

# **Political Dynasties, Parliamentary Coalitions, and the Reproduction of Power in Brazil (1985–2026): Ceará, Bahia, Maranhão–Amapá, Operation Car Wash, and Educational Internationalization**

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**ABSTRACT:** Research question: How have political dynasties, parliamentary coalitions, and media influence reproduced power in democratic Brazil between 1985 and 2026 despite educational progress? Method: qualitative historical-institutional comparison of Ceará, Bahia, and Maranhão–Amapá, using process tracing of electoral records, judicial decisions, party history, university and educational evidence, news archives and peer-reviewed scholarship. Results: persistent family networks and parliamentary bargaining interact with uneven communicative resources across administrations. Public realignments involving FHC, Lula, Ciro and PL politicians demonstrate documented cross-ideological cooperation without erasing ideological disputes. The political consequences of Lava Jato, Temer’s presidency, Moro’s resignation and subsequent 2026 election, and the Universal Church’s Angola diplomacy illustrate differentiated mechanisms of institutional access. Historical data on reading and media ownership identify hypotheses about information inequality, while the 2017 UFSC case raises questions of investigative proportionality. Conclusions: network continuity is observable, but an alleged centrally coordinated conspiracy involving all parties, courts and media is not established by the evidence. Contributions include a framework separating public alliances, institutional change, contested allegations and causal hypotheses.

**Keywords:** political dynasties; coalition presidentialism; PMDB/ MDB; Ceará; Bahia; Operation Car Wash; education; governance.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTION AND CONTRIBUTION**

The formal return to democracy in 1985 reopened presidential competition and strengthened civilian institutions, but did not automatically dismantle networks of territorial, business, bureaucratic, and media brokerage established in earlier periods. The research problem is not to assume that all administrations are alike, but to identify which political resources are transmitted between administrations and which genuinely change. Brazilian scholarship on coalition presidentialism demonstrates that forming legislative majorities is central to presidential survival and policymaking (Abranches, 1988; Figueiredo & Limongi, 1999).

Throughout the New Republic, families historically associated with particular states continued to hold governorships, parliamentary seats, secretariats, executive offices, and party leadership positions. The concept of a dynasty does not presume criminal conduct: it denotes recurring family membership in elected office or leadership sustained by transferable resources, social recognition, electoral organization, and access to information. The framework of familial political capital makes recruitment advantages visible without reducing the electorate to passivity or manipulation (Bourdieu, 1986).

Ceará reveals tensions between administrative modernization and the reproduction of ruling groups. The so-called Governments of Change combined fiscal restructuring, water policies, and health and education initiatives; they also became the subject of scholarship on political communication and the legitimization of new elites (Tendler, 1997; Barbalho, 2003, 2007). Bahia provides an important historical contrast: the Magalhães family linked state leadership, parliamentary activity, urban policies, and a presence in the communications sector.

Maranhão and Amapá add a federal and territorial dimension. José Sarney built his career in Maranhão and subsequently represented Amapá in the Senate. Political migration does not amount to private ownership of territory: claims that he owned Marajó would require property-specific land records and are not adopted in this study.

Events in 2014–2018 raise another problem: how an elected government loses congressional support, how judicial operations generate political consequences, and how military institutions enter public debate. The analysis separates the formally recorded grounds for impeachment from hypotheses concerning structural

interests, media delegitimation, and resistance to policies expanding educational opportunities (Chamber of Deputies, 2016; STF, 2021).

Lastly, the October 2026 elections in Ceará and Bahia make it possible to compare regionally influential family-based political leaders who failed to win their respective state executive offices. Results must be understood in their contexts rather than assuming that an opposition candidate's defeat reveals a concealed alliance with opponents (TSE, 2026a, 2026b).

## **SECTION 1. RESEARCH DESIGN, THEORY AND HISTORICAL INSTITUTIONALISM**

Recent comparative research strengthens the theoretical distinction between historical mechanisms and allegations about contemporary actors. Chagas and Lehmann (2026), in Springer's *Public Choice*, model the credible threat through which a military regime can co-opt powerful municipal elites by allowing local elections; their empirical application is to the Brazilian dictatorship of 1964–1985, not to contemporary electoral fraud. Eaton and Giraudy (2026), in *Studies in Comparative International Development* (Springer), explain why the juxtaposition of national competition and resilient subnational power enclaves is analytically consequential. Pérez Sandoval, Power, and Rocha (2026), in the same journal, provide a contemporary comparative approach to differences in subnational polyarchy. These studies support examining the persistence of territorial brokers without attributing identical governing mechanisms to dictatorship and democracy (Chagas & Lehmann, 2026; Eaton & Giraudy, 2026; Pérez Sandoval et al., 2026).

The literature synthesis also differentiates the evidentiary status of material listed in the previously shared books bibliography. Limongi's *Operação Impeachment*, Thompson's *The Media and Modernity*, Tendler's *Good Government in the Tropics*, and Bueno de Mesquita and Smith's *The Dictator's Handbook* are useful bibliographical leads for different theoretical questions: coalition rupture, communication and power, public sector performance, and political survival incentives. Their listing or commercial descriptions alone cannot substitute for reading the works. Accordingly, arguments in this article rely primarily on verifiable peer-reviewed studies and documented primary records; unverified book details are not passed off as extracted findings.

The study employs a qualitative, comparative design at three levels. Nationally, it examines coalitions, leadership of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, and party realignment. At state level, Ceará and Bahia are the primary cases, with Maranhão–Amapá examining the territorial transfer of political capital. At sectoral level, it examines infrastructure contracts, political communication, school learning, and access to higher education. The proposed triangulation combines legislation, judicial decisions, audit-court reports, Superior Electoral Court data, Inep statistics, ministerial administrative documents, peer-reviewed scholarship, and news reporting on verifiable events. Interviews, memoirs, and testimony record actors' interpretations and are not sufficient proof of every allegation they contain. Each accusation should be documented by the responsible authority, case number, subject matter, procedural stage, defense, and outcome.

The inference strategy is process tracing: identifying chronological sequences, intermediate causal mechanisms, and alternative hypotheses. For example, the claim that international scholarship programs antagonized military sectors is a hypothesis about perceptions and interests requiring speeches, meeting records, corroborating interviews, or decisions linking actors and policies. Mere temporal coincidence between an educational program and impeachment does not establish causality.

Educational outcomes will be compared using enrollment and coverage, progression, learning, socioeconomic composition, accessibility, and persistence in higher education. The Ideb index does not independently measure equality of opportunity. Likewise, strong municipal performance does not automatically establish uniform results across all schools and groups (Inep, 2026; World Bank, 2020).

Election results are dated events. Pre-election polls cannot retrospectively be replaced by actual outcomes, nor can their differences be treated as evidence of manipulation without methodological scrutiny. Comparing the 2026 campaigns requires polling time series, margins of error, samples, geographic disaggregation, and campaign-finance records.

Four categories of findings are distinguished: confirmed institutional fact; interpretation supported by multiple sources; contested allegation accompanied by the accused party's response; and unsubstantiated hypothesis. This distinction is especially necessary when research associates identifiable individuals with corruption, the press, or military interference.

## **II. Dynastic reproduction: international evidence and causal mechanisms**

Dal Bó, Dal Bó, and Snyder (2009) examine political dynasties in the United States Congress since its foundation and test whether relatives enter politics solely because of inherited characteristics—talent, vocation, or social position—or whether extended tenure in office generates a causal advantage. Their design uses instrumental-variable strategies and compares the persistence of political families with other occupations. They

find evidence of self-perpetuation: legislators who remain longer in office are more likely to have relatives who subsequently enter Congress (Dal Bó, Dal Bó & Snyder, 2009, pp. 115–142).

The finding matters for Brazil because it allows the broad notion of “coronelismo” (political bossism) to become a testable mechanism. In Ceará, Bahia, and Maranhão–Amapá, research should measure succession among relatives, term lengths, access to party leadership and campaign resources, and relatives’ election outcomes. The US study does NOT demonstrate wrongdoing by specific Brazilian families; it offers a hypothesis and research design for testing whether political power facilitates its own transmission.

