On processes of conflict "environmentalization" and its participatory dilemmas

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the *environmentalization* of social conflicts underlying the construction of a new social question, a new public issue. Like other analogous processes, the historical process of *environmentalization* implies changes both in the State and in the behavior of people at work, in their daily lives and leisure. Such processes are analyzed in order to frame the environmental issue as a new source of legitimatization and argumentation in conflicts.

Keywords: environmentalization, life conditions, risk, social conflicts.

Introduction

In this paper I will resume a long-term development undertaken in a previous work, focusing this time on more recent specificities and dilemmas of citizen participation in environmental issues. Current state is appropriately marked by the environmentalist forces' uneasiness towards the paradoxes ensuing from the intensification of certain tendencies – unilaterally productivist enterprises, agribusiness and socially and environmentally predatory industrial sectors – in the context of a government historically linked with social movements along the last twenty five years. This paper, however, aims at calling attention to a long-term process of invention, consolidation and enrichment of the environmental agenda also evinced by conflicts, contradictions, internal constraints, as well as reactions, recoveries, and restorations. In this process of genesis and consolidation, I noticed the importance of professionals and experts implementing interdisciplinary topics in public policies and State institutions, as well as the participation of social groups ranging from entrepreneurs to vulnerable and endangered populations. I also noted how, as an effect of disputes within or between professional fields, the environment as a theme is made up by and

connected to particular traditions pertaining to different specific fields. Mention was also made of how the previous history of social movements attached to different social groups shapes how such topic is appropriated and related to previous conflicts, which are then recast under the new idiom.

On the other hand, inasmuch as this theme asserts itself and the movement unfolds, entrepreneurs themselves – the chief producers of environmental degradation – also appropriate the criticism against their own actions and seek to use it favorably. Corporate business splits between two poles: environmentally primitive accumulation and a critical appropriation of "environmental responsibility" (even propitiating clean and environmentally-correct production, a source of new material and symbolic profits). These two poles are bookends for a range of in-between practices, which pragmatically use one or other element characteristic of the antipodean ideal-types as part of the strategies available within the field. Both workers and some of the population victimized by environmental damage begin likewise to use the environment as part of their own repertoire of interests and claims.

Such is the result of the process of "environmentalization" of social conflicts I will describe in the first part of this paper. The success of this process leads to various reactions, counter-attacks, restorations and adaptations. These range from non-inspected illegal and illegitimate environmentally primitive accumulation to the sweet violence of environmentally-correct language and procedures overshadowing socially irresponsible business practices. These will be approached in the second part of this paper.

In the final part, I will discuss how population "participation" in issues related to citizenship and life quality, especially as prescribed in environmental recommendations, has at once increased and met with constraints inherent to the forms whereby they are implemented.

Such considerations derive from two recent investigations. The first focused on population involvement in the control of industrial pollution. The other tackled diverse Agenda 21 experiences of participation in environmental issues.[1]

On the "environmentalization" of social conflicts

In a recent investigation drawing on empirical data regarding damage and control of industrial pollution, I was able to outline emerging characteristics of social conflicts. Although situated in urban-industrial settings, these research outcomes served as a first stimulus for reflection by colleagues with broad experience in socio-environmental issues, working in different social contexts.[2] Such a repercussion – limited, but qualified – of my previous inquiries prompted me to resume the presentation and discussion of those findings in an appropriate format for this journal's issue.

The handling of empirical facts eventually suggested that they could be approached from the perspective of a historical process carrying a particular, albeit contradictory, meaning.[3] These are empirically-circumscribed social processes belonging to a historical trend in Brazil and elsewhere which, although recent from the standpoint of the present, can be conveniently dated back to the aftermath of the 1972 conference on the environment held by the UN in Stockholm (Sweden). For over thirty years, a new public issue has been configured internationally and in Brazil, bearing particular appropriations and various dimensions: preservation of the environment.[4]

The term "environmentalization" is a neologism analogous to others used in the social sciences for denoting new phenomena or new perceptions of phenomena on the perspective of a process. Thus, the terms "industrialization" or "proletarization" (the latter used by Marx) indicated new phenomena in the nineteenth century. Similarly, one could speak of tendencies towards "de-industrialization" and "sub-proletarization" since the late twentieth century. Or yet, in a more strict sense, there were the terms used by Norbert Elias (1990, 1993, 1995, 1997) for characterizing past historical processes newly perceived as important, such as "curialization" – the formation of European court societies between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries – or "sportification", starting in nineteenth century England and becoming popular worldwide throughout the twentieth century (Elias, 1990, 1993, 1995, 1997; Marx, 1985).

The suffix common to all these terms indicates a historical process of emergence of new phenomena, associated with a process of internalization by people and social groups. In the case of "environmentalization", internalization concerns different facets of the public issue of the "environment". Such an incorporation and naturalization of a new public issue can be noticed through the changing forms and languages of social conflicts and its partial institutionalization.[5]

Environmentalization of social conflicts relates to the emerging of a new social issue, a new public issue. It is assumed that such an issue was originally framed by industrial developed countries, in the context of large-scale industrial accidents, amplified risks, and its institutionalization. Hence, the Stockholm conference in 1972 was proposed by Sweden, concerned with the pollution of the Baltic Sea, acid rain, pesticides and heavy metals found in fish. Such pollution was claimed as caused not only by national industries, but also by those based in neighboring countries; thus environmental problems contributed to the emergence of "global issues". In developed countries, growing modernization and the application of science to an already-existing industrial foundation led authors such as Anthony Giddens (1996) to define such societies in terms of processes of "artificial uncertainty" and "reflexive modernization". Others, such as Ulrich Beck (1992), dare classifying them as a new social type, "risk society". Such macro-sociological characterizations based on risk are relativized by Mary Douglas (Douglas; Wildawsky, 1982), who reframed modern conceptions of risk within the context of capitalistic and individualistic ideology. According to her, such conceptions should be relativized *vis-à-vis* more general processes taking place in different societies: more general notions of danger, guilt and purity; and risks in social classifications, borders, disorder and passage-points (for instance, popular classes as dangerous classes, youth as a risky age range). Be that as it may, it is possible to notice, not only in developed countries, the increasing differentiation of societies and the growing importance of field effects (Bourdieu, 1997), the role of experts and professionals, as emphasized by Pollak (1993), and the economistic application of science and technology to industry (in both capitalist and socialist countries) resulting in more risks and dangers: risks for nature, the "environment", the "natural" or man-made landscape (including what could be termed "historical and cultural patrimony" in its wider sense). This seems to be part of the "great transformation" Karl Polanyi (1980) speaks about: both the more evident great transformation subduing society to capitalism since the first Industrial Revolution, but chiefly the following great transformation, that is, the struggle for controlling capitalism and re-establishing the social fabric. Environmentalism can provide such forms of controlling capitalism, or express one of its possible transformations.

