

# POLITICAL CLEAVAGES IN BRAZIL: A LONGITUDINAL DIMENSION

*Clivagens políticas no Brasil: uma dimensão longitudinal*

*Clivajes Políticos en Brasil: una dimensión longitudinal*

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## **Abstract**

The study investigates the persistence and evolution of political cleavages in Brazil, examining how differences in public opinion relate to value priorities (materialism and postmaterialism) and party preference for the Workers' Party (PT). The empirical basis consists of data from five waves of the World Values Survey (1991, 1997, 2006, 2014, and 2018), analyzed using factor analysis and item response theory techniques. The results reveal a value difference of the liberal-fundamentalist type that remains constant over the waves, with fundamentalist voters being more materialistic and less likely to prefer the PT. Additionally, it is observed that the relationship between this liberal-fundamentalist difference and the preference for the PT has become less stable over time, reflecting changes in the party's base. These findings highlight the significant role of religious mobilization in Brazil and evidence historical roots in Brazilian public opinion that help to understand contemporary phenomena. By providing empirical evidence from the Brazilian context, the study contributes to the broader literature on political cleavages and suggests new directions for comparative research in other Latin American countries.

**Palabras clave:**

*clivajes políticos;  
fundamentalismo;  
opinión pública;  
preferencia  
partidaria;  
posmaterialismo.*

**Resumen**

El estudio investiga la persistencia y evolución de los clivajes políticos en Brasil, examinando cómo las diferencias en la opinión pública se relacionan con las prioridades de valores (materialismo y posmaterialismo) y con la preferencia partidaria por el Partido de los Trabajadores (PT). La base empírica consiste en datos provenientes de cinco olas de World Values Survey (1991, 1997, 2006, 2014 y 2018), analizados mediante técnicas de análisis factorial y teoría de la respuesta al ítem. Los resultados revelan una diferencia valorativa del tipo liberal-fundamentalista que se mantiene constante a lo largo de las olas, con votantes fundamentalistas siendo más materialistas y teniendo menor probabilidad de apoyar al PT. Además, se observa que la relación entre esta diferencia liberal-fundamentalista y la preferencia por el PT se ha vuelto menos estable a lo largo del tiempo, reflejando cambios en la base del partido. Estos hallazgos resaltan el papel significativo de la movilización religiosa en Brasil y evidencian raíces históricas en la opinión pública brasileña que ayudan a comprender fenómenos contemporáneos. Al proporcionar evidencia empírica del contexto brasileño, el estudio contribuye a la literatura más amplia sobre clivajes políticos y sugiere nuevas direcciones para investigaciones comparativas en otros países latinoamericanos.

**Palavras-chave:**

*clivagens políticas;  
fundamentalismo;  
opinião pública;  
preferência  
partidária; pós-  
materialismo*

**Resumo**

O estudo investiga a persistência e a evolução de clivagens políticas no Brasil, examinando como diferenças na opinião pública se relacionam com prioridades valorativas (materialismo e pós-materialismo) e com preferência partidária pelo Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT). A base empírica é composta por dados provenientes de cinco ondas do World Values Survey (1991, 1997, 2006, 2014 e 2018), analisados por meio de técnicas de análise fatorial e teoria da resposta ao item. Os resultados revelam uma diferença valorativa do tipo liberal-fundamentalista que se mantém constante ao longo das ondas, com eleitores fundamentalistas sendo mais materialistas e tendo menor probabilidade de preferir o PT. Além disso, observa-se que a relação entre essa diferença liberal-fundamentalista e a preferência pelo PT tornou-se menos estável ao longo do tempo, refletindo alterações na base do partido. Esses achados ressaltam o papel significativo da mobilização religiosa no Brasil e evidenciam raízes históricas na opinião pública brasileira que ajudam a compreender fenômenos contemporâneos. Ao fornecer evidências empíricas do contexto brasileiro, o estudo contribui para a literatura mais ampla sobre clivagens políticas e sugere novas direções para pesquisas comparativas em outros países latino-americanos.

## 1. INTRODUCCIÓN

In recent decades, Brazil has undergone significant political and social transformations. With the democratization process, the public sphere witnessed the emergence and consolidation of new political debates, particularly those related to cultural issues, which became a strong element of voter division both in Brazil (Rennó, 2020; 2022) and in various other Latin American countries (see Corrales,

2020). This phenomenon mirrors elements present since the 1970s in the context of advanced democracies (Dalton & Flanagan, 1984; Inglehart, 1977; Inglehart & Welzel, 2009).

This topic was explored in studies from the 1990s, such as Moreno's (1999), which identified significant political divisions in newly democratized countries, including Brazil. He highlighted an economic division in 1991 and the merging of the «Democratic-Authoritarian» and «Liberal-Fundamentalist» issues, with the latter gaining prominence over time. By 1997, all three dimensions were evident, with a notable decline in the Democratic-Authoritarian cleavage as public sentiment shifted towards the Liberal-Fundamentalist dimension.