External validity must be considered. The US legislative system studied by Dal Bó et al. (2009) differs from Brazilian electoral federalism, with numerous parties, proportional representation in the lower house, and transitions between executive and legislative positions. A Brazilian test therefore requires its own database of terms of office and kinship ties, distinguishing inherited visibility from demonstrable administrative ability and institutional patronage.

Together with Guriev and Treisman (2019), the contribution is twofold: Dal Bó et al. theorize how holding office increases the probability of family succession, while Guriev and Treisman examine informational mechanisms of political legitimation and public-perception control in nondemocratic regimes. Combining these models does not warrant automatically calling Brazilian politicians autocrats or replacing procedural evidence of corruption with family connections and media relationships.

### **III. REGIONAL TRAJECTORIES: CEARÁ, BAHIA, AND MARANHÃO–AMAPÁ**

#### **Ciro Gomes and modernization in Ceará**

Ciro Ferreira Gomes was born in Pindamonhangaba, São Paulo state, but grew up in Ceará, to which his family moved during his childhood. His political formation in Ceará should not be confused with his birthplace. A law graduate, he served as a state legislator, mayor of Fortaleza, governor of Ceará, and federal minister of Finance and National Integration. His career combines public administration, developmentalist rhetoric, and membership in various political parties. Economics courses and studies should not be mistaken for a completed PhD in Economics.

A balanced assessment should recognize achievements associated with Ceará’s modernization administrations without attributing collective accomplishments to one leader. Judith Tendler (1997) studied the experience of community health workers and health programs in Ceará, identifying mechanisms of public-sector performance that challenged pessimistic expectations about governance in poor regions. Expanded primary healthcare and action against infant mortality are indispensable dimensions of the assessment.

The Workers’ Canal, associated with the 1993 water crisis, illustrates both an emergency response and infrastructure constraints requiring long-term operations and maintenance. An ex post evaluation should establish actual water supply, cost, sustainability, and territorial effects, distinguishing physical completion from benefits effectively distributed.

Ciro’s closeness to Tasso Jereissati should be studied through modernization projects, party alliances, shifts in position, and subsequent ruptures. None of these personal or institutional connections suffices to attribute irregularities found in different administrations to a given individual. The scientific contribution lies in reconstructing decisions, contracts, and financing networks through verifiable records.

Sobral is a decisive case for understanding the intersection of administrative modernization, educational performance, and political-group continuity. In the 2023 Ideb, its municipal school system scored 9.6 in the early grades and 7.9 in the later grades of primary education; Antenor Napolini School and Antônio Custodio de Azevedo School reached 10 in the early grades (Inep, 2024; Ipece, 2024; Agência Gov, 2024). These results show measurable improvements in learning and school progression without exhausting questions of access to critical reading and political participation.

#### **ACM, ACM Neto, and Bahia**

The Magalhães family consolidated lasting influence in Bahia through executive and legislative positions, party networks, and media-related activities. Antônio Carlos Magalhães was central under both military rule and civilian administrations, including as communications minister under President José Sarney. These positions make broadcasting an essential object of investigation, given its role in public visibility and the regulation of broadcast licenses.

ACM Neto built a parliamentary career before serving as mayor of Salvador. Any evaluation of his administration should consider transport and mobility works, urban regeneration, services, and fiscal management, as well as territorial segregation, the social costs of interventions, and conditions in peripheral neighborhoods. Listing achievements without equity indicators is incomplete; attributing all inequality to one mayor’s term would likewise exceed the evidence.

Bahia’s 2026 gubernatorial election was decided in the first round: Jerônimo Rodrigues was re-elected with 55.80 percent of valid votes, according to TSE (2026b). ACM Neto’s trajectory should be examined in relation

to municipal coalitions, capacity to transfer votes, and shifts in regional support, without assuming that defeat implies clandestine support for the winner.

### **Sarney, Maranhão, and Amapá**

José Sarney's career includes membership in the governing party under military rule, involvement in the 1985 transition, service as president of Brazil, and terms as senator for Amapá. His national rise reveals both accommodation during political liberalization and movement of elites between federal levels. Roseana Sarney and Sarney Filho illustrate the significance of family continuity in Maranhão.

The Maranhão–Amapá trajectory suggests a hypothesis concerning the territorial transfer of support networks; it does not establish private ownership of Marajó, which is in Pará. Specific business records, concessions, and properties may be investigated, but broad property allegations cannot legitimately be inferred from an electoral biography.

Comparison with Ceará and Bahia requires distinguishing the concentration of political resources from policy effectiveness. Groups marked by family succession may preside over effective or deficient administrations; these variables should be measured separately.

## **SECTION 2. DYNASTIC POWER, PARTY BROKERAGE AND CROSS-IDEOLOGICAL COALITIONS**

Two complementary empirical findings anchor this section. Limongi and Figueiredo (1998) identify stronger executive legislative resources and party discipline under Brazil's 1988 constitutional system, challenging the premise of an inherently incoherent legislative process. Assis and Silva (2026), using 2,030 roll-call votes from the Chamber of Deputies for 1995–2016, report legislative success of 92% for executive-backed measures and distinguish formal governing alliances from informal legislative support. The latter is an especially powerful benchmark for this article: convergence should be measured as observed voting behavior rather than presumed from the public reputation of party leaders (Limongi & Figueiredo, 1998; Assis & Silva, 2026).

Cross-party brokerage can thus be coded at three levels: public endorsements (for example FHC's announced support for Lula in 2022), parliamentary coalitions (voting alignment on executive measures), and local elite reproduction (the recurring capture of candidacies, positions and campaign resources by relatives and political associates). The first level proves endorsement, the second reveals repeated policy coalition, and the third tests family-based advantage. No one indicator by itself proves that politically opposed actors belong to a single command structure. A network analysis spanning governments could calculate persistence of actors and links while reporting negative findings as carefully as positive ones (Dal Bó, Dal Bó & Snyder, 2009; Limongi & Figueiredo, 1998; Assis & Silva, 2026).

The MDB emerged as the legal opposition party under the dictatorship's two-party system, whereas ARENA supported the regime. After 1979, ARENA gave rise to the PDS. The subsequent migration of conservative leaders into PMDB-led alliances is a phenomenon of political transition and does not justify claiming that MDB was ARENA. This distinction is fundamental to reconstructing institutions without erasing the history of opposition to military rule.

The PMDB's congressional strength rests on statewide reach, municipal networks, capacity to bargain for positions and resources, and representation on committees and in parliamentary leadership. Abranches' (1988) concept of coalition presidentialism shows how Brazilian presidents must bring parties together to form majorities; Figueiredo and Limongi (1999) demonstrate governmental and legislative discipline and coordination under particular circumstances.

The presiding officers of legislative houses are especially important: they shape agenda priorities, the processing of bills, and procedural opportunities for political oversight. Yet legislative independence does not imply the executive branch is permanently subordinated to a single party. The weight of party groups and coalitions changes across elections and administrations.

On March 29, 2016, the PMDB formally announced its withdrawal from Dilma Rousseff's government. Recorded by the Chamber of Deputies (2016), this was an observable causal link in the loss of executive support. Vice President Michel Temer assumed office following her removal. Eduardo Cunha of the PMDB had accepted the impeachment petition in December 2015. A reconstruction must also include the formal arguments, votes, and internal divisions of each party.

The party participated in governments of differing ideological orientations, but this does not, in itself, prove that left and right operate under a single command. Durable brokerage networks, sectoral interests, intraparty disputes, and public agreements are more directly observable mechanisms than clandestine coordination.

State political dynasties become particularly relevant when deputies and senators connect family groups, local executive administrations, and congressional majority-building. Testing this mechanism requires mapping kinship, terms in office, campaign funding, leadership posts, legislative amendments, appointments, and recorded votes relevant to each sector.

### **SECTION 3. LAVA JATO, INSTITUTIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND POLITICAL TRANSITION**

The Ecoplan episode in the previously published study offers an unusually specific institutional test of this article's claims. De Angelis (2026) differentiates the findings of the TCU, the investigation by the Federal Police, the initial position of the Administrative Accountability Proceeding Commission and the subsequent technical/legal reviews by CGU and AGU. That sequence illustrates how oversight institutions can disagree about scope, materiality and legal thresholds; it does not establish that any single institution was acting under a secret partisan directive. Comparative discussion of corruption and educational outcomes is reinforced by Ferraz, Finan and Moreira (2012), cited in the published article, on the institutional consequences of missing education resources. These distinctions give the present work stronger causal discipline than retrospective interpretation of presidential turnover alone.

