

**"Contributions of the Workers' Party (PT) to the Consolidation of
Democracy in Brazil"**

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Eu acho que a democracia vale, não é pouca coisa, vale muita coisa. [...] A democracia não é uma apendice, é uma coisa fundamental na nossa vida humana, especialmente na vida política. [personal interview with Luís Inácio ("Lula") da Silva (6/20/96, São Paulo)].

Much has been written on the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT: Workers' Party) since it was officially founded in early 1980. Yet those unfamiliar with contemporary Brazilian politics might wonder why this one political party merits its own chapter in this volume, especially when it is but one among twenty-five legally registered parties in the country. I imagine that some will wish to dismiss academics' interest in the avowed-Socialist PT, and therefore this chapter, as evidence of our anachronistic yearnings for Leftist utopias. Such easy criticism, however, ignores the fact that democracy has become a centerpiece for the PT's 'utopian' vision of the future (a vision shared by the majority of Latin America's post-Cold War Left). That in itself is worthy of comment. But it is all the more noteworthy when one sees that the PT was the largest opposition party in Brazil in the 1990s, and the most visible 'loyal' critic of the country's otherwise elite-dominated political and economic processes. Constructive criticism and conscious efforts to erect an alternative course for Brazilian democracy have led many observers of Brazil's contemporary political processes to share the opinion of Amanda Sives [1993:556] that "the PT is the only party which is attempting to be truly democratic in Brazil at the present time."

But what exactly does it mean to 'attempt to be truly democratic'? And does the 'attempt' actually contribute positively to Brazil's contemporary democratization processes? This chapter outlines the PT's participation in some of those processes. The nature of that participation provides the foundation for the main argument that the party does, in fact, contribute positively to the consolidation of Brazilian democracy in at least two important ways.¹

¹ This analysis is implicitly comparative. Much of what is said about the PT can be applied to comparable democratic Left

First, *in actively opposing social exclusion, the PT contributes to the legitimation of democracy.* I argue that the causes and reforms championed by the PT help to focus policy makers' attention on those segments of the population excluded, on the one hand, by Brazil's traditionally unequal economic and social systems and, on the other hand, by contemporary neoliberal policies and structural reforms.² Its interpretations and representations of the interests and needs of non-elite citizens enter into the political debate which otherwise would remain dominated by intra-elite politics and concerns. On a very general level, the public policy agenda is expanded and enriched allowing non-elite citizens to see issues of potentially vital concern to them openly debated within the political system. To the extent that such debates give citizens greater choices among candidates and parties, allowing them to feel better represented, the legitimacy of the democratic system is enhanced.³ Furthermore, party competition and elections have allowed the PT to gain public office and implement 'popular' programs designed specifically to benefit non-elite sectors of Brazilian society. These too help to further the legitimacy of the system. The popularity of such policies and the PT's strong electoral presence over the years also forces non-Left parties to respond, in part, by coopting part of the PT's agenda. Democratic legitimacy is further enhanced as non-PT governments and politicians defensively support and implement public policies to benefit non-elites in an effort to minimize the PT's electoral appeal.

parties in other newly democratic countries of Latin America.

² "... the PT was created to be an instrument, a hope, an alternative for all the exploited, oppressed, and dispossessed of our country. Not just for the working class, not just for urban workers, but for all those who are exploited, who live their entire lives subjected to violence, marginalized, those who never had a voice." [interview with Vilson Santin, small farmer and PT militant in Santa Catarina, in Harnecker (1994:119), this author's translation].

³ In the words of Susan Stokes [1995:76], "citizens must be presented with at least the outlines of alternative policies, outlines that serve as credible maps of real government action, if elections are to support popular sovereignty".

We must keep in mind, however, that in patrimonial Brazil, this legitimation function I am attributing to the PT has been ostensibly performed by traditional patronage-distributing parties-of-elites and parties-of-the-State. Yet it is precisely those types of parties and politicians that are accused by many contemporary analysts of Brazilian politics of being responsible for the "slow death" of Brazilian democracy: the "progressive diminution of existing spaces for the exercise of civilian power and the effectiveness of the classic guarantees of liberal constitutionalism" due, primarily, to the stifling influences of "archaic patrimonialism", clientelism and populism in the political arena.⁴ Evidence from a broad range of cases suggests that without at least the threat of popular mobilization emanating from a viable organized Left, democratic or otherwise, the trickling down of patrimonial patronage never goes beyond the limited personalistic granting of 'favors' that stands at its core. Periodic favors from on high cannot assure lasting **collective** gains for the poor and powerless (ie. the majority). Rather, as has been demonstrated time and time again in numerous works across the range of social science disciplines, patrimonialism and clientelism foster non-elite dependence and quiescence as a means of constructing tightly-controlled political 'fiefdoms' in the interests of highly-placed political elites and their elite-dominated political agendas.⁵ Since we are concerned here with the construction and consolidation of democracy, and not some regime-neutral concept of stable institutionalized domination, it's not enough to equate democratic legitimacy with the observation that the 'have-nots' are merely quiescent or have somehow been paid off with official favors. Democracy ultimately includes citizens' participation ("inclusion") in the institutions of political contestation and governance. This should be all the more true where the have-nots constitute the vast majority of the population, and where this majority has been historically excluded from autonomous political participation by a stifling combination of patrimonialism and authoritarianism, as has been the case in Brazil.

⁴ O'Donnell [1992:19]. Other 'pessimists' include Frances Hagopian [1992;1993] and most of the contributors to Valladares & Prates Coelho [1995].

⁵ See, for example, Chaui [1994]; O'Donnell [1992]; Graham [1990]; Roniger [1987]; and Roett [1978].

Only the PT talks about actually promoting participation above and beyond the act of voting. Nearly everyone else in Brazil, when they're not talking exclusively about the intra-elite politics of neoliberal restructuring and/or backroom bargaining over the spoils of patronage, seem to be talking about maintaining "governability" in the face of the 'bitter medicine' that restructuring entails for all but the most well-to-do and in the face of widespread voter dissatisfaction with political corruption and venality. Arguing that a more active, more autonomous, and better informed citizenry translates into a more accountable, corruption-free and, therefore, more legitimate democracy, the PT has done more than just talk about expanding participation. It has prioritized institutional designs and programs that encourage popular participation within its own ranks, and in all state and local administrations where it governs. *Thus, the PT contributes to the legitimation (and, therefore, consolidation) of democracy not only by placing popular concerns and interests on the public policy agenda and by directing some percentage of public funds towards alleviating material inequities, but also by promoting greater citizen involvement in democratic processes.*

The second manner in which the PT contributes to democratic consolidation is by *providing a non-violent channel of participation (or "integration") for those ever-present political activists who criticize the chronic inequities of peripheral capitalism and patrimonial democracy.* To argue as many analysts have, for example, that the PT is the only party in Brazil approximating an ideologically and organizationally coherent instrument for interest aggregation and representation (ie. mainstream political science's ideal democratic party), is to recognize that the PT represents a legal alternative for political activists and potential activists who reject Brazil's traditional fare of non-ideological (patrimonial) and organizationally diffuse parties.⁶ Such individuals will always exist; and they will act either within formal democratic rules (if they see them as efficacious) or against them (if they do not).

⁶ Mainwaring [1992-93; 1995]; Lamounier & Meneguello [1986]; Baaklini [1992].

Providing a clear example of the norm, in the 14 months spanning 1995 and the first third of 1996, 92 federal deputies changed their party affiliations.

