

Willem Assies

To Get out of the Mud

Neighborhood Associativism
in Recife, 1964-1988



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACO	Ação Católica Operária
ANPOCS	Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais
ARENA	Aliança Renovadora Nacional
ARRUAR	Assessoria de Urbanização Popular
ASPE	Associação dos Sociólogos de Pernambuco
BNH	Banco Nacional de Habitação
CCC	Comando de Caça aos Comunistas
CEAS	Centro de Estudos e Ação Social
CEB	Comunidade Ecclesial de Base
CELPE	Companhia de Eletricidade de Pernambuco
CGT	Confederação Geral dos Trabalhadores
CIMI	Conselho Indigenista Missionário
CNBB	Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil
CNDU	Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Urbano
CNPU	Comissão Nacional de Regiões Metropolitanas e Política Urbana
COHAB	Companhia de Habitação Popular
COMPESA	Companhia Pernambucana de Saneamento
COMUL	Comissão de Urbanização e Legalização
CONDEPE	Conselho de Desenvolvimento de Pernambuco
COSINTRA	Conselho Sindical dos Trabalhadores do Estado de Pernambuco
CPT	Comissão Pastoral da Terra
CRC	Companhia de Revenda e Colonização
CSU	Centro Social Urbano
CTU	Companhia de Transportes Urbanos
CURA	Comunidades Urbanas para Recuperação Accelerada
CUT	Central Unico dos Trabalhadores
DICON	Diretoria de Controle Urbanístico
DOPS	Diretoria de Ordem Política e Social
EBTU	Empresa Brasileira de Transportes Urbanos
EMPREL	Empresa Municipal de Processamento Eletrônico da Prefeitura do Recife
EMTU	Empresa Metropolitana de Transportes Urbanos

ETAPAS	Escritório Técnico de Assessoria, Pesquisa e Ação Social
FABEB	Federação das Associações dos Bairros do Estado de Pernambuco
FASE	Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional
FCP	Fundação da Casa Popular
FEACA	Federação das Associações, Centros Comunitários e Conselhos de Moradores de Casa Amarela
FECOPE	Federação Comunitária de Pernambuco
FEMEB	Federação de Bairros da Região Metropolitana do Recife
FEMOCOHAB	Federação das Associações de Moradores dos Núcleos Habitacionais de COHAB e Similares de Pernambuco
FGTS	Fundo de Garantia por Tempo de Serviço
FIDEM	Fundação de Desenvolvimento da Região Metropolitana do Recife
FNDU	Fundo Nacional de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Urbano
FNEBM	Fundação Macional do Bem Estar do Menor
FPM	Fundo de Participação do Município
GAJOP	Gabinete de Assessoria Jurídica às Organizações Populares
GRAC	Grupo de Ação Comunitária
GTDN	Grupo de Trabalho para o Desenvolvimento do Nordeste
IAA	Instituto do Açúcar e Alcool
IAB	Instituto dos Arquitetos do Brasil
IBAD	Instituto Brasileiro de Ação Democrática
ICM	Imposto de Circulação de Mercadorias
IFOCS	Inspetoria Federal de Obras Contra as Sêcas
INOCOOP	Instituto para Orientação de Cooperativas
IPI	Imposto sobre Produtos industrializados
IPTU	Imposto Predial e Territorial Urbano
IR	Imposto de Renda
ISS	Imposto Sobre Serviços
ITER	Instituto de Teologia do Recife
LBA	Legião Brasileira de Assistência
MCP	Movimento de Cultura Popular
MDB	Movimento Democrático Brasileiro
MDF	Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados
MEB	Movimento de Educação de Base
MNU	Movimento Negro Unificado
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NPC	Núcleo de Planejamento Comunitário
OAB	Ordem de Advogados Brasileiros
PCB	Partido Comunista Brasileiro

PDC	Partido Democrata Cristão
PDI	Plano de Desenvolvimento Integrado
PDLI	Plano de Desenvolvimento Local Integrado
PDM	Plano de Desenvolvimento Metropolitano
PDR	Plano de Desenvolvimento do Recife
PDT	Partido Democrático Trabalhista
PFL	Partido da Frente Liberal
PLANHAP	Plano Nacional de Habitação Popular
PMDB	Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro
PP	Partido Popular
PR	Partido Republicano
PREZEIS	Plano de Regularização das Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social
PROFILURB	Programa de Financiamento de Lotes Urbanizados
PROMORAR	Programa de Erradicação da Sub-Habitação
PSB	Partido Socialista Brasileiro
PSD	Partido Social Democrático
PT	Partido dos Trabalhadores
PTB	Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro
RMR	Região Metropolitana do Recife
RPA	Região Política Administrativa
SAB	Sociedade de Amigos de Bairro
SAC	Sistema de Ações Comunitárias
SAPP	Sociedade de Plantadores e Pecuáristas de Pernambuco
SBPE	Sistema Brasileiro de Poupança e Empréstimo
SEDIPO	Setor de Documentação e Informação Popular
SEHAB	Secretaria de Habitação
SERENE	Seminário Regional do Nordeste
SERFHAU	Serviço Federal de Habitação e Urbanismo
SFH	Sistema Financeiro de Habitação
SSCM	Serviço Social Contra o Mocambo
SUDENE	Superintendência do Desenvolvimento do Nordeste
TIP	Terminal Integrado de Cargas e Passageiros
UBR	União dos Bairros do Recife
UDN	União Democrática Nacional
UEP	União de Estudantes de Pernambuco
URB	Empresa de Urbanização do Recife
ZEIS	Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social

INTRODUCTION

Está tudo muito parado -it has all come to a standstill- they told me when I arrived in Recife in February 1988 to conduct research on social movements. That did not sound very encouraging and it was rather surprising. For about a year, I had been submerged in social movement literature, ranging from top-heavy theorizations to micro-studies, and if at times I wondered what to think about all that, at least the literature conveyed the impression that Brazil was teeming with social movement.

Admittedly, most of the literature I had come across dealt with movements in the Brazilian southeast, São Paulo in particular, but there was no reason to think they were non-existent in the Northeast. The aim of my research project was to find out about the northeastern movements and, more precisely, about the ones in Pernambuco and Recife. Due to the dearth of studies on movements in that part of the country, I was not committed to anything very precise, though it would be something about "social movements" and "democratic transition." I would assess the feasibility of studying any particular movement once I was in the field.

There was a more precise reason for going to Pernambuco. Early in 1987, Miguel Arraes once again became governor of Pernambuco, where he had been dislodged by the military *coup* in 1964. He is a nearly mythical figure in Pernambucan history, symbolizing the time when Pernambuco seemed to be on the verge of revolutionary change: *O Tempo de Arraes*. In those days, he had been carried to the governorship by a left-wing popular front. The countryside was in a turmoil as a result of the activities of the famous *Ligas Camponesas*, and the city of Recife was known for the radical application of Paulo Freire's conscious-raising alphabetization method. The 1964 military intervention had turned Pernambuco into the site of "The Revolution that never was" (Page, 1972). This historical background was one reason why Pernambuco was interesting, though it would not be the main research focus.

Nevertheless, one thing should be noted. What had struck me when surveying the literature was that the history of Pernambuco and its capital seemed to stop in 1964. Even the newer literature was more concerned with the past than the present. When I was finishing my manuscript on the vicissitudes of neighborhood

associativism in Recife after 1964, I got hold of a recently published study entitled "Social Movements and Political Crisis in Pernambuco, 1955-1968" (Jaccoud, 1990). That promised to extend Pernambucan history for four years beyond the 1964 *coup*. I was disappointed in this respect, however, when I read the introduction:

....lack of time and difficulties encountered in studying the 1964-1968 period impeded the carrying out of this project, so the work remains limited to some considerations on the period and to indications which may be helpful in the development of the theme in future studies.¹

One of the aims of the following study is to reconstruct the history of neighborhood movements in Recife from 1964 to 1988. This history can be divided into three periods, according to the role of neighborhood associations in urban politics and policies. The first period runs from 1964 to 1979 and is marked by what has become known as bureaucratic-authoritarianism and by a repressive attitude on the part of the state to any form of "popular organization" whatsoever. Repression was at its peak between 1968 and 1974 and then relaxed somewhat. The neighborhood associations that had been in existence before 1964 had been dissolved, but sponsored by the Church, a new neighborhood associativism gradually emerged. The second period, from 1979 to 1985, was when the transition to a civilian government gathered steam. The attitude of state apparatuses to neighborhood associativism changed in that in an effort to outflank the increasingly prominent oppositionist neighborhood associations, the government now showed a new concern with the urban poor. The repressive attitude made way for attempts to curry favour with the urban poor through populist and clientelist policies, including setting up government-sponsored neighborhood associations. The third period, from 1985 to 1988, covers the administration of the first elected mayor of Recife after 21 years of imposed mayors.

This brings us back to my choice of subject. Before going to Recife I had not committed myself to the study of any specific movement since for lack of precise information, I did not know what to expect in the Pernambucan context. During a round of visits to people who were supposed to know what was going on, I discovered I had stumbled upon an attempt to democratize the municipal administration in which "urban social movements" were supposed to play a major role. It was related to the "time of Arraes" in that this period was invoked as a historical precedent of democratic and popular administration. This was the more immediate motive for my decision to focus on "urban social movements."

¹ "No entanto, a falta de tempo hábil e as dificuldades enfrentadas para o aprofundamento da pesquisa no período 1964-1968 impediram o desenvolvimento deste projeto, ficando o trabalho limitado a algumas considerações sobre o período e a indicações que possam ajudar o desenvolvimento da temática em estudos futuros" (Jaccoud, 1990:10).

In retrospect, I feel that the choice was even more appropriate than I realized at the time. It was not just that I was examining a process of municipal democratization which might be considered a more or less "natural" outcome of the fact that after over twenty years of authoritarianism and imposed municipal executives in 1985 Recife had been allowed to elect a mayor again. In fact I was studying one of the first serious efforts at municipal democratization by a left-wing administration in one of Brazil's metropolises. The effort was exceptional at the time. It resulted from a particular local political conjuncture which had carried a left-wing popular front candidate to the mayoralty. By the end of my year in the field, another round of elections for municipal executives under Brazil's *Nova República* had brought a major breakthrough for the Left with the election of Luiza Erundina of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) in São Paulo. The PT broke through in various other large cities as well and its proposals for the democratization of the municipal administration turned out to be quite similar to what had been going on in Recife. I had had the opportunity to study a rather unique phenomenon.

Recently, studies of the process as it has been taking place in São Paulo have started to become available (e.g. Gohn, 1991a; 1991b; Jacobi, 1991). Although these studies suggest parallels to the developments in Recife, it is beyond the scope of this study to develop anything like a systematic comparative framework. I hope, however, that the present study will contribute to the discussion and comparison of experiments in democratization at the municipal level in Brazil.

The focus on the relationship between "urban social movements" and "democratic transition" had wider implications. It brought into view the interface between movement and state, an issue that had until then hardly been addressed in concrete terms, though it had emerged in the Brazilian theoretical debate. In the usual theorizations of "urban social movements," be it inspired by marxism or by post-marxism, state and social movements are regarded as each others' negation. In the marxist perspective, dominant in the 1970s, this is related to a still present dual power perspective in which "urban social movements" are regarded as supports for an emerging workers' state in confrontation with the capitalist state. In the post-marxist perspectives, social movements tend to be conceptualized in the context of a struggle of "civil society against the state" or as being beyond political and material concerns. Though this may be a healthy corrective to the older obsession with "taking power," the exclusive focus on civil society leaves little room for thinking about processes of democratization, i.e. changes in the relationship between civil society and the state. In more practical terms, both perspectives serve to underpin the idea that social movements should be "autonomous" from the state, the capitalist state in the first case and the state as such in the second case.

This brings us to another point. One of the striking things about the Brazilian scene is that the notion of "social movement" has entered common speech.

The municipal administration in Recife between 1985 and 1988 appealed to the "organized social movements of civil society" and this was a meaningful interpellation. I shall argue that this penetration of the term "social movement" into political discourse and common speech is significant, as it indicates how the Brazilian "social movements" were socially produced.

This social production of "urban social movements" is highlighted in this study. In the Brazilian discussion, the somewhat ingenuous notion that "urban social movements" are a spontaneous response of the urban poor to "urban contradictions" has been criticized since the early 1980s. The presence of "external agents" has been signalled with increasing frequency. Nevertheless, the role and "nature" of such agents, apart from the role of the Church, has hardly been systematically discussed. However, there has recently been more attention for the rise of the Brazilian "new middle classes" and the relevance of this process for the Brazilian political process. The emergence of organizations of these new middle classes and the emergence of the "popular movements" have hitherto usually been discussed as separate, parallel processes. The ubiquitous presence of the "external agent" in "popular movements" suggests a more complicated relation, however, and in this study I shall highlight the interrelations between the processes of the emergence of the new middle classes and the "popular movements." The existence of these interrelations seems only recently to have become apparent in that the former "unity" is now perceived as having been "dissolved" (e.g. Gohn, 1991a:13).

