

Chapter 6

Conciliation and voter persuasion Party broadcasts and written manifestos in the 1989 and 1994 presidential campaigns in Brazil

The analysis of strategic political communication during electoral campaigns constitutes a mainstream approach to political communication (McQuail, 1979). It is to this 'voter persuasion paradigm' that I intend to make a contribution in this chapter. As the previous arguments in this thesis suggest, one of the main effects of electronic media on politics is that it weakens the possibilities of drawing clear-cut *frontiers* in society by favouring 'catch-all' rhetorical strategies forging ideological convergence between political parties. To understand the weakening of ideological frontiers between political forces, here I examine the media intensive Brazilian society where television works in favour of conservatism and the survival of traditional political practices. This weakening of political frontiers occurs since television decreases the already low potential of confrontation (Lamounier, 1993:131) between the main political forces, increasing 'democratic' stability. In other words, television favours political reconciliation while curtailing antagonism.

Voter persuasion and the media has been the object of several studies by Brazilian scholars. Most suggest strong links between mass communication and politics in Brazil (Lima, 1994; Albuquerque, 1994; Rondelli & Weber, 1994; Rubin, 1994; Cunha, 1994; Soares, 1994; Caiafa, 1994; Amaral, 1994; Albuquerque, 1995; Rua, 1995; Lima, 1995; Magalhaes, 1995; Albuquerque, 1996; Figueiredo, 1993; Jorge, 1997; Chaia, 1996; Porto, 1996; Costa & Brener, 1997; Figueiredo, 1998). These studies introduced new perspectives to voter persuasion research, traditionally developed by Anglo-Saxon political scientists, being applied to other national cases and comparative research (Berelson, Lazarsfeld & McPhee, 1954; Budge & Farlie, 1977; Budge, 1982; Budge, 1983; Budge, Robertson & Hearl, 1987; Fishel, 1985; Duquin, 1985; Graber, 1986; Hess, 1985; Kaid & Davidson, 1986; McCoy, Nimmo, 1986; Sorauf, 1987; Benze & Declercq, 1985; Garramore, 1985; Jamieson, 1986; Kaid, 1987; Hofferbert & Klingermann, 1990; Kaid,

Gerstle, Sanders, 1991; Alonso, 1992; Cohen, 1991; Diamond & Bates, 1988; Mata, 1994; Delarbre, 1995; Mungham, 1996; Hallin, 1996; Landi, 1997).

All these studies take political campaigns as the paradigmatic instance of political communication and study the strategic uses of television to influence public knowledge, beliefs and action on political matters.

I organise this chapter as follows: In section one, I begin with some general remarks concerning strategies of televised electoral propaganda. These corroborate my earlier claim that the electronic media perform a conservative function guaranteeing the reproduction of clientelistic practices in Brazilian politics. I comment on previous studies of electoral campaigns, focusing on Diamond & Bates' (1983) categories of electoral persuasion in the US and Marcus Figueiredo's (1998) propositions regarding strategies of persuasion in majoritarian elections. Figueiredo suggests a new methodology for the study of strategies of electoral communication that is applied to an analysis of the 1996 mayoral electoral broadcasts in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. His main finding was that electoral strategies are dependent on the position each contestant occupies in the 'persuasion game' established in the mass media. As I will argue, this is so in Brazil since the communicational strategies of the mass media facilitate the differentiation of the political space. This favours conservative or conciliatory 'one nation' discourse rather than simplifying the political space in antagonist camps through a discourse of emancipation. Brazilian television assists repetition, continuity and therefore the iteration of a conservative order when it boosts the 'Dominance Principle' according to which one party tends to dominate rhetorical appeals on a particular theme established by a dominant coalition (Riker, 1996:6).

In section two, I discuss two methodologies I have developed to study the influence of television on communication strategies. These methodologies are helpful in testing the hypotheses that Brazilian television performs a conservative role since it prevents enemy politics and supports 'one nation' discourse. The first enables the study of 'mimetic convergence' between party broadcasts from a dynamic perspective and throws into relief the interference of

public opinion on ideological re-orientations. The second methodology, which is applied to a comparative study of the 1989 and 1994 presidential campaigns in Brazil, permits the observation of three rhetorical strategies of persuasion: the *institutionalising* discourse, the *mobilising* discourse and the discourse of *frontiers*. The general categories of *mobilising* and *institutionalising* strategies in political argumentation form an alternative way of viewing political discourses from the perspective of discourse analysis. These are contrasted with a traditional content analysis, which explores the emphasis on traditional issues in party manifestos.¹ This content analysis indicates that television validates political competitiveness on the leadership level while constraining the translation of heterogeneous social demands into political proposals.

In the conclusion I discuss the consequences of television's constraints on antagonistic politics and the favouring of the *institutionalising* and *mobilising* strategies, inhibiting discourses of radical subversion of the traditional order.

Section 1

Electioneering in Brazil: Television and the politics of non-confrontation

Political advertising is a form of persuasion that has existed for almost fifty years in American television and for thirty-six years in Brazilian television. As mentioned in the previous chapter, free and systematic electoral propaganda on television emerged in Brazil during Juscelino Kubitschek's government in August 1962, when Law 4.115 established the *Horario Eleitoral de Propaganda Gratuita* –HEPG, on radio and television.

Diamond & Bates (1983) have classified strategies of political advertising in the US into four rhetorical modes, or acts, following the chronology of a political campaign. First, 'ID spots' identify and introduce the candidate at the beginning of electoral contests. Second comes a lengthy intermediate phase when candidates begin to use 'argument spots'. Here candidates

¹ A first version of party manifestos categories was developed by David Robertson (1976:73-75) for a comparison of modes of party competition between British and American parties. See chapter 1, 'Methodology'

introduce policy discussions, and outline their programmes. This intermediate phase is characterised by the use of both specific argument, issue-oriented spots and general argument spots where party strategists use the resources of endorsement humour and appeals to emotion. Once the candidate's name, history and ideas are familiar, the campaign often enters a third phase of negative advertising with the use of 'attack spots'. While controversial - as they provide certain unfavourable details of opponents - 'attack spots' also cause unexpected reactions that can significantly undermine an opponent's campaign. The fourth and final phase is characterised as a sweet end spot; a quieter 'moment of resolution and reflection'.²

In a former study of the 1989 Brazilian electoral campaign, I have identified these rhetorical modes that characterise distinct phases of the American campaigns in the Party Electoral Broadcast series - the HGPE.³ The latter are generally longer than the thirty- or sixty-second American spot. Unlike the US paid propaganda, Brazilian parties are allowed free electoral Air-time that is proportional to the number of seats a party holds in the National Congress. This ranges from thirty seconds in the case of parties without representation in the Congress to twenty-two minutes for parties with greater numbers of seats.

Studying the political strategies of ten parties over a two-month campaign in Brazil, I presented evidence that in the so-called intermediate 'argument phase' a mimetic behaviour occurs between candidates trying to express what they stand for in terms of their governmental platforms. Using a content analysis of political speeches I have proven that given the media constraints, the intermediate stage of a campaign corresponds to a high percentage of convergence between different parties even if these comprise a multiparty system. Taking the example of the Brazilian elections of 1989, the main convergence was around the centre parties - Partido Liberal, (PL) and Partido da Renovação Nacional, (PRN). In 1994 the convergence was clearly with the Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira (PSDB) of Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

² For a detailed analysis of the major persuasive techniques and the visual styles of the political spot form see E. Diamond & S. Bates, The Spot: The Rise of Political Advertising on Television, (Massachusetts, MIT, 1984), pp.293-348.

In my view, this 'mimetic convergence' provides additional evidence that a plurality of diverse political proposals is obstructed by the conservative function of television since the media's function is to construct a stable state of affairs that resists subversion. For this reason, when seeking wider support, candidates are required to adapt their substantive proposals to 'scenarios of political representation' (Lima, 1994) constructed by the mass media, using their own symbols. Recent analyses of campaign strategies in Brazil claim that 'electoral dispute is actually a dispute among strategies of persuasion' (Figueiredo *et al.*, 1998: 31). On this account, any campaign is a rhetorical game that can be summarised in three stages: First, a debate is established between different interpretations of the present state of affairs (positive or negative). Second, campaigns project future scenarios that are compared. Third, campaigns discuss which party or candidate is able to guarantee realisations in the future world. According to this perspective, a campaign holding a dominant interpretation of the world will have electoral advantage over opponents who are subsequently left with only two alternatives: to either abandon the debate or to disqualify the dominant interpretation. If the party intends to remain in the competition it is unlikely to recognise its failure by abandoning the dispute altogether. Instead it will seize the only remaining possibility by attempting to invalidate the dominant interpretation and thus win the argument.

'Incumbents' and 'challengers' thus play a rhetorical game in electoral competitions. On the conservative side, 'incumbents' assume a positive attitude, projected beyond any conflict, to glorify the world as it is. 'Incumbents' display their achievements and pretend that they are not taking part in the dispute.⁴ On the opposition side, 'challengers' try to undermine 'incumbents' by criticising their achievements, by demanding change and by striving to secure dominance of relevant issues in the campaign.⁵ The point to be stressed here refers to a comparison made by

³ F. Carvalho, 'O Centro do Labirinto: Um Estudo sobre a Competição Eleitoral na TV', (Rio de Janeiro, M.A. thesis IUPERJ, 1994).

⁴ See M. Figueiredo *et al.*, 'Estratégias de Persuasão em Eleições Majoritárias: Uma Proposta Metodológica para o Estudo Eleitoral da Propaganda Eleitoral', *Serie Estudos* (Rio de Janeiro, IUPERJ, 1998)

⁵ Strategies attributed to 'challengers' are: (1) appeals for change, (2) offensive about issues, (3) emphasis in optimism about future, (4) attacks against the ongoing administration, (5) attacks against the adversary, (6) comparison.

Figueiredo (1998) between the competitive level in four different majoritarian disputes on television. First, the 1996 municipal campaign in Rio de Janeiro between Conde vs. 'challengers' (Cabral, Chico Alencar and Miro Teixeira). Second, the 1996 municipal campaign in São Paulo, between Pitta vs. 'challengers', (Erundina, Rossi, Serra), third, the 1988 presidential campaign in France between Mitterand and Chirac and finally, the 1992 presidential campaign in the US between Bush and Dukakis.⁶ According to Figueiredo (1998:33), a comparison between electoral campaigns in the United States, France and Brazil reveals that the latter is less competitive:

While challengers in those countries spent from 50 percent to 64 percent of their broadcasts in attacks against the adversaries, in Sao Paulo Pitta's 'challengers' used attacks against him in only 16 percent of their broadcasts and, in Rio de Janeiro, Conde's 'challengers' attacked him in only 30 percent.⁷

A comparison with the US and France shows that enemy strategies in Brazil have not been as challenging as they were in these countries given the constant invocation of a posture 'beyond the fight' generally adopted in party broadcasts. Brazilian parties, according to Figueiredo (1988), do not use television to establish a discourse of change but to support continuity. Now, one can argue that this is not always the case. In the 1989 election, for example, all main candidates seemed to deploy a discourse highly critical of the status quo. There has been a discourse of opposition in Brazilian elections even under highly restricted electoral conditions during the military rule. Yet my point here is that television generally supports continuity. Even in the 1989 election, when all main candidates were critical of the status quo, a highly conservative candidate, Collor de Mello, advanced the most hegemonic discourse.

The typical posture of 'incumbents' adopted by all parties in Brazilian electoral disputes excludes any debate about interpretations of the world. Even opposition parties follow a non-confrontational approach. By contrast, electoral campaigns in France and the US involve confrontation. In France, Mitterand's adversary did not adopt the strategy 'beyond the fight' at

⁶ The Brazilian campaigns involved the content analysis of 134 Party Broadcasts for the Rio de Janeiro campaign and 151 Party Broadcasts for Sao Paulo. The analysis of the US campaign was based on 81 commercial spots and the French campaign was analysed on the basis of 20 Party Broadcasts.

⁷ See M. Figueiredo *et al.*, 'Estratégias de Persuasão em Eleições Majoritarias', p.33.

all, and in the US, Dukakis remained 'beyond the fight' in only 2 percent of his broadcasts. Conversely, in the São Paulo elections, 'incumbents' and 'challengers' adopted a non-confrontational strategy in 70 and 72 percent of their respective party broadcasts. In Rio de Janeiro, incumbents remained 'beyond the fight' 79 percent of the time and the opposition used the same strategy in 54 percent of their programmes. Moreover, in the US and France 'challengers' demanded 'change' in, respectively, 75 and 70 percent of their televised discourses whereas in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro these claims consisted of only 23 and 38 percent respectively of opposition parties' broadcasts.

This evidence supports my claim that Brazilian television prevents the creation of new antagonism between political forces. As I argued in chapter 5, Brazilian television performs a conservative function as a key aspect of the elite dominated media of the country.

Section 2

Electioneering in the 1989 and 1994 Presidential Campaigns. Two methodological approaches

In this section, I present two methodologies I have developed to study the interference of television on communicational strategies that constrain antagonistic politics in Brazil. When applied to the analysis of party platforms, these methodologies confirm that political communication not only forces the rhetorical and thematic convergence between parties but also *manufactures* a conservative culture since it prevents the construction of new political frontiers and the consequent hegemony of new worldviews.

The first methodology discussed in this section gives an account of 'mimetic convergence' between party electoral broadcasts over successive phases of a television campaign. This convergence has proven to be strongly influenced by the interference of public opinion polls given that parties formulate their policies on the basis of what the audience voters want to hear. The observation of 'mimetic convergence' proves that television interference leads

parties to abandon radical positions and adopt non-political claims in order to universalise their discourse and attract voters. Parties try to adapt their claims by shifting toward the centre. The programme sustained by the candidate who is growing faster in the polls generally determines the character of the centre.

The second methodology, which is applied to a comparative study of the 1989 and 1994 Brazilian presidential campaigns, allows the observation of three discursive forms: the *institutionalising* discourse, the *mobilising* discourse and the discourse of 'frontiers' from the perspective of discourse analysis. This methodology aims to show the predominance of non-radical *mobilising* and also *institutionalising* discourse over a discourse of 'frontiers'. When compared with a traditional content analysis of emphasis on issues, my study confirms that television leads to a convergence between parties not only in rhetorical terms but also in relation to emphasis on specific themes that tend to present similar salience for most parties.

The relevant point is that the *mobilising* discourse frequently used in Brazilian party broadcasts also promotes a synthesis of political aims around empty signifiers. These signifiers are generally conservative since they do not attempt the radical subversion of traditional political identities but repeat crystallised identities. Any attempt to subvert a given order and to generate new frontiers on television would not succeed through the use of a discourse of 'contra' or a strategy of polemic negation because there is nothing outside discursive creations to be negated. The limits between political ideologies must be given inside communication, through hegemonic descriptions of the real and the creation of new empty signifiers able to persuade and dominate. As mentioned in chapter 1, the condition of possibility of communication is given by the infrastructure of iterability that allows repetition through innovation. The repetition aspect of communication is nevertheless problematic in that it is a logical aspect that invalidates subversive discourses in the media. In this way, innovation is incremental to continuity, not to change.