Furthermore, to the extent that the PT attracts such individuals and groups, allowing them to express themselves and to pursue their goals with some degree of success or hope, these same individuals and groups can move beyond mere "integration" into the political system (ie. simply being allowed to participate). They can become "socialized", which implies their actual acceptance and internalization of the rules of the political game. Without the latter, the former is a shaky foundation upon which to build (and defend!) a lasting democracy. *One could even say that while integration of such `chronic opposition' individuals and groups is crucial to democratic transition, their socialization is the backbone of democratic consolidation.*⁷ Only the PT is able to carry out both of these functions in Brazil.

Let me summarize my argument so far:

- 1) As the PT aggregates and integrates a significant number of Brazil's Left-thinking individuals and groups by combining the traditional Leftist concern for Social Justice (ie. distributive equity and emancipation from hard and mindless work with little or no reward) with a concern for citizens' empowerment via political participation, and;
- 2) as its efforts are rewarded with success (or the perceived possibility of success) in electoral competition, in extracting popular reforms by working within formal democratic rules and institutions, and in enhancing the efforts of non-elite civil society organizations (eg. social movements) to grow and to express their interests, then;
- 3) popular legitimation of democracy is enhanced, and;
- 4) `chronic opposition' activists are increasingly socialized into playing by the democratic rules, and;
- 5) the cause of democratic consolidation is furthered.

I want to make one more related argument premised on the contradiction that exists in democratizing peripheral capitalist societies between the Left's traditional concern with Social

⁷ See the concept of "elite convergence" in Burton, Gunther & Higley [1992].

Justice and equality on the one hand and, on the other hand, the traditional concern of capitalism's proponents with profit accumulation and, more recently, with market-driven efficiency and repayment of the foreign debt (and, let's be honest, with maintaining elites' enormous social privileges and capacities to ignore the law).⁸ I argue that the socially-optimal 'solution' to this contradiction lies neither in the victory of one side over the other, nor in the common practice of denying that such a contradiction even exists. It does exist. In fact, it **needs** to exist. Total victory (or "hegemony") of one side over the other would inevitably translate into either social injustice or economic stagnation, neither of which constitutes the foundation of a healthy society.

The contradiction between the two extremes of social justice and economic/political accumulation must be maintained and sustained, therefore, as a dynamic equilibrium: each checking and balancing the other. In practical terms, this dynamic equilibrium emerges from the ongoing political struggles between those who hope to declare victory for their side (rhetorically legitimating that victory, of course, as a victory for all of society). Clearly, the Left needs to be actively participant in all the relevant debates in order for the necessary dynamic equilibrium to emerge. The Right always is, always has been, and always will be present and fully accounted for. Without a strong democratic Left like the PT in Brazil, social injustice will prevail and democracy will have failed.

One criticism of this conceptualization of the substantive problem of democratizing peripheral capitalist societies would point to the practical difficulty of keeping the never-ending conflict implicit in this conception of dynamic equilibrium contained within non-violent democratic rules of the game. Historically, the "civic culture" goals of compromise and moderation have been taken up by only a few true believers of democracy, with predictable results. Yet as the twentieth century draws to a close, procedural democracy has developed a strong legitimacy throughout the world and across social and political spectra. This fact represents Brazil's proverbial window of opportunity for establishing and consolidating its democratic

⁸ This formulation is inspired by Przeworski [1985] and Bobbio.

regime. One can see, for example, that in spite of all the criticisms of Brazil's democracy for being elitist, exclusionary, etc., the PT has been allowed to grow and flourish (although not without obstacles thrown in its path). Fortunately, (so far, at least), democracy remains 'the only game in town' for most, if not all, important players.

In the rest of this chapter, I will flesh out the arguments above by providing empirical evidence of the PT's constructive role as a loyal opposition party acting according to democratic Left principles of Social Justice and Participatory Democracy. First, I will present a brief description of the PT's history, outlining the party's participation in elections. Second, I will discuss its participation in institutions of governance, focusing on the PT's experiences in municipal administration and national congressional activism. Finally, I will discuss the evolution of its ideological program (ie. its party platform).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PT:

During much of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the concepts of activists' democratic integration and socialization, as discussed above, would have been labeled "abandonment of principles" and "cooptation" by many of those who considered themselves Leftists.⁹ Granted, the 'heroes' of Leftist dreams -- the urban working class -- had long been integrated into Brazilian politics 'from the top down' by State-controlled corporatist unions; and union leaders had allied themselves throughout the 1950s and early 1960s with Populist "parties-of-the-State" that called themselves Leftist, but prospered within the unabashedly capitalist, clientelist and semi-democratic regime of that time. The Cuban revolution in 1958 and 1959 suddenly presented a clear alternative. Rather than steer an ill-defined middle course between Social Justice and increased productivity-via-profit in response to the market, Cuba (and, later, Vietnam) demonstrated that only revolution -- violent and spearheaded by a small but dedicated vanguard party -- could bring forth Social Justice by bringing down capitalism. Lenin's prescriptions seemed validated. Bourgeois democracy was a sham.

⁹ For the history of the Left in Brazil, see Sader [1995]; Garcia [1994]; ...

But thirty years of subsequent failed revolutionary attempts, military reaction and repression of real and imagined opponents, ongoing capitalist social transformation (especially an enormous growth of the urban working class and an intensive modernization of vast segments of the countryside), the collapse of "existing socialism" in the late-1990s in the former Soviet Bloc and the subsequent decay of Cuban socialism alongside its authoritarian rigidification led to a reassessment of the Left's strategy and goals. Many of these same events created a consciousness among significant numbers of politically aware individuals who did not necessarily consider themselves to be "Socialists", or even "Leftists", that some kind of opposition to Brazil's authoritarian-style of capitalism was necessary. The `insurgent idea' that unified all of these individuals and groups was democracy. Between those who came to value democracy for its openness to grassroots organization and representation of previously-ignored non-elites ("*basistas*"), and those who valued the opportunities it offered to organize and collectively struggle `within the system' for progressive reforms ("reformists"), surviving revolutionaries found themselves increasingly isolated by their former colleagues and `heroes'. Not only in Brazil, but worldwide, "democratizing democracy" (empowering citizens to participate more directly and independently in institutions of contestation and governance) combined with `humanizing capitalism' (redirecting a significant portion of the economic surplus towards improving the quality of life and future prospects of non-elites) to form the twin pillars of a Post-Cold War Leftist platform which the PT would come to call "Democratic Socialism".

The origins of the PT and of Democratic Socialism can be traced to the massive metalworkers' strikes of May 1978 and March 1979 in the industrial heartland of Brazil -- the so-called "ABC region" on the Southwestern outskirts of the city of São Paulo. The leader of those strikes, Luiz Inácio da Silva (better known by his nickname, "Lula"), and a small group of union activists and sympathizers reached the conclusion that unions' representation of their members' demands for better working conditions, wages, etc. were not enough to ensure a better life for Brazil's working classes.¹⁰ Workers were also citizens, with important needs and

¹⁰ Much of this historical overview is drawn from Keck's [1992] excellent account of the PT's first decade, and from Harnecker's [1994] collection of interviews with PT founders and early activists.

interests outside of the workplace, and they needed to be represented as such in the national political arena. Even for workplace issues, Lula and his colleagues recognized that unions in Brazil were highly vulnerable to targeted State repression, whereas a party might operate in multiple locations both within and outside the institutions of the State. Lula launched an idea, subsequently debated in numerous union forums and among leading Left intellectuals of the day: Brazilian workers needed their own political party. This new party would not be a typical "oligarchical", "bourgeois" or "populist" party of elites cutting deals among themselves while making grand promises to an inert mass of client-supporters. Rather, it would construct itself 'from the bottom up', acting as an umbrella organization for the active participation of urban workers and all others who felt excluded from or alienated by traditional politics. The point was to build a party that could expose the inadequacies of Brazil's democratization process by, in effect, 'bringing the people back in' through the previously-closed door of organized non-elite civil society.

