

Latin American Political Parties, Social Movements, and Democratic Administration – the case of the Brazilian Workers' Party

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The objective of this paper is to explore a much-discussed avenue for public participation in developing Latin American democracies¹: the political party. Of late, the party as a principal articulator of citizen interests has been said to be in demise (Diamond and Gunther, 2001: ix; Gunther and Diamond, 2001: 3; Schmitter, 2001: 70). It is argued that the new vehicles of democratic participation in developing Latin American countries are a plethora of New Social Movements (NSMs): local groups or organizations individually struggling for recognition of their cultural, ethnic, gender, sexual, or environmental identity. Where political parties once acted as centralized demand aggregators and representative agencies, these functions are now becoming more and more decentralized, allowing for greater direct participation on the part of citizens in political processes (see Schmitter, 2001: 69-72). Through their mere existence, NSMs are creating more democratic administration: they are empowering citizens to deepen democratic spaces and increase accountability.² I would argue, however, that parties' apparent unpopularity does not diminish the representational utility that has made them so important to democratic politics in the past.

Social and political recognition of identity-based struggles is important. In particular, it is significant to our discussion because civil society activism is crucial for the success of democratic administration - a participatory political process resulting in heightened government responsiveness to societal interests (see Dryzek, 1996: 476; Putnam, 2000: 21-8, 338-47; de Tocqueville, 1981: 102-4, 406-8). However, the mode of

¹ Current Latin American democracies can generally be described as "electoral". In electoral democracies, leaders are chosen through free and fair elections, but other political processes are not necessarily democratic (Diamond, 1997: 13). The ideal to strive for, on the other hand, would be a *quality democracy*, where: a) the state functions as a Rechtsstaat (subject to the rule of law), in which *all* citizens are treated equally by the law and the judiciary and *all* citizens' interests are considered equal by policy-makers; b) government is accountable to citizens through elections and civil liberties that allow them to voice their demands and opinions (vertical accountability) and the actions of state institutions and officials are checked and balanced by each other (horizontal accountability); c) citizens accord legitimacy to the state; d) citizens actively make their preferences known to others; e) citizens' conflicts are resolved peacefully; and, f) the state assures citizens access to primary education, health care, and an adequate level of income to live decently (see Hilgers, forthcoming).

² For a more extensive explanation of democratic administration, see Sossin (2002: 78-9).

struggle must fit its social, political, and economic context, and this is where the post-structural³ bent of NSMs fails in Latin America. Scholarly focus on identity-based social movements and many movements' struggles for local autonomy appears to overlook several key issues. First, Latin America has been suffering through an economic crisis since the late 1970s that continues to have severe effects on people's livelihoods. Second, the state and domestic business elites - largely transnational - hold a monopoly on national economic resources.⁴ Third, the state is pressured by domestic business and foreign economic interests and financial institutions to manage economic policy in a neoliberal fashion. In other words, with an average of 44 per cent of the area's population living in poverty,⁵ livelihood issues must be addressed. However, they must be negotiated with government and economic elites that are functioning under global pressures to cut social spending. Diffuse, identity-based social movements that have little interest in or means of negotiating with the state for access to resources cannot hope to relieve poverty. Even if this were their objective, it would remain questionable whether they possess the human or organizational resources to transform their demands into a sustainable political discourse.

The sustainability of social movements' demands in national policy-making arenas is especially doubtful in Latin American countries, where elected officials and bureaucrats at the national level have traditionally been members of an elite. Policy-making elites have few inherent ties to the large mass of lower and lower-middle classes of the population, and therefore have few incentives to consider their demands, unless continually pressured to do so (see Karl, 2000: 153-4). Simple electoral pressure is not adequate, since Latin American politicians have had a strong inclination to use populist politics since the Second World War: they often rely on charisma and lofty promises to win elections and deliver little once in office, thus perpetuating the status quo.⁶ These tendencies will hopefully change with the election to national office of New Movement Parties (NMPs)⁷, such as Lula's Workers' Party in Brazil, but national democratic administration has not existed in Latin America before the present time.

In sum, Latin American social struggles - and their analysts - should recognize the structural constraints of their context. NSMs are a significant force in civil society sociopolitical awareness and change. However, I believe that they and those who study

³ NSMs' post-structuralism refers to their, and many scholars', unwillingness to consider political institutions such as parties, legislatures, and judiciaries as important entities providing frameworks within which politics, society, and economics then function (see Chilcote, 1994: 303, on structuralism). These institutions are seen as hierarchical and exclusionary, and therefore their legitimacy is questionable (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 2).

