

Mediated Citizenship in Democratic Brazilian Politics: A Comparative Perspective¹

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Abstract:

Most authors focusing on Brazil's democratic transition argue that the survival of 'traditional' elements tends to inhibit the emergence of modern democratic structures and weakens democratic processes. This article examines the space between 'traditional' and 'modern' democratic politics. Drawing on the example of three municipalities administered by the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT), a party internationally renowned for its capacity to democratise municipal politics, the article argues that successful democratisation does not eradicate clientelism and patronage. It tends to incorporate and build on these 'traditional' political elements. Moreover, the article maintains that the democratisation of municipal politics is inextricably bound up with the eradication of poverty and the construction of a responsive, state-based social safety net.

Most recent accounts focusing on the re-democratisation of Brazilian politics have highlighted the survival of 'traditional' political elements that weaken Brazil's democracy. According to these accounts, populism, personalism, patronage, and clientelism remain common features in post-authoritarian Brazil (Mainwaring 1990; Roniger 1990; Mettenheim von 1995; Hagopian 1996; Weyland 1996; Power 1997; Gay 1998; Banck 1998a; Conniff 1999; Mainwaring 1999; Kingstone and Power 2000; Power 2000; Weyland 2000). Even within the new participatory, democratic structures traditional political practices have been detected (Baierle 2002; Chaves Teixeira 2002; Dagnino 2002; Tatagiba 2002; Torres Ribeiro and Grazia 2003; Ottmann 2004). These traditional elements, it is usually argued, inhibit the emergence of more solid democratic institutions and a more democratic culture. However while such a pessimistic reading of Brazilian democracy is able to tell us much about its shortcomings, it leaves the space between the reference points of 'traditional' and 'democratic' unexamined. More crucially, it fails to

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observe how ‘traditional’ political practices such as patrimonialism and clientelism are being transformed, and how these practices actually figure, for better or for worse, in the new structures.

The debate focusing on the ‘traditional’ elements in Brazilian politics draws on a theoretical trajectory reaching back to at least Francisco José de Oliveira Viana’s writings on *Coronelismo* (a kind of authoritarian, semi-feudal, rural patrimonialism) during the 1920s and 1930s. In more contemporary accounts, ‘traditional’ generally refers to a failure of modern institutions to regulate the power of politicians and civil servants. Modern, on the other hand, signifies the dominance of legal-rational authority in administrative processes, a genuine representative spirit in political institutions, and universal principles and the ‘greater good’ in political culture. The survival of ‘traditional elements’, it is argued, reinforces the elite-bias of Brazilian democracy, undermines the stability of the democratic system, punctures essential liberal notions such as universalism and due process, and cements patrimonialist structures (Mainwaring 1999).

In this article, I would like to examine some of the political practices and processes that escape a reading of Brazilian politics in terms of ‘modern’ or ‘traditional’.² By suspending this bipolar interpretation, a closer connection between these two analytical poles can be discerned. The central argument put forward in this article is that democratic advances build on and transform ‘traditional’ political practices rather than break with them altogether. In fact, the three case studies on which this article is based suggest that real life democratic transitions are composed of cultural as well as material transformations. Within the realm of culture, the process is driven, somewhat paradoxically, by normative claims based on a bipolar reading of ‘traditional’ and ‘democratic’ that emerge within the sphere of civil society. In order to theoretically ground this dramatised tension between the ‘normative’ (democratic) and the ‘real’ (traditional), I am drawing on Jeffrey Alexander’s (1998) conceptual difference between “‘real civil society’ in which universalism is compromised by stratification and functional differentiation - and ‘normative civil society’, which maintains the idealised utopian forms” (Alexander 1998:28).³ For Alexander, the greater the contrast between the two representations, the greater the scope for civil society actors to effect social change. For Alexander, it is the role of the media to “create public narratives that emphasise not only the tragic distance between is and ought but the possibility of heroically overcoming it” (Alexander 1998:28).

² Endorsing the idea of ‘multiple modernities’, Renato Ortiz has argued that ‘traditional’ cultural elements constitute the lived experience of Brazilian modernity (Ortiz 2000).

³ As in Marx’ dialectic, the potential problem of Alexander’s dichotomous approach is that the opposition between real and symbolic needs to be dramatised in order to be effective.

Yet, real democratic transitions during which such democratic ideals are translated into political reality do not occur in a material vacuum but are shaped by socio-economic conditions. In this sense, the fact that many poor people seek some form of political patronage has little to do with a Banfieldian ‘amoral familism’ (see, for instance, Reis) or with an inability of the poor to reason (..), but rather with the poverty they live in. In other words, in countries such as Brazil, the democratisation of ‘traditional’ political practices is inextricably bound up with the elimination of mass poverty and chronic inequality.⁴ Yet, poverty and inequality remain part of reality into any foreseeable future. Unsurprisingly, in this perception, the case studies indicate that the democratisation of municipal politics involving the elimination of poverty and the democratisation of relationships of dependency is likely to involve a state-organised social safety net. Finally, this article suggests that this bricolage of traditional and democratic elements that surfaces in the case studies may be, in fact, continuous and not simply a stage on the way to rational, universal politics. In sum, the article sheds light on attempts to democratise municipal life in Itabuna (BA), São Paulo (SP), and Porto Alegre (RS). It does this by showing how ordinary people make sense of local politics and how they negotiate citizenship claims. Indeed, it is the mediation of citizenship that forms the comparative basis connecting the three, otherwise very different, municipalities that were the focus of the fieldwork this article is based on.

The fieldwork was conducted between October 2003 and February 2004. I singled out Itabuna, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre, municipalities that were at the time administered by the reformist Workers’ Party (PT), because they respond to different stages in the democratisation process. I spent an equal length of time in each city taking a ‘top down’ approach contacting key individuals and organisations within civil society and following their networks into the poorer neighbourhoods of each city. This approach allowed me to profile the range of political practices outlined in this article. In each city, I conducted 30+ interviews and participated in countless meetings and events. I limited my geographical focus in order to make the fieldwork feasible. In Itabuna, I focused predominantly on the city’s southern and western suburbs, in São Paulo I visited the sub-municipalities of Brasilândia and Pirituba, and in Porto Alegre I focused on neighbourhoods in the South (*Sul*) and Extreme Southern (*Extremo Sul*).

Clientelism and ‘Traditional’ Practices

⁴ This is an argument that has been voiced during much of the 1980s (see, for instance, Touraine 1994). This essay is based on the assumption that poverty in Brazil is the result of an unequal distribution of resources, rather than a lack of economic development proposed by other authors (see, for instance, Reis 1998). More recently and particularly in the literature

Perhaps the most important element that has stood in the way of a constructive debate surrounding the ‘traditional’ elements in Brazilian democracy is the conceptual ambiguity of the terminology employed. For instance, in the recent literature the term ‘clientelism’ has turned into a catch all category for terms such as populism, patrimonialism, personalism, and patronage politics. For the sake of conceptual clarity, it makes sense to give a brief definition of the terminology employed. Personalism refers to the personal ties that hold together edifices of hierarchical social relationships (see, for instance, Weyland 1996).⁵ By contrast, patrimonialism, in its current usage, refers to a situation where politicians treat public resources as though they are their own. Patrimonial leaders dispense public resources among family and friends and their political clienteles, rather than according to impersonal universalist criteria (Mainwaring 1999). In other words, they engage in a private form of patronage politics. And clientelism refers to a mutually beneficial yet unequal exchange of favours between individuals (see, for instance, Gellner 1977; Lemarchand 1977; Roniger 1990). Hence, whereas ‘patrimonialism’ describes the appropriation or privatisation of public resources, ‘clientelism’ denotes a relationship of unequal, dependence between political patrons and their clients (see also Roniger 1998), a relationship that usually involves a range of mediators or brokers.

Geert Banck points out that these concepts are neither intrinsically traditional nor indigenous to developing countries (1999). For instance, Banck argues that ‘clientelism’ should not be regarded as part of a Brazilian academic or any colloquial tradition because the term was brought into circulation in Brazil by foreign (US) academics as late as the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, Banck rejects the transfer of terms used in the past to describe the past in order to reflect on the present. Indeed, Banck has a point. Terms like ‘clientelism’ and ‘patronage politics’ express a sense of fatalism and relationships of absolute dependency that is often the topic of popular culture.⁶ In this sense, although these terms are used to

focusing on Brazil’s transition to democracy, the issue of poverty has been overshadowed by other, institutional aspects of democracy and ought to be re-thematised.