1979 was a propitious moment for such an idea. The military-led government had embarked on its controlled program of gradual democratization, including an end to the artificially-constructed two-party system that had been imposed for fifteen years.¹¹ Many opposition-minded groups and individuals couldn't bring themselves to trust the 'official' opposition party (the MDB, later the PMDB), not even its progressive factions. Meanwhile, fifteen years of repression and soul-searching had created an organizational vacuum on the Left. The older communist parties had had their ranks decimated, with new and surviving members split into numerous more-or-less antagonistic factions, many of which were adamantly opposed to the idea of a new workers' party. Lula's "New Unionist" leaders found support, however, from a small but significant number of Brazil's political and intellectual Left to form the initial core of the PT. At the same time, the nationwide proliferation during the 1970s of Christian Base Communities under the aegis of the so-called 'progressive wing' of the Catholic church, and the emergence

¹¹ There were two ways to legalize a party: to have at least 10% of Congress affiliated, or to be organized in at least eleven states, and to be organized in at least 20% of the municipalities in each of those states. The PT legalized itself following the second option.

of numerous community-focused and identity-based social movements provided additional diverse support and important grassroots leadership cadres for the fledgling party.

On February 10th, 1980, the PT was officially founded. The party was literally born divided over the issue of its ultimate goals and strategies -- an issue taken up in greater detail below. The most important disagreement for our purposes here concerned whether the PT should actively engage itself in formal institutional politics (ie. play within the established rules), or use the opportunities provided by elections and public office to publicize the struggles of constituent social movements, to expand and unify their followings behind a single banner, and eventually to attain power and utilize this massive social movement together with the "occupied spaces" of institutional power to transform Brazil's basic social structures. Minimalist or maximalist, all could agreed, however, that participation in elections was ultimately useful. Already in 1982, the party entered the electoral fray wholeheartedly. Table One [next page] illustrates the PT's performance in all arenas of electoral politics from 1980 to 1996.

With the emergence of the PT in 1980, one incumbent senator and five incumbent federal deputies switched party allegiances to the PT, albeit in some cases for only a short duration. The party's elected congressional representation began with eight deputies emerging from 1982's first multiparty elections. That number doubled to 16 in 1986, more than doubled to 35 in 1990, then increased by 40% to 49 in 1994. It took ten years (1990) to elect a PT senator. But in 1994, the party elected five. At the level of state politics, the PT did not elect a governor into office until 1994, when it elected two: Espirito Santo and the Federal District of Brasília. The party's initial 12 state deputies in 1982, however, almost trebled to 33 in 1986, then almost trebled again to 93 in 1990, staying at about that level (91) in the 1994 elections. It was at the level of municipal politics that the PT surprised many observers. Beginning with only 2 elected mayors in 1982 (and its first state capital mayorship -- Fortaleza, Ceará -- in the special election of 1985), the number of PT mayors skyrocketed to 32 in 1988, almost doubled to 56 in 1992, and more than doubled to 115 in 1996. By 1997, the party had governed or was governing in a wide variety of cities ranging in size and character from the tiny rural town of Agua Branca Amapari in the Northeastern Amazonian state of Amapá, with its 2,320 inhabitants,

to the highly urbanized and industrialized city of São Paulo, with its nine and a half million inhabitants.¹²

TABLE ONE

ELECTION RESULTS FOR THE WORKERS' PARTY (PT) (1980 - 1996)

PRESIDENT

1989: 2nd place (16% in first round,
46.9% in second)

1994: 2nd place (27% in first round,
no second round)

NATIONAL LEGISLATURE

	Senate	House
1980:	1/69*	5/479*
1982:	0/69	8/479
1986:	0/72	16/487
1990:	1/81	35/503
1994:	5/81	49/513

¹² Other dimensions of the magnitude and diversity of experience in local governance were equally impressive and telling. Following 1996, the PT administered municipal governments in 22 states, as opposed to 18 in 1992-1996 and 10 1988-1992. And while 16 (or 62%) of its 1988-1992 administrations were located outside of São Paulo (the PT's home state, so to speak), the corresponding figures for 1992-1996 was 45 (or 80%) and 102 (or 89%) for 1996. Minas Gerais was the state with the largest number of PT-led administrations in 1996 (30), followed by Rio Grande do Sul (26), followed by São Paulo with 13. In addition, while only ten (or 42%) of the cities administered by the PT from 1988 - 1992 had a primarily non-industrial economic base, 33 (or 59%) of those picked up in 1992 were non-industrial.

Information is from Keck [1992:157 & 277]; also Bittar [1992:301-24]; also PT (Secretaría Nacional de Assuntos Institucionais) [1993]; also "Curiosidades eleitorais" Boletim Nacional [no date].

STATE GOVERNMENT

	Governor	Legislature
1982:	0/23	12
1986:	0/23	33
1990:	0/26	93
1994:	2/26	91

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

	Mayor	Vice-Mayor	City Council
1982	2	n/a	78
1985**	1	n/a	n/a
1988	36	35	1,015
1992	56	70	1,148
1996	115	142	1,892

* National legislators listed for 1980 were not elected under the PT label, but changed their prior party affiliation once the PT was legalized.

** 1985 municipal elections were for state capitals only.

sources: Keck,1992:164; Branford & Kucinski,1995:57; Boletim Nacional,no date.

Finally, in presidential elections, candidate Lula placed a close second in 1989 behind Fernando Collor de Melo, winning 16% in the first round of multi-candidate voting, and 46.9% against Collor's 53.03% in the second round. Although there was no second round in the 1994 elections due to Fernando Henrique Cardoso's overwhelming victory (54.5%), Lula's second-place finish with 27% of the votes was almost double his first round showing in 1989.

From its disappointing showing (at least for the party) in the maiden elections of 1982, the PT burst onto the national scene in late 1984 when massive street rallies and demonstrations developed

from its demands that the military's plan for indirect presidential elections via an electoral college be replaced by direct popular elections. Calling attention to this use of "non-institutional politics" to promote institutional reforms, Paulo Baia [1996:56] notes this "irony of history" by which "a Left that gave little strategic value to democracy and that even frequently discussed its merely tactical utility ended up being the principal voice in defense of its full installation, principally by means of the campaign for direct elections." This campaign for "*Direitas Já!*" (Direct Elections Now!) was subsequently adopted (coopted) and then abandoned by many PMDB politicians as a bargaining chip in getting their party's candidate, Tancredo Neves, elected in the electoral college. The PT risked public censure by sticking to its guns and requiring its Congressional delegation to abstain from voting for the popular Neves. In the end, however, with Neves' death and the subsequent collapse of José Sarney's presidency into economic turmoil and corruption, "many Brazilians began to see the PT as the only political force that had had the courage to stick to its principles" [Branford & Kucinski:58].

In spite of losing the presidential elections of 1989 and 1994, the PT's strong showings in these and other elections further raised the party's visibility and credibility. As Fernando Collor de Mello's presidency (1989-1992) waxed and then waned in a wash of economic stagnation and corruption, and as Itamar Franco's presidency (1992-1994) hobbled along in disarray, the PT remained consistent in its opposition to these 'inevitable' outcomes of the public's trust in and/or deception by Brazil's traditional political elites. It remained similarly steadfast in its opposition to the government of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1994-1998) in spite of Cardoso's popularity and that of his flagship economic program, the Real Plan. By 1997, far from remaining the isolated voice of São Paulo trade unionism that some of its critics predicted at the outset, the party had grown into a national organization with some 750,000 registered members nationwide, an impressive record of electoral successes in many parts of the country, and a solid nationwide party preference of 17%-19% throughout the 1990s (the highest rate among all political parties).¹³

¹³ Membership figure from PT [1997]. Party preferences from Gallup [1995].