The electoral victory of the right-wing candidate, Jair Bolsonaro, in 2018, strongly supported by a discourse centered on moral conservatism (Rennó, 2020; 2022; Zanotti, Rama & Tanscheit, 2023), and the growing solidification of collective identities in the subsequent period, particularly around the axis of liberal versus fundamentalist values (Nunes & Trauman, 2023), reshaped the Brazilian political landscape. The presidential contests in recent Brazilian democracy history between the two parties that were then the main national contenders, the Workers' Party (PT) and the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB), which lasted for 20 years (1994-2014), did not clearly divide the electorate on cultural issues; on the contrary, supporters of both parties held very similar positions (Borges & Vidigal, 2018). This caused some surprise regarding mass adherence to the new right-wing movement. How much of this difference in values, now institutionalized through voting, is a contemporary and new phenomenon, and how much of it was a latent phenomenon in the electorate that had no electoral offer until the emergence of this new national movement? This question makes it necessary to develop studies aimed at capturing both the persistence and evolution of these differences in the electorate over time.

In this study, we update the analysis of the Brazilian departing from the empirical and theoretical contribution made by the seminal work by Moreno (1999) on the topic. We do so by incorporating recent empirical data from the World Values Survey (WVS) waves of 2006, 2014, and 2018. The aim is to trace the evolution and persistence of the liberal-fundamentalist dimension over time. Our hypotheses focus on the key explanatory determinants of this type of difference within the electorate, based on recent advancements in the literature. Specifically, we investigate two main hypotheses: (H1) the relationship between the persistence of the liberal-fundamentalist dimension and the process of modernization, as discussed in postmaterialist theory; and (H2) the connection between this dimension and the structuring of the Brazilian party system, with an emphasis on the evolution of party identification with the PT. The analysis of these hypotheses will be conducted using factor analysis techniques and item response theory, applied to WVS data.

This is an exploratory study, with the aim of establishing analytical frameworks for a developing research agenda, which will need to be complemented by further studies. In the next section, we present a brief review of the literature on the topic, as well as the hypotheses. Afterward, we present the database and the techniques used. In the third part, we discuss the results. We conclude with brief remarks.

## 2. THE ROOTS OF THE LIBERAL-FUNDAMENTALIST DIMENSION IN BRAZIL: THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

The framework for studying cleavages has evolved significantly due to social and political changes. The term «cleavage,» introduced by Lipset and Rokkan (1967), lacks a clear definition, as noted by Deegan-Krause (2013), Damen (2013), and Dolezal (2022). Moreno (1999) also highlights this ambiguity, making its usage inconsistent. Despite this, the framework remains relevant in Europe, North America, Latin America, and Eastern Europe (Dalton, 2018; Deegan-Krause, 2007, 2013; Moreno, 1999).

Bartolini and Mair (1990) attempted to systematize the concept, defining cleavage through three elements: an empirical reference (e.g., social class), a normative element (e.g., values and beliefs), and an organizational/behavioral component (e.g., political parties). Moreno (1999) bases his work on this definition. Deegan-Krause (2007, 2013) builds on Bartolini and Mair's framework, introducing terms like «complete cleavage» (all three elements), «partial cleavage» (two elements), and «difference» (one element). He also identifies four cleavage types: «position divides» (values and identities), «census divides» (structural and institutional aspects), «issue divides» (values and institutions), and «full cleavages» (all elements).

Deegan-Krause (2013) acknowledges the varied use of «cleavage,» noting that not all cases meet Bartolini and Mair's criteria. Our study will focus on identifying opinion differences among citizens (the first element) and their relationship with identity variables (the second element). We will avoid labeling these divisions as cleavages unless they meet the full criteria. Moreno (1999) similarly adopted a less demanding approach due to data comparability issues between elites and citizens, focusing on public data to analyze social identities, issue positions, and party identification.

Moreno's (1999) study was innovative at the time for bringing this approach into discussion and applying it to Eastern European and Latin American countries. Complementarily, other studies have looked at the Latin American scenario (Soares, 1967; Torcal & Mainwaring, 2003; Bonilla *et al.*, 2011; Bornschier, 2020) in light of cleavage theory. The study by Boas and Smith (2015) tacitly points to the growth of two divisions, generally between Protestants and Catholics and between secular and religious individuals. As already mentioned, Corrales (2020) indicates

that this dimension is particularly strong in Brazil, highlighting that evangelicals in this country are even more conservative than those in other parts of the region.

Most of the party systems in Latin America have been established (or reconstituted) in recent decades, with distinct configurations in terms of non-democratic experiences, the maintenance or non-existence of previous parties in the system, and their relationship with the electorate. The Brazilian case is not an exception. The period Moreno (1999) focuses on coincides, for this region, with redemocratization processes.

Foundational explorations of the cleavages within the Brazilian political system can be traced back to the work of Soares (1967). This publication, a collaborative effort with Lipset and Rokkan (1967), introduces a political cleavage rooted in a singular core societal division that demarcated two distinct political cultures. On one side, there's a conservative and authoritative rural populace, firmly under the sway of influential landlord colonels. This group wielded disproportionate political influence, ensuring that their interests held considerable sway within the legislative sphere. On the opposing front, we encounter the labor parties, with a particular focus on the PTB and its successive elected presidents. These parties represented the aspirations of an emerging and developmentalist industrial working class.

Returning to Moreno's work (1999), the author identified distinct cleavages for Latin American countries: «Left-Right materialism», «Democratic-Authoritarian», and «Liberal-Fundamentalist». The first refers to the classical economic division, defined by respondents' orientations in issues of an economic nature, rather than in class. These include redistribution policies and the topic of means of production, especially the dimension of public vs. private ownership. The second refers to democratizing government reforms, to what extent institutions are valued and trusted, and issues of order. The third mainly involves elements such as religiosity and moral issues.

