



ABSTRACT

What is the role of Brazil's Workers' Party (PT) in its sponsorship of the World Social Forum, and what is the significance of this relationship to the struggles to build a more just social order? Some have criticized the presence of the PT in the Forum, juxtaposing its partisan motives to the democratic impulses of the "multitude." This article challenges this reading by tracing the development of the PT in the last decade, bringing to light the ways the party's development challenges traditional narratives about leftist parties. In particular, this article discusses the way that the successful resolution of the challenges of governance in local and regional levels through "participa-

tory solutions" has progressively transformed the party towards a party of radical democracy that values non-instrumental relationships to social movements and unorganized sectors of civil society. This radically democratic stance is represented in the way that the PT sponsors, but does not control or seek to control, the WSF or its proceedings. Re-imagining the relationship between social movements and political parties is an urgent task in the struggle for global social justice and the PT serves as a useful model. Abandoning this relationship as implicitly suggested by advocates of the "multitude" would be to the detriment of the struggle for global justice.

THE PARTY AND THE MULTITUDE: BRAZIL'S WORKERS' PARTY (PT) AND THE CHALLENGES OF BUILDING A JUST SOCIAL ORDER IN A GLOBALIZING CONTEXT*

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INTRODUCTION

Ironically, the star attraction of the Third World Social Forum, in 2003 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, was a president. The world-wide gathering of social justice activists had grown in its third edition to a plural meeting of over 100,000 participants from more than 150 countries, most of whom, as according to the WSF charter, had come as representatives of entities in civil society and not governments or political parties. But on the evening of January 24, Luis Ignácio da Silva, Lula, the former metalworker and founder of the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT), walked on to the stage at the Forum's single largest event as Brazil's president. He told the electrified audience of tens of thousands on that late afternoon that he had pondered whether to attend the Forum at all. As one of the Forum's early advocates, Lula himself defended the position that the World Social Forum ought not to be a space for government or political party officials. Now, as Brazil's president, he considered his presence inadequate at the Forum as a *participant*, but decided to attend anyway as its host.

Flanked by well-known PT leaders, like Benedita da Silva (the ex-governor of Rio de Janeiro) and Tarso Genro (Porto Alegre's ex-mayor), Lula gave an impassioned speech that called for international solidarity for his mandate and

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the tough times it would no doubt face in the coming years.¹ Lula then publicly defended his decision to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos as one of a series of pragmatic decisions that would foster dialogue to solve common problems. He likened his term as president to the role of a soccer coach at a match; while there will no doubt be difficulties, his record ought to be examined at the end of the term rather than at its start. He closed by promising he would not deviate “one comma” from his socialist ideals. The crowd went wild and started to chant, holding up two hands to signify the number eight, a call for Lula’s re-election barely three weeks into his first term.

Lula’s attendance at the Forum and the number of contradictions it represented was not devoid of symbolism. The World Social Forum has been hailed by many as one of the most important innovations in global social justice activism; the “popular alternatives to globalization” discussed there are part of emergent utopias that guide the growing and diverse movement against neoliberal globalization.² Activists and scholars alike have recognized the World Social Forum as a completely novel “movement of movements” that transcends traditional narratives of social movements: it is an internationalist North-South gathering without hierarchy, unified ideology, or leadership unlike any previous nationally or internationally-based movement (Wallerstein 2002). The decentered meetings at the Forum evoke well the notion of “the multitude,” the new plural political subject brought forth by globalization to resist Empire and “whose desire for liberation is not satiated except by reappropriating new spaces (Hardt and Negri 2000:396).”³ But Lula’s victory in October of 2002 also represents something

¹ A description of the speech is found in *The Economist* (2003), “Lula’s Message for Two Worlds” January 30th 2003.

² See for instance, the resolutions collected in Cattani (2001; Fisher and Ponniah 2003), which read as “contemporary Cahiers de Doleance (Hardt and Negri 2003:xvii).” For a discussion of the Global Social Justice movements, see, among many others, Brecher (2000) and Ancelovici (2002). See also the site of the World Social Forum: <http://forumsocialmundial.org.br> and the “movement of movements” series of articles in *New Left Review*, at: <http://www.newleftreview.org>.