Taking the "unity" in the social production of the "urban social movements" into account will help us understand the formation and dynamics of movement leadership, the emergence of groups of "neighborhood movement" spokespersons and the forms of self-understanding of such movements. Highlighting the relations with sectors of the new middle classes, professionals in the social sciences and social work -including the clergy- can account for the penetration of the notion of "urban social movement" into the discourse of neighborhood associations leaders and "the neighborhood movement" spokespersons. It also helps to understand, in part at least, how the influence of such movements comes about by taking into account such middle class agents as "translators and articulators of social demands" (Oliveira, 1988).

If one looks back at the mobilizations of the 1970s and early 1980s, one gets the impression that "it has all come to a standstill." Such an assessment is superficial, however. Like beauty, it is in the eye of the beholder. Although the visibility of "the movement" has diminished, this does not mean it has simply vanished. Instead, in the course of the 1980s neighborhood associativism changed from a relatively unified "movement" which provided a field of recruitment for street demonstrations, into an increasingly dispersed and heterogeneous phenomenon. The idea that "it had all come to a standstill" at least in part expressed the view of people who had emerged as spokespersons of "the movement" during the earlier period. For

them, it is above all the large manifestations of "the movement" that count. People at the grassroots, though not simply unaware of such issues, have other priorities. During the elections for the directory of a dwellers' council, I once asked the voters why they bothered to cast their vote. The answer almost invariably was something like: *Pra sair da lama*: to get out of the mud. If that can be done in any other way than "going out in the street," so much the better, though I also saw them going out in the street to protest eviction attempts by somebody who pretended to own the land.

However, there also was an ebb in mobilization when the hopes of the early 1980s about the new democracy were dashed. Recife, like the rest of Brazil, experienced the growing crisis and the consequences of neo-liberal policies. This contributed to an atomization, which seems to acquire increasingly Hobbesian aspects. In 1990, the North American *Population Crisis Committee* ranked 100 metropolises all across the globe according to the quality of life. Recife ended 96th, between Dacca (Bangladesh) and Lima (Peru). Only a third of the children between the ages of 14 and 17 years were registered at a secondary school. Infant mortality was 122 per 1,000 (and in the *favela* Irã-Iraque -what's in a name- the municipality even recorded an infant mortality of 20% in 1986). No more than 57% of the homes were connected to the water and electricity supply. Joaquim Francisco, a neo-liberal who had been Mayor of Recife since 1988 and had just been elected Governor of Pernambuco, announced that if he visited Washington, he would drop in at the Population Crisis Committee to bang on their table and spit on their papers. The Brazilian weekly *VEJA*, which reported the story, commented that the Committee had still been generous in its ranking. Its data were from 1984 and since then things had only deteriorated (*VEJA*, November 28, 1990). In any case, spitting on papers won't make it better.

The aim of this study is to reconstruct the history of neighborhood associativism in Recife from 1964 to 1988, devoting particular attention to the relation between "the neighborhood movement" and the (municipal) state apparatuses in view of the focus on the "democratic transition" process. The first Chapter provides an overview of the theoretical issues. I argue that theorizations of "urban social movements" have actually contributed to the shaping of Brazilian neighborhood associativism and to the self-understanding of leaders of "the neighborhood movement." The ways this contribution came about can only be understood if we take into account the role of "external agents" and the broader organizational networks whose intention it is to help movement leaders play their role. The notions about "urban social movements" thus transmitted, strongly emphasized the concept of "autonomy." This is helpful in fending off attempts at cooptation by state agencies or instrumentalization by political parties, but it is less helpful when

it comes to thinking about democratization and forms of institutional innovation, such as the formation of "popular councils."²

The following three chapters introduce the reader to the city of Recife. Chapter 2 discusses the historical and demographic development of the city in its regional context, while Chapter 3 focusses on the internal development and tendencies of spatial division between the rich and the poor during the first half of the 20th century. Chapter 4 focusses on the 1955-1964 period, when neighborhood associations spread during the popular-front administrations.

Chapter 5 covers the 1964-1979 period. After a general overview of the period to sketch the context, I discuss the urban policies of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime and how these policies worked out in Recife. These policies were consistently aimed at removing the low income groups from the city center and were strongly biased to the construction of motorways and huge viaducts. Investment was concentrated in already the privileged areas of the city. This resulted in a city with an elaborate road system, but a sewerage system that barely covers 10% of the municipality and only serves a third of the population. In the second part of the chapter, I discuss the reemergence of neighborhood associativism and how it was promoted by the Church. I argue that in the course of this period, the theorizations of "urban social movements" started to influence the practices of social workers and clergy in the promotion of neighborhood associations and ideas about the future role of neighborhood associations started to filter down to groups of local leaders. This implied a shift in the perspective of their activities. Initially the Church had promoted forms of communitarian self-help, but the new perspective tended toward a socio-political analysis of the problems of the urban poor and consequently tended toward political solutions. This politicization was not easily reconcilable with the more religiously oriented communitarianism and generated tensions that can be regarded as symptomatic of the problems of Church sponsored neighborhood associativism. Nevertheless, a certain shift in the activities of the local variety of the well-known Ecclesial Base Communities took place in the sense that they became more outward oriented and more engaged in the general political struggles against the authoritarian regime which marked the second half of the 1970s.

² I must admit I often had doubts about this view since my experience was limited to the case of Recife. I wondered whether the appeal to "autonomy" was indeed what one might call "paradigmatic." It also might merely be a way of not engaging in a particular coalition. Though this aspect was present, I think the paradigmatic aspect is important. In a recent paper about the experiments with "popular councils" in São Paulo, Gohn (1991b:38) notes the same problems I encountered in Recife: "A final question relates to the necessary deliberative character which the popular councils should have. If they are not part of the administrative institutions (*instituições governamentais*), if they are not organs of parallel power and if they do not pretend to stand above the constituted powers, the question arises: what is their effective power?"

Chapter 6 is devoted to the 1979-1985 period, when the transition to a civilian government gathered steam. While electoral politics became increasingly important, the earlier repressive attitude to the urban poor was replaced by policies aimed at defusing their discontent, which tended to be channeled through the new neighborhood associativism. I first discuss the shifts in urban policies in Recife and the policy of setting up government-sponsored neighborhood associations. This process was not without contradictions, as groups of professionals active in their implementation were increasingly critical of the urban policies as well as of the clientelist and neo-populist policy of sponsoring neighborhood associations. Their criticism converged with and legitimized the resistance of independent neighborhood associations and contributed to what became known as the "identity crisis" of the planning agencies. The discussion focusses on three issues, namely the new "participatory" policy style developed in the context of the "politics of *abertura*," the World Bank financed *Projeto Recife*, and the policies on urban land use. These three points are taken up again in the discussion of the alternative approach developed under a democratically elected left-wing administration. In the second part of this chapter, I discuss the vicissitudes of the independent or "authentic" neighborhood movement and the efforts to articulate local organizations into a platform of citywide scope. This efforts were promoted by the increasing number of non-governmental organizations sponsoring neighborhood associativism, and it were accompanied by the emergence of a group of leaders or spokespersons of "the movement," whose primary concern was with the political impact of the neighborhood movement.

Chapter 7 covers the 1985-1988 period and the effort to democratize urban policies in cooperation with the "organized social movements of civil society" through the formation of something like "popular councils." I first discuss how this proposal arose and was debated during the 1985 electoral campaign, and then devote attention to the implementation of democratization policies. The first policy area is the decentralization of urban policies and the creation of mechanisms through which neighborhood associations can influence local and overall urban policies. Secondly, I briefly discuss the attempt at participative reorientation of the World Bank financed *Projeto Recife*. Finally, I discuss the policy of regularizing landholding in "popular settlements" and of urbanizing these settlements. I argue that the failure of the institutionalization of popular participation in these policy areas was partly due to the particular political conjuncture they took place in and to the particular signification the notion of "autonomy" had acquired during the preceding periods. The problems were largely due to the role the spokespersons of "the movement" had come to play. The position they took resulted in the mutual wearing out of the municipal administration and this group of spokespersons, whose credibility among the local neighborhood associations rapidly declined.

Chapter 8 is presents a review of the general arguments and to my own concluding observations.

The research for this study was conducted from early February 1988 to late January 1989. The reconstruction of the history of the neighborhood associations in Recife is partly based on archive material. Special mention should be made of the *Setor de Documentação e Informação Popular* (SEDIPO). This data bank, which functioned in the Archdiocese framework, was summarily closed during my fieldwork period in the offensive launched by Archbishop Dom José Cardoso Sobrinho against the "Church of the People." A highly valuable source of information on the popular movement of Pernambuco and Recife thus disappeared, which was unfortunate for my research but even more so for people I had come to admire for their dedication and friendship who lost their jobs. Further information was gathered from the files of the local *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, which was also to be disarticulated somewhat later, and from the archives of the *Escritório Técnico de Assessoria, Pesquisa e Ação Social* (ETAPAS) and the *Centro de Estudos e Ação Social* (CEAS). These data were complemented by a series of interviews with participants in the neighborhood movement. Data on the municipal democratization program were also gathered from these sources, and were made available by the municipality. They were complemented by interviews with officials involved in the implementation of these policies and interviews with participants in the neighborhood movement. Throughout the year I attended innumerable meetings in the context of these democratization policies, notably meetings on the overall democratization program at the neighborhood and the municipal level. I also attended the meetings of "the movement" itself. Finally, I visited neighborhood associations and accompanied two local organizations more systematically throughout the year. My original intention was to devote two chapters to these groups, but the focus on the municipal level developments and a lack of time made me decide otherwise. Nevertheless, my intention of encouraging local history projects under the auspices of neighborhood associations led to my contribution to a neighborhood history book to be used at the local school (Silva, 1990).

URBAN SOCIAL MOVEMENTS: THEORY AND PROJECT

"They can in no sense be regarded as agents of their own destinies," Perlman (1976:261) wrote about *favelados* in her well-known *The Myth of Marginality*. Elsewhere in the book she underlined the point, stating that:

The favelado who says he "has a voice in government decisions" or can "do something to influence the government" is not more efficacious, more modern or more competent as a citizen; he is simply more of a fool, more effectively blinded by the rhetoric of the government and less in touch with his own reality. It is a tribute to the favelado's common sense that this group is a tiny minority (Perlman, 1976:190).

These assessments of the political propensities of *favelados* derived from a study in which Perlman took issue with then current theories regarding *favelados* as marginal, i.e. not integrated into "the system." In her study, she argued that they should not be regarded as a "marginal" group, but rather as a repressed and exploited part of a social system. Their political conduct does not derive from a lack of integration which, as some hoped and others feared, might propel them into radical "adventures," but from their dependent integration. Rather than being prone to radicalism of any sort, the urban poor are political conformists, something which reflects their powerless and dependent position within the system. They obligingly play the role the system assigns them. In the populist era, especially the 1950s and early 1960s, when the system asked for votes, the *favelados* voted, and when populist politicians wanted local organizations, they formed Residents' Associations. Under the authoritarian regime after the 1964 military coup, the system demanded acquiescence and apathy, and the *favelados* were quiescent and apathetic. So not much is to be expected from the urban poor:

Since it seems that the present military regime in Brazil is unlikely to be overthrown from without, or undergo radical changes from within, the poor will doubtless continue to be subjected to policies which sacrifice their own interests in protecting the power, wealth, and privilege of the upper sectors. Although their discontent and

bitterness may grow, their position of powerlessness is sufficiently evident that it is unlikely they will take any futile risks (Perlman, 1976:240).

The verdict had hardly been given, when the urban poor seemed to be stricken with an acute loss of common sense. In 1978 the Cost of Living Movement, "made up mostly of the poor from the outskirts of the big cities," played a leading role in the "fight to win back the streets as an arena for political expression," as Kucinski (1982:63-64) put it.³ A few years after the publication of Perlman's study, the introductory chapter of the pioneering anthology *São Paulo: o Povo em Movimento* (Singer & Brant, 1980), sponsored by the Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese, started by stating that:

A large part of the studies of the urban popular classes in Brazil is dedicated to explaining their absence from the political scene and from the great social clashes. This book deals with their presence. New actors

had entered upon the scene (Sader, 1988) and their performance was accompanied by a rapid proliferation of studies on these "new social movements," extolling their autonomy and potential impact as political actors. "What is new in the urban popular movements," Nunes and Jacobi (1982:195) wrote, "is that they do not submit themselves any longer to cooptation, to a subordinated participation," and Oliveira (1977:73-75) argued that these movements did not address themselves "to the state" anymore, but "against the state." Others nurtured similar expectations about the transformative potential of the "new (urban) social movements," the horizon of whose struggles, given the highly exclusionary system of domination and appropriation of riches, would not be restricted to the parameters of a capitalist society (Moisés & Martinez-Alier, 1977:52; cf. Kowarick, 1987; Boschi & Valladares, 1983:70). Evers, Müller-Plantenberg and Spessart (1979), though sometimes expressing some caution, gave reason to think (cf. Kowarick, 1987:45) that they actually foresaw a rather linear development of what they regarded as another form of the class struggle:

The steady lowering of the level of reproduction creates the increasing necessity as well as the objective conditions for a unification of demands and the articulation of ever broader coalitions (Evers, Müller-Plantenberg & Spessart, 1979:163).

