SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL CULTURE[*]

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SUMMARY

This paper reports on a research of popular participation in low income neighborhoods in the Southern state of Santa Catarina, Brazil[1]. The aim was to study the relationship between sociopolitical participation and democratic changes in Brazilian political culture. The first part of the text situates the problem of participation in the current debate over change in political culture in Brazil, and in particular over the legacy of populist state-led mobilization and the demobilization promoted by the military authoritarian regime. The second part of the report discusses data gathered in three low-income neighborhoods in S. Catarina about sociopolitical participation, and local changes in the normative claims used by the residents, to justify participatory action. This discussion is based on previous studies of cognitive and moral development, using categories of Habermas' communicative action and Kohlberg's moral/cognitive development theories.

Keywords: participation, political culture, democratization, local government

Continuity and change in Brazilian political culture

> "Whoever controls the interpretation of the past in our professional history writing, has gone a long way toward controlling the future" (Gabriel Almond, 1988:828).

Professional history writing in the area of studies of Brazilian political culture is yet to be done. However, existing studies on Brazilian political culture could be divided with a good deal of simplification, in two different trends: those that look at the data in terms of the past, and those that look at the same data in terms of the future. This "shorthand" suggests that some emphasize the legacy of authoritarian demobilization under the military regime, and the patterns of state-led populist politics prior to 1964; while others focus on the electorate's potentials for learning and experiencing in the present context of democratization.

My colleagues of **Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul** have conducted surveys of political culture in Southern Brazil since 1968. They presented (Baquero and

Pra, 1992) a longitudinal analysis of political culture and citizenship construction, according to Almond/Verba's and other classic works in the literature[2]. The results indicate that "in the **gaucho** political culture the predominant subject-type attitudes contrast to those of participant political culture - which are considered necessary for an effective democratic consolidation" (p.88). They add that "the lack of active participation in political action is a symptom of a society that has not yet established stable political structures that arouse interest among the citizens" (p.109). Rather, the data portray "a transitional process from traditional political attitudes towards subject-type attitudes. The latter, in turn, provide the basis for the development of participatory attitudes - which, however, will depend on the direction taken by the process of democratic consolidation"[3] (p.108).

This interpretation converges with other influential evaluations of Brazilian political culture, which emphasize the present legacies of past state-led populism and/or authoritarian demobilization under the military regime (e.g. Banck, 1993; von Mettenheim, 1992; Guillon Albuquerque, 1990). These conclusions in relation to Southern Brazil are also important, for demystifying some common sense assumptions about civic traditions and levels of sociopolitical participation at the regional level, supposed to be higher vis-à-vis Brazilian standards.

In fact, the data presented by Baquero-Pra show a relative continuity over time in some basic indicators of political awareness and participation in Porto Alegre (the capital of Rio Grande do Sul). These results are comparable both to the national data in 1989/90, and to data from the other Southern state (Santa Catarina, 1989) where I did my own research in low-income neighborhoods (1992).

Table I - Political awareness and participation in southern Brazil
(Figures denote %)

	PORTO ALEGRE*			NATIONAL			SANTA	CATARINA	
	1968	1976	1982	1985	1986	1989	1990	1989	1992
1) Interested in politics	67	56	51	60	-	63	77	55	59
2) Politics influences your life?	52	55	56	-	-	63	72	62	78
3) Reads or views political new	48	53	30	31	48	68	78	55	64
4) Participation in political campains	-	-	26	29	27	8	24	18	45

NOTES - (*) Porto Alegre is the capital of the Southern state Rio Grande do Sul;

These data were collected by the Universidade Federal.

SOURCES - For 1968 until 1986: Baquero and Reis Pra (1992).

       For 1989 and 1990: Moisés (1992).

       For 1992: Krischke (1993).

However, this relative continuity with the past merits a closer scrutiny in terms of methodology and logitudinal analysis. For one thing, longitudinal analysis on the national level shows both a striking increase in some indicators (e.g. opposition to military involvement in politics) and remarkable stability in other aspects (e.g. a divided opinion on support to political parties) during the transition and attempted consolidation of civilian rule (cf. Table II). And the data for 1992 in Santa Catarina (Tables I, IV and V) were collected only in three low-income neighborhoods, which we assumed to be relatively more politicized. This assumption will be discussed below.

