

The Spiral of Values in Political Magic: Lula, NLP and Spiral Dynamics in the Brazilian Context

Article 3 in the Series on the Lula Popular Leadership Model (MLLP/LPLM)

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Abstract

This article is the final piece in the trilogy on the Lula Popular Leadership Model (MLLP/LPLM). While the previous studies focused on the systemic architecture of leadership (Percia, 2025a) and the linguistic engineering of political influence (Percia, 2025b), the present work integrates Third-Generation Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) with the Spiral Dynamics model (Graves; Beck & Cowan) in order to investigate the axiological and evolutionary dimension of leadership.

The central hypothesis is that the effectiveness and resilience of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva do not derive merely from rhetorical charisma, but from his functioning as a “Spiral Wizard”: a leader capable of operating simultaneously within multiple value systems (vMEMEs), translating antagonistic codes into functional coalitions.

Through a qualitative forensic-modelling methodology, we analyse how Lula navigates the States of Change (Alpha, Beta, Gamma, Delta) of Brazilian politics, managing the “memetic turbulence” of a deeply unequal country. The article introduces the concepts of “Memetic Translator” and “Axiological Orthogonality”, detailing a 12-case matrix that connects survival-level bases (Beige/Purple) to global elites (Orange/Green/Turquoise). Finally, it discusses the “Shadow of the Chameleon” – the ethical and psychological risks of extreme flexibility – and proposes MLLP-ED as an advanced framework for understanding leadership in polarised societies.

Keywords: Spiral Dynamics; systemic leadership; value systems (vMEMEs); Spiral Wizards; Lula; Third-Generation NLP.

1. Introduction – The Invisible Cartography of Leadership

In the first two articles of this series, we dissected the structure of the “political magic” of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The first established the macrostrategies of Influence (MLLID), Persistence (MLLPER) and Coalition (MLLCOL) that underpin the Lula Popular Leadership Model (Percia, 2025a), while the second revealed the linguistic micro-surgery at play through metaphors, Milton Model patterns and Sleight of Mouth techniques (Percia, 2025b).

A fundamental question, however, remains open and continues to challenge political analysts and leadership scholars:

How is it possible that the same leader is organically acclaimed by masses fighting hunger (subsistence levels), bargains pragmatically with financial technocrats (strategic levels) and at the same time articulates global environmental and identity-based agendas (sensitive levels)?

The answer proposed here is that Lula's leadership operates upon a sophisticated cartography of values. Using the Spiral Dynamics framework – which describes the evolution of adult biopsychosocial systems as adaptive responses to specific life conditions (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Beck et al., 2018) – we posit that his political longevity stems from a rare competence: the ability to move vertically along the spiral, activating the precise value code (vMEME) for each audience without collapsing his central identity.

This text is therefore an investigation into axiological flexibility. It does not assess the moral merit of policies (an agnostic stance essential to modelling); rather, it models the structure of the competence to harmonise conflicting conceptual worlds in a country marked by profound memetic heterogeneity.

2. Theoretical Framework: The Master Code of Humanity

To understand Lula's “engineering of values”, we need to integrate two robust models of human understanding: Systemic NLP and Spiral Dynamics.

2.1. Systemic NLP and Field Modelling

Third-Generation NLP expands the focus from the individual to relational and systemic fields (Dilts, DeLozier & Epstein, 2010). To model Lula is to capture not only his internal cognitive processes, but also how his perceptual filters (beliefs and values) couple with the deep needs of the Brazilian social field.

Leadership is viewed here as a phenomenon of resonance between the leader's map and the followers' territory. The leader's linguistic and behavioural patterns become attractors that organise meaning across a wide field of experiences (Bandler & Grinder, 1975).

2.2. Spiral Dynamics: vMEMEs and Life Conditions

Based on the pioneering work of Clare Graves and systematised by Beck and Cowan (1996), Spiral Dynamics describes the emergence of value systems (vMEMEs) as responses to specific Life Conditions. Crucially, vMEMEs are not “types of people”, but systems of thought that switch on and off depending on context.

