

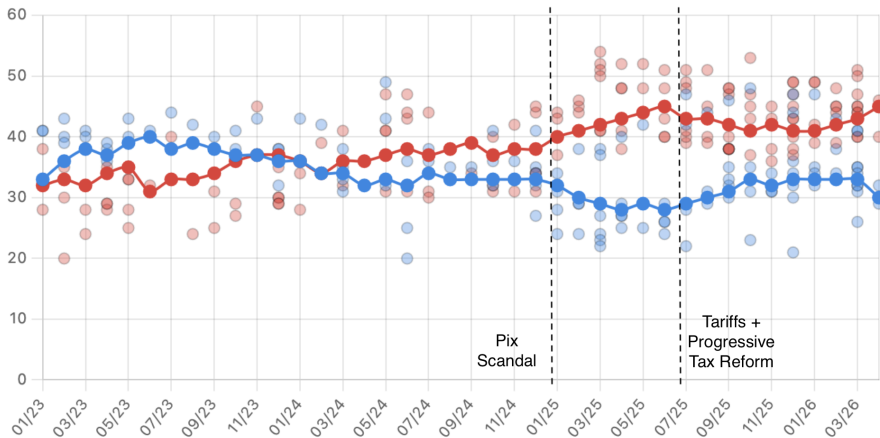
Brazil's 2026 Elections: Looking Ahead to October

Lucas Gelape (UFMG)

<https://lgelape.github.io/>

David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies
Harvard University
April 14th, 2026

3 years in 3 minutes



Source: Meio/Ideia's pool aggregator.
Blue == approval; Red == disapproval.

The evolution of presidential competition

Estrutura da Competição pela Presidência e Consolidação do Sistema Partidário no Brasil*

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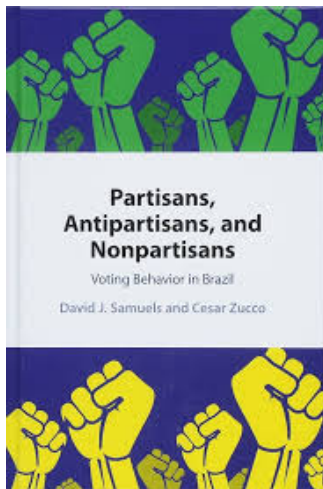
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AS ELEIÇÕES DE 2010 E O QUADRO PARTIDÁRIO

FERNANDO LIMONGI E RAFAEL CORTEZ

- PT and PSDB structure(d) the political competition for the presidency
- Repercussions for all other races: governors; senators; federal MPs; state assemblies.
- Reasons of supply, rather than demand

The evolution of presidential competition



- In the demand side, the Brazilian electorate was divided between *petistas* (pro-PT) and *anti-petistas* (anti-PT).
- The anti-petistas were not created with the PT, but emerged over time, and voted for the PSDB.

The evolution of presidential competition

*The Bolsonaro Voter:
Issue Positions and Vote Choice in the
2018 Brazilian Presidential Elections*

Lucio R. Rennó

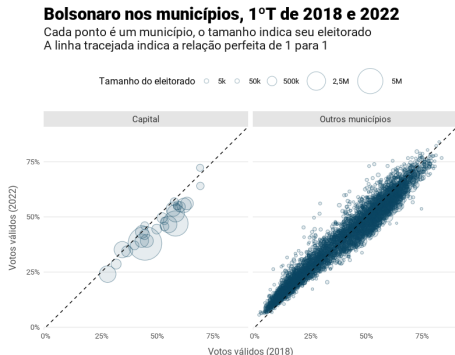
Beyond Electoral Fortunes: The Consolidation of a Far-Right Alignment in Brazil

Lucio Rennó¹ , Thiago Moreira² ,
and Eduardo Ryo Tamaki³ 

- Bolsonaro has *aligned* (not realigned) and *consolidated* the anti-petista votes in his candidacy.
- This is due to affective evaluations and issue alignment operating as mutually reinforcing processes.
- In sum, *bolsonarism* is here to stay.

Lula's swing voters in 2022

- In 2022, Lula closely beat Bolsonaro, after seeing Haddad lose by 10 p.p. in 2018.
- Lula won 2 blocks of swing voters:
 - Working-class voters in the peripheries of large cities
 - Remembrance of good economic times, in an uncertain age
 - More-educated voters from large cities
 - Disapproval of Bolsonaro's handling of the pandemic and his authoritarian leanings



Source: **Fernando Meireles.**

How might these campaign main issues affect these voters?

● Public safety

- The police killings in Rio in Oct./2025 stopped the rise in approval ratings the government was enjoying.
- The right is seen as more capable of dealing with this issue.
- It's a more salient issue in larger cities.

● Corruption

- Corruption is a salient issue for high-education voters.
- Even if Lula/PT are not deeply involved in the *Banco Master* scandal, it reinforces existing negative associations with PT.

● Economy

- GDP has risen 2-3% every year of Lula 3.
- Controlled inflation: 4-5%/year. However, it varies by areas.
- All-time unemployment low: 5.8%. But, they are low-wage jobs.
- Lula promised beer and steak (*cerveja* and *picanha*). *Many voters do not think he delivered it.*

Lula and Biden's similarities



- However, there's at least one other similarity that worries me:
 - Biden's and Lula's economic advisers allegedly cannot “understand” their approval ratings, giving good economic indicators.
 - Americans still don't understand this, and Brazilians are going in the same direction.