DEMOCRATIZING PRESSURES FROM BELOW?

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN NEW BRAZILIAN DEMOCRACY

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The stories told of Brazilian social movements have been intimately linked to the rise and fall of hopes about the quality of Brazilian democracy. In the 1970s and 1980s, accounts of Brazilian politics told of an unprecedented generation of social movements - of urban neighborhoods, women, environmentalists, the Catholic Church, lawyers, and many more - who joined in a sudden upsurge of mobilizations against the military. The new movements were hailed as harbingers of a potential new era of democratic participation and inclusion.(Durham 1984; Mainwaring and Viola 1984; Scherer-Warren and Krischke 1987; Vigevani 1989; Assies 1993) This surge of grassroots mobilizations collapsed in 1984, however, along with hopes for Brazil's emerging civilian regime: "If it is true that the campaign for *diretas ja* [direct elections of the civilian president in 1985] was the crowning moment of oppositional protests and expressed the generalized desire for democracy, it is also certain that it was their last year."(Cardoso 1990, p. 16) After that point, the story goes, more traditional political actors regained control over the post-military agenda, while social movements faced "new dilemmas and internal conflicts"(Mainwaring 1989, p. 169) at best.

A survey of recent articles on urban popular movements in Brazil now finds them as a harbinger of undemocratic woe. One by one, urban popular movements have succumbed to drug dealers (Leeds 1996), bureaucratization (Fontes 1995), the presence of opportunities to participate in government (Costa 1995), the unwillingness of people to participate (Fontes 1996), the new strength of Pentecostals in the *favelas* (Zaluar 1995), the influence of Catholics and leftists (Cunha 1993), and, more generally, their successes and their failures. Along with the decline of the movements themselves, all these authors note the pathologies of the new Brazilian state, which calls itself democratic, but cannot allow participation without cooptation, cannot protect its citizens from each other or from itself, and in every other way fails to provide the conditions of citizenship for many of its inhabitants.

These stories fit the classic dynamics of a cycle of social movements protest, where social movements rise *and* decline in structured ways within "a phase of heightened conflict and contention across the social system."(Tarrow 1994, p. 153) The next section of this paper outlines the model of a characteristic social movements cycle, using the period of social movements organizing in Brazil from 1978 to 1984 to illustrate related concepts like initiators, frames, and repertoires of social movements mobilizations.

The true subject of this paper, however, is the history of social movement organizing in Brazil after 1985, the putative trough of the earlier cycle. What influences from the frames, repertoires, and experiences remain? How evenly are the sector-wide social movements dynamics spread across more specific social movements networks and organizations? Any account of social movements organizing in Brazil after 1985 must be able to address not only movement decline, but also some striking innovations in grassroots and middle class organizing as well, such as the growth of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and new movements like the landless movement (MST) and the various urban anti-violence movements. The third section of the paper addresses these developments, examining both the motivating frames and strategic repertoires of social movements mobilization after 1985.

The final section necessarily returns to the characterization of a social movements cycle: To what extent does the story of a social movements cycle adequately capture the development of social movements in Brazil? I conclude that the concept of a cycle does describe the dynamics of

social movements protest in Brazil, but that the cycle continues in important ways after 1985 to the present. What happens in 1985 is not the true end of the cycle, but the end of its first version. Shared frames are further elaborated and strategic innovation increases. At the same time, the persistence of the cycle of social movements mobilizations is not an unequivocal sign of social movements success. If earlier stories of Brazilian social movements were linked to hopes about the quality of Brazilian democracy, my story here raises some issues about the social movements themselves and the hopes about their own democratic qualities.

CYCLES OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS PROTEST

Cycles of social movements protest share several related features:

...a rapid diffusion of collective action from more mobilized to less mobilized sectors; a quickened pace of innovation in the forms of contention; new or transformed collective action frames; a combination of organized and unorganized participation; and sequences of intensified interaction between challengers and authorities which can end in reform, repression and sometimes revolution.(Tarrow 1994, p. 154)

All of these features appear in the organizing of social movements in Brazil during the late 1970s and early 1980s.[1]

During much of the first decade of Brazilian military rule, opposition to the military was largely defensive and harshly repressed. The military government's blatant disregard for human rights and legality backfired, however, by turning some of its traditional institutional allies against it. Especially after 1974, the Catholic Church joined with other elite sectors of journalists, lawyers, and the political opposition to confront the military on its unsavory record.(Alves 1985) Protest did indeed then diffuse from these traditionally more politically active sectors to new grassroots and middle class actors. All of these elite actors together made political space for new actors by helping to shift the stamp of legitimacy from the military regime to its opposition.