Table II - Opinion-change in Brazil: democratic institutions and political participation
(Figures denote %)

INSTITUTIONS	1972	1982	1989	1990
1) Favorable to military involvement in politics	79	52	46	36
2) Favorable to political parties	51	71*	50	56
3) Against government control over unions/ strike activity	07	42	62	70
PARTICIPATION				
4) Favorable to participation in elections	57	82*	66	71
5) Favorable to the vote of illiterates	38	60	59	56
6) Favorable to the idea that "people know how to vote"	50	47	52	-

SOURCES - Data for 1972 and 1982: Rochon and Mitchell (1987)
Data for 1989 and 1990: Moisés (1992).
(*) The first direct election for state governors since 1965 was held in 1982.

If Baquero-Pra's longitudinal analysis is valid for Porto Alegre and other cities in Southern Brazil, one must ask how "Subject-oriented" deferential attitudes relate to the election of "Popular Front" left-center candidates for City Hall in 1992, in Porto Alegre (where the PT - Workers' Party was **reelected**) and in two of the cities studied in Santa Catarina (including the state capital, where the new mayor is a member of the Communist Party). Undoubtedly there must be an explanation that Baquero and Pra will be capable to present, in light of their long-term analysis. To my mind this could have to do with the legacy of populist politics, which is especially strong in Rio Grande do Sul (though now relatively disconnected from Vargas and his heir Leonel Brizzola - who supported a separate candidate for the last election in Porto Alegre). This legacy is also present in S. Catarina, where Brizzola's party joined in the different "Popular Fronts" that won in two of the cities studied below.

However, a fresh look at electoral change is being proposed by those studies of political culture, that emphasize the opportunities for learning and experiencing (the "future") now open to the Brazilian electorate. José Alvaro Moisés (1992) for example, has emphasized that in spite of the enduring demobilizing effects of the military regime, there are data on the top levels of political sophistication of the electorate that include:

"(...) not only the segments of the elite or groups close to it (because of inequalities of access to education) but also different segments among the mass public, which despite their lack of resources, feel the impact of politics in their lives, become interested in politics and experience the results of political

resocialization (...) In countries like Brazil this comes partly from the mobilization and organization of the poorest sectors in pursuit of a less unequal distribution of resources (like education) (...) Political sophistication is much greater when the population is concentrated in middle-ranking and larger cities. The level of sophistication is connected with the variables that form the 'tripod' of political participation — income, education and occupation"[4] (p.15-17).

Table III - Levels of political sophistication among Brazilian voters by size of municipality, income and education (1989), and support of democracy (figures denote %)

	Brazil	Urban	Medium Cities	Income[1] 0-5	5-10	More Than 10	Education Elementary[2]	Secondary	Higher	support of Democracy[3]
High	11	14	13	07	16	28	05	17	43	70
Medium	43	46	52	42	54	54	39	55	47	46
Low	46	40	35	51	30	18	56	28	10	30

SOURCE: Moisés (1992).

NOTES: (1) Income figures are given in multiples of minimum wage.

(2) Elementary education includes illiterates.

(3) Percentages in this column are on the totals for each level of sophistication.

Moisés adopted Neuman's (1986) "theory of the three publics", and created a scale to measure the differences in levels of sophistication of the Brazilian electorate. The scale correlated the usual indicators for political culture and socioeconomic resources - around such criteria as the mobilization of information, the salience of politics for the interviewees, and their capacity to conceptualize political life. He finally correlated these levels of sophistication with the interviewees' preference for democracy. He concluded that:

"The most sophisticated tend to classify themselves preponderantly on the democratic end of the continuum; the least sophisticated at the authoritarian end (...) The public situated in the intermediate strata are divided almost equally among the three positions in the continuum (...)" (Hence the latter) "- nearly 50% of the electorate - is playing a crucial role in the consolidation of a democratic culture. It is composed of sectors that possess the minimal cognitive and informational resources required for public life to function. It therefore forms the core structure upon which any strategy to consolidate democracy for the long-term has to be based" (pp.17-19).

We have already noted that this "future-oriented" approach to change in the political culture relies on the same indicators of the literature that emphasizes the legacies of the past. However, it specifies methods of empirical analysis that underline the open-ended characteristics of political/cultural change. Other Brazilian studies oriented to the "future" (e.g. Lamounier and Souza, 1989; Figueiredo, 1990) may be less comparable (if at all) with the classic approach derived from Almond/Verba - for they rely on rational choice, adaptive or other theories of change. Moisés' proposal, however, may be compatible with the "subject-attitude" hypothesis advanced by Baquero and Pra — though he demonstrates that the range of situations of the general public is broader than the apparent homogeneity highlighted by the classic typological studies.