The historical process of environmentalization, as in other analogous processes, simultaneously implies transformations in the State and in people's behavior (in work, daily life, leisure). This is what I will attempt to show next.

Such transformations have to do with five factors to be discussed here: the growing importance of the institutional sphere of the environment between the 1970's and late twentieth century; local social conflicts and their effects on the internalization of new practices; environmental education as a new individual and collective code of conduct; the issue of "participation"; and, finally, the environmental question as a new source of legitimacy and argumentation in conflicts.

The growing importance of the environment's institutional sphere between the 1970's and the late twentieth century

In this regard, the creation of a series of institutions committed to performing the new activities triggered by the 1972 UN conference on the environment in Stockholm stands out. The Brazilian government had spoken out against the environmental concerns and controls brought about by the conference, for fear of an international backlash against the industrialization process started in the country during the 1930's and 1940's and carried on by the Military Regime, which was at the time betting everything in the ephemeron "economic miracle". Even so, in the following year an environment office (SEMA) subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior was created. On the one hand, SEMA was a response to demands for environmental control by a versed minority of governmental technicians. On the other hand, it provided an institutional seal conducive to obtaining international funds which require environmental guarantees. Also in the wake of the Stockholm meeting and as a result of demands by engineers and technicians for widening their professional scope through the creation of new theoretical and administrative conceptions, new environmental control institutions were created in the Brazilian states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro: the Environmental Sanitation Technology Company (CETESB) in 1974, and the State Environmental Engineering Foundation (FEEMA) in 1975, respectively. Within this overall framework, the figure of "environmental licensing" was created as a permit for industrial activities, construction works, and services having potential "impact" on nature, urban patrimony, or public health. Around the same time, FEEMA created the SLAP (System for Licensing Polluting Activities), a directory of technical prescriptions for production activities within licensing thresholds. This system was based on the experience of a North-American environmental-control federal agency (EPA - Environmental Protection Agency). The aforementioned SLAP was instituted in 1977 by a state government decree, and in 1979 an *Environment Handbook* (FEEMA, 1979) was published. This handbook established the relevant procedures, norms & standards and legislation. What seems to have occurred was a conversion of sanitary (as well as chemical and industrial) engineers to a wider conception of their profession, coupled with the progressive creation of new expertises from existing occupations such as environmental economists and jurists (not to mention biologists and geographers, and, later on, public health personnel). Besides the creation of new institutions, the overall character of the environmental problem helped revalue existing professions. "From the 1960's on, ecology left biology colleges and migrated to people's consciousness. The term 'scientific' became a world view" (Sachs, W., 2000, p. 124).

Twenty years later, all the normatizing work of listing and classifying harmful substances, hazardous inputs and dangerous procedures undertaken in Brazilian states such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo would become federal norms and standards, embodied in the 1996 and 1997 Resolutions of the National Environment Council (CONAMA).[6]

The whole process of environment-centered institutional construction is permeated by social conflicts, between different social groups unequally endowed with means and effects of pollution, and between different militant and technical-administrative groups. A case in point is the 1975 decree-law, the so-called "pollution decree", on the "control of environmental pollution caused by industrial activities", promulgated in the heydays of Brazil's Military Rule. This federal decree was

prompted by a local social conflict over the judicially-mandated closing of a polluting cement factory in the industrial city of Contagem, state of Minas Gerais. In the aftermath of demonstrations against pollution by those living near the factory, supported by the local parish priest, several of them were arrested for suspected "subversion". Reaction by authorities outside the security apparatus had veiled popular support. Contagem's mayor reacted by filing a law suit claiming "right of neighborhood", and a judge closed the factory for disobeying municipal norms against factories lacking pollution filters. The federal government reacted by issuing the aforementioned decree, which concentrated at the federal level the power to shut down factories whose production was regarded as of national interest for ecological and pollution reasons. (It is worth noticing that, following Brazilian re-democratization, current jurisprudence is to allow for more strict norms at the local level, that is, environmental-control laws can be more rigid within states and municipalities).[7]

In 1981, still under the Military Regime (President Figueiredo's Administration), the National Congress approved legislation on the "National Environmental Policy, its ends and mechanisms of formulation and application, as well as other measures". It promulgated a federal institutional framework comprising an environment office under the Presidency of the Republic (SEMA), a national environmental council (an advisory and deliberative agency), and the Brazilian Institute of the Environment (IBAMA). The federal level followed what was being established at the state level, especially in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and other states, thus creating mechanisms articulating a national environmental system. Institutional demands by environmentalists and technicians involved in environmental administration gained momentum.[8]

In 1985, the year of Brazilian re-democratization, a Public Civil Action Law was enacted as an answer to environmental struggles taking place at the level of state and municipal administrations elected by universal suffrage (in 1982 direct elections for state governors had been held). Such piece of legislation aimed at "disciplining Public Civil Action for liability for damage caused to the environment, to consumers, to goods, assets and rights bearing artistic, aesthetic, historic, tourism, and landscape value". In the 1980's a major environmental public issue came to the forefront in Brazil: the industrial and residential city of Cubatão (SP), with its polluting effects on the population and on the native forest (*Mata Atlântica*) enveloping it at a distance (Dean, 1996). The 1985 law secured the right of private associations, NGOs and the Public Attorney's Office, without in any way limiting the filing of class law suits (previous 1960's legislation) against sources of damage to the environment, to consumers, as well as to artistic, historical, tourism, and landscape assets and values. It also created public funds from payment of fines and compensations. Juridical precepts for new "diffuse rights" were being thus formulated.

In 1986, CONAMA established a national policy for assessing environmental impacts which demanded studies and public hearings for licensing potentially polluting activities. Study and Report of Environmental Impact (EIA-Rima) were introduced into the licensing mechanism, together with a classification of the activities or enterprises subjected to it (mining, industry, construction, services, hauling and transportation, agricultural and cattle-breeding activities, use of natural resources).

In 1988 Brazil's new Federal Constitution was promulgated. It included an important chapter on the environment, reinforcing 1981 and 1985 laws (on the national environment system and the Public Civil Action, respectively), as if crowning the process of building up environmental institutionality and articulating it with other neighboring domains on which social movements claims during the 1980's were rooted.

Twenty years after Stockholm, in 1992, the UN Conference on the Environment (also known as Rio-92 or Eco-92) took place in Rio de Janeiro. During previous preparations, great attention was paid to the issue by non-specialized NGOs, social movements, residents associations, business federations, and government institutions. Many environmental NGOs and entities were then constituted. During the conference, worthy of note were the parallel meeting of NGOs and popular associations, on the one hand; and, on the other, the commitment by signatory governments to Agenda 21, a lengthy document made up of four sections, forty chapters, and two annexes (the Brazilian edition, published by the Federal Senate, has 598 pages). It states the objectives, activities and considerations on how to implement and plan international cooperation and national and local actions aiming at development, fighting poverty, and protecting the environment. This document reverberated within signatory countries such as Brazil, where it triggered the construction of a Brazilian Agenda 21 by means of a common effort of specialists, NGOs and other entities. State and municipal governments as well as local consortia also carried out local planning. Brazil's Ministry of the Environment was given funds to sponsor local Agenda 21 projects, for which cities may apply by submitting their proposals.