Some ten years later, by the late 1980s, the mood of the "(new) urban social movement" studies had changed: "Nearly a decade after the initial wave of opti-

³ The Cost of Living Movement emerged from Ecclesial Base Communities, Mother Clubs and Neighborhood Associations in the periphery of São Paulo. The first initiatives were taken in 1973 and by 1978 the movement was able to gather about 1,250,000 signatures for a petition for a price freeze and wage adjustments. The mobilization was accompanied with large public manifestations and meetings (Evers, 1982).

mism, it has become apparent that the earlier expectations have not been borne out" (Mainwaring, 1987:132). Nascimento (1987:26) argued that defining urban social movements in terms of their transformative nature "has the inconvenience that in Brazil observations and research do not seem to confirm this," while Gohn (1988) commented on the changing frame of mind of students of the "urban social movements" that:

In recent years we are becoming accustomed to studies on the popular movements of an autocritical nature. They present a series of justifications for the causes which impeded the movements from fulfilling the tasks with which they had been attributed in the 1970s. The usual explanations are that the students at that time held utopian views and that the state has undergone a reformulation during the 1980s.

What actually takes place is a dislocation of analysis from the real. In our view, the social movements in general, and the popular (movements) in particular, did not advance sufficiently to bring about substantial transformations, nor ruptures or the emergence of the new, not because scientist have been utopian or ingenuous, but because the movements did not manage to give a sense to the hegemonic crisis of that moment (Gohn, 1988:332).

Telles (1988) reflected upon the same issues in her essay on the experiences of the 1970s. What is the importance today of reflection on the popular movements that emerged in the periphery of the city -São Paulo- in the 1970s? She noted the "barely disguised disappointment in the face of an unrealized promise" and observed how many people started to reveal the "other face" of the movements, thus dismounting the hope vested in them or, at least, making it necessary to rethink their political significance.⁴ And then she commented that

If the emphases have changed and if new problems emerged, demanding theoretical and political reflection, this is nothing extraordinary, quite the contrary. The problem arises when the new questions are being perceived as constituting such a rupture with the past that we end up dissolving the threads which link the present to its own history. In this way, to take up the initial question, the experiences of the 1970s are frozen as objectified data from the past, at best remembered as examples from the "hard years of resistance"

⁴ Telles (1988:247) supplied the following list of practices said to constitute the 'other face' of the movements: "the localism of practices which exhaust themselves in a routine of pressure on the public organs so as to obtain attendance to specific demands; the fragmentation of interests and the preponderance of a corporatist notion of rights; their isolation in a certain type of communitarianism which, however, does not impede them from opening themselves to populist manipulation by the state; the affirmation of a basism which has its counterpart in the rejection of forms of political representation and in an instrumentalist view of institutions."

which generated practices and orientations that made sense then, but now have lost their reason for being. And there also is the risk to take the data from the present for proof or measure of the truth of what now has become enshrined as the past. In this case the analyses of the first interpreters are disqualified, since what they said can be attributed to the ingenuous optimism of those who let themselves be seduced by their object or who took for reality things only happening in the interior of their own imagination (Telles, 1988:248-249).

However, even if the emergence of the "new urban social movements" in Brazil was not merely taking place in the utopian or ingenuous imagery of social scientists, and if today's "truth" should not be projected onto the past, the foregoing quotes suggest a complicated process of rethinking the "urban social movements" and settling accounts with the theorizations that had accompanied their rise.

1.1. Theory as a discursive matrix

The problems of "interpretation" derive from the particular relation of the social sciences to their "object," i.e their reflexive character, or "the practical connotations of social science" (Giddens, 1984:348; Taylor, 1983). The theorizations of "urban social movements" developed in Brazil in the 1970s also outlined a political project and a course of action:

the potential radicality ascribed to neighborhood associations derived (and derives) from theoretical and political perspectives which take urban life and the sphere of reproduction to be the locus of a second front of social struggle, besides those which develop in the sphere of labor (Ribeiro, 1989:106).

The theorizations were not only a means of understanding, but also provided a framework for self-understanding for the newly emerging "urban social movements."

Social theorizing may "enter" its very object and thus contribute to the reflexive transformation of the object (Taylor, 1983). This certainly takes place through many mediations and filtrations, which may be traced, located and situated in their specific context, as this study proposes to do. The point here is that theorizations may become what Sader (1988) has called a "discursive matrix," a resource which can be drawn upon:

Discursive matrixes should be understood as modes of approaching reality, involving diverse attributions of meaning. They, consequently, also imply the use of specific categories of naming and interpreting (of situations, themes, actors) with reference to specific

values and objectives. But they are not simply ideas: their production and reproduction depends on material positions and practices from where the discourses are enunciated (Sader, 1988:143).

Elucidating the concept, Sader argued that in the course of social struggles the subjects involved elaborate representations of the events and of themselves. In such elaborations of meaning, they have recourse to constituted discursive matrixes from which modes of naming the lived experience are extracted, but at the same time, through the very use of such "given words" in the context of conflicts and antagonistic interpretations, they operate changes in the meaning of these words.⁵

One aspect of the above conjectures is that they serve as a justification for bracketing the concept of "urban social movement," which so often tends to be "reified" (Banck and Doimo, 1988:72). Bracketing the concept allows us to analyse such processes of "reification" at work and to highlight the role of theorizations of urban social movements as a discursive matrix which enters into the very constitution of "its world," with "tortuous and ramified consequences" (cf. Giddens, 1984:350).

The Brazilian discussion on "urban social movements" has, certainly in its early stages, been closely linked to the "object" of its concerns. "Theoretical problems" that came under scrutiny, were quite often not just theoretical problems, but "theoretical problems of the popular movement" (e.g. Lima, 1982:54) worked out through the discursive matrix of "urban social movement" theory which articulated with, and served to specify the "discursive matrixes" of Liberation Theology and the dispersed Left in pursuit of a new relationship with "its base."⁶ The theorizations of "urban social movements" can thus be seen in their double relation to neighborhood associativism, as a discursive matrix for "understanding" as well as a medium for "self-understanding," or as theory as well as project, subject to constant redevelopment.

⁵ These formulations bring him close to the discourse-theoretical approach elaborated by Laclau and Mouffe (1985) but avoid the "discourse reductionism" of their framework by explicitly taking into account the situatedness of the enunciator (cf. Assies, 1990:55-58; Salman, 1990:118-129; Stuurman, 1985).

⁶ Sader (1988: 144-145), referring to S-ao Paulo, discusses three "discursive matrixes," related to three "institutions in crisis," namely the Church which was losing influence among the people; the Left which sought new forms of 'integration with the workers' and the trade-union structure which was confronted by the novο sindicalismo, stressing autonomy in the face of any state tutelage. The latter discursive matrix is less manifestly present in Recife than in the industrial heartland of the country.

A corollary of the bracketing procedure is the rejection of "essentialism."⁷ I use the notion of "neighborhood associativism" as a "catch-all concept" indicating the broad range of territorially-based associative practices related to "urban contradictions" (cf. Assies, Burgwal & Salman, 1990:4, 170). Neighborhood associativism should not be understood as something preceding maturation, as a sort of raw material in a temporal sequence, but as processed "in and by" various more or less conflicting discursive and organizational matrixes that frame and influence it. By organizational matrix I mean the forms of organization and the broader networks within which neighborhood associativism operates.⁸

Forms of neighborhood associativism can thus be understood as social constructs shaped by the interaction of various actors, including the adversaries and the "external agents" whose presence and impact should be taken into account at all moments, rather than subsequently be added to the analysis as a complement to what is viewed as an essentially internal "spontaneous" dynamic.

The theorization of "urban social movements" that emerged in the course of the 1970s came to serve as a discursive matrix in shaping neighborhood associativism. It provided the groups most involved with promoting neighborhood associativism, as well as local leaders, with a theoretical perspective and a more specific program of action. It served, as a framework for defining "strategic interests," to borrow a term from feminist literature.⁹ The theorizations of "urban social movements" served to specify and modify the the Catholic discourse of "human promotion," with its existentialist and developmentist leanings, as well as the orthodox marxist discourse. While forms of neighborhood associativism had existed earlier, they now came to be understood and signified as "urban social movement."

By the end of the 1970s, a countermatrix was articulated in governmental circles. In the context of the transition to government by civilians, the military government started to devise strategies to diffuse the conflict potential in urban areas. The core concept of this countermatrix for neighborhood associativism was "communitarian development" with "the nation" -the community as the "essence of

⁷ Non-essentialism does not imply simple contingency "without history." Though "metanarratives" or "philosophies," which served to anchor "essences" and their immanent rationalities -the "cunning of history"- have become obsolete, large historical narratives and analyses of societal macrostructures, though less presumptuous than "metanarratives," are indispensable for critical social theorizing (Fraser and Nicholson, 1988).

⁸ In the 1970s the Catholic Church and its Ecclesial Base Communities provided the main organizational matrix. In the course of the Brazilian democratization process, organizational alternatives became feasible, and state agencies also started to promote neighborhood associations. At the same time, the possibilities for organizing within the Church framework narrowed as a consequence of the conservative offensive against Liberation Theology.

⁹ Strategic interests are "deductively derived from the analysis of situations of subordination and the formulation of alternative, more satisfactory arrangements to those that exist" (cf. Alvarez, 1990:24).

the nation"- rather than "the people" or the "working classes" as point of reference. On the other hand, by the early 1980s, the rather consensual understanding of what "urban social movements" were, could be and should be, started to fissure for reasons I shall discuss in due course.

Thus rather than come up with a new definition of what "urban social movements" really are, I thematize the "practicality" of the notion as the core of a discursive matrix. In order to understand its workings, I discuss the main features of the theorization of the "new urban social movements" developed in Brazil in the mid-1970s to coalesce into what can be called "the paradigm of the 1970s" (Assies, 1990:73) and digress on conceptualizations of the "novelty" attributed to the "new urban social movements." By the early 1980s, the "paradigm of the 1970s" fractured. A series of key notions underpinning the "paradigm of the 1970s" were thoroughly questioned, not just for purely theoretical or conceptual reasons but also with respect to their practical implications.

1.2. The "paradigm of the 1970s"

While neighborhood associativism had existed at other times in Brazil, the conceptualization of neighborhood associativism as "urban social movement" did not emerge there until the mid-1970s. The notion itself had been produced a few years earlier in Castells' books on *The Urban Question* (first published in 1972) and on *Urban Social Movements* (first Spanish¹⁰ edition in 1974) and in Borja's (1975) book of the same name. Lojkin's book on *Marxism, the State and the Urban Question* (published in 1977) was the third source of inspiration for what may be called "the paradigm of the 1970s" (cf. Assies, 1990:28-42, 73-77). The impact of these authors in framing the initial discussion in Brazil can hardly be overestimated. A "phenomenon" that "had existed for some time" (Valladares, 1988:295) acquired a new name and it was this very name that gave the phenomenon a new dimension, namely that of a project of "social movement."¹¹

¹⁰ We refer to the title of the Spanish edition. Significantly, the original French title, reflecting Castells' structuralist marxism of that time, was *Luttes Urbaines et Pouvoir Politique* (cf. Assies, Burgwal & Salman, 1990:2).

¹¹ The emergence of forums of academic discussion on the topic of "urban social movements," such as the meetings of the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Ciências Sociais* (ANPOCS) and its workshop *Movimentos Sociais Urbanas*, later renamed *Lutas Urbanas, Estado e Cidadania* (Gohn, 1985:32; Doimo, 1989:43), greatly contributed to the specification and reappraisal of the concept in the context of broader discussions and trends within social theorizing (e.g. the eclipse of structuralist marxism and the rethinking of theories of democracy), always with reference to the "concrete" Brazilian situation.

Jacobi and Nunes (1983:62) highlighted one strategic aspect of this process in their discussion of how Castells was appropriated by his Brazilian public. They contrasted it with his European and North American public:

Here, his perception of the relation between the contradictions of capitalism and the urban was worked out in texts with other addressees: fundamentally it was a critique of the "elitist" positions of the orthodox and/or revolutionary Left, suggesting a "third way" of action, between "populism" and "insurrection" or between "social democracy" and "bureaucratic socialism."

While "urban social movement" theories served to criticize the orthodox left, they also provided a framework for radical elaboration of the discourse and practices of the Catholic Church. In the 1960s, the Church had launched its strategy of creating Ecclesial Base Communities as a means of combating the crisis of vocations, the eroding influence among the population and the onslaught of other religious orientations. This new strategy soon acquired a dynamics of its own, as the more official Church views on human promotion through communitarian action tended to be redimensioned in terms of "social movement" under the influence of Liberation Theology. Church-sponsored neighborhood associativism, which provided an "umbrella" for the radical Catholic undercurrent and dispersed Left-wingers¹² under the repressive climate of the time, now became more than a second choice option, forced by circumstances. Taking these aspects into account, provides an analysis perspective capable of shedding light on the relations between modifications in theory and political conjunctures (cf. Jacobi and Nunes, 1983:63). In this respect, it should be noted that a fracturing of "the paradigm of the 1970s" occurred in 1982-1983 (cf. Doimo, 1989:2). It was related to a moment of inflection of the political conjuncture in Brazil, a moment of Church reorientation and a shift in social theorizing and was accompanied by a redimensioning of the notion of "urban social movement."