Moreover, the focus suggested by Moises, on processes of resocialization, due to experience and learning in political and social life, has additional consequences for research: 1) It points to the need for studies on processes of **social** participation, to see whether they influence resocializations and thereby eventually effect political outcomes; 2) It also suggests that studies should be made, on changes in the patterns of cognitive development, that are relatively independent from access to formal education and which relate to the learning experiences flowing from participation of low-income groups and organizations in society. The following section of this paper draws on these two topics through a preliminary analysis of social and political participation in three low-income neighborhoods in Santa Catarina.

Case studies of socio/political participation and cultural democratization

> "By their very nature, cultural values are at best **candidates** for embodiment in norms that are designed to express a general interest. Participants can distance themselves from norms and normative systems that have been set off from the totality of social life, only to the extent necessary to assume a hypothetical attitude toward them, (...that) covers only practical questions that can be debated rationally, i.e., those that hold out the prospect of consensus. It deals not with value preferences but with the normative validity of norms of action" (Habermas, 1990:104, emphasis in the original).

There are many heated debates in the literature about political culture and sociopolitical participation, that are very far from settled, and whose general lines do not have to concern us here. The main point that leads the analysis below - of different cases of sociopolitical participation in low-income neighborhoods - is that respondents can best (in fact, can only - says Habermas) interpret their actions through a reflexive evaluation of the normative validity of those actions - a reflection and validity shared with others (the interviewer included)[5].

A preliminary remark is in order here, to qualify the use below of the framework proposed by Habermas (derived from Kohlberg and Piaget) of "stages of moral and cognitive development". The framework does not assume that the process is linear or evolutionary, but rather that understanding change requires the use of a conceptual or analytical scale. For instance, we start below with the more complex situation of **Bairro** A, because it will enable us also to understand the less complex situations of **Bairros** B and C. Moreover, we are not therefore attempting to classify any of these **bairros** as being

"superior" and/or "inferior" on the basis of its stage of "moral and cognitive develpment". We are rather attempting to assess their political cultures ("cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations") in the terms of the relative complexity of their shared normative validity.

A second methodological remark is that the data presented in the Tables about Santa Catarina (1992) were collected and organized using technical assumptions of survey research, i.e. they were considered as aggregate individual orientations that provide meaningful clusters for probability inferences. However, these data were not collected from a statistical representative sample of the state's population, but rather from 130 interviewees - a random sample of each of the three low-income neighborhoods. Our intention is not to make correlations among those data, but rather to see how these three case studies compare with the results of surveys of broader representative samples[6].

The main assumption of the following analysis is that the characteristics of the **bairros** are better interpreted through the shared visions and discourses of their own inhabitants. For example, Sra. Alice[7] has lived in **Bairro** A since the late 70s, when the neighborhood was settled. She migrated with her family from the surrounding countryside because her husband had lost his job due to the closing of a lumber factory — caused by indiscriminate deforestation. The couple and two children came to the bairro because they had heard that the municipal government was proposing to finance low-income housing neighborhoods, and the husband expected to work there as a carpenter. Local government financed the land and construction materials, through a long-term loan to the residents. The neighbors worked to build their own houses, under technical supervision from the municipality.

Sra. Alice said that those early days were very exciting, and "marked forever" the neighbors' ways of life and organization. Sra. Alice is now in her late forties and displays a great vitality. Her husband has retired and receives a very small pension; thus she supplements family income with her work as seamstress. Their two sons have already married and moved from the parents' house. Therefore she finds enough time to participate in the board of the neighborhood association (where she has "always been active in the rank-and-file").

Sra. Alice said the neighbors were initially very pleased with the low payments they had to pay for their houses, when they moved in. Since the beginning they became organized in a voluntary association that held regular elections and tried to solve the problems of the **bairro**. Sra. Alice recognized "there were quarrels sometimes among the neighbors", and "different factions competed" in the yearly board elections. But they always "managed to reach an agreement", in which the contenders had "to sacrifice something in their positions", for the sake of "the welfare of all".