In 1998, a new Federal Act regulating environmental crimes and prescribing severe sanctions increased the siege laid against devastating and polluting activities. This process of law-making and institutional enhancement persists up to this day.

Social conflicts at the local level and its effects on the internalization of new practices

This research was carried out in Rio de Janeiro, and secondarily in Minas Gerais and Argentina. I have already remarked on the importance of conflicts underlying the very promulgation of federal laws. A couple of such cases were the aforementioned conflict over a cement factory in Contagem in 1975, the pollution law approved that same year, pollution in Cubatão during the 1980's, the promulgation of 1981 and 1985 federal laws and CONAMA's 1986 Resolution.

This paper will focus on the events taking place in the city of Volta Redonda, state of Rio de Janeiro, since it presents a uniquely illustrative case. Extreme cases such as this may have the advantage of calling attention to phenomena which may be present but are downplayed in other instances. They can thus suggest more general trends.

Currently with a quarter of a million population, Volta Redonda expanded from an urban core annexed to a large steelmaking factory extending downtown over ten kilometers - *Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional* (CSN), installed there in 1943. In the 1950's, the district (which belonged to the city of Barra Mansa) was emancipated and became a municipality. However, the major power in the area remained with CSN, which owned numerous houses and buildings there until the middle 1960's. During the Military Rule, the city became a national security area and, as such, its mayors were appointed by the federal government. CSN exerted its influence over the city by providing an educational and professionalization system to its employees and their dependents (Lask, 1992; Morel, 1989).

During the early 1980's, in the wake of the great labor strikes beginning in 1979 in the "ABC Paulista" (an industry-heavy part of the Greater São Paulo Metropolitan Region) and later throughout the whole country, CSN workers went on strike for better wages and labor conditions. A long series of labor struggles, in which the Steelworkers' Union had a central role, unfolded along that decade, culminating in the occupation of the steelmaking plant by army troops, death of workers, and massive local mobilization in 1988. These labor struggles receded during the early 1990's, when state-owned CSN began to prepare for privatization.

At the climax of the highly-visible 1988 conflict, a Public Civil Action based on the 1985 Law was filed by an environmental entity based in the city of Macaé. This led to a legal suit filed for repairing pollution caused by steelmaker CSN in the Paraiba do Sul River. This triggered a series of other actions against water and atmosphere pollution attributed to the company.

As early as 1985, FEEMA started inspecting CSN. The company had been hitherto spared from surveillance since it shared with the municipality wherein it was based its character of national security area. The company was built before the environmental licensing procedures were established in the late 1970's. Thus, from 1985 on, CSN had accumulated a staggering amount of environmental fines and penalties. Their monetary and symbolic values increased with the growing strictness of environmental legislation.

By 1985, some CSN workers also discovered leucopenia, the first diagnosable stage of benzenism, a serious illness similar to cancer caused by benzene intoxication, one of the gases expelled by the factory's coke-plant smokestacks. The acknowledgement of such disease, and thus of deaths previously naturalized as the outcome of a lifetime of excessive hard work, was the result of public health assistance provided by the Santos (SP) labor union and extended further to the Volta Redonda union. This is another instance of a traditional professional group – labor medical doctors and engineers – converting to the field of labor and environmental health, as well as turning to union advising.

The high tide of union action dwindled when the state-owned state-run steel company began to be prepared for privatization between 1990 and 1993. During this process, the union severed its ties with the Single Workers Central (*Central Única dos Trabalhadores – CUT*) and joined the Unionist Force (*Força Sindical*), as the result of significant struggles between its political factions. It lent support to the privatization plan, provided workers became company stockholders and were given perspectives of immediate gains (although with broader losses for the entire class and its future). However, the municipal government, elected by members associated to unionist struggles in the 1980's, stood up against privatization. It joined the Workers' Health Program (*Programa de Saúde do Trabalhador – PST*), a line of activities in the State Health Office brought about by sanitary doctors assembled in a movement for enhancing work conditions in factories. This was a new professional focus for labor inspection, hitherto monopolized by an institutionally precarious staff provided by Brazil's Ministry of Labor. PST was associated with the unions, and performed an almost underground role within the state apparatus. In the case of Volta Redonda, it attempted to make CSN sign a Term of Agreement regarding labor and environmental health problems, particularly leucopenia.

The city and state administrations (with their respective environment and health offices, as well as FEEMA) pressured and succeeded in including an environmental clause in the CSN privatization Call to Bid, in order to compensate for the company's "environmental liabilities". It was as if, at the very moment when the company tended to disengage from the city itself, its mobilized population demanded new compensations for the changes in the implicit pact between the company and the city. It thus unveiled a hitherto "naturalized" aspect in the form of this "discovery of pollution".

Various law suits filed against CSN and intermittent proposals of agreement around environmental compensations – "quasi-agreements" at times with the city, at times with FEEMA – persisted unsolved throughout the 1990's. Ictiologist biologists hired by the Environmental Committee of Rio de Janeiro's State Assembly were able to ascertain deformations in contaminated fish inhabiting the Paraiba do Sul River. Public hearings were held. Several administrative agencies, actors and stakeholders involved in the legal entanglement with CSN united to pressure the company:

FEEMA, Rio de Janeiro Environment Office, Rio de Janeiro's State Assembly (ALERJ), and the National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES). BNDES blocked credit to the company on the grounds that it had disrespected its own privatization Call to Bid. Finally, between 1999 and 2000, the Public Attorney's Office and other institutions and stakeholders involved succeed in having the company sign a Term of Conduct Adjustment (TAC). According to it, CSN pledged to engage in a progressive Plan of Goals & Targets for de-polluting sectors of its plant and to contribute to the city sewage system, as forms of environmental compensation. Through an insurance system, the company would be forced to pay high amounts to the municipal and state governments if it did not reach the agreed-upon goals and targets.

This outcome was the result of CSN's internal corporate reorganization, ascribing greater powers to environmental management. A technician was hired with previous experience at FEEMA and in private consulting. Not only was CSN heavily besieged by national institutions and actors, but environmental claims could make it lose commercial opportunities, given the requirements for environmental certifications and approval stamps currently demanded in the international market.

Simultaneously, at the local level social movements mobilized different previous struggles around the common goal of setting up a municipal Agenda 21.