The chain Rousseff–Temer–Bolsonaro is therefore represented by event chronology, party behavior and documented legal decisions. The impeachment involved congressional and legal processes, but it also altered political opportunity structures. Moro's 2020 public accusation about attempted political interference at the Federal Police is a source-attributed allegation and must not be rewritten as a court conviction. Nor does subsequent political affiliation establish the truth or falsity of his earlier claim. The research question is whether actors from different institutions collaborated on specific, authenticated decisions, and what causal alternatives could explain the same outcomes (De Angelis, 2026; Figueiredo & Limongi, 1998).

Dilma Rousseff's impeachment can be analyzed at several levels: the legal and budgetary grounds of the proceedings; deterioration of governability; conflict among parties and congressional actors; circulation of corruption allegations and their media framing; and public military interventions in later stages of the political crisis. Combining these levels without chronological evidence produces imprecise causal claims.

The so-called fiscal maneuvers ("pedaladas fiscais") prompted debate over advance payments by public banks, prohibited credit operations, and compliance with budgetary rules. Comparison with earlier federal and state practices is necessary but should distinguish instruments, amounts, applicable legislation, financial institutions, audited accounts, and oversight decisions. It is insufficient to assert that every administration carried out exactly the same conduct.

The Science Without Borders program, launched during Rousseff's first term, expanded international training opportunities. English Without Borders sought to reduce language barriers to academic exchange. Potential benefits include skills acquisition, intercultural exposure, scientific networks, and the internationalization of higher education. The social distribution of scholarships, costs, disciplinary priorities, and outcome evaluations warrant independent investigation.

The article's critical hypothesis is that policies expanding cultural capital and internationalization could conflict with traditional mechanisms reproducing social hierarchies. However, claiming that Science Without Borders triggered impeachment or that the military coordinated its termination would require documentary evidence not established in this version. This remains a falsifiable research question to be tested against chronology, speeches, and institutional records.

Operation Car Wash (Lava Jato) exposed corrupt practices while also attracting criticism concerning judicial bias and procedural limits. In 2021, the Federal Supreme Court upheld the finding that Sergio Moro was biased in the Guarujá apartment case (STF, 2021). That ruling addresses judicial bias in a specific proceeding; extending it to attribute the entire operation to military command would exceed the evidence.

Moro's transition from the judiciary to the Ministry of Justice under Bolsonaro adds a political dimension to the analysis of institutional reputation. His alliances and ruptures are biographical and political events that can be documented; personal motives should not be presumed from the eventual outcome.

Studying the military's position within Brazil's New Republic requires examining institutional autonomy, budgets, appointments, doctrine, military education, and public statements. General Villas Bôas's 2018 statement is an example of consequential public military intervention during a judicial controversy. Nevertheless, the coexistence of military political influence and civilian governments does not demonstrate uniform secret command throughout all PT and PSDB administrations.

Operation Condor belongs to the history of transnational repression under South American dictatorships. Brazilian democratization arose from varied political, social, institutional, and economic processes and cannot be reduced to Condor's termination. A defensible argument examines identifiable continuities in personnel, practices, and institutions, distinguishing them from constitutional changes in 1988.

### **SECTION 4. EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION, RELIGION AND INFORMATIONAL POWER**

The contemporary religion-and-politics literature permits an unusually well documented comparison with general theories of information and power. Klein and Carvalho (2024) analyze the crisis of the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God in Angola as a case of evangelical actors seeking support through Brazilian foreign policy during the Bolsonaro administration. A separate 2024 study in *Mediações* traces the internal

rupture and nationalist narratives in the Angolan church. Together, these papers substantiate the political relevance of the dispute and of diplomatic involvement while ruling out the simplistic proposition that religious actors exercised undifferentiated control over all foreign-policy decisions (Klein & Carvalho, 2024; Mediações, 2024).

Media influence must also be operationalized rather than inferred solely from media visibility. Ownership and licensing records, public advertising budgets, observed electoral exposure, and surveys on news consumption should be compared across states and periods. A 2006 newspaper account referring to 2000 reading estimates—one book per person in Brazil against four in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay—is a dated historical observation requiring confirmation of methods and denominators; it is not a current 2026 reading rate. The theoretical contribution of Guriev and Treisman (2019) is to clarify informational mechanisms, not to establish that all Brazilian administrations are informational autocracies.

Sobral's empirical record is striking: the municipality's 2023 Ideb was 9.6 in the early grades and 7.9 in the later grades; Antenor Napolini School increased from 3.6 in 2005 to 10.0 in 2023, while Antônio Custodio de Azevedo School reached 10.0 in 2023 (Inep, 2024; Ipece, 2024; Agência Gov, 2024). This development should be examined as a public policy accomplishment, rather than turned into propaganda or substituted for analysis of the power relations accompanying its institutionalization.

The experience drew on diagnostic testing, continuing teacher training, and administrative continuity. PAIC, inspired by the municipal experience and formalized through state-level cooperation, responded to diagnosed literacy difficulties in Ceará's municipalities (Marques, Aguiar & Campos, 2009). Its development involved different administrations and cooperative arrangements, contradicting accounts attributing all improvement to a single governor or party (Vieira & Vidal, 2013).

UNILAB has a statutory mission of academic integration with Portuguese-speaking countries, particularly in Africa. A critical evaluation of its implementation should examine budgets, housing, student support, reported racism, international engagement, and academic outcomes, distinguishing the institutional plan from students' actual experiences.

Comparing schooling outcomes and political power requires examining who defines curricula, reading materials, training priorities, and access to libraries. The hypothesis that students' reading range is restricted—for example, that utilitarian or self-help texts predominate over history, politics, and literature—can be tested through collection inventories and book-distribution programs, but is not established by the indicators reported here. Ideb measures assessed learning components and promotion rates; it does not directly measure intellectual pluralism, independent book reading, or civic awareness.

Scholarship on Ceará's political culture provides a documented connection between modernization and power. Barbalho (2007) shows how the "Governments of Change" discourse defined itself against traditional coronelismo while deploying media-centered political marketing and concentrating political leadership. His historical analysis of cultural administration also describes investments in audiovisual production and the crafting of a public image of a "new Ceará" (Barbalho, undated, consulted document). Thus, rhetorical opposition between modern and traditional does not eliminate continuity in networks of power.

Rodrigues and Silveira (2026) examine the rise of the Ferreira Gomes family in Sobral following Cid Gomes's election in 1996, linking it to modernization under Tasso Jereissati. The case highlights connections that transcend party labels and bring business leaders together with political groups. Analyzing subsequent cooperation among left, right, and far right requires identifying concrete coalitions, votes, endorsements, and party switches; ideological labels alone do not explain territorial alliances.

### **Informational autocracy: media, education, and political legitimation**

Guriev and Treisman (2019, pp. 100–102) distinguish dictatorships grounded in overt repression from informational autocracies seeking to foster public perceptions of competence through propaganda, formally democratic institutions, and selective control of the information environment. This model offers an analytical framework for hypotheses about communication, media concentration, and the reproduction of power; it does not justify automatically classifying democratic Brazilian governments as autocracies. Application to Brazil requires independent indicators of press freedom, electoral competition, repression, and institutional functioning.

The authors argue that informational control depends on the size of informed elites and the cost of monopolizing communication channels (Guriev & Treisman, 2019, pp. 116–119). Research on electronic coronelismo, political families, and links between news outlets and state governments should therefore examine broadcast licenses, official advertising, ownership interests, and the diversity of reporting, separating potential influence from proven censorship or manipulation.

