NOT-SO-PUBLIC CONTENTION: MOVEMENT STRATEGIES, REGIMES, AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS IN BRAZIL[*]

Rebecca Tarlau[†]

This article examines how political regimes structure the strategies activists can effectively utilize to transform public institutions. Drawing on Tilly's concept of "regime space" as a combination of capacity and democracy, the author analyzes the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement's (MST) attempt to implement alternative pedagogies in public schools in two diverse contexts: the state of Rio Grande do Sul and the municipality of Santa Maria da Boa Vista, Pernambuco. In Rio Grande do Sul's high-capacity democratic regime, social movement repertories and partisan politics are effective in transforming schools for a decade, until a right-leaning mobilization ends these initiatives. In contrast, in Santa Maria's low-capacity non-democratic regime, the MST engages in a Gramscian war of position and transforms public schools over multiple administrations. This comparison illustrates the relevance of subnational regimes in shaping contention, the strengths and weaknesses of diverse activist strategies, and the importance of not-so-public forms of contention in movement outcomes.

On May 4, 2011, I walked out of the mayor's office in Santa Maria da Boa Vista, a poor municipality in the far western part of the state of Pernambuco, in the semiarid *sertão* region. I had just interviewed Mayor Leandro Duarte, who was elected for his third nonconsecutive term in 2009 as part of a traditionally right-leaning political party, the Democrats (DEM).[1] Leandro is the nephew of the most recent *coronel* (local political strongman) in the region, Florêncio de Barros Filho, more commonly known as Coronel Barrinho. In our conversation Leandro explained the politics of the municipality: parties are much less important than the person. Leandro said that his supporters believe in his personal capacity to improve the municipality, which is why they elected him to office. An hour into the interview, his secretary came in and whispered into his ear. I noticed Leandro's demeanor immediately change and, shortly after, the interview ended.

As I walked out of the office and onto the burning streets of the municipal center, I decided to call Jetro Gomes—Leandro's cousin and opposition candidate in the previous election. Jetro, who had recently joined the left-leaning Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB), was also the nephew of the deceased Coronel Barrinho. Jetro answered his phone right away. The courts had declared the previous election invalid: "Rebecca," he exclaimed, "Let the people know, I have won and I am mayor."

My next meeting was with Adailto Cardoso, an activist from the Brazilian Landless Workers Movement (MST), a national social movement of over one million people struggling for access to land through the occupation of large land estates. The MST also makes claims for other services once land is redistributed. Adailto, for example, is the head of the MST's

regional education collective, a sector of the movement that attempts to implement alternative educational practices in public schools. Adailto and I decided to go to Jetro's victory party at sunset. Over a hundred people were outside, drinking beer, talking, laughing, and dancing. Jetro stood among the crowd shaking people's hands as they congratulated him for the victory. Adailto explained that people were declaring their allegiance to Jetro, in hopes of getting a municipal job. These supporters had to be careful, however, because the court verdict could quickly be overturned. Adailto pointed to several people on the outskirts of the crowd. "Those are Leandro's people noting who talks to Jetro. If Leandro stays in power, those who declare support for Jetro will be punished." Adailto looked concerned. The MST, he said, had to be careful to stay out of these political disputes. Otherwise, activists would lose everything they had won—most notably, a high degree of control over the municipal public schools.

I had a flashback to October 12, 2010, when I was in the state of Rio Grande do Sul participating in a march of over 200 *sem terrinha* (little landless ones), the sons and daughters of families living on MST settlements and camps. The theme of the march was "To Close a School is a Crime," and the children's protest chants were directed at the administration of Governor Yeda Crusius of the right-leaning Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB). Although MST activists in Rio Grande do Sul had been implementing the movement's pedagogical proposals in state public schools for almost a decade, this had all ended when Yeda Crusius came to office and began shutting down schools on MST camps and settlements. In response, the MST had employed a strategy of counterattack, attempting to publically shame the new administration. Government officials I spoke with in Rio Grande do Sul described these protests with contempt, claiming that the movement was training the children as "guerrilla warriors."[2]

I followed the lines of hundreds of children through the city center, until we reached a set of state government offices. As the children continued to sing songs and shout about their right to public schools in their communities, MST educational activist Elizabete Witcel called me over. She was talking to Lucia Camini, the previous Secretary of Education under the Workers Party (PT) administration, who was participating in the protest as an activist and supporter of the MST. "It is awful," Lucia said, "All of the work our administration put into creating quality public schools on MST camps, and now they have been shut down." Lucia and Elizabete bemoaned the situation, and discussed the need to campaign against the PSDB in the next election. In Rio Grande do Sul, the animosity between the PSDB and the MST/PT appeared to be deep and mutual.

These two vignettes exemplify the different types of political relationships the MST has cultivated in diverse subnational regimes: nonpartisan versus largely party contingent. I analyze the strategies that MST activists adopt to implement alternative educational pedagogies in public schools in these two contexts. I argue that the subnational political regimes, defined by degrees of government capacity and democracy, are highly influential but not completely determining of the strategies available to MST activists. In Rio Grande do Sul, the regime is relatively high-capacity and democratic, a situation that, as Tilly (2006) has argued, allows for a variety of social movement repertoires to flourish. However, in the context of blurred boundaries between parties and movements, these social movement repertoires solidified a potentially dangerous animosity between the MST and right-leaning sectors of the state.

In contrast, in Santa Maria activists employ a strategy of nonpartisanship, carefully navigating between mayors on both sides of the political divide. The local political regime, which is relatively low-capacity and nondemocratic, creates limits on the use of traditional social movement repertoires. Thus, in Santa Maria activists engaged not in public displays of contention, but rather in not-so-public forms of contention: attempts by excluded groups to mobilize political leverage to advance collective interests through means that are not in the public spotlight. These not-so-public forms of contention take place in what Gramsci (1971) referred to as the "trenches" of civil society.

The goal of this article is to answer the following question: If political regimes are strongly deterministic of political contention, why was the transformation of the public sphere more sustainable in Santa Maria da Boa Vista than in Rio Grande do Sul, given that social movements are supposed to be weaker in low-capacity nondemocratic regimes? My answer to this question relates to the MST's choice of social movement strategy in each political context. In comparing these cases, this article contributes to social movement theory by (1) applying Tilly's regime concept to subnational governments, and illustrating the strongly determining yet two-way relationship between regimes and contention at this level; (2) analyzing the not-so-public forms of collective demand making that social movements can effectively employ; and (3) assessing the strengths and weaknesses of movement strategies under particular regimes.

BACKGROUND: THE MST AND EDUCATION

Brazil, like most of Latin America, has been characterized historically by its large disparities in land ownership, with a small percentage of the population owning the majority of the land and millions of rural workers who are landless.[3] Furthermore, in Brazil these large landowners have been accustomed to cultivating only a small portion of their property, which has resulted in much of the arable land in the country lying fallow (Wright and Wolford 2003: 22-25). The MST arose in the early 1980s to contest this unequal land distribution. Isolated groups of landless rural laborers, primarily in the south of Brazil, were inspired by the progressive wing of the Catholic Church to occupy unproductive land estates (Ondetti 2008). As this tactic became successful, a national movement—the MST—was formed in 1984 to unite these dispersed actions.[4] According to recent estimates, by 2006 the MST had succeeded in winning land rights for 134,440 families (Carter and Carvalho 2009: 329). The movement also inspired dozens of other rural social movements to organize similar occupations, which has resulted in additional redistribution of land. In addition, tens of thousands of people are still living in MST camps, waiting for land rights.[5]

Once MST activists succeed in getting legal land rights for families living in occupied encampments, the federal government creates an "agrarian reform settlement." Families living in these new settlements have the right to additional public goods, such as housing stipends, loans for agricultural production, and technical assistance. However, MST activists often have to mobilize contentious actions to pressure government officials to deliver on these benefits (Wolford 2010b). Among these public goods, primary and secondary education are the responsibility of municipal and state governments. After families win land rights (and sometimes even before land rights are won), municipal and state governments will either build schools in these areas or provide transportation for students to travel to local city centers. The MST prefers the first option, schools built in their own communities, so youths do not have to leave the countryside to study.