It would appear that the PT definitively opted for the role of 'loyal opposition' in Brazil's formal democracy. *To fully make that argument, however, we need to know more about the party's record of accomplishments in elected office and its guiding ideology.* We might find, for example, that in spite of all its rhetoric to the contrary, the PT is one more in a list of progressive-sounding opposition parties that, upon entering office, "have been successfully co-opted into the orbit of the patrimonial regime".¹⁴ Such cooptation might occur consciously, by surrendering principles to opportunities for individual enrichment or access to power; or it might occur unconsciously as a result of playing by formal rules of the game that ultimately preclude fulfillment of its primary goals. Either way, democracy's "slow death" would arguably be the final victor. On the other hand, we might find that its enthusiastic participation in formal democracy masks a "tactical" Trojan Horse strategy of taking advantage of democratic procedures to infiltrate, undermine and overthrow the established order from within. Such a strategy is clearly visible in the party's origins and has an established pedigree in Marxist-Leninist circles.¹⁵ It should not be dismissed without contrary evidence.

THE PT IN OFFICE, PART ONE -- LOCAL POLITICS: "*inversão de prioridades*" and "*participação popular*"

Case studies of PT-administered cities demonstrate how public policy outcomes in such areas as education, public health, public transportation and the budget-making process have consistently benefitted non-elite sectors of society within those cities.¹⁶

¹⁴ The trend is described by Roett [1978:45].

¹⁵ "... the first step in the revolution by the working class, is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy." Marx & Engels "Manifesto of the Communist Party" in Tucker [1978:490]. See also "The Working Class as Vanguard Fighter for Democracy" in V.I.Lenin [1984:78-93]. For evidence of such thinking in the early years of the PT, see Harnecker [1994], Baia [1996], Azevedo [1995] and Keck [1992].

¹⁶ For case studies of PT municipal administration, see Nylen [1997a;1997b]; Couto [1995]; Kowarick & Singer [1994]; and Branford & Kucinski [1995:76-91]. Also see issues of the São Paulo-based journal Pólis (Instituto de Estudos, Formação e Assessoria em

These are issues targeted by what the PT calls its commitment to an *inversão de prioridades* ("the inversion of priorities"): targeting public policy to favor the traditionally excluded, while targeting fiscal reforms to fairly tax those most capable of paying [Bittar]. In São Paulo, for example, under the PT administration of Luiza Erundina (1989-1992),

... social spending reached 48.1 percent of total city spending, up from 33.8 percent during Jânio[Quadros]'s administration [1985-1988] and nearly 10 percentage points higher than it had ever been in the past fifteen years. [...] The only funding source that was readily available to the mayor's office was a direct tax on property [*Imposto Predial e Territorial Urbano*, or IPTU ...] Erundina increased the share of the IPTU as part of the total municipal income from 9.7 percent in 1989 to an estimated 20.8 percent in 1992. The PT administration was partly successful in adjusting real estate resale assessments to realistic levels and in making tax collection more progressive. [Kowarick & Singer:240 & 239].

Similar examples of other PT administrations successfully inverting public policy priorities are too numerous to present here. But it is instructive to note that when Brazil's federal government in 1995 sought out the country's most successful experiences in innovative local government to be included in an exposition at the United Nations' 1996 Habitat II Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, eight of eighteen selected projects came from PT-administered cities.¹⁷ As one PT poster in the party's national office bragged, "The party administers less than 1% of our cities, but it contributes 44% of the projects that officially represent Brazil." Similarly, when UNICEF sponsored publication of a 15-volume series of exemplary educational programs in Brazil, five of the fifteen

Política Sociais) which regularly publishes articles on "popular democratic" (ie. PT-administered) municipal governments and policies. Similarly, the PT's own trimesterly magazine, Teoria & Debate, often runs articles describing PT-administered cities and towns.

¹⁷ The eight cities/towns were: Angra dos Reis (RJ), Betim (MG), Belo Horizonte (MG), Diadema (SP), Londrina (PR), Porto Alegre (RS), Santo André (SP), and São Paulo (SP). See PT [1996].

cases came from PT-administered cities [MED/UNICER/CENPEC: 1993]. "From an across-the-board reading of the results of the recent democratic administrations [ie. PT-administered cities]", sums up Silvio Caccia Bava [1995:170], "one can affirm that public services under the responsibility of these municipal governments have improved."

In a conscious effort to affirm its commitment to a "transformative" agenda of structural change -- a change going beyond "mere administrativism" (ie. governing efficiently, effectively and ethically), the PT's Mode of Governance has also included a heavy emphasis on promoting *participação popular* (political participation among non-elites) [Bittar; Nylén, 1997a & 1997b]. From 1982 to 1992, most PT administrations set up issue-specific or neighborhood-specific participatory organs called *Conselhos Municipais* and *Conselhos Populares* -- Municipal Councils and Popular Councils -- to serve as intimate and non-intimidating spaces for public debate, to provide opportunities for citizens to meet together in familiar settings and express opinions on issues that they themselves deemed important, and then to channel those opinions directly into the formal decision-making processes of the Administration and the City Council. The Councils were intended to empower the unorganized poor through organized, institutionalized participation.

Efforts to create and then shore up popular participation confronted two serious problems. First, early efforts were often infused with the anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist rhetoric of the 1970s, and not much else. The resulting radical posturing and sloganeering invariably clashed with efforts by administration officials charged with actually governing -- which, in practice, turned out to mean negotiating and bargaining their way through the 'dirty' give and take of democratic politics. Such clashes between mobilizing and governing 'logics' took place in numerous PT administered cities [Keck; Couto & Abrucio]. The most notorious example remains the highly-publicized intra-party warfare leading to the self-destruction of the PT's first experience in governing an important capital city (Fortaleza, Ceará) from 1985 to 1988 [Nylén:1997a; Pinto:1992].

A second problem with popular participation policies is that they seemed to be unpopular and, as such, unrewarding in terms of electoral politics. Most citizens simply didn't care to participate [Nylén: forthcoming]. They preferred more concrete

results, which they generally associated with, on the one hand, highly visible public works projects and, on the other, the all-too-familiar invisible or hidden 'favours' and benefits clientelistically distributed on a personal basis. These, of course, were precisely those aspects of the Brazilian political culture and practice that the PT wished to eliminate with its focus on empowerment via organized popular participation. Electoral logic, then, together with the logic of administration appeared to dictate the abandonment of this central tenet of the party. This dilemma contributed greatly to the intense intra-party disputes discussed below in greater detail.

These early difficulties led elected officials in PT-run municipalities and state governments to experiment with numerous variations of the Municipal and Popular Council theme. Some of these variations moved in the direction of "benevolent vanguardism" or "enlightened elitism and populism": an abandonment of popular participation programs in favor of 'top-down' formulation and implementation of electorally popular 'good works' [Nylen,1997a:434; Reis,1995:60]. Others moved in the opposite direction of throwing more and more decision making into public meetings and Popular Councils [Nylen, 1977b]. Out of this caldron of practical experimentation and theoretical debate emerged a particular strategy of popular participation that captured attention and growing numbers of adherents both inside and outside of the party: the *Orçamento Participativo* [OP].