Moreno's (1999) book analyzes cleavages in different regions, and he writes a specific chapter for each reality. One is dedicated to cleavages in consolidated democracies, for example, while another is about countries that came out of the Soviet context. Finally, which interests us more, one chapter is dedicated to Latin American countries. In general, the author incorporates the framework of cleavages to present the different divisions that make up the groups of countries he analyzes.

The outcomes for Brazil particularly align with those for Argentina and Mexico. In 1991, Moreno (1999, table 4.1), in addition to the economic divide, found another factor in which «Democratic-Authoritarian» and «Liberal-Fundamentalist» merge into one (although the factor loading values are much higher for moral issues). In 1997 (Moreno, 1999, table 4.2), all three factors appear for Brazil and most countries in the region. In his concluding remarks about Latin America, Moreno emphasizes the decline of the Democratic-Authoritarian cleavage, which held

paramount importance during the post-redemocratization phase. This transition was anticipated as a consequence of the consolidation of Latin American democracies. Prevailing public sentiment began instead to revolve around burgeoning concerns, most notably the Liberal-Fundamentalist cleavage.

Moving on to a discussion about which attributes or attitudes explain the liberal-fundamentalist difference in the electorate, we will highlight some approaches that will serve as a basis for formulating hypotheses about the Brazilian case.

First, there is the theory of postmaterialism, originally presented by Inglehart (1977) and which largely informed Moreno's (1999) work. According to this approach, the modernization process experienced by central countries has deeply changed their electorates' political values, which, slowly and continuously, caused changes in individual value priorities. In such contexts, environments where the struggle for survival had already been largely resolved enabled post-World War II generations to develop values linked to self-expression, such as gender equality and environmental concerns. Among the various consequences of this phenomenon, one of them is in the political dimension, with positive effects on democratization processes (Inglehart & Welzel, 2009). Although one may have questions about the relevance of this thesis for contexts of deep inequalities and economic underdevelopment, such as Brazil, the theory is backed by evidence, especially at the individual level (Ribeiro, 2011; Ribeiro & Borba, 2010; Okado, 2018).

Considering that the notion of the emergence of a liberal-fundamentalist dimension alongside the erosion of an authoritarian-democratic dimension is grounded in the concept of a society undergoing modernization, we anticipate that employing the postmaterialism index from our datasets will lend support to our initial hypothesis.

**(H1)** The liberal-fundamentalist dimension correlates directly with the postmaterialism index, indicating that the more postmaterialistic individuals tend to exhibit more liberal tendencies, while those more materialistic individuals tend to be more fundamentalist.

A second important element in the utilization of cleavages as organized by Bartolini and Mair (1990), as well as by Deegan-Krause (2007, 2013), is the institutional aspect, particularly parties. The literature on cleavages treats parties as expressions of collective identities that translate social conflicts into institutional politics. In the Latin American case, despite the fragility of parties in the electorate (Carreirão & Kinzo, 2004), research indicates that they can minimally play this role of political mediation (Carreras; Morgenstein & Su, 2013; Albala & Vieira, 2014).

Several Latin American countries went through authoritarian periods in the middle of the last century. Bornschier (2019) does not place Brazil in the rare list of Latin American countries that managed to maintain some continuity between the party

system of the early 20th century and the one resulting from the redemocratization process. This context made the newly formed Brazilian party system more fragile. This feature has three main aspects: a large number of parties (Rennó, 2006), the personalist tradition (Samuels, 2006), and especially the parties' organizational fragility (Carreirão & Kinzo, 2004). Kinzo (2004) analyzed data up to 2002 and concluded: «The party scenario outlined here - marked by intense fragmentation, party fragility, low intelligibility of the electoral dispute and high electoral volatility - is evidence that, during these eighteen years of democracy, advances towards the consolidation of the party system were quite modest» (Kinzo, 2004, p. 35).

While the initial presumption holds that party identification lacks strength in Brazil, investigations conducted by Samuels and Zucco (2014) reveal an exception in the form of PTism, which emerges as a potent identity. This contrasts with the usual volatility characterizing identifications with other parties. As per the scholars' findings, this identity exhibits even greater resilience than identification with the party's foremost charismatic figure, Lula (Samuels & Zucco, 2014). The researchers demonstrated that, at least until 2014, the Brazilian electorate's party system tended to pivot around pro or anti-PT sentiments (Samuels & Zucco, 2018).

Hence, despite the prevailing notion that Brazil lacks steadfast political identities due to the intricate nature of the multiparty system, the literature unveils robust evidence of firmly established identities related to both PTism and anti-PTism. These identities distinctly center around the Workers' Party (PT), recognized as the most adeptly organized political entity in the country. Furthermore, within a more contemporary context, an additional social identity associated with the right-wing has emerged, referred to as Bolsonaroism (Hunter & Power, 2019; Amaral, 2020; Nicolau, 2020; Rennó, 2020; Fuks & Marques, 2021; Ortellado; Ribeiro & Zeine, 2022; Fuks & Marques, 2023). Noteworthy scholars (Kitschelt, 1997; Dalton, 2013) have already underscored that when established parties hesitate in their responses to the electorate's demands, new parties—or, in this instance, a social identity manifested through a candidate—emerge to represent these perspectives. Therefore, this inquiry, although surprising, is rooted in the foundations of political science cleavage literature. However, since we only have surveys up until 2018 and this new identity lacked a strong attachment to a specific party, our analysis will concentrate on the dominance exhibited by the PT over the period under scrutiny.