⁴ This point is not limited to Latin America, and should therefore be addressed by analysts of social movements around the world.

⁵ Figure for 1999 (ECLAC, 2002: 64-5).

⁶ Broad discussions of populism and its history are provided in Weyland (1995) and Knight (1998).

⁷ Participatory parties that reject the status quo and include social movements' knowledge in their planning - explained in more detail below.

them are 'taking the long road'; attempting to change the rules of the elitist power game, while more immediate approaches using existing avenues could more efficiently further poverty alleviating policies.⁸ In order for some of the most pressing issues, especially livelihood-related ones, to be successfully addressed a negotiatory agent between society and government is needed to ensure the sustained and active presence of the lower and lower-middle classes in the political arena. New Movement Parties are the best existing vehicles for this type of representation. It is civil society's obligation to ensure that political parties represent the people's demands in a bottom-up matrix, rather than channeling down the government's policies (see Putnam, 2000: 338). But it is the NMPs' responsibility to aggregate and articulate the pressures coming from below, ensuring cohesive policy-oriented demands representing a large enough proportion of the citizenry to have positive effects in government and create more democratic administration.

This paper will consider New Social Movement theory and the history of politics in Latin America to explain NSMs' inadequacy as a lone agent of change in the Latin American context. It will then discuss the arguments of political parties' critics and define the alternative approach of New Movements Parties as one bridging the gap between established parties and social movements. Finally, the case of the Brazilian Workers' Party will be used to illustrate the viability of the NMP argument.

Social Movements⁹

The economic and political changes in Latin America from the late 1970s until today have engendered widespread social responses. Neoliberal economic policies arising from the 1980s debt crisis caused increasing poverty and socioeconomic inequality. The (frequently) parallel process of democratization provided political contexts more open to social responses to the economic fallout, but representational structures that would allow these responses to be addressed institutionally did not exist. Explanation of the abundance of social movements emerging at that time appeared to require a new theoretical understanding of their motivations and goals. Answers appeared in the 1970s through resource- and identity-based social movement approaches (see Cohen, 1985: 663; Offe, 1990: 233; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 1-2, 4; and Eckstein, 2001: 356).

The mainly Anglo Saxon resource-mobilization theorists understand collective action in terms of a group's rational pursuit of interests in response to changing resources, organizations, and opportunities with the goal of maximizing its members' political or material gain. Such action can be either institutional or non-institutional. Adherents to the identity-based paradigm emerging in continental Europe and Latin America, on the

⁸ See Hellman's (1994: 138-9) argument that the role of popular movements is to provide livelihood necessities, while that of political parties is to "promote broad societal change".

⁹ While my own argument is restricted to Latin America, I use New Social Movement literature applying directly to this area as well as to Northwestern countries to inform my analysis of NSM theory. The theoretical base of the literature is the same; considering works from broader perspectives provides a better understanding of the issue.

other hand, argue that one cannot apply rational-actor models to the new forms of collective action. Contemporary movements are not strategic responses to structural or economic inequalities, but self-manifestation in a struggle to broaden social and political recognition. These movements often take place in a local arena, not in the national social-political forum (Cohen and Arato, 1992: 498, 510-11; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 5; Kitschelt, 1993: 14-15; Melucci and Lyyra, 1998: 203). The latter paradigm's emphasis on social actors constituting "collective identities as a means to create democratic spaces for more autonomous action", has become known as the New Social Movement (NSM) approach, and was prevalent in early studies of Latin American social movements (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 5).

The focus on the mobilization of groups around identity politics has been combined with a rejection of existing political institutions. Scholars have found NSMs to be an explicit challenge to the economic and political status quo of hierarchical decision-making in Latin America (Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 2). The scholars themselves appear to reject the legitimacy of the state in Latin American democracies, or at least consider traditional channels of access to decision-making as outdated, since neither the state nor its institutions are responsive to the masses. NSMs are considered a more democratic and effective alternative to established formal political processes. They are a mode of direct participation in politics, a way to change not only that which they address directly (identity), but existing political processes as a whole. The study of NSMs is generally post-Marxist and post-structuralist and often even informed by a post-modern understanding of social dynamics. It rejects Marxist notions of class-based struggles, which are seen as having failed to reach any goals at all, and centers on individual group dynamics, arguing that generalizations obscure actual events because every organization is unique (Tarrow, 1988: 423-4; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 5).