The "paradigm of the 1970s" consisted of a blend of the theories of late dependent industrialization or peripheral capitalism and its political dimensions, and the "urban social movement" theories that became available in the course of the 1970s. A core idea was that in a situation of peripheral capitalism, "urban social movements" were to play a particularly prominent role in the anti-capitalist struggle. The main features of the "paradigm" can be summed up as follows:

¹² The opening up was accompanied by theological debate. Whereas the idea of Ecclesial Base Communities (CEBs) was initially often linked to rather exclusivist views on the "specifically Christian", which holds that the specific communitarian values of Christianity are only accessible to Christians, such "monolithism of the religious dimension" was contested by Liberation Theologists with the argument that "outside faith it is possible to find the universal gift of love," which opens the way for greater political involvement and a more autonomous relation to the Church hierarchy (cf. Nunes & Jacobi, 1982:191).

1. Urban (social) movements¹³ are generated by urban contradictions, notably the incapacity of the capitalist state to provide items of collective consumption in any satisfactory way (cf. Castells, 1977:234-242).¹⁴ These contradictions are exacerbated under conditions of "savage capitalism," or "accumulation on a poor basis" in the periphery of the capitalist system. The state is concerned with improving the conditions of production, above all investing in infrastructure for industrialization. Provisions for collective consumption for the rapidly growing urban population lagged way behind (Moisés & Martinez-Alier, 1977:45; Moisés, 1982);

2. The orthodox view of urban contradictions as "secondary" to the class struggle was criticized as Eurocentric. There is no reason, it was argued, to disqualify the Brazilian urban movements for not meeting the standards of the "classical" model of social movements, that is the model of working class struggle in the sphere of production. Latin American reality, as Moisés (1982:24-29) put it, has its own dynamics and Brazilian urban movements should be understood as a specific product of the "situation of dependency" which exhibits two important differences from the "classical" model. The first is that a situation of "dependent" capitalism does not give rise to a working class characterized by homogeneity deriving from the position on the labor market. In that respect, the situation is characterized instead by structural heterogeneity and the development of an amalgam designed as the "popular classes" (cf. Weffort, 1978:146).¹⁵ Secondly, the social movements developing in such a context are paradoxically united at a political level. Instead of labor movements whose unity derives from solidarity at the shop-floor level, Moisés (1982:26) argued, in Latin America "we have popular movements whose unity is constituted on the basis of something like a *popular identity*" forged in the context of populist politics. Such politics propagated the ideology that the state is there "for everyone" and thus legitimized the state as a

¹³ Though Castells (1977:260-275; 1983:284, 322) always sought to distinguish urban social movements from urban movements in general, in Brazil the term urban social movements came to be applied to virtually all forms of neighborhood associativism which, in any case at the time, nearly always had connotations of subversion.

¹⁴ Castells (1974; 1977:451) specified the main urban contradictions under state monopoly capitalism in the central capitalist countries as follows: 1. whereas the importance of collective consumption increases as a result of economic necessity as well as of the development of the class struggle, capitalist investment policies privilege the private consumption sector; 2. whereas ways of life are a private concern, collectivization of their management becomes increasingly important. These contradictions give rise to an increased presence of the state in the management of urban contradictions and, therefore, to a direct politicization of the urban problematic.

¹⁵ In this respect it should be noted that Castells's (1977) notion of "pluriclassism" can not simply be transposed to Brazilian "reality." For Castells it refers to alliances between well-defined classes or class fractions rather than to "structural heterogeneity."

target for demand-making. The popular sectors thus find their unity at a directly political level and ultimately the relation to the state becomes one of confrontation.

Arguments of this kind about tendencies in the emergence of the "popular sectors" as an historical actor served to stake out the potential importance of struggles in the "sphere of reproduction," which was very much in contrast to the orthodox disqualification of these struggles. This point was also stressed in a very influential article by Evers, Müller-Plantenberg and Spessart (1979), who argued that in the Latin American conditions of "associated industrialization" of the 1970s, such struggles could be regarded as trade union struggle with other means.

3. The novelty of these "new urban social movements" was first defined by contrasting them to the neighborhood associations of the populist period in terms of "autonomy" and the rejection of populism and clientelism as inauthentic forms of representation (Nunes & Jacobi, 1982:195; Singer, 1980). This stress on autonomy derives from the influence of the Catholic Church through its Ecclesial Base Communities (CEBs) and from a definition of autonomy in terms of a marxist class analysis, often inspired by Weffort's analyses of populist mass politics, significantly republished in 1978. These elaborations of novelty and autonomy imbricated with the critique of vanguardism and focism among the Left, resulting the pursuit of new forms of "integration with the base" and a "discovery of civil society" (Weffort, 1988)¹⁶ which converged with the grassrootism of the Liberation Theologists. Although the two discursive matrixes often merged to a great extent, particularly for those Catholics who came to regard marxism as a useful instrument for the analysis of reality, their relation is complicated and often fraught with tension, as I will show in the analysis of neighborhood movements in Recife. As Sader (1988:164-165) pointed out, the notions of "liberation" and "revolution" occupy the "same space" in their respective discursive matrixes. Both point to a "totalizing event which subverts and refounds social life on the basis of notions of justice activated by the people in action." However, in contrast to "revolution," which is rooted in "empirically observed events in the past and concretely programmed for the future (whatever the degree of 'irrealism'),"

"liberation" does not permit operationalization through any strategic rationality. And this is why its manifestations in the experience of daily life (regarded as indicating the direction) are not so much the large collective processes which affect social structures but rather the "awakening of consciousnesses" and the development of practices through which every small collectivity feels itself to be the "subject of its history." The central objective is not the

¹⁶ Forced by the repressive circumstances and as a result of theoretical reflection strongly inspired by Gramsci's writings, the Left discovered that there is a place for politics "beyond the state."

establishment of a new structure but, above all, the establishment of new meanings and values in human action, the priority goes to the valuation of the development (*promoção*) of the individual, which takes place in the bosom of the communities.

These two perspectives on "social transformation" have their counterparts in sometimes complementary and converging and sometimes contrasting conceptualizations of what the novelty of the "new (urban) social movements" is all about, a contrast between those who assess "novelty" in terms of socio-political change and those who stress the socio-cultural dimension.

1.3. Excursus: What's new?

The "novelty" of the "urban social movements" in Brazil has been approached from various angles. Their novelty can be staked out by contrasting them to the neighborhood associations of the populist period. Another aspect of their novelty may be the new relationship to left-wing parties, and they can also be regarded as new with respect to the "new values" they are said to represent. I shall briefly discuss the main features of populism theory and how the "new urban social movements" were contrasted with those of the populist period. Subsequently, I shall discuss the new "movementism" of the Left and examine some aspects of the approaches stressing the socio-cultural dimension.

In the Brazilian context, Weffort's (1978) essays on populism provide a major reference and I shall therefore focus on this theorization. Weffort situated and specified¹⁷ populism as an urban phenomenon in the context of a "society in transition" to industrial capitalism after the crisis of the oligarchic model in the 1930s. This crisis ushered in a "compromise State" rather than a real break with the oligarchy. As a "bourgeois revolution," it was a poor one "but we did not have and will not have another one" (Weffort, 1978:22). None of the fundamental classes were capable of exerting hegemony and this resulted in a great relative autonomy of the State and the "leader" identified with it. The "compromise State" is one of perpetual trade-offs between the interests of various dominant groups while simultaneously concessions are made to the dominated groups, i.e. the emerging urban masses, to enhance the legitimacy of the State. In the context of a "society in

¹⁷ As such, the notion of populism as a mode of political regulation or political regime elaborated by Weffort (1978) should be distinguished from the conceptualizations inspired by the Russian 19th-century *Narodniki* tradition of 'going to the people', which has its parallels in Brazilian Catholic as well as secular radicalism (Kadt, 1970:5). It should also be distinguished from the general theory of populism worked out by Laclau (1977), which hinges on the distinction between 'people' and 'power bloc' and seeks to legitimize 'populism' as a strategy of left-wing hegemony. For Laclau as well as Weffort, the theorizations of 'Bonapartism' and the particular forms of 'relative autonomy of the state' are a backdrop reference.

transition" and the accompanying rapid growth of heterogeneous urban popular classes, the dominated groups are available for populist policies of manipulation through concession. Weffort stressed that this should not be attributed to a lack of political experience on the part of the rural migrant population in an urban context, but to the specific sense of mobility and the feeling of improvement these migrants experienced. In a context of this kind, which opens new employment opportunities and makes new forms of consumption accessible, migrants tended to regard the rules of the social and political system as legitimate. Simultaneously, they can identify themselves with populist politicians who operate in the space provided by the hegemonic stalemate between the dominant classes. The emerging urban masses thus do not play an autonomous role, but serve as a "mass of maneuver" in the hegemonic struggles between dominant groups. However, the effects of this form of mass-politics are ambiguous, Weffort argued, since favors distributed by politicians can assume the dimension of acquired rights and may thus subvert the system of populist regulation. The popular classes claim their rights and start to play a more autonomous political role and eventually turn against the state. This development was cut short by the 1964 *coup*.

While Weffort thus outlined the "emergence of the popular masses" as a political actor, his analysis of populism also informs Perlman's (1976) study and her conceptualization of dependent, conformist participation, which is much less optimistic about these political actors:

During the populist period, the favela participated in the power game between competing segments of the national elite. In Weffort's words, the masses "conferred legitimacy upon a Populist leader -and through him on the state- insofar as they served as an instrument which was particularly useful when no one of the dominant groups had hegemony over the rest." The underlying dynamic constructed by populist politicians consisted of playing off the masses' desire for mobility against the oligarchy's fear of revolution. To the oligarchy, they could promise to keep the masses in check; to the masses they could claim the ability to win concessions from the elite. Manipulation of this basic conflict made populist politicians "mediators" and left them free to "wheel and deal," consolidate power, and "line their own pockets" (Perlman, 1976:260).¹⁸

¹⁸ Perlman's views on dependency and dependent participation, it should be noted, inspired a line of interpretation of Latin American neighborhood movements which includes the recent work by Castells (1983:175-212) and his concept of "urban populism." The nation states of the developing countries, he argues, are caught between the political pressures from the traditional oligarchies and the new international economic powers at a time when the popular masses increasingly forward political claims to broader participation. As a result of their vulnerability, however, the urban population and its movements remain dependent on the political system.

The neighborhood associations emerging in Brazil in the 1970s seemed to break away from the pattern of dependency sketched by Perlman. The pioneers of the Brazilian "urban social movement" studies, whose work started to circulate through informal circuits by the mid-1970s, measured the novelty of the "new urban social movements" by the distance from dependent participation. The notion of autonomy, in relation to the state and the established political parties, which played a key role in the public discourse of the new movements themselves, derived its significance from an extrapolation of the tendency towards autonomization Weffort had referred to as a main reason for the breakdown of populist regulation in the early 1960s. The development that had been cut short in 1964 now resumed with new force. In his pioneering study of the *Sociedades de Amigos de Bairro* (SABs) in São Paulo in the 1950 and 1960s, Moisés (1982) thematized the possibility for such a development. The SABs, he argued, had been called into existence for purposes of electoral gain by populist politicians, but had tended to become more autonomous and more antagonistic to the state. Singer (1980) ventured similar views. After the *coup*, he argued, the SABs had been hollowed out and had lost significance for the population. This vacuum was gradually filled by new associations closely linked to the Ecclesial Base Communities and

rooted in an ideological position completely different from that which inspired the movements of the previous decade. Instead of assuming that the needs of the peripheral *bairros* and impoverished populations stem from the negligence of the authorities, and that this might be overcome by an adequate mobilization of the interested parties, privation is attributed to the very social organization inherent in capitalism (Singer, 1980:91).

Moreover, by then, populism, which had been related to the phase of import-substituting industrialization, could be regarded as a past station. The new phase of associated dependent industrialization, accompanied by grim authoritarianism, left little leeway for the ambiguities that characterized the previous phase (Evers, Müller-Plantenberg & Spessart, 1979:140). Antagonism was virtually the only imaginable possibility and, many surmised, a transition to socialism the only solution.

The conjectures underpinning such views often bore a resemblance to the European theoretizations of State Monopoly Capitalism which, in its official French version, informs the work of Lojkine (1981)¹⁹ and, with structuralist

¹⁹ Lojkine, in particular, adhered to the STAMOCAP theory and argued that the original opposition between owners of the means of production and direct producers, in this phase of capitalism, had been replaced by a new opposition, this time between the dominant fraction of capital -monopoly capital- and the totality of non-monopolist 'layers'. In the European context, this argumentation had the convenience of conflating democratic struggles with the struggle for socialism, as both were directed against the

marxist qualifications, the work of Castells (1977) (cf. Assies, 1990:28-42). Oliveira's (1977) article on *Monopolist Accumulation, the State and Urbanization: the New Quality of Class Conflict*, which was "indispensable reading" at the time (Doimo, 1989:43), went quite some way toward developing a local variety of the State Monopoly Capitalism theory, including a definition of "the urban" as the "anti-nation" and a description of the state as "captured by the international-associated bourgeoisie." This dissolved "the ambiguity of the State, which is the foundation for the very possibility of the State" (Oliveira, 1977:73), which amounts to saying that the State had now been pitted against the nation. Theorizations of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (O'Donnell, 1973; Collier, 1979) also suggested that the relationship between economic development in the periphery and the development of democracy might be the opposite of what modernization theorists had promised (Cammack, 1985:5). Whereas in the central capitalist countries, the STAMOCAP theory served to underpin an electoral "democratic front" strategy, there might at least be some doubts as to the viability of such a strategy in the context of dependent capitalism, which did not even seem to provide a very propitious environment for "bourgeois democracy."

