

Maria Luíza Heilborn

Ans. 10.6.88

Elizabeth,

Desculpe-me a demora em manifestar-me. Mas estive procurando o tal artigo de Ruth Cardoso. Encontrei apenas notas e não o texto, que, no entanto, sei que foi publicado nos resultados do dito seminário. Infelizmente não tenho o exemplar da publicação. A coordenadora do evento Marie Nbeui encontra-se no momento em Campinas, afastada da Universidade do Rio Grande. Felizmente encontrei um papel de Sonia Alvarez

"Politicising gender and 'gendering' Democracy"

que trata da mesma perspectiva, tendo sido citado por Ruth em sua comunicaco de encerramento (vide programa em anexo). Esto providenciando o xerox; em breve chegaro ¢s suas mos.

Por ora lhe encaminho uma publicao do Conselho Nacional dos Direitos da Mulher, onde trabalhei todo o ano passado, sobre processos judiciais referentes ¢ violncia contra a mulher, ¢rea em que tenho escrito algumas coisas. Segue cpia.

Espero estar me redimindo
atenciosamente
Daleu Heilborn

Maria Luiza Heilborn

Rio. 16.6.88

Conforme combinado estou-lhe enviando o texto de Alvarez, que trata da problemática da "maternidade militante", um dos termos que Ruth Cardoso fez referência em sua análise sobre movimentos sociais urbanos e um abraço,
 / Maria

Politicizing Gender and Engendering Democracy

Sonia E. Alvarez
Board of Studies in Politics
University of California, Santa Cruz

Author's note: The data on women and the Brazilian abertura process presented here were gathered during field research conducted in São Paulo and other major Brazilian cities during November-December 1981 and October 1982 to October 1983. This fieldwork was made possible by grants from Fulbright-Hays, the Inter-American Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, and the Yale University Council on Latin American Studies. Research on post-1983 policy developments was made possible by a grant from the University of California at Santa Cruz's Faculty Research Committee. The data presented for '83-85 was compiled in collaboration with Miriam Bottassi and other members of the São Paulo-based Centro Informação Mulher and I thank them for their on-going help with my research--their collaboration has defied cross-cultural and cross-continental barriers over the past three years. I would also like to thank Susan Szabo, of the UCSC Latin American Studies Program, for her invaluable assistance in the preparation and editing of this paper. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the XII International Convention of the Latin American Studies Association Albuquerque, New Mexico April 18-20, 1985.

working draft
July 1985

preliminary draft: please do not cite without permission of the author. Article will appear in Alfred Stepan, editor, Democratizing Brazil (New Haven: Yale University Press, and Sao Paulo: Paz e Terra).

INTRODUCTION

Women have emerged as key political actors in the Brazilian transition to democracy. Since the mid-1970's, both university-educated, middle-class women, and poor, uneducated women have organized movements to press their gender-specific political claims on the Brazilian political system. Moreover, women were also the backbone of many of the organizations of civil society and of opposition political parties which successfully challenged the authoritarian political regime during the 70s and early 80s. Political liberalization or abertura in Brazil seems to have generated increased political opportunity space for female political participation and for the articulation of gender-specific political demands. The gradual process of "redemocratization" both reinforced and was in turn strengthened by an equally gradual process which I have labelled the politicization of gender--a process whereby issues previously considered "private" or "personal" are raised as political issues, thus to be addressed by political parties and the State.

As these two processes unfolded in Brazil, demands for increased political representation and political clout for women as a group, for free, community-based and -administered day care, and for safe, accessible, and non-coercive family planning, were introduced into institutional arenas at all levels of Brazilian politics by women's movement organizations. These and other gender-specific demands were increasingly endorsed by most opposition political parties and by several of the post-1982 opposition state governments. In the recently inaugurated, post-authoritarian "Republica Nova," one might reasonably expect that women's political claims will receive further endorsement given the importance of women's participation in the opposition since the 1970s. The new regime owes a considerable amount of its popular bases of support to organized female constituencies. Autonomous women's movement organizations and women's branches of the major

opposition parties unquestionably played a critical role in the nationwide mobilizations for direct elections in 1984 and in the subsequent mobilization of women's support for the "indirect" candidacy of Tancredo Neves and the Democratic Alliance.[1]

But just how gender-specific political claims will be incorporated into the new regime's political institutions and public policies remains an open question. The political clout wielded by organized female constituencies during abertura, especially during the 1982 and 1984 electoral conjunctures, may recede as Brazil returns to "politics as usual" under the post-authoritarian regime. As of this writing, President Sarney's Cabinet includes no women; the regime is vacillating on the implementation of gender-specific policy programs developed under authoritarian rule; and, the creation of a Ministry or Council on the Status of Women awaits the consolidation of the regime and the conciliation of the disparate political and social forces represented within it.

Comparative data on the politics of gender in other Latin American regimes in the past suggests a rather discouraging prognosis for the future of women within the New Brazilian Republic. Historical data suggests that the incorporation of women and women's issues into Latin American politics has most often reinforced existing patterns of gender-based inequality by relegating women and their gender-related political issues to a subordinate or secondary position within both male-dominant political institutions and political discourses. Women's political claims and women's movement organizations have most frequently been coopted, instrumentalized or manipulated by political elites and the political apparatuses of the State in ways which serve the needs of the prevailing pact of domination--even when women have sometimes achieved limited gains through their increased participation in politics. Populist, democratic, authoritarian, and, even socialist regimes have

proven especially resistant to gender-based political claims[2], albeit to different degrees.