Historical evidence on reading access offers an important empirical boundary condition. A report published by Folha de S.Paulo on 10 March 2006 attributed to the International Reading Association's Conselho Brasil Sul (2000) estimates of approximately one book read per person per year in Brazil versus four in Chile, Uruguay,

and Argentina, and approximately twenty in developed countries (Folha de S.Paulo, 2006). These are dated, second-hand figures with an unspecified sampling design in the news report, not a validated 2026 comparison or a causal estimate of media influence. An independent retrospective account from 2000 repeats the one-versus-four comparison (Assunção, 2000). Later Retratos da Leitura no Brasil figures use differing populations and definitions, limiting direct comparison (Instituto Pró-Livro, 2012). The theoretically relevant mechanism is that unequal access to sustained independent reading could increase reliance on concentrated audiovisual news sources; testing it requires linked data on reading, media exposure, ownership, education, and political knowledge rather than assuming manipulation from book counts alone (Guriev & Treisman, 2019).

Education is especially relevant: the authors associate modernization, expansion of higher education, and international connections with higher costs of overt repression, while acknowledging other explanatory factors and limitations (Guriev & Treisman, 2019, p. 103). In this study, their perspective informs questions about the potential civic effects of Science Without Borders and English Without Borders. It does not establish the specific claim that these programs motivated Dilma Rousseff's impeachment.

In their quantitative comparison of presidential speeches, Guriev and Treisman (2019, pp. 112–116, Figure 5 and Table 1) find that leaders they classify as informational autocrats emphasize economic performance and public-service provision more than violence, sounding rhetorically similar to democratic leaders. Hence discourse about public services—including education and healthcare in Ceará—cannot alone prove democratization or manipulation; substantive outcome and informational-pluralism indicators are necessary.

Finally, media–politics relations should be interpreted in light of the authors' discussion of indirect censorship, whereby economic incentives, ownership, and government advertising may affect editorial autonomy (Guriev & Treisman, 2019, pp. 118–119). Their article provides no empirical investigation of Globo, Lava Jato, or Brazilian political families and is used strictly as comparative theory, not as proof that these actors engaged in clandestine political coordination.

#### **Freemasonry, the press, and elite networks: historical documentary evidence**

Augusto César Acioly Paz Silva (2022, pp. 60–63) provides documentary evidence for studying Freemasonry as a setting for intellectual sociability and the circulation of political ideas during Brazil's First Republic. Focusing on Pernambuco's Masonic press, particularly *Arquivo Maçonico* (1906–1913), he challenges the view that the institution lost significance with the spread of positivism. His research documents Freemason intellectuals' participation in public debates on religious freedom, republicanism, educational institutions, and political reform (Silva, 2022, pp. 61–64).

The material reveals connections among thought, the media, and electoral competition, not merely abstract doctrines. The historical texts include criticism of oligarchic reproduction, proposals to reform political representation, and explicit advocacy of electoral support for Masonic candidates, justified by the claim that members could help improve public life (Silva, 2022, pp. 66–68). This evidence makes voluntary associations, sociability networks, and movement between civic organizations, the press, and parties relevant dimensions in the study of Brazilian political dynasties.

The article also documents advocacy of primary education and the creation of schools and libraries to foster citizens capable of political participation (Silva, 2022, pp. 68–69). Yet its examination of anti-feminist arguments in the Masonic press shows that liberal and republican ideals could coexist with patriarchal views (Silva, 2022, pp. 70–71). These tensions call for empirical research on the distance between declared values, actual networks of influence, and distributive consequences, without attributing ideological uniformity to Freemasonry.

For 1985–2026 the application is exclusively historical and comparative: Silva (2022) does not establish causal links between particular Masonic lodges and the Gomes, Magalhães, or Sarney families, or support a claim that Freemasonry coordinated contemporary national decisions. Such hypotheses would require institutional records, verifiable public careers, electoral documents, and independent evidence of concrete influence mechanisms.

#### **Globo, Collor, Ciro, and FHC: connections between media and power**

Relations between political elites and the media in Brazil include verifiable episodes that illuminate public image-making, unequal visibility, and movement between politics and the cultural industry. Fernando Collor de Mello's case predates the 1989 presidential election: according to FGV's Historical Atlas of Brazil, Rede Globo was an influential ally of his candidacy, providing favorable coverage and interviews on *Fantástico* during the rise of the Alagoas governor who presented himself as a “hunter of privileged officials” (FGV, undated). Globo's own historical archive acknowledges controversy surrounding the editing of the December 1989 Collor–Lula presidential debate aired on *Jornal Nacional*, which was accused of favoring Collor; the broadcaster says it subsequently abandoned editing political debates (GLOBO, undated). These sources document a mechanism of media influence during electoral competition but cannot isolate its effect on the result.

For Ciro Gomes, the chronology must distinguish his earlier relationship with the press from electoral exposure associated with his relationship with actress Patrícia Pillar. In August 2002, Patrícia openly participated in Ciro's presidential campaign advertising, defending his personal image after attacks by opponents, as contemporaneously reported by *Folha de S.Paulo* (PORTELA, 2002). The same coverage noted endorsements by politicians connected with the PFL, including Antônio Carlos Magalhães, although the party did not formally join the coalition (PORTELA, 2002). This episode documents the electoral use of a prominent actress's public visibility and concrete cross-party alliances. It does not, by itself, establish that TV Globo as an organization endorsed the candidacy. The hypothesis of an earlier rapprochement between Ciro and the broadcaster remains distinct from Patrícia's involvement and requires further records.

A further episode illuminating the boundaries between private relationships, journalism, and power emerged in February 2016. Journalist Mirian Dutra, a former Globo correspondent in Europe, alleged that she had received monthly payments through Brasif connected with the support of her son after a relationship with Fernando Henrique Cardoso. On February 19, 2016, *El País* reported these allegations, FHC's denial that he had used an intermediary company, and Brasif's position that the contract did not result from interference by the former president (BARCA, 2016). *Folha de S.Paulo* published an interview with the journalist and FHC's statements and subsequently reported on Dutra's testimony to the Federal Police (NERY, 2016; SEABRA, 2016). These are public claims and responses concerning possible financial flows and personal relationships, not documentary proof that Globo or its executives coordinated political coverage or that FHC committed a crime.

The three episodes invite comparison of distinct forms of brokerage: televised construction of a candidate's image (Collor), celebrity visibility in election advertising and cross-party endorsements (Ciro), and a journalistic controversy involving personal relationships, payments, and public exposure (FHC). The shared analytical category is not a single alleged conspiracy but the observable interaction of media visibility, elite coalitions, and public accountability. Together with Barbalho (2007) and Guriev and Treisman (2019), these cases provide empirical material for investigating unequal influence over public narratives while preserving distinctions between facts, allegations, and inferences.

#### IV. COMPARATIVE RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Ceará, the Regional Electoral Court reported that Elmano de Freitas was re-elected in the first round on October 4, 2026, with 53.19 percent of valid votes, while Ciro Gomes received 46.22 percent (TRE-CE, 2026). In Bahia, TSE reported Jerônimo Rodrigues's first-round re-election with 55.80 percent of valid votes (TSE, 2026b). Defeat of candidates with administrative experience and national prominence does not establish illegitimacy of the outcomes.

The cases call for separating historical performance, present organizational capacity, alliances, changing electorates, campaign effects, and shifts in voter preferences. The expression "losing while winning" can at most denote a paradox between leading in some earlier polls and losing the election, not proof of electoral arrangements.

The PMDB/MDB emerges as a central actor in sustaining and disrupting governments. Its congressional prominence connects state elites and national coalitions, although a rigorous explanation requires quantitative data on party-group composition and legislative voting in each congressional term.

The cross-ideological mechanism can be specified rather than inferred from party labels. The PMDB/MDB participated in governing arrangements of different ideological orientations and publicly withdrew its support from the Rousseff government on 29 March 2016; separately, the 2002 Ciro Gomes campaign received publicly reported backing from politicians associated with the PFL, including Antônio Carlos Magalhães, without a formal PFL entry into the coalition (Portela, 2002; Chamber of Deputies, 2016). These observable cases show that alliances and endorsements can cross left-right boundaries, but a comprehensive claim covering the far right requires a dated, systematic party-by-party table of coalitions, roll-call votes, and reciprocal endorsements. They should not be presented as proof of a covert common command.

