

*The Crisis of Democracy. What crisis?
What democracy? The case of Brazil or
saving the world by-and-for-Uncle Sam.*

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Abstract:

During the 1990s it became clear that democracy's global extension had not brought a matching degree of popular affection. In this paper I seek to explain this phenomenon by exploring the process of democratisation that began in Brazil in the mid-1970s. I argue that disenchantment was the predictable outcome of the mode of transition advocated by S.P. Huntington and by the 'transitologists' whose perspective emerged from the response to the mid-seventies 'crisis of democracy'. I argue that to the enfeebled citizenship which this produced was added a demobilisation of the class politics which had emerged in Brazil around the PT. With the democratising energies of liberalism and socialism curtailed I suggest that we may have to look to a new community-populist-politics if we are to go beyond the restricted options that Sam Huntington recommended in his 1988 plan to 'save the world'.

During the 1990s it became clear that the global extension of democracy had not brought a matching increase in popular affection for democratic practice. Each language seemed to have a word to express what was perhaps the only universal sentiment of the new era- in Spanish -speaking Latin-America it was *desencanto* ('disenchantment'); in the newly-united Germany , *politikverdrossenheit* ('weariness with politics'). By the early 1990s even the academic proponents of the new democratic order -the 'transitologists' of the move from authoritarianism to democracy- were beginning to register their concern that the infant at whose delivery they had been such solicitous if wary advisers had turned out to be 'a new monster'. Adam Przeworski's anxiety that what had developed were 'democracies without an effective citizenship for large sections of the political community' was given a wider and bolder conceptualisation by Guilleme O'Donnell who warned in 1994 that what was emerging in many of the new democracies-though perhaps satisfying one of the most influential formulations of procedural democracy, Dahl's polyarchy- would not constitute representative democracy. Rather what had developed was what he called 'delegative democracy': political systems dominated by presidential figures reliant upon plebiscitary endorsement and summary-*(decretismo)*- effectivity whose ersatz-populism resulted in (neo-liberal) economic packages and public cynicism. Such systems can display, O'Donnell noted somewhat ruefully, 'a rather remarkable capacity for endurance', though he wondered whether the masses would accept this state of affairs(Przeworski,1995:34; O.Donnell: 56,60,65-6,68).

To this question as to the 'masses' likely response- a rather ironic one in view of previous concern to keep those same masses at bay in the crafting of new democracies- there were at least two, paradoxical and troubling, responses. If, as Kenneth Roberts has suggested, we have recently entered a third phase in the study of democratization in Latin America, a phase which, following the focus upon transition and consolidation, concerns itself with the 'character and quality of democratic practices' in Latin America, then a worrying fact begins to confront us. Namely that , as Roberts puts it, the 'unprecedented durability' of Latin America's new democracies is a function of their 'weakness' in transmitting popular demands and the 'timidity' of the challenge to traditional social and political domination.In short, 'democracy may survive because popular sectors are too weak or restrained' to mobilize against elite interests and to place 'substantive alternatives 'on the policy agenda (Roberts:2,7).More troubling still, however, than the proposition that democracy is flourishing because the people are enfeebled is the second response to this question of the masses' tolerance.It is that this result -of mass disenchantment and weariness- was wholly predictable; that indeed it was a condition of the 'new' democracy's birth and the commencement of its

'third wave' , and that the strategy of the school of political scientists of which O'Donnell and Przeworski were influential members was instrumental in this outcome

It is this possibility that I explore in this essay. I do so by a consideration of three aspects of the political formation of the 'democratic' Brazil which has emerged since the mid-1980s. The focus will be on the political economy of the country, and specifically on the fate of the most significant democratic force to emerge in that country-or indeed anywhere else in contemporary Latin America- the labour movement and its articulation through the twin organisations, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT) and the Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT). The startling advances -but also the enforced retreats- of these two movements hold, I believe, the key to the question posed by Roberts as to the new democracies' qualitative character. I shall follow this discussion with a consideration of Brazil's political culture in which I will examine whether ,with the retreat of an insurgent politics of class, we can find alternative democratizing energies in a different politics of community. I begin ,however, with the question of political ideology. Here I will confront the circumstances that produced an enfeebled politics of citizenship and whose origins are to be found in a 'crisis of democracy ' which developed in the mid-1970s and whose perception and solution decisively shaped the outcomes associated with the emergence of democracy as the globally ascendant but collectively unregarded ideology it has become at the beginning of a new millenium.