And yet much of the recent literature on women and politics in Latin America has failed to explore, either theoretically or empirically, why political arenas are so resistant to the entry of women and of issues which would effect changes in the status of women (whereas, for example, women have successfully entered the formal labor market arena in ever-increasing numbers).

A key theoretical consideration, rarely explored in this literature, is that women, as a group, have never formed part of the pact of domination articulated within the State. I will suggest that a regime's policies concerning gender are not incidental but rather form part of the structural and ideological grid upon which State power is based. That grid has a class, racial/ethnic and a gendered content, and is not fixed, but rather constantly in flux, reflecting the class, racial and gender struggles which take place both within and without the State. Moreover, I will argue that this dimension of State power is critical to our understanding of the politics of gender in Brazil during abertura and to our ability to presage what a "redemocratized" Brazilian polity will mean for women as a group.

While many analysts of contemporary Brazilian politics have noted the massive presence of organized women within the "new social movements," few have considered its implications for real democratization (which would necessarily imply an end to institutionalized sexism) or pondered its potential for ameliorating gender-based inequality in Brazil. It is the central theoretical contention of the present analysis that gender-based inequality is inscribed in the very structure of State power in Brasil, as elsewhere, and that therefore, the incorporation of newly-mobilized women and women's issues represents one of the biggest challenges for the new democratic regime.

The intractability of the political arena to women in particular and to gender-based politics in general is attributable to the fact that the modern State (whether capitalist, dependent capitalist, or socialist) is not neutral on gender issues. Feminist theoretical insights suggest that as the modern State represents the quintessential institutional separation of the "public" or political from the "private" or personal domains of human activity, it also institutionalizes gender power relations by circumscribing the female gender to the latter domain, politically reinforcing the boundaries which have confined women socially and historically. The political, then becomes the domain of men and "male" issues, and issues which directly affect the lives of women, like reproduction, contraception, child care, rape and sexual abuse and battery, etc., are pre-defined as outside the "proper" realm of politics[3]

Contingent upon shifting social relations of production and reproduction, this "public/private split" must be constantly ideologically redefined and those new definitions coercively enforced by the State. As has been amply demonstrated by recent feminist scholarship, the State must in fact regulate and delimit "personal" power relations in order to guarantee the continued functioning of the "public" sphere--hence, marriage, divorce and inheritance laws, rape and pornography laws, State population control policies, etc.[4] The female gender role, largely defined by the biological and daily reproduction of the human species, is the structural foundation of the public sphere, without which neither production nor politics could function effectively.[5]

Though "generic,"[6] as well as economic and racial, power relations find their expression and articulation within the pact of domination represented within the State, the State does not monolithically, represent male interests.[7] To coin a phrase, the State is not the executive committee of men, but rather is relatively

autonomous of male interests, and therefore may act in the interest of women at particular historical conjunctures. By suggesting that the public sphere is interconnected with and dependent upon the private sphere, I am not proposing a functionalist approach to the generic basis of State power. Rather the State is conceived of as relatively autonomous of patriarchal interests; to paraphrase Carnoy's interpretation of Marxian "class struggle" theories of the State as represented in the work of Wolfe, Castells, and the later Poulantzas: the dominant gender is conscious of its interests and attempts to influence and control the State as an object of its socioeconomic and gender-based power, but at the same time, because of the existence of class and gender struggle, the State must appear to be autonomous of existing generic, class and racial power arrangements, in order to retain its very legitimacy as a State.[8]

Thus, the State is relatively autonomous of patriarchal or "male" interests not because it is independent of those interests but because its legitimacy is partially derived from its ability to conceal the generic, racial and class interests represented within the pact of domination by granting some concessions to subordinate groups and classes which increasingly press their political claims upon the State.[9] This feminist perspective on the relative autonomy of the State implies that class-based, racially-based, and gender-based political struggles, led by social movements, can and must take place both within and without the political apparatuses of the State. Again, drawing from Carnoy, in this "gender struggle" view of the State, the "white, male, capitalist" State can be moved against dominant interests by the

development of movements inside and outside the State to force it to move against its fundamental role as reproducer of [gender, race, and] class relations . . . The capitalist [patriarchal and racist] State will not reform in a progressive direction without such movements pressing it. In other words, the capitalist [patriarchal and racist] State is inherently class-based [gender-based and racially-based] and will act in that way unless

pressured by mass organizations. The correct political strategy is to organize at the base, both outside and inside the State, bringing those organizations to bear on society's dominant institutions to reform them.[10]

For purposes of comparative, empirical analysis of the relationship between women's subordination and institutionalized political power, the "gender struggle" view of the relative autonomy of the State proposed here also suggests that different political regimes, which represent different schemes of class, genderic and racial domination and different policies for structuring the relationship between State and society, may also represent different opportunity spaces for social movements to act both within and without the political apparatus of the State and thus impact State policies. Particular political regime structures and governmental policies may provide increased "opportunity space" for the articulation of gender-specific political claims by social movements, thus potentially ameliorating or redefining political power imbalances between women and men. And processes of regime transition, which redefine the relationship between State and civil society, may also momentarily redefine the boundaries between the "public" and the "private," thus potentially increasing the political space available to women and gender-specific political claims within institutional political arenas.