In the mid- to late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a shift in the Latin American NSM literature. Some scholars critiqued the incognizance of parallels between old and new movements, the neglect of economic motivations for mobilization, as well as the post-modern bias toward excessive individualism (Cohen, 1985; Escobar and Alvarez, 1992: 5-7). Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar (1998), for example, admit that the state should not be ignored in studies of social movements. However, their reasoning for this inclusiveness is that examination of the state may reveal whether movements have been successful in subverting its institutions (11). It is apparent that even these more comprehensive approaches to New Social Movement research do not go so far as to study the state in its own right, since they are unwilling to recognize its usefulness. Yet, consideration of how and why the state acts is crucial in a context where overarching policy changes to ensure basic socioeconomic rights are necessary and the state continues to be the domestic hegemon. As much as NSMs may be having an effect on the Latin American sociopolitical landscape, the state still rules. Citizens' rights cannot be addressed without some level of intervention by the state, and diffuse social movements with little impact on decision-making processes are unlikely to bring this about. This is especially true in Latin American countries, where elected and bureaucratic positions have traditionally been reserved for elites relatively impervious to non-business social pressures.

Political Elites, Global Pressures, and Delegative Democracy

Karl (2000: 150-4) argues that Latin American political and economic systems are largely rooted in contexts of inequality. In the 1500s, colonizers intent on conquest created hierarchical social and political structures that allowed them to monopolize local economies. They enslaved natives as laborers and ensured continued dominance through inheritance by primogeniture, establishing and perpetuating export-dependent economies and authoritarian governments to control the lower classes. The policies enacted by the domestic and international business elites and upper level bureaucrats that came to rule Latin America from the 1920s onward, further deepened the socioeconomic divide and hampered the evolution of democracy. The democratization that did emerge in the 1930s to 1960s was incomplete. It materialized under interventionist states, protected economies, and organized pressures exerted by the masses and increased political polarization and social antagonism. While this period saw a reduction in income gaps, it abruptly ended through authoritarian coups. Latin America has thus developed a certain dualism: rich and poor worlds, marked by income and social gaps, existing within the same countries.

In the 1970s, Latin American countries funded their national economic development projects with massive loans at floating interest rates from international lending agencies. When interest rates rose in the early 1980s, these countries found themselves in a debt crisis. Objectives of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank were remodeled to deal primarily with the debt crisis fallout, helping debtor countries to reschedule their loans and instituting neoliberal economic structural adjustment policies that would ensure more fiscally responsible developing states. Latin American debtor countries were thus forced to begin looking to the international arena for policy framing impetus. Adjustment included significant reductions of social spending, currency devaluation, privatization, state downsizing, and wage cutbacks. The lower classes, dependent on state-supported wages and social programs, bore the brunt of the austerity measures. Their plight had little impact on the state, which began to make policy based on the global debt managers' criteria – a process bypassing the democratic representation of citizens' interests (McMichael, 2000: 113-145).

The Dominican Republic's economy, for example, was based on sugar, coffee, cocoa, and tobacco exports since its nineteenth century independence. When export revenues fell in the 1980s, the IMF pressured the Republic to substitute new exports - roots, vegetables, fruit and beef - for its traditional ones in order to create new sources of income. The Dominican government removed protective tariffs and subsidies from sectors producing traditional crops, effectively destroying domestic food production and independent producers of export goods. As a result, most household food now has to be imported and peasants work on massive foreign owned fruit plantations. The plantation land, formerly used to grow sugar, is rented cheaply to transnational companies (TNCs) that pay very little, offer no job security, and do not allow independent union organization (McMichael, 2000: 138-9). Similar IMF-sponsored economic liberalization in Mexico has resulted in decreasing real wages, growing income inequalities, and

increasing poverty rates - reaching 57 per cent in 1999 (Camp, 2003: 250-2). Chilean economic restructuring preceded the debt crisis, begun by its military regime in 1975 in an attempt to insert Chile into the global market. After seven years of tremendous social costs, the reforms made it famous for its economic stability, but behind this façade Chilean society was adversely affected. Popular sectors' ability to organize was diminished (largely due to labor flexibilization) and this has carried through into the democratic era, further marginalizing and depoliticizing the poor (Barrera, 1998: 127-49; McMichael, 2000: 156-7).

