

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS AND POLITICAL CHANGE IN RIO DE JANEIRO

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Prior to the recent reestablishment of democracy in Brazil, much attention was paid to the sudden proliferation of a variety of collective organizations in civil society that arose in opposition to the military regime. By the end of the 1970s, vocal and widespread opposition had materialized from middle-class professional organizations, elements within the Catholic Church, a relatively independent and combative labor movement centered in the industrial suburbs of São Paulo, and a burgeoning number of neighborhood associations being organized in the major metropolitan areas around the country.

Although resistance to the regime was sporadic and uncoordinated, these new collective actors were perceived as the important beginnings of an associational network threatening to undermine the vertical ties between civil and political society that had dominated popular organization in the past. Not only did these new actors play a prominent role in popular protests against the military regime, they also provided the basis for a new Brazilian political party, the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), in 1979.

Given this transformation in the nature of popular organization, observers expected these new actors to have a significant say about the type of regime that would emerge from the shadows of authoritarian rule.¹ Subsequent events, however, have proved such predictions to be wrong in that the contemporary political system in Brazil has retained many of its pre-authoritarian qualities. The PT initially enjoyed few electoral successes outside its stronghold in and around São Paulo; in other cities, areas with high densities of collective organizations have provided a rich source of votes for more traditional political actors who rely on a mixture of clientelism and populism.² The initial failure of the PT and the marked degree of continuity between pre- and post-authoritarian politics in Brazil—in terms of personnel as well as the nature of political power—have prompted subsequent explanations of the democratization process to focus on changes within the institutional political sphere rather than on

changes in the balance of class power.³ The situation has also called for a more critical appraisal of the role of collective organizations in the process of political change.⁴

Yet if indeed these new collective organizations have been unable to supplant traditional political institutions as the main vehicles of popular interest representation, this outcome does not mean that they will have no influence at all on the form of democratic system established in Brazil. Even the most cautious observers would not deny that the swell of popular mobilization in the early 1980s differed quantitatively and qualitatively from anything the country had witnessed before. At the least, the events that preceded the military's withdrawal led those involved to a new understanding of the political process.⁵ To date, however, little attention has been paid to the specific mechanisms by which new forms of popular organization affect participation in the electoral process. This article seeks to make an initial contribution to this area of inquiry by examining the relationship between community organization and political preference in two slum neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro.

PAST RESEARCH ON NEIGHBORHOOD POLITICS IN BRAZIL

Neighborhood associations are not new to Brazil. They have served as a major vehicle of popular political incorporation since the 1950s. Over the span of the past decade, however, they have multiplied and apparently changed their political orientation, with the result being that a substantial proportion of these organizations appear unwilling to pander to traditional methods of political mobilization.

Initial attempts to understand the significance of this transformation in the role of neighborhood associations for current events in Brazil were guided by politicized expectations that assumed a relationship between the increase in the number of neighborhood associations and radical politics.⁶ But as democratization has progressed and neighborhood associations have become less visible, analyses of their role in the process of political change have become far more circumspect.

Despite a wealth of empirical research on neighborhood associations in Brazil, relatively little work has been done on the relationship between community organization and electoral politics. A few notable exceptions exist, however. T. P. R. Caldeira conducted a study of the relationship between local organization and voting in a working-class neighborhood on the periphery of the city of São Paulo in the context of the 1982 elections.⁷ By conducting a post-electoral survey of political preferences in the same neighborhood where she conducted her research on political organization, Caldeira was able to draw conclusions about the relationship between the two. She found that while a vigorous campaign effort and considerable sympathy for the PT among the population were

not sufficient to guarantee victory, there was a relationship between the level of community organization and the proportion of votes cast for the opposition.

N. V. T. Lima⁸ and S. Oliveira⁹ conducted similar research in *favelas* (slum neighborhoods) in Rio. Their findings compared and contrasted alternative forms of political organization. In both cases, they chose to examine a mobilized favela association and a traditional clientelistic association. Both studies found significant distinctions between the two different types of favela organization, not solely in political and social structure but also in their mechanisms for interacting with political parties and local government.

These three studies illustrate different aspects of the relationship between organization and politics, and each has its particular methodological strengths. Caldeira's study attempts to measure the impact of community organization on political preferences, while Lima and Oliveira identify and distinguish between different forms of social and political organization. The methodology employed for the present study involved a combination of these strategies. It entailed analyzing political preferences for the 1986 elections in two favela communities representing alternative forms of social and political organization in the city of Rio. The advantage of this approach is that by comparing two very different communities from the same macro-political environment, one can be relatively confident that discrepancies in voting preferences can be attributed to differences in organization.