The OP originated in the capital of Brazil's Southernmost state (Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul) when in 1989, the newly elected PT mayor Olívio Dutra, began to construct the Popular Councils that were, by then, a trademark of PT administrations throughout Brazil. Dutra added his own touch: he envisioned a Popular Council of the Participatory Budget with the idea that citizens should participate in the processes of deciding where their money should be spent. Ricardo Tavares [1995:29] summed up the way the Council worked as follows:

Popular assemblies in 16 city zones bring together 10,000 people and 600 grassroots organizations to debate and vote on municipal expenditure priorities. From a general budget of approximately \$465 million, about 31% is divided up in an open, public process involving large numbers of people and interests. As a result of this process, the city's residents decided the city should

concentrate its resources on legalizing land titles, providing water and sewage to poor communities (almost 100% of households now have clean drinking water), transportation, and environmental clean-up.¹⁸

The success of Porto Alegre's OP in terms of growing levels of citizen participation and a clearly popular redistributive outcome of the entire process (capped by the PT's re-election in that city in 1992 and again in 1996), generated great interest within the party in studying and hopefully duplicating the strategy. Dutra and the Porto Alegre PT seemed to have discovered in the OP a means of balancing the party's ideological concerns for promoting citizens' empowerment via popular participation, with pragmatic demands that policies and policy proposals be in the voters' own self-perceived interests. As a result, virtually everywhere where the party governed in the mid-1990s, the OP emerged as the cornerstone of the PT's mode of governance.

In assessing these experiences of PT local-level governance (ie. the *inversão de prioridades* and the promotion of *participação popular*), I wish to make three points. First, to the extent that 'inverting priorities' means making the local political system 'produce' on behalf of ordinarily ignored and excluded non-elites, a greater number among this heterogenous majority of Brazilians may have been more willing to see the democratic system in a positive light than would otherwise be the case (although it must be said that most Brazilians in the 1990s, and Brazil's poor most of all, showed little or no interest in politics whatsoever).¹⁹ Second, while early attempts at stimulating *participação popular* had an opposite effect by plunging the local political and party machinery into nasty internal conflicts, the *Orçamento Participativo* created an additional body of political institutions and processes through which non-elites could join the normally elite-populated ranks of political activists, representatives and, indeed, citizens. This was especially good for democratic consolidation as many grassroots-level organizations withered or collapsed during the 1980s following the heady days of the "resurrection of civil

¹⁸ For a detailed case study of how the OP process functioned in the city of Betim, Minas Gerais, see Nylén [1997b].

¹⁹ Regarding the latter assertion, see Gallup [1995]; also Meneguello [1994].

society" in the initial stages of democratic transition. Third, as PT leaders, members and supporters judged their participation in local-level formal democratic rules and institutions to be meaningful, they became defenders of those rules and institutions at all levels of government, especially vis-à-vis anti-regime critics from 'orthodox' Leftist allies as well as from the ranks of the authoritarian Right.

THE PT IN OFFICE, PART TWO -- LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY: principled loyal opposition.

Just as local politics is often seen as the repository for traditional clientelistic politics, Brazil's National Congress has been maligned for functioning primarily as a "gigantic distributivist arena" and "a dispenser of patronage", rather than as a lawmaking body of citizens' representatives.²⁰ Where individualistic clientelist logic doesn't predominate entirely, party platforms and loyalties regularly lose out to corporatist and regional interests -- such as the landowners' bloc (*bancada ruralista*) and the private healthcare bloc -- all of which serve to effectively block any attempt at reform (unless, of course, such attempts are backed up with patronage or corruption sufficient to sway less committed members). Add to this a dizzying array of commissions and subcommissions, where legislation insufficiently 'sponsored' by the executive or by outside interests can be easily aborted, and you have an institution absolutely incapable of representing the vast majority of Brazilians, and virtually incapable of reaching consensus within itself or of coming up with viable alternatives to Executive proposals [Ames.95]. Such is the nature of their Congress that, quite understandably, Brazilians love to hate.²¹

²⁰ Barry Ames "Disparately seeking Politicians: strategies and outcomes in Brazilian legislative elections" in Political Science Paper No. 126 (Washington University, no date), quoted in Melo [1995:38,fn#20]; and Mainwaring [1992-93:696]. See also O'Donnell [1992:47-8].

²¹ For example, in mid 1995, 85% of respondents to a Gallup survey [Gallup, 1995:24] felt that "They do not feel personally represented by the current Federal Deputies and Senators", 12% said they did feel represented, and 3% didn't respond.

From its conception, the PT had to decide how it would come to terms with participating in such a Congress. The first PT deputies elected in 1982 saw their task as representing and promoting the workers' movements that they felt had elected them while denouncing the country's social structures and the policies of the Figueredo and Sarney governments that upheld those structures.²² These first PT Deputies generally followed the party's early "*basista* dynamic ... allowing the new party to construct an identity through the negation of the institutional order which petistas always saw as a reflection of the political practices of their adversaries." [Novaes:218-19] That three of the party's eight deputies felt compelled to leave the party in 1985 in order to vote for Tancredo Neves demonstrated, however, a tendency within the party for parliamentarians' logic of compromise and negotiation to buck up against the party leadership's logic of strict adherence to unbreakable principles. This tendency would grow into a major problem for the PT by the 1990s.

During the period in which the new Constitution was written and debated (1987-1988), the party's 16 deputies -- including Lula and some of the party's top leadership -- became fully engaged in an alliance of Left and Center politicians trying to open the process of Constitution-making to full public view, and to pass 'progressive' provisions such as strengthening Congress vis-à-vis the president, providing certain social benefits and labor rights, and maintaining certain privileges for national businesses [Baaklini:157-198]. Practical experience taught these and others in the party that working within formal institutions, even those as unpalatable as the National Congress, could generate real benefits for the party's core constituents (eg. Constitutional guarantees for workers against 'unwarranted' firings and layoffs) while also providing daily opportunities to expound the party's ideas through the otherwise hostile mass media.

These 'lessons' (and those of the Fortaleza experience mentioned above) suggested strong reasons for the party to abandon 'anarchic' *basismo* and radical posturing in favor of the negotiating, pragmatic logic of *políticos* (elected politicians and appointed administrators) and the coordinating, centralizing logic of party officials [Nylen,1997a]. Accordingly, by late 1987 "[t]he

²² Personal interview with José Dirceu, PT president, 6/11/96, São Paulo.

party [was] already no longer seen as an expression of the social movements; rather it [was] these movements that should be an expression of the `proposals previously debated within the PT'" [Novaes:224].

During the municipal and presidential campaigns of 1988 and 1989, and the Congressional and Gubanatorial campaigns of 1990, the party's electoral activities and successes multiplied, but its congressional activities practically ceased [PT,1990]. Congressional activism picked up, however, following the election of 35 federal deputies and one federal senator in 1990. The PT professionalized its delegation by organizing its members and staff around issue-specific groups (to avoid duplication and maldistribution of expertise), holding regular meetings and strategy sessions among members and staff, coordinating activities through an in-house party leadership structure, and distributing an in-house newsletter (Informes) containing news and analysis of impending legislation and informing members of party activities inside and outside of Congress.

Throughout this period, as one would have expected, PT deputies and senators systematically opposed government-proposed neoliberal economic policies intent on privatizing State firms, downsizing the federal government workforce, opening the economy to unregulated foreign investment, reducing social services and benefits, and lessening the tax burden on businesses. Criticized by their political opponents and by the media for being "corporatist", they nevertheless actively defended all rights and privileges for public sector and private sector workers (their primary core constituents) against efforts to ignore or reform the 1988 Constitution by the Collor, Franco and Cardoso administrations. This was seen to be all the more necessary in the context of the economic instability and rising unemployment which hit blue collar and lower-level white collar workers especially hard.