The Catholic Church deserves special mention in this diffusion process. The progressive wing of the Catholic Church had been supporting grassroots social movements in Brazil since the 1950s,(Ottmann 1995) but it played a much more fundamental role in the 1978-1984 cycle of protest. Here, the Catholic Church served as an "initiator" movement,(McAdam 1995) which not only appeared early on the protest scene, but also encouraged a set of spin-off movements. These were either organizationally nurtured by the Church or "cognitively liberated" by its example of

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[1] In writing of cycles, I am not denying that individual social movements networks or organizations may have their own dynamics and reasons for mobilizing - or not - as well. For example, identity-based social actors like women (see Paoli, 1991) or Afro-Brazilians (Segato, 1995) may need to overcome special internal and external barriers to their political participation. Within such special considerations, the dynamics of a cycle of protest provide additional encouragement or discouragement for mobilization.

opposition.[2] The Catholic Church was *able* to play this role because of its own special resources and organizational characteristics: "...no other institution except for the military, enjoyed a nation-wide network of cadres, a system of communications (even if only door to door) that functioned despite censorship and, unlike the military, a world-wide organization on which it could draw for support and bank on for an international 'hearing'."(Della Cava 1989, p. 147) The Church was *willing* to play this role in Brazil because of a historic shift in the way that world-wide organization reinterpreted the world in the 1960s, giving it a new focus on grassroots "participation and activism."(Levine 1996, p. 167)

The Church's new focus on participation and activism was one part of a larger process of writing new collective action frames, another feature of cycles of protest. Frames draw attention to the role of ideas and understandings in social movements mobilizations, and are "the specific metaphors, symbolic representations, and cognitive cues used to render or cast behavior and events in an evaluative mode and to suggest alternative modes of action."(Zald 1996, p. 262) Master frames are generally at a higher level of abstraction, and allow related movements to see themselves as part of a common struggle. The protest cycle of 1978-1984 was held together by exactly such a master frame of "democratization" or, even more broadly, "opposition to the military." This master frame brought a certain degree of unity to a highly disparate set of social movements, by granting them all a sense of being united under the same (military) oppression.(Cardoso 1983) Women drew parallels between the authoritarian government and the authoritarian home, challenging the violence of each.(Jaquette 1989; Nelson 1996) Rural social movements said, "Without land, there is no democracy."(Tavares 1995, p. 29) The shared frame gave political content to neighborhood movements clamoring for paved roads or electricity because of their implicit rebuke of the military government and its social and economic exclusion.(Soler 1994) The frame was even broad enough to include alternative parties like the Worker's Party (PT), which represented social movements in "their common condition of exclusion from the political agenda in Brazil."(Keck 1992, p. 15)

The language of inclusion and exclusion was central to this frame, with included actors automatically suspect, and excluded in turn from the network of the anti-military coalition. Thus while participation and activism were hallmarks of the alternative modes of action of this frame, the ultimate aim of the collective movements was not to participate in politics under the military regime but to use their participation to replace it - hence democratization as the master frame. As the military government adopted the language of participation and responded to their mobilizations with political openings for some,(Assies 1993) this became one of the most contested elements of the collective action frame. One reason that this cycle was seen to end with the *diretas ja* campaign was because the different reactions to the defeat of that campaign

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[2] McAdam (1995) discusses these roles of initiator movements on pages 226-230. McAdam argues in the same piece that initiator movements rarely change the political opportunities for their spin-off movements, p. 224. In this case, the organizational protection given by the Catholic Church did significantly increase the safety and opportunity of associated organizations to mobilize. Alvarez (1989) makes this argument for the women's movements, Gondim (1989/90) makes it for neighborhood movements, and Della Cava (1989) for indigenous, neighborhood, and landless movements, among others.

signaled substantially different understandings within the "anti-military" coalition about what constituted "democratization." As the military regime neared an end, the previous near-equation of these terms became highly controversial. This fracture was exemplified in the divisions between the PMDB and the PT parties, but it penetrated all of the anti-military coalition.

The word coalition turns our attention to another feature of cycles of protest, the innovation of new protest strategies or forms of contention within the cycle. The most significant innovation of this cycle of protest in Brazil was the development of new coalition-building strategies. Despite the tendency of some observers to claim the very presence of grassroots social movements as new, much of the protest repertoire of the 1978-84 cycle was familiar. Urban social movements used the street protest strategy at least as early as 1912 (Ottmann 1995), while feminists pioneered an alternative press strategy in the last half of the nineteenth century.(Hahner 1980) Repertoires of collective action are often repeated, because they are " not only what people *do* when they make a claim; it is what they *know how to do* and what society has come to expect them to choose to do."(Tarrow 1995, p. 91, emphasis in original) In addition to such already known strategies, what Brazilian social movements learned to do in this cycle was, in effect, to have urban social movements and feminists mobilize together. This took several forms.

Especially during the early part of the cycle when the military reaction to certain sectors' mobilization (e.g., students and labor) was often violent, opponents of the military joined safer mobilizations "to ventilate criticisms of the military regime without incurring more repression."(Ramos 1995, p. 6) Safer issues included topics like indigenous rights,(Ramos 1995) women's rights,(Alvarez 1989) and protecting the Amazon. A participant in the 1978-79 Campaign in Defense of the Amazon (against the military government's forestry plans there) told of how that campaign had been bolstered - temporarily - by the support of a whole cluster of activists who mobilized to join them against the military, but then easily moved on to the next oppositional issue.[3]

This same opposition coalition also put together its own more directly oppositional mobilizations on broadly political issues, like the amnesty demonstrations in 1978-79. In the later part of the cycle, these larger political struggles and mobilizations came to dominate the protest agenda, and the more-substantive movements nearly lost their specificity as their members joined in. The most committed practiced a "double militancy," as many women's organizations did,(Alvarez 1989) while others, like many neighborhood movements, felt sidelined by the switch in focus.(Gondim 1989/90) The crowning moment of this strategy was indeed the *diretas ja* campaign, which pulled literally millions of people into the streets for the festive rallies.