⁵ Personalism refers to the personal ties that permeate all social relationships in Brazil. According to Weyland, “personalism forms networks based on particularistic exchange and affective ties. In any large-scale society, these networks tended to assume a pyramidal form. Hierarchy thus pervades personalism. Since it is in the interest of those higher up in the personalist pyramid to keep their followers divided, horizontal links are discouraged, if not suppressed. Only actors at the top of the hierarchy have enough clout to counteract this divide-and-rule strategy and engage in horizontal relations (Weyland 1996).

⁶ Examples are too many to mention. However, the ‘traditional’ heritage was always a central element in popular culture. Among many other examples, it has been taken up by composers such as Donga’s *Pelo Telefone* (1917), Sinhô’s *Não Quero Saber Mais Dêla* (1928), Marino Pinto and Wilson Batista’s *Preconceito* (1941) Ismael Silva’s humble plea for a patron’s favour in *Antonico* (1950), Marino as well as Glauber Rocha’s rendition of injustice in the Brazilian Sertão (Backlands) in films, such as *Antonio das Mortes* (1968). Roberta da Matta has written extensively on the class subversion caused by samba and Darién Davis argues that a more social critical samba and particularly one that focuses critically on racial relationships emerged around 1930 (Davis 2000). It is likely, however, that popular musical forms such as samba practiced in bars and on street corners always provided an outlet for the social critical sentiments of the popular classes.

think the past, they do not adequately describe historical circumstances nor do they form an ‘authentic’ cultural vocabulary. They refer to an imagined tradition and describe a reality conjured up not only by intellectuals but also by popular musicians, writers, and film makers who often intermingle historical facts and fiction, and add a fair dose of modern sensibilities. The problem is that empirical phenomena are far more complex than implied by the normative content of the terminology used to describe them. For instance, a term such as ‘clientelist’ is used to express moral indignation by elites to criticise the popular voter, who is regarded as ‘ill-informed’ and ‘backward’ and hence unable to make the ‘right’ (seemingly rational) choices. Inasmuch, it is the terminology used by politicians, who air their frustration in the face of popular voters who, rather than focusing on democratic ideals, party platform, and policy content, vote with more immediate concerns in mind (see, for instance, Cardoso 1986-87).

This article situates the notion of clientelism within the context of a political economy of ‘mediated citizenship’. With this I mean that, in a political context that is not reliably governed by universalistic rules, access to citizenship is, by and large, constantly negotiated. In fact, in most of democratic Latin America, citizenship entitlements are not universally available to poor people and have to be redeemed through collective action. Processes that mediate citizenship claims and counterclaims play a key role in the three municipalities under study as they provide the link between public (state-controlled) or private (private patronage) social safety networks. As will emerge from the case studies, these mediating processes, in effect, express a negotiated compromise in the conflict between participatory civic democracy and formal representative democracy. For instance, while in Itabuna processes involving mediators such as supervisors or neighbourhood presidents are very closely associated with formal representative democracy, those involving community brokers are likely to be more closely connected with civic democracy. The various popular councils and the participatory budget potentially occupy the middle ground between the two poles. Yet, it will surface that in the case studies these linkages are far more complex and fluid.

To be sure, political patronage (‘pork’) forms a central feature of most modern political systems (Kahn and Formosa 2002). However, in places where citizenship entitlements are not universally available, political patronage becomes a most essential social safety net. Bearing this in mind, it makes little sense to conceive Latin American clientelism in terms of a Banfieldian ‘amoral familism’ (see, for instance, Reis 1998). Rather, within a context of negotiated citizenship rights and mass poverty, the socio-political mobilisation and inclusion of the poor is highly likely to involve some form of welfare. Hence for reformist administrations, the main question is how the conflict between popular demands for civic

democracy and citizenship entitlements and the patronage available through representative democracy ought to be mediated. Indeed, this is the central point of conflict in the three PT administered municipalities under study, as well as in the PT at large, and Porto Alegre's participatory budget (OP) which has been celebrated precisely because it systematises this mediation process, and renders it more transparent.⁷

Ingredients of Mediation:

It is important to bear in mind that political mediation is a competitive business as voters are quite savvy in choosing mediators or movements that promise the best possible returns. And it is hardly surprising that the poor who are in dire need of public resources often vote for politicians who tie communities into patronage networks by donating day-care centres or by privately subsidising medical, educational, or cultural facilities. Because political patronage (as well as the ownership of media outlets) forms a cornerstone of many political careers, the municipal legislature typically endorses bills that subsidise its members' private welfare organisations thus consolidating their political support base. Politicians elected to the executive tend to carefully 'target' public services and turn them into 'personal favours' in an attempt to extend their own political constituency. Moreover, they depend on the legislative arm to ratify their pork-barrelling schemes and engage in the necessary alliances with politicians at municipal, state, and federal level in order to maximise 'governability' as well as transfer payments to their municipality.⁸ The tens of thousands of politically nominated public service jobs, locally referred to as 'positions of trust' (*cargo de confiança*), are the traditional currency in this barter process through which political alliances are forged (see, for instance, Roniger 1990; Hagopian 1996). Clearly, to transform such a particularistic political model into a more universalistic one is not an easy task and each of the

⁷ The participatory budget is a process that invites the population to deliberate on how the city invests its resources. The OP generally has a two-tier structure of regional and municipal assemblies. An OP cycle takes place over one year and typically has the following components: review of its internal regulation, a general discussion of investment priorities, the election of delegates and councillors, the deliberation of proposals followed by the regional ballot. Moreover, OP demands are discussed with the technical experts of the municipality before being passed on the COP assembly where councillors debate and vote for the items that will form the investment budget of a given year. The budget is then passed on to the legislative chamber which has the power to amend budget items. Whereas a detailed comparison of the OP in Porto Alegre and in São Paulo is beyond the scope of this article, it is important to point out that the OP process in Porto Alegre differed significantly from that in São Paulo. Most importantly, in Porto Alegre, the OP process entered much deeper into the neighbourhoods as the city (~1.3 million inhabitants) was subdivided into 16 OP regions. The city of São Paulo with around 10 million inhabitants was subdivided into 31 OP regions (some regions held more than one major assembly). Moreover, in Porto Alegre, most government departments and schools were working in unison to propagate the OP and to prepare the population for participation. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, whereas the amount to be distributed by the OP process was clearly established, in São Paulo this was subject to negotiation between OP councillors and municipal departments who had a decisive say in how much money was to be allocated for the OP process.

⁸ Such arrangements often involve party switching (see, for instance, Roniger 1990; Hagopian 1996).

administrations featured in the following case studies approached the challenge differently. In Itabuna, the administration embraced an approach that featured competent reformist social policies on the one hand and the strengthening of private patronage ties, on the other. In São Paulo, the PT alliance embarked on an even more contradictory strategy. On the one hand it implemented a version of the participatory budget, while on the other it built extensive private patronage networks in order to get the legislative backing for its reform efforts. In Porto Alegre, the administration continued with its participatory social policies but also engaged, to some extent, in the politics of the spectacle usually associated with populist clientelism.⁹ The fact that in each one of the three municipalities under study the PT lost its bid for re-election in 2004, highlights the magnitude of the challenge faced by reformist governments to balance the various political demands that circulate in the Brazilian political economy.

