals for the left and right blocs within the 20-point scale. The center was defined as the remaining 6-point interval, ranging from 8 to 13. Parties were placed within each category according to their mean scores. This procedure is justifiable considering that the relative positions of the major parties within the system have remained mostly stable between 1990 and 2018, even though the absolute differences between the parties positioned at the extremes of the ideological scale have decreased over time. There are, however, two cases of parties that have changed very substantially their ideological profile, by abandoning their original center-left positions in the early 1990s and becoming more alike the center-right – the PSDB and the PPS. In the recent years, the PSDB has actually crossed, by a very small margin, the threshold that separates the center from the right. Still, given that both the PSDB and the PPS differ from right-wing parties in that they are, on average, significantly more secular and more socially progressive, according to the PREPPS 2015 and 2018 expert surveys, I opted for classifying them as center parties.

The resulting classification of Brazilian parties is presented in table A.1 below:

Table A.1 – Ideological Classification of Brazilian Parties

Left	Center	Right	
PSTU	PROS	PSD	PFL/DEM
Rede	PSDB	PTB	PSL
PSOL	PMDB	PSC	NOVO
PCdoB	SD	PODEMOS	PRTB
PT	PHS	PL/PR	PRONA
PSB	PTC	PRB	PEN/PATRI
PDT	PPS	PDC/DC	PRP
	PMN		
	AVANTE	PRN	PTR
	PV		
		PRONA	UB
		PDS/PPB/PP	

Sources: BLS and PREPPS surveys (various years), Codato and Bolognesi (2018). Author's elaboration.

¹ The parties not included in the classification are very small, transient organizations and their joint vote never surpassed 2% of the national total in all lower chamber elections considered in my analysis.

Variable description

election	Election year
party_code	Unique codes for party and election year considering changes in party names throughout time
party_code2	Unique codes for party and election year utilizing original party names (e.g., party names utilized previous to changes in acronyms)
cat_ideo3	Ideological classification of parties, according to average ideological scores (averageideo3)
scalePZorig	Power-Zucco (2021) original ideology scores, obtained from BLS (1990-2017)
sdPZ	Standard deviation of mean ideology scores obtained from Power and Zucco (2021)
ideologyPZ	Power-Zucco scale converted to the PREPPS 20-point scale
ideopp	Ideology scores obtained from PREPPS expert surveys (2006, 2011, 2015 and 2019)
ideovd	Ideology scores obtained from the V-Party 2020 dataset
ideo3	Average ideology scores for party x and election t across available sources. Whenever there is a single measure of party ideology in a specific year, ideo3 is equal to the ideology score reported by the available source.
averageideo3	Averageideo 3 was calculated by averaging ideo3 across all election years for which there existed valid observations for the party
legvote	Share of the valid national vote obtained by the party in lower chamber elections
legseat	Share of lower chamber seats obtained by the party
party_facts_id	Unique party facts id code

References:

Codato A, Berlatto F and Bolognesi B. (2018) Tipologia dos políticos de direita no Brasil: uma classificação empírica. *Análise Social*: 870-897.

Zucco Jr, Cesar, e Power, Timothy J. (2021), "Fragmentation without cleavages? Endogenous fractionalization in the Brazilian party system". *Comparative Politics*, 53(3): 477-500.