REGIONAL CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Of the metropolitan areas where neighborhood associations proliferated in the late 1970s, Rio is perhaps the most interesting. During much of the military interregnum in Brazil, the state of Guanabara (which became the municipality of Rio de Janeiro in 1974) was governed by a well-established and highly organized clientelist political machine. Although Rio de Janeiro was the only state controlled by the opposition, the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB) in Rio de Janeiro was less concerned with removing the military from power than with consolidating its own political power by distributing public goods as patronage.¹⁰ Much of the MDB's political power in the region centered in the city's numerous favelas.

The favelas house a substantial portion of the population of the city of Rio.¹¹ Containing the poorest social classes, they are consequently the areas most lacking in basic public services. Most favelas consist of illegally settled, haphazard clusters of improvised dwellings, and most have no official water, sewage, or drainage systems. The poverty of favela inhabitants makes them particularly dependent on the state, a relationship that

has led to favela neighborhood organizations being intimately associated with the MDB's clientelist machine.¹²

But Rio was also an area where collective organizations mushroomed in the late 1970s, primarily in the form of neighborhood associations. The state of Rio de Janeiro already boasted the oldest federation of dwellers' associations in Brazil. The Federação das Associações de Favela do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (FAFERJ) had been established in 1962 under the slightly different name of the Federação das Associações de Favela do Estado da Guanabara (FAFEG). Until the late 1970s, however, it served more as a mechanism for state control of favela politics than as a vehicle for popular interest representation. But in 1979, a second federation was formed by a group of communities who were rejecting traditional political methods in an attempt to divorce favela politics from state control.¹³

Finally, in 1982 the first democratic elections for governor in almost twenty years resulted in the defeat of the PMDB (the Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro, the new name of the MDB). The victor was Leonel Brizola, one of the more radical populist leaders before the coup in 1964. Brizola had returned to Brazil in 1979, after fifteen years of exile, to create a new political party, the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT), and then went on to win the election as governor of the state of Rio de Janeiro.¹⁴ Although the PDT did not represent a radical break with traditional politics in many respects,¹⁵ once the Brizola administration took power (1983–1987), it devoted considerable resources to providing basic infrastructure for a substantial number of the region's favelas.¹⁶ While decisions governing the design and location of these programs were fundamentally political (and in this sense represented a subtle form of patronage), the PDT administration was the first to implement a series of universalistic programs on this scale that targeted the urban poor.

The city of Rio de Janeiro is the ideal laboratory in which to examine the clash of the old and the new in contemporary Brazil. What makes it so is the juxtaposition of political forces with contrasting styles and tactics and the presence of different forms of community organization.

TWO REPRESENTATIVE FAVELAS

To examine the relationship between community organization and political preference, two favelas were chosen that seem to be nearly ideal types of predominant forms of political organization in Rio de Janeiro. One favela is deeply embroiled in the logic of clientelist politics while the other one is not.

The Favela of Vila Brasil

First settled in the 1940s, Vila Brasil is a densely settled community of some three thousand inhabitants located due west of the center of Rio.

On walking into Vila Brasil, one is immediately struck by its atypical physical appearance in comparison with most other favelas in the area. Each of the five hundred dwellings is served by piped water and sewage, and every road and alley of this clean and well-lit favela is paved. It also boasts a community association building and a covered recreational area in back. In terms of infrastructure, Vila Brasil is one of the best-served favelas in the area. Yet less than six years ago, it lacked all these services.¹⁷

Vila Brasil has long been involved in the process of marketing its votes in return for promises of goods or services at election time. Until 1980, however, this procedure had reaped few benefits for the community. Only since the current president of the neighborhood association took office have these transactions begun to bear fruit. This recent success is due almost entirely to the president's exceptional ability to manipulate clientelist arrangements to the advantage of the community.

Since taking office, the association president has assiduously cultivated personal contacts with politicians and bureaucrats at the various levels of state and municipal administration. The most important of these was his special relationship with Jorge Leite, a locally based PMDB politician. When the association president first started working for Leite, the latter was a state deputy and a key figure in the PMDB political hierarchy. According to the president, Leite was an archetypal clientelist politician who was uninterested in political discussion and whose political discourse was the politics of favors. His only concern was to guarantee the necessary number of votes to maintain his position in office, and to this end, he employed local community leaders to work as his campaign officers.

The president of Vila Brasil was first approached by a Leite campaign worker prior to the elections in 1982 after the president had prohibited Leite's employees from distributing campaign literature around the favela. The president let it be known that only those candidates who performed some service for the community prior to election day would have access to the area. Thus began the president's association with Jorge Leite. The president was responsible for house-to-house distribution of publicity and the display of campaign posters at strategic points around the favela. Although a strictly illegal maneuver, the president could also erect a candidate's banner atop the association building in order to make it perfectly clear who was receiving the organization's support. Most important, the president could use his personal influence to persuade community residents to vote for "his" candidate. In return for such cooperation in the 1982 elections, one week before election day, a fleet of local government trucks pulled up in the favela and paved every single one of the community's roads and alleys.