The Case Studies:

The case studies feature three municipalities that could not be more different. In fact, the only apparent element they have in common is that between 2001 and 2004 all three were administered by the PT, a left-of-centre political party that has gained international acclaim for its attempts to democratise municipal politics. However, despite the obvious differences outlined in this section the case studies will bring to the fore a common theme that runs through them all: a very vocal civic movement sector. Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, is situated in the south and has a distinctively more homogeneous, white-ish population that claims a strong European heritage. São Paulo, the industrial hub and cultural melting pot of Brazil, is located in the south-east of Brazil. And Itabuna, a city that until the 1980s lived, by and large, from the export of cacao and rubber, is located in the north-eastern state of Bahia. While Porto Alegre has become famous for its experiment in participatory democracy, São Paulo is going through a difficult implementation phase of participatory processes, and Itabuna has by comparison few participatory mechanisms in place. This south to north-east distribution with its diminishing level of participatory democracy when heading towards the north-east could be read in a manner that reinforces cultural preconceptions about a progressive dynamic South versus a traditional stagnating North common in Brazil. By no means should these case studies be interpreted in such a manner. I could have chosen municipalities with similar political characteristics without leaving the south. Equally, I could have focused on cutting edge democratic municipalities by concentrating exclusively on Bahia. In fact, one of the more interesting democratic experiments is currently taking shape in Pintadas, a country town located in the dusty and dry rural interior of Bahia. Rather, the

⁹ The construction of Porto Alegre's carnival parade ground probably falls under that category.

differences that come to light in these three case studies are the result of factional and ideological differences within the PT, socioeconomic factors, and the level of civic organisation.

Porto Alegre, São Paulo and Itabuna in comparison:

Defining Features	Porto Alegre	São Paulo	Itabuna
Geographic Location	South	South-East	North-East
Size*	495.53 km ²	1525 km ²	443 km ²
Population*	~ 1.3 million	~ 10.4 million	~ 200,000
Status	State Capital	State Capital	Regional Centre
Hospital beds per person*	0.00461	0.0025	0.00463
Economy	Administration, Commerce, Declining Industry	Declining Industry, Commerce, Administration	Administration, Agriculture, Commerce Some Industry
Child Mortality* per 1000 births	12.2	15.1	24.4
% of population affiliated with associations or movements#	34-38%	19-24%	15-20%
Administration	PT – Left Alliance	PT – General Alliance with individual politicians	PT – Centre/Left Alliance with political parties
PT Mandates	1989 - 2004	1989-92, 2001-04	1993-96, 2001-04
Majority in Câmara	No	Through alliance	Through alliance
Participatory Budget	Implemented	In process	No

*Source: IBGE 2000 Census, Health Department Rio Grande do Sul, SEADE

Estimate based CIDADE Foundation, Avritzer (2004), and my own field work.

The PT at the Crossroads: an overview

Over the course of the last decade, the national PT undertook an ideological journey toward the political ‘centre’. This has led to a growing division between the civic democracy-inspired Left and the more pragmatist factions within the party that has affected the municipal level.¹⁰ For this ideological shift is also transforming the core political project of the PT, a project that has been frequently described in terms of a search for a novel more participatory form of administration (see, for instance, Genro and Souza de 1997; Sánchez 2002; Verle and Brunet 2002). Moreover, the ideological composition of the party has changed dramatically with the expansion of its social base and its exposure to the ‘requisite’ of

¹⁰ Still, it is important to bear in mind that the PT has always been a very heterogeneous party and that policy directives have been interpreted in a very dynamic, multifaceted manner by different municipalities (see, for instance, Keck 1992).

orthodoxy within the context of domestic and international finance (see, for instance, Branford and Kucinski 2003; Wallerstein 2004). This in conjunction with the bureaucratisation of its apparatus and the professionalisation of its politicians has turned the old *Petistas* committed to radical social change into a very vocal minority (see, also, Baiocchi 2003). Today, the program of this minority, often framed in terms of ‘The Petista Way of Governing’ (*O Jeito Petista de Governar*), is often seen as an element of an old, obsolete PT.¹¹ Yet many PT members of the Left remain attached to its proposal shaped by the much-lauded administrative programs of the PT in Porto Alegre that includes such elements as the participatory budget, a more progressive tax base, as well as education and social policy reforms. They are particularly committed to the participatory character of this approach exemplified by the participatory budget (OP). The OP consists of a stream of public deliberative processes that runs from the neighbourhood to the regional and finally the municipal level where OP councillors and administrators debate the social investment decisions, rank them on a needs basis, and monitor the implementation of proposals. However, the political viability of the ‘Petista Way of Governing’ has been dented by changes to the electoral law and the decline of social movements in all major urban areas in Brazil. As a result, the party was forced to reinvent itself, a task effectively undertaken by the main tendency within the party, the ‘Articulation’ (*articulação*) that enjoys the support of President Lula. Today the PT is putting forward a professional image that exudes confidence, thrift, as well as a capacity to get elected and to govern. The key challenge faced by this re-invented PT is threefold: It has to convince the Left that it is still a party that promotes social change. It has to demonstrate to social movements and civil society that it has not abandoned the organised sectors of society. And it has to demonstrate to voters that it is able to reconcile its ‘clean’ and transparent image with the demands placed upon it by its numerous political alliances. Moreover, in 2003 it had to do all of these things in a climate of economic crisis and mass unemployment.

Itabuna:

Itabuna has been hard hit by a two-decade long depression. The failure of the region’s main export crops, cacao and rubber, has led to underemployment and poverty on a massive scale. Yet, whereas many poorer voters are in search of some form of political patronage this more pragmatist outlook on life that underpins this pursuit clashes with a markedly democratic social imaginary. Nevertheless, in Itabuna, the importance of private patronage is immediately visible. The urban landscape and, in particular, the poorer neighbourhoods are dotted with welfare organisations, daycare centres and schools

¹¹ According to Jose Dirceu, the PT’s party president, the ‘Petista Way of Governing’ is a thing of the past (Dirceu 1999).

that carry the family names of the local political elite. This kind of patronage politics is particularly popular among the *Carlistas*, a group of politicians associated with the patrimonial politics of Antônio Carlos Magalhães, the most powerful politician and media baron in the state of Bahia who has dominated municipal and state politics for several decades. Yet, personalism is also an element within the current centrist alliance composed of 11 parties headed by the PT that won the 2000 elections by the smallest of margins.¹² Financially independent, a group of university-trained public servants that formed the core of this alliance was able to mount a political challenge to the entrenched, local elites. Despite the political success of this group, a more private form of patronage politics has persisted in Itabuna. This is in part due to widespread poverty and unemployment as well as the fact that civic movements and associations and with them demands for citizenship rights have remained underdeveloped and weak. In fact, the organised sector of society is dominated by a handful of national NGOs and movements, such as the MST (The Landless Movement) as well as the financially starved CPT (Pastoral Land Commission), CIMI (Indigenous Mission Council), and FASE (Federation of Entities promoting Social Assistance and Education). As a result, political parties have responded to popular demands in a rather statist fashion. Similarly, the local PT rather than mobilising the residents of poorer neighbourhoods through ‘grassroots’-based initiatives, opted for a strategy of broad alliances and a top-down mobilisation of the electorate.

Perhaps the most important distinguishing feature of the PT administration in Itabuna is the fact that it did not follow the ‘Petista way of Governing’ as it was practiced by Porto Alegre’s PT administration. Although it implemented a range of reformist social, educational, and health policies that obviously built on the PT’s experience in municipalities elsewhere, it did not adopt the participatory elements propagated by the Porto Alegre model. In fact, the PT attempted to implement participatory processes during its previous term in office (1993-96), an initiative that was abandoned in its first year. When questioned about this, a senior public servant affiliated with the PSDB (Brazilian Social Democratic Party) explained that the experiment generated too many unrealistic demands, was not politically viable, and that the participatory budget does not work in the north-east.¹³ During the 2001-2004 term, the local PT followed a different strategy. It created the position of the neighbourhood supervisor (*supervisor do bairro*).¹⁴ Officially, the 35 supervisors in 95 neighbourhoods were supposed to mediate the relationship between the municipal administration and individual communities. Unofficially, according to locals,

¹² The alliance included the following parties: PSDB, PDT, PTS, PV, PCdoB, PMDB, PPS, PSB, PTB, and PMN.

¹³ The case of Vitória da Conquista, a municipality around 300km west of Itabuna, contradicts this statement. In Vitória, the PT adopted a grassroots mobilisation strategy and successfully implemented participatory mechanisms when it came to office in 1997. Moreover, the party was returned to office at the following elections.

there were more than 300 neighbourhood supervisors who work as electoral agents for a wide range of municipal and state level politicians.