The party delegation went beyond economic and `corporatist' interests, however, developing an "ethical proposal" of clean government [Keck]. PT deputies were instrumental, for example, in initiating and then pushing along the Congressional Investigating Commission (CPI) in 1992 that exposed rampant corruption in the Collor administration. They were equally active, alongside party president Lula, in initiating and maintaining the multi-party negotiations that ultimately led to Collor's resignation under

threat of impending impeachment. PT delegates were ever-present at rallies addressing the massive "*Fora Collor!*" (Out Collor!) street demonstrations of 1992. Indeed, with its Congressional delegation so consistently at the forefront of anti-corruption campaigns and investigations, and its members (and other PT office holders) so conspicuously absent from the growing lists of the accused, the PT began to garner the image of being the one and only clean party in Brazil. Even the usually critical news magazine, Veja, was forced to admit the following in 1994:

The best thing about the PT [Congressional] delegation is that it does not have the same flaws as the others. Its members have never been caught committing improprieties and their names do not show up on the construction contractor's lists [of illegal bribes in public works bids]. The only reported case of corruption is that of Ricardo Moraes, of Amazonas, who was dismissed from PT ranks after an internal investigation.²³

The party was also active in the more routine operations of Congress such as legislation regulating the concession of public services, setting standards of fairness for auctions of public property, pushing forward agrarian reform measures, setting standards for public education, and setting up a federal public defenders program:

If we weren't always able to approve our proposals, we earned the merit of being at the front of the debate at every step of the process, alerting people of the errors of the Government and proposing politically and technically viable alternatives, consistent with our own party platform.²⁴

But exactly at this time in which the PT's congressional delegation, with an eye on Lula's candidacy in 1994, concentrated on demonstrating the party's capacity to defend workers within the democratic rules of the game while standing out ethically and programmatically from the rest of Brazil's political class, the party's national directorate began to clamp down on their autonomy

²³ "The PT Shines and Also Instills Fear" in Veja (6/15/94): 38-45.

²⁴ PT (Câmara dos Deputados, Gabinete da Liderança) [1992]: 5.

and authority. In 1993, for example, the directorate forbade the delegation to participate in that year's constitutional reform (perhaps the most important congressional activity of the year). The directorate forbade, as well, any negotiations by PT deputies regarding electoral alliances for the 1994 elections.²⁵ Throughout that presidential election year, the party erupted into open conflict between its 'principled' leadership and its 'pragmatic' *políticos* (including Lula). Such intra-party conflicts (eagerly reported by the media) could not help but have a negative impact on Lula's candidacy. Many observers both inside and outside of the party ultimately blamed his loss in large part on the party's factionalization and its excessively radical image in the eyes of much of the public. Party divisions between the leadership and members of the congressional delegation (expanded, in 1994, to 49 federal deputies and 5 senators) continued to boil until late 1995 when Lula orchestrated "the return of the moderates to the control of the PT" and solidified the hegemonic ascension of more moderate *político*-based groups.²⁶

With a new spirit of cooperation, the new leadership (headed by former congressman, José Dirceu) worked to establish a more

²⁵ On the one hand, the president of the PT's directorate, Rui Falcão, warned that "lawmakers should stop working on an exclusively individual basis. Their work should be a result of party action." On the other hand, the party leader in the Chamber of Deputies, José Fortunatti, argued: "The bloc is willing to negotiate alliances and is more open-minded than the party, because routine political action calls for negotiation and even for making positions more flexible, without relinquishing the [PT's] principles."

From Ana Maria Tahan "Estadão" in O Estado de São Paulo (11/7/94); see also Joao Domingos "PT Crisis Said to Hide Electoral Interests" in O Estado de São Paulo (2/13/94): A10.

²⁶ "The Difficult Relation of Forces Within the PT" in O Estado de São Paulo (8/23/95): A3; also see Lucio Vaz "Workers Party Splits, Leader Announces 'New Course'" in Folha de São Paulo (9/18/95): 1-9.

Novaes [1993], Baia [1996], Rosenberg [1994], and Nylén [1997a & 1997b] separately argue that heterodox *político* groups steadily gained ideological and political pre-eminence (or "hegemony") within the party by the early-to-mid 1990s.

complementary relationship with the congressional delegation in a conscious effort to make the party more appealing to a larger number of voters. The emphasis on ethical politics was retained because, in the words of one member of the directorate, "We are a progressive party, and anti-corruption is progressive in the eyes of the masses."²⁷ In mid 1996, for example, PT senator Eduardo Suplicy helped to initiate a new Congressional Investigating Committee "to investigate the process by which projects and releases of funds were approved [by the Cardoso administration] and the part played by lobbying firms in the administration's budget decisions."²⁸ Further examples of the application of the PT's ethical proposal abound. A glance at a randomly selected edition of the Folha de São Paulo (3/5/97) provides anecdotal evidence: in six corruption scandals reported that day, each involving federal, state or local government entities in different parts of Brazil carrying out illicit deals with private sector financial or construction concerns, three of them feature PT legislators pushing for official investigations and punishment of wrongdoers.

Indicating a similar concern for playing to popular conceptions of what 'progressive' means in Brazil in the 1990s, the PT's congressional delegation has attempted to counter opponents' charges that they are nothing but a bunch of radical 'nay sayers' by presenting and publicizing full programmatic alternatives to such government initiatives as social security reform, reform of the State bureaucracy, and tax reform. By the end of 1996, the highly-respected congressional lobby organization for the labor movement, the Departamento Intersindical de Assessoria Parlamentar, identified the PT as the most active opposition party in its annual list of the 100 most influential deputies and senators: "Outside of the government's base of supporters, the PT is the party with the largest number of influential parliamentarians, with 18 names in that capacity." [DIAP:11]

In assessing this history of the PT national legislative experience, I wish to make three basic arguments. First, because the PT has always been an opposition party in Congress, and because

²⁷ Personal interview with Marco Aurélio Garcia (6/14/96), São Paulo).

²⁸ Ilimar Franco & Oswaldo Buarim Jr. "Opposition Wants CPI on Distribution of Funds" in Jornal do Brasil (7/12/96).

its "ethical proposal" prohibits its delegation from trading votes for patronage, clientelistic benefits have not been made available to PT constituents. To the extent that such benefits are seen by many Brazilians to be the primary function of politics, this has had a negative effect on the PT's capacity to gain and hold office. Second, although evidence exists that the public sees the PT as the least corrupt of all Brazilian parties, we cannot conclude that the party's `ethical behavior' makes Congress -- and democracy -- any more legitimate in the public's eyes. The PT's muckraking may actually have the opposite effect, further delegitimizing Congress and politicians in general. This is all the more likely given the public's low level of political awareness and the mass media's tendency to lump all politicians under the `scoundrel' category regardless of party label. Whether their muckraking makes the PT more popular and, therefore, electable in the future (the ultimate rationale behind its "ethical proposal") remains to be seen. Third, on-the-job experience in the legislature seemed to foster a `necessary' willingness among many PT legislators to compromise some of the party's `rigid' principles and collective decisions in favor of building alliances and negotiating deals. While this clashed inevitably with those in the party most concerned with keeping the party's ideology intact (eg. the early-to-mid 1990s leadership), the ultimate outcome was neither doctrinal rigidity nor abandonment of party principles. Rather, a more moderate leadership of the party came to the fore, committed (as I will argue below) not to abandoning the party's principles, but to resolving some of the long-standing contradictions of the PT's original ideological heritage by prioritizing certain `heterodox' founding principles above other more `orthodox' ones.

PT IDEOLOGY: the struggle for the meaning of "Socialist Democracy"

Since the late 1980s, the PT has officially identified its guiding ideology as "Socialist Democracy". But what is Socialist Democracy? And is it conducive to democratic consolidation? These turn out to be difficult, but not impossible, questions to answer.

From the party's origins as an umbrella organization of disparate dissident groups united, first, in their opposition to bureaucratic-authoritarianism and exclusionary capitalism and, second, in their negative evaluation of the progressive potential of existing political parties, internal debates over positive goals and strategies have always been intense and, at times, acrimonious. This was as true in the late-1990s as it was throughout the 1980s

when a number of prominent individuals and organized factions within the party were expelled for various transgressions of party rules and majority decisions.