In the context of Lula's leadership, we observe the strategic activation of the following levels:

First Tier (Subsistence and Order)

- Beige (Instinctive): Focus on immediate biological survival (hunger, thirst). The “self” is automatic.
- Purple (Tribal): Safety in the clan, mysticism, rituals, tradition and “kinship spirits”. The world is magical and dangerous.
- Red (Egocentric): Power, conquest, impulsiveness, shame vs honour. The world is a jungle of predators and prey.

- Blue (Absolutist): Order, law, single truth, sacrifice for the future, hierarchy. The world is governed by a divine plan or rigid civic order.
- Orange (Entrepreneurial): Success, autonomy, science, achievement, competition. The world is a marketplace of rational opportunities.
- Green (Communitarian): Equality, feelings, consensus, pluralism, ecology. The world is a communal habitat to be shared.

Second Tier (Being and Integration)

- Yellow (Systemic): Functionality, integration, flexibility, flow. Recognises that “each stage has the right to exist” and focuses on competence.
- Turquoise (Holistic): Global consciousness, living organism, non-dogmatic cosmic spirituality.

A critical ethical point in this model is that no level is intrinsically “better” or “worse”. Each vMEME is a legitimate response to particular Life Conditions. Problems arise not from the existence of a level, but from its mismatch with the demands of the context.

2.3. The “Spiral Wizard” Archetype

A central concept in this study is that of Spiral Wizards, as described by Beck and Cowan (1996). These are individuals who:

- see patterns and connections that others cannot, because first-tier filters do not allow it;
- interact comfortably with many conceptual worlds;
- speak the language of many MEMEs when necessary.

Our thesis is that Lula functions, intuitively, from this position. Rather than a cold strategist who calculates each phrase, he behaves as a memetic artisan who calibrates his speech to the dominant value code in each context.

3. Methodology – Forensic Memetic Modelling

3.1. Approach

This qualitative study adopts the same “long-distance forensic modelling” approach as the previous articles in the series (Percia, 2025a; 2025b). We analyse the corpus of Lula’s speeches and actions (2002–2023), seeking linguistic and behavioural markers that indicate the activation of particular vMEMEs.

Such an approach does not aim to “diagnose” the person Lula, but to model the structure of his leadership performance in a specific historical context.

3.2. Coding Procedure

1. Mapping Life Conditions: Identification of the socio-economic context of each audience (e.g., food scarcity = Beige/Purple condition; institutional crisis = Blue/Red condition).

2. Identification of Memetic Markers: Analysis of key words and value structures (e.g., “family and protection” vs “profit and progress”; “law and order” vs “rights and inclusion”).

3. MLLP Correlation: Cross-mapping with macrostrategies MLLID, MLLPER and MLLCOL and the linguistic patterns already described (Meta-Model, Milton Model, Sleight of Mouth, metaphors) (Percia, 2025a; 2025b).

This is an interpretative analysis, typical of systemic modelling. We acknowledge the subjective nature of coding and suggest that future studies incorporate independent judges and mixed methods (e.g., corpus linguistics; Sardinha, 2010) to test the hypotheses generated here.

4. Brazil as “Value Turbulence”

Brazil does not operate at a single level of existence. It is a complex fabric in which, often within the same neighbourhood, coexist:

- the struggle for biological survival (Beige),
- the parallel power of criminal factions (Red),
- rigid state bureaucracy (Blue),
- high-tech agribusiness (Orange), and
- identity-based and environmental activism (Green).

Beck and Cowan (1996) remind us that we live in a world where “not everyone sees the world through the same lenses”. To lead Brazil is therefore not to impose a single vMEME (which would generate massive rejection from other layers), but to orchestrate this dissonant polyphony.