In most neighbourhoods that I visited, supervisors were regarded with some level of suspicion. This was particularly the case in neighbourhoods with strong links to the opposition where it was argued that the elected president of the neighbourhood did most of the work for the community, while the politically appointed and remunerated neighbourhood supervisor was mainly 'invisible'. Carlos Ferreira da Silva,¹⁵ President of a local neighbourhood association,¹⁶ was so incensed about this that he conducted his own survey to demonstrate that the appointed neighbourhood supervisor was ineffective.¹⁷ In a similar fashion, residents objected to the fact that these official supervisors were nominated by municipal or state politicians (a nomination that needed to be confirmed by the mayor) who were trying to get a foot into the electorate but failed to do much for the community. Although in the view of the municipality, neighbourhood supervisors formed part of its decentralisation strategy, all of the interviewees, except for the supervisors themselves, saw the role of the supervisor mainly as an electoral one. To me it looked as if the creation of the neighbourhood supervisor was an attempt by the PT alliance to rewire the patronage networks of the opposition and to connect extremely poor neighbourhoods to its own political mediators.¹⁸ The problem the PT faced was that most residents across the political spectrum were acutely aware of this and many were disappointed that the PT employed the same un-democratic, 'traditional' methods, sidelining elected neighbourhood presidents. Hence, although many of the poorer residents maintained strong links to patrimonialist politicians, residents drew on a manifestly democratic social imaginary to criticise the PT's 'decentralisation' attempts.

However, in everyday life, most residents had to rely on the elaborate web of patronage that covered the city. Strategies to gain access this web differed greatly. More politically savvy community leaders

¹⁴ In fact, a similar position existed under a previous administration but was cancelled some 8 years ago.

¹⁵ The names of community representatives have been altered in this account.

¹⁶ According to Carlos, the association was founded in 1982 with the aim to get access to the municipality. It is composed of a steering committee of nine and 1473 members/residents that are automatically affiliated. The neighbourhood itself was founded 26 years ago during a mass immigration phase. The area was initially a *fazenda* that was subdivided and sold off to unemployed rural workers that suffered during the cacao crisis. The neighbourhood is a major stepping-stone for immigrants and 70% of its residents are from C  ara.

¹⁷ In his 2002 questionnaire, of 235 respondents only 14 knew of the supervisor and only four actually knew the person by name.

¹⁸ Indeed, residents tend to contact the elected neighbourhood president first when they need some assistance. Yet the elected president does not have sufficient access to the municipality and needs to pass on these queries to the supervisor who then contacts the municipality. In fact, most neighbourhoods are neatly divided along partisan lines and clientelist brokers have only access to the municipality if they are personally linked to it.

discerned the advantages of party neutrality.¹⁹ More sophisticated than the more clientelist neighbourhood presidents/supervisors and financially more secure, community brokers tended to support both the conservatives and the progressives in equal parts. For instance, Rodrigo Magalhães Leite, president of another neighbourhood association, was adamant that it is important not to take sides. Whenever asked, he would support both sides in order to avoid being associated with either. “One cannot back only one candidate – because if that one loses, the neighbourhood will end up without services. Let the residents make up their own minds.” In this manner, Rodrigo tried to negotiate the best possible deal for his community (see also Gay 2001). Also, members of the same family often diversified their political affinities and backed different political parties. This allowed them to maintain their ties to the municipality when the political administration changed. Interestingly, community brokers such as Rodrigo I became acquainted with were Protestant Evangelicals and used their religious affiliation to demonstrate their commitment to the community and their contempt for clientelist ties. Although idealistic and very community focused, they tended to be less interested in political projects such as participatory democratic structures (see also Chestnut 1998). For instance, Rodrigo who was active in the health council for some time left because the discussions conducted within a democratic framework generated much talk and, in his view, very little tangible outcomes. To be sure, community brokers of this kind also seek political patronage but are more discrete about it. For João Batista, leader of a major Baptist congregation, patronage was the only way to finance the philanthropic ventures of his church. Although community minded, the politics of community brokers does not easily fit the modern democratic mould. In contrast to the more clientelist presidents of neighbourhood associations, they are not necessarily democratically elected as their leadership is very much bound up with their pre-eminent role in their congregation. Moreover, their political alliances are often shaped by reciprocal obligations assumed over the course of their lives. Nevertheless, some of these community brokers were forced to re-examine such traditional ties in view of the positive impact of social programs implemented by the local PT administration.²⁰

Local neighbourhood movements predominantly associated with a contracting progressive Catholic Church faced the problem of how to tap into patronage networks without losing their political

¹⁹ However, this ‘neutrality’ is often only a public positioning. In their private lives community brokers may be entangled in a web of reciprocal obligations that they feel obliged to honor.

²⁰ For instance, João Batista although privately indebted to a political patron who had helped him during times of need, felt that the educational policies implemented by the PT did indeed benefit students from poorer backgrounds. Moreover, he acknowledged that the continuation of such policies would, over time, benefit the whole community.

autonomy.²¹ Although religious institutions and support funds provided some project finance, high unemployment rates rendered the neighbourhood movement leadership dependent on scarce municipal jobs. Many capable leaders left the region to make a living in the large urban centres of the South East where unemployment was lower. This weakened local community-based politics. The fragility of community-based politics was also much in evidence in the various joint ventures (that involved movements, the municipality, as well as other institutions) that were started by neighbourhood-based movements and ended up as flagship programs of municipal departments and the politicians associated with them. The PRUNE, a pre-university-entrance-exam-course for Afro-Brazilians was a case in point. Started without the help of the municipality by a number of neighbourhood leaders, the PRUNE was eventually celebrated as success story by a publicity-hungry administration. This kind of project take-over was deeply resented by neighbourhood activists who generally worked long, un-paid hours to make such projects possible. Indeed, activists complained about their resource weakness that forced them to relinquish the leadership of their projects to the municipality.

However, in cooperation with larger nationally active civic movements, neighbourhood movements were able to amplify their political voice. Indeed, a local coalition of civic and neighbourhood movements organised in the *Forum de Luta por Terra, Trabalho e Cidadania* (Forum of Struggle for Land, Work, and Citizenship) was among the most vociferous critics of Itabuna's PT-led administration. In particular, it attacked what it perceived to be a continuation of an arrogant, undemocratic, patrimonialist and nepotist leadership style. According to a representative of the local MST, the coalition commands a significant influence in the municipality and is able to mobilise between 15 and 20% of its population. Ironically, the civic movement sector is far from politically united and individual political interests and incompatible personality traits, alongside differing strategic preferences, have undermined the capacity of the civic movement sector to play a more central part in local politics. It is perhaps not unrelated that the municipality, although engaging in a strategic alliance with the civic movement sector before the elections, has been able to minimise the influence of the sector in municipal decision making processes.²² Nevertheless, the civic movement sector, with its very vocal commitment to citizenship, social justice, participatory democracy and due process, was the single most important democratising force in Itabuna. Ironically, its moral critique payed into the hands of the conservative opposition.

²¹ I should point out that the Youth Pastoral is incredibly active in Itabuna. In fact, the entire 'next generation' of neighbourhood leaders that I encountered in Itabuna, at the time of the research in their teens and twenties, were affiliated with the local, liberation theology-influenced Catholic Youth Pastoral.

²² The movement sector is involved in a number of local social welfare councils that focus on food security and the like.

In Itabuna, the Tutelary Council and the Health Council,²³ two of the few councils that have their origin in the 1988 constitution and were actually in operation in Itabuna, by and large, displayed many of the limitations noted elsewhere (Dagnino 2002; Torres Ribeiro 2003). Local councils tended to be very closely tied to particular municipal departments or foundations and the respective politicians that run them. The PT-led alliance re-activated the councils after they had been rendered insignificant by previous conservative administrations. However, these icons of participatory democracy did not always work independently of parties and patronage. In fact, councillors who lacked strong ties to civic groups seemed to be only too willing to relinquish their autonomy to local politicians. For instance, educationists have claimed that Titulary Council members were often accompanied and assisted in their missions by a PSDB candidate for the office of state deputy as well as the head of the Marimbeta Foundation, a cultural welfare organisation closely associated with the municipality, and wife of the chief of Itabuna's Government Department. In fact, intimately intertwined with the interests of local politicians and insufficiently anchored in civil society the activities of the councils often became yet another facet of local, personalist patronage politics. Again, only councils, such as the Food Security Council, that have the support of the civic movement sector enjoyed some kind of autonomy and were admitted to the municipal policy-making process. Most others, but especially those associated with the opposition,²⁴ were shut out of the policy-making process.