Over the past three decades, MST activists have developed a series of curricular and organizational proposals for these rural schools that support the movement's struggle for agrarian reform in the countryside. These proposals include incorporating agroecological training in schools, valuing manual labor, emphasizing collective work, implementing participatory democracy, teaching students the history of socialist struggles, and promoting peasant traditions and rural life. Following Tilly (2006: 53), this attempt to transform the Brazilian public school system can be understood as a social movement "campaign." I analyze the relative success of the MST's educational campaign in two drastically different political contexts.

DATA SOURCE AND CASE SELECTION

I spent seventeen months between 2009 and 2011 doing ethnographic research in four differ-ent regions of Brazil. In total, I collected data on two municipal and four state public school systems, and researched the MST's involvement in the federal educational sphere. In each region, I participated in all of the MST's educational activities, lived with local MST educational activists, attended dozens of MST-administered teacher trainings, observed schools on MST settlements, and participated in meetings between MST activists and govern-ment officials. I analyze two of those six public school systems: the state school system in Rio Grande do Sul and the municipal school system in Santa Maria da Boa Vista, Pernambuco. In Rio Grande do Sul I conducted formal semistructured interviews with sixteen government officials and fifteen MST educational activists. In Santa Maria da Boa Vista, I interviewed twelve government officials and twenty-three MST educational activists. I also lived in each of these locations for three to four months. I triangulated several different data sources—observations, informal conversations, formal interviews, and documents—to trace the process of educational change in each location.

I chose to compare Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Maria da Boa Vista for two reasons. First, when I initially arrived in Brazil in 2009, these were the two school systems that national MST leaders were the most excited to show me, because they were both considered to be examples of educational "success." For the MST, "success" refers to activists' ability to implement their pedagogical proposals within public schools—what I also refer to as *educational transformation*. Second, I chose these cases because of their contrasting political regimes, the primary focus of my argument. By choosing two MST-identified successful cases, in widely different political contexts, I am able to compare the role of social movement strategy under each political regime. In the case of Rio Grande do Sul, the MST's social movement repertories and party alliances succeeded in transforming the state public school system for an entire decade. In Santa Maria da Boa Vista, activists' nonpartisan strategy allowed the MST to implement their educational proposals in the public schools for much longer, and over several different political administrations.

Finally, although I compare a municipal and state government, the unit of analysis—a single public school bureaucracy—is the same in both cases because of the similar degree of educational autonomy at each government level. This is due to the 1988 Brazilian constitu-tion, which devolved control over primary and secondary education to municipal and state governments in a vaguely defined "regime of collaboration." Practically, this means that twenty-six state school systems and thousands of municipal school systems across Brazil function with almost complete autonomy from each other and from the federal government. Therefore, the critical difference between school systems is not the level of government, but rather, as I explain below, the degree of government capacity and the extent of democracy within each political regime.[6]

POLITICAL REGIMES AND POLITICAL CONTENTION

The principal argument is that the MST's ability to transform the public sphere—in this case, the public school system—is highly influenced by the subnational regime that is admin-istering the schools. In contexts of relatively high government capacity and democracy, traditional social movement repertoires are effective. However, if the MST is closely associ-ated with left-leaning political parties, these repertoires can lead to a backlash against the movement by right-leaning politicians. In contexts of low-capacity nondemocratic regimes, traditional social movement repertoires are highly limited. However, I argue that even in low-capacity nondemocratic contexts, MST activists can effectively implement their pedagogical ideas in the public school system by utilizing *not-so-public* forms of *nonpartisan* contention.

This argument builds extensively on Tilly's (2006) concept of political regime, while also suggesting that there are effective social movement strategies that are not explained by his framework. Tilly (2008: 4-5) defines "repertoires of contention" as the range of claim-making performances available at a given time. "Repertoires of contentious performances" change incrementally, and therefore, people are limited in their choices for public demand making. In addition, repertoires vary drastically across the world. Tilly argues that political regimes shape collective demand making, and that particular repertoires are more likely to occur under certain regimes. He defines "political regime" as "repeated, strong interactions among major political actors," or the "prevailing relations among political actors, including the government" (Tilly 2006: 19).

Tilly outlines four types of regimes with two varying characteristics. The first of these characteristics, government capacity, is the degree to which governmental actions affect the distribution of populations, activities, and resources within a jurisdiction. The second, democracy, is the extent to which people subject to the government's authority have broad rights to influence governmental affairs and receive protection from arbitrary government action (Tilly 2006: 21). Statically, these characteristics produce four ideal regime types: high-capacity nondemocratic (authoritarianism), high-capacity democratic (citizenship), low-capacity non-democratic (fragmented tyranny), and the most unlikely to develop, low-capacity democratic. Dynamically, Tilly conceptualizes regimes as located on a two-dimensional space. This allows him to sketch trajectories of regimes over time (Tilly 2006: 26). This conceptual framework is similar to Stone's (1989: 9) notion of regime dynamics, "in which forces for changes and forces for continuity play against one another." Similarly, I utilize the concept of regime as located within a capacity-democracy "regime space," which shifts over time.

Tilly argues that social movement repertoires are more likely to develop in high-capacity democratic regimes. In these contexts "the large proportion of democratic claim making goes off without brute force" (Tilly 2006: 72), and government agents often participate in public demand making by adjudicating and monitoring claims. In contrast, in high-capacity non-democratic regimes collective demand making is controlled, and even preempted, by an authoritarian state. In low-capacity nondemocratic regimes, legitimate political contention is also limited; however, "efforts to impose cultural, political, and organizational uniformity throughout their jurisdictions remain weak" (Tilly 2006: 76). Therefore, Tilly maintains, insurgencies and civil wars—not social movements—are more likely to develop in these low-capacity nondemocratic contexts. It is this latter assumption that I contest—that social movement activity is less likely to occur in low-capacity nondemocratic regimes. Instead, I argue that social movements can be extremely successful in low-capacity nondemocratic regimes, but that the types of strategies activists utilize is obscured in Tilly's framework.

Before I move on to my cases, it is necessary to introduce one more of Tilly's (2006) arguments: while regimes are strongly determining of repertoires, collective demand making also influences regimes. In other words, there are "two-way interactions between contentious political processes and their social settings" (Tilly 2006: 3). As Tilly describes in detail for the case of South Africa, government changes affect the relationships between major political actors and government actors, which shifts political opportunity structures for challengers. These political opportunities, as many scholars argue (Tarrow 1994; McAdam, Tilly, and Tarrow 2001; McAdam 1999), then change the nature of contention. This change in contention, however, has a feedback effect on the government changes, influencing the entire set of causal relations (Tilly 2006).