The post-1974¹⁰ Latin American democracies thus continue to be characterized by historical factors and socioeconomic problems. Many of these democracies (for example, Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, and Bolivia) function under free and fair elections, freedom of expression and organization, universal suffrage, access to various sources of information, and institutions that should ensure government accountability to the public, and do not face immediate threats of authoritarian regression. Nonetheless, they are not evolving into representative democracies; historical socioeconomic crises underpin beliefs and procedures related to political power that are exclusionary (more specifically, delegative) in character (O'Donnell, 1994: 56). The excluded masses (racial and ethnic minorities, urban poor, peasants, women) come to see politics as the "private business" of elites, creating a seemingly unbridgeable gap between civil society and the political realm (Alvarez, Dagnino, and Escobar, 1998: 9-10).

In Delegative Democracies, the president is seen as the savior of the nation in a context of economic crisis, is considered to be above politics, and is the center of power - power is "delegated" to her. In her attempt to react to the crisis she sees accountability to institutions, such as the judiciary and the legislature, and citizens as a hindrance to action. Presidents therefore implicitly retard the development of stronger institutions, by bypassing the democratic checks and balancing influences of parliament, the courts, and civil society, which become overtaken by clientelism, patrimonialism, and corruption. Citizens are expected to be passive outside of the electoral forum. Resistance from workers, political parties, the media, the courts, and other individuals or institutions to policy elaborated by técnicos (bureaucrats with technical - for example, economic - rather than sociopolitical experience, skills, and interests), while tolerated, is ignored. (O'Donnell, 1994: 59-63).

Current political circumstances are not propitious to decreasing the conditions of poverty and inequality that have been exacerbated by neoliberal policies, which further remove the state from civil society. However, tactics to effect change do exist. If the poor stop suffering in silence, they can "appeal to the fears of the privileged." Uprisings push national elites to share resources with at least the unstable regions in order to avoid national social insurrection. On the other hand, revolt also often provokes repressive measures on the part of the state, and the governmental focus on the underlying problems diminishes as the poor settle back into silence (O'Donnell, 1999: 197-8). The Zapatista

¹⁰ According to Huntington (1991: 15-16), 1974 signals the beginning of a "third wave" of democratization - the most pervasive democratizing trend in history, begun with Portugal's transition in 1974.

struggle certainly exemplifies this argument. The Mexican military harshly repressed the Zapatistas' uprising, triggered by severe economic hardship, until the struggle gained international attention. Social instability combined with pressures from human rights activists convinced the Mexican government to make concessions to the organization's demands for self-determination. After a seven year battle and little state will to honor its agreements, in 2001 the Zapatistas negotiated with newly elected President Fox and were granted many of their demands. However, the government was not willing to allow the insurgents to implement a local legal framework based on Amerindian traditions and distinct from Mexican Civil Law. The Zapatistas refused the agreement, but did not have the resources to bargain further and also faced a decline in public support. They disappeared from the political scene. The government has abandoned the matter since it is no longer under active pressure.

The development of elite politics in Latin America, where elected officials and bureaucrats are traditionally a class apart from the masses, has created few incentives for government to be consistently responsive to the lower classes and their interests. Demands for change enacted by social movements are relevant only as long as they threaten the social or economic stability of the nation. Electoral pressure appears to be of little use, since leaders tend to disregard electoral platforms once in office and faced with economic crisis and global neoliberal pressures. Both Peters (2000: 30) and Panitch (1994: 63-74) argue that the state continues to have significant policy-making sovereignty in the era of globalization. Regardless of whether Latin American states had the discretionary ability to choose a global and neoliberal over a nationalist economic strategy, the key of this contention to the present analysis is its emphasis on the state's continued prevalence in shaping domestic policy. Even if, as McMichael (2000) asserts, international debt managers guide Latin American policy-orientation, the state remains as the domestic policy implementer. As such, movements attempting to change the political and economic status quo must be reoriented "towards the transformation of the state rather than towards transcending the state" (Panitch, 1994: 87). Isolated communitarian and state-rejection based movements, as well as their scholarly proponents, thus have few opportunities to create short- or medium term change at the national political level. They might argue that it is long-term change of hierarchical social and political structures for which they strive, but such an objective – while laudable – fails to achieve the people's pressing and immediate material needs. Agents of change in society should continue to deal with the state in promoting responsiveness to citizens' interests and increasing democratic administration. There exists a definite need for sustained, policy-oriented negotiation between government and the heretofore excluded masses, and political parties may be the best possible mediator in Latin America.