³ The multitude is brought forth by deterritorialization and displacement, and constitutes itself through radical new forms of self-organization and cooperation that transcend national politics and struggles while affirming its many singularities and constructing new demands. “The constituent power [of the multitude] makes possible the continuous opening to a process of radical and progressive transformation. It makes conceivable equality and solidarity, those fragile demands that were fundamental but remained abstract during the history of modern constitutions (Hardt and Negri, 2000:406).”

quite novel. In addition to the rupture it represents with traditional Brazilian electoral politics, it is not an exaggeration to describe it as the beginning of a new era for the electoral left, in Latin America and elsewhere. The history and trajectory of the Workers’ Party transcends traditional narratives of political parties and is difficult to capture by using the distinctions between “social democratic and socialist” (or “reformist and revolutionary”) usually drawn to describe leftist projects. Lula’s mandate as president holds the promise to be a wide-ranging experiment in deepening Brazil’s democracy while expanding the “boundaries of the possible.” This challenge includes the construction of a socially just order at the level of the nation-state, reversing many of the negative terms on which globalization has taken place.

In a sense, Lula and the Workers’ Party officials who shared the podium with him stood in front of their social movement mirror image while facing the multitude of global justice activists. In a real way, Lula had in the past been “one of them”, a social movement activist turned president. And while the gulf in power separating the PT from social movements is indeed real, the distance is compressed by a number of equally real, if contradictory, connections.

Analysts, however, whether in academic journals or other sources, have operated with an artificially rigid distinction between the “multitude” and the “party,” particularly when describing the WSF. These observers tend to either downplay the role of the PT or to take its presence within the WSF as evidence of the colonization of social movement spaces by rigid and hierarchical political parties. Either way, they operate with a misunderstanding of the PT and its relationship to social movements in Brazil, as well as a lack of imagination about the concrete possibilities that exist between parties and other actors in the global social justice movement. For example, even while admitting that the WSF would not have been possible without the party that hosted the event, Hardt (2002) expresses misgivings about the PT presence in Porto Alegre and traces a divide between the “parties vs. networks” present at the WSF. For Hardt this dichotomy embodies the gulf between hierarchical, national, and centralized parties and horizontal, decentralized, and post-national movements. Klein (2003), reflecting on the third WSF, claims that the large attendance at Lula’s speech is evidence of the “hijacking” of the WSF, now destined for “the graveyard of failed, left political projects.” Adamovsky (2003), complaining of the PT presence in the organizing committee of the WSF, warns that it threatens the autonomy of the WSF, as “the politics of the traditional left-wing [has been] to domesticate and co-opt the movement of movements.”

This brief article offers a needed corrective to these perceptions, by discussing the PT and its history of relationships to social movements and civil society. The objective is to shed light on the PT’s relationship to the World Social Forum, and

to offer some valuable lessons from the PT's history about crossing the "movement-party divide." To foreshadow my conclusion, the World Social Forum is far from the "deathbed of traditional actors like political parties" that some have described (Hardt 2002: 116). The Workers' Party has continued to develop since its first forays into electoral contests in the early 1980s. It has evolved through the 1990s into a political party known for good governance, and for radically widening the scope of civic participation in local public administration. . The PT's radical participatory stance has continued to reinvigorate the party, while transforming its relationship to social movements and civil society. These factors are at least partially responsible for the PT's national victory in late 2002. As the party embarks on its first experiment with national power, its relationship to social movements via the WSF offer a critical opportunity to bring new energy and imagination to its domestic policies, while fostering international solidarity and legitimacy for its platforms abroad. Of course, as time passes the exigencies of national governance are likely to produce more and more fissures within the PT-social movement alliance, and may even provoke divergences between the party and the multitude.