These links between changes in regimes and changes in political contention map onto a familiar story of democratic transition in Brazil.[7] The high-capacity and nondemocratic military government that came to power in Brazil in 1964 suppressed political opposition, especially after 1968 when the Institutional Act Number Five was passed and a state of siege was declared. During the following decade, almost all political organizing had to be underground. However, the regime's shift to a policy of *abertura,* or partial political opening, led to

Figure 1. Political Opportunity and Contention in Brazil's Democratic Transition 1975-85
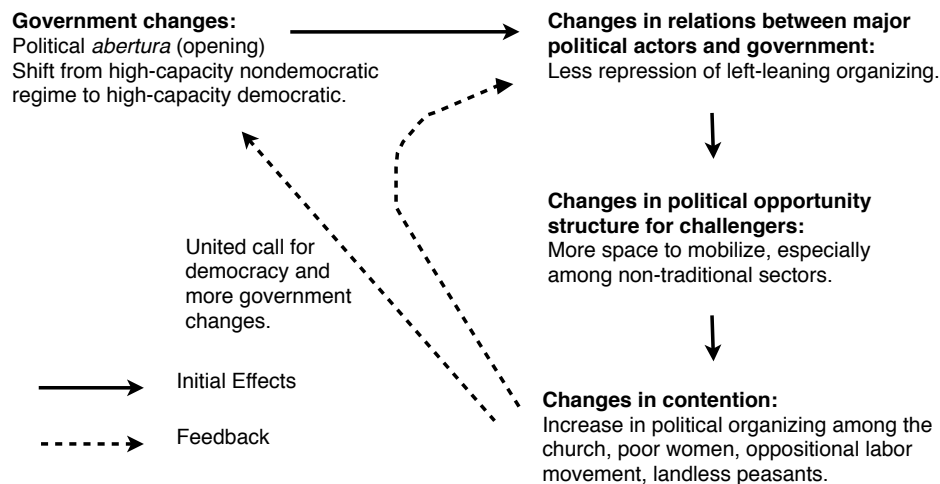
Adapted from (Tilly 2006: 113)
and applied to Brazil

changes in the relationships between major nongovernmental political actors (such as the progressive wing of the Catholic Church, labor unions, and women's groups) and the government. This increased the space for collective demand making, particularly in the form of broadly based social movements. These movements led to further government changes, as pressure for a return to democracy mounted. This was the moment when the Workers Party (PT) and the MST were founded. Figure 1 illustrates these relationships during the Brazilian democratic transition, based on Tilly's (2006) framework.

THE RELEVANCE OF SUBNATIONAL POLITICAL REGIMES

As figure 1 illustrates, political regimes are strongly deterministic of repertoires, but contention can also change political regimes. However, the contribution of this article concerns *subnational* political regimes, which are connected to, but not determined by, these national-level shifts. Furthermore, while national-level regime shifts are critical for analyzing subnational regimes, regime changes at the federal level can have inconsistent and varying effects across regions. This is similar to Tilly's (2006) argument that in Peru, some regions were left untouched in the transition to semidemocracy. In Brazil, differences in subnational regimes are important in analyzing contention, as subnational governments have full control over institutions and programs that are the target of much collective demand making. This is especially true for public schools, which are administered by both municipal and state governments.

I propose that the capacity-democracy "regime spaces" that Tilly utilizes for his analysis of national-level regimes are equally relevant to municipal and state governing levels in Brazil. Other scholars—mostly preceding Tilly—have applied the concept of regime to cities (Stone 1989; DiGaetano 1989) and neighborhoods (Baiocchi 2005; Dosh 2010). In many ways, Stone's (1989: 164) argument about urban regimes in the United States parallels Tilly's. Stone states, "Politics in the form of the governing coalition shapes policy, and policy also shapes the regime. . . . [P]olicy and politics are circular, each at various points causing and being caused by the other." He also argues that "capacity" and "relations among actors" are key elements of a regime. However, for Stone "capacity" is not a varying category but a pre-

requisite: "a regime is identified by its ability to make and carry out governing decisions" (Stone 1989: 179). This is in contrast to Tilly, who allows for the possibility of low-capacity regimes that cannot effectively carry out government actions. In contrast, Dosh describes neighborhood regimes as a combination of inclusiveness and competitiveness. Dosh (2010) is interested in how regimes affect the success of settlement organizations; however, "regime type" is the "invasion organization itself," not an external context.

While these previous studies set the stage for the analysis of subnational regimes, I find Tilly's capacity-democracy "regime space" concept to be the most useful framework for analyzing municipal- and state-level political regimes in Brazil. Tilly's theoretical framework is applicable because his definitions of government capacity and democracy are not inherently national-level characteristics. His definition of democracy as "citizens' ability to influence governmental actions and not be subject to arbitrary punishment" can be used to assess levels of democracy and citizen influence and protection at a municipal or state level. Similarly, the degree to which governmental actions affect the distribution of populations, activities, and resources in a jurisdiction—Tilly's definition of government capacity—can also be applied to the capacity of subnational governments.

Although "regime" is a useful concept at the subnational level, the nature of these regimes cannot be considered in isolation from the federal government. In both cases, the extent of democracy within subnational political regimes between 1995 and 2010 (the period of study) can only be understood in the context of Brazil's recent transition to a high-capacity democratic regime at the national level. For example, the state of Rio Grande do Sul was directly affected by the grassroots organizing that brought about this democratic transition. The major political actors organizing during the mid- to late-1970s in this state included the progressive wing of the Catholic Church, the oppositional labor movement, periphery urban movements, and, of course, the MST. In fact, the first land occupations that led to the founding of the MST in 1984 took place between 1979 and 1983 in the central region of Rio Grande do Sul (Branford and Rocha 2002; Wright and Wolford 2003). The PT gained a stronghold in Rio Grande do Sul largely due to this extensive political organizing. Goldfrank (2011a: 164) argues that, unlike the PT leadership in other states, in Rio Grande do Sul the PT was dedicated to "inclusive, participatory decision-making processes." This does not mean that the right-leaning sectors disappeared. Rather, elections turned into ideological battles between the right and the left, and the boundaries between social movements and political parties often became blurred. Once elected, politicians took broad-based programmatic actions[8] based on their left-leaning or right-leaning ideological positions, indicating a more open democratic context in which citizens were able to influence governmental actions with little fear of unjust retribution. These legacies of the democratic transition, in combination with Rio Grande do Sul's relative wealth as the fourth richest state in the country, put this state in the high-capacity democratic quadrant of Tilly's regime spaces.

In the second case of Santa Maria da Boa Vista, Pernambuco, political contention was not a major factor during the transition to democracy. While the history of the state is marked by its strong rural labor movement and peasant leagues that organized prior to the dictatorship (Pereira 1997), these types of contentious social mobilizations were less salient in the late-1970s and 1980s in the Western part of Pernambuco.[9] Rather, while the democratic transition succeeded in creating more autonomy for municipalities, it was the traditional rural oligarchs that entered this power vacuum—in lieu of other political contenders. As the opening vignette illustrated, the same family has been in power since Santa Maria's founding. Political relations in this region are clientelistic, involving "the dispensing of public resources as favors (or the promise to do so) by political power holders/seekers and their respective parties in exchange for votes and/or other forms of political support" (Burgwal 1995: 27).[10] In addition to the nondemocratic nature of local politics in Santa Maria, the municipality is extremely poor, making it difficult for government institutions to implement policy goals. In Tilly's "regime space," Santa Maria is located closer to the low-capacity nondemocratic quadrant.

SOCIAL MOVEMENT REPERTOIRES AND NOT-SO-PUBLIC CONTENTION

This brings us to the main puzzle of the article: if political regimes are strongly deterministic of political contention, why was the MST more successful in transforming the public sphere in Santa Maria da Boa Vista than in Rio Grande do Sul, given that social movements are supposed to be weaker in low-capacity nondemocratic regimes?