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Arguing that the origins and shaping force of the political ideology associated with current democratic practice are to be found in the mid-1970s and, additionally, in the politics of the advanced capitalist 'west' , is likely to raise a number of objections. From the 'left' -in both its earlier, Third Worldist , phase and its current, post-colonial, incarnations- will come the charge of an unwitting-or worse, complicit- imperialism which obscures the creativity of the 'dependent' world. From the 'right' will come the charge of conspiracy-mongering: of imputing strategies where there were only suggestions and assuming achievements where there were only aspirations. I shall argue, against both responses, for the central importance and capability of the 'core', capitalist states as definers of global possibilities and their preponderant influence in securing outcomes favourable to their requirements. I shall focus upon the work of S.P. Huntington-and associated authors, especially Zbigniew Brzezinski-and upon his political activities in charting a course for the onset of the 'democratic' transition

in Brazil which proved , following Huntington in this if no other respect, one of the formative processes in shaping contemporary democratic practice.

Stressing Huntington's influence in relation to the mid-seventies crisis helps to resolve a problem noted by a number of writers who have sought to explain the pre-eminence of democracy as a political form in the 1990s. Thus Przeworski's has commented upon the 'dramatic change' from the post-war period when democracy, although revindicated' by almost all regimes, was heavily qualified by 'adjectives that were supposed to reflect national traditions, local cultures or ideological projects', to the 1990s when 'modernization means liberal-democracy, consumption-oriented culture, and capitalism' (Przeworski,1995:4). From a different ideological perspective Paul Cammack-in his review of the school of political analysis of which Huntington was a leading member- notes that it was 'strange' how an approach that signally failed to develop as a 'scientific theory of political development' in the 1960s should nevertheless have seen its 'core values'- 'elite rule, limited popular participation and...free enterprise' adopted globally in the 1990s (Cammack:30). How to explain this 'great transformation'? Both Przeworski and Cammack resort to general and descriptive explanations, essentially no more than a list of key features in the 'landslide' of the last third of the century-the development of globalization and the emergence of the New Right, the successes of East Asian 'capitalism' and the failures of East European 'socialism' (Przeworski,1995:4-5; Cammack:32-3). What this misses, I would argue, is a 'moment of decision 'or rupture in the mid-seventies which marked a profound shift of direction in global politics, a key consequence of which is the current form of democratic politics.

The text which captured the preoccupations of a section of western elite opinion at this moment of danger was *The Crisis of Democracy*. This was a co-authored volume involving Huntington, M.J. Crozier and J. Watanuki produced on behalf of the recently-formed Trilateral Commission. This body was launched in 1973 with the intention of enhancing 'cooperation' between 'private citizens'-politicians, businessmen and academics-in the three key sectors of western capitalism-the US, Western Europe and Japan. Though its formation coincided with the recent economic difficulties associated with the oil price increase and international financial instability its roots can be traced to a more systemic political-economic/ cultural-crisis arising from the insurgencies of the 1960s(Gill:145). Thus one of the early proponents of such a body- himself a key participant in the *Crisis* volume- was Zbigniew Brzezinski. Brzezinski argued in his 1970 volume *Between Two Ages* that the cultural and political transformations arising from an emerging technetronic age and already evident in the US in

the 1960s required Western European, Japanese and US cooperation to 'weave a new fabric of international relations' (Brzezinski: 294,297).

The contours of this emergent age - to be known not by Brzezinski's neologism but by Daniel Bell's less informative 'post-industrialism' - were being sketched by American social scientists from the mid-sixties when intellectual curiosity was reinforced by political urgency. The reflections of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Commission on the Year 2000 - established in 1965 and with Daniel Bell as chairman and Brzezinski and Huntington contributing members - reflect both imperatives. Thus Bell, in outlining a range of changes in technology, social structure and culture - which he was later to make familiar in his conceptualisation of post-industrial society, was concerned to highlight their implications for US politics. Not only was the culture becoming more 'hedonistic' - a foretaste of his 'cultural contradictions' of capitalism - but 'individuals and groups... demand action instead of quietly accepting their fate'. As a result 'more and more decisions will be made in the political arena' and 'there will be more community conflict'. The 'political arena' would be like an 'open cockpit where decision points are more visible than they are in the impersonal market; different groups will clash more directly as they contend for advantage or seek to resist change in society'. (Bell: 642-6).

The note struck here is a familiar one : it is to be found amongst many of the participants in the Academy's discussions, Daniel Moynihan noting the 'diffusion of middle-class attitudes concerning participation' but expressing his concern that the 'number of people who can be heard is limited' ; in Brzezinski's *Between Two Ages* , where the cultural and technological transformations of the new 'technetronic' age involve a 'new democracy increasingly based on participatory pluralism' which , in its New Left manifestations, may prove 'destructive and threatening to American liberal democracy' , and, more generally, in the dominant paradigm in American political science at the time - the political development school - with its concern to secure an 'elite-led democracy' (Bell: 663; Brzezinski: 264, 271; Cammack: 14). It is the guiding motif in the Trilateral Commission's *The Crisis of Democracy* where Huntington diagnosed a 'democratic distemper' due to the 'vigor of democracy in the United States in the 1960s and the consequent 'democratic surge' . In identifying a decline in governmental authority - together with other modes of authority 'based on hierarchy, expertise and wealth' - Huntington posed the question central to all such concerns: '(d)oes an increase in the vitality of democracy *necessarily* have to mean a decrease in the governability of democracy' (Huntington, 1975: 64, 74-5, 102, 106).