The election came and went, and Leite succeeded in being elected to the Câmara Federal. He accumulated more than one hundred and

seventy thousand votes, the fifth-highest total among the federal deputies in the state. Leite was not the only one to benefit from this transaction, however, for it increased the president's own prestige and power within the community enormously. The residents of Vila Brasil viewed the president as directly responsible for a major improvement in their living conditions, something that had seemed beyond the realm of possibility before he took office.

Thus politics in Vila Brasil is a simple matter: allegiance is granted exclusively to those candidates who bring tangible benefits to the community. Decisions about whether or not to support a particular individual depend solely on the candidate's ability to deliver, irrespective of past record, ideology, or political party.¹⁸ According to the president of the favela association, politicians are corrupt and interested only in political power, and they exploit the poor as a cheap source of votes. The president views his own role as extracting as much as possible from each and every one of them whenever the opportunity arises. Given the reality of Brazilian politics and the poor living conditions of much of the population, clientelism clearly represents a rational strategy. Because of its powerful rationale, clientelism remains a common political orientation in Brazil.

The Favela of Vidigal

First settled in 1941, Vidigal is a close-knit community of nine thousand located close to the city center. It too is served relatively well in terms of basic infrastructure. Most dwellings enjoy some form of piped water and sewage, and about half of the roads and alleys are paved. But while these improvements are also fairly recent, they represent the outcome of a very different political process.

The political history of Vidigal can be divided into two distinct periods. During the early stages of its settlement, the community was unorganized and haphazard, and living conditions there were extremely precarious. As in Vila Brasil, Vidigal was isolated from politics except on the eve of elections. The single politician who enjoyed influence in the community was Paulo Duque. Like Jorge Leite, Duque was the local political representative (state deputy) of the MDB clientelist machine. Although Duque never benefited from the kind of institutional support enjoyed by Jorge Leite in Vila Brasil, his access to the state administration meant he was able to cultivate a sizable clientele in the favela through trafficking in favors.

The area in which Vidigal is located is different in that it is also the home of some of the city's elites. It is therefore not surprising that this area was targeted for favela removal during the 1960s and 1970s, when that solution to urban poverty was in vogue. In October 1977, the residents of Vidigal were informed that they were to be removed from the site that they

had occupied illegally since the 1940s. Faced with the prospect of moving to government-built housing more than two hours from the city center (their main source of employment), the community refused to budge. By the following January, when the eviction was supposed to take place, the dwellers' dilemma had attracted the sympathy and support of other groups in civil society who were beginning to organize against the arbitrariness of the military regime.

Together, this coalition managed to halt the eviction process in one of the first successes that helped spark the popular movement in Rio de Janeiro. The shared experience of the attempted removal became a watershed in the history of the community because it taught the Vidigal leaders that they could achieve far more through community organization than through traditional political methods. Their contacts within the municipal administration proved to be worthless for resolving an issue that was clearly beyond the domain of clientelist politics. As a result, they began to disassociate themselves from traditional political brokers like Paulo Duque and to seek alternate means of pursuing their collective interests.

As a result, Vidigal now exemplifies a community that refuses to play the game of traditional politics and yet has been almost as successful as Vila Brasil in obtaining infrastructural improvements. Since 1977 Vidigal has benefited from a number of public works programs, all of them the fruits of organization rather than electoral bargaining. Community politics in Vidigal is now based on an entirely different model than in Vila Brasil. Because community organization has proved to be relatively effective in pursuing fulfillment of the favela's immediate material needs, electoral politics is no longer necessarily associated with providing community benefits. According to the Vidigal leadership, every individual has a right to the basic requirements and conditions for existence, and it is therefore the duty of every administration to provide them, regardless of political affiliation. Vidigal leaders understand that traditional politics based on clientelism and populism exploits conditions of inequality to obtain a cheap source of votes and thus perpetuates conditions of social and economic marginality. Therefore, support for political parties in Vidigal is determined by broader political issues. The Vidigal leadership believes firmly in the value of a strong political party system and that political parties are the only institutional vehicles capable of forcing real social change in Brazil. The considerable differences in the political philosophies of the two communities were reflected in the nature of their involvement in the electoral campaign in 1986.

THE ELECTIONS OF 1986

The prospect of elections for a new governor, two senators, and representatives to the state and federal legislatures in November 1986 was

eagerly awaited by the president of Vila Brasil. By August the president had set the price for the favela's vote that year: construction of a second story on the association building. At this point, the president was receiving at least one call a day from candidates seeking to purchase the community's vote, and by mid-August, he had received five firm offers from candidates representing four different parties. The president told each candidate that the first to begin work on the project would receive the community's vote.¹⁹ By mid-September, however, the president had given up hope on carrying the project through. Either the price was too high or the votes he was promising to deliver were perceived as too few.²⁰ But he had received offers from two other candidates for state deputy: one had donated soccer shirts to the favela's club and promised another set if the president would help his campaign; the other candidate had offered to construct two bathrooms behind the association building. The president decided to throw in his lot with the second candidate, Henrique Oswaldo.