The Party⁴

Analysts of the WSF have sometimes expressed misgivings about the overt presence of the PT within the forum's structures (Hardt 2002; Klein 2003), while some of the best-known figures involved in the planning of the WSF have attempted to distance the event from the PT (Cassen 2003).⁵ Whether implicitly relying on traditional narratives about political parties, such as those invoked by the "Iron Law of Oligarchy" (Lipset 1997; Lipset, Trow and Coleman 1956; Michels 1962; Piven and Cloward 1979) or reacting to the actual history of leftist parties and their relationship to civil society⁶ (Bengelsdorf 1994; Kertzer 1980),

⁴ This section draws upon the Introductory chapter of Baiocchi (2003).

⁵ Bernard Cassen, for instance, writes that, "at first, the PT was a bit uneasy about the Forum, because its tradition is quite 'vertical', and it was afraid that a Forum organized in Porto Alegre, which it did not control, might somehow be used against it" (Cassen 2002:47).

⁶ The disappointing history of formerly socialist or social-democratic parties in power in Western Europe over the course of the twentieth century seems to confirm some of these expectations (Przeworski and Prague, 1996). The example of the Communist Party in Italy in the mid-twentieth century has been cited as that of a democratically inclined party that nonetheless occupied civil society organizations. The democratic-centralist Communist Party maintained control over organizations in civil society that were ultimately understood to be appendages of the party and bound by its political directives

analysts have been unable to imagine the relationship between the PT and civil society as anything but an instrumental one. As such, these scholars to the on have misunderstood the PT's relationship to the WSF.

The history of the Workers' Party shows a clear evolution—from an oppositional pro-democracy and socialist party with a more "traditional" relationship to social movements⁷ through the 1990s—to a political organization seasoned through successive turns in government. More importantly, over the course of this evolution, the party's successes could often be attributed to its new and non-instrumental relationships toward civil society and participation. While the PT represents a rupture with Brazilian politics long characterized by patronage and personalism (Keck 1992b; Löwy 1993; Mainwaring 1992–93; Meneguello 1989), the significance of the PT rests on its relationship to civil society, one that breaks with traditional molds of leftist electoral parties.

While formally founded in 1980, the idea of the PT emerged around the 1978–79 strikes in the Scania plant in São Paulo's ABC region, where Lula was one of the strike's prominent leaders.⁸ The idea of a new and genuine 'party of and for workers' became increasingly influential among the then-burgeoning trade union movement, as well as among intellectuals returned from exile (Singer 2001). Brazil at the time did not have the independent trade unions, and autonomous political organizations were largely illegal. Dissatisfaction with the populist

and hierarchy. As Kertzer notes in his ethnography, the party in Bologna controlled all forms of civic life, where '[t]he authority and prestige of the party are reinforced through the "independent" associations in which Party positions are extolled and the various party officers' high status is validated' (Kertzer 1980: 48).

⁷ By a traditional relationship I mean here that there were two opposing positions in the PT about its relationship to civil society: one was the minoritarian vanguardist position held by some tendencies, that PT activists ought to occupy positions in social movements and civil society and "bring them along" ideologically. The other position, and the one that won out initially, was one that the PT ought to be the "reflex" of social movements – which turned out in practice to be an equally difficult position to adhere to because it assumed society was "always already" organized. Such an attitude also tended to privilege certain social movement sectors *vis-à-vis* other sectors of civil society and the unorganized. The latter position still has the difficulty that it prevents reflection and criticism of the party itself.

⁸ We are fortunate to have a wealth of documentary and historical evidence available. The history of the PT has been well documented by a number of insightful scholars, including Meneguello (1989) , Keck (1992a; 1992b) , Harnecker (1994) , Sader (1986) , and Singer (2001). The history below largely relies on their accounts as well as my own interviews in the process of reconstructing the history of the PT in the South of Brazil.