The relationship between newly-released but poorly channeled energies and established but inadequately regulating authority had been a central issue in Huntington's *Political order in changing societies* where, as Cammack stresses, Huntington drew out the 'pessimistic' implications of modernisation theory employed by the political development school (Cammack:58). What was novel about the Trilateral analysis was that the dysfunctions which had previously been assumed to be a feature of the 'developing' world- its 'irrational' even 'pathological' lack of correspondence between authority and aspiration- were now identified as a central problem for the 'developed' core. It is true that the analysis- of an excessively - participant mass society and its (populist) delinquencies- had its origins in the response of American political scientists and historians in the 1950s to 'western' democratic experience but the relevance of such fears and the applicability of such an analysis to the developed world seemed to have been reduced by the diffusion of post-war prosperity and the perception of a consequent 'end of ideology'. Now, as a result of sixties' insurgencies and the wider transition - to a 'technetronic' or post-industrial' society- the 'crisis of democracy' seemed to be as much a problem at home as abroad.

Such universality was certainly within the compass of Huntington and the political development school but the common difficulties which they sought to address obscured a profound difference: while 'democracy' was at issue in both advanced and 'developing' worlds, in the first case it was its reduction that was sought while in the second it was its reintroduction. What Huntington and his fellow-Trilateralists sought to counter in the mid-seventies in the advanced world- the sixties' 'democratic surge'- had ended in the mid-sixties in the developing. The latter's democratising energies- deriving from an optimism prompted by political independence in Africa and Asia and economic advance in Latin-America and expressed in the 'developmentalist' aspirations of the 'Third World'- had been decisively checked by a wave of military coups from Brazil in 1964 to Nigeria in 1966 and including Indonesia (1965) Ghana (1966) and Argentina (1966). Not only did these coups claim some of the most potent symbols of Third World insurgency- especially Sukarto and Nkrumah- but they also checked the increasingly radical social and economic strategy towards which such regimes were moving and signalled the search for a new strategy- a politically-authoritarian and globally-oriented 'free market'- whose full implications were, however, only to become evident some ten years later following the coup in Chile. Huntington and the Trilateralists may have been addressing a universal problem, therefore, but they were doing so in a world marked by far-reaching contrasts with respect to democratic possibilities.

While these contrasting democratic experiences produced not dissimilar remedies from Huntington the outcomes were probably other than he and his-fellow 'transitologists' would have expected. Thus when Huntington, in a paper written for the Japan Society in the early 1970s in what was perhaps a prelude to the creation of the Trilateral Commission, investigated the political implications of post-industrial society it was notable that while he was concerned with the problems posed by 'the expansion of participation' that he saw as a consequence of such a society and recommended, as in *The Crisis of Democracy*, a 'more authoritative and effective pattern of governmental decision-making' to deal with this, his expectation was of a population that continued, as a result of occupational and educational developments, to be both organised and active. Through 'new forms of political party organisation'-he instanced the campaigns of the both New Left and New Right, McGovern and Goldwater- and 'greater job oriented participation-through 'white-collar unionism'- he foresaw 'new types of decentralized decision-making, participatory management and even "workers control" could be developed' (Huntington, 1974:176-7,190)

Huntington's perspective reminds us that during the first half of the 1970s the political tide seemed to be running strongly, if not unambiguously, in a left direction; the mid-70s crisis represented both the culmination of that process and the point at which it was rebuffed. The defeat that was delivered to the left at this juncture opened the way for a very different settlement to that which was probably preferred by the Trilateralists. For while not unanimous in their attitude towards labour their rhetoric still assumed modes of planning and participation in which labour would be a necessary component; Huntington's preference for 'some measure of apathy' to reinforce the 'claims of expertise' seems unlikely to have included, or even foreseen, the weakening and exclusion of labour which was to follow from the New Right's pursuit of authority as Thatcher and Reagan displaced the more conciliatory-imperfectly corporatist- strategies of Callaghan and Carter (Huntington, 1975:113-4; Gill:97,99,188).