Political Parties

Lipset (2000: 48) identifies political parties as critical components without which modern democracies could not exist – they are civil society's key mechanism for influencing government decisions. Diamond and Gunther (2001: x) are somewhat more equivocal on this point, arguing that stable and enduring political parties are not essential to deepening democracy, but they do find that the process of legitimating democracy may

be more difficult without parties. Even though there appears to be some consensus among various scholars of the advantages of political parties, parties themselves (at least in terms of their traditional functions) are in decline. Around the world, voters show less party loyalty than in the past. This trend is especially striking in Latin America, where 80 percent of the population expresses lack of confidence in parties and less than 50 per cent are satisfied with the way democracy works overall (Diamond and Gunther, 2001: ix-x).

The decline of parties has various causes. Perceptions of official corruption, elitism, lack of responsiveness and accountability, party ideological shifts away from society-centered concerns to embracing neoliberal economic attitudes, and influence purchasing through party financing, are among the factors causing the public's disaffection with political parties. Parties per se have also undergone changes. Until approximately thirty years ago, parties in democratic systems nominated electoral candidates, mobilized support for candidates, structured political debates according to various issues, represented society through elections and legislative deliberations, aggregated interests, formed governments, and integrated society into the political process. More recently, party organizations have become thinner, focusing increasingly on elections and distancing themselves from issue-, ideology-, or interest-based functions (Diamond and Gunther, 2001: x-xv; Gunther and Diamond, 2001: 3, 7-8).

Schmitter (2001: 68-72, 85) argues that parties are not as important to the consolidation (i.e. the regular practice and voluntary acceptance of the cooperative and competitive rules of democracy) of the new post-1974 democracies as they were to pre-1974 ones. He finds that citizens now have more organizational skills and options, and that their values have changed to reflect a broader spectrum of interests, including identity, not necessarily based on traditional socioeconomic (class) cleavages. Schmitter indicates that social movements (and interest associations) are providing alternative modes of interest aggregation and articulation to modern citizens, and have become a serious competitor to political parties for support bases. However, Schmitter cautions that the rise of competitive organizations does not necessarily mean these will be able to better perform the functions previously attributed to parties. In addition, Diamond and Gunther (2001: xv-xvi) maintain that the changes parties have undergone are unlikely to be permanent; their evolution is not linear and they will probably become more programmatic and ideological again in the future.

In sum, although political parties may in the past have been the accepted avenue for ensuring government responsiveness to citizens' interests, perceptions of corruption and elitism have driven citizens to turn toward other organizations. On the other hand, social movements may not be much better off with regard to efficiency. Although this ostensibly alternative mode of political participation is gaining popularity among citizens, it often falls short of being able to guarantee substantive policy responsiveness to members' interests. Social movements' "base and ... source of power is local (that is, where people live, work and socialize); but these movements can only achieve their goals if they are able to mobilize and exert this localized strength against corporations and unaccountable political bureaucracies whose power is national, and increasingly international" (Wainwright, 1994: 195). It is necessary that movements have a

relationship with the political decision-making apparatus that will allow them to push forward economic and social change. Political parties provide access to such power (Wainwright, 1994: 190-1).

There have thus been two simultaneous developments. Political parties' legitimacy is in decline because citizens no longer trust them, but they continue to be that organization through which candidates are nominated and supported for election - and therefore an organization relying upon direct citizen support and with various degrees of access to political power. Social movements have taken over citizen trust and allegiance, yet are diffuse and do not have direct access to political power. In combination, parties and movements should be able to provide the change that citizens demand. Movements provide parties with the support required to back successful electoral candidates, and parties in turn provide movements with access to the formal political arena where they may affect policy outcomes. Furthermore, as Kitschelt (1993: 25-6) explains, political parties are better equipped than social movements (or interest groups) to commit to long-term policy agendas. Their legislative representatives and leaders work with long-term perspectives more likely to accommodate complex issues than organizationally thin social movements that tend to mobilize intermittently in opposition to discrete problems.

Due to parties' search for new bases of electoral support and sources of legitimacy, they should be open to movements' contingent allegiance. That is, contingent upon a different kind of interest representation that will address and promote pressing socioeconomic demands, and eventually result in changing the political and economic hierarchies that Latin American social movements oppose. Gunther and Diamond's (2001: 9-30) new typology of parties includes a description of "movement parties" - precisely the type of organization that might arise from this contingent relationship - and Wainwright's (1994: 212-13) discussion regarding parties of a new kind¹¹ focuses on the conditionality of parties utilizing social movements' knowledge.