Brazilian Labor Party, the PTB, as well as with the country's 'old left' (largely disfigured as a result of the violent repression of the previous decade) also fueled the search for a new political space. The crisis of 'real socialism' in Eastern Europe also united this disparate group of activists. The vibrancy of emergent social movements, such as those linked to the progressive Catholic Church, also compelled activists to form a party where 'social movements can speak' (Oliveira 1986:16). Rejecting 'bureaucratic socialism' and a one-party system as well as democratic centralism, the new party was united under the principles of autonomy, a commitment to democratic institutions and internal democracy, a mass base, and socialism (Garcia 1991; Singer 2001).

According to Margaret Keck (1992a), PT founders started from a broad conception of class, and early on linked class struggle with the struggle for citizenship. Instead of 'occupying social movements,' most of the PT founders envisioned the party as a 'reflex' of social movements (Ozaí 1996). This is not surprising, given that the party's founders included leftist Christian activists, sympathetic intellectuals, and pro-democracy activists from a number of social movements, in addition to the industrial union workers and leftist agitators traditionally identified with the PT (Lowy 1987). The party over the years came to house a broad spectrum of positions, including an open structure of internal 'tendencies' who compete inside the party to shape positions and program, but that ultimately unite in electoral contests.⁹ In 1983, the party gained prominence once again as part of the national movement for direct elections, the famous *Diretas Já* mobilizations. In addition to two municipal victories in 1982, the party registered two more victories in 1985 as well as disappointing results in the 1986 elections for Congress. According to Meneguello (1989), it was in this period that the PT started to decisively broaden its discourse beyond workerism, putting greater emphasis on social issues. Previous slogans such as 'work, land, and liberty' and 'workers vote on workers' were considered too restrictive (Beozzo and Lisboa 1983; Lowy 1987). In the late 1980s the party renewed its positions on civil liberties, and the right to autonomous association, distancing itself from Eastern European models, while choosing Lula to run for president in 1989 under a policy of broader alliances.

⁹ Some of the existing tendencies, such as Democracia Socialista, a Trotskyist group affiliated with the Fourth International, predate the PT and continue to act in concert within it, as one of the strongest groups to the party's left. Other political parties, such as the Maoist Revolutionary Communist Party, the Partido Revolucionário Comunista (PRC) dissolved within the PT, and a majority of its members formed the tendency Democracia Radical. A majority faction, Articulação, was formed in 1983 at the party's 'center' to hold the PT together. (Keck 1992a)

Local Strategies, Global Aims: The Party in Power

What would transform the party, however, would be its successive turns in government, particularly local government, throughout the 1990s. These experiments in local administration would eventually forge the party's new relationship to civil society. As a national protest against austerity measures and hyperinflation, the national electorate chose PT mayors in 36 cities, including São Paulo and Porto Alegre, bringing roughly ten percent of Brazilians under local PT administrations. Once in power, PT administrators faced a number of difficult choices in their quest to carry out progressive platforms once in office. Administrators were constrained by a number of factors both internal and external to the party: the administration's fiscal standing, reprisal from higher levels of government, pressures from local elites, electoral pressures, as well as pressure from the party's own bases.

A principal difficulty for the PT was how to negotiate the political demands of the party's base on the new administration in a way that did not jeopardize the party's ability to govern. In early administrations, for instance, the difficulties caused by 'the *petista* imaginary, [in which] our governments are seen as governments of popular mobilization' (Trevas 1999: 54) were severe, as factions of the party tended to clash with administrators who were not perceived to be radical enough. Newly elected administrators, according to Utzig (1996), faced a choice between defining a PT administration as an administration for workers or for the whole city. One of the recurring problems of many administrations, particularly where the local movements and public sector unions comprising the PT's base were strong, centered around the inability of administrations to distance themselves from demands that could not possibly be met given current finances: 'It was thought given the affinity of interests, [...] the *petistas* "in the government" would not be able to refuse demands that they had defended until yesterday' (Couto 1994: 154). The PT was 'deeply rooted in existing organizations in civil society; many of which were against traditional institutions, but also, against the state itself' (Couto 1994: 148).