In spite of the structural-historical tendency toward State cooptation of women's movement organizations and their gender-specific issues, women are not the passive "objects" of State policy. Instead, women are, and have always been, active "subjects" in politics, even if their political participation has been largely confined to non-institutional political arenas. Thus, the analysis which follows also examines the effect of State policy outputs on women's movements' political strategies and political discourses. My inquiry into the relationship between women's movements and the State therefore conceptualizes that relationship as a dynamic and reciprocal one rather than a linear one involving simply movement input

----- policy process ----- State output. As several critical studies of social movements have shown, it is crucial to examine how State policies shape, and sometimes determine the strategies and dynamics of social movement organizations.[11]

THE POLITICS OF GENDER AND THE BRAZILIAN ABERTURA.

In light of this reconceptualization, we cannot assume that merely because the post-authoritarian regime in Brazil is a would-be liberal, democratic one, it will necessarily restructure gender power relations in Brazilian society as it restructures State-civil society relations in general. Democratization is unquestionably important for women as a group, as it is for other social groups who were excluded or marginalized from politics under authoritarianism. But given the gendered bases of State power, the politics of gender in post-authoritarian Brazil are especially problematic and the institutions created by the new regime to channel women's political participation are especially critical for mediating the structural-historical tendency toward State cooptation of women's movement organizations and their political demands.

The reconceptualization of the politics of gender sketchily proposed above also suggests the need for a comparative, diachronic methodological approach to the relationship between autonomous women's movements, political parties, and the State in Latin America. If the State does not monolithically represent male or "patriarchal" interests, then it is crucial to examine comparatively which regime characteristics and which political conjunctures appear to be most favorable for promoting changes in the status of women through public policy. The gender struggle perspective on State power presented above, however, suggests the need to examine State policies concerning women not only in terms of "policy process" (which implies

a liberal view of State power) but also in terms of "the politics of public policy" (which implies a Marxian/feminist view of State power).

I therefore set out to examine the relationship between women's political mobilization and shifts in gender-specific government policy during the abertura process. Assuming that women were significant political actors in that process, how had the politicization of gender by women's movement organizations affected redemocratization? And assuming an interactive relationship between the state and civil society, I addressed a related set of questions. What impact did the political liberalization process have upon the politicization of gender and the emergence and development of women's movement organizations in the 70s and 80s? And what impact, if any, did organized, gender-conscious political pressure "from below" have upon the authoritarian regime's gender-specific policy outputs? And finally, what did democracy hold in store for women? Though liberal democracy clearly matters to women as citizens, as members of other social groups and classes, how would it matter to women as women, as gendered citizens whose lives and issues have historically been precluded from "politics as usual?"

In order to grapple with these questions while the "democratization" process was still underway, I undertook a within-nation comparison of two "micro-regimes" in the State of São Paulo. In order to elucidate the relationship between women's movements, political parties, and the State under authoritarian rule (in its transitional phase), I examined the relationship between women's movements' political "inputs" and the policy "outputs" of a governo de situação, The Maluf/de Barros PDS regime in São Paulo, 1979-1983. And in order to explore the question of what liberal democracy held in store for women as women, I then turned to an analysis of how that relationship shifted under a governo de oposição, that of Montaro/Covas, 1983 to the present.

I focused my analysis on day care and family planning policies as these issues have been especially prominent in women's movement politics and government policy in recent years. I also conceive these to be key issues in the analysis of the State's role in the preservation of the "means of reproduction" and therefore in the preservation of women's subordinate status.

These two issues are also of particular interest due to their class, as well as gendered, content. Both family planning and day care are relevant to all women as the primary reproducers of Brazilian society, but poor and working-class women do most of the "reproductive work" for their upper- and middle-class "sisters." Thus while many (if not most) middle-class women have domestic servants to alleviate their socially-ascribed confinement to reproductive labor, day care is an issue of particular relevance to women who carry the double burden of paid labor (for bourgeois industrialists or bourgeois and petit bourgeois (women) and unpaid (domestic) labor in their own homes. Similarly, though access to safe, non-coercive contraception is limited for all Brazilian women, women of the popular classes lack both the information and the capital with which to acquire the means of contraception which are more readily available to women of the middle classes.[12]

Abertura and the Politicization of Gender.

Indeed, the impact of authoritarian^{TAN} regime policies in general varied dramatically according to women's class status. As the "wives, mothers, and nurturers" of family and community, working class women were among the most significantly affected by regressive wage policies, rises in the cost of living, cuts in social welfare and educational expenditures, etc. It was women of the popular classes who first clamored for their "right" to feed their families, school their children, and provide them with a decent life. And it was also motherhood, as a social

institution not a "natural instinct," which prompted women to demand to know the whereabouts of their "missing" children, thus speaheading the human rights movement in Brazil as elsewhere in Latin America.

In sum, the authoritarian development model, premised upon the political and economic exclusion of the popular classes, engendered significant changes in the "domestic political economy" of the lower classes. One result of these changes was the "politicization of motherhood," a factor frequently overlooked in the analysis of women's massive participation in popular movement organizations. Poor and working-class women mobilized as women to defend their "rights" as wives and mothers, rights which dominant authoritarian ideolody assured them in theory, but which dominant political and economic institutions denied them in practice.