Tilly's assessment about the repertoires that are common in high-capacity democratic regimes seems correct for Rio Grande do Sul: from 1990 to 2010 MST activists engaged in traditional social movement repertoires, and activists were temporarily successful in implementing their pedagogical proposals in state public schools. However, in low-capacity non-democratic Santa Maria, the MST was also successful, even though collective actions making public demands were largely absent. There was also no "armed violence," or what Tilly (2006: 81) refers to as the "forbidden performances," in this low-capacity nondemocratic regimes.
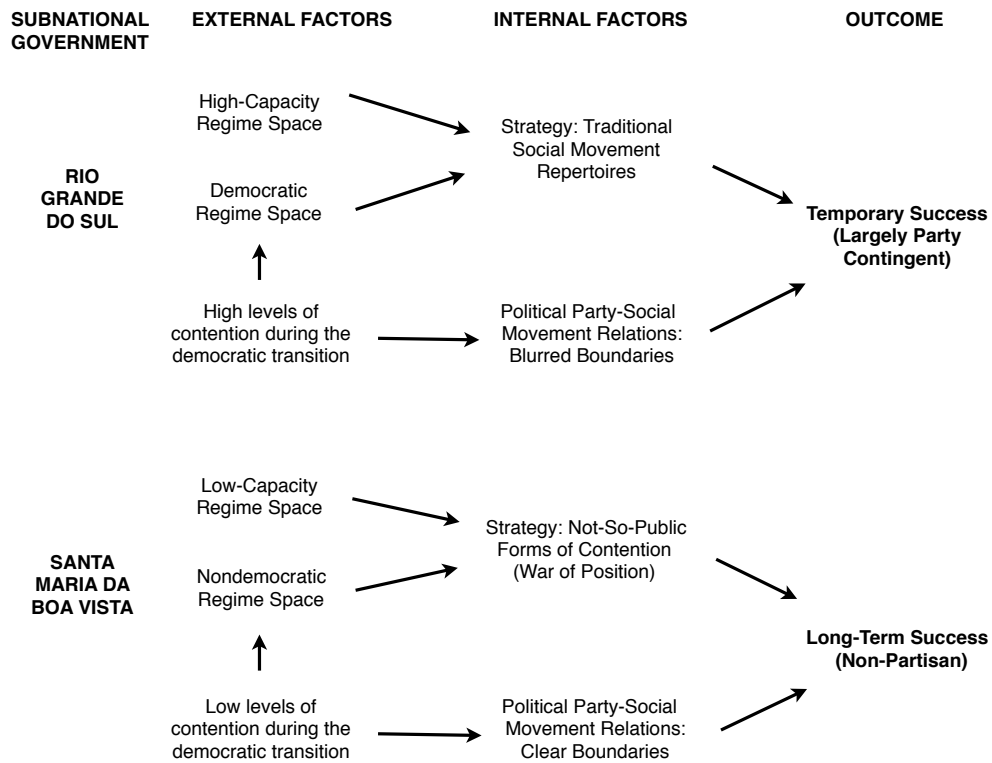
There are two explanations for this discrepancy. First, the nature of a low-capacity non-democratic regime is clearly different at the subnational level, because violent forms of collective action that can occur and be effective at that level would not be tolerated in the context of a high-capacity democratic national-level regime—even if the violence were directed only at the municipal government. Second, as this case study will illustrate, although the MST was extremely active in Santa Maria, the strategies activists utilized were not the typical "public displays" of contention. As Tilly readily admits, his focus on public demand making does not take into consideration other strategies social movements utilize, such as "backroom deals, patron-client relations, organizing efforts that precede claim-making, [and] official responses to claims" (Tilly 2006: 49). Auyero, Lapgna, and Poma (2009: 51) critique this focus, arguing that daily and "habitual" relationships between activists and elites directly affect the nature of collective action. Auyero (2008: 16) goes even further to argue that there is often "relational support" between clientelism and collective action—in other words, "well-functioning patronage networks can be purposively activated to conduct politics by other collective (and, sometimes, violent) means." I follow this perspective, arguing that clientelistic political systems—and the "subordinate role ideology continues to play" (Hagopin 1990: 162) in these contexts—might actually *facilitate* the success of particular social movement strategies. A major contribution is illustrating how the micro politics of these processes play out on the ground.

In order to categorize the types of social movement strategies that are successful in these low-capacity nondemocratic (clientelistic) regimes, I draw on Gramsci's (1971) concept of the "war of position." In contrast to a war of maneuver, which involves taking state power, a war of position is the "art of politics" in the "trenches" of civil society—garnering the consent of civil society for an alternative hegemonic project. This war of position is critical because every revolution "has been preceded by an intensive labor of criticism, the spread of ideas among masses of men who are at first resistant" (Gramsci 2000: 58). Wolford (2010a: 9) describes the MST's war of position as "the more subtle war of negotiation to win positions of power, create alliances, and construct new revolutionary political subjectivities." The war of position builds alternative social relations through not-so-public forms of contention.

Figure 2 illustrates the external and internal factors that I have discussed thus far, and the educational outcomes (defined as activists' successes implementing their pedagogical proposals in public schools) in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Maria da Boa Vista.[11] Again, although I am analyzing different government levels, the unit of analysis—autonomously administered public school systems—is the same in both cases. The external factors affecting outcomes include (1) levels of contention during the democratic transition, (2) extent of democracy, and (3) government capacity. As already discussed, the first external factor, levels of contention during the democratic transition, is critical for determining the second factor, extent of democracy. As Keck (1992: 40) argues, regime transitions are moments when, "however briefly, the interaction between human agency and structural determinations is rendered visible

Figure 2. Outcomes for the MST's Pedagogical Proposals in Public Schools 1995-2010

SUBNATIONAL GOVERNMENT	EXTERNAL FACTORS	INTERNAL FACTORS	OUTCOME

RIO GRANDE DO SUL

High-Capacity Regime Space

Democratic Regime Space

High levels of contention during the democratic transition

Strategy: Traditional Social Movement Repertoires

Political Party-Social Movement Relations: Blurred Boundaries

Temporary Success (Largely Party Contingent)

SANTA MARIA DA BOA VISTA

Low-Capacity Regime Space

Nondemocratic Regime Space

Low levels of contention during the democratic transition

Strategy: Not-So-Public Forms of Contention (War of Position)

Political Party-Social Movement Relations: Clear Boundaries

Long-Term Success (Non-Partisan)

Together, levels of capacity and extent of democracy affect the strategy choices that are open to MST activists. These strategy choices, in addition to the relationship between the MST and local political parties, define the subsequent outcomes. I compare two cases where the MST is at least temporarily successful implementing alternative pedagogies in public schools, in order to illustrate the effectiveness of different social movement strategies and party relations under diverse political regimes. However, the more successful outcome—in terms of sustainably— is in Santa Maria, the regime supposedly unfavorable to traditional social movement reper- toires. The following comparison will explore these dynamics, shedding light on the relevance of subnational political regimes and the strengths and weaknesses of different social move- ment strategies.

MOVEMENT REPERTORIES, PARTY CONTINGENCY: RIO GRANDE DO SUL

Political Regime

Rio Grande do Sul is the southernmost state of Brazil, on the border of Uruguay and Argentina, where German, Italian, and Polish immigration has produced a much whiter popu- lation than in the rest of the country. It is also the state with the fourth highest contribution to Brazil's GDP (IBGE 2010), due to its strong agricultural and industrial sectors. Rio Grande do Sul has been a stronghold for the PT and left-leaning politics since the PT's founding in 1980. The state's capital, Porto Alegre, is famous internationally for the participatory bud- geting system that PT mayor Olívio Dutra first implemented in 1989 (Abers 2000; Baiocchi 2005), winning a "best practice" award in urban governance from the United Nations in 1996

(Goldfrank 2011). Outside of the state capital, Rio Grande do Sul also has a long history of rural mobilization, most recently through the work of the radical wing of the Catholic Church (through the Pastoral Commission of Land, or CPT), the oppositional union movement (Central Union of Workers, or CUT), and the MST. It was in this state that the first land occupations leading to the formation of the MST began to take place in the late 1970s and early 1980s. In many rural regions of Rio Grande do Sul, there is significant overlap between activists in the CPT, CUT, MST, and the PT. This has resulted in blurring the line between movements and political parties, as many activists in these organizations support the PT, sometimes becoming PT candidates themselves.

In the mid-1990s, this combination of rural and urban mobilization brought many concessions from the state governor, Antonio Britto, a member of the centrist Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB). It was these same social movement mobilizations that brought PT candidate Olívio Dutra to power at the state level in 1999. The Dutra administration became a progressive icon internationally, hosting the first World Social Forum in 2001 and bringing thousands of activists from around the world together to discuss alternatives to neoliberal globalization. The PT's control was, however, short-lived, as another PMDB candidate, Germano Rigotto, took power in 2003. Then, in 2007, conservative mobilizations brought the right-leaning PSDB candidate, Yeda Crusius, to the governor's office. In 2011, the PT once again took power at the state level.