While many of the PT municipal administrations in the 1989–1992 period often ended in disastrous conflicts (with a full third of the mayors in question abandoning the PT before the end of their term and another third failing to gain re-election for the party), this period also marked a turning point in the PT's capacity to govern. By the time of the 1993–1996 administrations, the PT had become more adept at solving certain recurring problems and had given up the view that its bases of electoral support would be the most natural allies once administrators came to power. As such, PT administrations learned how to seek out broader bases of support among the underprivileged (Jacobi 1995: 160;

Pontual and Silva 1999). The “laboratories” provided by early PT administrations showed that negotiating these political conflicts would be as important as good policies and programs.

One lesson that emerged from the first large cohort of PT administrations was that where administrators successfully implemented broad-based participatory programs, these programs helped city administrators navigate the web of demands placed on them by the party’s base. These programs also helped legitimate the PT platform across a broad segment of the population at large, which also helped avert some of the earlier conflicts. This approach to popular participation represented a departure from the two principal positions within the party concerning its relationship to social movements. It was a break, first, with the minority Leninist position that the party ought to exert hegemony over movements (and use administrations as “trenches” in a larger struggle against capitalism), as well as with the second position that the party is simply a reflex of movements. The latter position implicitly narrowed the spectrum of participants: ‘We imagined that it was enough to say that the channels of participation were open to people to come intervene in the governance of public affairs. And [this was] wrong because it expressed a certain narrowness about who should participate, that is, by privileging, implicitly or explicitly the participation of our social bases, forgetting that society is complex’ (Filho 1991: 129). While almost all administrations of the 1989–1992 cohort invoked participatory reforms, many did not manage to institute broad-based participatory programs that extended beyond already organized sectors, and as a result, they were not able to shield themselves from severe conflicts.

In the best-case scenario, broad-based participation provided a solution to some of the principal dilemmas of PT administrators. It created a setting where claimants themselves could be part of the negotiation of demands, while generating legitimacy for the party’s redistributive platform, if not improving governance directly. By bringing conflicts into these participatory settings, administrators found ways to generate consensus around a redistributive platform, and helped forestall opposition to the administration. The crucial issue was that successful programs were those that relied on broad-based participation that went *beyond* already organized social movements, unions, and neighborhood associations.

The city of Porto Alegre’s participatory budgeting (PB) reforms became the model for many subsequent administrations because of its successes in governance and reelection [the PB didn’t have success in governance and reelection per se, right? It was the fact that the PB enabled better governance, and enhanced electoral success. Within the first four years the administration had succeeded in balancing municipal finances and incorporating several thousand active participants into various public fora on city investments. Largely as a result of the

success of these citizen participatory forums, the administration has kept local opposition at bay and carried out a number of ambitious reforms, such as introducing land-use taxes targeted at wealthier citizens. These taxes, have in turn funded many of the PB’s subsequent projects.

Since its first round of meetings in 1989, the PB has evolved into a complex structure of meetings throughout the city where elected delegates from civic groups such as neighborhood associations meet regularly to discuss, prioritize, and eventually monitor the types of investments needed in each district. The projects can include anything within the scope of municipal government: street pavement, water, sewage, social services, health care, housing, and primary and adult education. In addition, the structure has evolved to include thematic forums where participants can debate city priorities that are not necessarily specific to one district or neighborhood, such as culture and education, economic development, or health. Decisions are passed on to a budget council composed of two counselors from each district and two for each thematic forum who meet to “fit” the demands to the yearly budget. At the end of the year the budget is passed on to city council, where it is approved. Once projects begin, citizens are responsible for forming commissions to follow the construction.¹⁰ This experiment has been very successful, and many other PT cities have adopted similar programs. The overarching political conclusion that the PT has drawn is that broad-based participation, under a clear system of rules, has the potential of generating legitimacy for a broad-based, redistributive governmental agenda.