In this view, to sum up, the new neighborhood associations represented an ideological break with those of the populist period. At the same time, the State had lost the ambiguity that characterized it during this period. While the new neighborhood associations vindicated their autonomy, their relation to the State in the new phase of industrialization could only be one of confrontation. The conceptualizations were framed in terms of class theory adapted to the Brazilian circumstances, featuring the notion of autonomous action on the part of the popular or working classes taking charge of their authentic interests.

While the "new movements" were thus viewed as representing a break with populist manipulated participation, the way they might autonomously take charge of their authentic interests and how these interests might be expressed politically was another matter for heated debate. It involved the critique of the "traditional Left," its vanguardist and instrumentalist attitudes to grassroot organizations and its exclusive preoccupation with "taking power." The critique was inspired by multiple sources, ranging from the Christian humanism of Liberation Theologists to the international debate on leftist politics and Eurocommunism, the Latin American debate on the perspectives of the Left after the *guerrilla* experiences, and the international debate on "new social movements." The views developed by the secular Left converged with the communitarianism and direct democratism of the Church and Liberation Theologists (cf. Cardoso, 1981; Munck, 1989:146) in a

'monopolies and their state'. In Brazil, Oliveira (1977:73) wrote that "now the state and the international associated bourgeoisie are on one side and the rest of the nation on the other."

strong leaning toward *basismo* and *movimentismo*, the emphasis on "new ways of doing politics" and notions about "politics beyond the State."

Some argue, however, that this emphasis on "new ways of doing politics" and the shift from "partidarianism" to "movementism" still does not capture the novelty of the "new movements." They refer to the socio-cultural aspect as the most important. Such conceptualizations draw on notions of alienation, blended with chunks of Foucault and his notion of power, and on the theorizations associating "new social movements" with the emergence of post-industrial society. The departure from the conceptualization of novelty discussed above partly parallels the difference between "Liberation" and "Revolution" cited by Sader (1988:165) (see 1.2.).

Evers (1985:46-47) pinpointed the difference when he argued that Latin American scholars erroneously "perceived this tendency toward taking politics into one's own hands as a broadening of the sphere of 'the political'":

Together with the emergence of new fields of political action, corresponding new ways of "doing politics," alongside the associated new political agents, started to emerge. According to this line of interpretation, the intellectual task for today consists in "thinking the construction of a new hegemony through direct action of the masses, undertaking a reconceptualization of politics that broadens its realm and recovers as valid action the vast popular field with its everyday life, thus accepting the challenge of visualizing a project of society from the viewpoint of the practice of the popular classes." Instead of a "*partidarista*" viewpoint, a "*movimientista*" standpoint is called for.

This line of interpretation hinging on the "broadening of the sphere of the political," Evers argued, does not go far enough in the search for new concepts, as it maintains the idea of the centrality of politics and the notion that power is the only or most important potential for social transformation we can find in these movements and groupings. His main thesis then is that the "transformatory potential within new social movements is not political, but socio-cultural" (Evers, 1985:49). New social movements all over the world, he argued, create spaces for the experience of more collective social relations, of a less market-oriented consciousness, of less alienated expressions of culture and of different basic values and assumptions. Their quest is for an autonomous identity rather than for political power and:

a movement's increased potential for political power can carry with it a decrease in its long term socio-cultural potential. More power means, almost invariably, less identity, more alienation (Evers, 1985:65).

Such notions have strong affinities with those informing Catholic communitarianism and its stress on primary social groups, which allow for personal development

through open and personal relations with other persons and with the official doctrine, which relegates temporal politics to the private sphere.

If Evers' (1985) theorization of novelty is rooted in a good German tradition of alienation theories, the valuative elements in his conceptualization coincide in many ways with those in the theorizations that link "new social movements" to the emergence of a "post-industrial society" regarded as a qualitatively new societal type. This conceptualization partly derives from Bell's (1973) theory of post-industrial society and Touraine's (1973, 1978) further theorizations of this concept, with ramifications in the work of Melucci (1980, 1985), Lyotard's (1979) post-modernism and Castells' (1983) post-marxism (cf. Assies, 1990:42-68). These authors tend to regard the emergence of the "new social movements" as indicative of the emergence of a qualitatively new type of society where, as Featherstone (1988) resumed it, the development of commodity production coupled with information technology has led to a "triumph of signifying culture," which then reverses the direction of determinism.²⁰ The social movements in this type of society, which in Touraine's (1978) terms has reached the "highest level of historicity," are beyond the material and political concerns of the old movements and move on a socio-cultural level. For Touraine²¹ the emergence of "new social movements" indicates the emergence of new "system of historical action" which has attained the "highest level of historicity" located on an evolutionary scale (cf. Cohen, 1982:32) going from struggles at the level of organization (commercial society), through the level of institutions (industrial society), to the level of historicity in post-industrial or programmed society. These societies have reached the highest capacity for intervention upon themselves, i.e. for "self-production," and in these societies cultural orientations are directly at stake. Therefore they enter the "age of social movements" (Touraine, 1978:149). These "new social movements" are beyond material concerns and political involvement. Meaning, identity and culture are topographically located above

²⁰ The theoretical move indicated by Featherstone is reminiscent of the structuralist-marxist argument about the "displacement of dominance to the political" in the monopolist phase of capitalism. The shift to post-industrialism implies a "qualitative jump," however, which generates a "new" class conflict between "technocracy" and "self-management" directly involving the socio-cultural level (Touraine, 1978). Touraine's notion of class, it should be noted, is rather specific and the adoption of his terminology by Castells (1983) has not taken place without considerable "conceptual slippage" (cf. Assies, 1990:77).

²¹ We abstract here from his world-system differentiation whereby the application of the very notion of "social movement" in the context of developing countries is undercut. In such a situation of development, according to Touraine's definitional framework, social movements, which by definition pertain to the synchronic functioning of a "system of historical action," cannot constitute themselves as a result of the heterogeneous composition of the developing societies and as a result of the nearly inevitable political involvement in the context of development, i.e. is the diachronic transition to another "system of historical action" of a higher level. What matters at the moment is the "foundation" of the criteria of novelty (cf. Assies, 1990:85-87).

matter and power. The new movements are above all expressive, symbolic or prophetic (Melucci, 1980; 1985:797), involved with safeguarding "identity" and producing "meaning" in the wastelands of the post-industrial society. The "movement is the message."²²

An example of the transposition of such notions to Brazilian "reality" can be found in the article by Boschi and Valladares (1983:74-75), who assimilated the Brazilian movements to those described by Melucci (1980) as expressing the new class struggle of post-industrial society, i.e. the defense of identity against technocratic domination. Perspectives of this kind tend to assimilate Ecclesial Base Communities and Brazilian neighborhood associations into a "global" *problematique* of "post-political" and "post-materialist" movements.

The problem with these transpositions can be illustrated with the criteria used by Mainwaring and Viola (1984:19) to distinguish between "old" and "new" social movements in Latin America:

"New" social movements are inclined towards affective concerns, expressive relations, group orientation and horizontal organization. Old social movements are inclined towards material concerns, instrumental relations, orientation towards the state, and vertical organization.

They listed five types of movements which they regarded as new in the Brazilian and Argentinian context: the base communities, neighborhood associations, the women's movement, ecological associations and human rights organizations. By their criteria the neighborhood associations, often state-oriented in the pursuit of material values, scored lowest on "novelty."

One problem is that in these views on "novelty," the "expressive dimension risks overwhelming the instrumental purpose," as Lehmann (1990:64) put it. In other words, these criteria of "novelty" reflect an "overdynamization of the cultural" (Assies, 1990:67, 85) as the locus where it all happens nowadays, resulting in a sovereign neglect of "matter and power." The socio-cultural is represented as something disembodied, nearly sacralized, hovering above the material world. Movements engaged in material and political issues are regarded as "old" and lower on an evolutionary scale. Meddling with such things implies a lowering of the "level of historicity" and a "loss of identity."

This brings us to a second aspect of Mainwaring and Viola's criteria of "novelty." In their article, they seek to assess the contribution of the "new social movements" to the democratization processes in Brazil and Argentina. At the same

²² Similar notions underpin Castells' (1983:311-314) valuation of "meaning based on experience," which he regards as being nurtured in the local community, presented with strong *Gemeinschaft* connotations (Banck & Doimo, 1988:83; Banck, 1990). A sort of secular base communities, also stressing "experience" and the affective dimensions of life (cf. Mainwaring, 1986:228) and nurturing a hope of eventual liberation (Castells, 1983:331).

time, "state orientedness" is regarded as characteristic of "old" social movements. By definition, the potential contribution of "new social movements" to the democratization process seems to be restricted to "civil society" and "the cultural." This reflects a problem noted by Cohen (1982, 1985), namely the tendency to exclude the strategic interaction aspect from the concept of social movement in recent theorizations, notably in the influential work by Touraine (1973, 1978).

Cohen (1982, 1985) noted, and the argument not only applies to Touraine but to various other authors (e.g. Evers, 1985, Castells, 1983), that this approach forces a choice between "strategy and identity," which is then resolved by excluding the aspect of strategic interaction from the concept of social movement as well as from the concept of civil society where social movements are located. While this view makes for a healthy critique of the Jacobin imagery of social transformation and corrects the overemphasis on politics and the State, it also suffers a major flaw. It precludes thinking about the relationship between social movements, social change and its institutional dimensions. It suffers from a blind spot where the relationship between civil society and the state, that is the political regime, is concerned. This also is the case with Castells (1983)²³, who simply presupposes the existence of an open political system (Assies, 1990:59; Salman, 1990:129-139).

Lowe (1986) points to this aspect in Castells' recent work (Castells, 1983). The reason for Castells' new insistence on political autonomy, Lowe argues, arises from a new reading of the social system reliant on social process, meaning here personal and group interaction, to achieve changes in value and meaning systems. It is not very clear, however, how urban movements may achieve these tasks of social change, since Castells' theoretical position entails a full separation between social movements (civil society) and the political system. This, Lowe argues,

leads to the ambiguous conclusion that although these movements can innovate social change, they themselves cannot carry it through to a transformation of society because this depends on adaptations at the political level (Lowe, 1986:190).

Therefore, he goes on, it is not clear whether in practice urban social movements can be autonomous if they are to achieve the tasks Castells, by definitional fiat, assigns them. Lehmann, addressing the same issue, remarks that:

unable to get around the state and its biases (Castells) has withdrawn in civil society, calling the social movements up as an alternative, but also perhaps as a sign of despair. Since justice is unobtainable,

²³ "Without political parties and without an open political system, the new values, demands and desires generated by social movements not only fade (which they always do, anyway) but do not light up in the production of social reform and institutional change" (Castells, 1983:294).

will people have to content themselves with expressive, rather than instrumental, politics? (Lehmann, 1990:64)

The focus on "the socio-cultural" certainly is an important antidote to economism or overpoliticization, but dissociating it from "the political" or presenting "the political" as its negation is another matter. Framing the issue in terms of an opposition between strategy and identity not only runs the risk of thinking identity in essentialist rather than relational terms, but also results in evading the question of how alternative institutional arrangements might be developed to give practical shape to new cultural orientations. It precludes thinking about these issues (cf. Assies, 1990; Salman, 1990).

In the Brazilian context, in the discourse of the "new urban social movements" and their theorists and pedagogues, the rejection of involvement in institutional politics of the communitarian-identity discourse, with its strong affinities with aspects of Catholic thought, intertwined with the revolutionary rejection of involvement in "bourgeois" political institutions, sometimes including the wholesale rejection of parties as "ideological apparatuses of the state," as Ruth Cardoso (1983:223) noted with some dismay. Other authors have similarly commented on the problems and limitations, if not paralyzing effects, of the "new social movement" discourse in the broadest sense of the term, when it comes to political democratization (Barros, 1986; Cardoso, 1981; Munck, 1989:146). The anti-institutional consensus, reinforced by the authoritarian regime leaving left little leeway for anything but expressive manifestations of "civil society against the state," came under scrutiny in the context of the changing political conjuncture.

1.4. A paradigm fractured

For a number of reasons the "paradigm of the 1970s" underwent a multiple fracturing in the early 1980s. From this fracturing, a new and far more complex and differentiated image of the Brazilian "urban social movements" emerged. In contrast to the previous rather unitarian view, it involved an exploration of their internal contradictions, of the variety of actors involved in their constitution rather than "spontaneist" conceptualizations, and of their relations to the state and the political system rather than the simple confrontationist view. The theoretical reorientation was precipitated by the political conjuncture which, by 1982, had demonstrated that the growth of movements arising from the contradictions of capitalism in Brazil was not as linear as some had thought.