President of a tourist company, engineer, and college professor, Oswaldo was running on a platform promising to voice the interests of the tourist industry in Rio de Janeiro (obviously a constituency of little concern to the inhabitants of Vila Brasil). Deadlines were agreed on for the money to fund the bathroom construction to be handed over, but they were then broken. As election day drew near, favela residents questioned the president more and more frequently about which candidate should receive their vote. Finally, only ten days before election day, Oswaldo showed up at the association headquarters with a check for the agreed-upon amount. He was subsequently ushered throughout the favela from door to door and was presented as "the president's candidate." During the remaining days before the election, the association president paid two residents to distribute Oswaldo's campaign literature to each household in the favela and to hand out slips of paper showing the candidate's name at local polling stations.

The November 1986 elections were equally important to the Vidigal leadership, but for different reasons. They viewed the elections not as an opportunity for community gain but as a referendum on competing visions of social and economic justice. As a result, the neighborhood association served as a forum for political debate during the election campaign rather than an electoral tool.

At the weekly meetings with the community, association leaders stressed that it was a mistake to vote for candidates on the basis of what they as individuals had done for the community. The leaders explained why the community should vote, wherever possible, for candidates from its own social class, for those who had been involved with the popular movement prior to the election, and for those who had no past connections with the military regime. The association also provided a weekly forum where politicians could present their platforms, and it attracted

candidates from a wide spectrum of political parties. Also, as had been the policy since the removal attempt in 1977, the association refused to deal with candidates seeking to purchase the community's votes and thus actively discouraged individuals from indulging politicians in this way. This approach effectively eliminated the most blatant form of clientelism in the favela.²¹

The Vidigal leadership was also alert to more subtle forms of electioneering. During the campaign, the association came under considerable pressure from the PDT to mobilize support for the party's candidates on the strength of the programs that the administration had initiated in the favela. Despite the fact that the majority of Vidigal leaders in fact favored the PDT, they maintained that such programs were the fruit of community organization, recognizing this kind of political pressure as merely a more sophisticated attempt to generate votes in return for patronage. Thus aware of the motivation behind the pressure and its threat to the favela's political autonomy, Vidigal leaders prevented candidates from any party who had supervised work in the favela from campaigning on that basis.²² All these approaches together represented a concerted effort in Vidigal to sever the link between the vote and patronage in all its forms and to encourage discussion of political issues and ideas of broader import.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL PREFERENCE

One week before the election, 10 percent of the voting population of each favela were surveyed as to how they intended to vote. Respondents were asked to name the candidate or candidates and party of their choice for each level of the election—governor, senator, federal deputy, and state deputy.²³ The two major political blocks in the elections were the PDT and the APD (*Aliança Popular Democrática*). The APD comprised a coalition of twelve different parties, most representing the center and right of the ideological spectrum. The dominant partner within the APD was the PMDB, which accounted for nearly 90 percent of APD preferences for all four contests in the two favelas. The results of the survey for each level of the election are presented in table 1.²⁴

Table 1 shows the significant difference that was found in the distribution of political preferences in the two communities.²⁵ In Vidigal the PDT was the more popular choice at every level but markedly so for the gubernatorial election, where it was preferred by 63 percent of the residents. The PDT's popularity in Vidigal is not surprising, given that community's rejection of traditional politics and its concern with broader issues. The PDT has not only implemented universalistic entitlement programs in the favelas but has also consistently defended the interests of the working class. Although PDT support decreased noticeably at lower

TABLE 1 Preference for the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT) and Aliança Popular Democrática (APD) in Two Favelas in Rio de Janeiro, November 1986

Contest	Vila Brasil		Vidigal	
	PDT (%)	APD (%)	PDT (%)	APD (%)
Governor	40.2	24.4	63.1	18.0
Senator	18.1	25.6	37.9	18.1
Federal Deputy	19.7	30.7	39.0	14.0
State Deputy	12.6	38.6	33.2	18.3

Note: Due to the peculiarities of this election, voters could cast ballots for two candidates for senator in 1986. Thus the data for this race represent the addition of two preferences.

levels of the election, the party clearly enjoys far greater penetration in the favela than does the APD.

The distribution of political preferences in Vidigal is relatively uniform when compared with those of Vila Brasil. There too the PDT appeared to enjoy more support than the APD in the gubernatorial race. But the difference between the degree of support for the two political fronts is much smaller than in Vidigal. In fact, in the races for senator, federal deputy, and state deputy, the APD emerged as the most popular political force. Although voters in Vila Brasil too were attracted to the PDT candidate for governor, they were more likely to opt for the APD at all other levels of the contest.