Parties and Competitive system in 1989

In 1989, new parties created immediately prior to the presidential competition have further extended the scope of the Brazilian party system.⁸ These were the PSDB - *Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira*, the PRN - *Partido da Reconstrução Nacional* and the PV - *Partido Verde* (PV). These parties competed in the first round of the 1989 presidential election in which 22 candidates represented a multiplicity of existent parties. During the 1989 campaign, these parties availed themselves of 140 minutes of free television Air time every day. The Free Time allowance (HGPE) was divided according to the instructions of the Tribunal Superior Eleitoral (TSE) into two programmes of 70 minutes, transmitted on the national network at 13:00 and 20:30. According to attributions of Law 7.773 of July 8th 1989,⁹ the resolution n.15.580¹⁰ defined the following instructions to organise the distribution of the HGPE:

Art.1° - The free electoral propaganda on radio and television for the presidential election of 15th November 1989 will be aired on the national network, broadcast from Brasilia (Lei 7.773, art.16).

Art.2° - The programmes will be recorded and the video tapes will be delivered to the broadcasting network by parties or coalitions a minimum of twelve hours before transmission.

Art.3° - All radio and television broadcasting stations in the country (including those owned by the State, States of the Federation, Territories, Federal District and Municipalities), will reserve daily slots of 140 minutes for propaganda, half of which will be screened at night (Law 7.773, art. 18).¹¹ The propaganda will take place from 15th September to 12th November 1989.

Paragraph 4 - The broadcasting times of the HGPE will be defined by TSE according to a draw. The sequence of party broadcasts will follow an alternation between Parties and Coalitions. The first to be aired will be located at the end of the sequence on the second day, and so on.

⁸ With the end of the military regime, the Brazilian party system began to encompass almost all currents of opinion existing at that time and 27 legends were able to compete in the 1985 elections. The Law 7.332, of 01/07/85, that established the minimal conditions for the inauguration of political associations ended up producing an incredible pulverisation: 25 new parties were created to compete in the municipal elections.

⁹ Issued by the TSE on 5th September 1989.

¹⁰ Resolução n° 15.580 of Tribunal Superior Eleitoral, 5 September 1989, published in the *Diário da Justiça* Year LXV N°5, of 8th September 1989.

¹¹ Concerning the distribution, order and time slot of the HGPE to Parties and Alliances, (Law 7.773, art. 17 and paragraph 2), instructions of *Tribunal Superior Eleitoral* allowed from 30 seconds to parties without representation in the National Congress, up to 22 minutes to parties with more than 200 representatives.

Art.4° - The night slot will start at 20:00, for radio networks and at 20:30 for television networks; the day-slot, will begin at 7:00am for radio networks and 13:00 for television networks, Brasilia time (Law 7.773, art. 18°, *caput* and Paragraph 1°).

Of the 22 Parties and Coalitions competing in the first round of the 1989 presidential election, ten candidates (Collor, Lula, Brizola, Mario Covas, Maluf, Afif, Ulysses Guimarães, Roberto Freire, Aureliano Chaves e Ronaldo Caiado) obtained more than 400,000 valid votes. The other 12 candidates fell below this limit,¹² with less than 0.60 percent of valid votes and for this reason they are not included in my research.

Since, the dominant tendency was toward isolated candidacies in 1989, there were not as many coalitions as in 1994. The only exception was *Frente Brasil Popular* composed by PT, PSB and Pcdob with left-wing parties. 1989 saw no centre-right coalition and, during the first round, right-wing parties obtained 46.99 percent of the vote while centre parties achieved 4.74 percent, centre-left secured 11.52 percent and left wing 35.19 percent.¹³

The 1989 elections confirmed a main characteristic of the Brazilian presidential system:

In the contemporary world it is difficult to find another country that is as anti-party as Brasil. Politicians refer to parties as "rental parties" (*partidos de aluguel*), they change parties freely and frequently, vote in disagreement with party orientation and refuse to obey any type of party discipline, under the allegation that one cannot interfere in the freedom of representing his electors.¹⁴

According to Olavo Brasil (1987:90-93) this instability is a consequence of a continuous foundation and institution of new parties every time a process of change or transition menaces the political order. An exception to the anti-party tendency was the Workers Party (PT); a uniquely disciplined Brazilian party based on grass-roots support rather than the traditional elitist political interest groups. However, in Sartori's (1993) view the PT still presented a restricted and concentrated penetration encompassing only 7 percent of the population in 1991 and it could not

¹² See Table 1 ' Presidential Elections, Brazil, 1989' in the Appendix to Chapter 6.

¹³ See Table 1 as above.

¹⁴ Sartori, G. 'Nem Presidencialismo nem Parlamentarismo' in *Novos Estudos* (Sao Paulo, CEBRAP, n.35, 1993), p.11.

induce a solidification of the party system as a whole (Sartori, 1993:11). In 1989, PT was not the first option for its target group: workers of the secondary sector. For this reason PT could neither minimise the signification of an adverse cleavage associated with it nor assume opposition to other contestants (Santos, 1989:15-18). On these views the PT's 1988 electoral success has contributed to enlarging an illusion of 'real chances to win' in 1989. This motivated PT to adopt the same strategy as other competitive parties, the Downsian strategy of moving from its extreme ideological position towards the ideological centre. PT assumed the risk 'of letting its potential electorate vulnerable to other candidates and parties... without significantly progressing among the electorate of other parties' (Santos, 1989:15-18).

The model of 'polarised pluralism' (Sartori, 1976) is useful to understand the type of competition that occurred in 1989. Notwithstanding the number of competitive parties and other coincidences with the multipolar model, the 1989 campaign presented a dynamic of competition that is typical in bipolar systems. Discourses, in other words, tended to converge around the centre of the politico-ideological spectrum. In Sartori's view (1976), a 'polarised pluralism' would be a system with five or six 'relevant' or 'competitive' parties with some specific characteristics.¹⁵ These characteristics were present in the Brazilian party system. The number of competitive parties was superior to five and there existed bilateral opposition to government and the politics of giving and promising everything. However, according to my empirical analysis of the thematic convergence between party programmes and despite the evidence of a multiparty

¹⁵ These characteristics are:

- 1) The existence of bilateral and mutually exclusive oppositions to government;
- 2) Triangular and not bipolar iterations because "the metric centre of the system is occupied" by one party of a group of parties, with the competitive mechanics happening around this centre that confronts both left and right positions.
- 3) the spectre of public opinion is highly polarised, with cleavages deeper than consensus, resulting in a strong polarisation and ideological distance between parties;
- 4) A predominance of centrifugal tendencies over centripetal relations, with the weakening of the centre that suffers a persistent loss of votes to one or both extremes;
- 5) The political formation encompasses parties that disagree with respect to programmes and fundamental principles;
- 6) The presence of oppositions to the centre party is not subject to alternation because it is the basis of any governmental majority and its destiny is to govern indefinitely;
- 7) The politics of giving always more, promising everything. (G. Sartori, 1976:156-166).

system like that described by Sartori, the centre *was* under competition.¹⁶ Polarisation was not a main pattern of the competition precisely because that competition was enacted on television. Parties were thus forced to fight around a dominant scenario fixed by the mass media. That scenario concentrated on the centre and not the extremes of the political spectrum. Therefore, Sartori's theory cannot be confirmed in the Brazilian case. Despite the proximity between the Brazilian party configuration in 1989 and the model presented by Sartori (1976) about polarised pluralism, the extreme differentiation between party proposals cannot be confirmed in the Brazilian case if we take into account party manifestos as presented on television party broadcasts. The adoption of Downsian strategies in 1989, that caused an attenuation of candidacies, could be explained by both the reduced polarisation of the electorate and by the positions adopted along the politico-ideological spectrum during televised campaigns.

Downs (1956) has created analytical tools to give an account of utilitarian rationality influencing the dynamics of electoral disputes. According to his argument, the centre is the most valuable point in a dispute. Considering the relation in terms of cost-benefit, the centre diminishes the costs for buying one candidate's ideas. That is why in an electoral dispute, parties tend to converge towards the centre aiming for the greater amount of benefit with smaller costs of information. I agree that there is a convergence of political positions towards a centre but I think this is not dictated by a rational game but by a specific political infrastructure. My claim in this thesis is that in Brazil this convergence is a manifestation of an infrastructural iterability that is somehow associated with continuity. This logic of iterability helps us to analyse one of the main controversies of the Brazilian system that, despite being multipolar, presents a patterns of political competition that is not polarised. Parties might well be located at extreme ends of the political spectrum. However, when it comes to elections, their discourse does not always mirror their extreme position. In many cases, parties of the far right or left present particularly uncontroversial platforms corresponding more to the political centre during elections, primarily

¹⁶ F.Carvalho, 'O Centro do Labirinto: Um Estudo sobre a Competicao Eleitoral na TV', (Rio de Janeiro, M.A. thesis IUPERJ, 1994), p.138

because the voting public favour discourses of security and certainty rather than radical discourses of uncertainty when choosing candidates. This is not a reflection of Downs's logic of rational choice - by the parties or by the electorate - but a reflection of the logic of hegemony that operates in the symbolic order. Empty signifiers assume the task of universal representation because of the constitutive split between singularity and universality. The signifier is thus not bound by a strict attachment to a signified.

Contradicting Sartori's party system theory, the Brazilian multi-party system assumes a two-party dynamic in the dispute for the centre when formulating its discourse in elite dominated television. As I argued in chapter 6, the media tend to downgrade politics and politicians, favouring technical solutions whose main form of persuasion is the '*one nation*' discourse that strongly emphasises keeping issues as isolated matters.

According to this view, despite guaranteeing a minimal equality between parties, in awarding candidates the right of expression and continuous access to expensive media prime time, the HGPE has deep implications for the dynamics of electoral campaign. Interference in television transformed disputes among at least five competitive parties - PRN, PT, PDT, PSDB, PDS - into a bipolar dispute that was not centred on the debate of political issues but rather centred on *party image*.¹⁷ In 1989 parties were more concerned with the presenting an adequate image to the audience voter than with the defence of their projects. One clear example concerned the central question of governmental corruption, represented by a *maharaja*, as proposed by Collor de Mello and supported by TV Globo. This campaign incurred the adverse judgement of the Sarney government from the point of view of morality and ethics that in the literature are considered as a *question of position* in Stokes' (1963) terms or as an *erratic question* in the terminology of Budge and Farlie (1983).¹⁸ In 1989, moral judgements and the construction of a

¹⁷ The concept *party image* is taken from Sartori and is used in analyses of political behaviour in the era of television. (G. Sartori, 1976:360).

¹⁸ See Budge and Farlie (1983) Ideology, Strategy and Party Change: Spatial Analyses of Post-War Election Programmes in 19 Democracies.

moralising image motivated the convergence between parties around the centre of the politico-ideological spectrum.

Parties and Competitive system in 1994

From 1989 to 1994, the Brazilian political system underwent some changes in terms of politico-ideological realignments with the construction of a new hegemony of the centre-right. In 1994 there was an explicit break in the left-right polarity observed in 1989 due to a strengthening of the centre-right pole. This new hegemony caused a weakening of the purely right and central positions. At the same time the left-wing was re-organised into two coalitions. For these reasons, only eight parties or coalitions entered the presidential competition in 1994. Among the right-wing parties were PRONA, PPR, PRN and the PSC. The centre-right was occupied by the coalition PSDB-PFL-PTB-PL supporting Cardoso. One coalition, the PMDB-PDS supporting Orestes Quercia, pervaded the centre. The left-wing comprised two coalitions: PT-PSB-PcdoB-PPS-PV-PSTU, supporting Lula da Silva, and PDT-PMN supporting Brizola.¹⁹

In 1994, the left-wing parties were unable to form only one coalition and despite of being candidate of the most encompassing left-wing coalition, Lula (PT) received only 27.04 percent or half the votes (52.28 percent) secured by Cardoso (PSDB) who represented the centre-right coalition.²⁰ From 1989 to 1994, left-wing votes fell from 35 to 30 percent. Brizola's PDT suffered a visible decline with his populist discourse whereas the Workers Party (PT) was strengthened.

One could argue that the character of general elections in 1994 should be taken into account in a comparison with the 1989 elections which were more focused. In 1994, 94.7 million voters should have participated in choosing a new president, vice president, 82 senators, 513 federal deputies, 27 state governors and 1.032 state deputies. For several reasons, 33.15 percent of citizens did not vote or annulled their votes. In any case, the people could not or did not want to manifest their will and this is an important aspect of the 1994 elections when voters were not

¹⁹ See Table 2 'Presidential Elections, Brazil, 1994 (First Round)' in the Appendix to Chapter 6.

²⁰ See Table 2 as above.

satisfied and the general atmosphere was permeated with scepticism and loss of hope in politics. Moreover, most of the people did not believe in change or did not want new adventures as they did in 1989.

The 1994 campaign on television also suffered strong restrictions by the Law n.8.713 of 30th September 1993. This Law restricted the form and content of the HGPE, seriously interfering in the conditions of information dissemination. According to comparative analysis with other countries, the new legislation imposed a strongly regulated model compared with the French system with respect to its worse aspects, i.e. the authoritarian intervention (Albuquerque, 1995:53). In this sense, electioneering in 1994 was distanced from the North American model. In this year the HGPE was carried out poorly without the access to all technological resources available to television programmes. Parties were not free to build their own version of facts and precisely for this reason the PSDB was favoured by unofficial programmes transmitted by television networks, such as TV Globo, always supporting to the *Plano Real* in its regular programmes.

The 1994 campaign suffered not only a backlash in relation to electoral laws but also voters manifested clear conservative behaviour expressing a rejection of the traumatic experience of 1989 when the majority voted Collor, an unknown young candidate supported by a new 'rental' party, into office. In 1994 voters preferred traditional, conservative, rich politicians. These were elected for the majority of posts mostly due to their long and consecrated exposure in mass communications and also to their experience in power. Apart from the conservative vote²¹ there was also a rejection of populism and, as mentioned before, this was apparent in the low votes for Brizola (PDT) and Quercia (PMDB).

In general terms, the 1994 elections were referendum like pro or contra the *Plano Real* created by president Itamar Franco and his minister Fernando Henrique Cardoso one month before the start of the official campaign. The governmental strategy worked and during the

campaign opinion polls revealed a popular approval of 80 percent to *Plano Real*. To vote for Cardoso was to express satisfaction with the economic plan, preference for stability and confidence in the new currency. To choose Lula, was to vote against *Plano Real*.