The decisive moments of defeat for such a labour-based settlement in the mid-seventies and their locations were various and included the failure of the Labour Government in Britain, of Euro-communist advance in Italy and of the Portuguese Revolution but these tremors in the core also resonated throughout the developing world, a key instance being events that were unfolding in a vital country of the Third World -Brazil (Hooper, 1999). Huntington was to play a significant -though only later widely recognised- part in that country's 'transition to democracy'. The story of his role as a policy-adviser to the Brazilian military regime in the

early 1970s has been fully recounted by T.E. Skidmore. Suffice it to say here that Huntington became involved in discussions with representatives of the Medici regime in 1972 responding to a request from the head of Medici's Civilian staff to consider how 'decompression' could occur in an authoritarian political system. In 1973 Huntington produced a paper entitled 'Approaches to Political Decompression' in which he warned that the 'relaxation of controls in any authoritarian political system can often have an explosive effect in which the process gets out of control of those who initiated it.' At this stage Huntington recommended strong state leadership and suggested the Mexican PRI or the Turkish regime as models. A Brazilian US-trained political scientist responded by advocating a more thoroughgoing commitment to liberal rights that Huntington had considered but shared with the latter the perspective of 'a gradual and highly-controlled political liberalization' (Skidmore, 1988 :165). These perspectives provided the rationale for the immediate strategy of *distensao* adopted by the subsequent, more 'liberal', Geisel regime of 1974 and of a transition to democracy which was to last for more than a decade.

Huntington made the Brazilian experience-together with concurrent developments in Spain and later Hungary- a paradigmatic example of what he called, following J.Linz, a process of elite-led 'transformation' (*reforma*) and claimed that almost a third of the country's which had taken part in democracy's 'third wave' had followed this model. By 1988, during his Presidential Address to the American Political Science Association, he was fulsome in his praise for the Brazilian achievement- an eloquence perhaps inflated by the current celebrations of the bi-centennial of the American constitution- and not reluctant to hint at his own part in the outcome. Brazil was, he claimed, 'the most striking example of democratization introduced from above by a military elite' that recognised the need to move toward democracy. His own contribution was coyly hinted at in his comment that political science had 'played a modest role in this process' but he also stressed the contribution of General Golbery, the master strategist of the Brazilian military regime who, 'as a long-term member of the American Political Science Association' -and one-time Brazilian president of Dow Chemicals- had 'solicited the advice of political scientists', together with a younger generation of Brazilian political scientists who, courtesy of the Ford Foundation, had been at US universities in the 1960s and played an 'active role' in developing 'ideas' that were central to the Brazilian transition (Huntington, 1988:7).

Huntington's view of Brazil's transition as 'in many respects a masterpiece of obfuscated incrementalism' was pivotal to his interpretation of the 'third wave'. It encouraged him to

speculate as to its wider applicability and to look for even greater triumphs for 'slow, gradual and sure' democratization. Thus, at a moment of potentially epochal change, as the democratic wave which had spread from Southern Europe to Latin America and through to east Asia, seemed to be about to sweep forward into territories which even the American right had thought likely to prove inhospitable, Huntington asked where would be next -China? USSR? South Africa? As yet the outcome in the two communist giants was unforeseen-the following year would bring its own dramatic answers-but Huntington stressed the preparedness of the American Political Science Association-though in a spirit that owed more to the Salvation Army than the Boy Scouts as the title of Huntington's lecture made clear-which, following the example of the Ford programme in Brazil, proposed to bring non-white South Africans to the US to do graduate work in political science to learn the 'most fundamental lesson' of the study of politics-that there are no shortcuts to political salvation(Huntington,1988:8-9).

The lesson that Huntington sought to preach was not an unexpected one from such a source- it hardly needed the authority of the Salvation army for such a conservative to claim that revolution was neither a desirable nor a possible route to political contentment- but his use of the Brazilian example obscured key questions as to the character of its transition and the quality of its new democracy.First, the process of 'creeping democratization' which Huntington saw as Brazil's distinctive achievement led not only to a ,perhaps inevitable, inexactitude as to Brazil's political status-Brazil had made 'substantial progress' towards democracy by 1983(Huntington,1984);

was a 'democracy' by 1985 (Huntington,1988) ; was a 'full-scale democracy' by 1989 (Huntington,1991-2)- but, more seriously, overlooked the costs involved in terms of unreformed practices and undemocratic assumptions of a process whose 'genius' lay in the fact 'that it is virtually impossible to pinpoint the time during the twelve years' transition 'when Brazil stopped being a dictatorship and became a democracy' (Huntington:,1988:7). Second, though Huntington noted a range of international factors which had contributed to the 'third wave, emphasising EU pressure in Southern Europe and the role of the US which '(d)uring the 1970s and 1980s...was a major promoter of democratization' , he described the 'third wave' as 'overwhelmingly indigeneous'in character.This emphasis downplayed the decisive influence of the mid-seventies rupture -though Huntington noted in an undeveloped aside that the democratic movements 'inspired'by the US was in marked contrast to the position '(b)efore the mid-1970s' when 'the promotion of democracy had not always been a

high priority of American foreign policy'-on his own, and the west's, response to the democratic insurgency that had issued from the sixties (Huntington: 1991:15; 1991-2:583).