According to Fuks and Borba (2021), party identification is used frequently in Brazilian studies and has proven to be important to explain voting. The Workers' Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores, PT) stands out in this scenario as the common thread of the presidential disputes, and given the continuity of this political party, one way to investigate this may be to analyze its supporters. Veiga (2007, 2011), Samuels (2008), and Singer (2012) identified a change in PT's electoral base after Lula da Silva's victory in 2002. Singer (2012) pointed out that such a change had been taking place even before 2002 and has accelerated since then. Thus, what we

will do here is observe how these changes in the PT's electoral bases were related to changes in their positions on the issues under study.

Considering the centrality of the PT in the dynamics of the Brazilian party system and the shift in this party's electoral base, we formulate our second and final hypothesis.

(H2) Voters identified with the PT in the 1990s are anticipated to hold more liberal tendencies compared to other voters; however, beginning in the 2000s and onward, due to the party's expansion, we anticipate a reduction in the degree of distinctiveness.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The database used was the World Values Survey (WVS<sup>1</sup>). We have incorporated all the waves available for Brazil up to 2018. Considering the aims of our research, questions were selected based on the original study by Moreno (1999), and they are described in Table 1 below. Based on this author's findings, we integrated the variables employed in his investigation to assess both the presence and persistence of the cleavage (difference in Deegan-Krause terms) he postulated, particularly focusing on the liberal-fundamentalist difference within the contemporary context. Our analysis encompassed a more extensive array of variables compared to those initially presented in the author's findings. However, it's worth noting that all the employed variables were drawn from Moreno's selection (1999, Appendix A).

**Table 1. Questions used**

Expected dimension: Liberal-fundamentalist
Importance of God. How Important is God in your life? (1991-2018)
Justifiable: Homosexuality. (1991-2018)
Justifiable: Prostitution. (1991-2018)
Justifiable: Abortion. (1991-2018)
Justifiable: Divorce. (1991-2018)

1. The World Values Survey (WVS) has been researching global values since 1981, covering over 100 countries and 90% of the world's population. Initially based at the University of Michigan under the supervision of Ronald Inglehart, it is currently directed by Christian W. Haerpfer. Retrieved from <https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org>



**Expected dimension: Democratic-Authoritarian**

Jobs for men. When jobs are scarce, men have the right to a job more than women. (1991-2018)

Jobs for own nationality. When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to Brazilian people over immigrants. (1991-2018)

Greater respect for authority. (1991-2018)

National pride. How proud are you to be Brazilian? (1991-2018)

Justifiable: Fighting with the police. (1991)

Our government should be made much more open to the public. (1991)

People from other countries coming here to work (1997-2006, 2018)

Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections. (1997-2018)

Having experts, not government, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country. (1997-2018)

Having the army rule. (1997-2018)

Having a democratic political system. (1997-2018)

To maintain order in society or to respect the freedom of the individual. (1997)

In a democracy, the economy runs badly. (1997)

Democracies are indecisive and have too much squabbling. (1997)

Democracies aren't good at maintaining order. (1997)

Democracy may have problems but it's better than any other form of government. (1997)

**Expected dimension: Left-right materialism**

Societal change. (1991-1997, 2018)

Income equality. (1991-2018)

Private/Public ownership. (1991-2018)

Competition. (1991-2018)

Political reform in this country is moving too rapidly. (1991)

Government-Individual responsibility (1991-2018)

Source: World Value Survey (WVS).

To explore potential divisions regarding these particular issues, Moreno (1999) employed Principal Component Analysis (PCA). In pursuit of more stringent methodologies, considering advancements in the literature subsequent to this author's work, this study incorporates supplementary analytical approaches, notably Factor Analysis (FA) (Brown, 2006) and Item Response Theory (IRT) (Treier & Hillygus, 2009; De Ayala, 2013), aiming to enhance the analytical depth.

For findings uncontaminated by error variance, factor analysis is a good choice. This, however, does not indicate that one technique or another is a better fit, only that FA is more rigorous (Fabrigar *et al.*, 1999; Laros, 2005). FA combines functions for principal axis, minimum residual, weighted least squares, and maximum likelihood factor analysis.

Through the concurrent estimation of latent trait scores for individual respondents and response curves (derived from these scores) for each item, Item Response Theory (IRT) facilitates the determination of the extent to which each item contributes to information or precision across the spectrum of the latent trait under assessment (Funk & Rogge, 2007). This process constructs a depiction of the insights offered by each item, rendering it an invaluable complementary tool for discerning resilient and persistent schisms within public sentiment.

In dimension reduction methodologies, loading values considered high are  $> 0.6$  (Damásio, 2012); however, the cutoff value commonly used in studies in this field is 0.4. In social science research, orthogonal rotation is most commonly used, mainly because it facilitates interpretation (Brown, 2006, p. 31). For this reason, we used varimax rotation here. To test the fit, we used Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Bartlett, 1937) and KMO (Kaiser & Rice, 1977). According to the authors, an appropriate value for the KMO test is  $> 0.8$ .