Despite being disputed by two left-wing candidates, the social democrat Cardoso and the socialist Lula da Silva, the 1994 election did not involve a great deal of mobilisation, as in 1989. Commanded by rationality, voters did not wait for the second round to elect Cardoso, the official candidate, and a left-wing scholar, ex-minister supported by President Itamar Franco who promised a modern government by means of a neo-liberal rhetoric. As Amaral (1995:28) notes the self-constructed candidacy of the PSDB was manipulated in the same laboratory that would produce the most efficient of the political plans of the recent republican history because of the amplitude of its alliances. This conservative bloc supporting Cardoso encompassed almost all forces from the extreme right to the centre-left. It included the rural pressure group, UDR, the PTB that has been one of the main Collor de Mello's supporters, the PMDB of president Sarney, the PFL of Antonio Carlos Magalhães, entrepreneurs from FIESP CNI, the mass communications barons, and the acquiescence of MFI and the Club of Paris. Outside the status quo alliance remained solely the organic left. Cardoso gathered the unanimity of the conservative system that he deeply criticised in previous years. He was the alternative built inside the establishment. The other option was Lula and the *Frente Brasil-Popular*, an ex-metal worker a member of the syndicalism's elite who promised a timid and reformist government concerned with the acceleration of social reforms that were never carried out by Brazilian elites. The left-wing programme proposed the correction of deep injustices without any challenge to the capitalist order but could not gather enough support. This is not to say that if the PT had deployed an openly anti-capitalist programme it would have garnered more support. There is clearly scant popular support for a socialist project in contemporary Brazil. However, PT's weak opposition left a gap in the 1994 campaign when most claims for change remained without representation.

²¹ As Amaral (1995:60) notes, at least six oligarchies with more than thirty-years of control were consecrated in the 1994 elections: the Sarney in Maranhao, the Alves in Rio Grande do Norte, the Magalhaes (Antonio Carlos

PT's discourse of emancipation was challenged by the very nature of political communication in the electronic media understood as a mechanism of conciliation that universalises political claims.

The 1994 elections in Brazil could be most generally understood as part of the consolidation of the social democratic project based on a conception of 'modernity' involving old programmes like the defence of commercial liberalisation, the opening for foreign capital, the end of state subvention and privatisation. The hegemonic neo-liberal project of the PSDB favoured a recessive economy, the priority of finances over production, and the end of the State economy and the loss of hopes in change and social justice, maintaining the hierarchical, authoritarian character in Brazilian society.

Television and Mimetic Convergence²²

Here I show evidence that television and public opinion polls interfere with the agendas of political parties during electoral campaigns guaranteeing the hegemony of conservative forces. The point I want to stress is that television depoliticises political speeches leading them to convergence rather than polarisation. Taking as reference the successive publication of public opinion polls during the three months of HGPE, I have demonstrated in a previous work²³ that there is a correlation between candidates' positions in the polls and the re-elaboration of campaign agendas. My supposition was that public opinion influences discursive changes, i.e. candidates believe that success in the polls is related with the issues they are stressing at that moment or must stress in the future in order to improve their popular acceptance.

I have posed the following questions to verify the dynamics of the 1989 campaign: in which circumstances do polarisation and convergence between candidates occur? What is the

Magalhaes) in Bahia, the Campos in Mato Grosso do Sul, the Siqueira Campos in Goias.

²² The category for mimetic convergence and the relative methodology for its identification are presented and discussed in chapter 1 of this thesis.

²³ F. Carvalho, 'O Centro do Labirinto', 1994.

evolution of an electoral propaganda on television like? What kind of behaviour is associated with the beginning, middle and ending of an electoral campaign?

My working hypothesis was that during the 1989 presidential competition, opinion polls carried out by IBOPE, Datafolha and Gallup were published twenty five times over the three months of campaign contributing to a monitoring, revision and adaptation of parties' agendas in order to satisfy the public will. In this sense, my claim is that parties have changed their thematic emphases under the guidance of the vote intentions, i.e. opinion polls may have caused the inversion of thematic flux in certain parties' broadcasts. This empirical analysis required the development of a methodology to describe the dynamic of convergence between parties' broadcasts that included the division of the 59 days party broadcasts into seven analytic phases²⁴ to check the impact of the publication of the polls on party broadcast strategies.

According to table A, until the 3rd phase of the 1989 campaign the greatest influence of issues stressed on phases 1 and 2²⁵ over all party broadcasts agendas was by the centre-right candidate Aureliano (PFL). Mimetic convergence with the PFL amounted to 22.85 percent. In the same period there was also a significant convergence of 21.96 percent with the centre-left party represented by candidate Covas (PSDB). The observed convergence means that there was a strategic shift by certain parties to adequate their agendas to the centre-right and centre-left positions represented by the PFL and the PSDB.

²⁴ 'Phase 1' analyses the impact of the polls on party broadcasts presented from 15/09/89 to 19/09/89;

'Phase 2' analyses the same impact from 29/09/89 to 1/10/89;

'Phase 3' analyses (as above) from 04/10/89 to 9/10/89;

'Phase 4' analyses (as above) from 12/10/89 to 16/10/89;

'Phase 5' analyses (as above) from 30/10/89 to 2/11/89;

'Phase 6' analyses (as above) from 04/11/89 to 7/11/89;

'Phase 7' analyses (as above) from 7/11/89 to 12/11/89.

See chapter 1, part II 'Methodology' concerning the methods used to analyse party broadcasts in the 1989 elections. The interference of opinion polls as a hypotheses of work is also fully explained in F.Carvalho, 'O Centro do Labirinto', Vol.2, pp.3-36.

²⁵ q.v. footnote 24

Table A

ACCUMULATED INFLUENCE OF ALL CANDIDATES OVER ALL CANDIDATES HGPE - 1989		PHASE 2 ½	PHASE 3 1/3 + 2/3	PHASE 4 ¼ + 2/4 + ¾	PHASE 5 1/5 + 2/5 + 3/5 + 4/5	PHASE 6 1/6 + 2/6 + 3/6 + 4/6 + 5/6	PHASE 7 1/7 + 2/7 + 3/7 + 4/7 + 5/7 + 6/7
INFLUENCE CAIADO (PSD) BY		6.84%	9.93%	20.5%	12.64%	7.69%	11.46%
INFLUENCE MALUF (PDS) BY		5.5%	13.02%	42.28%	31.86%	13.67%	44.37%
INFLUENCE BY COLLOR (PRN)		2.2%	9.53%	16.16%	9.56%	14.19%	14.74%
INFLUENCE BY AFIF (PL)		0	7.7%	52.54%	48.93%	23.89%	8.31%
INFLUENCE AURELIANO (PFL) BY		13.3%	22.85%	16.57%	12.74%	4.24%	13.39%
INFLUENCE ULYSSES (PMDB) BY		13.2%	13.91%	29.88%	22.27%	10.23%	33.19%
INFLUENCE COVAS (PSDB) BY		9.94%	21.96%	33.44%	20.54%	5.46%	16.39%
INFLUENCE BRIZOLA (PDT) BY		5.8%	10.46%	29.24%	48.54%	22.2%	45.08%
INFLUENCE BY LULA (PT)		11.1%	9.49%	29.32%	42.19%	8.58%	22.15%
INFLUENCE FREIRE (PCB) BY		2.2%	17.26%	12.13%	6.45%	12.59%	17.5%

Table A indicates the percentage of convergence between all candidates in phases 1 to 7. The first column, 'Phase 2', considers the influence '1/2', i.e. the influence of issues²⁶ mentioned in phase 1 (15/09/89 to 19/09/89) by the PSD, PDS, PRN, PL, PFL, PMDB, PSDB, PDT, PT and PCB on the issues stressed by these parties in phase 2 (29/09/89 to 01/10/89), taking into account the impact of opinion polls on parties strategic changes. The second column, corresponding to 'Phase 3', indicates influences of phase 1 on phase 2 (1/2) and the influence of phase 1 on phase 3 (1/3). It shows whether the agendas supported by party broadcasts in phases 2 and 3 converged with agendas previously supported by other parties in phase 1 given their success in the polls. The third column, 'Phase 4', checks the convergence between the issues mentioned in this fourth phase (12/10/89 to 16/10/89) with previous phases, i.e. with phase 1 (1/4), with phase 2 (2/4) and with phase 3 (3/4). The fourth column 'Phase 5', checks the influence of issues mentioned by all candidates in the previous phases 1,2,3 and 4 and its influence on the agendas of party broadcasts on phase 5, and successively.

As we can see, in 'phase 3' party broadcasts exhibited a mimetic convergence with the party broadcasts of Aureliano (PFL) and Covas (PSDB). The influence by Aureliano (PFL) was given to the all-encompassing 'one nation' discourse promoted by the PFL that was extremely eclectic and also contradictory, including issues²⁷ such as:

- (a) Nature of the Political Regime (variable 0207) based on candidates' emphasises on the importance of their political parties, the necessity of well structured parties and positive remarks about pluralism.
- (b) Economy: Criticism of the Model of Capitalism (variable 0410) founded on attacks against rampant capitalism.
- (c) Welfare and Quality of Life: Food production and distribution (variable 0508) consisting in discourses about hunger and the encouragement of food production.

²⁶ The relation of issues 'Thematic Variables for the Analysis of Mimetic Convergences' can be found in chapter 1, part II 'Methodology'.

²⁷ The relation of thematic variables used to analyse the mimetic convergence of party broadcasts is in chapter 2.

(d) Social Groups: Rural Owners (variable 0704) consisting of positive remarks about land ownership, the necessity of special incentives to rural landowners.

The convergence of 21.96 percent with the PSDB party broadcasts was given to its emphasis on issues like: (a) Welfare, expansion of social services. (b) Criticism against Sarney's government from the perspective of the institutional- administrative order. (c) Criticism against the economic order; (d) Defences of demographic non-economic groups like the street children; (e) Nature of the Political Regime based on candidates' emphasises on party ethics, party platform, interviews with party members, and the display of party symbols. (f) Environmental policies based on defence of natural resources.

As we see, the group of issues Aureliano referred to in his TV programmes until the 3rd phase of the campaign did not translate the ideological profile of the Liberal Front Party – (Partido da Frente Liberal - PFL). His programme encompassed areas traditionally explored by other parties such as the PSD led by the right-wing and rural leader Ronaldo Caiado, and also themes that raised traditionally by more progressive parties like PSDB, PT and PDT.

Considering all phases of the 1989 television campaign, I have observed three moments of great strategic changes with respect to substantive contents used in electoral discourses. These changes occurred in the fourth, fifth and sixth phases of the HGPE (table B). During 'phase 4' of the campaign, (Table B, column 3) that corresponded to the 28th to 32nd days of the HGPE, I have observed a significant increase in the convergence between parties. This convergence of 52.54 percent was around the discourse of Guilherme Afif, from the PL, who was clearly growing in the polls. This convergence with the PL has thus confirmed my hypothesis that polls exert an impact in party programmes and agenda setting. As we can see in table 4, during phase 4 candidates presented a convergence of 52.54 percent with issues mentioned by Afif in phases 1, 2 and 3. This was the greater influence observed in the 1989 HGPE.

The main thematic stress in 'phase 4' was concentrated in four domains: (a) economy, (b) Attack against President Sarney government, (c) Nature of the Political Regime and (d) Welfare and Quality of life (Carvalho, 1994: Vol. II, p.63).

The main thematic stress in 'phase 4' was concentrated in four domains: (a) economy, (b) Attack against President Sarney government, (c) Nature of the Political Regime and (d) Welfare and Quality of life (Carvalho, 1994: Vol. II, p.63).

In 'phase 5' we can observe that there was a strong convergence with PDT's party broadcast. At the time Brizola was second in the polls after Collor de Mello (PRN). Brizola's left-wing populist discourse influenced other candidates who adopted most of the issues he emphasised in phase 5 like: (a) Social order, defence of national way of life and fight for national interests (variable 0601). (b) Social order: more repression and enforcement of laws (variable 0605). (c) Economic Protectionism: nationalisation of the economy (variable 0405). (d) Social Groups: Workers (variable 0701) with favourable references to the working class and unemployed (Carvalho, 1994: Vol. II, p. 64).

In phase 6, I have noticed a general decrease in the influence of all candidates, which means that convergence with centre positions was concentrated in the intermediate 'phase 4' and 'phase 5' of the dispute. At the end of the dispute there was a certain polarisation, and this is supported by Maluf's conservative impact on phase 7 exercising an average influence of 44.37 percent on the discourses of other candidates.

Table B

Average Real Influence of the discourses of conservative and moderate candidates: Caiado, Maluf, Collor, Afif, and Aureliano over other candidates HGPE --1989	INFLUENCE ON PHASE 2	INFLUENCE ON PHASE 3	INFLUENCE ON PHASE 4	INFLUENCE ON PHASE 5	INFLUENCE ON PHASE 6	INFLUENCE ON PHASE 7
Influence by Caiado (PSD)	F1/F2= 6.84% TOTAL= 6.84%	F1/F3= 1.5% F2/F3= 8.43% TOTAL= 9.93%	F1/F4= 4.6% F2/F4= 7.85% F3/F4= 8.05% TOTAL= 20.5%	1/5=2.2% 2/5=5.83% 3/5=3.23% 4/5=1.38% TOTAL= 12.64%	1/6= 0 2/6=1.11% 3/6= 0 4/6=4.56% 5/6=2.02% TOTAL= 7.69%	1/7=0 2/7=1.84% 3/7=0 4/7=0 5/7=9.62% 6/7=0 TOTAL= 11.46%
Influence by Maluf (PDS)	1/2= 5.5% TOTAL= 5.5%	1/3=9.45% 2/3=3.57% TOTAL= 13.2%	1/4=23.5% 2/4=9.62% 3/4=9.16% TOTAL= 42.28%	1/5=5.5% 2/5=5.92% 3/5=11.29% 4/5=9.15% TOTAL= 31.86%	1/6=2.11% 2/6=1.11% 3/6=1% 4/6=4.56% 5/6=4.89% TOTAL= 13.67%	1/7=4.6% 2/7=0 3/7=12.03% 4/7=2.77% 5/7=13.87% 6/7=11.1% TOTAL= 44.37%
Influence By Collor (PRN)	1/2=2.2% TOTAL= 2.2%	1/3=2.6% 2/3=6.93% TOTAL= 9.53%	1/4=6.8% 2/4=2.22% 3/4=7.14% TOTAL= 16.16%	1/5=1.8% 2/5= 0 3/5= 1.84% 4/5= 5.92% TOTAL= 9.56%	1/6=3.3% 2/6=1% 3/6=3.23% 4/6=1.11% 5/6=5.55% TOTAL= 14.19%	1/7=0 2/7=1.84% 3/7=0.9% 4/7=0 5/7=8.32% 6/7=3.68% TOTAL= 14.74%

Influence by Afif (PL)	1/2= 0 TOTAL= 0	1/3=3.4% 2/3=4.3% TOTAL= 7.7%	1/4=19.7% 2/4=18.78 % 3/4=14.06% TOTAL= <u>52.54%</u>	1/5=7.3% 2/5=7.4% 3/5=18.77% 4/5=15.46% TOTAL= 48.93%	1/6=2.1% 2/6=3.8% 3/6=13.75% 4/6=2.12% 5/6=2.12% TOTAL= 23.89%	1/7=0 2/7=0 3/7=6.47% 4/7=1.84% 5/7=0 6/7=0 TOTAL= 8.31%
Influence By Aureliano (PFL)	1/2=13.3% TOTAL= 13.3%	1/3=11.52% 2/3=11.33% TOTAL= 22.85%	1/4=5% 2/4=7.77% 3/4=3.8% TOTAL= 16.57%	1/5=5.45% 2/5=0 3/5=1.84% 4/5=5.45% TOTAL=2.74 %	1/6=1% 2/6=1% 3/6=0 4/6=1.23% 5/6=1.01% TOTAL= 4.24%	1/7=1.38% 2/7=0 3/7=2.77% 4/7=0 5/7=7.4% 6/7=1.84% TOTAL= 13.39%

In my view one explanation of how the definition of new cleavages occurred during the 1989 campaign is that the selection of issues was related to the positioning of candidates in every new voter intention poll published over the sixty-day competition. My hypotheses was that candidates ascending on the polls exerted influence over the discourse of other candidates, producing this mimetic behaviour, independent, to a certain degree, from party identifications. Through the understanding of a series of mimetic behaviour over the 1989 campaign I have tried to explain the strategies guiding thematic divergence and convergence to which corresponded a movement of candidates along the main thematic dimensions. To show evidence of these moments I have concentrated on the successive redefinition of cleavages produced through electoral discourse on TV. In the next section, I deal with the another aspect of the conservative function of television on the party system, which is related to rhetorical aspects of political discourse on the electronic media.