These developments coincided with the growing theoretical critique of the marxism that had informed earlier theorizing, a discussion which revolved around the rejection of the view of individuals as "supports of structures." For a brief period, "identity"-oriented research became prominent:

By 1982/83 a line of interpretation of culturalist leanings gained ascendance which, as a critique of the economism/reductionism of the preceding model, went out in search of the meaning of these practices in the context of their proper "experience." Thus, through a conceptualization referring to the sociology of daily life and the notion of identity, the social movements emerged as "a new type of conflict potentially indicating social transformation and a radical renovation of political life," through their aggressive profile of contestation of populism and clientelism as well as by their self-representation as autonomous subjects, independent from the political parties and the state (Doimo, 1989:2).

That is only part of the story, however. The shift to "identity" and "revolution in daily life" studies also served to keep up hopes at a moment when the "popular movement" and the party representing it -the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT)- had not performed as well as many had expected in the 1982 elections. Some felt the "socialist perspective the theme (of urban social movements) had been introduced with, had been barred" (Jacobi & Nunes, 1983:66). Turning to "culturalism" made it possible to relegate social transformation to the future and to simultaneously maintain that, at a local level in the movements, this future was in the making. The optimistic overtones of this type of research were questioned soon thereafter, however (Doimo, 1989:2), resulting in new assessments of what the Brazilian "urban social movements" were and could be about.²⁴

This process of rethinking was closely related to the ongoing process of political reorientation in the broadest sense of the term, in Brazil at the time. While a transition to socialism had turned out to be less imminent than many had expected, there was no longer any doubt that there was indeed an *abertura democrática*. The rigorously dualist interpretative schemes enshrined in the "paradigm of the 1970s" rapidly lost credibility, legitimacy and "practical" use (Cardoso, 1988:459).²⁵ Dualisms, ultimately rooted in some "dual power" theory, as in the rather manichean opposition between "planning" and "social movement" (e.g. Castells, 1977; Borja, 1975), lost legitimacy with the "revaluation of democracy" by the European and Latin American Left. The often rather nebulous imagery of "social transformation" as a cataclysmic event, underpinning the dualism and much of the conceptualization of what the "urban social movements" were

²⁴ Contributions to these debates can be found in: Scherer-Warren & Kriskche (org.), (1987).

²⁵ "The pedagogy of the movement, in the sense that it simplifies reality to the extreme (to favour the perception of oppression), creates conditions for a simplified, dichotomous apprehension of reality, with tendencies to radicalism.

This can be an obstacle for the real political action of the popular movement, particularly in a conjuncture which also is complex...." (Lima, 1982:58).

about, was crumbling (Munck, 1989:1-21; Telles, 1988: 281; Weffort, 1988). The problem was now how to go about the "revalued democracy" in practice (Cardoso, 1981; Barros, 1986).

A further development which deserves attention is the changing relation between the Church and the "popular movement," which partly was related to the political conjuncture:

The weak performance of the PT at the 1982 elections, not only stunned the political neophytes. For the elite political class, they brought the relief of knowing that the Church of the bases did not constitute such a menace or required as much attention as they had imagined. For the CEBs and the intellectuals of the Church of the People, they necessitated a profound reappraisal of their position in the face of the new political order and of the Church as a whole (Della Cava, 1988:258).

The electoral outcomes, however, were not the only reason. In the 1970s the Church had provided much of the organizational matrix for the popular movement. The 1980s brought the "emancipation of the social movements from the *pastoral*" (Doimo, 1986:112). It was a contradictory²⁶ process involving the disengagement of the Church which increasingly turned to its "cultural mission" rather than become involved in secular politics. In the general context of the "Retrenchment in Rome" (Lehmann, 1990:144), in Brazil the relation between Ecclesial Base Communities and the party system became an issue, notably in regard to the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), the "only party which had grown out of the grassroots" (Della Cava, 1988:251; Lehmann, 1990:147). Among the progressive sectors of the Church, the awareness had also grown that they were not the "organic intellectuals of the popular movement," as some had come to think. This involved the pursuit of a new relationship of commitment to the popular movement. The emergence of the *assessorias*, the non-governmental organizations "at the service of the popular movement" which had in the majority of cases their roots in the Church organization, was an outcome of this two-sided process (Landim, 1988).²⁷ These developments were paralleled by a secularization of neighborhood

²⁶ Much of the discussion revolved around "autonomy." People active in party politics often meant autonomy from the Church. Church-related people might agree on autonomy from the Church, but also tended to argue for autonomy from parties or to at least be wary of the "instrumentalization" of movements by the parties. Autonomy was thus often an eminently strategic term which might well be a means of securing informal "hegemony" over local organizations or over the supra-local articulations which operate in (relative) autonomy from the Church and the party system.

²⁷ NGOs and their personnel "move in a triangular field" constituted by the Church, the parties and the universities, according to Fernandes (1988). They function by maintaining a relationship of relative autonomy to these three poles. With the process of *abertura* under way, the field tended to become quadrangular as the opposition, some of whom had found refuge in such NGOs as an alternative of committed professionalism, came "to power" in an increasing number of states and municipalities.

associativism, influenced at the same time by the changing political conjuncture, including the reanimation of party politics since 1979 and changes in the policy style of state apparatuses.

These developments provided the background and perhaps the conditions for more distantiated studies of the "new urban social movements" and certainly contributed to the impact of these more critical studies within the Brazilian community of students and theorists of "urban social movements."

In a seminal contribution to the debate, Ruth Cardoso (1983) argued that Brazilian "urban social movement" studies often ended by reaffirming the transformative potential of the neighborhood associations without, however, providing empirical sustenance for such an affirmation. In her article she questioned three aspects of the novelty ascribed to the post-populist urban movements, namely:

1. that they question the authoritarian state and oblige it to democratize
2. that they force a recognition of the presence of the oppressed
3. as new political actors they put themselves beside the parties and trade unions and exert a renovating influence since they have the capacity for autonomous intervention in the correlation of forces.

In response to the first thesis, she argued that it could hardly be sustained. The state apparatuses had been modernized, although this had hardly been taken into account in the Brazilian studies, where the state appears in bare outline as the authoritarian enemy.²⁸ Nevertheless, the state has come to recognize neighborhood associations as interlocutors and demonstrates greater flexibility in dealing with their demands than the studies suggested. Conversely, the state is not only "the enemy," but is simultaneously legitimized as a valid interlocutor. Rather than frontal opposition, there is often a dynamic of negotiation where state agencies and their representatives as well as other actors can alternately be friend or foe, as illustrated in Santos' (1981) pioneering account of urban movements in Rio de Janeiro. At the same time, however, the overall policies of the state are beyond the scope of the associations. As to the second point, the "presence of the oppressed" has certainly been affirmed. By recognizing neighborhood associations as interlocutors, however, the authoritarian government also found mechanisms for

²⁸ Cardoso draws the important distinction between two types of problems which appear as one: 1. the transformation of the economic role of the state and the consequent centralization of decision-making and 2. the authoritarian government and the repression of traditional forms of expression of popular demands. As a corollary of the first point, she remarks that the development of public policies of the modernized state may actually generate demand-making, whereas the second point hints at the distinction between state and regime. Though under an authoritarian regime discourses aimed at delegitimizing the regime are likely to emerge in any manifestation of civil society, they should not be understood as delegitimizing the state as such, she would later argue in an article that covers much of the same ground as the earlier one (Cardoso, 1987:30).

fragmenting and separating them. In abstract ideological terms, associations can find their unity in the face of the state, since everyone lives in the same poverty, but at the same time they compete amongst themselves when it comes to concrete demands. Their demand-making character and the form of response by state agencies promote dispersal and fragmentation and thus sets a limit to the capacity for wide-ranging transformations. Dealing with neighborhood leaders also meant the (authoritarian) government avoided dealing with political forces proper, such as parties, which might contest the functioning of the state as a whole. Where the third point is concerned, she argued that the movements may exert an influence reducing the hierarchical character of parties and trade unions, but they can not replace them.

While this served to tune down the great expectations about the "new urban social movements," the manicheism underlying the "paradigm of the 1970s" was directly confronted in an article by Machado da Silva and Ribeiro (1985). They questioned the type of analysis which *a priori* conceives the political process as consisting of two opposed camps:

The political process -political struggle or "politics" *tout court*- is the conflict between those two camps, the result of which is not conceived of as a synthesis which transforms both, but as the dilution of one through the victorious intervention of the other (either the social movement is absorbed (*engolfado*) by the institutional system and disappears in it or, contrarily, -and this is the desired outcome- the institutional system is destroyed by the social movement (Machado da Silva & Ribeiro, 1985:327).

The notion of political process, they argued, is absent from such studies, which is detrimental to the analysis. Where the dynamic of movements is concerned, it "internalizes" the perspective, since it tends to focus on the internal dynamics of collective manifestations. This has its counterpart in a monolithic representation of the state. The notion of political process should therefore be given serious substance, they argued, and in this context, though with the qualification that domination is not limited to the institutional system, they referred to Boschi's (1983; cf. Boschi, 1987:23-39) view that the most promising destiny of a social movement is "the transformation and broadening of the institutional system to incorporate new actors and to become more democratic" (Machado da Silva & Ribeiro, 1985:327).

A third influential critical contribution was Durham's (1984) discussion of the generation of new models of citizenship as a dynamic process taking place in social movements. The latter "constitute a specific form of popular mobilization with a space of their own, different from that occupied by parties and unions" and are the "space where needs are transformed into rights." In her essay she linked up with some remarks made by Cardoso (1983) on the notion of "community" and

worked out a distinction between a "formal" model of organization and a "communitarian" one, to which she devoted most of the attention.²⁹

The communitarian model is one of direct democracy. It rejects institutionalization and requires the permanent participation of everybody in decision-making processes and in the execution of decisions. Thus it strongly emphasizes the notion of *equality* in the constitution of the collectivity. A "community of equals" is constituted with reference to a specific negativity, a collective need, a *carência comun*, ranging from the absence of asphalt to the feeling of being discriminated against in some general way. Equality in the face of a specific negativity thus proceeds through the concealment of other positive inequalities and heterogeneity. In these ways, a space is created for the concrete experience of community and equality, where individuals can be recognized as persons and subjects in a public rather than private sphere. "Inside" the community, people "learn to speak" and this generates new representations of the person. This is reflected in their actions "toward the outside," whereby they are social movements in the full sense of the word rather than sects. Thus they constitute new channels of communication between the individuals, society and the state. It implies that they legitimize the state as interlocutor and *vice versa*, generating new forms of citizenship and new conceptions of the attending rights in the process. The legitimation of the state is accompanied by an appraisal of those in power by the standards of the rights the population feels it is entitled to.

The communitarian model thus contributes to the generation of citizenship, but it also has its limitations. Durham argued that the internal dynamics have their limitation in that they are restricted to small groups. Such groups seem to be unable to develop mechanisms for the coexistence of divergent opinions and positions, as is illustrated by the constant processes of scission. The constitution of "community" not only means that differences³⁰ are covered up, but that they are delegitimized as a theme of public discussion. They tend to crop up in an "informal space" of slander, personal accusations and manipulation. The public face of the community remains one of equality, unity and consensus, but one should be aware that it conceals another dimension which is as much part of "community" as the experience of equality. It should not be romanticized and one should be aware that quite authoritarian mechanisms for imposing consensus may develop in these restricted spaces of democratic experience that fail to develop mechanisms to manage divergence. Moreover, the difficulty in institutionalizing (or even

²⁹ Though the "communitarian model" is often regarded as the more popular and the more democratic, Durham notes that the "formal model" is equally part of the popular cultural patrimony.

³⁰ Durham also referred in this context to the issue of the "external agents" (priests, left-wing militants, etc.) who become "part of the community." What matters here are the mechanisms she described.

admitting) representative mechanisms may promote parochialism, corporativism and particularism. Community has various faces and should be neither idealized nor disparaged.

An issue both Durham (1984) and Cardoso (1983) touched upon is the role of "external agents," such as priests, sympathetic left-wing activists or engaged professionals, which was often concealed by the imagery of communitarian equality and spontaneous activity of the "base." The role of these "agents" came to be increasingly recognized as crucial to the development of the Brazilian "new urban social movements" and they should be regarded as part and parcel of the process of social construction of these movements. Bringing its mediators into focus, one might say, was one of the preconditions for a critique of the reification of the notion of "urban social movements," that tended to take place in earlier studies.

These three contributions to the debate addressed various questions forcefully put on the agenda in the context of the changing political conjuncture of the 1980s, namely the forms of political representation and the role of "urban social movements," the relation between movements and the State and the possibilities and limitations of direct democracy. At the same time, the static dualist perspective and the reified conceptualization of "movement" and "state" gave way to a processual approach, not only where the relation to the adversary, the state, is concerned, but also where the relation to allies or "external agents" is concerned.

1.5. Bringing the state back in

The fragmentation of the "paradigm of the 1970s" ushered in a shift of focus to the relation between "urban social movements" and the institutional system (Doimo, 1989:2; Jacobi, 1987), a development related to the dissolution of the image of "exteriority of society in relation to the state" in theoretical as well as practical terms (Telles, 1988:281). In practical terms, state agencies had become more flexible in dealing with the demands of neighborhood associations, which brought the issue of "public policies" into view. In theoretical terms, the "re-evaluation of democracy" undercut the dual-power perspective which informed the "paradigm of the 1970s." In practice the two issues tend to converge in the process of "democratic transition," as the opposition, albeit gradually as in Brazil's protracted "transacted transition" (Share & Mainwaring, 1986), comes "to power" and may seek to democratize "public policies."