Leftist New Movement Parties (NMPs) fall between traditional concepts of parties and new social movements. They reject free-market economics and the dominance of bureaucracies in political dynamics, propounding participatory processes. They organize around this principle, bringing together individuals and groups with varying beliefs who support the party because it rejects the status quo (Gunther and Diamond, 2001: 29-30). The party recognizes that its power derives from various social sources, acknowledging and using their understanding of needs and solutions. "But though there is much moral commitment to decentralization, grass-roots power and so on, there is not always a self-consciousness about the importance of some of these methods for the *effectiveness* of both party and movement" (Wainwright, 1994: 212-3, emphasis in original).

New Movement Parties represent the negotiatory agent that will provide sustained, policy oriented bargaining between civil society sectors and with the government. Such parties would allow Latin American social movements to jointly

¹¹ Wainwright refers specifically to the German Greens, the Danish Socialist People's Party, and the Dutch Green Left.

pressure the government to address crucial livelihood issues. NMPs do not purport to speak to interests so specific that they would drive out movements originating in different localities or with varying identity-based characteristics. They do, however, promise to aggregate what Gunther and Diamond (2001: 30) would refer to as the lowest common denominator among movements - dissatisfaction with the status quo - and address that need on which all should be able to agree: poverty alleviation. Consistent pressure on the state from a political party representing a significant proportion of the population should increase the state's responsiveness, resulting in a more democratic administration.

The Partido dos Trabalhadores - a Latin American New Movement Party?

The Partido dos Trabalhadores (Workers' Party, PT) gained international attention Oct. 27, 2002, when its candidate - Luís Inácio Lula da Silva - won the Brazilian presidential election. Lula is one of Latin America's first clearly leftist, democratically elected presidents in the post-1974 period.¹² He leads a party built from the grassroots up by social movements, that has rejected hierarchical, bureaucratic administration of its own apparatus and of the states and cities it has governed. Skeptics from both the right and the left of the political spectrum fear that the PT may prove disastrous in office. Proponents of the Washington Consensus (which insists on free-market macroeconomic policy) worry that Brazil will now renege on previous commitments to repay its debt and refuse to negotiate a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Socialists feel that the PT may be selling out by continuing previous governments' neoliberal economic policies, thus renouncing its socialist roots. A closer look at the PT's past and present reveals that its current policies are congruent with its founding ideals, which hold that socialism and democracy are synonymous and no regime should exclude any movements or voices from participating in government (Sader and Silverstein, 1991: 107, 167).

The PT was formed in 1979, by a group of militant union activists who had been demanding sweeping changes to the labor laws existing under the Brazilian military dictatorship (1964-85). Most of the activists had been forced to remain apolitical until this time because of the dictatorship's repression, but 1979 was a turning point. A massive and very successful general strike awoke leaders' and workers' consciousness of collective strength, but also made them aware of a lack of support from congressional representatives. The official opposition, the Brazilian Democratic Movement, was ideologically mixed and few of its representatives backed the working class. When legislation covering political parties was reformed in 1979 to allow the constitution of new parties, a group of unionists (supported by intellectuals, leftist politicians, and popular movements) created the Workers' Party with Lula at its head. From the outset it was clear that the PT, while leftist, would not follow a dogmatic ideological program.

¹² Others are the recently (November 2002) elected Gutierrez in Ecuador, and Venezuela's Chavez. However, both are military men with a history of anti-democratic and extra-institutional behaviour. Gutierrez was a member of the group that attempted to oust then Ecuadorian president Mahuad in a coup d'état in 2000. Chávez was involved in a 1992 coup attempt in Venezuela, and is more of an old-style populist leader than a democrat, polarizing Venezuelan politics through his decisions. In sum, both men have acted in an undemocratic, anti-institutional fashion in the past. It remains to be seen how their governments will affect democratic administration in their respective countries in the long term.

The party would respond to the needs of Brazilians, not force a foreign political system on them (Sader and Silverstein, 1991: 35-51).

The grassroots, bottom up approach has served the PT well. Samuels (1999: 506-12) argues that the PT is the only Brazilian party to have a true "label"; to have built voter recognition of the party as a long-term organization, rather than as a vehicle for individualistic candidates. He finds that the party's founders recognized the need for a consensus building, movement based organization and formalized rules to ensure that they and their successors would not deviate from this ideal. All elected officials must give 30 percent of their salary to the party and campaigns are personally funded, ensuring that only the committed run for the PT. The rules also ensure candidate accountability to other party representatives and the PT's popular base because candidates are nominated by local organizations, rather than the central executive. Decisions are made based on extensive internal debates that encourage participation and alternate views, but once a resolution is voted on, members are expected to abide by it or they may be expelled. The PT has also maintained its label and autonomy by ensuring that its allies are strictly small opposition parties that would not infringe on its independence.¹³ Due to the party's popular and democratic roots, its leaders and representatives do not "depend on allegiance to a political boss, or being able to buy votes, but on the effectiveness and success of their organization" (Samuels, 1999: 511). It is precisely this organizational success that has bolstered the PT's popularity among the individuals and movements that support it.