Changes in the domestic political economy of the lower classes and women's resistance to those changes, then, must be seen as partially responsible for the emergence of women's movement organizations among women of the popular classes. But the creation of an organizational infrastructure for female political mobilization was also a critical factor.

As the Catholic Church turned towards the poor and against the military regime in the 1960s, it promoted organizations among the "people of God" at the community level, especially among those who had been progressively excluded and marginalized by the post-1964 regime. And women were actively encouraged to participate as equals in these new community organizations. But the sexual division of political labor was not necessarily challenged by the "people's Church" such that separate women's associations, usually termed "mother's clubs," were often created by the newly militant, predominantly male clergy.[13]

Though mother's clubs and similar neighborhood women's associations have not necessarily raised women's consciousness of their class, race, or gender status in

Brazilian society, they have provided the organizational context for networking among women of the popular classes. Apolitical women's associations have thus provided the organizational base for political mobilization along class-specific and gender-specific lines.[14] The creation of this extensive mobilizational infrastructure, combined with the regime's political "opening," and perhaps its hesitancy to be openly repressive to the "wives and mothers" of Brazil, increased the political opportunity space available for the expression of new political claims arising from perceived threats to the domestic political economy of the lower classes, in which women are both the primary producers and reproducers.

Community mother's clubs provided the organizational base for several political movements which expanded into citywide, and even, nationwide political campaigns. "Militant motherhood" provided the mobilizational referent for the Movimento Feminino pela Anistia, the Movimento Custo de Vida, and the Movimento de Luta por Creches in the 1970s and 80s.[15]

These "feminine" movement organizations are usually devoid of specific ideological content--their demands are gender-specific but do not necessarily challenge existing gender power arrangements.[16] Their political action has centered around direct revindication or lobbying vis-a-vis the municipal and state governments for concrete demands such as community day care centers and better health care services for women and children; demands which, up until the 1982 electoral conjuncture, were rarely channeled through political party structures. The politicization of these women's groups around gender-specific issues is often influenced by more ideologically-oriented, extra-community political actors such as party activists and middle-class feminists.

Feminist organizations have also proliferated throughout Brazil since the mid-1970s and there are presently over 100 feminist groups concentrated in the major

Brazilian urban centers. Politicization and mobilization in feminist groups are also centered on women's socially-prescribed roles, but these roles are ideologically defined as restrictive and oppressive to the full-realization of women as "people" and as "citizens." Thus gender provides the basis for feminist political mobilization as well, but the mobilizational referent in this case derives from a direct, ideological challenge to prevailing gender power arrangements.

The authoritarian development model had a radically different impact upon the lives of the middle class women who predominate in the feminist movement. The expansion of State sector employment and technical and professional university education, in the early years of the regime at least, actually resulted in some improvement in the status of white, middle class women in Brazil. As Boschi points out, "the female EAP went from 18.5 percent in 1970 to 26.9 percent in 1980, a proportion which accounts for 41.2 percent of the increase in the total EAP over the decade." More importantly, the occupational structure of women's employment also changed, "the share of female EAP increasing in administrative occupations (from 8.2 percent in 1960 to 15.4 percent in 1980) and in professions of higher prestige (engineers, architects, doctors, dentists, economists, university professors and lawyers which went up from 19,000 in 1970 to 95,800 in 1980)," and in 1980, the number of women enrolled in Brazilian universities practically equalled the number of men (689,000 men and 663,000 women).[17]

So networking[18] among would-be Brazilian feminists occurred in university and professional settings--settings which^{up} to the 60s had been largely male-dominated. Middle-class women's insertion into these previously male-dominant realms seems to have led some of them to question their own status as "lesser men" within those realms, to view gender-based inequality as a political problem.

Middle class women's increased involvement in higher education and the professions also increased the likelihood that they would come to be involved in the student movements, clandestine organizations, and "politicized" professional associations which challenged authoritarian rule in the 60s and 70s. Participation in these opposition groups also contributed to the development of networks among middle class women which would later be mobilized around gender-specific political issues. And as many of the feminists I interviewed suggested, the blatant sexism inherent in the theory and practice of these militant opposition groups also contributed to the development of feminist consciousness among many female militants.[19]

Abertura provided the political opportunity space within which that nascent consciousness could give rise to a full-scale social movement. In 1975, Geisel, decided to pay lip service to the U.N.'s call for concerted government action toward eradicating gender-based inequality, and allowed Brazilian women to organize meetings, conferences and demonstrations in commemoration of International Women's Day. Those commemorations, held in Rio and São Paulo in March 1975, sparked the creation of autonomous feminist organizations and spurred feminist activism throughout urban Brazil in the ensuing years.

Feminists challenged the archaic civil code which made married women the vassals of their husbands; they demonstrated against the judicial sanctioning of violence against women and "crimes of passion" which inscribed women's sexuality as male property within the law; they clamored for equal pay and for the redistribution of domestic labor. And they aligned their new political causes with those of other oppressed and exploited groups in Brazilian society.[20]

The political action of feminist groups has centered on protest actions-- petitions, protest marches, mass media denunciation of sexist government policies,

etc.--and on work with lower-class women's groups in peripheral neighborhoods. Many feminists have always been active in political parties--engaging in what the movement refers to as dupla militancia (double militancy) in feminist movement organizations and "legal" or "illegal" political parties--and that double militancy was particularly accentuated during the 1982 electoral campaign.[21]

Indeed, by the time I began my field research in São Paulo in October of 1982, most of the existing women's movement organizations were squarely enmeshed, or, better, entangled in the political partisan struggle for institutional power which characterized the 1982 electoral conjuncture. And gender-specific political demands had forcefully entered the traditional Brazilian political arena. After just a few weeks in the field, it was evident to me that middle-class feminists, who had more direct access to those arenas due to their class and professional status, had been critical in introducing women's issues into the political concerns of Brazilian political parties, though existence of mass-based feminine movement organizations certainly contributed to the increased attention paid by those parties to the female electorate as a whole.