Social movement activity during the democratic transition has led to a dynamic state-level democracy, where right, centrist, and left candidates come to power and implement far-reaching, ideologically driven reforms. In addition, Rio Grande do Sul has been able to develop strong bureaucratic institutions capable of following through on policy goals, contributing to its state capacity (Skocpol 1985). This allows both right- and left-leaning governments to affect "the distribution of populations, activities, and resources within the government's jurisdiction" (Tilly 2006: 21). On Tilly's capacity-democracy regime space, the Rio Grande do Sul of 1995 to 2010 is located in the high-capacity democratic quadrant.

Social Movement Strategy

In the mid-1990s, MST mobilization was at a peak in Rio Grande do Sul as activists organized dozens of new land occupations, with hundreds of families participating. In the context of a high-capacity democratic regime, these traditional social movement repertoires were not unexpected. This increase in the number of occupations galvanized the movement, increasing its organizational capacity. Furthermore, the cooperatives on the agrarian reform settlements were more viable than those in other states, allowing for a significant profit that could be used to fund the movement regionally. In this context, the MST showed its strength by organizing protests, occupying buildings, and holding marches throughout the state.

In addition to these public displays of contention, MST activists in Rio Grande do Sul participated in a coalition of social movements attempting to transform the state by electing activists to office. Sometimes, the MST leadership supported candidates from its own ranks.[12] For example, Congressman Dionilso Marcon—who lives on an agrarian reform settlement directly outside of Porto Alegre—was chosen by the MST to be a state congressman because he was viewed as a "candidate that represents the social movements."[13] Marcon won the election as a member of the PT in 1988, and was a state congressman for twelve years before becoming a federal congressman in 2010.

Thus, throughout the 1990s, MST activists in Rio Grande do Sul were engaging the state through both traditional social movement repertoires and partisan politics. This directly affected the movement's educational strategy as well. Rather than participate in the school system clandestinely, the MST could openly ask the state government to fund their educational proposals. Even before the PT took power in 1998, the centrist PMDB government acquiesced to the MST's educational demands, because of numerous public displays of con-

tention. For example, one issue that MST activists faced was the long absences from school for the hundreds of children living in MST camps. Local MST activists discussed this issue and decided that only a public school located inside these camps would give children the flexibility to study while occupying land. MST activist Elizabete Witcel explains, "We began to discuss the idea of the school of the encampment, that the school should be where the kids are, or in other words, the school should be in movement with the movement of the parents and the struggle for land. We brought this proposal to the Secretary of Education."[14] "We brought" is perhaps an understatement. In 1996, the MST organized a statewide march to the capital, involving all of the children living in MST camps. Once at the capital, these children camped out in front of the State Secretary of Education—while studying the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child—until Governor Britto agreed to construct publically funded "itinerant schools" on MST camps, as a "pedagogical experiment."

Temporarily Successful Educational Transformation (1996-2006)

The implementation of the itinerant-school proposal occurred in the context of a centrist government that yielded to the pressure brought about by numerous public displays of contention. These same social mobilizations brought the PT candidate, Olívio Dutra, to power one year later. In this new political context MST activists were able to implement their educational proposals in schools located in their camps, with full state support. Secretary of Education Lucia Camini explains the government's relationship to the MST:

> This was a very important political moment; we were growing so much in the state, and with such credibility that we conquered the government. It was a period that the government had to give into the social movements. The people that were put in the Secretary of Education were activists from the MST, they were people who had the experience of the movement…. There was a political decision in our government not only to guarantee the itinerant schools, but to encourage the MST's participation in settlement schools as well…. Olívio [Dutra] chose me for the Secretary of Education because the MST sent a letter to the governor recommending me…. He was a defender of their proposal.[15]

As this quote indicates, MST activists and their allies succeeded in electing a government dedicated to implementing the movement's educational proposals. In this context, the itinerant schools went from being a "pedagogical experiment" to a state policy supported by law. These schools were "itinerant," or "mobile," in that they "travelled" with the families through their various transitions. For example, during a mobilization in 2001, activists occupied federal offices in Porto Alegre and the itinerate schools spent seven months functioning outside of these offices—while still being funded by the state government! The MST also had high levels of control over these schools' internal practices.

In addition to establishing itinerant schools on MST camps, the movement also began to implement a participatory process in state schools on agrarian reform settlements. The state government helped organize hundreds of "constitutional assemblies," allowing community members, teachers, principals, and government bureaucrats to come together, debate important educational issues, and rewrite their schools' constitutions to adhere to the educational goals of the community (Camini 2010). Between 1998 and 2002, Governor Dutra held two public examinations to expand the official network of state teachers. Dozens of MST activists took this test and entered the school system as new administrators and teachers—while still following directions from the movement. This allowed many of the MST's educational initiatives to continue during the next centrist government that came to power in 2003.

Within the state school system, activists succeeded in implementing many of the MST's curricular and organizational proposals. The curricular proposals included adapting school curriculum to value rural life, moving beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries, encouraging students to engage in both manual and intellectual labor, including agro-ecological training

and collective forms of work into the daily curriculum, and studying the history of agrarian reform struggles. In terms of organizational proposals, activists reformed the traditional organization of the school system by forming student and teacher collectives, which led the majority of school decision-making processes.

In 2003, another centrist PMDB candidate, Germano Rigotto, came to power at the state level. Despite his lack of ideological alignment with the MST, high levels of MST mobilization convinced him to leave the movement's educational proposals largely in place. Although Rigotto did not support the MST's educational project as unreservedly as the previous governor, the itinerant schools continued to function and activists continued to define the curricular and organizational practices of settlement schools.[16]

In conclusion, in Rio Grande do Sul the MST was successful in incorporating many of the movement's educational ideas into the state school system from 1996 to 2006, both through the itinerant schools in camps and the public schools on settlements. This was a direct result of the movement's use of traditional social movement repertoires, which convinced a centrist government to allow the MST to participate in the state public school system in the mid-1990s. These same mobilizations led to the election of a left-leaning government in 1998, within which MST activists became embedded, allowing for the movement's almost complete autonomy in schools on settlements and camps. When another centrist governor came to power in 2003, the administration decided it was more politically savvy to allow the MST's initiatives to continue than to face MST discontent.

Political Party Backlash (2007-10)

The MST's educational initiatives in Rio Grande do Sul also reveal the limits of a social movement strategy that involves high levels of public contention combined with political party connections. Despite support for the MST's educational initiatives during two centrist governments, the MST's educational proposal was directly associated with the Workers' Party and a project of social transformation in the countryside. This threatened landowners and the traditional political elite, who unsurprisingly began organizing throughout the state on an "antisocial movement" platform, promising to expel "outside influences" from the government.[17] In 2007, Yeda Crusius of the right-leaning Brazilian Social Democratic Party (PSDB) came to power. Within two years, all of the itinerant schools were closed, as well as 200 other rural public schools—many of these public schools located in MST settlements.