Sobral presents an observable contrast: exceptional educational performance and the persistence of influential political groups in the same territory. Local administrations have demonstrably improved indicators, but identifying the political benefits requires examining recruitment, coalition continuity, financing, advertising, and elite circulation. Barbalho (2007) offers historical evidence of modernization discourse legitimizing statewide hegemony; Rodrigues and Silveira (2026) examine the local emergence of the Ferreira Gomes group.

Findings on Lava Jato remain circumscribed: a Federal Supreme Court decision found Moro biased in a specific case. Establishing the hypothesis of a project coordinated by the military, media, and party organizations would require reconstructing contacts, decisions, and communication flows among identifiable actors.

The educational hypothesis of impeachment requires the same rigor: internationalization may have broadened cultural horizons and generated disputes over priorities, but no causal link to removal from office has been established. Research on structural continuity becomes stronger when its hypotheses remain open to contradictory evidence.

## **V. INTERNATIONAL EVIDENCE: POLITICAL DYNASTIES AND POVERTY**

Comparative analysis must not assume that the political dominance of families always causes poverty. Using data from Philippine provinces and an instrumental-variables approach, Mendoza, Beja Jr., Venida, and Yap (2014) find strong evidence that poverty contributes to the consolidation of political dynasties, but weak evidence that the presence of these dynasties increases or decreases poverty. This finding cautions against one-directional interpretations of Brazil, where the relationship between social inequality and family-based political reproduction must be tested in both directions.

The authors identify two competing mechanisms: limited economic opportunities and poverty may increase dependency on clientelist networks and concentrate electoral competition, while administrative continuity may facilitate long-term projects. Comparisons of Ceará, Bahia, and Maranhão should therefore consider both mechanisms and distinguish sectoral policy outcomes from the political benefits enjoyed by families (Mendoza et al., 2014).

In Ceará, educational improvement and political reproduction coexist in a concrete case: Sobral recorded 9.6 on the 2023 early-grade Ideb while scholarship describes regional hegemony associated with Tasso Jereissati and the Ferreira Gomes family (Ipece, 2024; Barbalho, 2007; Rodrigues & Silveira, 2026). This contrast underscores the need to compare curricula, library collections, critical reading, and access to opportunities with data on political recruitment and ties between parties and business elites. Mendoza et al. (2014) provide a comparative mechanism: poverty in Philippine provinces was associated with dynastic persistence without a clearly established causal effect of dynasties on poverty.

### **Cross-ideological bargaining and institutional continuity (De Angelis, 2026)**

The previously published investigation, *The Convergence of Left and Right in Latin America: A Study of Operation Car Wash in Light of the Ecoplan Engineering Case*, provides an institutional comparison relevant to the present analysis (De Angelis, 2026). Its core contribution is to treat corruption and coalition formation as matters of organizational knowledge and governance rather than as characteristics belonging exclusively to one ideological camp. This second study extends that approach by tracing party migration, family leadership, information access, and parliamentary bargaining over the 1985–2026 period.

The documentary record of the São Francisco River Integration Project offers an instructive example of the limits of political labels. As discussed by De Angelis (2026), the same public program involved successive administrations, private contractors, supervision firms, public auditors, law-enforcement investigators, and administrative review bodies. The relevant accountability sequence includes TCU findings on supervision and segregation of duties, Federal Police suspicions, an initial administrative assessment, and later AGU/CGU determinations that the available evidence was insufficient for a penalty in the Ecoplan matter. The difference between indications of wrongdoing and a legally established finding is essential; these findings neither establish criminal guilt of named political figures nor prove a hidden pact between parties.

Party-level continuity is visible in the PMDB/MDB's participation in governments built around different presidential parties and in the party's departure from Rousseff's coalition in March 2016. Likewise, specific endorsements and electoral partnerships in Ceará and Bahia can cross the conventional left–right divide. These observations support a bounded finding: institutional and regional interests may persist through ideological alternation and can lead competing groups to cooperate on concrete decisions. They do not establish that the entire left, right, and far right belong to a single centrally coordinated organization (Abranches, 1988; Figueiredo & Limongi, 1999; De Angelis, 2026).

The article therefore distinguishes three observable forms of convergence: formal governing coalitions; shared networks of procurement, local leadership, and administrative appointments; and continuity of information brokers and media channels. For each, convincing proof would involve named actors, dated agreements, coalition rosters, legislative votes, contract records, and media ownership or advertising records. This evidentiary discipline makes the hypothesis more testable, rather than weaker.

### **Reading access as a boundary condition on media influence**

A Folha de S.Paulo report dated 10 March 2006 attributed to the Associação Internacional de Leitura – Conselho Brasil Sul, using data identified as from 2000, a comparison of approximately one book read per Brazilian per year against four per year in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay. The same report described a far higher rate in developed countries (Folha de S.Paulo, 2006). The underlying research protocol, sampling frame, and cross-national comparability were not available in the newspaper text; the estimates must therefore be identified as historical claims reproduced by the press, rather than current 2026 rates or a verified causal effect of media concentration.

The significance for the research question is conceptual and empirical: low access to diverse reading material can make broadcast visibility and agenda setting relatively more important, but this proposed relationship needs testing. The correct research design would triangulate reading surveys by year and respondent category,

household internet and television access, media ownership, public advertising, school-library collections, and exposure to competing political accounts. Guriev and Treisman (2019) offer a theory of informational control; the Brazilian election and media episodes supply potential mechanisms, not proof that a particular broadcaster determined outcomes.

## **VI. ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE: EDUCATION, STATE CAPACITY, AND PUBLIC PROCUREMENT IN CEARÁ**

### **Sobral: diagnosis, municipal management, and changing literacy instruction**

The institutional Inep study prepared by Ribeiro and Gusmão (2005) documents Sobral's experience before PAIC was extended statewide. It records learning assessments, explicit targets, administrative restructuring, classroom routines, training for literacy teachers, pay incentives, and assistance for nonreaders in later grades. The policy was therefore not the isolated action of a single politician: it involved operational design, education professionals, assessment mechanisms, and coordination between the municipal administration and schools (INEP, 2005, pp. 25–70).

The distinction between teaching basic literacy and broadening reading horizons is essential. The report includes learning frameworks, literacy assessment tools, teaching sequences, and classroom routines (INEP, 2005, pp. 89–133). These materials permit investigation of what was actually taught rather than inferring a single instructional method from Ideb scores. Given its date and purpose, the 2005 report does not establish the literary genres held in school libraries decades later or a predominance of self-help books. Assessing access to science, literature, and critical education requires library inventories, acquisition records, and observation of curricula in practice.

### **Ciro, Cid, and Ceará's institutional trajectory (1987–2014)**

Rosa's (2019) dissertation reconstructs the administrations of Tasso Jereissati (1987–1990 and 1995–2002), Ciro Gomes (1991–1994), Lúcio Alcântara (2003–2006), and Cid Gomes (2007–2014), examining government plans and the expansion of state capacity. It identifies continuity in industrialization, fiscal balance, administrative reform, governance, and the construction of a positive public image. Party changes and alternation between individual leaders therefore do not necessarily disrupt a political-administrative agenda developed over decades (ROSA, 2019, pp. 36–68).

In education, institutional credit should be given to those who actually designed and implemented policies. The Inep report identifies Izolda Maria Cela Arruda and other members of Sobral's education secretariat, alongside technical staff, teachers, and school teams (INEP, 2005, pp. 2–3). Cid Gomes governed Sobral while parts of this arrangement were developed and later headed the state executive when PAIC was launched; Ciro Gomes governed Ceará earlier. This chronology precludes indiscriminately attributing a program created in 2007 to both brothers.

### **PAIC: achievements, external assessment, and tensions of standardization**

Costa (2016, pp. 15–17) shows that PAIC combined the fight against school-based illiteracy with regulatory mechanisms built around measurement, evaluation, and information. Her study records that in 2004, 55 percent of assessed Ceará students finishing fourth grade performed below the desired level in reading and comprehending simple texts. This diagnosis motivated the Ceará Committee for the Elimination of School Illiteracy, established in 2004 with the state legislature, UNICEF, municipal associations, Inep, and universities, before statewide PAIC implementation in 2007 (COSTA, 2016, pp. 16–18).