Television and Conservative Rhetoric: Empirical Analysis

In this second empirical analysis I observe the influence of television on the convergence of political parties by means of another analytic methodology concentrating on rhetoric or persuasive strategies. I offer a quantitative content analysis, which compares the amount of 'denotative' (primary discourse), connotative (secondary discourse) and protest (tertiary discourse), present in structures of signification of written manifestos and party broadcasts. I must clarify that according to the criticism of Barthes (1974: 6-10)²⁸ all language is connotative, i.e., discourse is purely sense and judgement. In this case my categorisation of rhetorical strategies seems problematic when differentiating primary from secondary discourse. I am aware that my decision was necessarily arbitrary and that discourse cannot be mechanically segmented and classified, requiring qualitative interpretation. However, my intention here is solely to produce an arbitrary categorisation of nouns that compose pseudo-referential (primary) articulations, subjective (secondary) articulations and antagonistic (tertiary) articulations. My aim is to provide a first step methodology able to organise large amounts of textual data preparing them to be regularly compared. In a second step this material could be submitted to a qualitative analysis.

The relation between primary, secondary and tertiary discourse is that the first and the second consist of institutionalising and mobilising conciliatory strategies, presenting high compatibility with television as a mediatory mechanism of power whereas the tertiary discourse cannot be taken as mediatory. Additionally, the primary and the tertiary discourse stand for the fixation of meaning from different approaches since they acknowledge the existence of a world of reference, whereas the secondary discourse is mobilising and subjectively articulates new meaning. If primary discourse is quantitatively superior to secondary discourse this means that conciliation is of an institutionalising and referential type that characterises the *one-nation* discourse. If secondary discourse seems quantitatively hegemonic, then conciliation is of a mobilising type. Thirdly, when a tertiary discourse is hegemonic, this indicates that the author

places his or herself outside history and acknowledges an objective and official state of affairs that must be radically reversed. Therefore, in logical terms, it is only the secondary discourse that does not recognise the primacy of a referential world that is entitled to subvert meaning through conciliatory articulation.

Given the above preliminary explanation, I hope to present evidence that from a very schematic point of view, political discourse present different composition on television and written manifestos and that this preliminary quantitative examination is useful to support further qualitative and comparative between political proclamations in different media. The use of such methodological tool helped me to provide evidence for example that from 1989 to 1994, PSDB's dislocation from centre-left to the right-wing was followed by an increase in PSDB's secondary mobilising language on television whereas in written manifestos there was an increase in primary institutionalising rhetoric. These tendencies were different for the Socialist PT - Workers' Party. From 1989 to 1994 PT presented a decreasing pattern in both secondary and primary language with an increase in a tertiary rhetoric in its political broadcasts. Secondary discourse has grown, however, in PT's written manifestos, showing that the party was not following the main rules of political persuasion.

In a second stage, this analysis of rhetorical forms based on linguistic categories is contrasted with a content analysis of substantive political themes across PSDB and PT political manifestos and party broadcasts in 1989 and 1994. These will indicate in what extent the institutionalising discourse of the PSDB and the subversive discourse of the PT deviate from their programmatic commitments fixed on their written platforms when exposing them in television broadcasts. To accomplish this comparison I have developed two dictionaries with different approaches.

²⁸ I have already clarified this problem in Chapter 1, p.44

The media impact on discursive forms

With the categories of primary, secondary and tertiary discursive forms I have codified party broadcasts and manifestos of two relevant parties in Brazil - PT, the Workers Party (left) and also the PSDB, the Party of the Brazilian Social Democracy (centre-left in 1989). The latter occupied the right of the political scenario in the 1994 general elections.²⁹ The analysis of a large amount of textual data was viable with the application of the software 'Textpack' 7.0.³⁰ The most telling results have indicated that television brings about homogeneity between discursive forms used by different political orientations as we can see in Chart 1.

Chart 1: Party Broadcasts / Discursive Forms, (PSDB-PT) Brazil -1989

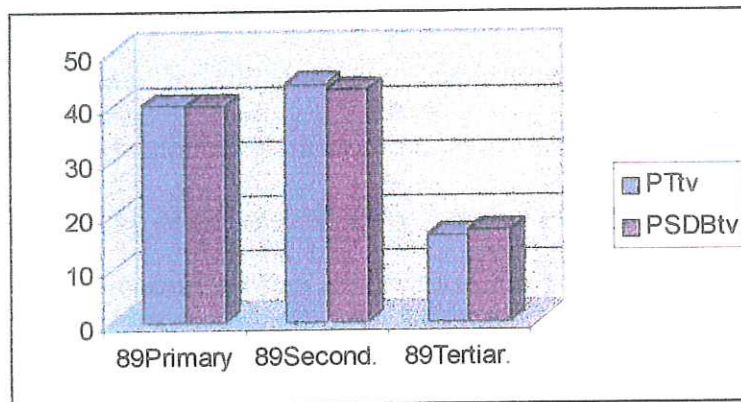


Chart 1 shows that there are no significant differences in discursive forms between parties concerning their rhetorical strategies on TV. This is because the convergence between discursive forms is related not only with the conciliatory effect of TV on political communication but also that both parties situated on the same side of the political spectrum tend to use similar strategies.

²⁹ The PT and PSDB should not be considered as opposite extremes of the political spectrum however, given to alliances established in 1994, the PSD, a centre-left party is here considered as the representative of the conservative elites. On the other hand PT was placed at the other extreme of the political spectrum that represented a left-wing coalition.

³⁰ All Textpack outputs concerning the PSDB and PT party broadcasts and manifestos can be found in the Appendix to Chapter 6. The routines through which all texts went through in 'Textpack' were the following:

- 1-preparation of a sentence file;
- 2-preparation of a Split file, a procedure which makes a vertical text from what was given as input;
- 3-Procedure frequencies to check the structure of each text by looking at which words appear in it and what what frequency;
- 4-Preparation of a dictionary out of a frequencies list for each case studied (party/year);
- 5-Coding the texts;
- 6-Importing final results for SPSS;

As we can see, in 1989 there was a similar discursive structure of both PSDB and PT concerning primary, secondary and tertiary forms of argumentation. Both moved closer in ideological terms; i.e. the PSDB was on the centre-left and the PT on the left. In 1989 there was a prevalence of secondary or connotative discourse forms for both parties, closely followed by primary forms. It is interesting to note that in 1989, the primary speeches of Mario Covas (PSDB) and Lula (PT) were at the same level revealing a similar proportion of 'denotative' or 'referential' argumentation.³¹ Elements like proper names, concrete nouns, objects, substances, dates, places and numbers typically constitute a 'referential' language. These 'objective' messages imprint the '*one nation*' discourse with a de-totalising function since they are always already the saturated part of discourse. As 'references', they function as the 'truth value' of a sentence.

The PT and PSDB campaign of 1989 presented almost the same level of secondary forms composed by connotative or subjective speeches. These secondary forms corresponded to paradigmatic articulations or particular articulations of ideas that stand for what Frege (1970:24-38) called *sense*, *second order function* or *contents of judgement*. Frege's notion of *sense* refers to the unsaturated part of discourse since the same sense has different expressions. *Sense* is not subjective as an idea, but is not the object itself. *Sense* or second level functions are composed by *general nouns*, either abstract or concrete, some of them potential *empty signifiers* in Laclau's sense such as democracy, justice, rights and modernity. *Adjectives, adverbs, and state verbs, conditional and imperative forms also constitute sense or secondary discourse*. These words are used indirectly because they are incomplete, in need of supplementation. They constitute immaterial truth and are characterised by *indefiniteness* and so, these categories are not a *truth-value* but a thought, a command, a request, a question that appears in the subordinate clauses. Most of second order words are affective and evaluative and are derived from verbs or adjectives.

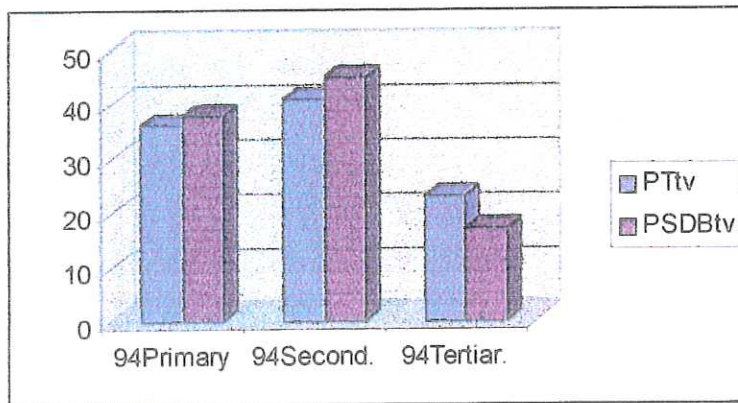
7-Preparing charts.

³¹ According to definition of the *primary discourse* in Chapter 2, referential messages are composed by *objective* names, either concrete or abstract, which are not vague. These names compose the 'referential' part of language as theorised by Frege (1892) in his *Philosophical Writings*. According to Barthes (1974) it is not possible to distinguish 'denotative' from connotative, however, as I said before, the adoption of such division in this thesis is purely schematic.

Looking at Chart 1 we note that even the tertiary or subversive discourse occupied almost the same percentage: 16 percent for PT and 17 percent for PSDB, showing that the Workers Party did not assume an antagonistic past oriented discourse as it would do in 1994.

Chart 2

Party Broadcasts 1994 Brazilian Elections, Discursive Forms (PSDB-PT)

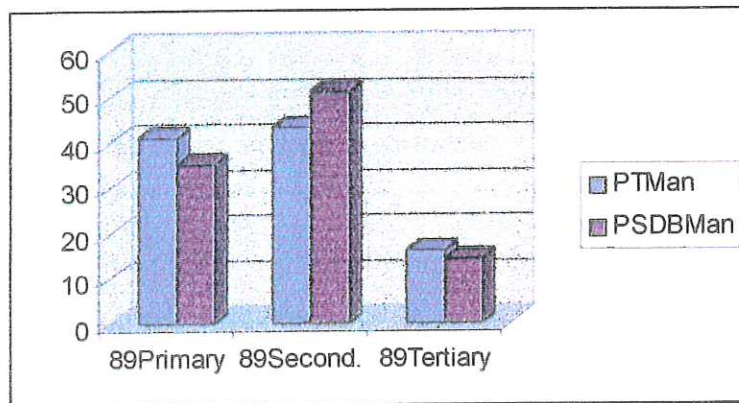


In 1994 (chart 2) rhetorical differences were still not particularly strong but they were certainly more significant than in the previous campaign given the ideological shift by PSDB towards the right. This shift presented slightly more differentiated discursive forms in relation to PT Party Broadcasts than in the previous campaign on television. The PT presented less primary discourse (36 percent) than the PSDB (38 percent). The PT used less secondary rhetoric (41 percent) than the PSDB (45 percent). Conversely, PT used a tertiary rhetoric in 23 percent of its programmes against only 17 percent by PSDB. As seen before, Workers Party specificity in 1994 was the emphasis on a tertiary form of argumentation in an attempt at constructing an oppositional identity. In relation to this, PT decided in 1994 on a different strategy from the one adopted in the 1989 presidential campaign. The PSDB has, therefore, imprinted slightly more emphasis on an institutionalising primary discourse, i.e. 'objective' messages that do not need supplementation because they function as the 'truth value' of a sentence.

In 1994, one of the main differences from Workers Party broadcasts was that the PSDB stressed a conciliatory mobilising rhetoric composed by secondary categories.

Chart 3

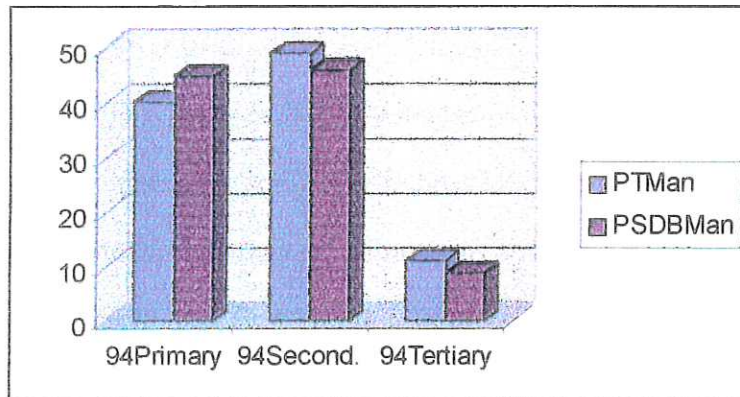
Party manifestos 1989 Brazilian Elections. Discursive Forms (PSDB-PT)



Now, looking at the 1989 written manifestos (Chart 3), the Workers Party attributed priority to a secondary language. The PT manifesto has relied more on a primary discourse and in relation to a tertiary discourse, the Workers Party (PT) has maintained a level of 16 percent of antagonistic and past oriented discourse, following the same pattern observed in its party broadcasts which presented also 16 percent tertiary categories. In 1989, the PT's Manifesto was slightly more aggressive than the PSDB's. However, on television, PT's discourse was less aggressive than the PSDB's. Despite the small variation between discursive forms on manifesto and TV, we can argue that PT used a more moderate strategy on television in 1989. This moderation supports my claim that television exerts a conservative tendency on political communication, i.e. television favours a conciliatory rhetoric.

Chart 4

Party Manifestos 1994 Brazilian Elections. Discursive Forms (PSDB-PT)



In 1994, the Worker Party manifesto (chart 4) significantly increased its secondary discourse in relation to the previous election, this means that PT's arguments followed a mobilising more than an institutionalising strategy. PT positioned itself in ideological terms more clearly than the PSDB, overcoming the latter in the use of secondary discourse. Primary discourse was relegated to less importance in the PT manifesto than in the PSDB's that clearly proposed a programme for the re-establishment of order in Brazil. In relation to tertiary discourse, both parties were moderate in their manifestos but oppositional language still remained higher for PT than for PSDB.

Summarising all these percentages we can observe that from the 1989 to the 1994 elections, differences between secondary and primary rhetoric on television and in written manifestos have increased for PSDB's broadcasts and decreased for PSDB's manifestos. High discrepancies between a mobilising and institutionalising discourse in its manifesto³² have since faded.