From 1975 to 1981, women's movement organizations of all types had mostly restricted their political activities to protest actions, mobilization and "consciousness-raising" among women from various social sectors, and in some instances, direct revindication vis-a-vis the state and municipal government. The authoritarian State apparatus was perceived as unresponsive to gender-specific political demands (or any other demands, for that matter). And, though individual women's movement activists joined the only existing opposition party, the MDB, the movement as a whole viewed the legal opposition as lacking in effective power to carry through women's demands in the legislative arenas. Only the creche (day care) movement and other neighborhood-based women's groups had engaged in direct

revindication vis-a-vis the municipal government (especially during the Reynaldo de Barros administration)--but these groups rarely directed their demands through legal opposition channels until the reconstitution of the party structure in 1979-80. However, the importance of the 1982 electoral conjuncture in the Brazilian abertura process pushed women's movement organizations to rethink their relationship to contestatory partisan politics.

During 1982, many feminist and feminine movement organizations (like other organized sectors of civil society) had become demobilized and divided on partisan issues during the trajectory of the campaign. Massista "frentes" had been created for the avowed purpose of mobilizing women for greater participation in the campaign process. Many women had left movement militancy to engage solely in partisan militancy--political society had temporarily swallowed up sectors of civil society.[22] Women from neighborhood women's organizations and feminist groups had become candidates (for Partido dos Trabalhadores and Partido Movimento Democrático Brasileiro in São Paulo) for municipal, state and federal level offices, and became the self-proclaimed candidates of the women's movement. And issues previously considered "private" such as violence against women, day care, contraception and sexuality, and many other revindications raised by organized women over the previous decade, were, for the first time in Brazilian history, prominently included in the political platforms and programs of many individual candidates and national political parties. For the first time since the Brazilian suffrage movement in the 1920s and 30s, gender had become the basis for social mobilization and gender inequality the object of generalized political debate.[23]

As a consequence, in part, of this unprecedented level of female political participation, gender-based political issues have forcefully entered the Brazilian political arena in the post-electoral period. Since March 15, 1983, family planning

and the so-called Brazilian "demographic explosion" have re-emerged as prominent issues in state- and federal-level policy arenas. And the São Paulo municipal government is once again engaged in a struggle over the allocation of public funds for day care.

A Gender Struggle Perspective on the Brazilian Transition to Democracy

The following two subsections examine day care and family planning policies in the State of São Paulo prior to the new PMDB regime's installation of the State Council on the Status of Women (Conselho da Condição Femenina) in September of 1983. A later section reviews policy developments in these two areas after the Council's first year and a half in office in order to determine the extent to which the Council has intervened in the regime's policy process in ways which advance the status of Paulista women. If, as I suggest, the State has a stake in the maintenance of a public/private split as a means of ensuring the reproduction of the labor force (in both the generational and daily sense) then it will prove especially resistant to gender-based political demands which threaten to alter women's socially-ascribed roles as mothers and nurturers.

Social relations of reproduction, like social relations of production, are historically mediated by shifts in the relationship between labor and capital and between women and men. State day care and population policies are therefore affected by those shifting relations. However, if the State is relatively autonomous of class and gender interests, then micro- and macro-political variables (not just "functional" or economic ones) such as the social bases of support sought by a particular regime, the competing ideologies represented within that regime, the regime's ties to particular national and international interests and organized gender-conscious political pressure from social movements, will also play a key role

in shaping the politics of day care and population.

A further consideration in the present analysis is that State intervention in the process of reproduction of the labor force is relatively less in dependent capitalist contexts than in central capitalist nations. Mathias and Salama argue that in the context of underdeveloped capitalism "the intervention of the State in the production and reproduction of the labor force is weak. One can argue that the State's incapacity to intervene substantially in the production and reproduction of the labor force permits the conservation of the domestic sector and gives the informal sector a function in the reproduction of the labor force." [24] In developed capitalism the State plays a much more forceful role in the reproduction of the labor force through social welfare policies--the so-called "indirect" salary.

What Salama and Mathias and other Marxist and neo-Marxist scholars of the State neglect is that the primary producers in both the "domestic sector" and the "informal sector" are women and that the maintenance of these sectors therefore has major implications for women's ability to overcome the limits of their confinement to these sectors within the context of underdevelopment. Also omitted from most Marxist and neo-Marxist analyses of "reproduction" is the role of women's reproductive and domestic labor in freeing men for production, politics, and "public" life in general. Therefore, men as a group, as well as capital, have a stake in the preservation of women's presently primary role in reproduction.

Mathias and Salama also suggest that the provision of the "indirect salary" is far less likely in underdeveloped capitalist States given their position in the international political economy: "The problems these regimes recognize in terms of their costs of production, their indebtedness, turn competitive, industrial State investment more imperative than in the past, at a time when the international context is less favorable. The "cost" aspect already seems to predominate and today

makes a significant development in the State socialization of the work force even more difficult, unless it has its origins in the socio-political contradictions."