In fact this experience of participatory municipal government became well known in Brazil, as a showcase of civilian opposition to the military regime. However, during the next municipal election campaign, the candidate of the pro military regime party visited **Bairro** A. He promised to reduce the monthly installments paid by the neighbors, in "case they voted him in, and he promised even to cancel all the debt" if the whole neighborhood supported his candidacy. This candidate used a similar strategy with other sectors and groups in the city during his campaign, and he was therefore elected. But, as "the population was divided", and "the majority of **Bairro** A did not vote him in", the debt of the neighbors was not canceled, but only for a few "**cabos eleitorais**" (party workers). Nevertheless, the debt was gradually reduced and was finally canceled by the new mayor, when the next election approached.

In the meantime the neighbors' association searched for support from the state government, which was now in the hands of the party of the opposition to the regime (the same that had started the housing project in **Bairro** A, in the late 70s). Even so, the conservative party won the next round of municipal elections again, though this time by a small percentage of the vote. Sra. Alice recalls that the neighbors pointed out at the time, that "any party that wanted a majority support should unite with other parties and win popular support". For "popular division only favors those who oppress the people".

In the gubernatorial election in 1990, the residents of **Bairro** A faced the hard choice of either supporting their friends already in power, or (foreseeing their probable defeat) supporting the conservatives who occupied City Hall. The vote of **Bairro** A was again divided, with 51% supporting the conservatives. However, abstention was high (24%), and at the national level it was rampant (especially in view of the fact that voting is mandatory): it reached 52% (including annulled votes). Sra. Alice explained: "when one goes to vote the cabin is closed and no one knows what the other does inside; parties and our association cannot and do not want to control anyone's vote; persons are free to chose what they want even when they are wrong". But after this doctrinal explanation she said the real problem was that "the parties of the center and the left did not arrive at a common platform and candidacy" for the state election.

When we did our fieldwork in early 1992, Sra. Alice was very convinced that neighbors from **Bairro** A would support a left-center candidacy, "because parties are forgetting their differences and preparing a common program to help the people, as they did in the late 70s". In fact, as Table IV shows, 40% of the neighbors preferred politicians from the left parties, and 66% supported an eventual party coalition for the local government. The November municipal election confirmed this early prediction.

The life history of **Bairro** A and Sra. Alice is a history of awareness building, through social and political participation. In other **bairros** there are other life histories. For instance, Bert is a worker we interviewed in **Bairro** B, of the largest industrial city of the state. He is a typical local industrial laborer, from German ethnic background, who had a secondary education and a technical manual job (trained by the **Escola Técnica**, a high school maintained by industry and government grants). He migrated from a family farm nearby, and came to study in the city as a young man. He was 30 years old when interviewed, was married to an industrial worker, and they had a small child. He said they joined the housing project at bairro B because they paid less here than the rent elsewhere, and could thus obtain a house of their own.

A fellow worker drew him to the municipal housing project, and his employer gave him a recommendation as a good worker with job stability. He had been working at this factory since 1983, and moved to the neighborhood in 1988. Bert said that "most people in the neighborhood liked very much being there", but "few participated in the meetings of the local association". These meetings were called by social workers and other municipal employees responsible for the housing project. The neighborhood was carefully planned, organized and controlled by these municipal officials. Bert says that the neighbors' participation was done through "voting in the assemblies, on proposals presented by the officials". They neither had ("nor needed", he said) an elected board: "the officials are good, and take care of everything, avoiding conflicts and differences among the neighbors". In fact, the bairro even had its own police post, "which watches over everything". The only problem Bert saw in this model/process of social organization was that "the government sometime forgets, or does not pay attention" to demands made locally, and "does things in the **bairro** without telling anybody what is going to happen"[8].

Considering the satisfaction of the neighbors with the local government, it is not surprising that the conservative parties that have been in power in this city for so long always received a majority vote. However, the 1992 municipal elections were very competitive, for all parties ran separately and no coalition was formed. In fact, a runoff election had to be held, and conservatives won by joining forces, against the center-left parties which remained divided. The neighborhood's prospective voting pattern was similar: right wing parties and politicians received the largest support and the people were not in favor of forming a coalition.

The relatively high electoral participation of **Bairro** B contrasts with the lower social participation of the neighbors in their association. Hence it is clear that this model of participation tends to demobilize the population and that social demobilization is part of a "conservative-modernization" strategy of the right wing to remain in power. This strategy, implemented by local and state authorities, was earlier conceived at state level — as a response to and a cooptation of, the participatory experiences (such as that of **Bairro** A)[9], formerly promoted in the late 70s by the parties of the left-center opposition to the military regime.