To calculate discrepancies between primary, secondary and tertiary discourses on manifestos and party broadcasts, I have used the following formula:

³² The PSDB Manifesto in 1989 was fairly small and unconventional if compared with its 1994 manifesto.

$$[(Party1\text{second.}-Party1\text{prim.})^{TV} - (Party1\text{ second.} - Party1\text{prim.})^{manifesto}] \text{Time}$$

$$[(Ps-Pp)^{TV} - (Ps-Pp)^M] T^2 - (Ps-Pp)^{TV} - (Ps-Pp)^M T^1]$$

This formula helps to calculate the amount of secondary discourse minus the amount of primary discourse for 'party 1' broadcasts in 'time 2' (i.e. the 1994 elections), minus the amount of secondary discourse minus the amount of primary discourse in 'time 2' for 'party 1' manifestos. The first result is subtracted from the amount of secondary discourse minus the amount of primary discourse for 'party 1' broadcasts in 'time 1' (i.e. the 1989 elections), minus the amount of secondary discourse minus the amount of primary discourse in 'time 1' for 'party 1' manifestos in 'time 1'. In sum, this formula shows discursive variation for the same party between two elections.

Regarding the changes in PSDB party broadcasts, from 1989 to 1994, differences between secondary and primary discourses have increased but in the case of its manifestos this difference has decreased. The secondary discourse for instance has assumed a progressively larger percentage on television (from 43 to 45 percent) and a smaller percentage on manifestos (from 51 to 46 percent). The opposite happened with primary discourse, which decreased on television (from 40 to 38 percent) but increased greatly on manifestos (35 to 45 percent).³³

In relation to PT, from 1989 to 1994 a decrease occurred in secondary discourse on television (44 percent in 1989 to 41 percent in 1994) revealing an inability to deal with a

³³ Considering the difference between connotative and 'denotative' discourse in PSDB's broadcasts and manifestos through time we have:

$$[(PSDB\ secondary-PSDB\ primary)^{TV} - (PSDB\ secondary-PSDB\ primary)^{Manifesto}] \text{time}2 - [(PSDB\ secondary-PSDB\ primary)^{TV} - (PSDB\ secondary-PSDB\ primary)^{Manifesto}] \text{Time}1$$

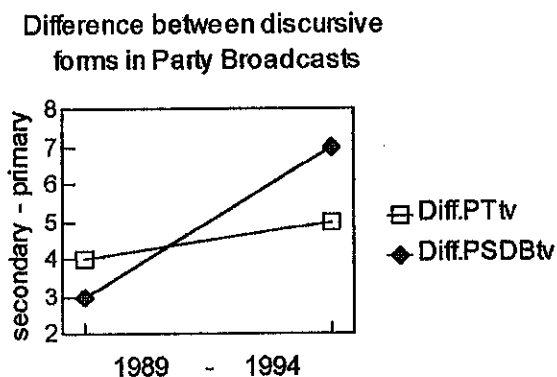
$$[(45-38)^{TV} - (46-45)^M] 1994 - [(43-40)^{TV} - (51-35)^M] 1989 = [(7)^{TV} - (1)^M] 1994 - [(3)^{TV} - (16)^M] 1989 = [6]^{1994} - [-13]^{1989} = [6]94 - [-13]89 = -7$$

As observed above, the secondary discourse has always been dominant in both PSDB's broadcasts and manifestos. The negative result means that overall there are inconsistencies or non-correspondence in the uses of 'denotative' and connotative discourse between TV and manifestos. If in 1989 this inconsistency was due to far more connotative discourse both on television and mainly in the manifesto, in 1994 these differences increased in the case of television were far more connotative than 'denotative' but have almost disappeared in the PSDB manifesto. Subtracting greater discrepancies in 1989 [-13] (more discrepancies on television) from smaller discrepancies in 1994 [6] (more discrepancies in manifesto), we have as result -7 of disparity between secondary and primary on television and manifestos over time due to the impact of television in political discourse.

language that reaches popularity through conciliatory mobilisation. In PT manifestos there was an increase in secondary discourse (43 to 49 percent) and this was followed by a slight decrease in primary discourse (41 percent in 1989 to 40 percent in 1994). The observation shows that in 1989, PT attempted at formulating a slightly more mobilising discourse on television than in its manifesto. However, in 1994 this strategy was inverted since PT used 49 percent of secondary discourse in its manifesto and 41 percent of secondary discourse on TV, inverting its strategy. In 1994 PT's manifesto was highly connotative.³⁴

In sum, the Socialist PT and the conservative coalition supporting the Social Democrat candidate have presented opposite tendencies concerning rhetorical strategies. I have summarised these tendencies by relating the data in the following way:

Chart 5



³⁴ In order to work out the differences between discursive strategies in the Workers Party broadcasts and manifestos I have followed again the formula used for the PSDB:

$$\frac{[(PT \text{ secondary} - PT \text{ primary})^{TV} - (PT \text{ secondary} - PT \text{ primary})^{Manifesto}]_{time 2}}{(PT \text{ secondary} - PT \text{ primary})^{Manifesto}_{Time 1}} - \frac{[(PT \text{ secondary} - PT \text{ primary})^{TV} - (PT \text{ secondary} - PT \text{ primary})^{Manifesto}]_{time 1}}{(PT \text{ secondary} - PT \text{ primary})^{Manifesto}_{Time 1}}$$

$$\frac{[(41-36)TV - (49-40)M]94 - [(44-40)TV - (43-41)M]89}{(44-40)TV - (43-41)M} - \frac{[(41-36)TV - (49-40)M]94 - [(44-40)TV - (43-41)M]89}{(44-40)TV - (43-41)M}$$

$$\text{Total discrepancy } [(-4)94 + [2]89] = -2$$

In all observed cases the connotative discourse is more present in PT's broadcasts and also manifestos. The negative result means that, like the PSDB, PT's discourse reveals a non-correspondence between the secondary and primary strategies and these were stronger in the 1994 manifesto, far more connotative and television in 1989 also more connotative. However, these discrepancies became larger for the Workers Party, which jumped from 2 to -4. We can compare PT's total differences between the secondary and primary discourse on television and manifestos in 1994 and 1989 (-2) with total difference between the same for the PSDB (-7). We can see that these are more significant for the second party. However, we can observe a still increasing pattern in the case of PT. This occurs insofar as the inconsistencies were 2 (more contrasts on television because of the positive signal) in 1989 and -4 in 1994, with more contrasts in the manifesto.

As we can observe in chart 5 the difference between discursive forms in party broadcasts has increased strongly for the PSDB. The Workers Party has also increased its mobilising strategies in time but PSDB has been the party that most increased the secondary, metaphoric discourse showing awareness of television language. In 1994, the PSDB was able to fix the meaning of the whole campaign around *Plano Real* and established a new currency by using a secondary persuasion. In relation to party manifestos (chart 6) which have less visibility than party broadcasts, the movement of discursive strategies was exactly the contrary: the PSDB decreased its secondary strategy and the PT increased the same type of persuasion. This has only caused problems for the Socialist party which was strongly criticised in the media for hiding its mobilising radicalism when appearing on party broadcasts and in this way being unreliable, even deceitful, to the masses about its real intentions.

Chart 6

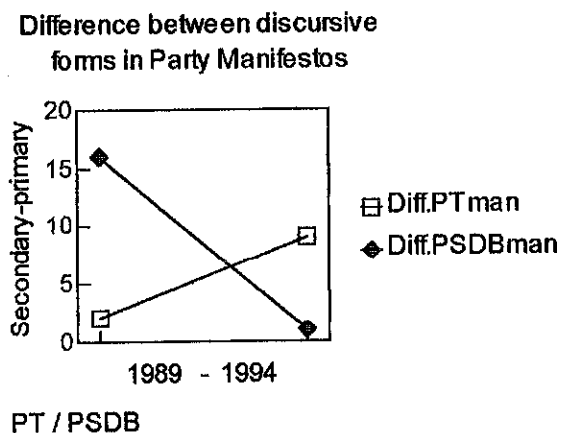
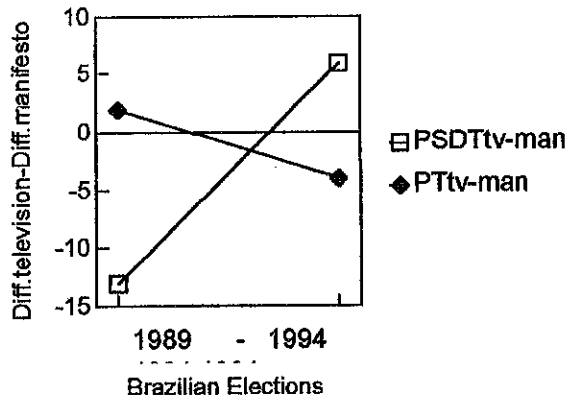


Chart 7 shows the impact of discursive differences (secondary minus primary) between television (in a positive relation) and manifesto (in a negative relation). An ascending line represents PSDB because the distance or difference between forms of discourse on television has become more significant than differences in written manifestos. Quite the opposite occurs in the PT. The heterogeneity between an objective and a subjective discourse has become more important in its manifestos where axiomatic and non-axiomatic evaluations have performed an important persuasive role that is less evident in PT's broadcasts.

Chart 7

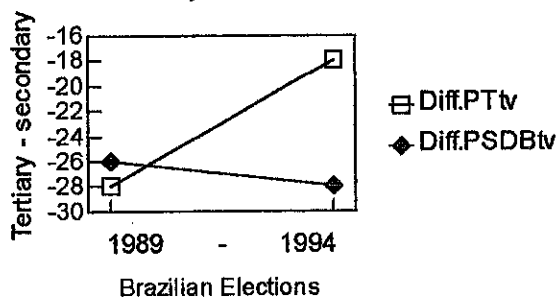
The impact of discursive differences
on Television and Manifestos



If we consider the difference between tertiary and secondary discursive forms in the HGPE, (chart 7), we note that the differences between an antagonistic discourse and a more mobilising approach have diminished for the Workers Party. The latter has increased its tertiary discourse in relation to a secondary approach. The opposite has happened with the Social Democrat party – PSDB, i.e. secondary discourse has increased more than tertiary discourse.

Chart 8

Difference between discursive forms
in Party Broadcasts

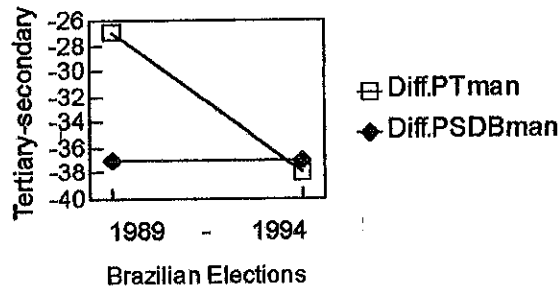


If we look at the differences between tertiary and secondary forms in party manifestos (chart 9), these have dramatically decreased in the case of the Workers Party yet remained stable in the PSDB manifestos. This proves that the Workers Party manifesto has become less

antagonistic from 1989 to 1994 however, as seen before, more mobilising presenting a convergence with PSDB.

Chart 9

Difference between discursive forms
in Party Manifestos



These differences show that media impact on discourse lead to a convergence between persuasive forms used by different political parties to formulate a more subjective and mobilising discourse. Secondary discourse seems to be the main resource parties can count on to create chains of equivalence between questions in their agendas without proposing a radical subversion of the order. The subjective or secondary discourse consists of paradigmatic articulations centred on symbols that provide the fulfilment of hopes in society by means of synthesising political claims concentrated around empty signifiers. Television favours synthesis rather than analysis. A failure to recognise the media's constraints may cause loss of party credibility, as was the case with the PT in 1994 and also in the 1998 election, though this later election is not the focus of this dissertation.

The analyses of differences between secondary and primary and secondary and tertiary persuasion shows in a very preliminary way that the Worker's Party tends toward antagonistic or past-oriented strategies in the media but this kind of tendency has punished the party in the last three elections. Moreover, the analysis of persuasive forms has proven that difference between rhetorical approaches in PT's manifestos and party Broadcasts are increasing. This explains why the party transmits ambiguity and therefore uncertainty to public opinion. In the case of PSDB,

the incompatibility between party manifesto and party broadcasts presents a decreasing pattern and this means that the party's image has become more unified and clear in the eyes of the public. Moreover, differences between secondary and tertiary persuasion show that PT has increased its opposition character on television and the inclination is that an antagonistic approach will overcome a secondary kind of persuasion becoming a deviant case in the Brazilian non-confrontational pattern. Additionally, considering that TV engenders a convergence of rhetorical strategies, progressive parties that tend to build radical images in the media will be penalised while they do not conform to the production of conciliatory appeals.

The media impact on political themes

To look at the content of party broadcasts from the perspective of discourse analysis seems controversial since the latter places into question the idea that there is a given reality or content that could be mirrored and perfectly reproduced. The reason why viewing the content of party broadcasts is relevant is to point out the repetition of issues (or signifiers), a repetition which empties them of their particular meaning (or signified). By weakening the links between signifier and signified, political language on television, as opposed to political language in written manifestos, is more predisposed to gain widespread support. In other words, the greater the ambiguity, the greater the number of people likely to accept and even support the claim. Or, more precisely, the weaker the link between signifier and signified, the more universal and hegemonic the political discourse and vice versa.

As seen in chapter 1, discourse analysis criticises the traditional theory of *representation*. According to the deconstructionist view, a category like 'democracy' cannot be perfectly reproduced for it indicates different things to distinct party ideologies. In this sense, content analysis of the emphasis given to 'democracy' in different party broadcasts could be considered a superfluous exercise because the meaning of the term is not the same for PT and PSDB. My argument here is that a sign standing for the thing, 'democracy', does not refer to its original concept and keeps only the phonic or empty signifier 'democracy'. This pure duplication of

forms occurs because *representation* has a synthetic character, it repeats instead of using signifiers that are not immediately related to a conceptual signified. This repetition pushes concepts to insignificance and thus it is possible to propose an analysis of the frequency of certain terms aiming to show the emptiness of political language. My objective in this analysis is to show that the emptiness of language leads to a convergence between radically different party ideologies around empty forms that are given a conservative content by the conservative representations forwarded by an elite dominated television.³⁵

I do not wish to imply that the meaning of democracy is the same for distinct parties. On the contrary, taking the example of 'democracy', in the 1994 PSDB manifesto this is related to State reform and the partnership State-Society. In the Worker's Party Manifesto, 'democracy' assumes a more radical connotation implying popular participation and extension of citizenship. In the few times democracy was ever mentioned in the PSDB's 1994 manifesto it was associated with the defence of the public interest in the following terms:

In order to start the transformation of our aims and dreams of a richer, more just, more egalitarian country, it is necessary to reform the State in order to intensify *democratisation*, accelerate the process of decentralisation and de-concentration. Above all, to amplify and modify its forms of relationship with the society, creating new forms of articulation between State and society.³⁶

In the Worker's Party manifesto of 1994, 'democracy' was associated with popular participation and citizenship, as follows:

To radicalise and universalise democracy, to make it effective and broadened to all, a reform of the State is required. It implies combating authoritarianism, physiologist behaviour, inefficiency, privatisation, and it also supposes the decentralisation and the refinement of the instruments of democratic representation and participation.³⁷

³⁵ As seen in chapter 5, *representation* is also related to the infrastructure of *supplementation*, in Derrida's terms. In this sense, representations of 'democracy' become meaningful insofar as they act as a supplement.