The Volta Redonda case is a textbook example of the historical process whereby intense major conflicts around labor issues championed by unions and concentrated within a factory turn into an environmental conflict between a city and a company over industrial pollution. In this transition period, spanning from the 80's to the 90's along which the "discovery of pollution" took place in the city, the public issue of environment preservation intensified at a national level, and an "environmentalization" of social conflicts occurred at the local level.[9]

In the other areas studied, similar processes were also found whereby environmental concerns were internalized. In Angra dos Reis (RJ), we followed up a conflict between the company in charge of the nuclear plants (Eletronuclear) and local institutions and environmental movements (the city administration included). This ranged from the "Hiroshima Never Again" movement to the 1999 Public Hearings on the Angra 2 nuclear plant licensing and its subsequent developments, among which a negotiation for environmental compensations to be provided by the company. In Itaguai (RJ), a conflict with the Inga zinc plant turned local fisherman into "Nature Inspectors" aiding regulatory activities being carried out by the local administration's "left hand" and renewed associativism in the city. In Betim, Barreiro (a Belo Horizonte borough) and Sete Lagoas, all three in the state of Minas Gerais, challenges were also faced by local industries when environmental demands were incorporated at the state level by means of a representative and deliberative council. And in Campamento, in the Argentinian province of Buenos Aires, the long-lasting conflict between a residents' association and a polluting plant illustrated the persistence of environmental demands by popular classes in Argentina. In this context of low institutionalization by the State and of a legitimating offensive by corporations, they were supported by juridical and university mediators.

Environmental education as a new individual and collective code of conduct

If on the one hand social-environmental conflicts promote internalization of environmental rights and claims and pressure for state controls and laws while being simultaneously fed by such institutional devices, on the other environmentalization as a process of internalization of behaviors and practices occurs through "environmental education". This is an explicitly pedagogic or para-pedagogic school-type activity which is also diffused by mass communication media.

Environmental education aims at providing codes for correct daily behavior, such as how to use water in bodily hygiene procedures, how to wash dishes and do the laundry, how to correctly dispose of garbage. This normatization of daily conduct is accompanied by information on the natural world, ecological chains, and threats to nature, to landscape, human health and urban quality of life. Such normatization resembles the "etiquette handbooks" emerging during European Renaissance analyzed by Norbert Elias (1990), as well as their role in controlling emotions and stylizing conduct through the internalization and naturalization of certain behaviors. Environmental education seems to share such aspects of self-help public handbooks acting through individual conduct.[10]

On the other hand, the diffusion of a new public behavior mediated by individual conduct is only possible when a specific field of environmental education is formed, with the creation of new experts, reorganization of school disciplines, and formation of an important publishing circuit. A study of such process was carried out by Carvalho (2001, Chapter 5), who also presents an analysis of the typical paths traversed by environmental educators (Carvalho, 2001, Chapter 4).

The environmental issue as a new source of legitimacy and argumentation in conflicts

This factor can be detected in the following instances:

New legal fields

Within the specialization and development of Environmental Law, a salient feature is the category of "diffuse rights", which encompasses consumer rights, protection of the landscape and historical patrimony, and rights of children and adolescents. This apparently heterogeneous set of phenomena is turned by this category into a coherent assemblage around the notions of collective rights, need for reproducing quality of life from a generation to the other, and "sustainability". They are about sustaining reasonable environment and life conditions for successive generations. On the other hand, interference by the Public Attorney's Office in the conflicts is looming large.

In schools

As I just noted, through environmental education the environment is being constituted as a new transversal discipline in schools (see federal law on environmental education, April 1999).

In companies

In this domain, the importance of Environmental Management grows vis-à-vis Production Management. Corporate and international market self-regulation is made manifest by environmental stamps and by production norms and standards, such as ISO 9.000 and ISO 14.000. These help shape new legitimate ways of being a businessman.

In this regard, an analogy can be made between contemporary companies' competition over environmental controls and what went on in the nineteenth century regarding working hours and work shifts (as described by Marx in *The Capital*). Some businessmen began to see advantages in reducing working hours when coupled with more efficient production processes. They then united with the State to enact regulations against more exploitative sectors which made use of higher working hours. Similarly, amongst contemporary business corporations, some are becoming aware of the environmental issue as a question of production efficiency, marketing and legitimacy *vis-à-vis* the market and society. And, through business federations, they pressure for reform on more

polluting sectors (for instance, pressure applied by FIEMG - Minas Gerais State Federation of Industries, towards less polluting pig iron and molten steel processes). Self-regulation appears partially in Argentina, where state controls are historically almost inexistent.

Therefore, there is a business counter-offensive, through varied effective actions, including marketing, against accusations by social movements and previous state controls. Such is the case, for instance, of actions by CSN in the case of Volta Redonda from 2000 on, by Eletronuclear in the Angra case after the Angra 2 public hearings, or of marketing actions by steel companies in Argentina.

In civil society, residents associations, and labor unions

In municipal environmental councils or in other city offices – health, education, agricultural policy, employment, income and revenue etc. – environmental topics appear transversally and linked to other issues.

In such committees, popular groups creatively appropriate "environmental" categories which are "external" to their usual universe, such as vulnerable or "affected" poor populations. Groups such as fishermen, rural workers, "jungle people", workers concerned with labor health, appropriate environmental idiom and claims in order to empower themselves in their struggle against eventual opponents. Itaguai fishermen's associative leaders, for instance, acquired a biologizing language when speaking of the pollution in Sepetiba Bay caused by a zinc plant and of its aggravation with the construction of the Sepetiba Seaport. Leucopenic workers in Volta Redonda learned a medical and labor health language through their conflict with CSN and the INSS. Representatives of residents associations in the council dealing with urban development and environment in Angra dos Reis have acquired knowledge of the urbanistic procedures and terms by internalizing claims and debates on the application of the City Master Plan to recurrent requests for licensing new activities. Finally, the residents of Campamento (Argentina), notably women and retired workers, acquired knowledge of legal procedures through the long conflict opposing the establishment of a local polluting textile factory.

Labor conflicts in the 80's tended to recede and partially change in the following decade. In Volta Redonda, they came to involve different, broader groups in an environmental issue pitting the whole city against CSN. In the *ABC Paulista*, as in other union poles in the country, the participation of unionists in urban public policy committees steadily increased. As a result of the diminishing intensity of labor conflicts and the pressure of unemployment and bad labor conditions for those who remained employed, the participation of union militants increased in other fora emerging during the 90's, such as the various councils and committees established by federal laws or by the municipalities with funds handed down by the federal government (Oliveira, R., 2002).

There is thus this tendency towards passing from social conflicts in the sphere of labor to an emphasis on other urban and rural conflicts involving the participation of citizens in more or less democratic and accountable forms.

Therefore, through control of industrial pollution as one amongst many environmental problems, the public issue of the environment as a whole increases in importance. This is related to changes in the State's operational forms towards more participative management. Also in business there are struggles over new forms of producing and managing *vis-à-vis* the environment and their own employees - for instance, the CSR concept (Corporate Social Responsibility) and the concept of social balance. It also relates to the internalization, in people's behavior, of new practices and

conduct norms regarding the new domain of "the environment". In such domain disputes emerge between different experts (engineers, chemists, lawyers, physicians, biologists and others, including social scientists), as well as between experts and laymen. And, amongst the latter, as well as in "poor" and "vulnerable" populations, to the extent that creative appropriations and new associative forms emerge around socio-environmental issues.