Party leaders positively `spin' these debates as evidence of the PT's "internal democracy" and their overall commitment to democratic debate and tolerance of diverse opinions (similarly, the expulsions are explained as resulting from individual's `anti-democratic' refusals to accept or abide by democratically arrived-upon party decisions). The party line is not handed down from the leadership to passively obedient members, but is hammered out in public in state and national conferences of programmatic debates and voting sessions ("*encontros*").²⁹ Sometimes even the leadership loses out, and is compelled by party rules to abide by the majoritarian decision. Oftentimes, these debates spill over into the media (which, on the whole, seems only too happy to consistently report the party's `imminent demise'). The PT presents this entire process, first, as a `school of democracy' for its active members and, second, as generating an `organic' conceptualization of party goals and strategy that can effectively respond `from the bottom up' to changing circumstances and changing perceptions thereof.³⁰

Implying that this `internal democracy' argument is best seen as making a virtue of necessity, Paulo Baia and Carlos Alberto Marques Novaes [1993] separately argue that practical concerns of maintaining party unity always necessitated concessions to minority viewpoints in the national meetings focused on constructing the party's official platform and public announcements.³¹ Similar to

²⁹ There were nine national *Encontros* between 1980 and 1994. These conferences also serve to elect the party leadership from among candidates representing different "*tendências*" or factions within the party, all of whom are given ample time and space to present their ideas.

³⁰ See, for example, the interview with Francisco Weffort in Harnecker [1994]: 91-4.

³¹ Party unity is further preserved by maintaining the official foundational rejection of the very notion of an internally hegemonic position: that party goals and strategies emerge organically from the day-to-day grassroots struggles of all

the political platforms of parties in the United States, these analysts suggest that the PT's official documents and declarations were less useful for discovering the true meaning of Socialist Democracy, or for guiding the party's political action, than they were for papering over differences and mending fences among party factions.

In the end, I would argue that an essential component of "Socialist Democracy" is, in fact, the process of internal debate and democratic decision making that underlies the very murkiness of the term itself. In Lula's words,

... we can't bring a prepackaged set of ideas to the working class. You have to allow them to discover for themselves if they are or are not socialists or communists. You have to provide space for them to discuss and discover things for themselves. Only in that way will the workers be able to define the type of society they desire.³²

Other observers are less sanguine about these party debates and their implications. Clovis Bueno de Azevedo [1995], for example, asserts that the internal democracy argument masked irreconcilable contradictions between the principles of "orthodox" Leninists and "heterodox" reformist Social Democrats, and that the party could eventually self-destruct if it did not come down definitively on one side or the other. Somewhat similarly, Margaret Keck [1992], Marcello Cavarozzi [1992] and Cláudio Conçalves Couto [1995] have each argued that the operative logic of playing by the rules of party competition and "institutional politics" (ie. the negotiating, compromising and interest-aggregating logic of "*políticos*") contradicted the vision of "*basistas*" that the party should represent the needs and interests

Brazilians and from the ongoing programmatic debates among *petistas* fully engaged in those struggles. Whether these positions were taken by heterodox/*político* leaders for purely strategic reasons, or as a result of principled commitment to democratic dialog (or some mix of the two), is probably less relevant than to simply note that party unity has been maintained in the face of the Left's usual self-destructive tendencies towards fragmentation and political insignificance.

³² Lula in Harnecker [1994]: 90.

of its constituent grassroots social movements and support those movements' efforts outside the institutional arena of politics, even if that meant compromising electoral prospects. Keck and Couto demonstrate how this contradiction expressed itself within the PT in numerous pitched battles between *políticos* and *basistas* throughout the 1980s. Novaes adds a third dimension to the struggle: the essentially orthodox party bureaucracy and support staff, capable of centralizing party decision-making and operations in the name of protecting basic principles, but to the ultimate detriment of the party's vital grassroots militants and membership. All of these analysts warn that internal fragmentation ran a risk of driving the party into irrelevancy: either by disintegrating entirely, by becoming merely one more out-of-touch bourgeois party 'like all the rest', or by becoming ultra-radicalized.

Most of these writers were responding to events surrounding the intense debates within the party in the year or two leading up to, and following, the 1994 presidential elections (discussed above in the context of relations between the party's national directorate and its congressional delegation). During that period, while PT candidates (*políticos*) strategized over how best to get elected or re-elected, "repeated victories of leftist PT groups in state directorates" translated into an orthodox majority in the party's national directorate.³³

But these so-called 'radicals' were not Leninists, as Azevedo and the media at the time would have us believe. They were not interested in undermining democracy from within so they could take over the State and implement the dictatorship of the proletariat. Rather, they expressed legitimate concern that the *políticos'* negotiating and compromising logic (eg. tactical electoral alliances with 'insufficiently progressive' parties) and their 'non-ideological' focus on good government and ethical practice in the interest of short-term electoral gains and popularity threatened to drive the party to abandon or seriously compromise what they saw to be the party's fundamental principles: first, to

³³ Luoia Helena Gazzola "Victories of Leftist Factions Within Workers Party Viewed" in O Estado de São Paulo (5/25/93), P.8; also see Carlos Eduardo Alves "Candidate Lula Disagrees With PT Government Program" in Folha de São Paulo (2/10/94), P.10; and Jorgemar Felix & Luciano Suassuna "PT vs. PT" in ISTOÉ (2/16/94): 27-29.

transform the *raison d'être* of Brazilian peripheral capitalism into a frontal attack on poverty and extreme inequality and, second, to transform its paternalistic political culture via non-elite empowerment and political participation.

If these orthodox groups were not the Leninists that their detractors painted them out to be, neither were the heterodox groups that succeeded them in the mid-1990s totally devoid of Leftist or progressive principles and ideals.³⁴ Since gaining hegemony in the party, heterodox-inspired party pronouncements regarding the economic dimension of Socialist Democracy increasingly approximated standard Keynesianism (ie. an active State in leading sectors of the economy and in redistributivist incomes policies), but with a newly-minted commitment to administrative reform of the patrimonial State primarily via greater citizens' oversight [Baia]. Meanwhile, the political

³⁴ The PT's programmatic evolution towards more heterodox (ie. pragmatic and institution-friendly) strategies of action can be explained in two ways. First, in a dual process which I have elsewhere called "party building" and "institutional learning" [Nylen, 1997a], a growing number of elected party officials and activists-turned-administrators with practical experience in public office and administration were able to collectively push the party in the heterodox direction. A similar 'learning' argument is made in Kowarick & Singer [1994:242-252]; also Whitehead [1989:79]. Second, the PT's presence in elections had the dual effect of moderating the party's discourse over the years, while also moderating the positions of many of its opponents. I would argue that this depolarization of party conflict stems partly from the fact that in many of the country's winner-take-all elections (including those of the president and the mayors of such major cities as São Paulo, Porto Alegre and Belo Horizonte), a two-coalition system (pro-PT vs. anti-PT) produces the same 'targeting the center' strategies as a classic two-party system in established democracies -- a key difference being, of course, that in Brazil's case of peripheral capitalism, the 'center' is composed primarily of the unorganized illiterate urban poor, rather than the educated upwardly-mobile 'middle classes' of advanced capitalist democracies. The PT is thus pushed by "electoral logic" to broaden its appeal beyond its core constituency, while its opponents are pushed by the same logic to adopt a surprising number of items from the PT's agenda and discourse.

dimension reflected a clear and unambiguous acceptance of the legitimacy of representative democracy, accompanied by a renewed commitment to 'improving' that democracy -- and, importantly, making it more available, and therefore acceptable, to the party's *basistas* -- with additional channels and institutions of direct citizens' participation.³⁵

In sum, a retrospective of the PT's ideology provides a complicated picture: on the one hand, a consistently heterogeneous mix of orientations that span the Center-to-Left spectrum; on the other hand, an evolutionary development of hegemony from the late-1970s' rejection of authoritarian capitalism and an embracing of *basismo* (ie. direct democracy), oftentimes to the detriment of the formal institutions of representative democracy, to the late-1990s' essentially social-democratic vision (in all but name) of loyal reformist opposition. All of this would seem to confirm Otto Kirshheimer's classic observation [1966:184-195] that "mass integration parties" like the PT eventually turn into more moderate catch-all parties as candidates' and office holders' learning-by-doing combines with a general "de-ideologization" in the interests of greater electoral viability. Foundational commitments to grassroots constituents and radical structural transformations are thereby abandoned, according to Kirshheimer, in order to attract a broader variety of voters.