This trend reflects differences in perceptions of the political process in the two favelas. Clientelism operates primarily at the lower levels of the political system, meaning that candidates for state deputy and federal deputy are the ones most likely to indulge in such transactions. Thus while the result of the election for governor in the two favelas appears likely to have been the same (albeit by a different margin of votes), at more local levels, the influence of clientelist transactions in Vila Brasil, past and present, makes itself felt. Almost 13 percent of all respondents in Vila Brasil said they were going to vote for Jorge Leite, the PMDB politician who had been responsible for paving the favela's streets in 1982, even though the association president was no longer working for him. This 13 percent represented 41 percent of all likely APD voters in Vila Brasil. Slightly more than 21 percent of all respondents in Vila Brasil said they were going to cast their vote for state deputy for Henrique Oswaldo, the PMDB politician who had paid for constructing new bathrooms behind the association building. Almost 55 percent of those who said they were going to vote for the APD in Vila Brasil specifically named Oswaldo as their candidate.²⁶

Given the emphasis in Vidigal on political parties as vehicles of

TABLE 2 Respondents in Two Rio Favelas Intending to Vote for Only One Party at Each Level of Elections in November 1986

<i>Political Preference</i>	<i>Vila Brasil (%)</i>	<i>Vidigal (%)</i>
Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT)	7.1	26.2
Aliança Popular Democrática (APD)	6.3	7.0
Other	1.6	0.3
Split or undecided	85.0	66.5
Total	100.0	100.0

Note: The respondents numbered 127 in Vila Brasil and 328 in Vidigal.

TABLE 3 Percentage of All Preferences Motivated by Party at Each Level in Two Favelas in Rio de Janeiro, November 1986

<i>Contest</i>	<i>Vila Brasil (%)</i>	<i>Vidigal (%)</i>
Governor	0.8	2.4
Senator	10.6	29.1
Federal Deputy	10.2	30.8
State Deputy	11.8	32.6

social change, it might be expected that party preferences would be more stable there than in Vila Brasil, where preference is determined according to the ability of individual candidates to deliver goods. Table 2 details the percentage of respondents in each favela who planned to vote for the same political party at all four levels of the contest. Although most voters in both favelas were intending to distribute their ballots across different parties or had not yet decided how they were going to vote at all levels of the election, considerably more respondents in Vidigal (33.5 percent) planned to vote for a single-party ticket than in Vila Brasil (15 percent). This finding demonstrates a much stronger commitment to party politics in Vidigal, the difference being the proportion of voters in Vidigal intending to vote for the PDT. Here again is further evidence of a different understanding of the political process.

All respondents were asked to indicate the candidate or party (alliance) of their choice or both. Their responses allow comparison of the relative importance of each factor in motivating political preference.

Given what is known about the politics of the two areas, one would expect party to be the more important motivation in Vidigal and candidate the determining factor in Vila Brasil. Table 3 summarizes the proportion of respondents in each favela identifying the party but not the candidate of their choice. With the exception of the governor's race,²⁷ a greater propor-

TABLE 4 *Voter Preferences in Two Rio Favelas for the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT) and the Aliança Popular Democrática (APD) Motivated by Party at Each Level, November 1986*

<i>Contest</i>	<i>PDT (%)</i>	<i>APD (%)</i>
Governor	1.9	4.4
Senator	54.1	27.2
Federal Deputy	54.2	30.6
State Deputy	69.6	26.6

tion of respondents in Vidigal identified with the party of their choice than did so in Vila Brasil. The finding that respondents in Vila Brasil are more candidate-oriented reflects the ongoing close association there between electoral politics and individual politicians, especially at more local levels.

The findings in table 4 suggest that part of the reason for the difference in the relative importance of party versus candidate in the two favelas can be explained in terms of differences in the appeal of the two parties themselves. Except in the race for governor, many more PDT voters in the two favelas were motivated by party than were APD voters: almost 70 percent of those intending to vote for the PDT for state deputy specified only the party. To some extent, this finding reflects differences in the organizational structure of the two major political fronts. Whereas the PDT is a highly centralized political party, the PMDB (the major force within the APD) is far more diffuse in that it incorporates many political bosses with particular clienteles of their own.

Having said as much, table 5 nevertheless reveals that while this relationship between the two major parties is much the same in the two favelas, substantial differences exist. Prospective PDT voters as well as APD voters in Vidigal were more likely to opt for the party of their choice than were their counterparts in Vila Brasil, evidence that the discrepancy between the importance of party and candidate as a motivation to vote in the two favelas results from differences in local organizational structure and political ideology.