On the uncertainties of a supposed "environmentalization process"

In a very well-documented and analytically-fruitful book, Almeida, Shiraishi Neto and Martins (2005) applied our notion of environmentalization of social conflicts to the Amazon rain forest's devastation, especially regarding babassu palms. This process is closely related to the expropriation of social groups organized around these natural resources (indigenous peoples, *quilombolas* [descendents from former communities of runway slaves], and more specifically, babassu coconut breakers). The analogy between their "process of devastation" and our "process of environmentalization" is perceived as an analytical tool, or "an instrument to achieve a detailed description, which characterizes the action of agents and agencies, their discourse and the devices disciplining their relations" (Almeida; Shiraishi Neto, Martins, p. 29). This analogy is also based on theme similarities, since both deal with environmental conflicts, a new major issue which imposes itself as a factor of argumentation, dispute and negotiation amongst social groups and State sectors. However, at a first glance, the "process of environmentalization" would be related to the progressive advance of claims, achievements and new environmental institutional forms, while the "process of devastation" would, on the contrary, indicate the progressive destruction of environmental resources, along with the expropriation of "traditional" social groups that succeeded during the last decades in organizing themselves along "modern" lines. Due to their exemplary participatory organization and their own example of social diversity, those groups were closely associated to the democratization of Brazilian society. It is true that along this process of devastation, agents introduce into their own socio-environmental destructive agency an environmental discourse or normative precautions of an environmental nature. This fact is paradoxically included within the argument of the "process of environmentalization".

In fact, the notion of "process of environmentalization" is based on the empirical experience of the "brown" side of environmental issues, that is, urban-industrial pollution and its respective social groups, rather than with its "green" side, represented by forests, indigenous peoples and peasants.[11] In this sense, it stems from a reaction to former "processes of devastation", intensified since the Industrial Revolution and its subsequent waves, to become a public theme around the 1960's and 70's. It is initially sustained on the struggles of affected populations, concerned professionals, state agencies and NGOs against risks to the health of workers and populations living near factories and polluting enterprises. Therefore, it progressively obtains benefits from the mobilization of social groups and national and international states' sanctions against processes of devastation or socio-environmental risks. From such processes ensue state-based protections, such as environmental agencies, laws and normatizations; the conversion of professionals to the new environmental cause, as well as the rise of new professions related to it; and even the construction of a business justification, based on the appropriation of the environmental critique to capitalism or to its devastating aspects, which results in new "corporate environmental responsibilities" and even in the profitability of anti-polluting and environmentally "sustainable" investments.

From the perspective of such struggles against devastation processes affecting urban life (including centers of power) and larger populations, the environmental issue might be seen just as another

episode of the great transformations of which Karl Polanyi (1980) speaks, one of them being the resistance to the overwhelming extension of the market system towards encompassing nature, health and even men's feelings. Based on the Brazilian experience of populations and social groups inhabiting industrial cities, the problem of constraining and controlling unlimited mercantile expansion over socialized nature and human health appears as a new analytical perspective. It is also evident that the process of environmentalization related to industrial pollution does display many interrelations, repercussions and analogies with what happens in its "green" counterpart. Those connections show themselves more explicitly in the struggles for implementation of protection areas, environmental preservation areas and indigenous and *quilombolas* territories, as was noted in the excellent critical review of our work written by Henyo Barretto Filho (2005).

But perhaps the most salient outcome elicited from a comparison between the historical processes analyzed above – "environmentalization" and "devastation" – is the contrast between the pace of capitalist transformation in old economic boundaries (which became a coveted territory thanks to the rise of commodities' price and the sharp boom of the Amazonian land & real estate market) as compared to the lower level of changes in traditional industrial areas, also submitted to stronger surveillance by environmental and labor authorities.

Another point to be stressed is the application of a combined strategy by new capitalist agents in Amazonia. On the one hand, capitalist forms of employment and servile forms of immobilization of labor force emerge, sustained by an environmental rhetoric when projects are submitted to associates, financers, funding sources and authorities. On the other, there is a "predatory modernization inspired by neo-liberal principles whose emphasis on the commodity market is so great as to entirely devastate natural resources and disregard the fragility of ecosystems" (Almeida; Shiraishi Neto; Martins, 2005, p. 94). Here, there is a shift on the social groups hitherto opposed to babassu coconut breakers: landowners and brokers, who commercialized the nuts, now leave the stage, to be replaced by new characters, orchestrated by industrial interests in direct conflict with babassu breakers – such as coconut leasers, nut pickers, a supplier's truck driver etc. In this new phenomenon, there is an overt attempt to de-stabilize the nut breakers' autonomy by progressively reducing them to the condition of wage-earning common laborers responding to a logic of individual interest (Almeida; Shiraishi Neto; Martins, 2005, p. 96).

In this broader framework, the cooperative organization of coconut breakers around the production of nuts, oil and soap for national and international (for instance, British brand Body Shop) commercial networks and chains – which support their associative organization and sustainable production, engaged in the preservation of babassu forests – is opposed to the production of babassu-based vegetal coal for steel companies employing wage labor and forms of labor force immobilization by production means which are predatory to babassu forests. The fact that those companies usually operate in other sectors where environmental norms are obeyed and environmental concerns are displayed, and that they devise projects filled with environmental arguments for their national and international sponsors, in spite of breaking, along their productive chains, environmental and labor laws and norms, only sharpens the complexity of the "environmentalization process" as an object of conflict and strategic elaboration, as well as its non-linear nature, always shifting between advances and regressions.

On participation

The stimulus to citizen involvement in environmental public issues through environmental education of individual conduct seems to neutralize fears regarding the subversive potentialities of participation, and by this very avenue popular participation is legitimized. In effect, the environment model as experienced by public policies and international funding agencies leads to citizen participation, given the low effectiveness of state control-and-command policies carried out without individual and civic commitment and collaboration with the environmental cause in its minute daily aspects. This tends toward the democratization of public policies.

The experience of Brazilian social movements, having emerged from the struggle against an authoritarian regime, engendered the search for public policies favoring greater popular participation. This would be a new form of managing the "*Res Publica*", and the State as a whole goes indeed in such direction. However, not always the participative forms and instruments provided by such policies resonate in the actual practice of people or local politics. Nor do democratic political proposals always know how to handle popular demands. The ethnography of situations such as environment municipal councils and public hearings may show the domination effects exerted by the technical presence of expertise, as well as the suffocation and lack of space for dialogue with bearers of lay knowledge.