Lula appears to understand that “different MEMEs can shine in different situations” and adjusts his transmission frequency accordingly. His leadership is not that of a monolithic prophet, but of a conductor who, at each moment, highlights different sections of the orchestra without losing the thread of the symphony.

5. The Expanded Lula Popular Leadership Model (MLLP-ED)

5.1. Biography as Ascent Through the Spiral

Lula’s trajectory exemplifies the dynamic whereby “the old system does not disappear, but remains as part of us, accessible when needed” (Graves; Beck & Cowan, 1996).

The Root (Beige/Purple): The experience of hunger and migration in the pau-de-arara (open lorry) anchors his visceral connection with those at the base of the social pyramid. He knows somatically what the survival condition is like.

The Fight (Red/Blue): Trade-union struggle forges the capacity for confrontation and power (Red), later organised in collective structures and hierarchical party discipline (Blue).

The Management (Orange/Green): The presidency requires integrating the logic of market growth and economic development (Orange) with policies of social inclusion and human rights (Green).

The Synthesis (Functional Yellow): In the third term, we observe the emergence of a systemic vision that seeks to integrate antagonists in favour of state functionality, a typical feature of Second Tier.

In this sense, Lula's biography is not a linear rise from "ignorance to enlightenment", but a spiral of inclusion: each stage adds new capacities without eliminating previous ones.

5.2. The "Memetic Translator" Concept

We define the Memetic Translator as a leader with Second-Tier competence who is able to:

1. Diagnose the dominant vMEME in an interlocutor or group;
2. Encode their message in the values of that vMEME (speaking the listener's "language");
3. Maintain the systemic integrity of the coalition, even when the parts do not understand each other.

Lula functions as a kind of "user interface" between worlds that do not naturally communicate. He translates Faria Lima (financial district – Orange) for the MST (Landless Workers' Movement – Red/Green) and vice versa, exercising what we call Axiological Orthogonality: the capacity to align values that appear perpendicular or mutually exclusive.

6. Case Study: The Matrix of Memetic Translation

The following matrix presents the empirical synthesis of MLLP-ED. It cross-breeds documented data (real or widely reported phrases and gestures) with vMEME analysis and the NLP strategies mapped in Articles 1 and 2. It illustrates how the Spiral Wizard operates in practice.

Note: Quotations are given in English translation for the sake of clarity; the original utterances are in Portuguese.

#	Utterance / Behaviour (Data)	Context & Life Conditions	vMEMEs Activated (Value Codes)	NLP & Linguistic Strategy	Why the Translation Works (Memetic Analysis)
1	"Hunger cannot wait. Those who are hungry are in a hurry."	Launch of the <i>Zero Hunger</i> programme (2003). Audience in poverty/food insecurity.	Bege (Survival) + Red (Action/Urgency)	L1 – Sensory Translation: Visceral focus on hunger. Meta-Model: Implicit Cause–Effect.	Activates the most basic instinct (Bege). It is not an intellectual debate, but a biological imperative. The addition of Red ("in a hurry") channels impulsiveness

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					s into moral action – urgency becomes an ethical demand.
2	"I am no longer just a man; I am an idea."	Before imprisonment (2018). Audience: militants and historical narrative.	Purple (Myth/Legend) + Turquoise (Collective Consciousness)	Antifragility: Ecological dissociation of identity. Nominalisation: Turning the process "I" into the thing "idea".	A moment of maximum physical vulnerability is reframed as transcendence. The physical body is left behind to create a mythical/spiritual level. The martyr (Purple) is formed, living in the collective mind (Turquoise).
3	"Never before in the history of this country..."	Government balance sheets and public addresses (various moments).	Red (Power/Pride) + Orange (Results)	Universal Quantifier: Generalisation to create exclusivity. Comparative Deletion: "Better" (than whom? implied: everyone else).	The Red vMEME asserts temporal dominance. It creates a "Year Zero" in the listener's mind, effectively erasing the relevance of predecessors and establishing a new hierarchy.