Finally, such more spontaneous participation was buttressed by an underlying foundation of new organized connections among the social movements organizations. During the 1970s and 1980s, they built unprecedented networks and more formal federations both within and across their sectoral issues. For the first time, for example, many neighborhood organizations were linked to others in federations like FAMERJ of Rio de Janeiro. Similarly, environmentalists and

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[3] Interview with Renato Cunha of the *Movimento em Defesa da Amazonia* (now a member of the environmental group GAMBA), Salvador, Bahia, September 5, 1991.

women formed umbrella groups and held conferences. The PT saw itself as a political arm of social movements and connected many of them to the new union movements of the time. Overall, the anti-military coalition strategy was remarkably inclusive, and brought together actors who had usually been on opposing sides in Brazilian politics as well as many more actors (quantitatively) of all kinds.

Any popular mobilization in the 1970s brought social movements into intensified interaction with the military authorities, a final characteristic of a social movements cycle. One of the hallmarks of military rule in Brazil was the military's efforts to *demobilize* civil society and quiet challengers. After a decade of such efforts, new mobilizations by unions and the social movements discussed here disoriented military leaders. Alves traces a repeating cycle of opening and closing, reform and repression in the military responses themselves,(Alves 1985) before the Brazilian military authority finally decided on political reform and demilitarization.

Because of this response cycle, social movements of the period found themselves with a constantly shifting set of opportunities for political participation and protest. The year 1985 is often given as the point of transition from military to civilian rule. Nonetheless, the most important moments of democratization occurred earlier - or later - for many social movements and many specific strategies. For two examples, many locally-based movements found the effective moment of transition to be the 1982 state and local elections,(Assies 1993) while the 1978 party reforms shaped ensuing participatory strategies.(Keck 1992) Both developments challenged the collective opposition movement's efforts to define inclusion and exclusion, military and civilian. Other parts of the transition came later, as with the first direct elections of the president in 1989 and with the many important changes codified in the 1988 Constitution. Still other important measures of democratization have not yet been achieved in Brazil. In short, 1985 is a rather arbitrary date for a final state response to this cycle of social movements mobilization. It is a convenient date because it is just after the failed *diretas ja* campaign in 1984, which included the last large street demonstrations at the time. As I will argue in the next section, however, 1984 is a similarly arbitrary date for an end to the cycle of social movements activity.

BRAZILIAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AFTER 1985
Refining Frames: From Democratization to Citizenship

One of the clearest signs of continuity between social movements organizing under the military regime and after is in the frames used to motivate their participation. More recent frames build directly on earlier ones, and reflect efforts to specify more exactly just what is at stake. At the earliest part of the social movements cycle, an "anti-military" frame drew many diverse actors together, not all of them social movements. "Democratization" was a specification of this anti-military frame which held a smaller number of actors together. The new frame signaled a rejection of some traditional civilian actors who wanted to restore their own traditionally privileged political position as the military withdrew from power. Once institutional democracy returned formally at every governmental level in 1985, the frame of democratization was jettisoned in turn for a more precise rendering of non-formal changes that were necessary.

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Among the public as a whole, democracy had become a word with little content,[4] and this was reflected in the new frame.

In response to these developments, social movements and other political critics have developed a new frame in the 1990s, one of citizenship (*cidadania*).(Menezes 1995) The frame of citizenship draws heavily on the language of inclusion and exclusion of the earlier frame. Social, political, and economic exclusion define the absence of citizenship. In this frame, citizenship extends far beyond the legal and political definition often used. Social and economic indicators of citizenship are central to the frame, with hunger,(Muller, 1986; Cadernos CIAS, 1993) violence,(Yu'dice forthcoming) and the lack of land (D'Incao 1991; Santos 1992; Comissao Pastoral da Terra 1993; Bergamasco and Norder 1995) often singled out as signs of non-citizenship. As Sales notes, the call for citizenship in Brazil is a social justice rights claim, not a liberal one: "...[A]mong us, citizenship begins with the social sphere."(Sales 1993, p. 56) Social movements themselves often use this language, as in the cross-sectoral NGO movement which called itself Citizens Against Misery and for Life (Cadernos CIAS, 1993) and the IBASE-based newsletter *Jornal da Cidadania*.[5] These names show a second use of this frame, where organized active social movements participants claim citizenship as a description of their own activities, and seek to extend an active citizenship to unorganized, excluded sectors.(Silva 1993) In this use, the presence of citizenship is seen in active political and economic participation, making inclusion more positively valued in this frame, although not without contradictions.