³⁶ F.H. Cardoso, *Mão à Obra Brasil: proposta de governo*, (Brasília, PSDB, 1994), p.208.

³⁷ A. Freire (ed.) 'Partido dos Trabalhadores, Bases do Programa de Governo: Lula Presidente Uma Revolução Democrática no Brasil', *Teoria & Debate : Worker's Party Magazine*, (São Paulo, Grande ABC Artes Gráficas, 1994), p.15

In Workers' Party broadcast, democracy was related with the Brazilian crisis and the democratic popular alternative. Different from the PSDB, democracy was among the main guidelines of the PT's project in 1994:

Our aim is to consolidate democratic institutions in a political system open to emergent rights with a growing popular participation in all levels... Democracy has acquired new contents and is no longer understood solely as a state of right. Democracy is a space for the construction of new women's rights, black's rights, of the minorities, of the different. (PT: HGPE, 1994)

According to the above examples divergence exist concerning the concept of 'democracy' as constructed by PT and PSDB manifestos but there is also convergence in the links both parties establish between democracy and reform of the State. These differences and similarities are, however, do not concern the present analysis of manifestos and party broadcasts in 1989 and 1994. As mentioned before, I will consider issues as *empty forms*. In this sense, different formulations about 'democracy' and several other issues can be compared and still be valid in terms of discourse analysis since in the process of communication terms like 'democracy', 'workers', 'welfare', 'nationalism' are just slogans. This repetition of political slogans and the convergence of political speeches toward certain empty forms are my concern.

Regarding the content of communication in Brazilian elections, the emphasis on themes like 'nationalism', 'democracy', 'labour groups' and 'political authority' (table 9) were the most significant for PT and PSDB in the 1989 and 1994 presidential elections. As seen in Chapter 1, 'nationalism' is classified under the domain 'fabric of society', democracy falls within the domain 'freedom and democracy', 'labour groups' is part of the domain 'social groups' and 'political authority' is part of the domain 'political system/government'. Issues classified in the domain 'Fabric of Society' constitutes a conciliatory type of argumentation by displacing political questions to the moral dimension. 'Fabric of Society' encompasses four themes, which are usually associated with populist discourses that are highly mobilising, in that they are able to unify public opinion. These issues are (a) 'National way of life' (Code 0601) that appeals to patriotism, nationalism and the support for established national ideas. (b) 'Traditional morality'

(Code 0602) or mentions of traditional moral values, prohibition, censorship and suspension of immorality and unseemly behaviour, family values and religious values. (c) 'Law and order' (Code 0605) or enforcement of all laws, actions against crime, support and resources for police and tougher attitudes in courts. (d) 'Social harmony' (Code 0614) that involves appeals for national effort and solidarity; the need for society to see itself as united; appeals for public spirit; decrying anti-social attitudes in times of crisis; support for the public interest). An example of 'law and order' would be Lula's discourse in a PT party broadcast in 1989:

This report you have just watched is a drop of corruption in an ocean of mud in which Brazil was transformed. The ocean of mud of the Coroa Brastel case, of the Capemi case, of the Delfim case, of the fraudulent concurrency of the North-South railway, of the external debt, of the internal debt... (PT-HGPE, 1989-17/09/89)

The theme 'democracy' integrates the domain 'Freedom and Democracy'. Issues classified in this dimension encompass favourable mentions of the importance of personal freedom and civil rights; freedom from bureaucratic control; freedom of speech; freedom from coercion in political and economic sphere and defence of individualism. It also includes favourable mentions of democracy as a method or goal in national and other organisations plus the involvement of all citizens in decision making as well as generalised support for country's democracy. Moreover this domain includes support for specified aspects of constitution or opposition to the constitution. 'Freedom and Democracy' encircles four themes: (a) 'Freedom and Human Rights. (b) 'Democracy' understood as a method or goal in national and other organisations. (c) 'Constitutionalism: Positive' consisting of support for specified aspects of constitution. (d) 'Constitutionalism: Negative', consisting of opposition to the constitution in general or to specified aspects of it. Condemnation of political parties seen as mere interest groups and therefore prejudicial to the whole society. The following example of the category 'democracy' in the 1989 PT's Manifesto exemplifies the point:

Any democratisation will have attained an irreversible quality before spreading through broad sectors of the society. Brazil's Popular Front has as its axis a combination of measures in the so-called representative democracy, with the valorisation of a broad option of new forms of direct

democracy, exercised by the population without the necessity of intermediates and delegations' (PT: Manifesto, 1989: p.14)

A further example of support of democracy allied to the category 'constitutionalism: positive' taken from the Worker's Part broadcast:

The fight for a democratic constitution was very hard. Deputies elected by PT, PSB and Pcdob were a minority in the Constituent Congress formed by representatives of bankers, big entrepreneurs, landowners and multinationals. (PT-HGPE, 1989:5/10/89)

The theme 'Labour Groups' - strangely stressed more by the PSDB than by the PT in their 1994 party broadcasts - is classified in the Domain 'Social Groups'. It consists of references to labour groups, working class, unemployed; support for or attack against trade unions as the following transcribed speech shows:

Despite not knowing any of you personally I am able to enter in your life knowing how you live, what you eat, how your children study, which perspectives you hold, because I know the working class in this country. (PT, HGPE: 16/10/89)

In Brazil, the lack of employment has reached extremely grave and peculiar proportions. The estimate is that 3.4 million workers are without employment today. At the beginning of the 1980s they numbered 2 million, which means that the number of unemployed grew 70 percent in the period of 1981 to 1994. (PSDB, Manifesto, 1994: p.124)

The issue 'political authority' is part of the domain 'political system/government'. Themes classified in this domain are related to the need for efficiency and economy in government and administration. These issues are divided in the sub-categories: (a) Decentralisation; (b) Corruption; (c) Critique of Political Economy; (d) Administrative inefficiency; (e) Political Authority and Competence or Self-Promotion vs. Mutual attacks.

Some examples of political authority in the 1994 party broadcasts are as follows:

More than a clean past, Fernando Henrique has the qualities that make him the most suitable man to be our President. He is prepared: Graduated in Social Sciences and became a university lecturer at only 21 years old. Internationally respected, he has taught in some of the most important universities in the world...He tidied the house and stabilised the economy, creating the *Plano Real*. (PSDB:HGPE, 1994:7/08/94)

According to the descriptions given above, different parties construct terms like 'democracy', 'labour groups' and 'nationalism' in different ways on television and on written manifestos.³⁸ As we can see, television exerts an influence in the preferential choice of certain signifiers and the more they are repeated, the emptier they become. This is the case with 'democracy', 'political authority', 'labour groups' and 'national way of life'. Any candidate can stress these issues that are not owned by certain parties and the most stressed issues on television differ from those stressed on manifestos such as 'technology and infrastructure',³⁹ an issue that has not been emptied by television's repetition.

To analyse the difference between salient issues in party manifestos and party broadcasts, I have created a dictionary of themes that is an adaptation of the 'Manifesto Research Group'(MRG)⁴⁰ coding frame. This was used to give an account of the emphasis placed on traditional issues in party manifestos. The original objective of this coding frame was to capture the ideology of parties across countries within a common framework. I have adapted it to give an account of the Brazilian case to expose discursive convergence around empty signifiers.

³⁸ See Table 3 , 'Presidential Campaign, (PSDB-PT), Brazil 1989-1994 - Content Analysis' in the Appendix to Chapter 6. This provides a description of these choices made by PT and PSDB on their Manifestos (m) and party broadcasts (TV). The scope of my analysis is restricted to the choice made by parties to emphasise certain signifiers and not others.

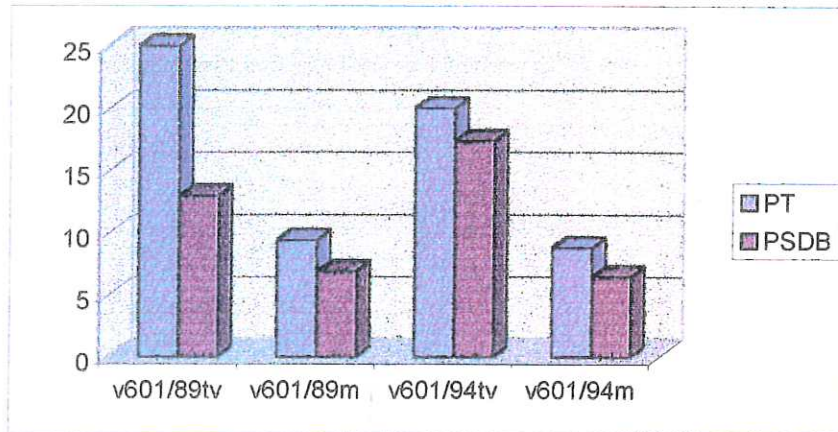
³⁹ See Table 3 as above.

⁴⁰ A first version of the classification scheme used to analyse the Brazilian broadcasts was developed by David Robertson (1976:73-75) for a comparison of modes of party competition between British and American parties. This was developed by the 'Manifesto Research Group' constituted as a research group of the European Consortium for Political Research. The coding frame includes general domains such as: External relations, Freedom and Democracy, Political system, Economy, Welfare and Quality of Life, Fabric of Society and Social groups. To these I added other

Chart 10

Emphasis on Nationalism. Brazilian Elections (PSDB-PT) 1989-94

Party Manifestos / Party Broadcasts

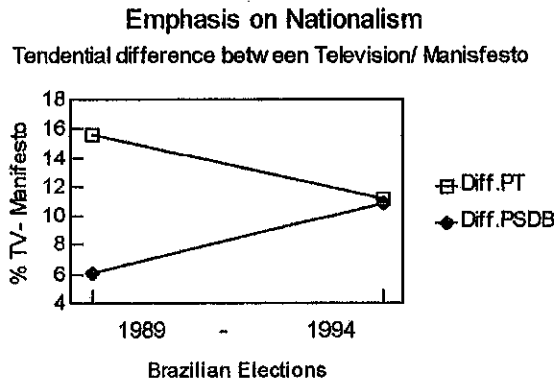


According to the results of the content analysis, issues related to the domain 'fabric of society', like 'national way of life' and 'social harmony', have been the most stressed by political parties in their television broadcasts in the last Brazilian elections. As I have argued, issues classified in the domain 'social fabric' tend to displace antagonisms by means of secondary rhetorical strategies. As chart 10 shows, in 1989 the PT broadcast emphasised 'national way of life' 25 percent of the time it was on air: more than the double the attention given to the same issue in PT's manifesto (9.4 percent). It is worth noting that in 1989, PT gained far more votes than the PSDB. The latter did not imprint a nationalistic character upon its discourse as PT did. From 1989 to 1994, the PSDB increased its nationalistic discourse significantly on television from 13 to 17.4 percent.

Some of the typical terms considered as 'nationalist' speech include mentions of the Brazilian way of life, patriotism, nationalism and living traditions. Nationalist discourse also includes mentions that Brazil is the tenth strongest economy of the world, the fourth greatest

agricultural producer in the world, the fifth biggest territorial area on the planet and, in sum, a great country with plenty of virtues.

Chart 11



We can see in chart 11⁴¹ above, that the difference in nationalistic emphasis on television and manifestos has decreased for PT and increased for PSDB. This confirms one of the main characteristics of a 'one nation' discourse in the second case: to emphasise unifying themes on television but not in its manifestos. The Workers Party took the opposite approach. This unifying issue has decreased with time on PT party broadcasts but remained the same in its manifestos, showing greater consistency.

Patterns observed in emphases on 'democracy' are slightly different from these observations about 'nationalism'. Typical discourse about democracy covers mentions about democratisation and democratic transition. It also includes mentions of democratic-popular politics, the necessity of involving all citizens in the process of decision, free and fair elections and the importance of a strong civil society. Lastly, it covers the need for responsible participation, the imperative consolidation of the party system, the urgency to re-structure the executive power are also classified as a typical discourse about democracy.

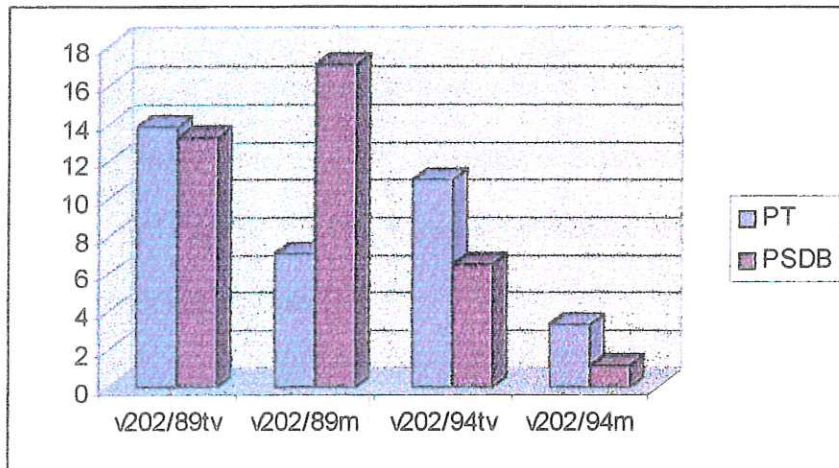
⁴¹ To build this chart I have used the following formula for both parties:

$$\left[\frac{(\text{TV nationalism} - \text{Manifesto nationalism})_{\text{PT1994}} - (\text{TV nationalism} - \text{Manifesto nationalism})_{\text{PT1989}}}{(\text{TV nationalism} - \text{Manifesto nationalism})_{\text{PT1989}}} \right]$$

$$\left[\frac{(\text{TV nationalism} - \text{Manifesto nationalism})_{\text{PSDB1994}} - (\text{TV nationalism} - \text{Manifesto nationalism})_{\text{PSDB1989}}}{(\text{TV nationalism} - \text{Manifesto nationalism})_{\text{PSDB1989}}} \right]$$
 [(11-3.3) - (13.8-7)] = 0.9% overall difference

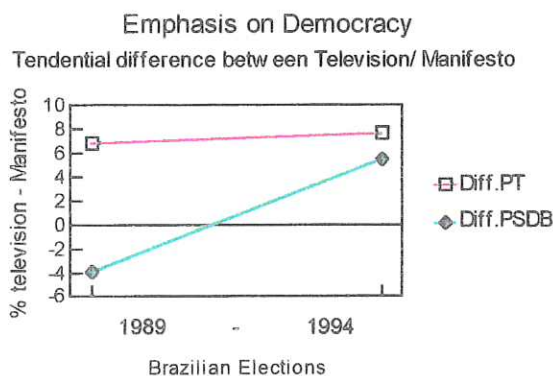
Chart 12

Emphasis on Democracy. Brazilian Elections (PSDB-PT), 1989-94
Party Manifestos/ Party Broadcasts



If we concentrate on the time series above (chart 12) from 1989 to 1994 there has been a general decrease in mentions about democracy-related issues. In 1989, 13.8 percent of PT's broadcasts emphasised democracy, a figure that fell to 11 percent in 1994. For PSDB a similar decline was observed, emphasis on democracy fell from 17.5 to 8.9 percent in the 1994 broadcasts.