CONCLUSION

Because the return to democracy in Brazil was accompanied by a rapid decline in the level of popular protest and organization, mobilization against the military regime has been cast in a significant supporting role, but one that has proved to be ephemeral at best. This research has addressed these issues: given what is known about the process of redemocratization in Brazil, is the distinction often made between old and

TABLE 5 *Percentage of Preferences for the Partido Democrático Trabalhista (PDT) and Aliança Popular Democrática (APD) Motivated by Party Preference at Each Level in Two Rio Favelas, November 1986*

<i>Contest</i>	<i>Vila Brasil</i>		<i>Vidigal</i>	
	<i>PDT (%)</i>	<i>APD (%)</i>	<i>PDT (%)</i>	<i>APD (%)</i>
Governor	0.0	3.2	2.4	5.1
Senator	15.2	24.6	61.3	28.6
Federal Deputy	24.0	10.3	60.2	47.8
State Deputy	43.8	10.2	73.4	40.0

new forms of Brazilian collective organization a useful one? If so, does this distinction have implications for political change?

In the case of neighborhood associations in Rio de Janeiro, the answer would appear to be yes on both counts. Clear distinctions can be drawn between the social and political structures of the communities selected, less in terms of the goals pursued by each than in terms of the mechanisms employed. The single most important function of the Vila Brasil association was to pursue the favela's material needs through manipulating clientelist exchange, mainly during periods of electoral activity. The relationship between the residents of the favela and the leadership and that between the leadership and the political system have been tailored to facilitate this particular kind of political transaction. The neighborhood association in Vidigal was also concerned with satisfying the immediate material goals of the community, but it chose other methods. Rejection of the traditional political exchange practiced in Vila Brasil arose from the collective realization of the broader implications of entering into such transactions. In deciding to sever the association between patronage and the vote, the community had to adopt a different strategy to pursue its immediate goals. This decision in turn gave rise to a different community structure.

The distinctions made here between these two forms of collective organization are not new and have recently attracted much scholarly attention. A far more important issue is whether or not such distinctions reflect differences in the ways in which the residents of such communities understand the political process and formulate their voting preferences.

The distinctions between the voting preferences of the two communities are complicated by ambiguities within the political system in that no direct translation occurs between the different organizational types and alternative political parties. The relationship also varies and becomes more complicated at different levels of the dispute. It is clear nonetheless that organizations like that in Vila Brasil are effective in generating sup-

port for individuals who pursue political power through traditional clientelist methods and that such support is relatively robust.

In contrast, clientelist politics in Vidigal is no longer an effective means of mobilizing votes, and since the community's reorganization in 1977, politicians who rely on such methods and who formerly enjoyed considerable influence in the area have seen their electoral base in the favela disappear. The same process appears to have increased the number of voters who favor more progressive political parties like the PDT, perhaps partially in response to the Brizola administration's favela policies but also in recognition of the issues that the PDT represents. As noted, the Vidigal association was alert to PDT attempts to use its programs as an electoral platform, and by preventing the PDT from campaigning on that basis, the association shifted the focus of the election to ideological issues. This outcome may imply that attempts to co-opt neighborhood associations like that in Vidigal through entitlement programs will not necessarily succeed in the future. Support in such cases will depend on party positions vis-à-vis larger issues. Events in Vidigal demonstrate that such organizations can be effective in eliminating clientelism and can also discriminate against more subtle attempts to employ traditional methods of mobilization.

The implication of these findings is that neighborhood associations may well have a say in the nature of political society in Brazil in the future. The transformation of local politics in communities like Vidigal helps erode the political constituency of traditional actors. In doing so, it creates a potential constituency for those who do not rely on such methods. This conclusion must be qualified, however.

Analysis of favela politics also reveals a compelling logic behind traditional forms of political organization, which may make their elimination difficult. Participation in clientelist arrangements can be responsible for providing considerable material benefit and is therefore particularly seductive for those at the bottom of the socioeconomic ladder. In a polity that promises everything and delivers nothing, the cost of participation in such arrangements is extremely low. Moreover, in a society marked by extreme poverty and inequality, the short-term benefits that can be obtained from such a transaction are relatively high.

In Vila Brasil, clientelism has produced significant improvements in the physical quality of life of the community in exchange for a check mark on a ballot sheet. Furthermore, the benefits that can accrue from clientelist politics are not solely economic. Participation in such arrangements requires some measure of community organization. It involves creating a political organization that can articulate the collective interests of its membership. While such forms of collective organization are not necessarily democratic or emancipatory, they do provide a measure of insulation from the vagaries of the political system. As a community

becomes more organized and experienced, it is more likely to be able to take advantage of the opportunities that clientelism provides. Clientelist politics is therefore self-reinforcing, and in a sense, the existence of a clientelist-based community organization is preferable to no organization at all.