The policy changes that started to take place in the late 1970s, particularly in the area of "social policies," required assessment. Mainwaring (1987:152) described this development as a paradox. The very success of the movements in

challenging traditional political practices, he argued, eventually led the movements to become more exposed to these traditional practices:

When the movements first emerged, the authoritarian regime generally ignored or repressed them. As the grass-roots movements expanded and the electoral process became more important, however, the state was forced to develop a strategy to respond to them. At this point clientelistic policies became more widespread (Mainwaring, 1987:152).

A neo-populism and clientelism emerged, he argued, but despite the cases where such policies succeeded in demobilizing movements or creating more conservative parallel movements one should not simply interpret this as evidence of the impotence of the movements. Cooptation of an established movement implies some exchange between the state and the movement. Viewed in this light:

the attempts to construct populist or clientelist mechanisms represented a victory for the urban popular movements. These movements helped force the authoritarian regime to redefine its political strategy (Mainwaring, 1987:152).

Though this certainly indicates an important aspect of the development, others have pointed to the "qualitative changes that took place inside the public bureaucracies and their repercussion on the process of interaction with the increasing social demands" (Jacobi, 1987:25; Cardoso, 1983). In other words, it was not just a return of the old clientelism. These authors drew attention to the process of modernization the State had undergone in the period of Bureaucratic-Authoritarianism.³¹ The implementation of social policies of any sort, even executed by a traditionally authoritarian state, requires some sort of interrelation with the population (Boschi & Valladares, 1983; Cardoso, 1983; Doimo, 1989:2). The fracturing of the dualist perspective opened the way for more differentiated analysis in terms of the relation between "urban social movements" and "public policies" (e.g. Jacobi, 1989; Somariba & Afonso, 1987). Rather than simply a revival of populism and clientelism, though these aspects were certainly important, it was a political response processed through modernized state apparatuses.

The change in the state machinery was linked to broader societal developments in the 1970s and intertwined with the rise of the Brazilian "new middle classes" and new professional groups, or "the bureaucratization of Brazilian society," evident in the rapid growth of administrative and technical-scientific

³¹ This view of the state links up with the notion that in the course of capitalist development, the state increasingly loses its aspect of a simple "bourgeois state," if ever it simply was one, to become a bourgeois-dominated state strongly imbricated with "the economic." As the state has increasingly become a primary source of dynamic for the monopoly-dominated capitalist economies, the state rather than production becomes a principal focus for class conflict and the issue of democracy acquires a new relevancy (cf. Carnoy, 1984:171, 259; Cardoso, 1988:457).

professions in the economically active population from 11% in 1960 to 19% in 1980 (Boschi, Diniz & Lessa, 1989:39). I shall highlight the role of segments of the "new middle classes" in their role of "articulators and mediators" of social demands (Oliveira, 1988). The "external agents" on the side of neighborhood associations and the "technicians" in state bureaucracies share a common class position professional outlooks and in the course of a democratic transition, today's "external agents" may be tomorrow's state "technicians." The role of the "new middle classes" has been rapidly enhanced in the period of authoritarian modernization, and it is worth devoting more specific attention to this development, its dynamics and repercussions.

These considerations bring into focus the committed professionals without whom the Brazilian "new urban social movements" would never have been what they are, the "external agents" whose role was obscured for quite some time by the spontaneist and autonomist discourse "the movements" presented themselves with. Whether as "catalysts" or as "resources" for local initiatives, priests, social workers, doctors, architects, lawyers and other professionals often played a crucial role in the development of the Brazilian "urban social movements." Taking the role of the new middle classes as "articulators and mediators of social demands" into account may also shed light on the dynamics of change in the state apparatuses when the authoritarian government rapidly lost whatever legitimacy it had left on the eve of the transition to civilian rule.

1.6. Urban social movements, democratization and institutional innovation

The shift in focus to "public policies" imbricated with the "re-evaluation" of democracy and the tendency to regard the state as an internally differentiated complex of apparatuses constituting "arenas of struggle." This view of the state as not capitalist or bourgeois in essence, but as capital or bourgeois dominated, implies a re-evaluation of notions like cooptation and autonomy, since the monolithic and reified conceptualization of the reference -the State- has crumbled. If the results of political processes are to be conceived of as a synthesis which transforms both, or perhaps even more, parties involved, as Machado da Silva and Ribeiro (1985) argued and if, as they also argued, this perception opens the way for an assessment of these transformations in terms of positive or negative impact, this implies a reappraisal of the "institutional system" which can no longer be regarded as the simple negation of "social movement." This brings into focus the issue of institutional innovation in the context of "democratic transition," particularly where the role of "social movements" in the democratization of "public policies" is concerned.

"Democratic transition" means a change of political regime, i.e. of the institutional arrangements that structure the relation between state and society which, if adherence to democracy as such is to be taken seriously, must be differentiated from the "pact of domination" giving sustenance to the state (cf. Cardoso, 1988:460). "Democratic transition" minimally involves a restoration of the institutions closed down or marginalized by an authoritarian government, such as elected representative bodies. Beyond that, it may involve institutional restructuring and experimentation, or the devising of new institutions allowing for an extension of democracy in the sense of increased pluralism or the incorporation of a greater number of actors in the decision making system as well as in the sense of a more substantial democracy (Calderón & Dos Santos, 1989). Presenting the issue in a polarized fashion, Calderón and Dos Santos argued that when confronted with processes of institutional experimentation, the interesting thing to know is whether they are the fruit of innovative orientations of collective action or merely institutional adaptations in conditions of crisis and/or change of regime, required by the political system to secure its governability.

This is quite a departure from the perspective of the "paradigm of the 1970s." Castells (1977:260-275), for instance, opposed planning, regulation or participation to social movement, as its negation. In that vein Carvalho (1987) *a priori* dismissed "participative planning" in the context of a capitalist state as an "organic form of cooptation of the subaltern classes" without allowing for any margin of variation. Participative planning, he argued, is the top-down promotion of parallel channels of representation which marginalize the broader and more fundamental channels like parties or trade unions. It "keeps popular autonomy from organizing itself, to learn through the practice of self-government to construct a government." Can state personnel, Carvalho wondered, mobilize the local population to participate in oppositionist parties like the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), the *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB) or the *Partido Democrática Trabalhista* (PDT). Such questions do not even have to be posed, he argued, because "what sense would participation mobilized through a coercive power, as the executive, have?" (Carvalho: 1987:35). Such questions, however, inevitably had to be asked when the opposition came to occupy executive posts in the course of the "democratic transition."

This recent turn to a focus on the institutional dimension, as it took shape in Brazil, often tends to emphasize transformations in the state apparatuses in the course of modernization. In this view, "social movements" constitute themselves in response to the spaces of direct interlocution opened by the state itself, rather than autonomously in any simple way. The movements, however, exhaust themselves in the periphery of the state apparatuses and their scope and impact is limited since their own tendencies to fission and fragmentation are exacerbated by the dispersion promoted by the state (Cardoso, 1983).

Thus the view that *a priori* dismisses "participative planning" converges with the view that refers to the limited scope and impact of "urban social movements" in citing political parties as the proper channel for either revolution or participation. A contrast to these views is provided in practice by the attempts of progressive administrations, mainly at the municipal level, to seek the "participation of the organized social movements of civil society." Instead of promoting dispersion, they seek to promote aggregation by opening spaces for direct representation of such movements so that they may interfere in the broader formulation of municipal policies, for instance through "popular councils" functioning alongside and conceivably in competition with the municipal council. This holds the promise of expanding the impact of "social movements" beyond the generation of citizenship through an increased capacity for topical demand-making, while remaining relatively independent from party politics.

In some smaller municipalities, experiments in new forms of participation and municipal administration already took place in the 1970s, constituting, "patches of light in a dark forest" (Nunes & Jacobi, 1982:185; Grossi, 1989:117-120, Souza, 1982). In the context of the "democratic transition" there was a gradual rise in the number of such experiments (cf. Grossi, 1989:120-123). The municipal elections of 1985, the first under a civilian government, opened up spaces for new experiments on a larger scale, of which the experiment in Recife was regarded as a pioneering and relatively successful one. After the 1988 elections, the newly elected PT administrations in São Paulo and other cities embarked on similar experiments in "popular administration" and "participation of social movements." In these cases the question posed by Calderón and Dos Santos (1989) whether these experiments are the fruit of innovative orientations of collective action or internally generated adaptations of the political system gains pertinence and I shall use their distinction as a guideline in discussing the experiments in Recife between 1985 and 1988.

1.7. Concluding remarks

It is significant in itself that by the mid-1980s, left-wing municipal administrations like the one in Recife talked about the "participation of the organized social movements of civil society" in the administration of the municipality (Prefeitura/SAC, 1987). This illustrates the extent to which the social movement discourse had entered political and everyday speech. "Social movement" had become a meaningful political interpellation. In the foregoing review of the Brazilian discussion of social movements, I have shown how the concept underwent a substantial reconstruction through theoretical reflection with strongly recursive aspects. The discussion of "new urban social movements" has always demonstrated a close and often manifestly pedagogical relation to its object, though this tended to

be concealed and could only be appraised after the crumbling of the dualist framework revealed the diversity of actors involved in shaping Brazil's "new urban social movements." I have argued that the theoretization of "urban social movements" can be usefully understood as a discursive matrix which articulated with and specified the discursive matrixes of the dispersed Left and Liberation Theology, eventually coalescing into what can be called "the paradigm of the 1970s." Through such articulation, it provided a framework for the shaping of neighborhood associativism in a specific way, namely as "new urban social movements" in project.

Neighborhood associativism has been introduced as a "catch-all concept." It refers to the wide range of territorially-based associative practices related to "urban contradictions." I have no qualms about using the notion of "urban contradiction," provided it is stripped of any connotation of immanent historical rationality. Urban contradiction, for operational purposes, can be detected in the tendency to relegate the "urban poor" to less valuable areas of a city through the operation of the land-rent mechanism, resulting in an increasing distantiation from the employment opportunities they depend on for survival. Another important urban contradiction involves the classic issue of collective consumption, the public services required for the reproduction of the urban population and (expected to be) supplied by the state. In operational terms, these contradictions broadly indicate the two main themes of neighborhood associativism in Recife, the issue of land use and the demand for public services. The process through which these contradictions become themes for neighborhood associativism is one of many mediations and rather than problematizing the notion of urban contradiction and eventually conjuring it away through deconstruction, it is interesting to focus on these mediations (Salman, 1990:129).

It is at this point that the more specific discursive and organizational matrixes which concretely shape neighborhood associativism come into the picture. Neighborhood associativism indicates a variety of practices and social constructs shaped "in and by" diverse discursive and organizational matrixes involving a variety of actors, rather than "spontaneously" sprouting from a contradiction. The discursive matrix of urban social movement theory contributed to the shaping of the Brazilian "urban social movements" through its articulations with Liberation Theology and the dispersed Left in the 1970s. This "practical" dimension was at the source of the reification of the notion of "urban social movement" in the late 1970s.

The deconstruction of the "paradigm of the 1970s" revealed, in addition to the local population, the variety of actors involved in the production of Brazilian "urban social movements." "External agents," whose presence had been concealed by the communitarian spontaneist discourse, turned out to be omnipresent (Durham, 1984:30). It is then usually recognized that the Church or left-wing militants played an important role "at the service of the popular movement," as they themselves

would say (Landim, 1988). The active role of these "agents" is hardly acknowledged. In the case of the Church, Doimo (1989:4) argued that at best there are some references to its action as "external agent," "mediator" or "social articulator," but that its role as -peculiar- political subject is concealed, for instance, by the valuation of spontaneity, "anchored in the rejection of vanguardism and populism." This brings into the picture the role of the Church as institutional actor and as organizational matrix with its own dynamics. Other "external agents," such as Non Governmental Organizations or *assessorias* "at the service of the movement," may similarly be brought into focus to explore their role in the construction of Brazilian "urban social movements."

Besides the institutional dimension, the professional dimension should also be taken into account in assessing the role of the "external agent." Besides clergy, often trained in social sciences, we find lay social workers, some of whom are in the service of Church agencies, and lawyers, doctors, architects and engineers. Their involvement can include solidarity actions through their professional organizations. Professional ethics and its policies can be a basis for adherence to the cause of "urban social movements" and a medium for their impact within state apparatuses through the delegitimation of clientelism (Jacobi, 1989) and a critique of authoritarian (Arcoverde, 1985) or technocratic practices (Cornely, 1985). Social workers, usually familiar with if not steeped in social movement discourse, are a case in point and Sposati (1988: 275) highlighted some of the issues involved when she wrote that:

We can affirm that during the 1970s in the city of São Paulo the municipal social work bureaucracy sought the bases for its social recognition. This is the fundamental feature of this period. Underlying this movement for recognition is a basic question involving the identity of the agency, that is to say, the identity of the social worker in the context of governmental action in a historical period marked by the rearticulation of the forces of Brazilian civil society.

Taking such processes into account will serve to provide greater insight into the dynamics of processes of delegitimation and attempts to restructure state apparatuses and the opportunities they provide for "urban social movements" in the process of "transformation of both poles."