These contradictions arise from the fact that processes of inclusion and exclusion were much more complex after the political opening of the 1980s. Most social and political actors embodied both processes. For social movements, the least ambiguous actors were traditional elites, long ruled out of the alliances and networks of social movements. These include the rural landowning elite, whose violence and political clout prevent land distribution-as-citizenship, and other economic elites. In a recent survey, Brazilians generally also selected business leaders, bankers, and politicians as the most responsible for violating or blocking the expansion of rights. (Cardia 1995, p. 360) Some business organizations have tried to join social movements networks, but they often are rejected. Brazilian social movements and NGOs organizing for the 1992 Earth Summit, for example, wrote a clause excluding those profiting from the current model of development from joining their preparations.[6] On the other hand, business organizations were central in establishing and especially promoting the Viva Rio coalition.(Ventura 1994)

The state (as formal governing actors and institutions) occupies a more ambiguous position. On the one hand, new civilian governments at all levels have promised and sometimes delivered all kinds of inclusion. Every civilian government since 1985 has promised and

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[4] A 1989 Datafolha poll found that less than 20% of respondents actively favored dictatorship, but that many also were not sure democracy mattered. This attitude was especially prevalent among Brazilian young people. Cited in Cardoso, 1990, pp. 23-24.

[5] Online at http://www.ibase.br/ibase/ibase.htm

[6] Forum Brasileiro, "Documento Final do Encontro de Brasilia," (Brasilia: Mimeo, 1990).

delivered at least some land distribution,(Tavares 1995) governments at all levels have provided new participatory opportunities,(Alvarez 1990; Costa 1995) and civilian constitutional democracy generally provides opportunities for citizens to promote other kinds of inclusion.

At the same time, the state is at best tolerant and at worst the perpetrator of many of the most violent kinds of exclusion.(Dimenstein 1996) A total of 3374 land conflicts between 1985 and 1990 left 563 dead; from 1964 to 1991 only 29 cases of rural killings went to trial with 13 convictions - for 1630 dead.(Santos 1992, pp. 6-7) The Pastoral Land Commission of the Catholic Church, which compiled these figures, concluded in 1993 that the state has in essence granted impunity for rural violence.(Comissao Pastoral da Terra 1993) Police forces themselves are major violators of urban rights and lives, with the complicity of political leaders. (Human Rights Watch/Americas 1996; Pinheiro 1996) From December, 1995, to August, 1996, 300 police officers were indicted for torture, while none were actually punished. (*Folha de Sao Paulo*, January 1, 1997) President Cardoso announced a National Plan of Human Rights and a new human rights training course for police in November of that year, but few concrete results are evident so far. In this context, especially political inclusion is indeed a contradictory value.

In the survey cited above, teachers, churches, and unions were most credited for expanding rights.(Cardia 1995, p. 360) This second group of actors has often worked with social movements on campaigns for citizenship. Yet beneath the general approbation, social movements also sometimes find each other blocking full citizenship. In more benign cases, these are errors of omission. For example, Sueli Carneiro, writing for the Movement of Black Women, explains their struggle as one which

> always moves in the direction of constructing full citizenship for black Brazilian women, which in addition to the defense of rights constitutionally won by the Women's Movement also means the struggle against the mechanisms of racial discrimination in the labor market, such as the euphemism of 'good appearance.'(Carneiro 1990, p. 218)

The divisions here are additive in nature, and could be resolved with a further elaboration of a (mostly) shared frame.

The divisions within the anti-violence movement, on the other hand, show just how deeply such critiques can run. One of the best-known anti-violence movements is the Viva Rio coalition which began in 1993 to bridge the divided city of Rio de Janeiro in the wake of extremely high violence.(Ventura 1994) In coordinator Rubem Fernandes' words, "Viva Rio is dedicated exclusively to public service, of two kinds at present: to establish a bridge between slum dwellers and middle classes at the neighborhood level, and to bridge human rights and public security issues."(Yu'dice forthcoming) Many individuals joined Viva Rio not only to demonstrate against police and drug-related violence, but also to participate in innovative strategies like a citywide two minutes of silence on December 17, 1993 and to build a House of Peace where police shot and killed 21 favela dwellers in Vigario Geral favela.

Despite the support of thousands of Rio residents, the two sides bridged by this coalition still view each other with suspicion. The middle class sectors waver between seeing favela dwellers as common victims of urban violence - or the perpetrators of it. Favela dwellers recognize this ambiguity and sometimes resent the economic inclusion of their coalition partners. Caio Ferraz, of Vigario Geral, derisively renamed one mobilization from *Reage Rio* (Rio React)

to *Reage Rico* (Rich React).(Yu'dice forthcoming) In this example, and in many similar movements around violence and human rights in particular, social movements find limits to their shared language of citizenship. Nearly all use the language, but some are more included than others. In 1997, many social movements participants are still trying to bridge this gap of their own between those more and less included, but the rift has the potential to widen. In any case, the gap is not a new one, but also divided social movements during the earlier mobilizations, as in the distance between middle class feminists and neighborhood feminine groups within the womens movement.(Alvarez 1990)

<div align="center">Strategic Repertoires: Change and Continuity</div>

While the mobilizing frames show substantial continuity from 1978 to 1997, Brazilian social movements' strategic repertoires have been considerably refurbished since 1985. If rapid strategic innovation is typical of a social movements cycle, it is more apparent after 1985 than before. New movements with new strategies have emerged, while existing movements have tried a whole new range of participatory options. Some of these push the limits of many conventional definitions and expectations of social movements, and largely create the conclusion of some observers that social movements have declined in Brazil since the formal transition to constitutional democracy. At the same time, many of the earlier strategies persist, such as mass street protests and cross-sectoral networking. In this section, I begin with the continuities, and then briefly explore four new participatory strategies: non-governmental organizations (NGOs), participation on government councils, international networking, and land occupations.