The effectiveness of local environment councils and Agenda 21 programs usually relies on the population's experience of political participation and its history of mobilization from churches' communitarian forms, neighborhood associations, and unionist activity. This is what the compared history of the municipalities of Volta Redonda, Angra dos Reis and Itaguai (in the state of Rio de Janeiro) and Betim (in the state of Minas Gerais), as well as the case studied in Argentine, indicates.

I will now dwell on some considerations on the degree of popular participation in the public sphere incited by the environmental issue, less through the dynamics of social conflicts as explored above than as a consequence of preconceived and fostered programs, such as Agendas 21.

Among the local Agenda 21 experiences observed, two have already been mentioned as historical references in the reports currently available on this modality of participative planning: Volta Redonda and Angra dos Reis. Nevertheless, although they competed for relevant Call to Bids, funds for their establishment were curtailed by the Ministry of the Environment. This did not happen in other experiences observed by us: Santa Tereza neighborhood in the city of Rio de Janeiro; and the Aldeia region, a "green" area comprising seven municipalities in the Northern metropolitan region of Recife (Pernambuco's state capital). Perhaps the originality of such experiences helped differentiate them: the former is a metropolitan Rio neighborhood where middle class and intellectuals problematically shared the space with shantytowns; the latter is an inter-municipal consortium led by one of the municipalities, which provided the whole enterprise with appropriate technical and political support. Although Volta Redonda was in our view the experience reaping greatest social effects, its project was not approved by these Calls to Bid. It may be that it was regarded as an accomplished undertaking, since it is well supported by the municipal government and even conveys its experience to neighboring municipalities at the state and national levels. Angra dos Reis, on the other hand, was a pioneer reference of Agenda 21 at a moment when local popular movement was in evidence and strongly represented in the local government by three successive administrations (between 1989 and 2000). However, its endeavor suffered discontinuities; its more permanent basis remained neighborhood movements and the presence of civil society in some municipal councils. Within Angra dos Reis there was also an Agenda 21

project set forth at the island of *Ilha Grande* and coordinated by the State University (UERJ); but it did not succeed in securing the winning bid either. Keen opposition between *natives* and non-*natives*, with a vast array of interests between these poles, may have weighed against the project.[12]

Agenda 21 in the Aldeia region, which is partially situated within the metropolitan region of Recife, was the result of an initiative by the mayor of Camaragibe, supported by the State of Pernambuco's Office of Science, Technology and Environment. The latter invited and committed neighboring municipalities to a plan addressing a common territory crossing over them. Such a territory, named "Aldeia region", originally corresponds to a native traditional perspective on the area as enjoying pleasant weather, woods, high concentration of water springs, situated a little above the coast. But this was also the product of a specific construction aimed at this public policies program. This constructive effort can be observed in the pre-diagnosis devised by a hired consulting company. Camaragibe had two Worker's Party (PT) administrations; the 2004 election was won by Brazil's Communist Party (PCdoB).[13] These successive administrations have been characterized by the progressive generalization of councils including local civil society representatives, from the first establishment of a Health Council with deliberative powers during the early 90's and, afterwards, great pressure from popular movements. Based on what would be a "participative administration", on debate with other exemplary municipal experiences, and on a small but outstandingly qualified technical-administrative body, such model was able to attain efficacy in many sectors (notably health), even receiving some national awards.

The inter-municipal Agenda 21 was another initiative by this administration, guided by the mastery acquired by its participative administration's body of counselors and delegates. Its purpose was to subsidize neighboring municipalities by proposing a regional planning based on a banner of "sustainable development". Such program ensured a joint enterprise with the State Office of Science, Technology and Environment, which was then focused on devising a state Agenda 21 stemming from seminars and debates with government and "civil society" representatives from different regions of Pernambuco. It also had funding and support from the Ministry of the Environment. This is another example of technical articulation between left-wing municipal administrations and state departments held by parties with other political hues (in this case, PMDB), as happened in Minas Gerais (between the PT city administration in Betim and the PSDB state planning office and COPAM, from 1994 to 1998).

Camaragibe became notable for its attention to its population's health. Indeed, the City Health Secretary for two terms was elected Mayor and led a participative administration inspired by the health-pioneered model. During his first term as a secretary, there was an attempt to establish a health council with a deliberative character. The mayor's veto to this deliberative function led the health secretary to resign. He returned in a different municipal administration in 1992, and finally succeeded in establishing the health council. In his two terms as mayor, beginning in 1996 and 2000, his administration kept the participative format and extended the accumulated experience from health to other domains. The councils progressively created were organized according to the different public policies topics, and their membership included the secretaries of municipal offices in charge of the council's topic and their technicians, as well as representatives of society at large and lay counselors. In April 2004, at the eight city forum (held on an annual basis since 1997, the second year of PT's city administration) there were no less than seven Books of Presence (where attendees sign their name) at the entrance to the City Council Building, for the following areas: health; education; safety & security; social assistance; child and adolescent; tutelage; and participative administration delegates.

The same council structure has been kept by the current administration (PCdoB). As other anthropology of politics works have shown (Barreira; Palmeira, 2006; Palmeira et al., 2005), as well as other students of municipal participative experiences,[14] although enormously valuable, there are intrinsic limits to the very mechanism through which participation operates. One is the dynamics imposed by leading teams – made up of governmental authorities and technicians, as well as by more experienced members of local civil society – on the preparation for meetings and management of Plenary Sessions and General Assemblies, where the constraints derived from the great number of members favor a pedagogic and diffusion logic, as well as ritualistic going-through-the-motions. Moreover, although in Camaragibe there has been an important debate amongst the mayor office's technicians and in committees made up of civil society representatives, the very technical prescription of Agenda 21 usually ends up referring the data-gathering phase to technical consultants whose research methods lack intensity. This is because they aim at too indicative public policy solutions, which renders planning a superficial instrument for knowing local problems and its articulations.[15] Finally, the fact that the municipalities associated in the Aldeia region do not have a relevant participative administration such as Camaragibe results in that the latter is the only municipality where there is internal debate between various councils and civil society entities and in that general plenary sessions with representatives from all municipalities involved end up having a lower participative value, making them look more like public hearings to air out pedagogic concerns.[16]

On the other hand, the continuous organizing work by councils objectively carves up space for the counselors' informal careers: indeed, the most vivid and disputed moments in plenary sessions and general meetings refer to counselors' elections, or to the choice of delegates as representatives in meetings or conferences at other levels of the federation. The dispute for prestige at the level of micro-social representation eventually opens up alternative opportunities. The low intensity of more expressive social or political conflicts with external opponents – the local government itself, powerful local companies, entrepreneurs jeopardizing interests of part of the population – may foster an internal struggle which leaps forth to the first plane of permanent concerns, and may lead to the weakening of internal solidarity.