The PT's support base consists of an array of groups and movements. Among them are: the Central Workers' Union (the radical left labor federation, CUT), Ecclesiastical Base Communities (Church and peasant-run local development projects), the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST), the National Confederation of Agricultural Workers (CONTAG), the Pastoral Land Commission (Church assistance for peasants, CPT), homeless and youth movements, radical intellectuals, human and civil rights activists, and radical left-wing groups (Löwy, 2000: 17; Sader and Silverstein, 1991: 39, 57, 59, 60, 64, 105). While most of the supporters are workers, peasants, and leftists, the PT also counts center and center-right adherents among its proponents. Skeptics, such as Gorender (1998: 21, 24-5) and Ortellado (25 Nov., 2002: 1-3), argue that the PT has renounced its socialist roots by including non-leftist elements of society. Gorender finds that the party has slipped Right into the camp of the business interests from whom it began to accept donations prior to the 1994 presidential campaign. Ortellado concludes that the PT's new institutional focus on winning elections was successful, but came at the expense of its inceptive militancy.

¹³ The PT originally avoided alliances altogether, but this policy changed in the late 1980s (Samuels, 1999: 509).

Regarding Gorender's criticism, it is accurate to say that the nascent PT did not count conservative individuals or groups among its backers, but its ideology always supported a crosscutting membership and an institutional approach, as can be seen by its election platforms. The PT's program in the 1982 elections was broadly defined as providing a vehicle for the population to oppose and, if possible, overthrow the dictatorship. However, it was also clear that this would be done within legal and institutional means: the party rejected an armed revolutionary struggle that would depose the authoritarian regime only to replace it with another. While it considered capitalism to be dangerous to the majority of the population, the PT was already aware in the 1980s that it would not be possible to create a socialist society in Brazil at that time. Therefore, it clearly set out to expand democratic spaces and increase participation so that all citizens could have the same political opportunities within the existing capitalist context. The party platform for the 1989 presidential campaign called for: democratization of the public sector, agrarian reform, civilian control over the military, a distancing of relations with the United States, inflationary controls, and a moratorium of interest payments on the foreign debt (Sader and Silverstein, 1991: 79-80, 91-2, 106-7, 130-33, 167). These proposals include elements that would be considered radical by the business community and foreign investors, but they certainly do not suggest the overthrowing of capitalism. In the 2002 presidential campaign, Lula continued to focus on equality issues and poverty alleviation, but also promised to honor Brazil's debt payments (Economist, 2 Nov., 2002: 39). If anything, changing his position on the debt shows the maturing of a leader.

Concerning this latter point, as well as Ortellado's reproach, I agree with Hellman's (1992: 56) observation that there appears to be a strange preference on the part of some writers for small and powerless movements over successful organizations. "These writers do not recognize any fundamental difference between demobilization through co-optation.... and the kind of political learning and growth of consciousness that may occur when a neighborhood group articulating narrow, limited goals is drawn into a broader struggle." While the PT was much more than a neighborhood group from the outset, it certainly does appear to have lost appeal for some writers through its electoral success. Yet, this success results from political learning that has led PT leaders and elected officials to recognize that a radical position will not take the party far. In order to institute change and alleviate poverty, the party has found that it will have to work within the existing political and economic system. Indeed, domestic and international financial and political tension at the prospect of a powerful socialist party that threatens to expropriate, nationalize, and default on debts would create radical opposition. This is not the type of social consensus that a movement party such as the PT should strive to attain, especially if it seeks to govern democratically.

As it is, conservative critics still fear for the future of Brazil. Lula promises to continue paying Brazil's debts and not to withdraw from FTAA negotiations (both of which were previously doubtful) but investors are not convinced by his pledges. The Brazilian currency - the Real - and government bonds began to fall in April 2002, as soon as Lula's presidential victory became likely, rallying only slightly since he promised to tighten fiscal policy. It will not be easy for the PT to govern Brazil as it holds only 3 of

27 states and 92 of the lower house's 513 seats (Economist, 26 Oct., 2000: 36; 2 Nov., 2002a: 39-40; 2 Nov., 2002b: 41; Rebick, 28 Oct., 2002: 1-2). This type of situation has previously caused governmental deadlock and presidential overuse of decree powers in Latin America, thus weakening the democratic process.