The author concludes that the program made advances while also facing limitations from assessment mechanisms and market-oriented regulation (COSTA, 2016, p. 15). This reveals a substantive tension rather than a false opposition: standardized testing may identify literacy difficulties while simultaneously placing pressure on teachers and curricular priorities. Such tension is not proof of book censorship, deliberate restriction of knowledge, or widespread program failure.

In qualitative research involving education professionals in Ceará's Central Hinterland, Moreira, Maia, and Ribeiro (2025) report perceptions that PAIC significantly helped overcome school failure, while examining achievements, contradictions, and challenges concerning teacher education, language, and human emancipation. Their regional qualitative sample is not a statewide causal estimate. Nevertheless, the study confirms that credible evaluation must consider both student learning and the actual conditions of teacher autonomy (MOREIRA; MAIA; RIBEIRO, 2025).

### **Business networks in municipal procurement: what the data establish**

Lyra et al. (2021) use network analysis to investigate firms participating jointly in tenders issued by all 184 municipalities of Ceará from 2015 to 2019. They identify 22 communities of firms exhibiting similar patterns, distinguishing activity profiles, geographic scope, and possible vulnerability to anti-competitive

manipulation. This is relevant quantitative evidence for investigating government–business relations, but detected communities are not, by definition, proven cartels, and the study does not calculate sums diverted by the Ferreira Gomes brothers (LYRA et al., 2021).

The methodological contribution lies in showing how administrative data can support verifiable audits: identification of tender procedures, recurring bidders, patterns of competition, and supplier relationships. Moving from statistical signals to accusations of corruption requires examination of specific contracts, payments, audit findings, statements by those under investigation, and judicial decisions. A network covering 2015–2019 cannot simply be attributed to state administrations that ended in 2014 (LYRA et al., 2021).

### **Implications for the hypothesis on coronelismo and circulation of knowledge**

Together, these sources make the coexistence of administrative capacity, elite reproduction, and unequal access to knowledge more amenable to empirical investigation. The Sobral study identifies educational interventions and outcomes; Rosa (2019) demonstrates historical continuity in state-capacity building; Costa (2016) and Moreira, Maia, and Ribeiro (2025) investigate tensions in education; and Lyra et al. (2021) offer techniques to analyze procurement patterns. The empirical challenge is to connect particular mechanisms—appointments, family ties, transfers, contracts, teacher training, libraries, and curriculum choices—to documented outcomes without conflating political reproduction, school performance, and crime.

## **SECTION 5. COMPARATIVE EVIDENCE, DISCUSSION AND EXPLANATORY SYNTHESIS**

Integrating the levels of analysis, the study predicts that territorial incumbency, institutional coalition capacity and informational visibility are partially substitutable assets for reproducing access to office. Where a dynasty loses an executive election, relatives or allies may retain power through legislature, municipal government, public visibility or coalition bargaining. Where a party changes its national endorsement, local machinery may remain stable. These patterns could be tested with a panel of party affiliations, kinship links, TSE campaign-finance records, votes and broadcast concessions rather than a binary division between left and right. The analyses of local elites and coalition performance provide a theoretical foundation for these comparisons (Chagas & Lehmann, 2026; Assis & Silva, 2026; Dal Bó et al., 2009).

The article's original contribution is therefore a differentiated answer to how elite power reproduces itself while formal competition continues: family transmission lowers organizational entry costs, cross-party coalitions distribute institutional resources, and unequal information exposure shapes recognition and accountability. This compound mechanism is consistent with several case trajectories but must not be conflated with proof of a centrally organized conspiracy linking every president, judge, journalist, religious group and business leader. Future research should prioritize causal designs and independent documentary replication.

The notion of a permanent alliance between left and right should be analytically disaggregated. Parties can compete over distributive and ideological programs while sharing institutional incentives to preserve legislative access, governability, broadcasting visibility and influential local intermediaries. As Abranches (1988) observed, coalition presidentialism makes multi-party bargaining constitutive rather than exceptional. Figueiredo and Limongi (1999) emphasize that legislative discipline and agenda power help executives organize majorities. Neither mechanism logically implies that party differences are fictitious. Nevertheless, coalitions may reproduce the same leadership networks even when the presidential party changes. The empirical task is to identify transactions and organizational channels rather than infer an invisible compact from similar outcomes. Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva offer an especially revealing sequence. Their presidencies represented different electoral alliances and policy priorities, with disputed approaches to privatization, social protection, macroeconomic management and labor relations. On 5 October 2022 FHC publicly endorsed Lula in the presidential runoff against Bolsonaro, describing his vote in terms of democracy and social inclusion (Azevedo, 2022). The endorsement is an observable instance of rapprochement across previous partisan rivalry. It establishes a specific, public electoral choice, not an enduring identity of their governments or evidence that the two leaders engineered the rise of the far right. In a process-tracing analysis the endorsement should be coded as an explicitly dated change in coalition preference, with attention to the electoral context and competing explanations.

The career of Ciro Gomes likewise demonstrates why ideological labels do not capture the entire history of political networks. His trajectory in Ceará was shaped by alliances with the administrations of Tasso Jereissati and subsequently by party realignments, national ministerial offices and electoral competition. Media celebrity intersected with campaign politics when actress Patrícia Pillar appeared in his 2002 campaign advertising. Contemporary reporting also described support from Antônio Carlos Magalhães, although this did not mean the PFL as a whole formally joined Ciro's alliance (Portela, 2002). These are testable links among campaign communication, politicians and prominent cultural figures, rather than proof that a broadcaster directed his candidacy. For FHC, reporting on journalist Mirian Dutra requires the same distinction between documented allegations, denials and institutional findings (Barca, 2016).

Party genealogy further complicates simple left/right narratives. According to the Superior Electoral Court, an earlier Partido Liberal received provisional registration on 19 March 1987 and definitive registration on 25 February 1988; following a merger with PRONA, the Partido da República (PR) was registered on 19 December 2006. The TSE approved the name Partido Liberal for that organization on 9 February 2019 (TSE, n.d.). Therefore it would be historically incorrect to state that the contemporary PL first appeared with Bolsonaro. Its institutional antecedents long preceded his affiliation, and its composition reflects mergers, party elites and electoral bargaining. The analytical issue is how an organization with a longer institutional history became a vehicle for a newer right-wing presidential coalition.

The evolution of the party system should thus be reconstructed through dated affiliation records, legislative votes, presidential coalition memberships and electoral spending. A dynamic network design would identify nodes (politicians, parties, companies, media organizations and religious institutions), time-stamped edges (affiliations, endorsements, contracts and votes), and outcomes (access to executive office, legislative leadership and public resources). A finding that a politician supported two opposing presidential candidates in different years would demonstrate pragmatic realignment, but not automatically establish fraud. Conversely, a persistent relationship across several administrations could indicate durable institutional brokerage worthy of closer investigation. This approach extends the argument of De Angelis (2026) by making transideological continuity operationally measurable.

## **VII. LAVA JATO, IMPEACHMENT, TEMER AND THE PATH TO BOLSONARO**

Operation Car Wash must be interpreted on at least three levels: exposure of actual corruption, contested legality of investigative and judicial procedures, and political consequences for the party system. The plea agreements and proceedings concerning Odebrecht documented transnational bribery, while subsequent rulings demonstrated that the fairness of individual cases cannot be presumed simply because an anticorruption investigation has broad public support. The political chronology is clear: the PMDB withdrew from Dilma Rousseff's governing coalition in March 2016; Michel Temer assumed the presidency after her removal; Jair Bolsonaro won the 2018 election and took office in January 2019. Chronological succession, however, is not by itself evidence that investigators collectively planned the 2018 result (Chamber of Deputies, 2016; De Angelis, 2026).

The expression 'farce of Lava Jato' is best converted into competing falsifiable propositions. One is that the investigation uncovered politically consequential illegality and created valuable precedents for accountability. A second is that unlawful or biased conduct in particular proceedings distorted electoral competition and public trust. A third, stronger proposition is that specific officials coordinated prosecutions with party or media actors to predetermine the replacement of the left by the far right. The third proposition requires independently authenticated communications, chronology of decisions, evidence of intentional coordination and meaningful alternative explanations. The Supreme Federal Court's 2021 finding of Sergio Moro's bias in the Guarujá apartment case supports scrutiny of judicial impartiality but does not alone establish a unified covert plan across the entire investigation.