Brazilian Population Policy: National- and state-level developments

My research revealed that macro- and micro-political "contradictions" have in fact overridden "cost" considerations in the shaping of Brazilian day care and population politics. This is particularly evident in recent developments in population/family planning policy. Whereas safe, accessible, non-coercive family planning has been a demand of women's movement organizations since their emergence in the mid-70s, the Brazilian State had made few concessions in this regard until recent months.[25]

In fact, the post-1964 Brazilian regime has been overwhelmingly pro-natalist, or, at best, ambivalent in terms of population politics. Cost considerations were clearly overridden by ideological and political factors in the shaping of Brazilian population politics prior to 1983.[26]

Sub-imperialist, expansionist ideology--the Miracle's vision of O Grande Brasil--led the regime to resist the implementation of a nationwide family planning program in the 60s and 70s when most other Catholic Latin American nations were doing so. In the sixties and early seventies, the regime argued that the vastness of unpopulated Brazilian territory and the richness of its untapped national resources could accommodate an infinite level of population growth. Nevertheless, in 1965, it conceded to the creation of BEMFAM (Sociedad Civil Bem-Estar Familiar no Brasil), a privately-funded branch of International Planned Parenthood, in Brazil and approved its distribution of birth control in several Brazilian states--primarily in the economically depressed Northeast where population control was seen as a panacea for the lack of federal investment in industrial and agricultural development in the area.

Coupled with this expansionist component of the regime's ideology in its early stages was a firm ideological commitment to "the family." Indeed, bourgeois civilian supporters of the 1964 military coup which installed the regime had mobilized thousands (primarily women) against Goulart, who allegedly threatened the very moral fabric of the Brazilian family through his "communist" social welfare policies. The political Right capitalized on the previous exclusion of gender-specific issues by all Brazilian political parties during the "democratic interlude" and, during early 1964, organized marches throughout Brazil in the name of "Family, God, and Liberty" (the now infamous Marchas da Família, com Deus, pela Liberdade). The FAMILY, writ-large and abstractly, thus became one of the backbones of the new authoritarian regime in Brazil, just as it has often functioned as the bulwark of conservatism elsewhere in Latin America.[27] This gender-based component of the Brazilian regime's ideological support of the family therefore must also be considered a significant factor shaping the pro-natalist policies of the regime in the 60s and early 70s.[28]

In 1966, the 10-year Plan for Economic and Social Development (Plano Decenal do Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social) was ambiguous in its recognition that underdeveloped nations' demographic problems often prevented or retarded their economic development--refusing to endorse the neo-Malthusian tide sweeping international politics during that period.[29] The Brazilian regime held to its pro-natalist position at the 1974 International Population Year Conference in Bucharest, declaring itself as unilaterally opposed to any type of policy aimed at controlling population size. The official position assumed by Brazil at the Bucharest conference was:

Brazilian demographic policy is the sovereign domain of the government of Brazil. The government will not accept external interference, whether official or private in nature, in its demographic politics. Fertility control is a decision of the family nucleus which, in this regard, should not suffer

governmental interference.[30]

Until the mid-70s, even the advertisement of birth control methods was prohibited by law. The 1975 II National Development Plan (II Plan Nacional de Desenvolvimento) essentially reaffirmed this posture, despite the fact that privately-funded family planning programs such as BEMFAM's were rapidly expanding throughout Brazil.[31]

In 1977, the federal government made its first feeble attempt at instituting state-sponsored family planning. Through a Ministry of Health program called the Prevention of High-Risk Pregnancy Program (Programa de Prevenção de Gravidez; de Alto Risco), the government approved the limited distribution of birth control (primarily pills) through the public health system for women whose health would be threatened by pregnancy. In 1978, President Ernesto Geisel became the first Brazilian Head of State to publically acknowledge the State's responsibility for the provision of birth control methods, arguing that family planning was a means of elevating the quality of life in Brazil as it promotes "a necessary conciliation between demographic growth and satisfactory provision of employment, education, health care, housing and other social opportunities which are fundamental to a worthy life for all citizens." [32] However, Geisel once again emphasized that "we believe that the limitation of fertility should not be imposed. It should be the discretion, the desire, the will of the couple." [33] In 1980, a federal health program entitled "Prev-Saude" included an extensive section on family planning under the rubric of "maternal-infant care," aimed exclusively at the distribution of birth control pills to fertile women (ages 15-49). However, neither of these programs was ever effectively implemented on a national scale.

While BEMFAM had five clinics functioning in the State of São Paulo by 1978 and Dr. Milton Nakamura had established several "maternal-infant care" clinics in the

capital which distributed birth control pills to "indigent" women, it was not until 1980 that the state government began to promote government-sponsored family planning. Under the administration of Paulo Salim Maluf, the Mobilization of Community Resources for Family Planning Program (Programa de Mobilização de Recursos Comunitarios para o Planejamento Familiar) was instituted, followed in 1981 by Maluf's controversial Pro-Family program (Pro-Familia).