In response to these actions, the MST organized dozens of contentious protests to force Governor Crusius to reopen the schools. This counterattack resulted in a period of intense conflict between the state government and the MST, with dozens of camps being disbanded and MST meetings broken up by the state police. As one news source noted,

> In 2009 there were over ten protests against the governor Yeda Crusius…. One of the biggest protests against the governor was organized by Via Campesina [the international peasant organization, which the MST is part of] in 2008. Close to 400 military police from Tropa de Choque de Brigada Militar [the Rio Grande do Sul military police] were sent to subdue the 3,000 protestors, leading to seventeen injuries. (Costa and Dornelles 2010)

Despite the MST's best efforts, the movement's political strategy of traditional social movement repertoires and party alliances had returned to haunt them a decade later. Governor Crusius's ideologically driven right-leaning administration, and her antagonism to both the PT and the MST, led to a full-blown attack on the movement's educational proposals and MST activists' other actions in the countryside.[18]

In 2010, another PT candidate, Tarso Genro, was elected to the governorship. When Genro came to power, he immediately lifted the legal ban on the itinerant schools. However, despite Governor Genro's nominal support of the MST's initiatives—a result of the left-leaning programmatic platform he had campaigned on—the movement was not invited to

participate in the government's administration.[19] This was in part because the MST itself was in a crisis locally: deep divides existed between MST activists, and the movement was having trouble organizing new land occupations. This meant there were not even enough children living in the occupied encampments to merit opening a school. The MST's ability to engage in the traditional social movement repertoires that had been key to its success during the previous PT administration was greatly restricted.

WAR OF POSITION AND NONPARTISANSHIP: SANTA MARIA DA BOA VISTA

Political Regime

Santa Maria da Boa Vista is located in the northeastern state of Pernambuco, a historically poor and underdeveloped region. Unlike the South, Santa Maria has a high percentage of Afro-Brazilian citizens. As discussed earlier, ever since its founding in 1872, Santa Maria has been controlled by a system of *coronelismo*: a "form of chieftainship or leadership by big men, the heads of large, extended households," who rule over rural areas as the dominant authority (Scheper-Hughes 1992: 87). While the democratic transition might have been a moment when political contenders could have replaced these traditional oligarchs, the western part of Pernambuco was not a region of intense political mobilization during the late-1970s and early-1980s. The same family was able to maintain power and all of the mayors over the past century have been connected to the same *coronel* lineage. In each municipal election, cousins from this family vie for power in intense and often slanderous campaigns that are based on personal feuds, not ideological platforms.

The most recent iteration of these familial rivalries began in 1997, when cousins Leandro Duarte and Maria Graciliano were elected to office (mayor and vice-mayor respectively) as part of the Liberal Front Party (PFL).[20] The cousins had a fight a year later, due to differences in leadership style.[21] Consequently, Maria decided to join the left-leaning Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB) and to support another cousin, Rogerio Júnior Mendonça, in the 2000 election, in an effort to take back power from Leandro. In 2005, Leandro beat Rogerio and won his second nonconsecutive term. Then, in 2008, Leandro won a third term against Maria's brother, Jetro, by 62 votes. Jetro filed for election fraud and came to power for twenty-one days in 2009, before Leandro had the ruling reversed. In May of 2011, a final court decision (described in the introduction) made Jetro mayor once again.

It is hard to exaggerate the turmoil these familial rivalries inflict upon citizens in Santa Maria. The mayor's control over hundreds of political appointments, and ability to manipulate the working conditions of thousands of other employees, is an important source of power. Citizens declare their allegiance each election by wearing the "color" of the mayor they support, and people who stay *encima da mural* (undecided) are few and far between, as it precludes any chance of receiving a municipal job or other direct benefit. The school system is the biggest government employer in Santa Maria, with approximately seventy-five schools. As soon as Jetro took power in 2008, he fired dozens of municipal employees, including all seventy-five school principals, and put his supporters in these positions. Jetro also punished unsupportive tenured teachers by sending them to far-off rural schools to work. When Leandro took office twenty-one days later, revenge was intense. Leandro fired all of Jetro's supporters—including the new principals—and transferred his teacher allies back to the schools in the city center. When Jetro came to power once more, in May of 2011, this entire political upheaval occurred for a third time: principals were fired, teachers were transferred, and the ex-Secretary of Education was punished with a menial position in a far-off rural school.[22] These local politics, in addition to the high levels of poverty, have made it difficult to develop strong bureaucratic institutions with meritocratic recruitment. In Tilly's regime space, Santa Maria falls in the low-capacity nondemocratic quadrant.

Movement Strategy

Amidst these familial rivalries, the MST held its first land occupation in 1995, and over the next decade activists were able to pressure the federal government to construct fifteen new agrarian reform settlements, with thousands of formerly landless families living in these new communities as small farmers. Currently, there are twelve municipal public schools located in and around these settlements. MST activists in Santa Maria, similar to those in Rio Grande do Sul, have been active participants in defining the organizational and curricular structure of the municipal public school system. However, unlike activists in Rio Grande do Sul, the MST activists in Santa Maria learned early on that party politics was not an effective strategy to promote the transformation of public institutions.

Teresneide Varjão was one of the original members of the local MST education collective in Santa Maria. When the first MST land occupation in Santa Maria happened in 1995, she visited the camp and "fell in love" with the community, deciding to stay. Teresneide began to teach children on the camp to read, as her eighth-grade diploma made her one of the more educated people in the camp. Observing her potential for activism, the state MST leadership sent her off to a high school program administered by the movement, where she learned about the MST's educational initiatives. The MST state leadership put her and three other women in charge of the MST education sector in this region. Teresneide spent six years dedicated to this work: meeting with the mayors, asking them to build schools, organizing protests if they refused, and trying to convince teachers to support the MST's educational goals.[23]

Through this process, Teresneide slowly learned that in order to transform the public school system the MST could not afford to antagonize the people in power. This would simply alienate the different groups that had a stake in the public schools—teachers, principals, parents, and community members—who were all deeply embedded and beholden to opposing clientelistic networks. Rather than engaging in contentious actions against the local government, Teresneide entered into conversation with all of these different groups and convinced many of them of the merits of the MST's educational proposals. Activists like Teresneide interacted with teachers on a daily basis—regardless of which mayors the teachers were aligned with—reflecting about their teaching, inviting them to teacher trainings, organizing teacher collectives, and discussing how to improve rural schooling. Many teachers welcomed this support, preferring it to the isolation they had previously experienced. Despite the rotation of principals and teachers every election, MST activists became a constant presence in the schools.

Slowly, the teachers' predominant opinion of the movement began to shift. One teacher, Graça Gomes, explains her personal transformation into an avid MST supporter:

> My vision was similar to everyone, I was scared and thought that this was an invasion, that the MST was just stealing land…. My first experience with the movement was in 1997 when I went to an MST teacher training in Caruaru; I began to understand the movement in another way, my vision expanded. After this I went to other meetings. I go to *sem terrinha* [landless children] marches. I am connected to the movement and always participating.[24]

By interacting with teachers on a daily basis, and talking to them about the movement's political and educational vision, MST activists became "organic intellectuals" (Gramsci 1971: 5) in these communities, giving the teachers a "homogeneity and an awareness of [their] own function" as teacher-activists supporting the struggle for agrarian reform. These teachers helped convince other teachers in the municipality to support the movement's proposals. One school principal, Auzenir Socorro, explains:

> There are no teachers who resisted the MST's pedagogy. There was a teacher who arrived and had never worked with the MST, and we just talked to her and explained how the pedagogy of the MST works. We explained the education collective to her, and the educational goals of the movement.[25]

Teachers and principals such as Graça and Auzenir have become strong advocates of the MST's educational approach. However, they also continue to participate in the clientelistic political system. As Auzenir admits, "Leandro says the principal of the school is his eyes and ears in the community. We let him know if there are problems." When Jetro took office several days after this interview, Auzenir was fired.

Sustainable Educational Transformation

The MST's strategy of garnering the consent of different civil society actors is not limited to teachers and principals. Activists also attempt to engage government bureaucrats and convince them of the merits of the MST's educational approach. For example, during Leandro's first term in office (1997-2000), the MST's ability to participate in the public school system was largely due to the friendship that activists cultivated with his Secretary of Education, Bernadette Barros. In 1998, MST activists invited Bernadette to Brasília, to attend the First National Conference for a Basic Education of the Countryside.[26] Bernadette's participation in this conference meant that she learned about the MST's educational proposals and witnessed the respect these ideas were receiving at the national level. Undoubtedly, Leandro heard about the prestige of this conference. The MST activists also organized contentious actions to support the movement's educational ideas. This combination of internal allies, protest, and national recognition convinced Leandro to sanction activists' daily presence in the public schools.