I would argue, with respect to the PT, that this interpretation goes too far. Far from 'de-ideologizing', the PT actually became more clearly ideologized as heterodox groups succeeded in elevating or prioritizing certain longstanding basic principles (and de-emphasizing others) from the ideological grab-bag that reflected the PT's alliance of heterogenous social and political forces. Table Two illustrates my reading of those principles/parameters in outline form.

TABLE TWO:

1. CRITIQUES:

- a. ... of inequality and exploitation of workers as an inherent tendency in capitalism;

³⁵ A vision not unlike that of Bobbio [1987].

b. ... of peripheral capitalism's tendency to promote political authoritarianism in order to shore up capitalist inequality and exploitation of workers when the latter attempt to organize and fight back;

c. ... of capitalist and paternalist "hegemony" in the realm of ideas and ideals regarding the best path towards Brazil's future;

d. ... of Brazil's `elitist' representative democracy as an inadequate means to defend against capitalist inequality and exploitation;

e. ... of authoritarian Leftist "vanguardism" and "voluntarism" (eg. Leninism) as flawed and dangerous prescriptions for ending capitalist inequality and exploitation;

f. ... of European Social Democracy for being `out of touch' with workers and social movements due to excessive party bureaucratization, and for having no transformative project beyond "mere reformism";

2. PRESCRIPTIONS:

a. the public sector (ie. the State), in alliance with organized civil society, needs to counteract the inherent inegalitarian and authoritarian tendencies of peripheral capitalism, and redirect the economic system in the direction of producing Social Justice.

b. for all its faults, representative democracy is a starting point -- an important `foot in the door' in terms of access to power, as a means of educating the public, and as a means of beginning to reform social inequities -- in the struggle against capitalist inequality and exploitation of workers;

c. local-level grassroots participatory activism and close relations of leadership and membership in civil society organizations are necessary components of `real' democracy;

d. acceptance and tolerance of real-life diversity and doctrinal contradictions -- "internal democracy" -- among the `popular' movements of Brazil;

I argue that these basic principles formed the ideological foundation for the `minimum winning coalition' of pro-democratic heterodox **and** orthodox forces within the PT against minorities of ultra-radical or ultra-orthodox groups throughout the party's history. The ideas that stand out most clearly are the aforementioned embracing of "internal democracy" within the party, the critique of peripheral capitalism's tendency to produce inequality, the assertion that the State remains the best instrument by which to counteract this inequality, and the belief that partisan activism combined with greater citizens' participation in governance can transform formal democracy and State policy making from essentially elitist games to increasingly popular ones.

We can conclude that the PT's seemingly nebulous ideological position regarding formal democracy has never actually contradicted its public stance as a loyal opposition party. At the same time, its more recent unambiguous acceptance of the legitimacy of Brazil's democratic rules of the game is the outcome of the internal hegemony of the heterodox groups and their efforts to make crystal clear that the party can and will play by the rules, and that the rules can and will allow substantive reforms in a more socially just and democratic direction.³⁶

CONCLUSION:

Clearly, the PT has taken an active role, and has performed quite well, in Brazilian electoral politics. Its party platform has always valued democracy, and has increasingly defined it as a positive goal and not just a tactical means towards an ultimate, perhaps anti-democratic end. That **the** most important Leftist force in Brazil has successfully committed itself to abiding by the rules of procedural democracy would seem, in itself, to indicate a major

³⁶ It's not my place to enter into, much less choose sides, the normative debate over whether this evolution is `good' or `bad' for the PT or even for Brazil's long-term future. I can, however, argue, as I have in this chapter, that it is good for the consolidation of Brazilian democracy.

positive step towards solidifying the legitimacy of democratic rules of the game. Nonetheless, internal debates and conflicts over tactics and over the relative prioritization of, at times, contradictory ends and means have stimulated doubts about that commitment while compromising the party's effectiveness. Those debates will, no doubt, continue. But they are unlikely to move the party in the direction of renouncing its commitment to playing by the rules while, at the same, trying to improve those rules in the direction of greater Social Justice.

So what does all of this imply for the consolidation of democracy? I make three arguments in this regard.

First, in actively opposing social exclusion -- by placing popular concerns and interests on the public policy agenda, by directing some percentage of public funds towards alleviating material inequities, and by promoting greater citizen involvement in democratic processes -- the PT contributes to the legitimation (and, therefore, consolidation) of democracy. At a minimum, the PT's electoral participation as an electorally viable democratic Left party makes contestation in Brazil something more than mere competition among political elites who sound and act more-or-less the same. But when the PT champions such policies as those described under the headings "*inversão de prioridades*", "*participação popular*" and "ethical governance", the 'output' of the democratic process itself can be seen to further regime legitimacy. The PT's electoral growth over its history provides some evidence to support this claim. We must be careful to note, however, that all of this is subject to such delegitimizing factors as the inherently exclusionary neoliberal policies of the 1990s, the indiscriminate politician-bashing carried out by most of the mass media, partisan-inspired disinformation disseminated by the PT's political opponents, and perhaps even the muckraking carried out by the PT itself.

The second way in which the PT contributes to democratic consolidation is by providing a non-violent channel of participation (or "integration") for political activists who criticize and militate against the inequities of peripheral capitalism and patrimonial democracy. To the extent that such individuals and groups enter the PT, express themselves and pursue their goals with some degree of success or hope, they come to accept and to internalize the rules of democracy ("socialization"). We have seen this occur under the heading of "institutional

learning" leading to a clear hegemonic presence within the party of heterodox groups by the mid-to-late 1990s. Also, to the extent that the PT's opponents see them 'working within the system', they too are encouraged to integrate and socialize themselves into the rules of democracy rather than to react in fear of some perceived authoritarian predisposition of the Left. In Lula's words:

Time passes and you evolve, learning all the way. [...] Fifteen years ago [1981], I never would have imagined letting a businessman into the PT, and yesterday I went to Brasília to sign the party registration cards of fifty businessmen who applied for party membership. Back then, I didn't accept them, but they didn't accept me either. They too have evolved. [personal interview (6/20/96, São Paulo)]

Finally, the PT contributes to democratic consolidation because it is the only political force on the Left sufficiently organized to respond to the forces of economic/political accumulation and concentration inherent in peripheral capitalism and patrimonial democracy with an alternative discourse and action on the side of greater Social Justice. Out of this conflict emerges the possibility of the dynamic equilibrium -- each side checking and balancing the other -- needed to construct and sustain a democratic capitalist system.³⁷ Brazilian politics has for too long been marked by an unhealthy dominance of its Rightist extremes. Without the existence of the PT, those extremes would likely be even more exploitative and exclusionary than they are today. There would certainly be little hope for improvement within the non-violent parameters of formal democracy.

³⁷ We have seen such a dynamic equilibrium emerge within the PT itself: the hegemonic position occupied by heterodox groups in the mid-to-late 1990s represents a moderate middle ground between the Left and 'Right' extremes of the party.

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