Let us look now at our last case. Carlos is a street vendor who makes a living in the central park of the capital of Santa Catarina. For 12 years he has continuously struggled to defend his house in **Bairro** C where he lives with his wife and 4 children in a two room wooden shack. This **bairro** is a group of 50 shacks along two streets, without sidewalks, pavement, sewers or any kind of services. They only obtained electricity and running water three years ago, by joining the "**Sem Tetos**" (No Roof - or Pro Shelter) movement, which is sponsored by church sectors and the PT (Workers' Party). Due to this broader political support, **Bairro** C managed to have the authorities issue documents legally recognizing their land ownership and residential status as part of the urban area[10].

Since its beginning, Carlos' life history is one of conflicts and hardship, when these neighbors first invaded public grounds in the center of the city in the early 80s, and settled there as squatters. There followed a long decade of fear and uncertainty, when these people were first misled by various politicians, and by promises of the administration; they then faced attempts at removal by force, and brutal police repression. For over a decade, these residents were: once "removed from the center of the city into its outskirts": three times "threatened with eviction to another place" both by city authorities and private groups competing for their land; twice were "surrounded by police forces armed with machine guns, dogs, and horses"; and several times had to suffer "gunfire aggression in the neighborhood, involving competing drug dealers and policemen". The question immediately arises: why did they stay there? And Carlos' answer is very straightforward: "Where should we go? The government first said we should come here, so we stayed...".

That is why he also said: "In this neighborhood we don't believe in anybody, everyone comes here as a liar and our enemy. The only ones I trust is my own family, because my wife and children depend on me". After saying this he reconsidered and added: "Well, Sister X and Dr. Y" (the nun and the lawyer who supported them in the "Pro Shelter" movement) "are different: they are good and tell us how to claim our rights and become organized".

The characteristics of these three neighborhoods fit quite well into Habermas/ Kohlberg's categories for cognitive/moral development. These categories analyze cognitive structures and social perspectives around three basic types of action: preconventional, conventional and postconventional[11].

Posconventional action-discourses rely on principles for testing the validity of norms, and they are the highest stage of cognitive/moral development present in contemporary societies. For they compare existing social validity norms to ideal standards or principles, in the interactions of daily life. The basic motivation of postconventional types of action is the affirmation of group and individual autonomy, around perspectives that are prior to society and oriented by principles of justice. We saw above how **Bairro** A sustained its neighborhood association through consensual norms, where an ideal standard of wellbeing prevailed over divisive tendencies and sociopolitical changes. Its autonomy was affirmed in the criticism of parties and politicians, through a careful distinction between different strategies of action, and the ultimate aims of building a society free from oppression.

The high levels of sociopolitical participation and party identification of this community were thus oriented to building up a coalition in the city at large, in order to oust the conservatives from government. This neighborhood certainly included neighbors who support populist politicians - indeed a minority in **Bairro** A. But they participate in cognitive and organizational experiences conducive to a higher stage of moral development: that which strives for justice as an end in itself, and they struggle to adjust the course of their daily life to this aim.

By contrast, **conventional** types of action focus on role behavior, structured in group-wide generalization of social roles. Their conceptualization of authority is based on loyalty to supraindividual will. The motivation of conventional actors is to make duty prevail over personal inclination, and duty is internalized from a primary-group perspective in conformity to prevailing social roles (stage 3 of moral development). This seems to be the basic situation of "subject-oriented" and populist attitudes of loyalty and deference.

Bairro B is an example of this conformity to prevailing social roles - though in this case the dominant note is not a populist charismatic allegiance, but a conformity to "conservative modernization" parties and policies. This stage 3 of moral development is usually incapable of accomodating differences and dissent through the legitimacy of a system of norms for action (in fact the latter only emerges in the normatively governed interactions of stage 4 of conventional moral judgement).

However, dissent may arise all the same, for there is already a cognitive coordination between observer and participant perspectives, and the confrontations between duty and inclination may generate divergencies - as we observed in the data on minority vote, etc. Therefore, there are also dissident minorities in **Bairro** B, who would prefer the left-center politicians and/or competition among party coalitions - instead of the prevailing domination on the basis of a conformity to roles.