Strategic continuities

During their opposition to the military regime, Brazilian social movements had learned to both protest and organize in large cross-sectoral and cross-movement coalitions. This strategy has continued to be important since 1985. The *diretas ja* campaign had a direct equivalent in August and September of 1992, when millions of people again marched in the streets of the large cities calling this time for impeachment - ironically of the first president to actually be directly elected.(Costa 1994) This campaign was successful at pushing the National Congress to openly consider and vote for Collor's removal from office later that year. Later campaigns also used this strategy, such as Viva Rio which used a "network of networks" to bring tens of thousands of people out to protest against urban violence. (Yu'dice, forthcoming; *Isto E*, December 6, 1995, pp. 40-42) The acceptance of this strategy as part of the social repertoire can be seen in the way it is invoked by actors outside the social movements sector as well. Former president Itamar Franco suggested "resuscitating the *diretas ja* and impeachment campaign models" to block privatization of the parastatal Companhia da Vale do Rio Doce (*Jornal do Brasil*, November 24, 1996), while a member of the Fluminense soccer team proposed a *Reage Flu* movement to retain the team's classification in Division I of the soccer rankings (*Jornal do Brasil*, November 26, 1996). Social movements themselves also used the mass protest model for smaller and more specific mobilizations.

Non-protest networking within and across social movements also continued and even expanded in the post-1985 years. The two years spent writing a new constitution in 1987 and 1988 brought together women,(Pinto 1994) environmentalists,(Hochstetler 1996) and other social movements in issue-networks to influence the new document. Many of these groups achieved significant advances within the Constitution itself, although there has been less progress

translating the constitutional text into actual laws and policies. In addition, social movements put together a cross-sectoral coalition, the Pro-Popular Participation Plenary, which mobilized to establish general language favoring citizen participation in both the constitution-writing process and the constitution itself.(Hochstetler 1996) Another large coalition, the Union of Housing Movements of Sao Paulo, later became the first to use one of these mechanisms which allowed popular initiatives to introduce laws. In November of 1991, the 45 movements and associations involved presented their proposal for popular housing with 850,000 signatures from all over the country.(Silva 1993)

After Brazil was chosen to host the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit), an even more extensive cross-sectoral mobilization took place. A total of 935 NGOs and social movements of all kinds gathered in eight national encounters from June 1990 to the June, 1992 conference, with sporadic gatherings of the coalition since.(Herculano 1995; Hochstetler 1996) This conference forged a dense set of linkages between organizations and issues that extended well beyond the earlier, more instrumental linkages. For example, one outcome was the creation of a Brazil Women, Environment and Development Program, while women had had "virtually no activity and little explicit interest in environmental" issues before.(Keith and Girling 1996, p. 51) The Earth Summit network later became the foundation for the NGO and social movements networks built around hunger and violence issues.

New strategies: Non-Governmental Organizations

NGOs have existed in Brazil at least since the 1950s, but they became a significant innovation in social movements mobilizing in the late 1980s and 1990s. After the Earth Summit they even formed their own association, ABONG, of Brazilian NGOs. The dividing line between NGOs and social movements is drawn in many different places and can be hard to trace once defined. The definition I use here is one which sees a tradeoff of two kinds of resources and two kinds of action. NGOs generally have more financial and thus institutional resources, which allow them to initiate longer-term projects through institutionalized kinds of action. Social movements generally have only the resource of volunteer labor, which tends to restrict them to shorter-term protest-oriented activities. While these definitions are based on the distinctions Brazilian activists themselves draw,[7] they are more indicative of general orientations than wholly descriptively accurate. Two indisputably-labeled NGOs, IBASE and ISER - the "I" stands for Institute in both cases - have organized many of the recent mass protest mobilizations discussed above, while the social movement label stretches to cover organizations like the environmental group Agapan, which has existed for 25 years and has a secretary, a building, and a whole set of long-term projects. In any case, the two kinds of organizations have mobilized together since the 1970s and continue to work together in the 1990s. For these reasons, I consider the recent growth of NGOs to be a complimentary innovation of the social movements sector rather than its replacement. Nonetheless, the change in strategic focus NGOs represent does pose some potential new dilemmas for Brazilian social movements.

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[7] This definition is drawn from a year of participant observation of the Earth Summit preparations in 1990 and 1991, where I attended three of the national gatherings and state and local meetings in five states.