Participatory reforms have often served the party well, and contributing to the steadily increasing number of administrations under PT control (over 170 for the 2001–2004 term). These measures have also transformed the party, including its practice, make-up, and relationship to social movements. In the course of its twenty years of experience in government, (with over two hundred terms at the municipal level) the PT has shifted its ideology away from staid socialist slogans toward its current emphasis on radical democracy. The party has, utilized local administration to incorporate (and validate) the demands of social movements and unorganized citizens without co-opting them. The base of support for the PT today is much broader as result (Trevas 1999: 52). The PT itself has experienced a significant renewal in leadership positions as many new activists in civil society have risen “through the ranks” to become party leaders.

¹⁰. Discussions of the PB in Porto Alegre can be found in Abers(2000), and Baiocchi (2002).

But by pursuing participatory reforms as a successful political strategy, the PT has also engendered an appreciation for the inherent value in public participation and citizen debate, recognizing the need to creating spaces for such participation and debate as both the means and ends of political contestation. Such participatory reforms have created unique spaces for public debate and for the practice of citizenship, otherwise historically rare from the Brazilian political landscape (Avritzer 2002). Most PT administrators today have become wary of letting participatory programs degenerate into simple public works programs. For example, the administrations in Belem, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, and Porto Alegre (among others) have fostered participatory programs not directly tied to service provision, convening municipal conferences on topics such as AIDS, human rights, and racial discrimination. As a result of its renewed relationship to civil society, the PT has developed a record of advancing a number of new issues, beyond what might be associated with a “workers’ party.” These include advancing legislation in congress around reparations and racial equality, as well as a number of bills in congress on areas considered priorities by the women’s movement.

The history of the PT in power, therefore, is somewhat counterintuitive. Rather than repeat the rightward turn of European social democratic parties in power, the history of the PT (particularly at the municipal level) shows that the party can successfully govern, not by shifting its policies so much as by deepening its legitimacy via broad-based popular participation. Original attempts at simply going to the party’s own bases of support, such as sympathetic unions, proved disastrous, while broad participatory programs that also rallied unorganized citizens were much more successful. This broad-based participation has also transformed the party itself, renewing its relationship with and attitude towards new and plural social movements. This novel kind of party practice—relating to organized and unorganized sectors via the sponsorship of autonomous participatory spaces—would deeply influence the party’s relationship to the WSF.

The Multitude

The World Social Forum, first held in Porto Alegre in January of 2001, represents one of the most vibrant and exciting developments among global social justice movements. It is one of the most successful efforts at coalescing transnational civil society actors and networks in modern history. According to Bernard Cassen, leader of ATTAC and one of the editors of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the idea of the World Social Forum emerged from European anti-globalization activists who approached the Porto Alegre administration about hosting such an event (Cassen 2002). While neither of Brazil’s two largest social movements were present among the organizing committee, then made up largely of European

anti-globalization groups and Brazilian NGOs, the Forum quickly grew into a participatory space where civil society organizations are able to collectively imagine “another world.” In addition to workshops, lectures, testimonials, and other public events, the Forum included innumerable opportunities for the 10,000 activists present to network and build bridges among their various causes.

After the first edition, the forum’s charter was approved, and its rules now more explicitly de-emphasized the participation of those in government and those representing political parties. The Forum’s charter describes the WSF as “an open meeting place for reflective thinking, democratic debate of ideas, formulation of proposals, free exchange of experiences and linking up for effective action [...] by groups and movements in civil society that are opposed to neoliberalism and to domination of the world by capital and any form of imperialism” seeking to build global relationships. Furthermore, it is a “plural, diversified, non-confessional, non-governmental and non-party context” that brings together organizations and movements (Fisher and Ponniah 2003:354–356).¹¹

By the 2003 edition, the WSF had expanded in numbers and in themes, as participants attended at least 1,500 official workshops. The six-day gathering opened under the shadow cast by possible US invasion of Iraq, but nonetheless retained a festive atmosphere. The Forum opened and closed with a march for peace and its last panel was dedicated to the theme. By the time of this third edition, a number of Social Fora had come into being: European, Asian, and African versions had taken place in earlier months. Also, a number of allied events now took place along side the WSF: the World Education Forum, the Forum of Local Authorities Against Social Exclusion, and the World Judicial Forum, not to mention the innumerable parallel meetings that took place, such as the meeting of the US-Based “Life After Capitalism” group.