Finally, **preconventional** types of action are either based on self-interest or controlled by authority. Their cognitive structures interlock submissive perspectives and particularist behavior, where authority is externally imposed via reference persons. Adherence to these persons is based on reward/punishment motivations, from an egocentric perspective. The conceptualization of justice may be either a complementarity between order and obedience (stage 1 of moral judgement) or symmetry of compensations (stage 2). **Bairro** C seems to be in a transition between these two stages of preconventional action and moral judgement.

For one thing, their action has been oriented by self-interest from the beginning; but it is now controlled by the authority of referent persons. The reward/punishment motivations were formerly applied to a complementarity between order/obedience, in

relation to the government. They are now used in a symmetry of compensations with their present external referents - in this case, church and PT militants.

It is striking to see that, despite the high levels of demobilization, apathy and alienation of **Bairro** C (Table IV), these neighbors may have supported the candidacy of the center/left coalition that won the municipal elections of 1992. This may be related also to the fact that both a Communist mayor was elected, alongside a majority of conservative council members (who have a strong clientele in many low-income neighborhoods). Therefore, these voters may easily change their minds in case they do not find immediate rewards - in their conceptualization of justice as "symmetry of compensations".

In conclusion, this summary use of Habermas/Kholberg's categories covers a considerable proportion of the internal variations one may find, looking closely at the apparently homogeneous indexes of sociopolitical participation of these three neighborhoods. The group with the longest and most successful life-history among these neighborhoods is **Bairro** A - which also presents the highest state of cognitive/moral development.

Table IV - Political preferences before the municipal elections in Santa Catarina (1992). (Figures denote %)

	1) Has party preference			2) In 1990 voted in:			3) Favorite politician:			4) Favors party coalition:
	Yes	No	Don't know	Right	Left	Abstained/ Don't know	Right	Left	Don't know	
Community A	75	27	07	51	24	25	29	40	31	66
Community B	52	49	15	42	10	48	21	28	51	36
Community C	33	21	21	33	-	67	29	17	54	58
All Communities	57	34	12	43	14	34	26	32	42	54

SOURCE: Krischke (1993).

Both **Bairros** B and C, in turn, indicate the vulnerability of low-income neighborhoods to state-led and populist manipulation. They provide additional evidence to Baquero-Pra's assertion that a "subject" type of orientation tends to prevail in Southern Brazil. On the other hand, the case of **Bairro** A is surely exceptional, because it arose out of the party program of the civilian opposition to the previous authoritarian regime. The latter's experience can (and should) certainly be extended to other places, as the national study by Moisés on popular sophistication has suggested. This potential is illustrated by the apparent homogeneity of the neighborhoods, in the right column of Table V.

Table V - Social and political participation in Brazil and Santa Catarina
(Figures denote %)

	Brazil	1989	1990	Santa Catarina	1989	1992
1) Politics influence your life		63	72		62	78
2) Reads or views political news		68	78		55	64
3) Talks to others about politics		44	51		29	30
4) Tries to convince others how to vote		31	53		29	32
5) Goes to meetings and associations		23	25		31	67
6) Participates in electoral campaigns		08	24		18	45
7) Has party preference	44	48		33	57	

SOURCES - 1989 (Brazil and S. Catarina); 1990: Moisés (1992).
1992: Krischke (1993).

However, there is a long and sad history of cooptation of participatory politics in Brazil. The comparison above, among three case studies of neighborhood sociopolitical participation in Santa Catarina is an obvious case in point. For the experience of **Bairro** A - which is to this day a "showcase" about the possible results of participatory democratic mobilization - instead of stimulating other experiences, served as a warning for the rightist parties to implement their "conservative modernization" strategies (e.g., **Bairro** B), and also for their overt repression and manipulative domination of popular defiance (e.g., **Bairro** C).

It remains to be seen whether the left-center forces in Brazilian politics will be able to learn from their experiences, and in turn propose a coalition program and strategy to educate the electorate politically. For as Moises has reminded us all, there is a crucial 50% of the population who have a moderate political sophistication, and may either support a democratic program, or turn to some "conservative modernizer" - or even to a populist demagogue, in every next election.

Therefore, if both Baquero-Pra and Moisés are right, the point is how to strike a balance for a party coalition and a government program - and not only for a successful electoral campaign. Such a program and coalition would have to combine the legacy of subject-oriented and state-led politics with an active strategy of democratic sociopolitical participation - one that would be applicable to different segments of the population, their representative parties and leadership. For such a combination could be the only way to

consolidate a democratic regime and national political culture in Brazil (incidentally confirming Almond/Verba's classic definition of a "balanced" political culture).