The culmination of that insurgency was the Portuguese revolution of 1974-6. These event had obvious implications for the Brazilian regime and its opponents and the timing of the decompression process was unlikely not to have been influenced by them; no less important was that the outcome of the Portuguese revolution was vital to the possibility of an elite-led transformation in Southern Europe and the subsequent feasibility of such strategies elsewhere, including in Brazil. Huntington was not alone in thinking that a revolutionary outcome was possible in Portugal- 'a state of revolutionary ferment existed between April 1975 and November 1975'-though he could only conceive its outcome in the stale terms of the Cold War-the 'choices in Portugal were between bourgeois democracy and Marxist-Leninist dictatorship' (Huntington, 1991-2:606-7; Pimlott: 346). Perhaps it was inevitable that Huntington could not recognise a new type of politics when geo-political as opposed to domestic priorities were in question or perhaps it was simply that the forces of the sixties- though significantly with workers to the fore rather than students- could not be taken seriously as contestants for state power. Either way the energies of the sixties had to be rebuffed; the outcomes of democratic transitions were matters for conservative elites not insurgent masses. In the next section we shall see the consequences for Brazilian democracy of this enforced -and, given the outcome of the mid-seventies crisis, neo-liberal- international strategy -for this was what the US in the Reagan years came to deploy-and of Huntington's advocacy of elite-controlled transitions (Wiarda: 155-9)

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'(T) he intriguing issue is the difficulty of institutionalizing a party system in a country that has changed so dramatically' (Mainwaring, 1999b: 225). These words, which appear during the course of his latest investigation of the travails of Brazilian democracy, are those of Scott Mainwaring, one of the most prolific North American Latin-Americanists of the past generation. His considerable output during the last decade and a half captures the evolution of this sector of academic opinion, an influential one if only because of the quantity of their output. In particular his writings on Brazil reveal the increasing academic disenchantment which has accompanied the 'consolidation' of Brazilian democracy since the mid-1980s. From an early, and widely shared, optimism concerning the potentialities of Brazil's 'popular' Catholicism, the social movements to which it gave rise and their potential role in 'deepening'

democracy, he has come to focus on the institutional barriers to democratic politics represented by over-mighty executives and inadequate parties. Latterly his writings have revealed a mixture of reluctant acceptance of a degree of democratic effectivity-the 'surprising resilience' of elected governments- and mounting frustration with the 'weak parties' and the 'feckless democracy' which they have produced in Brazil (Mainwaring :1995; 1999a). In this most recent -and extended- discussion of these issues - *Rethinking Party Systems in the Third Wave of Democratization. The Case of Brazil* -he has come down decisively on the pessimistic side of the balance. The likelihood of an effective party system -effective both as an agent of popular representation and as a facilitator of executive authority- at least amongst the parties of the elites ('the catch-all parties') is remote; the effect has been to undermine 'democratic legitimacy and to leave Brazilian democracy with significant 'shortcomings' (Mainwaring,1999b:6). Few would dissent from such a judgement; most would agree with the factors which Mainwaring identifies as cause -and effect- of this situation; at least some would ask whether the outcome might have been different and whether a democracy more worthy of the name might have been possible. To investigate such a possibility we have to consider a different theoretical perspective and a different range of subject matter from that deployed by Mainwaring.

Mainwaring's theoretical perspective-while it gives some attention to what he calls 'comparative macroanalysis' -involves a combination of historical institutionalism and rational choice analysis (Mainwaring,1999b:7-9). This results in a sophisticated analysis but one that arrives only at the unremarkable observation that in Brazil 'party patterns have contributed to the maintenance of a patrimonial style of politics that is favorable to elite interests' (Mainwaring, 1999b:49). Mainwaring documents the diverse forms a personalised politics of clientelistic exchange take in Brazil in 2000 as it did a century earlier. Yet such findings could be deduced not only from the historic record of the nineteenth century but also have been identified as the favoured mode of governance for Brazil's elites during much of the twentieth and indeed a very significant outcome of the 'compromised' transition whose longevity Huntington was so disposed to celebrate (Graham,1990 ; Shugart & Carey,1992; Hagopian,1992). The interesting question-especially in a country of such sustained elite manouvering as Brazil- is surely not why 'everything changed so that everything could remain the same' but what exactly *might* have changed?

To address that question we have to turn to the political economy of Brazil, especially during the second half of the twentieth century, and to the fortunes of its labour movement. The latter

is a subject to which Mainwaring does give some attention but only in the narrowly-institutional sense of reflecting upon the role of working-class parties in the shaping of party-systems. Noting their importance as a stimulus to general party-development and with the experience of the PT clearly in mind, Mainwaring argues that the 'formation of disciplined, centralized, working-class parties of integration occurred at a moment in world history that is no longer reproducible'. A combination of social and organizational features- a small, organized urban working class subject to corporatist modes of control- has ensured the absence of a 'galvanizing working-class party' (Mainwaring,199b:227-231). Much of this is unquestionably so but surely misses certain general features of working-class politics in Brazil and the specific possibilities which arose during the years of military dictatorship and their aftermath?