Such aspects do not override the importance of the work being carried out by the Camaragibe Planning Secretary's team, which introduced Aldeia's Agenda 21 inter-municipal project as an instrument for municipal and regional planning. In doing so, it established bridges with government technicians and civil society entities from other municipalities and added substance to the workings of local participative administration. Moreover, it has developed a preparatory effort aiming at obtaining funds for restoring the historical neighborhood of *Vila da Fábrica*, dwelling of workers from the local textile company which formed the city's original urban core. This area was indicated by the Agenda 21 report as being of interest for historical preservation and tourism as well as for its cultural importance. It embodies a vital share of the area's memory and original social identity of the area which would later become an autonomous municipality. It remains to this day the neighborhood concentrating most of the city's cultural legacy and assets. Its history is indeed regarded as important by its older residents and their descendants. Different variations on local history are the object of investigations being carried out by spontaneous local historians, who keep a collection of oral narratives, a script of old informants, documental relics and, among the younger ones, an internet website, www.camaragibeonline.com.br.

This vein of local history, underplayed in the Agenda 21 report, could be indeed explored as a common point by several, if not all, municipalities comprising the Aldeia region. Paulista, for instance, has in its central area a former textile company workers' village much larger than Camaragibe's. This is a space of strong social memory which is the object of spontaneous interest by older residents and their descendents, as well as by spontaneous historians of more recent

generations, amongst whom directors of the city's cloth-weaving labor union. A comparison between the urban developments of both cities, starting from the common historical origin of their respective workers' villages, would be a highly welcome collective enterprise. The extension of lands owned or influenced by Paulista's textile companies throughout the Aldeia region would also be of great historical interest for understanding its development. Of particular interest is the material and immaterial patrimony embodied in this area, such as the existence between 1943 and 1945 of so-called "concentration camps" for a large number of German citizens who held chief positions at CTP and remained under home confinement within houses built by the company in the neighborhood of Cha de Estaves, in Aldeia. Also the history of Abreu e Lima, an old district from Maricota de Paulista, is entirely grounded on its opposition and complementarity *vis-à-vis* Paulista and the textile company's domain. On the other hand, there is a history of sugar cane industry in the municipalities of São Lourenço, Paudalho and Araçoiaba, particularly rural workers' movements dating back to the peasant leagues during the 40's, 50's and 60's until the rural workers' unions and sugar cane workers' strikes during the 70's and 80's. (These latter movements covered an area roughly equivalent to that of ABCD Paulista's steelworkers' movement, in São Paulo). Those are indeed important axes of local social identity. A sizable part of Recife's history (Pernambuco's state capital) could be coupled with that of other municipalities, that is, the history of its workers' villages and fading textile factories (Macaxeira, Torre, Tacaruna, Amalita, TSAP, Várzea). Or still, the history of its first peasant leagues during the 1940's and 1950's in what was by then rural or semi-rural areas, today completely urbanized (Iputinga, Ibura).[17]

This clue to mobilization for participation via local memory and social identity may provide advantages for the main goal of the Agenda 21 project: besides reinventing a "social capital" which is vital for local development, in some cases what would otherwise be a burden of "environmental liabilities" resulting from de-industrialization (buildings, warehouses and lands abandoned, though still controlled by factories and plants) could be turned into a source of material and immaterial, historical and cultural patrimony.[18]

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1 The two research projects were carried out in the Social Anthropology Graduate Program at the Museu Nacional (PPGAS, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil) by teams of scholars also linked to other institutions. The first one, named "Population participation in the control of industrial pollution in Brazil and Argentina", was originally sponsored by the World Bank's environmental division and, later, by the Ford Foundation's office in Brazil. The second project was entitled "Agenda 21: constructing participation", and was sponsored by the Ford Foundation. Both investigations enjoyed additional funds from the Foundation for Research Support of Rio de Janeiro State (Faperj) and led to an array of projects on "The Anthropology of Politics", along the line "Rituals, Representations and Violence", coordinated by PPGAS's faculty member Moacir Palmeira. The first project resulted in the book *A Ambientalização dos Conflitos Sociais: Participação e Controle Público da Poluição Industrial* (Leite Lopes; Antonaz; Prado, 2004). Scholars participating in the second inquiry are J. S. L. Lopes, Diana Antonaz, Rosane Prado, Gláucia Silva and Eugênia Paim.
2 These are Almeida, Shiraishi Neto and Martins (2005, p. 29), and Barretto Filho (2005).
3 The first part of this paper is based on the introduction by Leite Lopes, Antonaz, Prado and Silva (2004).
4 There is a vast literature on this issue in Brazil. For indications of relevant literature, see Sachs, I. (1986), Viola (1988), Feema (1992), Lins Ribeiro (1992), Vieira (1992), Herculano (1996), Ferreira (1998), Vieira and Bredariol (1998), Little (1999), Acselrad (2002), Pádua (2002), and DaMatta (1994, 2002).
5 The very embracing of such theme by this research team is somehow indicative of this new public issue. In effect, my previous investigations were in the field of industrial anthropology, that is, on workforce typical of traditional Brazilian industrialization such as factory workers from sugar cane plants and textile workers' villages, as well as "modern" sectors such as aluminum or nuclear industry. I was then contacted by international institutions for performing studies on "population participation" (or, to use the North-American term, "involvement") in industrial pollution control. The outcomes of such previous research experience can be found in Leite Lopes (1978, 1988), Antonaz (1995, 2001), Corrêa (1997), Costa et al. (1995), Kottak, Costa and Prado (1994), Prado (1996) and Silva (1999). This investigation was situated in the institutional field of "the environment" and, within it, in its "brown" (as opposed to "green") part. Its originality was the anthropological focus (or sociological, in opposition to the economic focus, common and almost the

single one in multilateral institutions' research committees). Our interest was to follow up some group of workers from the perspective of industrial pollution and its effects, as well as populations living near factory facilities. Alternatively, the possibility was opened for studying participative forms of local and extra-local management. Such modalities acquired the statute of a new and exemplary form of administration by some international (for instance, World Bank in the 1990's) and national (intensified after the 1988 Brazilian Constitution) institutions. Thus, it was found that the traditional "command and control" mode (native term used by such international governmental institutions) carried out by governments turned into the need for "citizen involvement", for assuaging suspicion from dominant institutions (at least rhetorically), and for mobilizing subaltern social groups (an outcome possibly associated with the termination of socialist regimes in Eastern Europe and the end of Cold War by the late 1980's). We were also interested in investigating the growing (or not), the vicissitudes and difficulties, of participative forms existing since the time when they were repressed or de-stimulated by Military Rule, and how themes driving such mobilizations changed over time. Indeed, studies focusing on industrial workers showed difficulties with mobilization around wage issues during the last years, denoting tendencies of unemployment, decreasing income and deterioration of labor conditions. The relative importance of mobilizations around workers' health increased. And the participation of labor unions in municipal committees of employment, health, education, environment and others became an important item in the agenda of union leaders in recent years. How did environmental issues and rhetoric appear in such context? For international references, see Beynon (1999), Bullard (1994) and Davis (1981, 1996).