We utilized several tests to ascertain the optimal number of dimensions: the Scree test, VSS Fit, Complexity Test, Empirical BIC, and SRMR assess the adequacy of factors by analyzing variance curve changes. Additionally, we considered SS Loading values, retaining factors with SS loading greater than 1. Finally, we constructed models to compare fit statistics (chisq/df, p-value, CFI, TLI, RMSEA, and SRMR) across different scenarios, utilizing variables with factor loading  $> 0.4$ .

Dimensions summarize the correlation pattern between the cross-variables in the matrix. However, since the number of dimensions is usually much smaller than the number of variables, it is important to be careful when transposing this kind of interpretation to the individual level, which, in the end, is our main goal. For this reason, one of the strategies adopted in the literature is the use of a score assigning each individual a value that measures the level of closeness to the dimension described. «When factor scores are estimated for each subject, they are generally more reliable than scores for the individually observed variables» (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007, p. 608). Dalton (2018) also adopted this strategy. According to him, one of the main advantages of this technique is that the scores are weighted

combinations of all the questions, which diminishes the importance of each variable individually and emphasizes the individual's association with the dimension.

As a robustness test, we ran confirmatory factor analyses, since we relied on prior theory (Moreno, 1999) about the divisions. The findings are not different from those of the Exploratory Factor Analysis technique. We present this robustness test and a more detailed analysis in an online [appendix](#).

Next, our analysis investigates which of these structural and institutional aspects act as determinants of the dimensions found in the previous tests. To do this, we implemented a multivariate regression (Hair *et al.*, 2009), using the previously mentioned determinants as independent variables (postmaterialism index and PT identification). We also included some control variables: income; age; the size of the respondent's city; gender; interest in politics; education; ideological self-placement and ethnic group. The control variables incorporate, using the lexicon proposed in the works of Deegan-Krause (2007, 2013), the Census Divide.

Additionally, the variable «religious attendance» (religiosity) has been incorporated into the model. We abstained from formulating a specific hypothesis regarding the impact of this variable due to the clear interrelationship between attendance at religious services and certain variables within the factor representing the dependent variable, such as the significance of God in life. Hence, it is pivotal to integrate this variable into the model, as utilized by Moreno (1999), considering the anticipation of an inherent correlation between religiosity and fundamentalism. Nevertheless, we refrained from framing this association as a hypothesis owing to the significant proximity between the religiosity variable and several components constituting the liberal-fundamentalist dimension in our theoretical model.

For the regression tests, the dependent variables were those containing the resulting scores analysis, as expressed in the equation below:

$$Y_n = \alpha_n + \beta_{n1}X_1 + \beta_{n2}X_2 + \beta_{n3}X_3 + \beta_{n4}X_4 + \beta_{n5}X_5 + \beta_{n6}X_6 + \beta_{n7}X_7 + \beta_{n8}X_8 + \beta_{n9}X_9 + \beta_{n10}X_{10} + \beta_{n11}X_{11} + e_n$$

$Y_n$  represents the dependent variables (scores).  $X_n$  represents the independent variables and the controls, which are:  $X_1$  – Postmaterialism index;  $X_2$  – Party identification;  $X_3$  – Religious Attendance;  $X_4$  – Gender;  $X_5$  – Age;  $X_6$  – Education;  $X_7$  – Income range;  $X_8$  – Population size of the respondent's city;  $X_9$  – Ethnic group;  $X_{10}$  – Self-placement on the ideological scale;  $X_{11}$  – Interest in politics.

The «postmaterialism index» variable was developed in the works by Inglehart (1977) and Inglehart and Welzel (2009). The WVS data includes a comprehensive index comprising twelve items. These items encompass various aspects, such as maintaining order, empowering individuals in decision-making, combating inflation, safeguarding freedom of expression, promoting economic growth, ensuring national defense, enhancing community involvement, beautifying urban and rural

areas, sustaining economic stability, fostering a more humane society, tackling crime, and valuing ideas over wealth. Respondents rate their priorities across these dimensions on a scale of 0 to 5, reflecting a spectrum from materialistic to postmaterialistic values.

The respondents are categorized based on their answers as to their choice of priorities concerning these twelve items on a scale of 0 to 5, ranging from materialistic to postmaterialistic. The party adherence variable became dichotomous, with PT assuming the value 1 and the others the value 0. The variable race became dichotomous, with white as the value 1 and non-white as the value 0. The other variables remained as they were in the original database.

## 4. RESULTS

Employing these enhanced consolidation methodologies, we confirmed the enduring presence of an initially solitary and resilient difference across all five waves, originally pinpointed by Moreno (1999). Termed the liberal-fundamentalist divide, this ideological facet encompasses significant concerns within emerging democracies: «[...] This ideological dimension [...] reflects the salient issues in the new democracies. Attitudes toward abortion, religiosity, and nationalistic feelings define the poles of this dimension» (Moreno, 1999 p. 22).

Particularly in 1997, the WVS incorporated an array of issues concerning perspectives on democracy. This instigated the emergence of two additional robust dimensions linked to the democratic-authoritarian schism (see online [appendix](#)). Given that this paper's scope is solely to duplicate the data employing the identical variables proposed by Moreno, we abstained from integrating fresh and distinct issues that address this theoretical trajectory. The authors intend to delve deeper into this matter in subsequent works, aiming to amplify the tally of enduring divisions discerned. Thus, within this paper's confines, we will focus on the solidified liberal-fundamentalist divide, as substantiated through this particular set of variables.