Within this context, MST activists began implementing a range of curricular and organizational proposals that supported their struggle for agrarian reform in the countryside. For example, activists promoted participatory democracy, created teacher and principal collectives, helped incorporate generative themes (Freire 2002) into the school curriculum, and encouraged students to do community research projects. These activists also incorporated manual labor, agro-ecological initiatives, and MST cultural practices into the daily school routine. In addition, the MST organized several municipal-wide teacher-training programs—funded by the municipal government—to introduce public school teachers working both inside and outside of the MST settlements to the movement's educational approach.

Rogerio Júnior Mendonça, Leandro's cousin and political rival who came to power in 2001, explained why he supported the movement's educational program:

> After I took power, the MST became part of the administration—they helped to run the government. They began to make a lot of suggestions about education, and we invited them to participate…. It was very practical. The MST education collective had already been working in the municipality for a long time.[27]

As Rogerio states, the MST was already working in the schools when he came to power, and many teachers—both allies and enemies of Rogerio—were vocal supporters of the MST's educational goals. This grassroots support convinced Rogerio to continue funding the MST's educational proposals. Rogerio has been a member of the left-leaning Brazilian Sociality Party (PSB)—a party that the MST has cultivated a relationship with at the state level[28]—ever since his cousin, Maria Graciliano, convinced him to run against his other cousin, Leandro Duarte, in 2002. However, in Santa Maria the MST's relationship with Rogerio is not a function of partisan politics.

This cycle of nonpartisan support continued into Leandro's second and third administrations, between 2005 and 2009, despite Leandro's affiliation with the conservative PFL/DEM party.[29] Rogerio comments on this support: "Leandro is not stupid. He saw that working with the MST was offering some results. He saw that this work needed to be done, and he did not want to hurt his political relationships."[30] Leandro confirms this general assessment: "I support the MST's education proposals because I did not want to create conflict…. I think the MST participation in the public schools is good. The MST helps teachers and students discuss

the local reality."[31] The critical point here is that the MST's daily work in the "trenches" of civil society was showing tangible results in the schools. In the context of a low-capacity regime that did not have the resources to construct quality public schools, the MST's daily work was perceived in a positive light. Furthermore, none of these mayors wanted to rock the boat, since teachers on both sides of the clientelistic divide were enthusiastic about the MST's proposal.

Hegemony and Movement Continuity

In Santa Maria da Boa Vista, MST activists never transformed the low-capacity non-democratic political regime. The same family continues to stay in power and use the public school system for the clientelistic distribution of government jobs. Nonetheless, movement activists have successfully convinced each new mayor to let them participate in the public schools. They have also persuaded each new set of teachers and principals that cycle through their communities to be part of this educational project. Despite three political transitions be-tween 2008 and 2010—when Jetro and Leandro were in a vicious court battle—the MST continued to work in the public schools. Although the principals and teachers rotated in and out of schools three different times in less than two years, the MST activists themselves were a constant presence. Adailto Cardoso, a leader in the MST education sector in Santa Maria, explains:

> What we have today is a result of a struggle since 1995. We did not win over the municipality one day to the next…. The people we work with are very affected by this political party question; it is hereditary, an issue that comes from our roots and is part of the culture of the municipality…. But we have struggled and we have won over all of our school principals. We did this through a lot of work. And the mayor might have the right to say a person cannot be principal because they did not vote for his party, but we have our own autonomy to not accept just anyone that voted for that party to enter our schools. We have to reach a consensus.[32]

The MST's participation in the public sphere under a low-capacity nondemocratic regime is not easy; it involves a complex compromise with local political officials. Adailto refers to the political party question as something "hereditary" in the municipality, a part of the culture. Even for a dedicated MST activist, "clientelist politics is taken for granted; it is normal (and normalized) politics" (Auyero 2000: 179).

Over time, MST activists have learned to navigate clientelism by neither replacing it nor adhering to it. Activists have won over teachers and principals in different political parties and convinced them all to support an educational project that is "independent" of partisan politics. The mayors of Santa Maria seem flexible about the MST's left-leaning and often overtly socialist educational approach. However, it is highly unlikely that these mayors would be equally supportive if this educational program turned into an actual socialist revolution. This raises serious questions about if and when an educational strategy based on a war of position can link to larger political, economic, and social transformations.

CONCLUSIONS

In his book's conclusion, Tilly (2006: 210) writes, "Contentious repertoires differ dramatically from one type of regime to another. Both government capacity and extent of democracy strongly affect the ways that people make collective claims on each other and how authorities respond to those claims." I build on this assertion, comparing two subnational political regimes and characterizing them based on levels of democracy and government capacity. In this article, rather than focusing exclusively on "public displays of contention," I examine the variety of strategies that allow for activists' successful participation in and transformation of

the public sphere. While I rely on Tilly in analyzing "traditional social movement repertoires" in a high-capacity democratic regime, I draw on Gramsci's concept of the war of position to explain the success of social movement strategies in a low-capacity nondemocratic regime. This comparison sheds light not only on how activists can win concessions from the government, but also how processes of participatory governance develop in diverse political and economic contexts.

Following Dosh (2010: 26), "there are not automatic 'winners' in terms of strategy choice. Rather, the success of a chosen strategy rests on how well it reflects existing constraints." By choosing two cases with similar short-term successes in widely different contexts, I am able to isolate the role of social movement strategy and how strategy is shaped by political regimes. However, in the two cases I explore the nature of success is very different. In Rio Grande do Sul, activists were able to implement many of their pedagogical ideas in the state's public system over three different (left-leaning and centrist) administrations, from 1996 to 2006. Tilly (2006: 72) writes that, almost by definition, "democratic regimes leave more room for legitimate contention than nondemocratic regimes." This is indeed what happened in Rio Grande do Sul, as the MST engaged in massive displays of public contention that convinced a centrist governor to support the movement's educational approach. The MST's ideas were implemented with even more force during the left-leaning PT government, when the boundaries between social movement and party activists became blurred. During this period, the MST's educational initiatives in public schools were connected to other political transformations across the state. Although the PT lost the next election, the threat of contention convinced the centrist government to largely maintain the MST's educational proposals. It was only in 2007, when a right-leaning and anti-MST administration came to power, that these initiatives ended. Relatively high levels of government capacity allowed both the right- and left-leaning administrations to implement their educational goals.

 In contrast, in Santa Maria da Boa Vista, the MST has been able to implement alternative educational practices in the municipal rural school system for over fifteen years, and through countless political shifts. In Santa Maria, citizens are not protected from arbitrary government action. Rather, politicians struggle for power based on personal, direct exchanges with citizens. In this context, the MST has engaged in a war of position, working within the state and slowly but surely winning over teachers, politicians, bureaucrats, parents, and community members for their educational project. The teachers, in particular, are enthusiastic about the MST's pedagogical support in the context of a low-capacity regime that offers few opportunities for their professional development. These educational transformations have had continuity over several different political administrations.[33] However, the extent to which these educational initiatives can link to reforms that contest other unequal power relations is in question.

This comparison offers several other lessons about the relationship between political regimes, social movement strategies, and the public sphere. First, as Tilly argues, there is clearly a relationship between political regimes and contention. In the two case studies I analyze, previous levels of political contention—specifically during the transition to democracy in the early 1980s—directly affected the nature of the subnational regime in the 1990s and early years of the twenty-first century. These levels of mobilization also affected the relationship between the MST and local political parties. In the case of Rio Grande do Sul, where MST activists helped found the PT, the boundary between the MST and the PT is often blurred. In Santa Maria, where the MST arrived long after rural oligarchs had solidified their power, the boundary between the MST and political parties is clearer. This confirms Tilly's arguments about the two-way interactions between regimes and contention, while also illustrating the relevance of these processes at the subnational level.