Both these state programs, like the federal ones which preceded them, were aimed at low-income populations, arguing that family planning was "human right" denied to poor populations because they lacked the economic means to purchase contraception and the public health facilities at which to purchase/obtain birth control methods. Funded by Japanese and American private family planning organizations and entrusted to the Governor's wife, Dona Silvia Maluf, the program involved the training of community volunteers to distribute birth control pills to women in peripheral neighborhoods in the capital and in rural areas elsewhere in the state, with limited or no medical supervision. The Governor's Grupo de Assessoria e Participação (known as GAP), a special Malufista organ created by the PDS in São Paulo to advise the executive branch on community issues, further suggested that people of color should be the primary targets of state population policy--or else the black population would come to predominate electorally and otherwise in the State of São Paulo.[34]

The openly neo-Malthusian targetting of low-income and black populations for birth control by the State elicited an immediate response from both the Paulista women's movement and the opposition-controlled state legislature. Labelling the Malufista family planning programs controlista, the São Paulo legislature passed Projeto Lei no. 244 in 1980, sponsored by MDB State Assemblymember Antonio Resk, which prohibited the "implementation of any family planning program which seeks to,

directly or indirectly, control population size, without the previous approval of the State Assembly." The legislative project was promptly vetoed by Maluf.

The Paulista women's movement also orchestrated a firm response to State population control initiatives. The first national meeting of Brazilian feminist groups, held in Valinhos in June of 1980, appointed a special commission to study the government's past and present population control/family planning policies and to propose a feminist alternative "which would express the real interests and needs of Brazilian women." The Commission released an extensive document for internal discussion within the movement in late 1980, a pamphlet-length version of which was widely distributed during the 1981 International Women's Day celebrations throughout the State of São Paulo. Proclaiming that "women's right to control their own bodies has long been one of the great banners of feminism" and that "both natalist and anti-natalist politics have utilized sexuality, the body of woman, as a social patrimony, denying her rights and her individuality," the documents vehemently opposed the "ambiguous official proposal for intervention in the 'regulation of fertility' of women" and proposed the "right to have the necessary conditions to opt freely for maternity." [35]

The feminist position differed markedly from that of the male-led opposition parties. Agreeing with the left in that "it is not the demographic explosion which is causing hunger, misery, and the aggravation of our historical situation of oppression but rather the unjust distribution of national wealth and the lack of democratic freedoms which are there to preserve the privileges of a minority, to the detriment of the overwhelming misery of the majority." [36] the women's movement further argued that the State did have the responsibility to provide women with safe, accessible, non-coercive methods of birth control:

Today we struggle to have the conditions with which to exercise the right to

opt freely to have or not have children, how many to have, and the spacing between one pregnancy and another. This is for us a legitimate and democratic revindication because it contains a series of aspects which are essential to the advance of the liberation of women such as: the strict respect for the free exercise of our sexuality; the demand that motherhood and domestic work be assumed as social functions; the battle against any and all forms of utilization of our bodies as a social patrimony, above our individual right to choose.[37]

Feminists also denounced the government's programs for isolating women's reproductive function from the general conditions of women's health. By introducing the notion of reproductive choice as an essential precondition for women's liberation, the women's movement introduced a new, gender-based element in the Brazilian pro-natalist versus anti-natalist debate--proclaiming that the heretofore "personal" control of fertility was an issue for public, political debate and State action, not to be dismissed solely as an "imperialist plot" to "kill guerrilheiros in the womb."

The movement sponsored a public debate to denounce Pro-Familia in late 1981, co-sponsored by most legal and clandestine opposition parties, unions of nurses, doctors, and public health workers, popular organizations such as SABs and CEBs, and neighborhood women's groups. The debate was to generate a massive campaign against Maluf's family planning program. But the emergence of partisan rivalries within the women's movement and other organizations of civil society in 1982 prevented such a campaign from being effectively carried out. And it was not until March of 1983 that family planning reemerged as a central issue in the Paulista women's movement--again in response to State policy initiatives.

Population control policies in the Third World have often gone hand-in-hand with strict monetarist policies imposed on national governments by the international aid community. The official justification is that controlling the "exaggerated" population growth rate in underdeveloped nations is a quicker, more cost-efficient

solution to the inequitable distribution of national resources. This neo-Malthusian idea is to decrease the number of people who need to be housed, fed, schooled, employed, etc., rather than increase State investments in housing, social welfare, education, and so on.

Facing the 1982-83 debt crisis and consequent renewed negotiations with the IMF and other international lenders, the authoritarian regime made population control one of its political priorities as of 1983. In his address to the newly-elected National Congress on March 1, 1983, President Figueredo argued that:

In Brazil, during the last 40 years, demographic growth has surpassed 50 million inhabitants. This human growth, in explosive terms, devours, as has been observed, economic growth. The agent of instability, population growth causes social, economic, cultural and political disequilibriums which call for profound meditation . . . A wide debate on this subject, especially by the National Congress, will contribute to the fixing of objective, fundamental directions in this regard . . . [38]

The National Congress followed suit, immediately creating a special commission to study population problems, the Senate Parliamentary Inquiry Commission on Population Growth (Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito sobre Aumento Populacional) in March of 1983. The Commission was addressed by leading politicians and private citizens, including some nationally-known Brazilian feminists, and concentrated on the issue of "family planning" rather than demographic imbalances as such.