6 Conama Resolution issued on 01/28/1986 on environmental impact and licensing offered the first definitions and guidelines for the establishment of studies and reports of environmental impact (EIA/Rimas). The 12/12/1986 Resolution set forth a classification of controlled and polluting substances aimed at controlling transboudary movement of hazardous wastes. And, finally, in the 12/19/1997 Resolution, which again regulates environmental impact and licensing, there is an annex classifying activities or enterprises subject to environmental permit. All references on legislation were quoted in Medauar (2003); see also Findley (1988).

7 As a consequence of conflicts such as that in Contagem and of growing conservationist and ecological movements even within technical bureaucracy in the State Science and Technology Office, pressures emerged for the creation of environmental control agencies. Pressed by these as well as by opposing demands by short-term profit developmentists, the governor created, in "typical Minas Gerais way", an environmental policy committee with very little power. However, pro-environmentalist forces succeeded in making such committee incorporate different actors representing governmental institutions and industrial and ecological entities to discuss control need. Such pro-environmentalist forces retrospectively assessed that they made a sort of "Minas Gerais conspiracy" towards gradually constituting a council – COPAM – including members of the government, NGOs and residents associations, as well as industrial businessmen, with deliberative powers. This council (originally framed as a committee in 1977) was an innovation and a forerunner of future councils which would proliferate during the 1990's.

8 As compared to the Argentinean Military Rule, it is interesting to note how the Brazilian government ended up allowing the establishment of a significant federal environmental system. This was the work of sectors within the government which favored scientific and technological modernization by fostering and encouraging parts of the university system (after a more intensive period of repression against students and faculty). Conversely, the Argentinean government pressured university sectors much more extensively and dampened down technical elements within the State apparatus (particularly those related to environmental controls) in order not to de-stimulate companies in the aftermath of economic policies provoking de-industrialization.

9 Previously (Leite Lopes, 1988), a similar case analyzed the transition from major labor conflicts within the Companhia de Tecidos Paulista factory in Pernambuco during the 1940's and 50's to a movement for "liberating the city" of Paulista (PE). The latter was carried out by union leaders and traders, who demanded expropriation of some of the company's land in order to clear the way for

neighborhoods without workers' villages. Included in the expropriation list were some of the company's rural properties where green areas were supposed to be earmarked for city supply and land reform. Such a movement was informed by ongoing public issues of its time, that is, land reform, the need for a city-supplying "green revolution" and the demand for land expropriation within urban areas wholly set in a particular territory and subordinated to a mono-industrial company. It therefore could not take up environmental arguments which were simply not available at the time. On the other hand, in the Volta Redonda crisis during the 1990's, resulting from the redefinition of its traditional conditions of subordination to CSN, environmental claims, made manifest as a public issue of growing interest and institutionalization, ended up setting the movement's tone. See also Alvim and Leite Lopes (1990).

10 This insight was provided by direct observation, after we witnessed the residents' meeting of a Volta Redonda neighborhood. This meeting was promoted by the new environmental department of the steel workers' union and held in a municipal school. The two-part meeting was named "Seminar: Environment, a Permanent Concern" and was made up of two parts. In the first part there was a lecture, delivered by a young local biology teacher (colleague and friend with the union's environment director) on the scarcity of water in the planet and the ways to deal with it. In the second half, CSN's environmental manager was called to present the company's progress towards meeting its own goals of making up for the pollution caused by its production processes and its effects on the city. Our observation of this meeting incited a reflection on the role of environmental education *vis-à-vis* individual behavior, as a new "etiquette handbook". Also, the municipal Agenda 21 has an important program for reinforcing environmental education in schools, which contributes to children and teenagers being far better informed than their parents about environmental issues and pressuring – according to CSN environment manager's reasoning in a research interview – them for demanding environmental correction by the companies where they were employed (in this case, CSN itself).

11 In a World Bank meeting held in Washington in 1999, group membership followed this great divide between brown and green issues.

12 In our investigation of popular participation in Agenda 21 experiences, Rosane Prado reported on Ilha Grande and Angra dos Reis (RJ); Silvia Borges Correia on Volta Redonda (RJ); Eugênia Paim on the city of Rio de Janeiro (experiences in the Santa Tereza neighborhood and in the city's West Side); Gláucia Silva made a comparison between policies of population participation in nuclear areas of Brazil and France, and worked with participatory experiences with riverside populations in the Amazon; Diana Antonaz investigated Agenda 21 projects in the states of Pará and Maranhão, as well as the participatory politics of Belém's city administration up to 2004; and I worked with the experiences in Pernambuco I report below. Additionally, we had joint debates and seminars with other project researchers (also sponsored by the Ford Foundation): "Participation and Municipal Management", coordinated by Beatriz Heredia and Moacir Palmeira between 2003 and 2005.

13 After the mayor's pre-candidate (his government secretary and former sister-in-law) was impugned by the Regional Electoral Court (*Tribunal Regional Eleitoral, TRE*) practically on election eve, he vetoed his own party's next pre-candidate in favor of another party's (PSB) candidate. This aggravated the internal conflict and split team. Some supported the PCdoB candidate - eventually, the winner (PCdoB, PSB/PT, and PFL participated in the election). The current PCdoB mayor had held this office before the two administrations by the PT mayor; the latter had been health secretary of the former. The municipality had been dismembered from São Lourenço da Mata in 1983, and, under the influence of Recife's popular movements, has had many left-wing administrations since 1992.

14 Both Oliveira, F. (2004) and Sales (2005) wrote books on Camaragibe's participatory experience.

15 For a critical analysis of the assumptions underlying Agenda 21's methodology, see Mello (in printing).

16 Although Recife is part of the Aldeia consortium, since the part of the city included in it is small the participatory character of its administration is not reflected in the implementation of this program. The technicians from the environmental division of Recife's city government followed guidelines provided by the Camaragibe Planning Office's technicians. Such low-level participation can however be a stimulus for discussing an eventual Agenda 21 for Recife. In fact, this has already been included in the list of alternatives in the agenda for meetings on the city's participatory budget.

17 An audio-visual registration was started by me with support of the textile union and old workforce militants from Paulista (as well as Camaragibe's residents). I also had the collaboration of Rosilene Alvim and Celso Brandão, photographer and movie-maker from UFAL. This project was first carried out in Paulista, and later on in Camaragibe, Recife, Escada and Moreno. The operating factory was filmed in Escada.

18 Anthropological and sociological literature may provide much subsidy to this issue, by means of monographs not only on cases taking place in Brazil, but also elsewhere. I would like to recall here the monograph on a coal miners' community in Southern France (a classic instance of Brazilian anthropology carried out "away from home") by Brazilian anthropologist Cornelia Eckert, published in Brazil under the (for us) telling title "memory and social identity" (Eckert, 1993).