Many of Itabuna's very colourful publicly sponsored festivals, catered for the substantial number of swinging voters. As swings in opinion polls demonstrate, the strategic sponsoring of street parties has a significant impact on the political preferences of an entertainment-starved popular electorate. However, as the last municipal election in 2000 demonstrates only too clearly, electoral gains achieved in this manner are as easily lost as voters quickly resume a more sober political view.

Clearly, in Itabuna political patronage played a central role. In fact, without some form of patronage many of the city's poorer residents would have found it difficult to survive.²⁵ Unsurprisingly, the

²³ The Conselho Tutelar (Titulary Council) is concerned with the welfare and control of children and adolescents. The council can be approached by community members in case of abuse or unlawful behaviour. The Councillor will research the allegations and, should the case require it, transmit it to the local authorities. The Health Council is involved in the running and monitoring of health care facilities.

²⁴ Opposition in this sense includes those associations connected with the conservative Carlistas but also others such as the Council of the Elderly (*Conselho da Terceira Idade*) who refused (I am paraphrasing the council's coordinator) to be turned into a public relations branch of the PT. alliance.

²⁵ According to IBGE's 2000 census, more than one third of the city's population lived on less than R\$ 390 per month, or less than US\$ 1 per day.

'fairness' of the distribution of public resources was the subject of a lively debate in Itabuna.²⁶ To me it seemed that this debate constituted the foundation of the local democratic social imaginary. Indeed, most interviewees condemned clientelist forms of politics. Whereas civic movements and associations staunchly rejected undemocratic behaviour and promoted a more participatory form of civic democracy, community brokers tended to morally reject the notion of clientage and patronage. Nevertheless, movements as well as community brokers depended on private patronage networks for their survival. Whereas the former tapped into the semi-private patronage networks of Churches and NGOs, the latter sought out private patronage channels linked to the formal, political system. In Itabuna, the PT (as well as any other political party) tried to expand its electorate by responding to clientelist expectations from both camps. It attempted to construct an electoral majority through wide-ranging alliances leaving the construction of civic democracy to funding starved social movements which it, due to conservative pressures it was exposed to through its alliance politics, excluded from the wider decision-making process. In response, the civic movement sector pushed for a more radical democratic politics including the right to deliberate over policy decisions. Yet in Itabuna the civic movement sector is small and divided. Moreover, civic movements have found it increasingly difficult to mobilise the growing segment of the urban poor. As a result, these poor formed part of a growing electoral segment in search of patronage through representative democratic channels. Again, this increased the pressures on the PT to respond to electoral clientelist expectations, which it tried to mediate by creating the role of the neighbourhood supervisor. Given Itabuna's context of mediated citizenship, it is hardly surprising that the competent policy reforms introduced by the PT, although often positively acknowledged by the electorate, were not able to deflate the importance of established patronage networks. In fact, the high level of social inequality in conjunction with the weakness of civic movements generate a political context that is relatively resilient to change. Having said this, there is a strong support for more genuine forms of democracy among Itabuna's poorer residents. Given this and taking into account the widespread rejection of the PT's conventional reform approach it appears that future reformist governments will be under substantial pressure to develop a more participatory and democratic reform process that generates an alternative social safety net encouraging poorer residents to leave their patronage networks behind.²⁷

²⁶ Indeed, historical research suggests that patronage has been the topic of a morally charged debate for centuries in Brazil (see, for instance, Graham 1990; Bieber 1999).

²⁷ To be sure, civic movements provide important democratic impetus in Itabuna. They offer a vision of a more egalitarian and just society as well as a set of administrative and political tools (many of which were borrowed from Porto Alegre) that explain how to construct such a society. Moreover, they foster and educate the next generation of democratically inclined leaders. Yet here, as in São Paulo, the civic movement sector's political voice is far from united, a factor that significantly reduces its political clout.

Whereas in Itabuna's poorer neighbourhoods, public debate focused on the fair distribution of public resources, in São Paulo wide-ranging participatory mechanisms had been implemented this debate focused more squarely on the tensions and contradictions between civic and representative democracy. It is important to bear in mind that patronage relationships very similar to those in Itabuna persist in São Paulo as well as Porto Alegre. However, rather than burden the reader with repetition, I will illustrate how participatory processes build on and transform the 'traditional' political culture of the municipalities and how the transformation of 'traditional' political practices gives rise to a bricolage of 'traditional' and 'modern' forms of politics.

São Paulo

After eight years of a corrupt right wing administration led by Paulo Maluf and his crony Celso Pitta, the election of Marta Suplicy (PT) spurred the hopes and expectations of many voters. Yet Marta Suplicy's administration (2001-2004) represented something like an antithesis to the city's previous PT administration (1989-92) led by Luiza Erundina (Couto 2003). Luiza Erundina, a social worker from the north-east with close ties to social movements, refused to trade in administrative power for political support. Rather, she implemented an elaborate, albeit inefficient, consultation process, and introduced an earlier form of the participatory budget. As a result, her government lacked support of the municipal legislature and faced a serious governability crisis. Learning from mistakes committed by this and other PT administrations, Marta Suplicy, a Paulistano socialite and member of an established elite, immediately brokered a deal with representatives of the municipal legislature (*vereadores*) including those associated with 'traditional' politicians in order to construct a working majority in the municipal assembly (Couto 2003). Consequently, Marta Suplicy's mandate has been exemplary in terms of 'governability'. In particular, many members of the numerous civic movements that played an important political role during the re-democratisation of the 1970s and 1980s hoped that Marta's election would signal a turn toward a more democratic, participatory decision-making process and to social justice and welfare projects. In response, the Suplicy government decentralised the city administration creating 31 sub-municipalities (whose heads were appointed by alliance members) and implemented a streamlined version of the participatory budget. However, already during the second year, civic movement leaders claimed that the administration was not entirely committed to the process. Rather, Marta Suplicy's administration became known in civic movement circles for its political ambivalence: Combining a personalist, autocratic, iron fisted, top-down approach with social-democratic policies and participatory

mechanisms at the grassroots. As a result, members of the civic movement sectors within her own party became Marta Suplicy's most passionate political opponents.²⁸

Clearly, the Suplicy administration's governance model came at a price. Its alliance was built on an exchange of favours where rent-seeking conservative politicians could nominate candidates for senior positions within regional sub-municipalities as reward for their political support. In the eyes of many traditional *Petistas*, Marta's governance cultivated the kind of patronage structures the PT ought to be ideologically and ethically opposed to. More importantly still, it antagonised leaders within the civic movement sector who for decades had battled these same right wing politicians that continued in office under the PT-led alliance. Civic movement leaders retaliated with mockery and scorn. The most faithful *Petista* in the municipal assembly, it was joked, were the ultra conservatives such as Viviane Ferraz (PL – Liberal Party), previously associated with Paulo Maluf (PP – Progressive Party) because they always voted with the government.²⁹ For many leaders within civic movements the pragmatism employed by the Suplicy administration was incompatible with their dream of a radical democracy, in which, in the words of Tarso Genro,³⁰ “the government transforms itself into a kind of great solidary community engaged in a politics that protects the excluded sectors of the population” (Genro 1999). Carlos Neder's (PT)³¹ head of staff articulated the disappointment of the *Petista* Left when he summed things up in the following manner: the PT has turned into a “personalist party. And even worse, [a personalist party] with the discourse of the Left. When we have a practice of this kind under Maluf, it is obvious, Maluf will not deceive me. ... To put it like this, everything that distinguished the PT [from other parties], is no longer.” For the civic democrats within the PT, pragmatist experiments that contain too many ‘traditional’ elements such as those in Itabuna or São Paulo destroy the trademark of the PT, a trademark that has differentiated the party from competitors such as the PSDB (see, also, Rosenfield 2002).