The distribution of fundamentalism scores, as we call this difference, can be found in this paper's online [appendix](#). The dimensional analyses conducted over the five available WVS waves for Brazil allow the degree of fundamentalism during different periods to be compared. The results are in Table 2.

Due to these considerations, we have opted to exclusively present the liberal-fundamentalist dimension, showcased in Table 2 (the unconstrained dimensions are detailed in the online [appendix](#)). This classification was made in alignment with the aforementioned delineation by Moreno (1999), notably encompassing moral concerns and, in 2018, the inquiry regarding the importance of God.

**Table 2. Liberal-Fundamentalist Difference: Longitudinal Dimension Reduction Analysis**

	1991			1997			2006			2014			2018		
	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT
Dimension: Liberal-Fundamentalist															
Jobs for men	-0.18	-0.15	-0.15	-0.27	-0.22	-0.26	-0.15	-0.15	-0.12	-0.07	-0.08	-0.13	-0.16	-0.14	0.15
Jobs for own nationality	-0.05	-0.07	-0.03	-0.07	-0.07	-0.16	-0.09	-0.09	-0.10	-0.06	-0.14	-0.04	-0.04	-0.28	0.30
Importance of God	-0.07	-0.24	-0.23	-0.34	-0.22	-0.34	-0.28	-0.20	-0.29	-0.21	-0.24	-0.23	-0.25	-0.40	0.55
Societal change	0.02	-0.24	-0.13	-0.02	-0.01	0.02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-0.02	-0.11	0.13
Income equality	0.17	0.07	0.08	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.04	-0.02	-0.01	-0.04	-0.03	-0.05	0.10	-0.12	0.11
Private/Public ownership	-0.01	-0.13	-0.05	-0.06	-0.06	-0.06	-0.03	-0.09	-0.03	-0.01	-0.05	-0.03	0.01	-0.03	0.02
Competition	-0.02	-0.08	-0.02	-0.05	-0.08	-0.03	0.02	-0.09	0.00	0.07	0.05	0.02	-0.02	0.00	-0.04
Respect for authority	-0.12	-0.34	-0.28	-0.29	-0.20	-0.28	-0.19	-0.14	-0.14	-0.13	-0.21	-0.18	0.05	-0.20	0.25
Homosexuality	0.80	0.57	0.83	0.76	0.71	0.83	0.72	0.62	0.70	0.76	0.60	0.82	0.77	0.56	-0.66
Prostitution	0.79	0.63	0.89	0.76	0.71	0.88	0.78	0.64	0.88	0.76	0.71	0.81	0.73	0.67	-0.81
Abortion	0.59	0.60	0.61	0.68	0.56	0.69	0.67	0.55	0.70	0.62	0.55	0.58	0.60	0.63	-0.79
Divorce	0.61	0.54	0.56	0.62	0.50	0.54	0.56	0.42	0.44	0.63	0.40	0.54	0.70	0.44	-0.50
Fighting with the police	0.20	0.41	0.40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
National pride	0.03	-0.25	-0.13	-0.19	-0.12	-0.14	-0.06	-0.05	-0.04	0.00	-0.07	-0.01	-0.01	-0.22	0.25
Government more open	-0.03	-0.07	-0.11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Political reform	-0.14	-0.23	-0.17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Govt. responsibility	0.01	-0.08	-0.00	0.03	0.01	0.02	0.16	0.04	0.11	0.14	0.08	0.04	0.14	0.08	-0.14
Immigration policy	-	-	-	-0.02	-0.04	-0.00	-0.12	-0.13	-0.11	-	-	-	-0.16	-0.19	0.18
Strong leader	-	-	-	-0.03	-0.04	-0.06	0.04	-0.07	0.02	0.04	-0.14	-0.05	-0.06	-0.16	0.13
Experts	-	-	-	0.13	0.10	0.10	0.03	-0.03	0.03	0.10	-0.11	0.01	0.06	-0.12	0.10

	1991			1997			2006			2014			2018		
	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT	PCA	FA	IRT
Dimension: Liberal-Fundamentalist															
Army rule	-	-	-	-0.16	-0.15	-0.16	-0.15	-0.23	-0.14	-0.07	-0.15	-0.13	-0.14	-0.24	0.20
Democratic pol. system	-	-	-	0.04	0.08	0.08	0.01	0.10	0.06	0.12	0.01	0.16	0.13	0.02	-0.04
Order vs freedom	-	-	-	0.10	0.06	0.08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Dem. eco. performance	-	-	-	-0.08	-0.04	-0.07	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democracy& stability	-	-	-	-0.08	-0.03	-0.05	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democracy & order	-	-	-	-0.11	-0.08	-0.08	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Democracy better	-	-	-	-0.09	-0.01	0.12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SS Loadings	2.13	1.95	2.56	2.41	1.79	2.63	2.10	1.48	2.14	2.07	1.53	2.10	2.18	1.87	2.66
Proportion Var	0.13	0.11		0.10	0.07		0.12	0.08		0.12	0.09		0.11	0.10	0.14

Source: WVS.