#	Utterance / Behavior (Data)	Context & Life Conditions	vMEMEs Activated (Value Codes)	NLP & Linguistic Strategy	Why the Translation Works (Memetic Analysis)
4	"Lulinha Peace and Love"	2002 Campaign. Tense financial markets and fearful middle class.	Green (Harmony/Consensus) suppressing the aggressive Red .	Content Reframing: Shifting the frame from "angry unionist" to "conciliatory statesman".	Calms the fear of chaos (Red) by offering inclusion (Green). It allows the Orange vMEME (market/business) to feel secure enough to engage.
5	"The bricklayer's son will become a doctor."	University expansion/ProUni. Ascending 'Class C'.	Orange (Success/Status) + Green (Social Equality).	Future Pacing: Creating a visual image of success. Submodalities: Brightness and Height (ascension).	Connects individual desire for progress (Orange) with social justice. It is the "Brazilian Dream" translated specifically for the working class.
6	Football Metaphors ("The team took the pitch...", "Scored a goal").	Explaining complex economics to the general public.	Purple (Tribalism/Belonging) + Blue (Rules of the game).	Milton Model (Isomorphic Metaphor): Translating abstract concepts into a familiar domain.	Football is Brazil's tribal language (Purple). By using this code, he democratizes information and generates immediate <i>Rapport</i> .
7	Crying in public when	Emotive speeches (2003)	Purple (Affective bond)	Physiological Congruence	Breaks the frame of the cold,

#	Utterance / Behaviour (Data)	Context & Life Conditions	vMEMEs Activated (Value Codes)	NLP & Linguistic Strategy	Why the Translation Works (Memetic Analysis)
	discussing misery or achievements.	Inauguration, 2022).	+ Green (Humanity).	: Alignment between verbal and non-verbal. Anchoring: Crying anchors sincerity.	strategic politician (Orange) and reveals the human (Green). Validates the other's pain through radical empathy.
8	"Us against Them" (The Elite vs The People).	Political polarisation speeches.	Red (Combat) + Purple (Clan protection).	Meta-Programme (Direction): "Away From" (pain/elite) and "Towards" (people/pleasure).	Creates tribal cohesion (Purple) by defining a common enemy. The Red vMEME energises the base to defend their political territory.
9	"Letter to the Brazilian People" (2002).	Calming investors and the establishment.	Blue (Order/Contract) + Orange (Pragmatism).	Pacing and Leading: Validating the current system (Blue) before proposing changes.	The Blue vMEME ensures contracts are honoured, deactivating the fear of systemic rupture. It allows for governability within the rules.
10	"The people will eat <i>picanha</i> (steak) and drink	2022 Campaign. Economic crisis context.	Bege (Food) + Orange (Abundance/Pleasure).	Representational System (VAK): Gustatory and Visual. Direct	He does not promise "GDP growth" (abstract); he promises the sensory

#	Utterance / Behavior (Data)	Context & Life Conditions	vMEMEs Activated (Value Codes)	NLP & Linguistic Strategy	Why the Translation Works (Memetic Analysis)
	beer again."			sensory evocation.	experience of reward (concrete). Accesses affective memory.
11	"This is not my victory; it is a victory for all of you."	Election victory speeches.	Green (Collectivism) + Turquoise (Holistic view).	"We" Inclusive: Dissolution of Ego into the collective. Referential Index Switch: From internal to external.	Distributes power (Green), making every individual feel like a co-participant in history, rather than a mere spectator.
12	Janja and love in later life ("I will marry Brazil").	Political comeback post-prison and widowerhood.	Green (Love/Connection) + Yellow (Integration of complexities).	Resource States: Accessing the "passionate" state to govern. Metaphor of Union.	Humanises the elderly figure, bringing vitality (Yellow: life flows). Counteracts political hatred with affection (Green).