For in Mainwaring's account one gets little sense of the historic import of the insurgent labour struggles of the late 1970s and the political activities of the PT and its allies during the 1980s and early 1990s. For that we have to turn elsewhere, to Paul Drake's recent study, *Labor Movements and Dictatorships*. This examination of the relationship between labour and the dictatorships of Southern Europe and the Southern cone of Latin America gives us at least the bones of the situation and reveals the very significant contrast between the experience of Brazilian labour under military dictatorship and that of her neighbours. As Drake puts it: Brazil was 'best for organized workers after the coup (of 1964), whilst it had previously been worst' (Drake:31).As a result of the industrialisation strategy of the Brazilian military-as opposed to the de-industrialisation in Argentina and Chile- and even, paradoxically, their continuing corporatist controls over the unions, the social and organizational weight of the Brazilian labour movement became a significant factor in the political calculations of the 1980s.The figures are impressive: trade union membership increased five -fold between 1964-80 and by 1985 some 9 million workers out of 40 million were unionized. 'As the autocratic regime prepared to step aside in the early 1980s' ,observes Drake,' Brazil's working-class organizations held out more promise than ever before', a promise that found expression in an increased wave of strikes-from 293 to 1148 between 1983-6 and especially general strikes-2 in 1983,25 in 1986- and in the increasing ascendancy of the more militant and leftist CUT at the expense of the class-collaborationist ('pelego'/C.P.) CGT, the former having 15 million members as opposed to the latter's 8 million by 1991(Drake:51,82,85,88,89). By the early 1980s Brazil's levels of union organization were significantly higher than most of Latin - America and considerably higher than E.Asia, while even a decade later- after de-

industrialization had begun to take its toll- Brazil still probably had 'more unionized workers than any other country in the Americas(Banuri & Amedo:178;Pereira:94).

In addition,Brazil had -like Portugal and Greece for a time- a more militant and radical labour party than before the military regime (Drake:55). The P.T. was a ' party of a new type' perhaps in a global sense, certainly in the Brazilian context. With its emphasis on politics from the bottom up it carried the hopes of those who looked not only to the 'self-activation of the working class' but also -in a complex and open-ended process- the 'development of effective citizenship' and with it 'democratic participation'(Keck:242). Such a project -for a rationalised and moralised politics of popular participation- was quite unprecedented both in the Brazilian context and in terms of the sort of political forces and issues with which the Brazilian elites had previously to deal. Drake may be right to claim that 'many Brazilian business executives' felt 'labor still posed no grave threat' and was far from having 'revolutionary possibilities'; nevertheless in the 1989 Presidential elections the PT candidate, Lula, achieved the 'strongest showing by a worker candidate for president in Latin American history' (Drake:90).The circumstances surrounding this achievement were exceptional and Lula's 30 million plus votes were far from representing a coherent or committed bloc; neverthelss, the PT was firmly on the map as the most significant opposition force in Brazilian politics, a status confirmed by its considerable advances in the more favourable environment of local politics(Fox:111) .

The emergence of such a labour movement shaped the elite's management of Brazil's transition.Przeworski has argued that government capability- specifically to enforce economic reforms- is likely to be greatest either when labour is very strong and supports reform or when it is very weak and unable to oppose them or, more bluntly, when it can be co-opted or destroyed (Przeworski, 1991:180-1). Neither was true of the Brazilian situation: industry was unwilling to enter into a social pact with labour and governments were not disposed to engage in a frontal assault on labour (Payne:90).What followed was perhaps a typical elite *jeito*: :a generalised conciliation of labour together with a specific focus on ensuring the radical's exclusion from power and the slow erosion of their strength to the point at which they were neutralised. Mainwaring brings out the first aspect when he notes that throughout the early 1990s- as the country experienced hyper-inflation and political instability-congress blocked measures designed to reduce both wages and public-sector employment (Mainwaring:,1999b:301-5). Such reluctance no doubt owed something to a lack of commitment to a neo-liberal strategy and the desire to maintain clientelistic resources amongst the elites but it seems unlikely that the electoral danger represented by the PT was

not a key factor. The PT had played a crucial role in the popular activity that marked a phase of democratic aspiration that- notwithstanding increasing disenchantment- ran from the mid-eighties through to the mid-nineties and included the *diretas ja* (1985), constitutional reform (1988) and Collor impeachment mobilisations(1992). Electorally such national prominence not only took Lula to a narrow defeat in the 1989 Presidential campaign but made victory seem a strong possibility in 1994.As manipulated elections in the post-Cold war 'liberal' era go those of 1994 and 1998 which brought Fernando Henrique Cardoso to power as the elite's preferred candidate were fairly modest examples- certainly in comparison with the fraud that deprived Cardenas of victory in Mexico in 1988 or which brought success to Yeltsin in 1996- but the familiar repertoire for sustaining an establishment candidate was fully deployed ((Flynn,1996:402-7; 1999: 295-300; Goertzel:120-2).Lula's third defeat in 1998 dealt a crushing-if not conclusive- blow to the PT's hopes.