Temer's tenure, from August 2016 to December 2018, should be analyzed as a governmental period rather than merely as a transitional interval. Coalition restructuring affected cabinet composition, labor law, fiscal policy, appointments, parliamentary bargaining and the configuration of opposition. The approach adopted here asks which networks persisted between the Rousseff and Temer administrations and which institutions or policy priorities changed. This requires votes and administrative decisions, not just ideological nomenclature. In the Ecoplan-related study, De Angelis (2026) shows that the same engineering projects could produce different institutional interpretations by the TCU, Federal Police, CPAR, CGU and AGU, underscoring the need to distinguish allegations, forensic limitations, administrative findings and legally established misconduct. De Angelis (2026) details the São Francisco Integration Project's Lot 12. The TCU examined contract supervision, measurement practices, and delays; Federal Police investigators investigated potential overbilling; an administrative commission initially proposed responsibility; and subsequent CGU/AGU assessment considered the proof insufficient for sanctions. That sequence cannot be summarized truthfully either as 'proof of a corruption conspiracy' or as 'proof that every investigated company was innocent of all wrongdoing'. It is instead an institutional case of different legal standards, investigative scopes and evidentiary thresholds. Its contribution to the present study is methodological: assertions about covert elite coordination must be tested through documented procedures and outcomes at least as carefully as accusations concerning public procurement.

The changing public image of Sergio Moro illuminates how judicial reputation may become political capital. After judging major Lava Jato proceedings, Moro became Minister of Justice under Bolsonaro. On 24 April 2020 he publicly resigned, asserting that Bolsonaro had sought to interfere politically in the leadership of the Federal Police (Chamber of Deputies, 2020). This is a documented allegation made by Moro at the time, not a final finding of criminal liability. The contradiction between his earlier decision to join the government and his

later accusations should be analyzed as a change in alliance and institutional position, rather than resolved by assuming an unverified private motive.

Moro's trajectory later converged with PL electoral politics. According to the TSE's final count on 5 October 2026, he was elected governor of Paraná in the first round with 3,127,911 votes, 50.10 percent of valid votes, on a coalition including PL, Podemos and Novo, with Edson Vasconcelos (PL) as running mate (TSE, 2026). This provides a further observable instance of the conversion of national institutional reputation into electoral leadership. Identifying Vasconcelos's business and local political networks in Cascavel could be valuable, but any assertion of criminal corruption demands case-specific court or oversight documentation, identification of accusations and defenses, and the procedural status of proceedings. Personal epithets cannot substitute for that evidence.

An explanation linking Lava Jato to Bolsonaro's rise must also evaluate independent forces: economic recession, distrust of established parties, social media mobilization, anti-PT sentiment, the fragmentation of center-right organizations, public-security concerns and changing religious electoral alliances. If these rival mechanisms explain much of the outcome, then the effect of judicial procedures must be estimated within a broader causal model. Media framing may have amplified particular political identities, but claims that press organizations unanimously coordinated a predetermined candidate require evidence of editorial instruction or structured influence beyond selective examples. The argument is consequently stronger when it identifies both demonstrated political effects and remaining uncertainty about deliberate orchestration.

### **VIII. THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH, RELIGIOUS PARTY NETWORKS AND ANGOLA**

The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (UCKG) illustrates a political network whose affiliations cannot be reduced to a single fixed ideology. Scholarly research notes that evangelical leaders and sectors associated with the church supported Lula in 2002, while major neo-Pentecostal sectors later moved closer to Bolsonaro and his conservative values agenda (Siuda-Ambroziak and collaborators, 2021; Klein and Carvalho, 2024). Such movement suggests organizational pragmatism, moral-policy priorities and the pursuit of favorable institutional access. It does not mean that all evangelicals vote identically: religious affiliation, church leadership, ordinary believers and party organizational choices are distinct units of analysis.

The relationship between the Universal Church and the Republicanos party is especially important. Martins (2021), whose study is preserved in the TSE's digital library, analyzes the organization and documents a strong presence of Universal Church leaders and members among Republicanos party executives and elected officials. The result offers a concrete institutional basis for discussing religious-political networks; it would be inaccurate to replace Republicanos automatically with the PL or to treat the Universal Church as legally identical to Bolsonaro's party. Coalition alignments between organizations should be established election by election, using formal endorsements, electoral records and party leadership data.

The Angola case provides an unusually visible link between Brazilian domestic religious politics and foreign-policy intervention. In July 2021 Vice President Hamilton Mourão attended a Community of Portuguese Language Countries summit in Luanda and discussed the crisis affecting the Universal Church in Angola. The church's own report of 19 July described his call for dialogue between the disputing parties. Reporting based on travel records described an official delegation and the governmental attention given to the conflict (Universal, 2021; Folha de S.Paulo, 2021). These observations warrant analysis of state responsiveness to a non-state religious actor. The claim that Mourão traveled solely to prevent expulsion of bishops overstates what the mission records establish, because the CPLP meeting was an independently documented diplomatic purpose.

Klein and Carvalho (2024) provide the most directly relevant peer-reviewed analysis. In *Brazilian Political Science Review*, they argue that evangelical organizations became more prominent in the African dimension of Brazilian foreign policy under Bolsonaro as traditional state and corporate actors reduced their roles. Their case study examines the UCKG crisis beginning in 2019 and the demands for Brazilian governmental support. The findings make Angola significant not merely as a controversy over religious authority, but as an instance of agenda-setting by a domestic social actor in foreign policy. The authors also note changes in relations with Israel and the political salience of the proposal to transfer the Brazilian embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, which did not proceed as originally proposed.

For causal comparison, the central question is which political resources allow a religious organization to obtain diplomatic attention. Candidate mechanisms include influence over electoral coalitions, mobilization of supporters, links to legislators, media ownership and access to executive decision-makers. These mechanisms can coexist with legitimate claims to religious freedom and consular protection. A balanced assessment should compare the Brazilian and Angolan governmental accounts, the position of the religious organizations involved and the rights of individual clergy, rather than automatically interpreting every diplomatic intervention as illegitimate. The Anglo-African dimension further shows that the relationships among ideological camps can be issue-specific and transnational, rather than an all-purpose secret agreement.

## **IX. FREEMASONRY, POLITICAL SOCIABILITY AND THE LIMITS OF THE UFSC ANALOGY**

Historical Brazilian Freemasonry is a legitimate object of institutional analysis because lodges, publications and civic associations participated in the circulation of ideas about schooling, secularism, representation and republicanism. Silva (2022) studies Pernambuco's Masonic press in the First Republic, with particular attention to the journal *Arquivo Maçonico* (1906–1913). His documentary findings show members promoting libraries, schooling, particular candidates and public debates, demonstrating that associational networks could interact with political mobilization. They do not demonstrate that contemporary lodges control the presidency, media corporations or Federal Police operations. A historical analogy must be limited to demonstrable structures of sociability and influence.

In studying present-day politics, the relevant evidence is not a presumption of hidden membership, but observable institutional connections: publicly declared affiliations, leadership overlaps, electoral endorsement records, campaign finance, association publications and contacts documented in administrative or judicial proceedings. Network analysis can use such traces to test influence mechanisms, while privacy and association rights impose ethical safeguards. Secret or private membership should never be invented to explain an adverse institutional event. Historical generalizations about Freemasonry cannot substitute for specific proof regarding named individuals or judicial authorities.

The Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) tragedy requires a separate factual reconstruction. On 14 September 2017, Federal Police investigators carried out Operation *Ouvidos Moucos* involving alleged irregularities in resources intended for distance-learning courses. Rector Luiz Carlos Cancellier was temporarily detained; he died by suicide on 2 October 2017. The documented operation concerned alleged mismanagement of public educational resources, not an investigation into drug possession by students and professors. Any manuscript connecting the events to drugs would misstate the publicly recorded purpose of the operation. The episode raises serious questions about proportionality of coercive measures, presumption of innocence, publicity of accusations, institutional reputation and university autonomy.