The city of Porto Alegre was chosen by the organizing committee for the third time times partially because of practical concerns. It was, after all, a sympathetic municipal government with the capacity to host such an event and the experience to carry it off, given its years of successful participatory meetings. The city also contributed significant resources (as did the state government in the first two editions when it was run by the PT). But the choice was also symbolic on the part of organizers: the city had by then become celebrated as a model of par-

¹¹ Indeed the collected resolutions between the first and second editions of the Forum show significant differences. Gone from the second are the resolutions of government officials and resolutions authored by prominent PT politicians.

ticipatory governance, and as anti-globalization activists were hard pressed for “alternatives” (given the disappointing prospects of state socialist regimes), Porto Alegre’s style of governance stood in for that alternative. It was a city run by progressive administrators based on real participatory input by the city’s least privileged. It was also a city where the left’s redistributive mission had been guided and transformed by a style of radical democracy and discussion from below.

But the PT administrators also chose to host the event, committing significant city resources in a financially difficult time. One reason is no doubt that such a gathering offers the administration some international publicity and solidarity. It is possible to imagine, for instance, that a global network of activists, inspired by their experiences in Porto Alegre, could be summoned to defend the Lula administration against international pressure from agencies such as the IMF. But another concrete reason the party chose to host the third World Social Forum is that it had evolved to a point where open-ended discussion and participation by broad sectors of civil society were highly valued as ends unto themselves. Just like the rules for the Participatory Budget,¹² for instance, the WSF is an autonomous, self-regulating, non-partisan space for discussion open to broad sectors of civil society that is sponsored by an administration run by the PT. This kind of radical democratic vision places a premium on fostering spaces for discussion which are not controlled by the party. The commitment of the PT to this perspective is amply demonstrated by the large number of political issues which the PT advocates in a non-instrumental fashion, and which may even be counter-productive in terms of electoral results. One particularly salient example is the current discussion on reparations legislation. Interaction with transnational social movements and civil society via the WSF promises to create new kinds of non-instrumental relationships between these movements and the PT. These also promise to bring into the party new demands and political identities, much as local reforms have done for the PT’s municipal chapters.

The sponsorship of the WSF also shows the evolution of the party over the 1990s. In July of 1990 the PT administration in São Paulo sponsored an international, but mostly Latin American, meeting of leftist organizations which eventually became known as the “Foro de São Paulo.”¹³ Co-sponsored by the Cuban

¹² Whether the standard rules for the PB served as a model for the WSF charter or not, there is a striking similarity in the prohibition of party activity within these spaces as well as on the autonomous and self-regulating character of participation. (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2002)

¹³ It was originally known as the meeting of Parties and Organizations of the Left in Latin America and the Caribbean. For some history, see the site <http://forodesaopaulo.org>

Communist Party, and modeled on previous Internationals, it counted with 48 communist and socialist parties, as well as unions and allied social movements from throughout the region. The Foro has continued to meet yearly, growing with each edition, and promoting a significant and on-going venue for debate and discussion among leftist organizations, at least as evidenced by its resolutions. While the Foro de São Paulo has nowhere the size or scope of the WSF, its resolutions and goals share some affinity with it: they affirm the value of citizenship, democracy, social justice, and resisting neoliberal globalization. The principal difference is on participants and privileged subjects: the Foro de São Paulo’s emphasis on organized sectors and parties reflects the PT’s earlier stance toward civil society, while the WSF reflects a decade of experiences with participatory democracy that had radicalized the party’s stance toward civil society. The practical experience of the PT in power has shown that to foster non-instrumental relationships to civil society can reinvigorate the party and generate new kinds of political visions.