²⁸ According to the head of staff of Carlos Neder's (PT), a municipal representative (*vereador*) and severe critic of the Suplicy administration, the exclusion of the civic movement sectors has a very pragmatic reason. Today elections are generally fought in two rounds and this tends to polarise the votes between two candidates. The civic movement sector can earn a PT candidate around 15 to 17% of the votes, which is not enough to get elected. Moreover, because the political strength of social movements in São Paulo has been declining since the late 1980s, the PT decided to court the ‘sub-proletariat’, alongside the educated elite and the finance sector. According to the same interviewee, “... in 2000 the PT is a completely different party than it was in 1988. In 1988 the PT was a party that stimulated the social struggle, ... the PT of 2000 is a party that is markedly institutional. It is a party that works to win elections. Today the sectors within the PT that seek to organise society, that seek to organise the excluded are counter hegemonic factions.” Moreover, because the ‘Petista Way of Governing’ does no longer attract a sufficient number of voters, it is likely to be ‘fortified’ or superseded by more ‘conventional’ political strategies. And not even Porto Alegre, the sanctuary of Left within the PT, is safe from this hardest of all ‘bottom lines’.

²⁹ In fact, a number of the PT's own municipal representative who belong to left factions, do not.

³⁰ Tarso Genro ex-mayor of Porto Alegre and ex-state deputy is currently fulfilling a ministerial function within the Lula government.

³¹ As mentioned above, Carlos Neder (PT) is an elected representative in the municipal legislature.

However, this perspective overlooks the fact that the kind of ‘solidary community’ envisaged by Tarso Genro has to be constructed within the context of a formal, participatory democracy. Furthermore, this interpretation of a ‘solidary community’ ignores the fact that within the context of mediated citizenship such a community contains clientelist elements as well as democratised patronage structures (see, for instance, Dagnino 2002; Tatagiba 2003; Ottmann 2004). For instance, invited to join the ‘solidary community’ many of the neighbourhood movement leaders responded very positively to the Suplicy administration’s welfare policies that enabled them to renew the patronage deals that, in part, financed the daycare centres, employment generation projects, and vocational training centres they were running. Moreover, more experienced community leaders accessed other patronage networks tied to the PSDB state government that allowed them to further subsidise the much-needed social services they were providing. That these patronage deals contained a good deal of personalist kudos emerges from the fact that community leaders proudly displayed glossy images of themselves shaking hands with the wife of state governor Geraldo Alckmin (PSDB). Also, they were positively disposed towards the CEUs (Unified Educational Centres) - gigantic education facilities that include a daycare centre, primary and secondary schools, a theatre, a library, a skate ring and swimming pools, that the Suplicy administration was building in the poor periphery of São Paulo - that were much criticised by civic movement leaders who regarded them as ‘pharaonic’ (i.e. in the style of the pyramid building Pharaohs) election projects that respond to the expectations of a broad range of political clienteles.³² Indeed, for most neighbourhood movement leaders, democracy is as much about forging the necessary political connections in order to maintain or even expand social services within their neighbourhoods as it is about freedom of speech. This in conjunction with the regular political swings they experience generates a more pragmatic outlook. In fact, I found similar attitudes throughout the Brasilândia region among community-minded presidents of neighbourhood associations and football clubs. Although most of these leaders had participated in OP rounds, they also employed clientelist strategies. Nevertheless, the political outlook of these mediators was distinctly different from that of the clientelist neighbourhood presidents in Itabuna. Interestingly, although many of these mediators had forged clientelist, face-to-face relationships with municipal government officials, they also advanced demands citing citizenship rights. Hence, on the one hand, they expected municipal officials to honour the clientelist arrangements they had forged, on the other, they argued that it was the right of the community to have access to sporting

³² Indeed, many resident feared, with good reason, that these extremely costly projects would be abandoned if the PT would lose the municipal election campaign. Indeed, Rio de Janeiro was the site of a similar project that, abandoned by the subsequent administration, fell into disrepair and became the haven of social outcasts. Moreover, many civic movement

and other social facilities. In this instance, clientelist ties were used to establish communication links with local officials so that citizenship claims could be voiced more effectively. In this sense, 'traditional' and 'modern' political practices have become interlinked creating a very ambivalent political environment in which political representatives not only have to address clientelist expectations but also have to acknowledge the fact that such expectations might be connected to demands for citizenship entitlements.

This bricolage of 'traditional' and 'modern' could be also detectable in participatory democratic schemes such as São Paulo's participatory budget. In São Paulo the OP was in its third year and was far from a refined process nor was it politically established in a sense that it formed part of everyday life politics, as in Porto Alegre. Moreover, the process built on and, paradoxically, was undermined by the 'traditional' power sharing arrangement of the administration. The effects of this bricolage in the form of an ill-resolved tension between more participatory and representative forms of democracy were particularly visible in the Brazilândia/Freguesia do O region where the OP was placed in the hands of public servants, who were linked to a 'traditional' politician (Viviane Ferraz) who unofficially 'ran' the sub-municipality. Many of Brazilândia's civic movement leaders rejected this power-sharing arrangement, which tended to skew the vital information flow within the region's OP towards the lower-middle class constituency in the Freguesia. As a result, the shortcomings of the OP process were assessed in an extremely sceptical, if not outright hostile, manner. Those who tried to participate in the OP at a regional level had to cope with erratic meeting schedules and cancellations as well as an OP coordinator who, in a fashion quite common in São Paulo (see, for instance, Barban 2003), tended to dominate the regional OP meetings by means of an elitist demeanour³³ extremely used to wielding administrative power.³⁴ Unsurprisingly, at the end of the 2003 budget cycle and after participating in the regional OP for nearly 12 months, several OP delegates still thought that the decision-making authority rested with administrators rather than the forum in which they were participating. This, and a general

leaders were incensed about the CEUs because they mirror the 'traditional' strategies employed by conservatives, such as Paulo Maluf, that respond to the expectations of a broad range of clienteles, elite as well as popular.

³³ In a discussion about how to improve the participation rate in the regional OP meetings (only 9 of 55 delegates were present), the regional OP coordinator, linked to the PSDB, responded in the following manner: "I don't care about quantity – I want quality. They need to have some knowledge about the political process. We should create an educational forum. ... In Brazilândia, large population groups are simply not interested – they cannot read, are unaccustomed to local politics. Maybe the OP doesn't work at a local level?"

³⁴ The meetings were often rescheduled at an extremely short notice and the sub-municipality often failed to inform OP delegates of this fact. As a result, many sacrificed scarce resources and time to attend meetings that had been cancelled. Moreover, many delegates claimed that they had not been informed about forthcoming regional OP meetings. However, such occurrences were quite normal in São Paulo's OP at the sub-municipal level (see, for instance, Barban 2003). To be sure, the OP process in the Freguesia/Brasilândia region was by no means among the worst in São Paulo. In fact, comparative research

sense of distrust in a process that did not yield the expected returns, caused many community leaders to withdraw from the process. Despite such shortcomings, São Paulo's OP provided an excellent opportunity to study the transformation of clientelist expectations.

In São Paulo, rather than eradicating clientelism altogether, the participatory budget tended to shift the focus of clientelist expectations from political mediators of private patronage networks linked to municipal representatives to democratically elected OP delegates and councillors. For instance, Rosângela Graciani, a very committed OP delegate in Pirituba, had fought long and hard for a first aid health post and youth training facilities in her neighbourhood. Instead, the region received one of the large CEUs. As a result, she felt under pressure by the population and believed that she had lost face. Moreover, she thought herself incompetent because the population had elected her to bring about some change in the poor neighbourhood, but she had failed to attract the much-needed resources. Similarly, the community's demand for a health care facility, endorsed by the various OP negotiation rounds, was ignored by the municipal administration that, faced with too many requests, decided to alter its public health strategy. At this stage, the population felt misled and focused its misgivings on the mediator connecting the community with the OP. It emerges that the OP not only harbours the capacity to build a new civic tradition and to transform 'traditional' political structures, if unevenly implemented, it can also dislodge a local leadership that took decades to emerge. In this sense, in São Paulo, claims that were voiced within the framework of informal, transparent bureaucratic processes were nevertheless personalised focusing on individual political mediators. As a result, in Brazilândia, Pirituba, and Jaraguá the OP process unravelled from the bottom up.³⁵ Indeed, community and civic movement leaders who attempted to defend the OP got caught in the conflict between civic and formal, representative democratic forces. They not only lost their credibility within their communities but also lost their voice within the movements. Hence, it is not surprising that for many civic movement leaders, São Paulo's OP process, a process whose outcomes were not reliably implemented, lost its appeal.³⁶ Most were disillusioned with the impact of the OP and some claimed that it was easier to get municipal services through more 'traditional' channels. Nevertheless, despite its perceived failings the OP had a large number of proponents especially among OP councillors who had received an extensive induction training

focusing on the first quarter of 2004 praised the regional administration's commitment to the process (Andrade, Ricci et al. 2004).