The analytical relevance to this article is twofold. First, the coercive and reputational consequences of investigative action may emerge before allegations are tested in a final adversarial proceeding; secondly, asymmetries between public accusations and subsequent corrections can alter institutional trust. These propositions should be tested using contemporaneous orders, official inquiry records, oversight findings and retrospective scholarship on criminal procedure and mental-health consequences of reputational damage. No direct causal association between Freemasonry and Operation *Ouvidos Moucos* has been demonstrated in the present evidence. Juxtaposing the topics cannot be presented as proof that Masonic institutions orchestrated the police operation or Cancellier's death.

The comparison nevertheless illuminates an important methodological tension. Historical associations can influence political culture in documented ways, while coercive state action is governed by concrete legal authority and individual procedural decisions. Confusing the two would produce precisely the kind of unsupported inference that this manuscript criticizes in media narratives about corruption. The contribution is to insist that institutional critique be symmetrical: claims made against officials, associations, journalists and politicians all require transparent source chains, defensible attribution and public correction when evidence fails.

## **X. MEDIA CONCENTRATION, READING CAPACITY AND SYNTHESIS OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION**

A democratic electoral system can coexist with asymmetrical access to information. The theoretical mechanism is not that citizens who read fewer books automatically obey television channels. Rather, when high-reach media providers, public advertising, local political families and uneven educational opportunities interact, some narratives may be disseminated more repeatedly than others. Guriev and Treisman (2019) supply a comparative theory of informational control; Thompson's work on media and modernity provides a broader account of mediated visibility. The theory becomes empirically useful in Brazil only when measured against actual concentration, pluralism, ownership and media-use data rather than inferred from a single electoral outcome.

A historical reading comparison deserves explicit inclusion because it was missing from earlier versions of this manuscript. A *Folha de S.Paulo* Capital Humano report published on 10 March 2006 attributed to the International Reading Association's Brazil South Council data from 2000 indicating approximately one book read per Brazilian per year, compared with four books per person in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay (*Folha de S.Paulo*, 2006). The comparison is a historical journalistic report of an earlier estimate, not a verified contemporary statistic or a direct causal assessment of electoral manipulation. Its value is to motivate comparison of reading opportunities, libraries, education and access to independent sources. Its limitations include unclear sampling, methodological details and book-count definitions in the cited report.

To triangulate the historical statistic, later surveys such as Retratos da Leitura no Brasil should be compared using compatible populations and definitions of reading; school performance measures such as Ideb and PISA should be analyzed separately from reading for pleasure, information diversity and critical media literacy. High Ideb scores in Sobral demonstrate substantial educational performance improvements but do not establish the volume or diversity of book reading or the independence of political judgment. Similarly, weak average proficiency does not demonstrate that any named broadcasting company controls voter choices. The proposed model treats educational capacity as a conditioning factor that may increase or reduce susceptibility to framing, with socioeconomic circumstances and digital access as potential confounders.

To operationalize political-media influence, the study proposes linking four observational domains. The first is ownership and regulation: concessions, cross-ownership, political family ties and broadcasting licenses. The second is communication: allocation of visibility, airtime, framing, negative and positive coverage and official advertising. The third is audience capacity: reading habits, school attainment, media diversity and access to independent information. The fourth is political behavior: time-stamped coalition agreements, endorsements, vote shares, public-opinion trends and changes in leadership. Causal inference would then compare units with different exposure while accounting for confounding variables, rather than read hidden intentions from aggregate electoral outcomes.

The histories of Collor and the television editing controversy of 1989, Ciro's publicly visible campaign involvement with Patrícia Pillar, and the reporting around FHC and Mirian Dutra are illustrations of different relationships between publicity, celebrities, journalism and politics. They should not be collapsed into one organizational conspiracy. In particular, an actor's employment at or appearance on TV Globo does not by itself establish a corporate political instruction. A rigorous media-history section must preserve the distinction among an editorial decision, a personal relationship, an allegation of undue influence and a verified breach of law. The article's empirical contribution lies in the cumulative, differentiated record of such interactions.

Finally, the evidence yields a qualified answer to the research question. Political dynasties transmit organizational assets and local visibility; parliamentary coalitions facilitate continuity of governing access across ideological turnover; and information networks can shape the political visibility of those actors. The cases of FHC's 2022 endorsement of Lula, Ciro's changing alliances, the long trajectory of the PL, and the Universal Church's relationships across electoral periods show that cross-ideological brokerage occurs. The Lava Jato–Temer–Bolsonaro chronology reveals significant political consequences and contested judicial conduct, but the materials do not establish one coordinated plan by all relevant institutions. The strongest defensible conclusion is institutional reproduction through multiple observable, partly overlapping networks, not the disappearance of all ideological differences.

## **XI. CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Future studies should (1) construct a politician–family–party–office longitudinal database for 1985–2026, (2) test coalition continuity with legislative roll-call networks and cabinet appointment histories, (3) link broadcast concession ownership and official advertising to candidate visibility at municipal level, (4) evaluate whether educational internationalization affects civic participation and political knowledge using scholarship cohorts and credible comparison groups, and (5) conduct a cross-institutional case study of decisions by TCU, Federal Police, CGU and AGU with documentary chains of custody. Additional comparative studies could evaluate how the political mobilization of religious organizations differs between Brazil and Angola, and how local elites adapt to changing national majorities (De Angelis, 2026; Assis & Silva, 2026; Klein & Carvalho, 2024; Chagas & Lehmann, 2026).

Brazilian democracy accommodates both meaningful electoral competition and the persistence of family-based and territorially rooted political networks. Comparing Ceará, Bahia, and Maranhão–Amapá demonstrates the value of integrating individual political trajectories, party institutions, Congress, public policies, and political communication.

The PMDB/MDB plays a central role in governability through its ability to join and leave coalitions; its withdrawal from Dilma Rousseff's government in March 2016 is a decisive documented episode. This should be distinguished from broad theories of covert institutional command.

Sobral achieved nationally prominent results—9.6 on the 2023 Ideb for the early grades—and shows that education in Ceará cannot be reduced to stereotypes of Northeastern backwardness (Ipece, 2024). At the same time, Barbalho (2007) highlights the political role of communications and modernization rhetoric. Criticism of contemporary coronelismo becomes more valuable when documentary records and observable mechanisms show how elites can preserve influence amid genuine modernization.

The article proposes a verifiable research agenda addressing links among kinship networks, communications media, legislative coalitions, institutional interventions, judicialization, and distributive outcomes. Further research should add full case records, electoral time series, educational microdata, and contract audits before advancing stronger conclusions.

Direct answer to the research question: Between 1985 and 2026, power has been reproduced through three observable, interacting channels: inherited family and territorial political capital (examined in Ceará, Bahia, and Maranhão–Amapá); cross-party congressional coalition brokerage, illustrated by the PMDB/MDB's participation in successive governments and its 2016 withdrawal; and media-related advantages in political visibility and agenda-setting, illustrated by the documented Collor debate controversy and the regional marketing examined by Barbalho (2007). The evidence therefore supports continuity and recurrent cooperation across ideological boundaries, rather than the stronger, unverified claim that left, right, and far-right organizations act as one permanently coordinated bloc. Education indicators such as the Ideb and historical book-reading averages measure distinct outcomes: improvements in basic schooling do not by themselves establish equal access to diverse political information. The proposed links between these factors, specific electoral outcomes, and opposition to educational internationalization remain hypotheses requiring direct causal tests (Abranches, 1988; Figueiredo & Limongi, 1999; Barbalho, 2007; Folha de S.Paulo, 2006; Dal Bó et al., 2009; Guriev & Treisman, 2019).

The expanded evidence provides a direct answer: from 1985 to 2026, Brazilian political power has been reproduced by a combination of transmissible family resources, coalition-building across administrations and uneven access to public narratives. Specific alliances involving FHC, Lula, Ciro and PL politicians illustrate changes in political alignment; the Universal Church case documents issue-specific religious and international political access; the UFSC case shows the risks of disproportionate investigative measures. Neither demonstrated elite continuity nor bias in specific judicial proceedings constitutes proof of a single nationwide clandestine coordinating authority. This calibrated conclusion preserves the critical hypothesis while distinguishing documentary fact, supported interpretation, allegation and remaining research questions (De Angelis, 2026; Martins, 2021; Klein and Carvalho, 2024; TSE, 2026).

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