The larger implication is that it is erroneous to think that popular participation in traditional political arrangements is secured primarily through coercion. If it were, then the habits and rituals that perpetuate such patterns of behavior would be far easier to change than they actually are. The association between the vote and the pursuit of material gain is tailored to the limitations imposed on collective organization by the pattern of political and economic development peculiar to the less-developed world. It is therefore no surprise that the system is slow to change.

NOTES

1. The literature on the role of collective organizations in the process of political change in Brazil is vast. For a sample of the more optimistic theses, see M. G. M. Gohn, *Reivindicações Populares Urbanas: Um Estudo sobre as Sociedades de Amigos de Bairros de São Paulo* (São Paulo: Edições Cortes, 1981); J. A. Moisés, V. Martínez-Alier, F. de Oliveira, and S. de Souza Lima, *Contradições Urbanas e Movimentos Sociais* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1977); and P. Singer "Movimentos de Bairro," in *São Paulo: O Povo em Movimento*, edited by P. Singer and V. Caldeira Brant (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Vozes, 1981), 83–107. On the birth of the Partido dos Trabalhadores, see M. Keck, "Democratization and Dissension: The Formation of the Worker's Party," *Politics and Society* 15, no. 1 (1986):67–95. On the connection between collective organizations and political parties, see M. H. Moreira Alves, "Grassroots Organizations, Trade-Unions, and the Church: A Challenge to Controlled Abertura in Brazil," *Latin American Perspectives* 2, no. 11 (1984).
2. Clientelism is defined here as the distribution (or promise) of resources—public or private—by power seekers or holders in return for votes. Populism represents an appeal by political elites to popular discontent with the distribution of power in society. In a sense, populism is simply a more sophisticated form of clientelism in that both represent strategies for the political incorporation of the masses. But although populism is also essentially an exchange of "votes for patronage" in that the distribution of benefits is calculated on the basis of what is necessary for consolidating political power, populism is less transactional and more ideological than clientelism.
3. As an example, see M. C. Campello de Souza, "A Democracia Populista (1945/1964): Bases e Limites," in *Como Renasce as Democracias*, edited by A. Rouquié, B. Lamounier, and J. Schwarzer (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1985), 73–103; and A. Stepan, "State Power and the Strength of Civil Society in the Southern Cone of Latin America," in *Bringing the State Back In*, edited by P. Evans, T. Skocpol, and D. Rueschemeyer (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 317–43.
4. Among the best appraisals are R. Boschi, *A Arte da Associação Política de Base e Democratização no Brasil* (São Paulo: Edições Vertice, 1987); R. Boschi and L. Valladares, "Problemas Teóricos na Análise de Movimentos Sociais: Ação Coletiva e o Papel do Estado," *Espaço e Debates* 8 (1983):64–77; R. Cardoso "Movimentos Sociais Urbanos: Balanço Crítico," in *Sociedade e Política no Brasil Pós-64*, edited by V. S. Cruz (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1983), 215–39; E. Diniz, "Favelas: Associativismo e Participação Social," in *Movimentos Coletivos no Brasil Urbano*, edited by R. Boschi (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1983), 27–74; and L. A. Machado da Silva and A. Ziccardi, "Notas para uma Discussão sobre Movimentos Sociais Urbanos," *Cadernos do Centro de Estudos Rurais e Urbanos* 13 (1980).