First, NGOs are predicated on higher levels of regular funding than volunteer social movements are. In Brazil, the tradition of paid membership in advocacy groups is weak - the *Folha de Sao Paulo* newspaper called the SOS Atlantic Forest Foundation's 4000 national members a "rare case" in 1990 (June 5). NGO resources largely come from governmental and international sources. Nearly 5500 Brazilian NGOs receive US$400 million annually from international sources. With the dollar weaker against the cruzeiro after the Plano Real sharply lowered inflation, 86% of NGOs reported they were cutting employees and programs in 1995. (*Veja*, May 31, 1995). Many have turned since to governmental sources, with an astounding 70% of Brazilian NGOs reporting some kind of partnership with government agencies in 1996. NGOs influence or control R$1.4 billion (close to US$1.4 billion) in funds administered by the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Social Security and Welfare, and international banks. (*Folha de Sao Paulo*, June 9, 1996) Such large sums of money inevitably raise issues of the autonomy of the NGOs from the organizations and agencies that fund them. One analysis concludes that many NGOs end up giving most of their time and effort to projects which were conceived by governments and follow their interests. (Menezes 1995) Others see similar dangers in accepting international funds, although Fernandes of Viva Rio and ISER argues that the plurality of sources allows each NGO to petition an international NGO donor which best suits its agenda. (Fernandes 1994, p. 80)

A second potential dilemma of NGOs concerns their relationship to other parts of the social movements spectrum. Many NGOs were specifically established to support and act as intermediaries for community groups, especially those of the favelas. Originally a shield for such movements against the military regime, NGOs are equally critical to guide social movements through the complex institutions and channels of democracy. The dilemma is that popular groups can become just as dependent on their own leaders and NGOs as they would otherwise be on the state. (Ottmann 1995) One recent analysis by an NGO leader traces the pressures from both sides that NGOs link. Grassroots groups want NGOs to be their lawyers, helpers, and patrons, with the danger that NGOs will come to replace the grassroots groups as political participants; the state on the other hand also wants the NGOs there, as a more familiar kind of social actor, well-educated and closer in culture. The danger here is that the NGOs will also substitute for the state, doing things it should do for its citizens.(Neto 1996)

This second dilemma plays out differently for middle class social movements. In some issue networks, like the environmental movement, NGOs and middle class social movements sometimes see themselves as directly competing for scarce resources and media attention. This kind of competition was chronic in the Earth Summit mobilizations, where volunteer organizations with a longer history in environmental activism felt pushed aside by non-environmental NGOs with fax machines, E-mail accounts, and media access. One observer even concludes that environmental NGOs broke (*desencadear*) their associated movements in the process,(Mucouah 1995, p.36) although other observers simply see the more professional environmental associations as more successful.(Vieira and Viola 1994)

Finally, the lack of membership base of many NGOs causes some observers to raise questions of their accountability. Corruption and general ineffectiveness are only two of the potential dangers.(Edwards and Hulme 1996) A variation of this concern is that employees of NGOs themselves might be opportunisticly employment motivated in a country where university

graduates are often underemployed. One reporter noted as the Viva Rio coalition fractured that all the jobs associated with it went to the middle class.(Yu'dice forthcoming) NGOs claim for themselves that they can be private individuals speaking for public interests,(Fernandes 1994) and the current flow of resources to them suggests some confidence in this claim. Nonetheless, this is an important area for future research. Such questions could equally well be directed at the social movements themselves. At the peak of their breadth - the 1-2 million behind the biggest demonstrations or the most-supported popular amendments for the constitution - they aggregated about one percent of the Brazilian population. The organizations themselves and most of their mobilizations are much, much smaller, and often not very representative of the population as a whole.(Herculano 1995)

New Strategies: Participation on Government Councils

The original anti-military coalition of the late 1970s and early 1980s included many politicians who gradually formed a number of parties on the left and center-left as the military regime loosened party and electoral rules. The 1982 state and local elections brought a number of these politicians to power and still more followed in subsequent elections. Some of the new politicians were actually members of social movements themselves, and many of them retained a commitment to the frame of grassroots participation and activism. These politicians, mostly from the PMDB and PT, converged on the idea of the government council as a site for citizen participation. Some especially innovative municipalities had pioneered these councils as early as 1971 in Boa Esperanca, Espiritu Santo. During the 1980s, social movements and NGOs were invited to sit on these councils at all levels of government, where they could discuss and advise government officials on policy. Some of the councils were set up to actually allow decision-making, while many were only consultative.(Assies 1993) Environmentalists were allowed to select five representatives for a national council, the CONAMA, while women gained a National Council on Women's Rights. At the local level, organized groups were allowed to comment on urban development plans and other issues. Many of these organizations did initiate significant policy changes. In 1986, for example, the CONAMA passed a regulation requiring environmental impact assessments. More recently, the National Council on Women's Rights asked Cardoso to propose a law legalizing abortion, a permanent demand of the feminist movement.(*Folha de Sao Paulo*, March 7, 1997)

Some observers worry about the potential of such councils to coopt and dilute the demands of social movements. With an institutionalized channel for demands, Alvarez warned that women's movements might begin to censor their own more radical demands, weakening them as a source of change.(Alvarez 1989) Nelson points out the inherent contradictions of such hybrids of social movements and state: "The DDMs [women's police precincts] must simultaneously enforce the law and subvert the system; they must represent the interests of the state and those of a social movement born from opposition to that state."(Nelson 1996, p. 144) Partisan politics also dominates many of the councils, and conflicts with social movements' agendas.(Alvarez 1990)

In fact, the more prosaic fate of many of these councils was that they were largely ignored and then often eliminated altogether, especially at higher levels of government. Under the Sarney administration, CONAMA rarely met, and environmentalists received late invitations and information; under Collor, it disappeared as a decision-making body.(Hochstetler 1996) The

councils have persisted at a local level, especially because of the ideological commitment PT administrations have to social movements participation. Even among these efforts, local governments have had a hard time finding the balance between asking for more participation than social movements want (such participation competes with other activities) and allowing for meaningful influence on policy decisions.(Assies 1993; Abers 1996)

New Strategies: International Networking

Over the last decade and a half, Brazilian social movements have become a part of a global phenomenon of citizens networks that span the world. Like the networks social movements have built inside the country, the international networks also link both same-issue and cross-sectoral social movements organizations.(Clark, Friedman et al. 1997) This international networking has taken two forms so far.