Lula's supporters do not seem bothered by his opposition's claims that he will not be able to fulfill his promises to the poor (Economist, 26 Oct., 2002: 36). They see the PT as the champion of social justice that will implement nationwide programs to promote the movements that have supported it (Rebick, 28 Oct., 2002: 1). Precedent exists to strengthen social movements' belief that the PT will work to bring equality to all citizens. In 1987, the PT's participation in the Constitutional Assembly ensured: the unconditional right to strike (although this was later softened in Congress), 120 day paid maternity leaves, capping of continuous work shifts at six hours, raised dismissal settlements, and the extension of labor rights to domestic employees (Sader and Silverstein, 1991: 90). For the past twelve years, the party has been putting its participatory philosophy into practice in the city of Porto Alegre. Budgetary decisions are made at open assemblies, where citizens decide how the financial resources allocated to the city should be put to use and then monitor the implementation of their projects (Löwy, 2000: 16). This procedure arises from the notion that the people know better what services they themselves need than bureaucratic spheres. The PT's avoidance of corruption and nepotism as well as its prioritization of local needs have brought it tremendous legitimacy in Porto Alegre. This reputation helped it to win Rio Grande do Sul, the state in which Porto Alegre is located, in the 2000 gubernatorial elections. It immediately implemented the participatory budget process at the state level, as well as helped local environmental and peasant movements defend themselves against powerful foreign agricultural companies (Löwy, 2000: 16-19). The PT lost Rio Grande do Sul by a narrow five point margin (52.7 to 47.3%) in the 2002 elections, but its activities there certainly show its adherence to participatory, democratic administration (see Rebick, 28 Oct., 2002: 2).

What Lula and the PT will do with their electoral victory remains to be seen. Until this point, however, it appears clear that the Brazilian Workers' Party has indeed been a New Movement Party. It has rejected bureaucratic administration, both of its own party apparatus and of states and cities, favoring a participatory approach to planning and decision-making and thus reinforcing democratic principles and institutions. As such, the PT has used the knowledge of all individuals and social movements willing to be active in its processes, without an excessive militancy or radicalization that would limit the effectiveness of either the party or the movements that support it. PT city and state governments have worked to ensure responsive and democratic administration.

Conclusion

It is important that Latin American social movements, as well as those who study them, recognize that their individual activities are valuable, but that much can be achieved by joining together under the aegis of political parties. Diffuse movements striving to further individualistic interests do not have the human or organizational resources to pressure the state for responsiveness to pressing livelihood necessities. This

is especially true since historical political elitism exacerbated by global pressures to downsize the state and cut social programs has created a deep chasm between Latin American governments and the popular masses. In this context, NSMs cannot reach objectives of greater socioeconomic justice without the help of negotiatory agents. New Movement Parties, exemplified by the Brazilian PT, combine the participatory approaches and rejection of the status quo that social movements value, yet they also have access to the formal political arena and can ensure sustained political representation of movement interests.

A key challenge for Latin American democracies today is poverty alleviation. Through guaranteed universal access to rights such as education beyond the primary level, health care, minimum wages to allow a decent standard of living, and social assistance to the unemployed, the currently marginalized lower classes will gain the opportunity to not only provide for themselves, but to advance the socioeconomic status of their families. This type of social welfare system, however, opposes the pressures for subsidy-cutting economic policies brought to bear on Latin American states by the IMF, World Bank, and other international organizations and investors. Since the project of globalization and neoliberalism set forth by these groups is carried out by the state, the marginalized lower classes should combine and reinforce their strategies of self-protection to present the state with policy alternatives at the national level. The state will respond only if it sees its legitimacy threatened, and this cannot happen unless social movements unite in their opposition to the state.

Presenting a united front requires that diffuse interests be aggregated. While groups may be mobilized around diverse issues, such as women's rights, human rights, and land rights, they should be able to agree on the need for poverty alleviation and socioeconomic equality. But there must also exist an agent of interest aggregation. The political party is the best possible tool. This is not to say that social movements are not important in themselves: a vibrant civil society is essential to democracy, and even action with limited reach enhances the social capital that makes government more responsive. Parties provide channels for these pressures to present a united front at the national level that should be most effective in forcing the state to respond to the lower classes' needs, enhancing the quality of democracy in place.

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