By the mid-1990's the popular energies for which the PT had been both catalyst and channel were beginning to wane.To the global crisis of left politics was added the impact of neo-liberal economic restructuring, launched by Collor but now carried forward by Cardoso.While the former's 'new rightism' was not difficult to expose and defeat the latter's 'social democracy' was altogether more difficult to pin-down and discredit.To these ideological difficulties was added a more general constraint on the sort of sustained popular mobilisation that the PT sought as part of its project for a deepening both of class confidence and citizen aspiration. As a result of the country's socio-economic heterogeneity and geo-political diversity labour in Brazil has tended to move forward in phases of decisive advance, only subsequently to face the challenge of achieving effective institutionalisation. TE Skidmore, for instance, has noted that the mobilisations in the years before 1930, and especially the great insurgency of 1917-20, 'left a strong impression on both ruling elites and demonstrating workers'; as such they can be seen to have shaped Vargas's semi-fascist incorporation of labour in the 1930s and thereby 'set the framework for the labor relations system' which lasted until the 1970s(Skidmore,1979:125).Twice challenged, in 1953 in Sao Paulo and ten years later nationally, the system could only survive through to the 1970s with the aid of an extended military dictatorship and the transformation of working-class areas like the ABC district into 'garrison states' where soldier was clearly set against worker. It was this regime which the strikes of the late 1970s and the subsequent campaigns of the PT and CUT sought to overturn. During the strikes and the 'unprecedented mobilization'of the mid-eighties for direct elections the PT not only began to shape a new coalition of forces- urban and rural, union and community organisations, popular intellectuals and clergy- but also,as Maria

Helena Moreira Alves has noted, to sustain ' a new sense of empowerment' and a 'culture of confidence' (Alves: 1989:295;1997:376). It was this precious resource -powerful and yet fragile- which the PT sought to institutionalise and which the Brazilian elites- unaccustomed to such democratic assertion - have sought to restrain. The former's failure and the latter's success should not cause us surprise but it should certainly induce a degree of scepticism when those who have celebrated the elite's ability to manoeuvre in the interests of controlled change express surprise that the democracy which has emerged displays many of the clientelistic regressions of the elite and few of the democratic aspirations of organised labour.

(iv)

'Politics in Brazil has nothing to do with political phrases, rather 'personal questions...are the quintessence of what is called Brazilian politics'. These words of Ernest Hambloch, a former British consul to Brazil, are quoted with approval by Roberto DaMatta in a recent essay which seeks not only to reclaim the specificity of Brazil's social formation but also the legitimacy of its democratic politics. DaMatta's work constitutes Brazil's contribution to a growing literature expressing an increasing scepticism as to the relevance of the universalizing- but European-derived- categories of citizenship and class to the experience of the 'Third World'- a concept that one such author has called 'deplorable' because of its origins in 'fantasy' and its aspirations to 'ideological messianism' (Bayart, 1991:51,68). Such perspectives-while perhaps drawing upon a fashionable (but already superseded?) post-modernism -do alert us to a third mode of considering democratic possibility, one that in focusing upon everyday popular experience invites us to examine the political cultures of different social formations-and the communities to which they give rise- in a way that while narrower in its definition of the 'political' as currently practised is broader in its sense of 'culture' as normally conceived. As such we may find here, as DaMatta suggests, both a means of explaining what he calls the 'enormous disenchantment with the so-called redemocratization process' after 1985 and a different source for democratic legitimacy (DaMatta:286-7).

At first sight the prospects do not look promising. Observers throughout Latin -America have been unanimous in noting the waning of popular community energies that has followed the installation of democracy.(DH Levine & S. Mainwaring:1989:221). Da Matta's concern -like that of Bayart- is narrower, however, and manages to escape the encompassing political gloom. For he focuses upon a pattern of social life at once more elemental and more sustained

than formal associative activity, one that is centred upon the 'home' , its 'friends, relations, *compadres*' and the strategies of patronage, intermediation and trickery which they employ in coping with everyday life. This world constitutes, claims DaMatta., a distinct sphere existing 'side by side in mutually exclusive, although complementary' fashion with a public world-'the street'- which professes the values of liberalism and its formal, rational and universal criteria. The result is that words like 'autocracy and republicanism'- and democracy?- which circulate in public discussion and academic analysis should be taken less seriously than words like 'mixture','confusion' and 'combination', for it is these that hold the key to a pattern of relations that are not 'linear or transitive but circular or dialectical'. What should interest us is the 'social logic that interrelates the system and exploits the ambiguities of its intermediate ranges' and the modes of 'social navigation' employed in living a 'reality' where 'the universe of the street heads in one direction, while the dominion of the home takes off in another'(DaMatta: 272,277,279, 281).