The values highlighted in gray in Table 2 refer to variables for which the dimensional analysis generated values above 0.4. The variables referring to tolerance and importance of God have the highest loadings. This fact shows a similarity between the findings from the dimensional analysis and Moreno's (1999) definition of liberal/fundamentalist.

For all variables, questions regarding tolerance had the sign reversed in relation with questions regarding the importance of God. This fact denotes the consistency<sup>2</sup> of the measures, since it was to be expected, according to Moreno's (1999) definition of the liberal/fundamentalist divide, that those who place importance on church and God tend to be less tolerant of abortion, prostitution, divorce, and homosexuality.

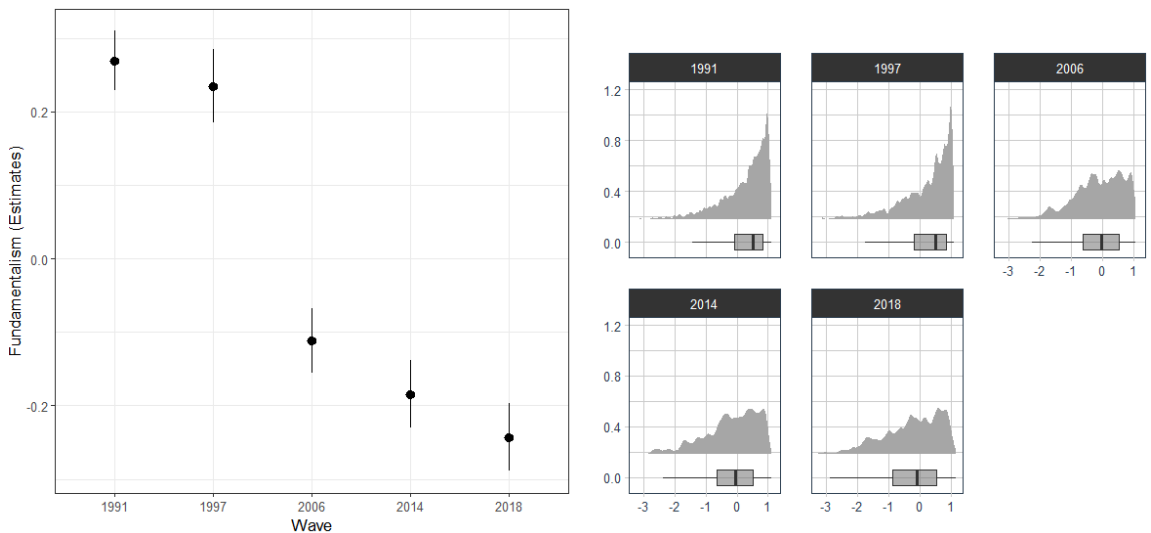
An important aspect that may be crossing the reader's mind is this: if it was only in 2018 that the loading value of the variable «importance of God» became significant, why do we persist in labeling it as fundamentalism? Our continued usage of this term stems from our recognition that the «importance of God» variable

2. In the 1997 wave, the signs were reversed. This is not a problem; we simply divided the scores for that year by one and generated a similar distribution (see the online [appendix](#)) in all waves.

may not possess the robustness needed to unequivocally identify the extent of fundamentalism in a country predominantly inhabited by Christians. Therefore, in the forthcoming tests, we will examine its relationship with the level of religious institution attendance (religiosity), akin to Moreno (1999), to illustrate that fundamentalism is far more intertwined with religious practices than with any form of personal belief.

With the establishment of this enduring chronological difference, an inquiry emerges regarding the constancy or fluctuation in the intensity of fundamentalism during these years. By conducting a factorial analysis by amalgamating the datasets from the five distinct waves, while at the same time exclusively considering variables that exhibit precise replication across all of them (see the online [appendix](#)), we observed fluctuations in the level of fundamentalism across the years. Notably, there is a substantial decrease in fundamentalist intensity from 2006 onward, as vividly illustrated by the downward trajectory depicted in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Variation in the magnitude of fundamentalism across waves**