Second, this study suggests that successful social movement strategies do not only involve public displays of contention. Rather, "habitual social arrangements" (Auyero et al. 2009: 51) and the "backroom deals, patron-client relations, [and] organizing efforts that

precede claim making" (Tilly 2006: 49) are critical to activists' ability to engage the state. In less democratic contexts, such as clientelistic regimes, or in political regimes where traditional social movement repertoires are more limited (i.e., low-capacity nondemocratic), the process of garnering consent among diverse civil society groups is a key component of the struggle. In Santa Maria, activists' ability to convince groups on both sides of the political divide to support their educational project directly facilitated the movement's ability to participate in the public sphere. Although the MST did engage in some traditional social movement repertoires, it was the war of position that made the mayors' concessions to the MST possible. This suggests that the overwhelming focus on public displays of contention in social movement research should be revisited.

Third, success is always partial and contradictory. In both cases I explore, examples of counterhegemonic pedagogies are present in the state and municipal public school systems—e.g., students learning agro-ecological farming techniques and critiquing large agribusiness; classrooms named after revolutionary leaders, such as Rosa Luxemburg and Che Guevara; and manual labor being positively integrated into the school curriculum. These examples of resistance to educational norms exist in tandem with a curriculum that is still urban-centric, with mayors that use schools to maintain political power, and with bureaucratic hierarchies that go against the MST's vision of schools as democratic spaces. Realizing the emancipatory—yet always contradictory—potential of public schools is critical for scholars interested in promoting school democracy (Apple and Beane 2007) and for researchers of participatory governance more generally (Fung and Wright 2003).

Finally, this comparison illustrates the relative strengths and weaknesses of different social movement strategies. On the one hand, engaging in a war of position—working within the "trenches" of civil society—is a highly effective form of long-term, stable social change, while potentially limited in its scope and ability to shift other unequal power relations. In other words, organizing for an alternative hegemonic project without directly confronting power has serious limits, which is why Gramsci thought a war of position had to be followed by a war of movement to take state power. On the other hand, when institutional change is part of a larger political transformation brought about by social movement repertoires, this has the potential to threaten powerful elites who—especially in a high-capacity democratic context—can mobilize to end those initiatives.

Nonetheless, this is not the entire story: these temporary transformations also have long-term implications for expanding our social imagination of how to create participatory state institutions. For example, although the itinerant schools in Rio Grande do Sul were only open for a decade, MST activists from the state of Paraná learned from these experiences, and (as of 2012) around a dozen Itinerant Schools are still functioning in this state. This suggests that both the continuity of a war of position and the more radical possibilities of social movement repertoires—although always conditioned by the political regime—are both critical to a social movement's ability to engage in and transform the public sphere.

NOTES

[1] The DEM party was founded in 2007 and was previously known as the Liberal Front Party (PFL). The PFL, founded in 1985, had a direct connection to the military dictatorship's political party, the National Renewal Alliance Party (ARENA).

[2] Several officials made these types of remarks, including the Secretary of Education from 2007 to 2009 (interview November 1, 2010) and a lawyer in the Public Ministry (interview, November 11, 2010).

[3] For example, 1 percent of landowners in the northeast of Brazil had 50.6 percent of the land in 1950 (Andrade 1980: 37); in the late 1990s, 4 percent of landowners across Brazil owned 50 percent of the land (Wright and Wolford 2003: xv). According to a World Bank equity report in 2005, the Gini index for land concentration in Brazil was .85, the highest concentration in land ownership of any of the large developing countries (Carter 2008: 55–56).

[4] For more information on the history of the MST, see Branford and Rocha (2002), Ondetti (2008), Wolford (2010a), Wright and Wolford (2003), and Fernandes (1996).

[5] According to DataLuta (NERA 2011), there have been 5,091 occupations between 2000 and 2011, involving 685,561 families. These numbers, however, include occupations organized by all rural social movements in Brazil, not only the MST. The director of NERA estimates that the MST organizes 50-60 percent of total land occupations in Brazil (interview with Bernardo Mançano Fernandes, November 10, 2011).

[6] There are some common curricular guidelines set at the national level, which all state and municipal governments have to follow; however, the degree of autonomy states and municipalities have vis-à-vis the federal government is similar. The extent to which state and municipal governments can ignore federal educational trends is a result of their internal capacity, rather than the level of government. For example, the high-capacity São Paulo municipal school system can function largely independently of federal support.

[7] For more on Brazil's democratic transition, the role of social movements, and the rise of the Workers' Party, see Keck (1992).

[8] Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) define "programmatic" actions as indirect actions benefitting a group of people at the policy level.

[9] Although there was a lot of rural union organizing in the late-1970s and early-1980s, this was primarily in the eastern sugar cane region of Pernambuco. Furthermore, Houtzager (2001) argues that the western Pernambuco was the center of the military government's efforts to rebuild rural unions in a conservative model, preempting future organizing efforts by the left and giving the authoritarian state a stronger presence in the countryside.

[10] Kitschelt and Wilkinson (2007) define clientelism as "non-programmatic" politics, where politicians do not campaign on the basis of ideological proposals or indirect collective benefits, but rather on the distribution of direct benefits to citizens.

[11] I follow Dosh (2010) in developing this causal framework between external factors, internal factors, and outcomes.

[12] The MST's official position is to maintain a separation between the movement and political parties, even though activists campaign for candidates they believe are more likely to support agrarian reform each election. However, if an MST activist wants to run for office, this means that he or she is no longer allowed to participate in the decision-making bodies of the movement.

[13] Interview with Dionilso Marcon on November 15, 2010.

[14] Interview with Elizabete Witcel on November 15, 2010.

[15] Interview with Lucia Camini on October 26, 2010.

[16] I confirmed this information about Germano Rigotto's government (2003-06) with multiple interviews with MST activists and several educational bureaucrats.

[17] This information is taken from an interview with Governor Yeda Crusius's Secretary of Education between 2007 and 2009, Mariza Abreu (interview on November 1, 2010).

[18] During Governor Yeda Crusius's government, the state Public Ministry carried out dozens of legal prosecutions against the movement. It was one of these prosecutions that led to the closing of the Itinerant Schools.

[19] Confirmed by several interviews with MST activists in Rio Grande do Sul in October of 2011.

[20] The PFL became the DEMs in 2007.

[21] Interviews with Leandro Duarte (May 4, 2011) and Maria Graciliano (May 2, 2011).

[22] I was doing fieldwork in Santa Maria da Boa Vista during this political transition in 2010. I interviewed Leandro Duarte's Secretary of Education, Neuma Vasconcelos, both before and after she was fired (interviews May 2, 2011 and July 14, 2011).

[23] Interview with Teresneide Varjão on April 29, 2011.

[24] Interview with Maria Graça Gomes de Lima on May 6, 2011.

[25] Interview with Auzenir Socorro dos Santos on May 6, 2011.

[26] This was a national conference that the MST organized to support the movement's educational proposal at the federal level, with the financial support of UNICEF, UNESCO, and the University of Brasília.

[27] Interview with Rogerio Júnior Mendonça on May 11, 2011.

[28] Specifically, the PSB Governor Eduardo Campos (1997 to present) has a close relationship with top MST leaders, and has placed MST activists within his government.

[29] As mentioned in previous endnotes, the PFL became the DEM party in 2007.

[30] Interview with Rogério Júnior Mendonça Gomes on May 11, 2011.

[31] Interview with Leandro Duarte on May 4, 2011.

[32] Interview with Adailto Cardoso on July 21, 2011.

[33] This confirms Baiocchi's (2005: 161) argument about the sustainability of institutional transformations that occur through non-partisan initiatives, as opposed to "the traditional vision of party hegemony over civil society."

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