DaMatta's analysis has its appeal. It seems both to console those who unavailingly seek 'a sociology of interests and individuals'-or of class and citizen-and to celebrate the resilience of the masses ' caught' by 'one perspective that is truly Catholic, another that is authentically civic and modern, and still another that is fully popular and Canivalesque'and the communities which they generate (DaMatta:281) The 'defeat 'of the former, in short, is more than compensated for by the diversity of the latter. But at a moment when the organizing ideologies of modernity-liberalism and socialism- seem bereft of purchase can this post-modern popular creativity deliver as much as is claimed?. For when it is not-as with Bayart's Africans- producing a coping strategy for dealing with the deprivations of the state it becomes, in DaMatta 's Brazil , a 'tragic capacity to compensate (for) the injustices of the system". (Bayart,1993:254; DaMatta:276). Is this enough? Przeworski has noted that in Brazil-unlike Southern Europe- the 'syndrome' which reveals a disenchantment with democratic practice translates into a wider scepticism as to whether democracy is the 'best form of government' so that 'Brazil stands out as the society where the cultural foundations of consolidation seem to be eroded'(Przeworski,1995:58). Something more vigorous may be necessary from cultural and community practice if it is to offset the failures of citizen and class-based politics.

Such a politics must for the moment be as speculative as it is subterranean. Nevertheless it will certainly draw upon the perspectives sketched by DaMatta, perhaps above all by trying to make preeminent the elements that are at present expressed through Carnival in preference to

those utilising patterns drawn from the Catholic church and the military-the three modes which DaMatta argues inform the style of political assembly in Brazil (DaMatta:288). It will also need to draw upon the insights that Ken Hirschkop finds in the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin and Raymond Williams, the former stressing that 'representation...means more than embodying meanings in signs' but requires 'a subject confronting another subject' -that liberal dialogue must give way before embodied dialogism-and the latter emphasising that the determination of collective interests requires 'a linkage of institutions or systems of culture rather than one of ideas, discourses or interests'. If all this sounds too prescriptive, even imperative, it may be responded that it reflects no more than the possibilities of what Hirschkop calls a 'complex populism', a populism that draws out what is potential in popular practice rather than the familiar and continuing elite populism in Brazil and elsewhere with its manipulation of mass aspirations (Hirschkop:1989 17;1999:82). Our last resort at this moment-but our continuing resource- may lie in a popular creativity given a decisive political edge by a populism which is politically less , but culturally much more , than existing definitions of political culture would allow.

(v)

In this essay I have argued that current democratic disenchantment should not surprise advocates of democracy though it should certainly trouble us.I have sought to show both that an enfeebled citizenship was implicit in the mode of democratic transition favoured by Trilateralists and the transitologists and that an insurgent class politics which might have given force to the search for a deepened democracy was also made impossible by the preferred elite transitions.While theTrilateralists probably hoped for a settlement that incorporated labour it has been left to the transitologists to reflect upon the deleterious consequences for democracy of the neo-liberal strategies that came to be associated inextricably and , given the manner in which the energies of the sixties were rebuffed in the mid-seventies, inevitably with the elite transitions.While the preferred politics of most transitologists is probably for a moderate version of social democracy-as with Lawrence Whitehead who claims that neo-liberalism both provides the conditions for liberal-democratic'consolidation' but also undermines the latter's participatory possibilities but hopes that it may open the way to a '*viable* programme of social democracy'- current outcomes seem to point to an intensification of that 'delegative' democracy which O'Donnell considered the bastard outcome of their labours (Whitehead153-6;Phillip:239).

At best the proponents of this chastened liberal-cum-social democracy have been able to hold out the prospect-despite international perspectives to the contrary- that once the economy is functioning then social justice may follow. Against this delayed -and delusive?- generational promise DaMatta and his co-editor David Hess conclude with the thought that unravelling the 'Brazilian puzzle' may help 'Brazilians and foreigners alike to construct alternative visions of their societies in terms of democracy and social justice' (Hess & DaMatta:298). It is an aspiration with whose content and scope it is difficult to disagree if we are to counter the falling short of expectations in terms of participatory opportunities and of popular satisfaction that has marked democracy's 'third wave'. I have sought to account for this in terms of three perspectives in the study of political activity- those of political ideology, political economy and political culture- and the three dimensions of political co-ordination to which they correspond - those of the citizen, class and the community. I have reached the perhaps surprising but not wholly improbable conclusion that it is to a new form of populism and the modes of community it engenders that we must look if we are to redefine, renew and extend the possibilities of citizenship and class and to give a deeper content to the meaning of democracy than has hitherto been the case.

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