³⁵ Senior public servants representing the Suplicy administration argued that the CEUs were the only effective way to meet OP demands. This rebuttal was rejected by civic movement leaders who claimed that the policy essentially circumvented the democratic process.

³⁶ In civic movement circles the government's slogan "*Você decide, o governo faz*" (you decide, the government will implement it) was transformed into "*Você decide e o governo faz que quiser*" (you decide and the government does what it wants).

and who participated in the process at the municipal level. This popularity is somewhat surprising, given that São Paulo's OP was implemented in an extremely unreliable fashion.³⁷ Yet, bearing in mind the public debate surrounding 'fair' distribution of public resources in places like Itabuna and considering the rapid spread of the OP throughout Brazil and Latin America (see, for instance, Torres Ribeiro and Grazia 2003), it seems that participatory and transparent negotiation schemes such as the OP might become a pivotal within a context of mediated citizenship.

In the case of São Paulo foregrounds a number of important features of the democratisation process. Most importantly, it emerges that the implementation of participatory, democratic schemes does not eradicate clientelist structures. Rather 'modern' and 'traditional' elements become fused and create a hybrid political culture whose complexity has yet to be explored. Many of the patronage forms contained within this new hybrid culture are, without a doubt, compatible with democratic processes. Indeed, it would be difficult to see how associations that have contributed to the democratisation process in the Brasília region in the past could have survived without field-specific patronage (see, for instance, Ottmann 2002). Moreover, the case of São Paulo's OP spells out the tension between the 'logic' of participatory and the 'logic' of representative democracy. For instance, for many participants, the OP held the promise of a civic democracy with universal citizenship rights, a promise that was soon disappointed as it emerged that the OP was but a citizenship negotiation process whose outcome was constrained by electoral as well as party political considerations. In fact the tension between the two approaches to democracy underpinned most political processes. For instance, although many community leaders advanced their demands through OP channels, some felt that it was wiser to 'back up' their demands with more 'traditional' strategies that had worked in the past. Indeed, informal, private patronage schemes continued to exist alongside the OP creating some confusion as to what form of democracy was being practiced. This contributed to the PT's difficulty to convince civic movement leaders that it was committed to a democratisation of municipal politics. Although the party implemented a range of innovative social policies, civic movement leaders identified Marta Suplicy's approach as a 'business as usual' approach to politics and no longer interested in the construction of a participatory, civic democracy. As a result, civic movements and especially those linked to the progressive Catholic Church exerted significant pressure on the local PT-led alliance. And, many career public servants aligned with these movements resisted the Suplicy government's alliance politics and its

³⁷ Indeed, the São Paulo's OP was so popular that the incoming PSDB administration under José Serra did not ax it.

calls for a pragmatic inclusion of conservative politicians (and lost their jobs, as a result).³⁸ The morass and confusion that resulted from the PT's inability to fuse civic and representative approaches to democracy in a coherent fashion significantly undermined Marta Suplicy's own democratic credentials. Nevertheless, the fact that civic, participatory schemes were able to thrive even within a relatively conservative political context such as São Paulo foregrounds the importance of participatory mediating schemes for the excluded fringe population. The case of São Paulo offers a second snapshot of this dialectic where a reformist party attempts to expand their electorate by turning the access to state patronage into a democratic and transparent, participatory process. However, in the case of São Paulo, the mobilisation drive of this democratised patronage mechanism was too weak to deliver an electoral victory. As a result, the PT responds to a broad range of more 'traditional' clientelist demands that undermined its capacity and legitimacy to implement participatory policies in a coherent fashion, thus fortifying the critique of the civic movement sector.

Porto Alegre

In Porto Alegre, the public debate over what constitutes 'fair' and 'functional' distribution of public resources was largely resolved in favour of the OP. In Porto Alegre the OP has turned into the central mediating vehicle of citizenship entitlements, re-channelling clientelist expectations into a transparent, democratic process. Under the PT, this mediating vehicle was significantly skewed in favour of the poor and during the last 15 years of the OP's existence, Porto Alegre's poorer periphery has come to enjoy most of the infrastructure the more developed centre does (see, for instance, Marquetti 2002).³⁹ Clearly, this re-distribution of resources was not divorced from the PT's own electoral interests. Indeed, for the conservative members of Porto Alegre's legislature, the OP process formed part of an ingenious plan of the PT to expand its electorate. For instance, according to a conservative *vereador* of the PPB (Progressive Party) "The OP is a diabolical plan. It aims at organising the popular sector ... Why didn't we think of that?" Under the PT, Porto Alegre's OP disengaged voters from 'traditional' clientelist networks controlled by *vereadores* and conservative politicians and reconnected them directly with the participatory budget organised by municipality's executive. In this sense, the participatory budget does

³⁸ To be sure, many of the policies implemented by the PT administrations contributed to the democratisation of municipal politics in the area. For instance, many of the local community leaders participated in deliberative steering committees directly linked to municipal departments controlled by the PT. And a number of these steering committees and consultation meetings managed to galvanised local movements against the anti-democratic approach of the sub-municipality. The social pressure generated by this synergy between movements and municipal departments convinced the sub-municipality to open to the public the second stage of the deliberation process of the Plano Diretor, São Paulo's urban planning master plan.

³⁹ Indeed, many of the schools constructed at the periphery are comparable to those in the developed world.

indeed encourage the formation of alliances free from clientelist loyalties to party bosses or municipal representatives, as some authors claim (Baierle 1998; Fedozzi 1999; Abers 2000; Sánchez 2002; Sousa Santos de 2002; Avritzer 2002a; Goldfrank 2003; Baiocchi 2003a).

Clearly, the OP represented a central element in the ‘great solidary community’ over which, the PT administration exerted corporatist ownership claims. And, on many occasions the distinction between the party and the OP was blurred. This was particularly the case when the municipality utilised the OP network as an alternative communication and dissemination tool with the aim to mobilise the population. As a result, one of the key issues for organisers of participatory schemes such as the OP or the *Congresso da Cidade* was the question of legitimacy. They needed to overcome the label that such schemes were only “a thing of the PT” (*coisa do PT*), as the opposition had it. This task was not an easy one as the ‘great solidary community’ contained a substantial number of OP councillors, delegates, participants, as well as their families with firm links to the PT network.⁴⁰ In this sense, distinct patronage elements underpinned the emergence and functioning of the OP. However, it is difficult to see how a popular politics could have emerged in any other way in this politically and socio-economically highly polarised context. Indeed, Habermas (1992) has a point when he claims that for an autonomous public sphere to emerge participants need to enjoy some degree of financial security and education. In this sense, it does not surprise that Porto Alegre’s rather moderately sized municipal administration finances around 660 ‘positions of trust’ of which many were made available to ‘worthy’ but also to needy members of the solidary community.⁴¹

While it is true that participatory democratic processes and especially the participatory budget have transformed clientelism, ‘traditional’ political elements did survive in Porto Alegre. In fact, rather than supplanting and eradicating clientelism, the OP incorporated it. Still, in Porto Alegre, clientelism and political patronage did not dominate administrative processes as, for instance, in the other two municipalities under study. In this sense, Porto Alegre’s administrative culture differed significantly from São Paulo’s or Itabuna’s. For instance, in Porto Alegre, the OP was fully implemented in a sense that terms, directives, and investment decisions elaborated through the process were regarded as binding by the administration. This turned the OP into an effective mediating vehicle not only of citizenship entitlements but also for the conflicting claims of participatory and representative democracy.