7. Dynamics of Change: Navigating Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta

A sophisticated aspect of Lula's leadership is his management of the States of Change described by Graves and later by Beck and colleagues (Beck & Cowan, 1996; Beck et al., 2018). The leader's trajectory is not linear but cyclical, and he uses these states to create narratives of overcoming.

Breaking the Alpha State: Lula often induces a Beta state (dissonance) by pointing out that "the country cannot go on like this" (hunger, inequality), generating the tension necessary for change. He disturbs complacency.

Managing the Gamma Trap: The period of imprisonment (2018–2019) represented the classic Gamma Trap (anger, hostility, apparent loss of meaning). The MLLPER (Persistence) strategy was crucial to avoid collapse and to transform the barrier into a springboard. By declaring himself “an idea”, he avoided regression to earlier states and prepared the leap.

The Delta Leap: The 2022 campaign and the construction of the broad democratic front represented the Delta state (overcoming and excitement), in which old barriers (such as rivalry with Alckmin) were transcended in favour of a new systemic configuration (Yellow).

New Alpha: The third term seeks to establish a new level of stability, though it is constantly threatened by the turbulence of a world in continuous Beta.

Under this lens, Lula does not merely adapt to crises; he uses them to reinforce a narrative of transformation, turning defeats into chapters of a broader saga.

8. The Shadow of the Model: The Risk of the “Chameleon” and the Ethics of Flexibility

No honest modelling of excellence can ignore its shadow and ecology. The capacity to move through so many vMEMEs exacts a high price.

8.1. Blue Dissonance

For individuals centred in the Blue vMEME (which values a single Truth and rigid consistency), Lula’s flexibility is read as lack of character, deceit or opportunism. Blue does not understand Yellow’s fluidity; it demands absolute conformity. The Memetic Translator is frequently mistaken for a “principle-less chameleon”.

8.2. The Cost of Dissociation (Hubris)

Sustaining paradoxes (being both “father of the poor” and “friend of bankers”) requires massive internal dissociation (L7). The risk is losing contact with factual reality (hubris), in which the mythical narrative supplants concrete data and isolates the leader in a symbolic ivory tower.

8.3. Red Incomprehension

The militant Red base, which longs for confrontation and revenge, may feel betrayed by the leader’s systemic conciliations (Yellow), generating fragmentation and feelings of abandonment among the most radical supporters.

An ethical discussion of MLLP-ED therefore demands recognising that flexibility can be misread as lack of principles, integration can be misused to justify contradictions, and the same competence that sustains democracy can, in other contexts, be captured by authoritarian projects.

9. Cross-Context Applications and Conclusion: The Spiral Wizard in Action

MLLP-ED proposes that Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva operates as an intuitive Spiral Wizard. He displays the essential characteristics described by Beck and Cowan (1996) for Second-Tier leadership:

- he thinks in open systems.

- he interacts comfortably with multiple conceptual worlds.
- he solves problems in an integrative way, seeking to “keep the Spiral healthy”.

His “magic” is not supernatural; it is an advanced competence in reading and calibrating value systems. He survives politically because he does not fix himself on a single floor of the human building; he is the lift that travels all floors, connecting the survival basement (Beige) to the penthouse of global vision (Turquoise).

Beyond Politics: Applications in Other Contexts

This model transcends the figure of Lula and offers a map for leaders in several domains:

CEOs and Executives: How to manage the merger of distinct corporate cultures (e.g., a Red/Orange start-up acquired by a Blue/Green multinational) using memetic translation.

Educators: How to adapt language to students at different stages of the spiral, using myths for Purple, challenges for Red and global causes for Green.

Therapists and Coaches: How to identify the vMEME in which the client is “stuck” and which intervention (support, confrontation, insight) is needed to facilitate vertical change.

In complex and polarised societies, mono-memetic leadership (which speaks only “one truth”) is doomed either to irrelevance or to tyranny. The future belongs to Memetic Translators – those capable of seeing the dignity in each level of existence and weaving, out of chaos, a functional order.

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