Family planning suddenly attained a prominent place on the floor of the national Senate as well. Former Minister and present PDS Senator Roberto Campos stressed the issue in his first official address to the Senate:

A negligence of demographic issues is manifested in our timidity, if not our inertia, before the population explosion. In the last decade, we evolved from a position of antipathy to family planning, to a sympathetic apathy, and now, an apathetic sympathy. The last census, of 1980, sets the population growth rate at 2.49 percent, declining in relation to 1960 and 1970, but even so, it is enough to condemn us to relative poverty and to pockets of absolute poverty . . . The country must exorcise the demographic tabu . . . In the south, due to the combined effect of education, income growth,

and urbanization, there is already spontaneous family planning. All that is called for is to give the poorer classes and regions the opportunity to practice responsible paternity, impossible today due to lack of information and the inaccessibility of preventive instruments.[39]

"Responsible paternity" became the catchword of anti-natalist arguments in 1983. PDS Senator Eunice Michiles, the only woman in the national Senate and President of the Movimento de Mulheres Democráticas Sociais (MMDS), the feminine branch of the PDS, made it her primary political banner. In a speech before the Senate on April 28, 1983, the "women's Senator," combined neo-Malthusian arguments with women's rights arguments to propose the creation of an Interministerial Department for Family Planning (Departamento Interministerial de Planejamento Familiar) to be directly linked to the Presidency and to be directed by a woman "due to her natural affinity with the program." After blaming a score of national ills on the "population problem," Michiles added that:

The important fact is that women have been systematically omitted from the discussion of family planning; one cannot omit the fact that it is woman who is the principal agent of human reproduction, the one who spends nine months carrying a child, protecting it with her own body, the one who gives birth with all the joy and suffering that involves . . . the understanding of contraceptive methods opens the doors to feminine independence, in the sense that a woman can decide how many children she will have, when she will have them, giving her the sensation of control over her destiny, allowing her a greater utilization of opportunities for education, and employment.[40]

The executive branch of the Federal government also began its own plans for the institution of a nationally-based family planning program, independently of the deliberations of the National Congress. The Ministry of Health elaborated a new program called the Program for Integral Assistance to Women's Health (Programa de Assisstencia Integral a Saude da Mulher or PAISM), which, like Michiles' proposal, also appropriates the "reproductive rights" discourse developed by the Brazilian women's movement, an ideological emphasis notably absent from the pre-1983 State population policies. Elaborated by two feminist-identified women doctors in the

Ministry of Health, the Program called for a holistic approach to women's health in contrast to the way in which "traditionally a woman has been attended by the health system almost exclusively during the period in which she crosses the cycle of pregnancy and childbirth, leaving other aspects of fases situated outside that cycle on a secondary plane." [41] On paper, the program is indeed more all-inclusive than previous health programs aimed at women, and is a clear instance of state appropriation of feminist discourse, though its emphasis remains on the female reproductive role. The Ministry's recommendations are explicitly anti-controlista in rhetoric, denouncing "isolated vertical actions of family planning" which would interfere directly in "women's right choose" maternity or which would be solely preoccupied with the "reproductive aspects of women and not with their general health." [42]

In June of 1983, the Ministry of Health directed all State Health departments to begin to discuss state-level implementation of the Program. But in São Paulo, the discussion of a possible family planning program had already been initiated within the PMDB regime. At the urging of the State Council on the Status of Women, the Department of Health, under the leadership of left-leaning Secretary Jose Yunes, had initiated a discussion of a comprehensive health program which was to respond to demands of organized women in São Paulo. Elaborated by a special working group of leading PMDB feminists, representatives of the Council on the Status of Women and health and demographic specialists, the Programa da Saude da Mulher (Women's Health Program) was even more in tune with women's movement demands than the federal program.

Ontario, N.Y.

Ideologically, the program reflects the compenetration of certain sectors of the women's movement and the new São Paulo opposition regime. Openly "feminist" in its discourse, this unprecedented document addressed issues of women's equality,

women's sexuality, sex education, reproductive rights, and other issues which were first raised as political claims by the Paulista women's movement:

Facing, in a general sense, adverse conditions in the workplace (where the worst paid and least gratifying functions are customarily reserved for them); women accumulate domestic obligations in a toilsome double shift which consumes their physical and mental health. As housewives who dedicate themselves integrally to unpaid domestic labor, they also suffer the consequences of carrying out uninterrupted, repetitive, isolated and socially-devalued activities.

Besides the specific conditions of women's work, the role of women in reproduction requires special attention, since pregnancy, childbirth, and lactation are processes that demand their biological, psychological, and social involvement. Women's psycho-social involvement with maternity assumes larger proportions in our society, where the sexual division of the labor of childcare determines that this responsibility fall exclusively on the shoulders of women, without the participation of their companions and without the provision of nurseries, day care centers, or other services by the State.[43]

The program proposal surveys and addresses the general health conditions of women in the State of São Paulo and aims to contribute to the "demystification of anti-natalist and natalist fallacies . . . and clearly disassociates itself with a demographic policy, that is, does not seek to interfere in fertility, either to reduce it, maintain it, or increase it." [44]

But even these seemingly "women-centered" federal and state family planning programs elicited distrust on the part of Brazilian women's movement organizations, left-wing opposition parties, the progressive Church, and some sectors of the State apparatus and of the official government party, the PDS. No clear federal or state population guidelines were established and the implementation stage awaited some sort of consensus within the governing coalition at both the national and state levels. // 21

While Figueredo, Campos, Michiles, the Ministry of Health, and other key government sectors endorsed a national family planning program, opposition to such a program emerged elsewhere within the State apparatus and among the ranks of the