First, Brazilian and international NGOs and social movements have formed instrumental coalitions to influence governmental decisions. Most often these coalitions have worked to develop new points of pressure on governmental decision-makers. In one of the best-known examples, international environmentalists joined with associations of Brazilian forest peoples to bring pressure from the multilateral development banks to bear on Brazilian national and Amazonian development policies.(Keck 1995) International human rights groups have also been a critical support for national human rights groups, both during and after the military regime. International NGOs generally have supported the work of Brazilian NGOs and social movements through the donated resources discussed above. One hazard of such coalitions is that they are vulnerable to nationalist critiques, which have materialized with respect to the environmental mobilizations (Hurrell 1992) and recent criticisms of Brazil's policies towards the landless movement.(*Estado de Sao Paulo*, February 15, 1997)

Second, these international networks have also served as forums for exchanging ideas and support beyond specific mobilizations. Many Brazilians attended the Earth Summit in Rio precisely for such international connections and community-building, rather than to try to influence the governmental conference.(Hochstetler 1996) Women's organizations have found new energy and inspiration in more than a decade of meetings among Latin American feminists.(Sternbach, Navarro-Aranguren et al. 1992) Meetings like these are fertile ground for affirming solidarities and identities, e.g., that feminism *is* appropriate for Latin America. Such international experiences also teach new strategies and analyses.

Land Occupations

The new and old strategies discussed so far have mostly been used by social movements which were active in the early part of the mobilization cycle. No discussion of Brazilian social movements in the 1990s can be complete, however, without briefly discussing the Landless Movement (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem-Terra* - MST). Although the MST has existed since the early 1980s, its appearance as a national actor which has changed the face of social movements organizing is much more recent. As recently as 1994, agrarian reform seemed to have moved off the national agenda. Agrarian reform's strongest opponent, the UDR (*Uniao Democratica Ruralista*) had closed its doors, saying it had completed its work. The MST responded by picking 1995 as the year to "democratize land." (Tavares 1995) Shortly afterward, the MST emerged in full force. The basic MST strategy is to move a cluster of families onto government-owned or unproductive private land and to occupy it and farm it until they are

granted title to the land. To support these aims, the movement has also innovated by occupying government buildings, especially those of the Institute for Agrarian Reform (INCRA). Occupation is a classic social movements strategy, depending primarily on sheer numbers of participants and direct action.   It has also been a violent strategy, although the MST has taken an official position in favor of using pacific means.(*Isto E*, August 23, 1995) Much of the violence has been perpetrated against the MST by the hired guards of landowners and the military police, but the MST is also accused of violence. Calling violence in the countryside a national security issue, the Cardoso government has been using police solutions to the occupations, with the military offering to stand by.(*Estado de Sao Paulo*, June 20, 1996)

More recently, the government has been searching for other solutions to the crisis, recognizing that it has failed to politically isolate the MST.(*O Globo*, April 1, 1997) Cardoso has said numerous times that he will meet a delegation of the MST when it arrives in Brasilia this month (April, 1997) after a two-month march from Sao Paulo. Polls show that 85% of the population supports the invasion of land as a legitimate tactic, as long as it is done without violence.(*O Globo*, March 21, 1997) In Rio Grande do Sul, 1500 families recently formed an urban version of the MST, the *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Sem Teto Urbano*.(*Zero Hora*, March 23, 1997)

Ironically, there have also been recent allegations about the MST which reveal flaws in the organization. While the MST maintains the public profile of a grassroots social movement, INCRA (which has an interest in passing on negative information about its most persistent critics) calculates that the MST worked with a budget of almost US$20 million in 1996, from governmental and international sources. This money paid the salaries of 800 professional militants, making the MST's organizational profile more like that of an NGO.(*Folha de Sao Paulo*, March 9, 1997) Other reports tell of the iron discipline in the occupied lands, where persecutions, expulsions, and fines maintain order. Participants must have authorization to leave the occupation, and the organization takes 10% of any earnings during the occupation.(*O Globo*, March 9, 1997) Like every other face of social movements in the 1990s, then, the MST also looks in two directions.

CONCLUSIONS

Are Brazilian social movements democratizing pressures from below? In 1997, it is clear that popular and middle class actors did not retreat from an activist public life with the return of civilian rule in 1985. They continue to express a "generalized desire for democracy," (Cardoso 1990, p.16) although they now use the frame of citizenship to emphasize just what they want of democracy, for themselves and others. In a new political setting, they have devised new strategies for voicing their demands. Why, then, do so many observers see a social movements cycle that ends in 1984?