Chart 13

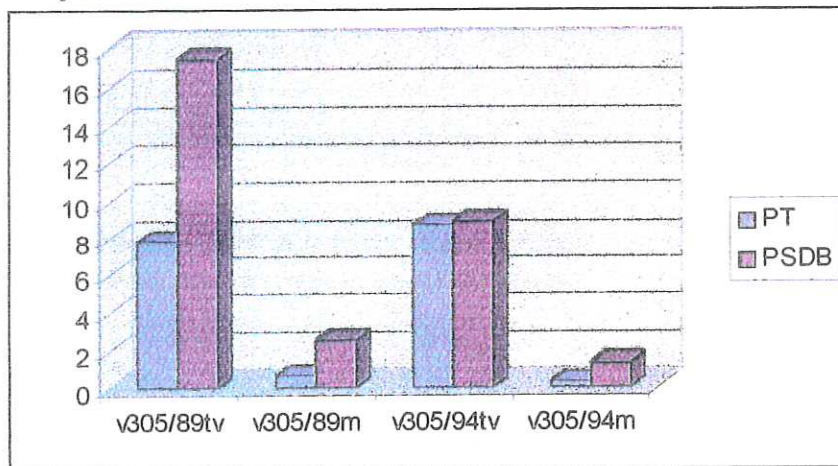


In Chart 13 we can observe that the difference between the emphasis on democracy on television and manifestos along party lines has been the following: it has remained the same in

the case of the Workers' Party. Both in 1989 and in 1994 PT gave more emphasis to Democracy on television than in its manifesto. In 1989, 13.8 percent of PT's broadcasts consisted of democratic claims whereas its manifesto reserved only 7 percent of its space for the same issue. In 1994, democracy was mentioned in 11 percent of PT's broadcasts and only in 3.3 percent of its manifesto. The situation was inverted in the PSDB's case. In 1989 the PSDB's manifesto presented more emphasis on democratic issues (17.1 percent) than party broadcasts (13.2 percent). In 1994 the PSDB's manifesto presented less emphasis on democracy (1.1 percent) than its broadcasts (6.5 percent).

Chart 14

**Emphasis on Political Authority. Brazilian Elections, (PSDB-PT), 1989-94
Party Manifestos/ Party Broadcasts**



'Political Authority', or self-promotion, has been another theme that does not indicate any direction of change and has been typically stressed in party broadcasts. As we can see above in chart 14, this theme was almost absent in the PT and PSDB party manifestos in 1989 and 1994 but strongly emphasised in their party broadcasts during the two months just before election day.

Illustrative phrasing used to affirm 'political authority' has been stated by the candidate himself or by the endorsement of some authority emphasising the candidate's virtues. Very frequent claims made about the political authority held by the PSDB's candidate in 1994 were his capacity to be dynamic, determined and persistent. Cardoso claimed to be a liberal but never a

conservative, to be extremely progressive but not radical and to be a specialist in Brazilian problems always discovering solutions for its problems, being able to unite the country.⁴²

An example of Fernando Henrique's self-promotion in 1994 was:

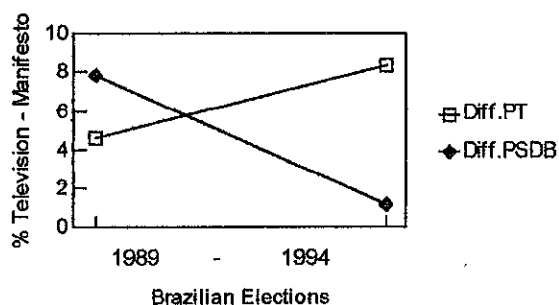
My friends: more than a president that knows only the problems of this country, Brazil needs a president who knows the solutions. The first solution to change Brazil and to look after the Brazilians is to fight against inflation. This step is been taken. When I was Treasury minister, I said that inflation was going to be controlled and it is being controlled. The cost of living is no longer increasing...⁴³

Conversely, the typical statements of self-promotion made by the Worker's Party leader were: to have worked since childhood, being able to overcome poverty and knowing for this reason what he was talking about. Furthermore, the PT claimed to think about the poor and to have always been at the workers side, to have the best team to govern, standing as the only possible change.⁴⁴

Chart 15

Emphasis on Political Authority- Self-Promotion

Tendential difference between Television/Manifesto



As observed in chart 15, differences between emphasis on political authority have increased in the case of PT's broadcasts. In 1989 this theme occupied 5.6 percent of his broadcasts and in 1994 this percentage has increased to 8.4 percent. This shows a higher concentration on the personality of Lula as a charismatic leader, a tendency which was avoided in the previous election of 1989 given the Workers Party fight against populism. Conversely, the emphasis on political authority decreased for PSDB in both television and manifesto insofar as

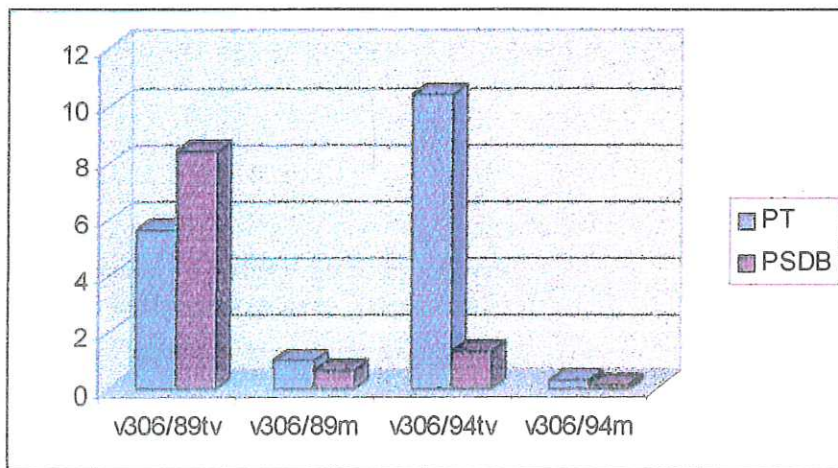
⁴² These examples were extracted from the transcription of the PSDB's Party Broadcasts in 1994.

⁴³ Transcription from the PSDB broadcast in the HGPE, 03-08/94

the Senator Mario Covas, candidate of PSDB in 1989, was not as well recognised as Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1994. The current president, elected in 1994, was already a prominent politician, and had been previously Foreign Relations Minister and the Minister of Economy. Cardoso created the *Plano Real* and, in so doing, made a direct impact on the peoples' lives.

Chart 16

Emphasis on Political Authority-Negative Brazilian Elections, (PSDB-PT), 1989-94 Party Manifestos/Party Broadcasts



As seen in chart 16, emphasis on attacks against the enemy, another erratic issue (i.e. one that does not propose any direction of change) classified as 'political authority - negative' has also been prominently emphasised by candidates in party broadcasts while remaining almost absent from party manifestos. Examples of discourses in this area were plentiful in the 1994 Worker's Party broadcasts:

Look who is behind Fernando Henrique: Marco Maciel. In 1968, Marco Maciel supported the Institutional Act 5, which extirpated the freedom of the people. In '77 he supported the 'April pack' (Pacote de Abril) that closed Congress. In '84 was against direct elections for president. In he supported Collor for Presidency. In '91 he became leader of Collor in the Congress. In '92 he was against Collor's impeachment. Marco Maciel is candidate to Vice-president of Fernando Henrique. Think about that! Honesty is Lula, Brazil doesn't give up!⁴⁵

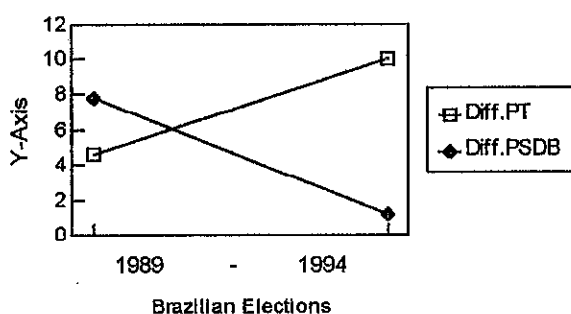
⁴⁴ These examples were extracted from the transcription of the PT's Party Broadcasts in 1994.

⁴⁵ Transcription from the Workers' Party Broadcast in the HGPE- 05/08/94

Among the typical expressions in this category are accusations about candidate's lack of legitimacy, bad conduct, charges against radicalism and lack of competence to govern. Remarks about the enemies' weaknesses and lack of authority are also salient. Besides all this, we can also find imputations of elitism, denouncements of alliances with non-democratic politicians, entrepreneurs and bank owners and accusation of candidates standing on the same ideological side as ex-president Collor de Mello, ex-president João Figueiredo, the military generals and North Eastern colonels. Similarly, emphasis on political authority brought about the censure of candidates pictured as puppets manipulated by the right-wing.

Chart 17

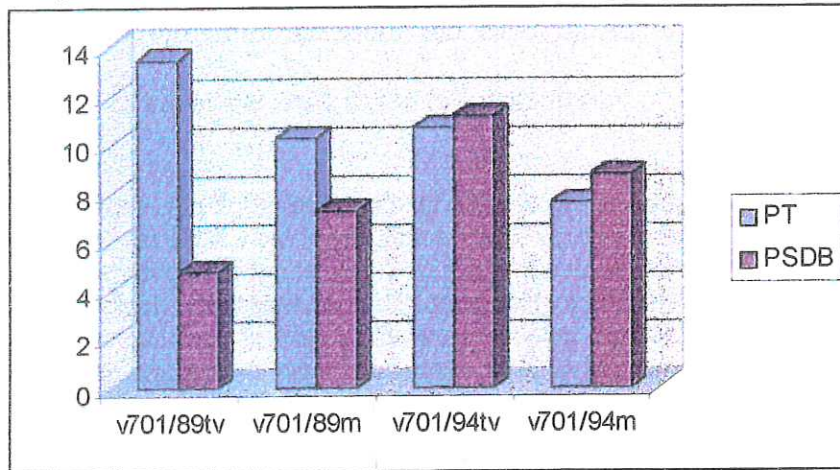
Emphasis on Political Authority - Attacks
Tendential difference between Television/ Manifesto



According to Chart 17, differences between television and manifesto attacks against enemies have increased for the Workers Party from 5.6 percent on television and 1 percent of the manifesto in 1989 to 10.4 percent on television and 0.26 percent in the manifesto in 1994. These percentages almost doubled in the case of PT's party broadcasts, but in the case of PT's manifestos, emphasis on political authority has decreased in spite of being already insignificant. Conversely, the 1994 PSDB broadcasts have almost done away with attacks on television – 1.2 percent, which played an important part in the 1989 party broadcasts- 7.8 percent, when PSDB was positioned on the centre-left.

Chart 18

**Emphasis on Labour Groups Brazilian Elections, (PSDB-PT), 1989-94
Party Manifestos/ Party Broadcasts**



Labour groups (Chart 18) mentioned as a political issue has surpassed the barriers of the Workers' Party arena, being largely adopted by other parties like the PSDB. In 1989 and 1994 elections, speeches on behalf of labour groups addressed for instance the necessity of strengthening unions, they have condemned slave work and also claimed for the autonomy of unions. Other important issues were the amelioration of the general situation of manual workers. Unemployment was also underlined by candidates who also drew attention to the need for collective negotiations, claiming for an increase in salary levels.

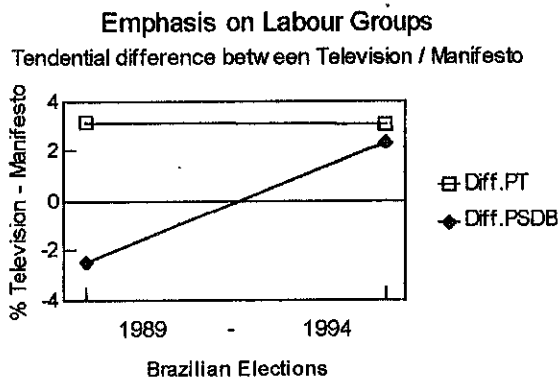
The emphasis on labour groups seems to be connected with television's exposure and not so much with written manifestos (chart 18). However, viewing the issue through the whole period of time, labour groups as a theme was very much accentuated by PT on television in 1989 but showed a decline in the 1994 elections. The Workers Party, which accredited extreme importance to Labour related issues in its 1989 broadcasts, failed to repeat the same performance in the 1994 election. The emphasis on this crucial issue has decreased by 3 percent from 1989 to 1994. This was probably part of a universalising strategy to identify PT not only with the working class but also with the middle class represented by intellectuals and liberal professionals. It is also true that neither workers nor intellectuals and other representatives of the middle class could participate in any party broadcast in the 1994 elections, though this was allowed four years

before. As I have said, Law n. 8.713 of 30th September 1993 prohibited any external interview or image in party broadcasts. This law restricted participation in the HGPE to talking heads, small interviews with the candidate and clips filmed in the studio. Even though, Lula formulated discourses about the issue in the following terms:

There is nothing more sad and depressing in a human being's life than to be unemployed. It is only the one who woke up at four o'clock in the morning during several months and wandered around the streets the whole day with the professional card in the pocket and had to go back home at four o'clock in the afternoon without finding a job; the one who saw his wife sitting in the kitchen with the children, looking at the empty cooker because there was nothing to prepare dinner; this is the one who knows what is unemployment in this country. Today we have eight thousand unemployed people in this country.⁴⁶

However, his decreased emphasis on labour groups in 1994 cannot be explained merely by the restrictions imposed by a new electoral law insofar as a similar pattern of a decrease of references to workers was also repeated in the Worker's Party written manifestos. In the 1989 manifesto, positive discourse about labour groups occupied 10.3 percent of all claims and in 1994 this number fell to 7.6 percent. Conversely, the same issue has also increased in the Social Democrat's broadcasts from 4.8 percent in 1989 to 11 percent in 1994. In the PSDB's manifestos there was also an increase in the labour groups theme but this was lower: it was a small jump from 7.3 percent in 1989 to 8.8 in 1994.

Chart 19



⁴⁶ Transcription from the Workers' Party Broadcast in the HGPE- 7/08/94

According to Chart 19, differences between the emphasis placed upon labour groups on television and in manifesto content remained the same for the Workers Party between 1989 and 1994 elections. For the PSDB there was a significant increase in the issue in television programmes insofar as in 1989 this was stronger in the PSDB's manifesto. Finally, welfare issues such as environmental protection, welfare state expansion, social justice and education expansion increased their importance in the agendas of both PT and PSDB.

The PSDB and PT tended to concentrate on different areas of welfare on television. It is important to note, however, that 'social justice' was the theme both parties disputed most in the media and this was the main point of convergence between PT and PSDB. Formulations in the PT and PSDB programmes are very similar and differences do not emerge even in relation to the causes of social justice that for both parties are robbery and corruption by privileged groups. Social injustice, starvation and poverty have been transformed by the mass communication into empty signifiers explored by any party on the left or on the right of the ideological spectrum that are free to formulate very similar approaches. It seems that if there are any differences in these approaches, those differences favour conservative parties' representations that are congruent with the mass media conservative representations.