⁴⁰ The OP did attract the participation of communities linked to the opposition. However, their representatives found it difficult to influence the political agenda as they were the minority in the OP council.

Nevertheless, although the interests of the PT alliance and OP activists often overlapped in this forum, the relationship between the municipal administration and the COP, the Council of the OP, was never cosy and conflicts between the municipal representatives and the councillors could be heated (see, for instance, Sousa Santos de 2002). Nevertheless, most conflicts between the municipal administration and OP councillors were resolved along legal/rational, bureaucratic lines. Indeed, within the OP process, legitimation was closely associated with due process, rules, regulations, and guidelines and the effectiveness of an OP councillor depended on his/her knowledge of the rules and regulations that informed processes. Although personalistic conflicts were quite common during an earlier stage of the OP, the process remade such conflicts and generated a para-legal discourse based on expert knowledge and technical competence (see, for instance Sousa Santos 2002).⁴² In this sense, Porto Alegre's OP transformed the political culture of the municipality and turned it into a democratic process that harboured distinct Weberian connotations.

Yet, at the fringes of this 'great solidary community', the continuity of hybrid forms of 'traditional' and 'modern' politics was clearly in evidence. For instance, in the Loteamento Chapeo do Sol, one of the poorer neighbourhoods in the south of the city, members of a poorly integrated neighbourhood association tied to the OP regarded the assistance of municipal representatives as most important in their attempt to resolve legal and administrative problems. Under Porto Alegre's PT, (in contrast to many other municipalities in Brazil) poor communities did have access to municipal officials. Nevertheless, they as well as their fellow residents often relied on municipal representatives to mediate their relationship with the municipal administration. This, they claimed, added strength to their queries and requests. And when conservative, local politicians claimed that the 'invisible hand' that provided the much-desired urban infrastructure was actually theirs and not that of an all too abstract OP (or that of the state government, for that matter), poorly informed, poverty stricken residents were often ready to believe them. Indeed, in Porto Alegre as in São Paulo or in Itabuna, private patronage networks (even when they are fictional) continue to play an important role in the lives of poor residents where they offer an important measure of security against the calamities of life. Still, even here, the impact of the OP was discernible and ample evidence could be found that the OP had transformed social relationships beyond its immediate sphere of influence.

⁴¹ In Brazil's highly politicised public service these positions of trust are known as *cargos de confiança*. These positions don't require a public service entrance test. Indeed, according to the public media at the federal level as many as 21,000 *cargos de confiança* are currently in the hands of the PT (see, for instance (Braga 2003)).

⁴² Ironically, it is this feature that alienated many of the OP participants that I interviewed in São Paulo.

Although at the fringe of PT's 'great solidary community' residents were often not exactly sure how urban infrastructure came to their neighbourhood ("the mayor did it"), many residents did perceive that the benefits they had derived from the municipalities were not of a particularistic nature. For their response "the mayor did it" did not carry the same veneration of patrons that the question generated in Itabuna, for instance. For the reply was a matter-of-fact description of a municipal response that did not carry the name of a local politician (Jão Verle, Tarso Genro, etc.) and, as a result, did not contain the kind of reciprocal obligations of clientelist exchanges. In a similar fashion, although only some of these residents participated in the Regional Council meetings of the OP (the CROP) and only a few more could be mobilised to attend the all-important ballot meetings during which the region's investment priorities were decided, virtually all of the members of two communities that I got to know pointed to the president of the local neighbourhood association when asked how the neighbourhood received its infrastructure ("Ask him, he knows"). Indeed, most of these unaffiliated residents were aware that the neighbourhood association's president represented their interests at the level of the municipal administration. And here as in São Paulo, clientelist expectations involved the OP delegate or councilor. Nevertheless, residents were reasonably confident that their mediator did actually represent their interests and not primarily his own. In their reply "ask him, he knows" resonated a certain trust in the transparency of a still relatively distant process. In this sense, in Porto Alegre, signs that the OP can transform Brazil's 'traditional' patronage politics even beyond its boundaries were faint, but clearly visible. Yet, the case of Porto Alegre also suggests that that clientelism and patronage are continuous features and do not form part of a stage to a more rational, universalistic politics.

Concluding Remarks

This article focused on the democratisation of municipal politics in Itabuna, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre. Authors focusing on the transition to democracy frequently regard democracy as the outcome of an evolutionary process leading from undemocratic 'traditions', such as clientelism and patronage, to a 'modern' democracy based on reason, concerns for the greater good, as well as procedural rules. This article argued that the democratisation process does not eradicate 'traditional' political elements as is often suggested in the literature. Rather, it transforms them by incorporating them. Moreover, the article maintained that within a political context of severely restricted citizenship entitlements the construction of more genuine democratic processes hinges on the availability of a universally accessible, social safety net.

The case of Itabuna suggested that, in the absence of such a safety net, unemployment and poverty tends to reinforce the importance of private patronage networks. Moreover, in Itabuna clientelist competition for scarce government resources gave rise to a public debate focusing on the way popular demands for public resources are mediated. Irrespective of political affiliation, Itabuna's poorer residents regarded the 'top-down' mediation of public resources as unfair and preferred a more democratic and transparent mediation process. Such widespread support for a more genuine form of democracy was also in evidence in São Paulo and Porto Alegre. Moreover, in all three cities, civic movements vociferously strengthened and validated such demands. Whereas in Itabuna, the way public resources were mediated was highly disputed, this was less the case in the other two cities where more wide ranging participatory processes had been implemented. In São Paulo, the public debate in the poorer neighbourhoods focused on the contradictions and shortcomings issuing from a partially implemented OP and the confusion arising from the PT's formal alliance politics. And in the periphery of Porto Alegre, the OP was, by and large, accepted as a fair and transparent mediation process.

In all three municipalities, citizenship entitlements had to be actively redeemed and were not universally available. The case studies focused on the different strategies poor community leaders employed to redeem citizenship entitlements. The case of Itabuna illustrated that relative autonomy and financial independence play an important role in the quest for political patronage. Financial and political autonomy increases the range strategies available to civic movement and community leaders. Moreover, the case of Itabuna demonstrated that in a setting where private patronage networks contribute significantly to the social safety net, a multi-pronged approach is the key to success. In fact, many of the more cunning community leaders have constructed a wide-ranging web of patronage ties that allows them to survive and negotiate political shifts and changes. In São Paulo, where the civic movement sector is significantly stronger than in Itabuna and where past mobilisation campaigns have left a more lasting legacy, community leaders employed a range of multi-layered strategies that tapped into both 'traditional' and 'modern' worldviews in order to reinforce civic demands. Moreover, although sceptical about the outcome of the process, they were positively disposed towards the OP and, at least initially, actively supported it. In Porto Alegre, clientelism, although still present, is more difficult to spot within the participatory budget process. Porto Alegre's OP demonstrates that clientelist expectations can be transformed by a reliable, transparent mediation process that encourages civic participation and accountability. Nevertheless forms of clientelism and private patronage were still in evidence at the fringes of the 'great solidary community'.

The case studies demonstrated that within the context of a political economy of mediated citizenship, the democratic inclusion of the poor is likely to involve some form of state subsidy. In this sense, the democratisation of municipal politics as well as state subsidies for health, education, and welfare form a necessary stepping stone in the transition to a genuine democracy in which citizenship entitlements are more universally available. The case of Porto Alegre illustrates that a sustained, needs-based participatory budget in conjunction with other social services can be a precursor for such a democracy. However, the fact that after almost 15 years, during which most of Porto Alegre's government departments worked incessantly to include the poorer population, the linkages between the poor and the political system were still very fragile, suggests that within a political economy in which citizenship is mediated, the dialectic between participatory inclusion and private patronage is ongoing. Hence, when focusing on the social space between the conceptual poles of 'traditional' and 'modern' an evolutionary view of a transition to democracy is to be rejected in favour of a view that sees advances towards democracy as a continuous dialectical process.

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