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5. For recent discussions of changes in the nature of political discourse in Brazil, see G. Banck, "Poverty, Politics, and the Shaping of Urban Space: A Brazilian Example," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 10, no. 4 (1986):522-40; and C. N. F. Santos, "Metrópoles e Outras Cidades Brasileiras: Bem antes de 60, Muito depois de 80," *Espaço e Debates* 13 (1984):103-16.
6. This assumption was especially characteristic of those who borrowed from Marxist urban theory. So pervasive was the influence of this body of theory that few discussions of the "new urban social movements" in Brazil failed to cite the following works: J. Borja, *Movimentos Sociais Urbanos* (Buenos Aires: Ediciones SIAP, 1975); M. Castells, *City, Class, and Power* (London: Macmillan, 1978); M. Castells, *The Urban Question* (London: Edward Arnold, 1977); and J. Lojkine, *O Estado Capitalista e a Questão Urbana* (São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1981).
7. See T. P. R. Caldeira, "Electoral Struggles in a Neighborhood on the Periphery of São Paulo," *Politics and Society* 15, no. 1 (1986):43-66. Caldeira's work is particularly interesting in illustrating the problems that face the PT in low-income neighborhoods.
8. See N. V. T. Lima, "As Eleições de 1982 em Favelas de Rio de Janeiro," paper presented at the meeting of the Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais (ANPOCS), Rio de Janeiro, Oct. 1983.
9. See S. Oliveira, "O Movimento Associativo e o Debate sobre a Representação de Interesse: Principais Interpretações," paper presented at the meeting of ANPOCS, Rio de Janeiro, 1984.
10. The MDB became the PMDB (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro) following the electoral reforms of 1979.
11. Estimates of the total population of Rio's more than four hundred favelas vary. While a recent municipal survey put the total at seven hundred and twenty-two thousand, popular estimates range between one to two million. For the most recent and one of the more reliable surveys of conditions in Rio's favelas, see P. Cavallieri, "Favelas Cariocas: Mudanças na Infra-Estrutura," in *4 Estudos* (Rio de Janeiro: IPLANRIO, 1986), 19-38.
12. For an analysis of the MDB in the city of Rio de Janeiro and its relationship with its clientele, see E. Diniz, *Voto e Máquina Política: Clientelismo e Patronagem no Rio de Janeiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1982).
13. On the relationship between the state and FAFERJ from its formation until 1982, see *ibid.* For a discussion of more recent events see, R. Gay, "Political Clientelism and Urban Social Movements in Rio de Janeiro," Ph.D. diss., Brown University, 1988.
14. Brizola engaged in and lost a dispute over use of the pre-coup party name of the PTB (Partido Trabalhista Brasileira).
15. The PDT's ideology consists of an awkward blend of democratic socialism and traditional laborism associated with the pre-coup PTB. The PDT is relatively progressive in the ideological spectrum of political parties in Brazil, but like most parties (excepting the PT), the PDT is organized from the top down. While not a clientelist party, it retains certain populist elements.
16. These projects included programs to install sewage, drainage, and water systems in the favelas, a pilot project for legalizing the tenure of favela communities, and a major project to improve educational opportunities for the working class by constructing special schools. For a description of the administration's programs, see Cavallieri, "Favelas Cariocas."
17. The community studies were conducted during seven months of intensive field research in the two favelas between May and November of 1986.
18. Although the association president worked for Jorge Leite for five years, he expressed no affinity with the man or his party. In 1985 Jorge Leite won the PMDB candidacy for the mayoral elections in the city of Rio, and the president worked for him during the campaign. This time, however, the president received no payoff because the clientelist party was out of power. Jorge Leite suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the PDT, and soon after, the president decided to switch his political allegiance. It would have been unwise for him to continue working for a politician who had recently suffered a major political reversal and was unlikely to regain power in the near future. It was also inconvenient for the president to continue to support a known politician from the

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- losing party because it would be an obstacle in gaining access to the state bureaucracy, which was now under the control of the opposing party.
19. During this time, the president received calls from candidates for whom he had worked in the past, including Jorge Leite. Getting the favela's roads paved in 1982 was the president's greatest victory, and the only one directly linked to elections thus far, but he had achieved other "understandings" in the past.
 20. It is important to point out that while the PDT administration at the time was involved in a certain kind of electioneering, it did not engage in naked clientelism of the kind employed by the PMDB machine in power until 1982.
 21. This is not to say that the association was unwilling to accept "gifts" designed to generate political support. It was made clear, however, that acceptance of such donations would in no way oblige the community to vote for the donor. As a result, most of the offers that the association received during the election campaign did not materialize. The soccer club, however, which was run by the same individuals as the association, did receive money for a barbecue and a set of shirts.
 22. Of the PDT candidates who had contact with Vidigal prior to the election in their capacities as the administrators of favela improvement programs, only one was favored by respondents in the survey. According to Vidigal leaders, this particular candidate was popular precisely because he never used his position to pursue personal political ambitions.
 23. Age and sex of respondents were controlled for in the sample.
 24. Because I am interested primarily in the relationship between the two major political parties or alliances in the election, table 1 lists neither preferences for other parties nor "undecided" responses. In the two favelas, only 8 percent of preferences for governor, 6 percent for senator, 7 percent for federal deputy, and 6 percent for state deputy named alternative parties (predominantly the PT). Those who remained undecided one week before the election totaled almost 16 percent of respondents for the election for governor, 42 percent for senator, 41 percent for federal deputy, and 43 percent for state deputy.
 25. Log-linear analysis revealed that the variation in political preferences in the two favelas was statistically significant at each level.
 26. This finding demonstrates the effectiveness of this type of transaction in that the survey probably underestimated the proportion of respondents who were actually going to vote for the two candidates, especially for Oswaldo. The survey was conducted two days after the candidate's "guided tour" of the favela and before the distribution of campaign publicity. Furthermore, many of those who were as yet undecided would have ended up opting for the most familiar names on the ballot sheet when they arrived at the polling booth. The influence of the neighborhood association was clear in that 52 percent of those who planned to vote for Oswaldo said they were doing so because the association president had instructed them to vote in this manner.
 27. The election for governor differed in that both candidates enjoyed high visibility in the local press.