The Party, the Multitude and the Contradictions of the Good Governance Road

The distance between the party and the multitude may be a lot smaller than appears at first sight. The radical participatory stance of the PT, honed through its turns in government, is one that neither seeks to bring social movements under the tutelage of the party (as its appendages) nor is it predicated on subsuming governance to the mandates of the party’s ideology. Rather, this participatory stance, as I have discussed, is one that mobilizes the instruments of government to facilitate discussion among organized and unorganized sectors in local settings so as to better negotiate their relationship to government, to the party, and to each other. This form of radical democracy turns social movements and unorganized citizens alike into discussants, and its quality depends precisely on the autonomy of these participatory spaces from party control. At Participatory Budget meetings, for instance, PT members do not participate as “party members” but rather as independent citizens or, as the case may be, as members of civil society organizations. It is not a surprise that in many cities PT members are heavily present at PB meetings because the PT has its roots in social movements. But even in those cities, rules strictly prohibit the meetings from being turned into partisan spaces.

Similarly, at the World Social Forum, PT members are heavily represented, and according to Cassen (2002), it may even be that the whole of the Brazilian organizing committee belongs to the PT. However much like with Brazilian NGOs, social movements and unions, the fact that the majority of activists in these areas are PT members does not imply that the PT “controls” their activi-

ties, or has any desire to. In like fashion, the PT did not seek to control the WSF in being its host. Rather, the party has paradoxically developed a radically participatory stance that values the autonomy of civil society and the sources of innovation it may bring.

As the PT embarks on its sojourn at national power, the relationship between the party and social movements in Brazil and abroad will likely experience tensions. The economic proposals advanced by the PT are much less radical (or more pragmatic) than the familiar calls by activists in Brazil and elsewhere to break with various international agencies and trade agreements. Rather, as Lula announced at the start, his government's position will be for "better terms on international trade." Several of the other economic choices announced by the Lula government are likely strike some movements as too moderate. The decision to raise interest rates in order to prevent capital flight, as well the choice to comply with IMF conditionalities, may be perceived as necessary within the administration, but certainly is at odds with the calls of many in the international social justice community. Nonetheless, maintaining a relationship with transnational social movements via the WSF can be politically productive for both the PT and those in the struggle for social justice. On one hand, learning about the challenges of progressive national governance can be a useful education for all of those who oppose the current parameters of globalization. But one can also imagine that in 2005, when the next WSF is scheduled in Porto Alegre, that Lula's government will be taken to task by sympathetic but critical observers in a way that will be impossible to ignore within the party.

Ultimately, the relationship between progressive party and social movement as currently exemplified in the WSF, as well as in PT experiments in governance, may serve as a model for those involved in global justice causes. One of the truly novel features of the WSF is in fact this relationship: a leftist party involved in governance investing resources and energy to foster autonomous spaces of discussion in which it does not even participate. It is not, as Hardt writes, that party leaders craft "resolutions[...] but can never grasp the democratic power of movements," and that parties will be eventually "swept up in the multitude (Hardt, 2002:118)." Rather, the relationship between party and movement is founded on very different terms, and not predicated on opposing logics. Social movements and the multitude would not have a space to appropriate in the WSF were it not for the institutional resources and projects of the party. Most of the multitude also realize that until a very different framework for globalization emerges, social justice struggles will have to go through an institutional moment when the regulatory power of states will be called upon, and when "traditional" actors like parties will need to be set in motion. Re-imagining the boundaries of this relationship, even while acknowledging that it is full of contradictions, is an urgent

task for those the struggle for global social justice. Creating an artificial distinction between party and multitude in this context ignores the history and context of the relationship between the PT and social movements. But worse, it irresponsibly offers as a prescription the abandonment of the institutional contest and the engagement with political parties. To follow such a prescription would indeed guarantee that party and multitude stand apart, which would lead not to parties being "swept up in the multitude" but to the sweeping away of both parties and multitude by stronger and much less democratic forces.

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