One part of the answer to this puzzle is an empirical one. The cycle of social movements protest encompasses the entire social movements sector, while many of the pessimists focus on the decline of a single issue network or even a single social movement organization. Because of their precarious resource and personnel bases, individual social movements organizations are notoriously ephemeral. Specific issues also move on and off political agenda. Nonetheless, the overall cycle continues as long as there is innovation and renewal of contention. In this particular case, the most negative conclusions about Brazilian social movements tend to be

reached by observers of urban popular movements. As outlined in the introduction, such movements have indeed succumbed to a plethora of causes which make them the leaders of social movements decline within the broader cycle. Other social movements networks have tended to be more enduring, while new movements like the MST and the anti-violence coalitions draw some of their supporters from previous participants in the urban popular movements.

Before their recent role of prominence in decline, urban popular movements also carried the distinction of having once been the most promising embodiment of hopes for democratization, in both the political and the economic forms that the citizenship frame encompasses. (Assies, 1993) Their recent decline gains dimension from the height of those past hopes. What is striking in a closer investigation of this "decline" is that some of it began with the formation of the organizations in the 1970s. Ruth Cardoso was already warning in 1983 that the activities and demands of many of the urban popular movements bore little resemblance to the democratic role claimed for them, (Cardoso 1983) and some of the recent stories of decline actually do describe developments in the 1970s.(Cunha 1993; Gondim 1989/1990)

In fact, I would argue that the strongest cyclical rise and decline between 1978 and 1984 is in the writings about social movements rather than in the social movements themselves. This suggests a second analytical component which accompanies the empirical one briefly laid out above. Any discussion of the fate of social movements and their role in democratization depends very much on the definition of social movements used. In particular, analyses which conclude that the cycle ended in 1984 work with a definition of social movements that builds in certain assumptions about both social movements and the larger social and political context. They emphasize the mass base of social movements, temporarily and even spontaneously arrayed in protest against dominant elites of state and society.(Eckstein 1989) This is a definition based on a fundamental opposition of state and society, which at its extreme becomes a kind of fetishization of social movements autonomy. (Hellman 1992) The definition resonates with the frame identified for the 1978 to 1984 period, which saw a sharp opposition of military state and civil(ian) society. In this opposition, social movements were unequivocally democratizing pressures from below. Democratic qualities were also attributed to the internal functioning of social movements, with more and less accuracy. (Mainwaring and Viola 1984)

Social movements organizing after 1984 displays several conflicts with this definition. First, most of the strategic innovations fall outside it. NGOs are not mass-based, and have cultivated close relationships with state actors in many cases. They are even compared to state actors, as when one newsmagazine report favorably commented on the Viva Rio coalition's frugality in organizing large demonstrations of support - only R$20,000 instead of the R$350,000 usually spent by political parties.(*Isto E*, December 6, 1995, pp. 40-42) The government councils are obvious violators of the opposition between state and society - or they represent efforts to coopt social movements, which amounts to the same thing. The focus on financial resources makes it possible for social movements to move beyond mass protests, but compromises their autonomy, central to this definition. Hence, many of these innovations would be seen not as innovations of social movements, but as replacements or distortions of them. The new forms of action make social movements after 1984 more ambiguous as democratizing agents in this view.

Second, the new stories of social movements also highlight their internal ambiguous characteristics as democratizing agents. Observers in the 1990s acknowledge - as observers in

the 1970s and 1980s often did not - that at least some social movements organizations are plagued with the same failings of other Brazilian actors. These include a tendency to clientelism, paternalistic leadership, and self-interested behavior. The MST enforces its strategies with sometimes-harsh discipline. Other organizations, especially neighborhood organizations and NGOs, can suffer from bureaucratization and careerism. Processes of inclusion and exclusion exist within social movements as well, as in the example of black women within the women's movement who find only a part of their agenda addressed, or the divisions within the anti-violence coalitions.

In the context of all of these criticisms of recent Brazilian social movements, I still conclude that the cycle of social movements organizing continues in important ways into the 1990s. To begin with social movements' internal characteristics, these are not new developments within social movements organizations. In many cases, they are patterns which extend back to the beginning of the cycle. If social movements were democratizing forces then, they still can be now. Understanding that social movements are not immune from general patterns of political and social interactions - and why should they be? - prompts both analysts and activists to be more rigorous in questioning the actual democratic foundations of social movements. Both should be demanding greater accountability and representativity from these organizations, rather than granting them democratic certification from the outset, both before and after 1984. At their worst, such internal characteristics demobilize participants and discredit social movements. At their best, they can spur movement-wide self-examination and growth, and a more profound internal democracy.

Finally, the sharp division between social movements and the state is simply untenable given the many changes of the last decade in Brazil. Social movements may oppose the state, but they cannot be wholly separated from it as it is still necessarily the focus of many of their demands. This is partly because the state is still the most resource-dense of all actors in Brazil. More philosophically, a state that calls itself democratic *should* be the locus of a public sphere for broad public debate and collective decision-making. As social movements engage the state and force it to be that locus, they are, indeed, democratizing pressures from below. This will require them to use new strategies which may not be strategies of pure opposition, but which pull them into extended interrelationships with the state. From the point of view of social movements, these relationships carry the risk of subverting their agenda and logic for a state one; the opposite risk still represents one of the best hopes for deepening Brazilian democracy.

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