Endnotes

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[2]The classic study of Almond and Verba on the "Civic Culture" (1963) suggests that a stable democratic polity requires a "balanced" political culture (the "civic culture"), which combines both a participatory and a deferential attitude toward politics. This combination of participatory and "subject" orientations may vary (as illustrated by the cases of American and British cultures). But it contrasts with other "unbalanced" cultural "blends", which combine various levels of commitment and/or involvement in political life, and do not provide stability for democratic politics.

[3]Baquero/Pra's study shows that there is a "growing dissatisfaction, apathy and a feeling of inefficacy of the citizens toward politics, the political parties and the dilemmas of the political transition" (p.95). "Parochial participation may emerge and blend with a parochial alienation, resulting in various dissenting subcultures" (p.97). In short, "subject orientations must precede participatory orientations" (p.98). Otherwise "passive, modern (...) or alienated parochialism, plus other deviant subcultures" may emerge (p.102) and impede the consolidation of a democratic culture. Nevertheless, the study shows that we are in a "transitional situation, that extends from the traditional to the subject types of orientation"(p.108) - "though we are far from a political culture characterized by participatory attitudes."

[4]Moisés adds: "Although not a causal phenomenon, it shows that starting from the assumption that sophistication precedes commitment to values, we can reach the conclusion that the degree of heterogeneity in sophistication encountered in middle groups is closely associated with their differentiation in terms of commitment to political values" (p.17).

[5]In the last few years there has been a "renaissance of political culture" studies (Inglehart, 1988), which revived earlier criticisms of Almond/Verba (e.g. Pateman, 1979), together with new debates on the actual transformation of the concept - into what is considered by some as a "residual variable" (Lane, 1992). In this chapter I have adopted a provisional definition of political culture, in terms of "moral reasoning development". This definition was derived by Stephen Chilton (1990:68), from, the Habermas'/Kohlberg's approach, as "a way of relating 'shared' only if it is **publicly common** within the collectivity". This means that this "way of relating" "shares" validity claims for norms of action that are "common" and "public" among participants in interactions, for they are (a) understood by most in that culture (a **common** understanding); and (b) in fact used by them to orient to one another on sociopolitical matters (the **public** focus of orientation). An extreme consequence of this approach may be the one suggested by Wildavsky (1987), that "each nation is a mixture of cultures". However, one subculture may come to dominate over the others, accepted (and/or imposed) as a "national" political culture.

[6]This is certainly a powerful claim to correct (but not to invalidate) the usual aim of survey research on political culture — that of inferring the general characteristics of value-systems from aggregate individual responses to questionnaires. The correction goes in the direction of affirming the probabilistic limits of survey research — provided that overgeneralization of value inferences be avoided, and a new emphasis be focused on the normative validation by respondents of sociopolitical actions. On the other hand, survey research should be always accompanied with case studies of subcultures and historical analysis, ir order to substantiate value inferences (i.e. to test whether they can in fact be substantiated).

[7]The three low-income neighborhoods were chosen on the assumption that they represented different forms of sociopolitical organization, participation and normative orientation - as in fact was shown to be the case. The main preliminary criterion for selection was that these **bairros** were all involved in

government negotiations, social struggles and policies, over low-income housing. The bench mark for the contrasting situations was the situation of **Bairro** A - a long-established experience of sociopolitical participation that had an impact on the housing policies in the state. They were also selected because these neighborhoods were formed on three different occasions, over the last two decades, and under different local and state governments. An additional sociogeographic criterion was that the case studies were located in different regions of the state of Santa Catarina: **Bairro** A in a medium-size city in the cattle-growing and lumber region of the **planalto**; **Bairro** B in the largest and most industrialized city of the state; **Bairro** C in the capital, - which is primarily a center of public administration, tourism and commerce.

[8]The names and personalities of the interviewees are fictional. Their life-histories are constructed from the "shared" experiences and responses of various respondents in each neighborhood.

[9]Cf. the MA thesis of Liliane Moser (1991).

[10]Cf. the MA thesis of Edinara Andrade (1991).

[11]Cf. the MA thesis of Francisco Canella (1992).

[12]What follows is an analysis of the data based on Habermas (1990:116-196).