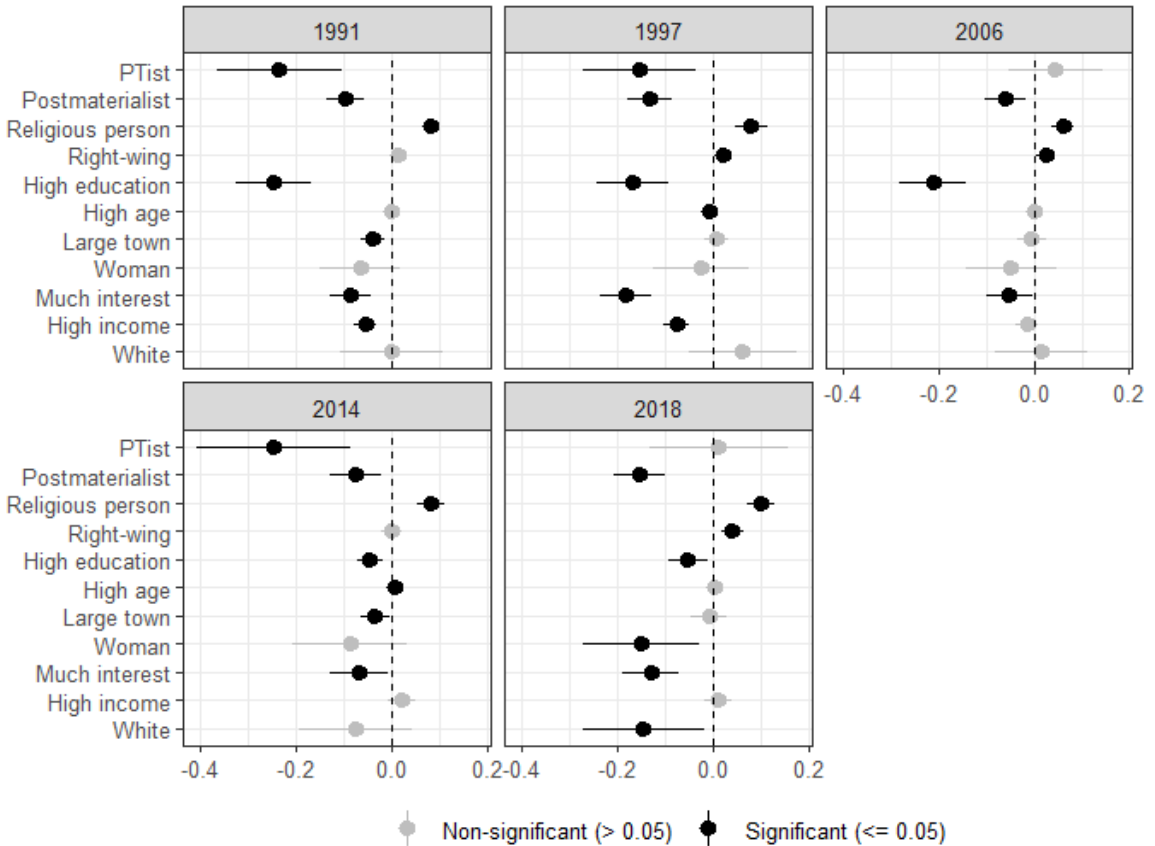


Source: WVS.

Below we apply regression models in which we treat the liberal/fundamentalist scores variable as dependent and insert a set of independent variables and

controls mentioned above in order to observe their controlled effects on our measure. The regressions are shown in Figure 2 with standardized values<sup>3</sup>.

**Figure 2. Correlates of Fundamentalism in Brazil (1991-2018)**



Source: WVS.

Before delving into the hypotheses, it's important to note that our expectations were validated concerning the connection between moral concerns and religious engagement. The divide we refer to as fundamentalism is closely linked with attendance at religious institutions, and its explanatory significance appears to be growing in relation to this difference over time. Consequently, we can affirm that

3. The online [appendix](#) contains the table for the model.



the chosen terminology is appropriate and aligns with the expectations set forth by Moreno (1999) in the development of this concept.

Considering this, it is possible to better collate our hypotheses based on the interpretation of Figure 2. For example, the postmaterialist index consistently followed the expected trend across all five waves, aligning with H1.

In the regression analysis, hypothesis H2 was corroborated. That is, PT voters showed less tendency toward fundamentalism in the waves of the 1990s. In subsequent waves, this attribute has become more undifferentiated. However, there is a level of significance for this variable in the model even in 2014, a period marked by heightened anti-PT sentiment—an association that warrants exploration in datasets containing a more comprehensive set of explanatory variables than those included in the WVS formulation. In any case, the primary takeaway from these findings is that, except for the 1991 wave, where the link between PT affiliation and lower levels of fundamentalism stands out more prominently, it becomes evident that this is not a robust and enduring association as anticipated within the framework of cleavage institutionalization theory. This suggests that we may not be dealing with a full cleavage in this context.

## 5. FINAL REMARKS

This study enhances the understanding of political cleavages in Brazil by examining the interaction between cultural issues and political alignment from a longitudinal perspective. Our findings support previous research on the significance of religiosity and conservative values in shaping political attitudes. The persistence of the liberal-fundamentalist dimension reveals a significant and stable difference within Brazilian society, reflecting broader global trends regarding voter divisions on cultural and moral issues.

The fact that the Brazilian electorate is predominantly composed of fundamentalist voters suggests that, since democratization, there has been a stable demand for party programs driven by moral conservatism. However, there was no clear electoral or party offer addressing these issues. In this context, Bolsonaro appears to have been the politician who best tapped into this preference.

In comparison, Brazil stands out among Latin American countries for the significant influence of religious leaders and conservative values on political alignment. Studies by Boas (2023) and Mariano and Gerardi (2019) highlight Brazil's unique position in this regard, where religious mobilization has played a crucial role in shaping political discourse and opposing the «Pink Tide» parties.

Future research should investigate whether similar patterns exist in other Latin American countries, particularly regarding the correlation between postmaterialism and the liberal-fundamentalist dimension (H1), as well as the evolution of

party system dynamics (H2). Additionally, evaluating the alignment between public views and political elite perspectives, as suggested by Dalton (2018), could offer further insights into how party offers align with social cleavages.

In summary, this study provides a comprehensive analysis of cultural and political differences in Brazil, contributing to the broader literature on political cleavages. Our findings highlight the importance of considering cultural factors and their long-term stability, offering a foundation for future comparative research in the region.

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## POLITICAL CLEAVAGES IN BRAZIL: A LONGITUDINAL DIMENSION

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