As said before in this chapter, the PT and PSDB should not be considered as opposite extremes of the political spectrum but it is possible to understand these parties as representative of the party coalitions that split broadly along the left-right divide. So, while it must be noted that the PSDB itself was not a right-wing party, in 1994 it became increasingly representative of the centre-right wing coalition established between the PSDB, PFL, PTB and the PL. The PT similarly represented the coalition located at the other extreme of the political spectrum, which also included the PSD, PCdoB, PV, PPS and PSTU.

From the above, I conclude that the media in Brazil does not favour oppositional politics, it seems to constrain the translation of heterogeneous social demands into political proposals. An example of this is the disposition to a convergence between the PT and PSDB behaviour in the 1989 and 1994 elections. Chart 11 shows a convergent inclination for both parties in terms of

their emphasis on 'national way of life'. Both parties seem to adjust their positions by converging toward a middle point. Chart 13 shows again an inclination toward convergence between PT and PSDB in relation to their emphasis on democracy. In this case the PSDB moved towards PT's positions, increasing the weight given to the empty signifier 'democracy' in its Party broadcasts. This leads to the suggestion that conservative innovation on television leads right-wing discourse to absorb more progressive signifiers in the form of *empty signifiers*. This need not lead to the conclusion that parties share a common ideological ground. Rather it shows that parties addressed similar issues by using the same signifiers and universalising, or "emptying", them. In so doing, they provided an illusion of stability stemming from the repetition of signifiers. That illusion was also enhanced through the innovation composing television language that institutionalised political conservatism as something always already new.

If we look at chart 19, the PSDB was also disposed to converge with PT's party broadcasts concerning the emphasis on Labour Groups. This move by PSDB was conservative in the sense that it shows how the emptying of certain signifiers on television is related with the conservative co-optation of certain progressive themes. This co-optation or emptying of opposition themes by conservative candidates weakens discourses that are intended to be original and genuine. Such is the case with the Worker's Party.

Chart 14 concerning emphasis on political authority shows that PT and PSDB adopted very similar emphasis on this issue in their party broadcasts of 1994. In most cases, the PSDB converged with the PT behaviour. However, Charts 16 and 17 show a disposition toward a divergence between PT and PSDB in relation to emphasis on political attacks. This divergence communicates an image of radicalism to PT that has adopted an aggressive and oppositional approach on television, going against mass communication conciliatory character.

Conclusion

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the Brazilian hierarchical order derives its identity from contingent constructions that are the result of hegemonic articulations involving the expansion of a traditional discourse. This expansion has been possible through political mechanisms such as patronage, parentela, coronelism and clientelism that perform a *conciliatory mediation* between social strata in Brazilian society. Looking at contemporary Brazil, my investigation focused precisely on how television understood as a *mechanism of power* performs a new type of *mediatory conciliation* that prevents the dislocation of a traditional power structure by articulating opposing forces of innovation and conservation. The peculiarity of the Brazilian case is that contingent *mediatory conciliation* has fostered an apparently unlimited repetition of structural arrangements that otherwise would not survive democratic impulses in this society.

I have explained this unlimited repetition of a traditional order in terms of the poststructuralist infrastructure as *iterability*. *Iterability* allows one to account for the repetition of a traditional order resulting from a syntactic arrangement between elements. My argument has been that the reproduction of the traditional order can be understood along the lines of the infrastructure of iterability that incorporates both continuity and change in one and the same moment. Thus, to characterise this political system in post-structuralist terms helps to bring to light the continuities in the system while not neglecting, or underplaying certain discontinuities.

In chapter 1, I introduced a theoretical view of syntax articulated through the infrastructural logic as iterability and supplementarity and the political logic of hegemony. Looking at the debate on Brazilian State that recognisably followed a different path from Western liberal democracies, I have argued that there are important tensions in liberal democracy as found historically in Brazil. These tensions arise from the fact that in the Brazilian case, traditional patronage and populist mechanisms preclude not only the democratisation but also the

liberalisation of the political system. The exemplary case of Vargas' corporatist welfare state impaired democracy since it neither postulated popular self-government nor strengthened the individual autonomy that is one of the main requisites of a democratic regime. Similarly, the anti-statist character of Brazilian liberalism has been based on elitist mechanisms of conciliation that blur the anti-democratic character of a hybrid liberal order.

The repetition of ambiguous democratic-authoritarianism and liberal-anti-state articulations can be brought to light through focusing upon the idea of an impure non-same repetition. In the Brazilian case, liberal democracy was 'repeated' by meaning something that is already other than what it means. This recurring fixation and constant rearticulation of impure 'democratic models' has undermined a popular government in Brazil insofar as 'traditional' syntaxes impair the free play of meaning subsumed in a democratic logic. The Brazilian State does reproduce itself through the construction and sedimentation of certain 'universal truths' and idealised orders that stimulates intolerance and reinforce the hegemony of non-political conceptions of society.

As seen throughout my exposition in chapter 3, the main factor that provides an idealised image of Brazil is the effacement of an original hierarchy of values preventing a national identity from being emancipated. Viewing Brazilian history we find that conservative discursive constructions persist despite 150 years of millenarist movements and 40 years of post war social movements. This is because construction of social identities in Brazil has been fundamentalist and idealist not only regarding the Euro-centric elitist argumentation but also regarding nationalist-populist, millenarist, Socialist and social movement constructions. Even phenomena of authoritarian transformation seem to carry the innovative energy for the repetition of a split identity in the uneven Brazilian society whereby a 'modern developed' half retains its hegemonic position through its power to represent and manipulate images of the other 'subaltern' half, augmenting contradictions in Brazilian society. This is to say that the infrastructural logic of

iterability gives an account of the repetition of the hierarchy civilisation-non-civilisation at the origin. An original non self-sameness is the main theoretical explanation for the continuous traditional domination.

Besides the contradictions between the liberal and the traditional universe, the naturalisation of hierarchies in Brazil derives from the incompatibility between public and private ethics that are integrated by intermediate instances such as moral conceptions ingrained in political discourse and clientelism in political practice. The latter play a part in the attenuation of differences that Da Matta's notion of a *relational dynamic* gives an account. The *conciliation* of formal and substantive rational systems provides the conditions of possibility for the attenuation of discrepancies between a traditional and a rational world in Brazil. *Conciliatory mediations* guarantee the co-existence of parallel codes that obscure or weaken the concept of the *individual* and the primacy of an individualistic ethics.

Thinking about Da Matta's *relational dynamic*, I have concluded that one of the key points in the explanation of the repetition of a hierarchic order in Brazil relies on the logic of supplementation. The two incommensurable meanings of iterability – repetition and alteration – are internally related through the infrastructural logic of supplementation. Repetition and alteration are re-conciliated by means of 'mediators' that link together vertically disposed social strata through moral, affective, religious links and horizontal 'mediators' that articulate a discourse on differences, making them acceptable.

Looking at the problem of continuity from a theoretical point of view, it seems that the clientelistic order cannot be threatened where it has been condition of possibility for the progressive integration of social strata and exclusion of social antagonism and political struggles from Brazilian society. One of the best explanations for the endurance of this traditional system of domination dwells on the notion of *system* that predominates over its elements, impeding historicity and change as *dislocation* of the structure. This is because the nature of changes in

traditional ordering is circumscribed to an apparently closed structure combining *distributional relations* and *integrative relations*. These relations harmonise different social levels in the interior of the stratified groups also promoting distributional relations of an egalitarian type. *Integrative relations* give identity to elements in the interior of a determined unity, resolving tensions between the two hierarchic levels while the *distributional relations* guarantee the reproduction of the system. *Integrative function* can be understood in terms of *coronelismo* and *clientelism* while distributional relations can be characterised in terms of the web of influence and friendship inside horizontal power groups, such as nepotism, corruption and influence peddling.

As explained throughout this thesis, Laclau's deconstructionist approach to politics explains the absence of change as a-historicity. *Dislocation* in Laclau highlights an aspect of historicity as the rupture of space that points to the possibility of change and freedom because temporality is the absence of determination. The lack of *dislocation* or repetition of structural relations is given by the impossibility of the drawing of new clear-cut frontiers. Logically prior to time, *dislocation* requires an absence of predetermined direction of transformation. In this sense, the concept of time as *dislocation* illuminates the *possibility* of democracy as *variation* in political articulations, i.e. the disarticulation of the *integrative* and *distributive* functions of a power structure. However, traditional domination endures since temporality becomes the metamorphosis of a nucleus that undergoes repetition. The re-organisation of the interests of traditional elites around mechanisms of power such clientelism of state, political machines and lately an elite dominated electronic media retain integrative effects that disperse and demobilise Brazilian society.

From the point of view of its social functions, modern 'political machines' such as the mass media are centralised systems that serve very diversified types of clientele. They differ from the old *clientelism*, which was directed to individual actors since now what stands as

relevant is a symbolic integration. Modern *clientelism* mobilises the new clientele through political communication strategies deriving its force from rhetoric strategies that provide a certain symbolic integration among the community, promoting a vertical mobilisation that consists in strengthening links between the subordinated and their superiors. This dilutes horizontal bonds of solidarity between pairs.

New political machines maintain an ambiguity between the meaning of progressive and non-progressive positions in Brazilian society by means of the *displacement* of meaning and the reintegration of dislocated events. It is through symbolic rewards that the Brazilian working class has internalised an authoritarian statist ideology since Getulio Vargas' *Estado Novo*. An unconventional divide of public opinion in Brazil shows that populist, symbolic articulations between liberalism and democracy led to a non-conventional political participation in Brazil. This is not to say that participation in Brazil is different to any Western democracy. On the contrary, participation in Brazil entails the support of issues organised into dimensions corresponding to 'libertarian' and 'egalitarian' contents of democracy. However, several issues are ambiguously associated with democratic procedures but also with democracy as an ideal of equality. This ambiguity indicates the existence of a common ground unifying different political positions and impeding the constitution of radical political differences in Brazilian society.

It is my claim that rhetorical strategies of political communication give rise to a hierarchic relation between formal and substantive notions of democracy, downgrading them rather than promoting an emancipatory synthesis. In this sense, the condition of possibility for a growing democratic orientation among Brazilian workers has been, and must be, the development of anti-authoritarian values that will overcome ambiguities in the meaning attributed to democracy. In a theoretical view, the key to an interdependence and repetition of an ambiguous relation between the two dimensions of democratic values and the consequent increase in political cynicism does not lie in the differential distributions of respondents by class

but in persuasion that follows the infrastructural logic of iterability. The repetition of incongruent versions of democracy in Brazil hinges on the structural possibility of an absence of an ideal of democracy and the possibility of repetition of this ideal that divides the identity of democracy.

In empirical terms, political information constraints are possibly among the main factors that increase incongruent or anachronistic notions of democracy. The image-oriented mass media increase a breach between the universal phraseologies and their particular contents that are condensed through *empty signifiers*. These points of intersection that provide the structuring principle of discourse bring about the relationship between the symbolic and the real. Since the symbolic component of *empty signifiers* relates to the materiality of the signifier and these are inappropriate to express the content of ideological conceptualisation, all television does is to attribute positivity to the lack in a given society. The problem is that this positivity that cannot be erased. Thus, if Brazilian voters think about politics in symbolic terms, they reflect an agreement around the materiality of certain signifiers that lead to a unifying effect rather than encourage the drawing of new clear-cut *frontiers* in society. In other words, the materiality of television's language increases the relevance of remainders of particularity that hold the place of an absent universality. Consequently, television's hegemonic intervention through the positivation of emptiness increases the impossibility of purging signifiers from their traditional materiality.

The present model of a centralised mass media in Brazil tends to make intra party politics superfluous in Brazil since, apart from excluding a democratic dialogue that poses a threat to all differences within the traditional discursive formation, it has daily access to the largest constituency of all. Parties cannot compete with the media in terms of the representation of society's interests. Campaign advertising thus appears secondary and dependent in relation to discursive constructions elaborated by the main television networks that constitute the environment where political pledges become meaningful and able to be assimilated. Television is unbeatable in terms of the fixation of certain images of society. Acting independently of current

national and domestic crises, television gives rise to a certain idea of society conferring the places of social groups in society that do not seem static since television renews small ideals and proposes innovation that does not challenge the basic power structure.

Television favours 'catch-all' rhetoric, ideological convergence between political ideologies and the crystallisation of political frontiers. The latter occurs since television decreases the already low potential of confrontation between the main political forces, increasing 'democratic' stability. Brazilian television reinforces the 'dominant interpretations' postulated by incumbent candidates who use a posture of 'beyond the fight' in their party broadcasts. As I have shown through the evidence presented in chapter 6, television constrains oppositional politics, favouring the *one-nation* strategy that expresses political issues as non-related matters. Television thus erases not only thematic differences but also forces rhetorical convergence between different parties.

According to my case study of the 1989 and 1994 presidential campaigns of the PSDB's and the PT's electoral spots, the PSDB has shown a tendency toward an increase in secondary, interpretative language with an important unifying effect. I have observed that the dominant trend followed by the hegemonic PSDB was based on the emptying of signifiers that rest on the logic of exclusionary or antagonistic limits. The antagonistic discourse - or *discourse of frontiers* in Laclau's terms - works to restructure conceptions of the real and to institute a new order by means of the *reduction* of political positions into antagonistic camps. As I have noted, the Workers Party (PT) has not followed the general tendency toward an increase in secondary discourse but an increase in a tertiary or oppositional language that has been unable to restructure conceptions of the real in an elite-dominated mass communication. The building of new frontiers on television does not accept a discourse of 'contra' or a strategy of polemic negation as a means to promote a new democratic order. The limits between political ideologies must be given within communication itself. This is because the logics of *difference* and *equivalence* that

dominate the discursive field are complementary and do not require a tertiary form as external to the content.

Thinking about the future of the Brazilian political system and the role to be performed by television, it seems that the model of the public sphere as a neutral zone is not applicable. From the poststructuralist perspective, neutrality means the stabilisation of meaning through the imposition and acceptance of certain hegemonic views as truth and necessary. Discussion where all those participating in public debate do so on an equal basis seems utopian since television accentuates persuasion and thus dislocation between phraseology and content. Even if the mass media provide an arena of public debate, it does not constitute a public body. Proof of this is that the enlargement of the public sphere with the impressive expansion of Brazilian television did not enable the formerly excluded to participate in the public debate on an equal basis. On the contrary, it has increased scepticism and lack of interest in public affairs.

Certain models of a democratic media system propose television as a public service in a way that the core media, understood as system of checks and balances, might promote pluralism and strengthen the democratic institutions of civil society. Since media organisations are arranged on different principles regulated by private enterprise sector, civic sector, professional sector and social market sector, they are designed to produce a vigorous plurality of competing voices. At this moment when mass media is the focus of much research in Brazil given its centrality to consensus formation, I would recommend further research on the viability of democratic incumbent media systems around Latin America. It is relevant to know in which measure a democratic television, even in embryonic form, can or does foster sectional solidarity. It is also crucial to determine if a democratic mass media are able to assist the functioning of organisations needed for the representation of collective interests - not to mention the power to carry attentive observation and inspection of governments and centres of power. For if they continue to slumber complacently in the 'misleading security' of the 'lullabies of the

speechmakers', traditional societies like Brazil are fated, as Paulo Prado feared, to play 'a role of complete ignorance' to the democratic wind of change that is blowing through the world.