The social production of the Brazilian "new urban social movements" has thus been theorized as a multilayered complex process, and I have outlined the main features. The approach emphasizes the process of articulation of disperse elements or "experiences," involving diverse actors, rather than starting from an "internal" perspective and subsequently introducing the external dimension (Bader, 1991:44-45).

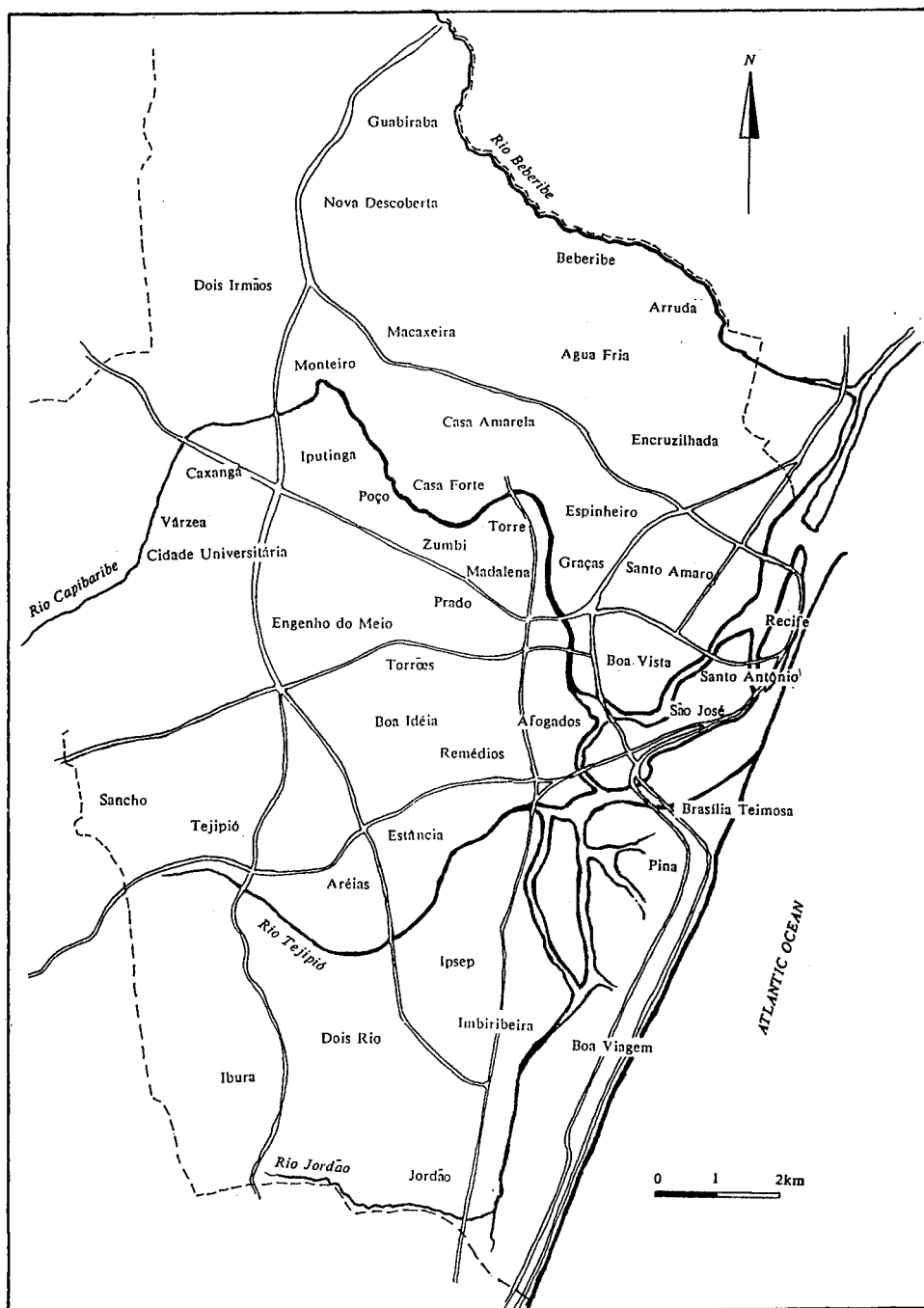
The analysis of the social construction of "urban social movements" as a specific form of neighborhood associativism and the dynamics of this process constitutes the three central chapters of this study, Chapters 5, 6 and 7 which cover the years from 1964 to 1988. In these chapters I take the municipal "level" as a vantage point for analysis. It provides the main territorial framework for the "supra-local" articulation of neighborhood associativism and it serves to highlight the municipal "level" of the local state and its policies. The 1964-1988 period has been sub-divided into three sub-periods according to different constellations of actors involved, against the background of shifts in the political conjuncture between 1964 and 1988.

Chapter 5 covers the period from the *coup* in 1964 to the *abertura democrática* in 1979, when a transition to government by civilians started to assume serious shape. The chapter starts with a discussion of the urban policies of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state and their specification at a municipal level. I subsequently discuss the re-emergence of neighborhood associativism after 1964 and the role of the Church. From the mid-1970s onward, the notion of "urban social movement" started to inform discussions on the practices of the Church. Assistentialist aspects were criticized and a new definition of "strategic interests" emerged from an analysis of "urban contradictions," indicating the issue of urban land use as of main importance. I shall show that this "reorientation" did not take place without friction with the existing discursive and organizational matrixes provided by the Church. These discussions accompanied and informed the development of two important movements in Recife, which will be discussed as culmination points of what can be referred to the formative period of "urban social movements" in Recife.

Chapter 6 covers the period from the beginning of the *abertura democrática* in 1979 to the first direct elections for a municipal executive in 1985. In the first part of the chapter, I discuss the change in urban policies in Recife after 1979, focussing on the regulation of urban land use and urbanization in the context of overall urban policy. These changes coincided with a new policy style as part of what I shall call the "politics of *abertura*." It was aimed at outflanking the emerging "urban social movements" and involved the sponsoring of parallel forms of neighborhood associativism through policies of "communitarian action." The second part of the chapter is devoted to efforts to articulate an "urban social movement" to resist the new policies. The rivalry over the hegemonization of neighborhood associativism produced a rapid rise in the number of local associations. The attempts to articulate these local associations into a broader "urban social movement" coincided with the "emancipation of the social movements" from the Church and the growing role of secular non-governmental organizations "at the service of the popular movement."

Chapter 7 is devoted to the experiments in institutional innovation that took place in Recife between 1985 and 1988. The opportunity for such experimentation arose with the direct election of a left-wing executive in late 1985. I shall discuss the development of proposals for the construction of new relations between the municipal executive and "the organized social movements of civil society" during the run-up to the 1985 elections, and the subsequent dynamics of policy implementation. This discussion will be oriented by the question as to whether this process of institutional experimentation was the fruit of innovative orientations of collective action or an internally generated adaptation of the system.

By way of a reconstruction of the social production of "new urban social movements" in Recife, I aim to highlight the contradictory features and the dilemmas which pervade the process and structure its dynamics. This, I hope, will provide insight into the role and impact of the "new urban social movements" during the period under discussion.



Recife Municipality: Some Neighborhoods

METROPOLIS OF AN UNDERDEVELOPED REGION

In this chapter, I shall outline the historical development that transformed Recife into the "metropolis of an underdeveloped region" (Andrade, 1979). The periodization roughly coincides with the demographic development of the city as presented by De Melo (1978:110). The first period covers colonial times, and is marked by the growth of the Pernambucan sugar plantations and the stagnation of the sugar trade from the mid 17th century onward. In terms of the demographic development of Recife, this was a "long period of slow growth." A second period roughly corresponds to the 19th century, beginning around 1820 and ending around 1920. This was when a regional division of labour emerged in Brazil, under the hegemony of the central-southern region. The coffee boom made it dominant and it then consolidated its position as a result of industrialization. Efforts to modernize sugar production in Pernambuco at the end of the 19th century were related to the demise of the old planter class and, in conjunction with the expansion of cotton production in the interior, were reflected in a reshuffling of local political alliances. For Recife, this period was a "century of accentuated growth." It was to be followed by the "decades of explosive growth" from the 1940s onward, that can largely be attributed to the "decomposition of the rural complex" (Singer, 1968), i.e. the modernization of the sugar industry and the decline of the cotton trade resulting in a decomposition of the cotton-cattle complex of the interior (Andrade, 1980) and, eventually, in the emergence of a form of modernized cattle-ranching. In the absence of alternative employment opportunities, these developments turned Recife into a "swollen city." In the next two chapters, this will be analyzed in greater depth, devoting particular attention to the urban policies of the *Estado Novo*¹ period in Pernambuco and their effects on the city of Recife, and then to the political developments of the 1950s and early 1960s which propelled Pernam-

¹ The *Estado Novo* (1937-1945) was established by way of a coup by President Vargas on the eve of the 1937 presidential elections, in which he was not allowed to participate according to the Constitution. The coup inaugurated a period of more systematic state-promoted industrialization accompanied by the consolidation of a corporatist trade union structure and policies of national unification. The *Estado Novo* drew inspiration from the Southern European fascist regimes of the time.

bucó onto the world's television screens, be it mainly the North American ones, and which saw the emergence of urban movements in Recife.

2.1. The colonial period

The ancient nucleus of the town of Recife was located on a flat peninsula in the delta of the Capibaribe and Beberibe Rivers, a natural harbor, protected by a reef (*recife*) off the coast. Over the centuries, the swamp areas of the river delta were to be consolidated by gradual landfills to form a site for the town.

Until the Dutch invasion (1630-1654), the *Povoação dos Arrecifes* was of relatively little importance. Two years after his arrival in 1535, Duarte Coelho, the *donatário* of the *Capitania* of Pernambuco, settled himself a bit further north on the hill of Olinda. Olinda was the capital of what was to be the most successful of the *capitanias* of Portuguese America (Furtado, 1962). Pernambuco, together with Bahia, became the center of world sugar production and remained so until Brazilian sugar started losing out to Caribbean competition in the middle of the 17th century. Olinda was the administrative center of the *Capitania* of Pernambuco. It was where plantation owners had their permanent residences and where education and religious life were concentrated. The port of Recife, located on the southern end of a peninsula which connects it to Olinda, slowly grew into more than just some "storehouses, warehouses and taverns." In 1561, French pirates evidently thought the place was worth attacking and in 1595 the English pirate John of Lancaster was attracted by the sugar stores (Andrade, 1979).

Sugar plantations were established along the river shores, the *várzeas*, and some of the present-day neighborhoods of Recife still bear the name of the original *engenhos*, sugar mills. By 1584, Pernambuco had 66 sugar mills along the various rivers of its coastal area (Andrade, 1980:45).

During the Dutch invasion, Recife gained in importance. In 1631, after burning down Olinda, they made Recife the capital of the new colony. The island of Antônio Vaz, now the neighborhoods of São José and Santo Antônio, was turned into Mauritsstad, protected by a row of fortresses. A bridge was built to connect the city to the harbor area proper and a second bridge connected it to the mainland. The clustering of houses on that side of the bridge was to become the neighborhood of Boa Vista, where tracks led inland to some of the plantations. A further connection to the mainland was established by building a dike to the small strongpoint of Afogados, the later starting point for roads to the south and southwest. Transportation was still largely by water (Nederveen Meerkerk, 1989).

After the expulsion of the Dutch in 1654, the demographic development of Recife seems to have stagnated for some time. Olinda was reinstated as capital of Pernambuco in 1657, although it had already been overtaken by Recife in size. By

that time, rivalry between the two cities had started, reflecting the conflictive relations between the aristocratic plantation owners of Olinda and the Recife based traders and financiers. The former had always been dependent on mercantile capital, but this became really problematical with the fall of sugar prices and the ensuing stagnation of the Brazilian sugar trade from the middle of the 17th century onward. The contradiction overlapped the distinction between the "native" Brazilians of Olinda and the Portugal-oriented traders or *mascates* (hawkers), as they were depreciatively called by the aristocrats. Throughout the 17th century the two groups squabbled over the location of the Municipal Council. When the metropolitan government decided to split off the *vila* of Recife from the jurisdiction of Olinda, honoring the demand of the *Recifences*, the rivalry resulted in the *Guerra dos Mascates* (1709-11) (Melo, 1984).

Although Olinda had become a city and the seat of the bishopric by 1776, it was overtaken by the commercial center of Recife. By then Recife probably had about 20,000 inhabitants and functioned as the factual capital of Pernambuco. This is reflected in the fact that the uprisings of 1817 and 1824 had Recife as their principal site. The 1817 insurrection was against Portuguese domination and mercantilist interventions. The 1824 uprising, two years after Brazil's independence, was against the political centralism of the central south and involved various of the northeastern provinces in the secessionist *Confederação do Equador*. Meanwhile, royal decrees had made Recife a city in 1823 and in 1826 it officially became the capital of the province.

By the end of the colonial period, the Northeast had lost its former predominance. From the middle of the 17th century onward, Brazilian sugar production had succumbed to Caribbean competition and was in a period of stagnation. Moreover, the discovery of gold and diamonds in Minas Gerais had prompted a reorientation of the colonial economy starting in the late 17th century. The shift was reflected in the transfer, in 1763, of the colonial capital from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro, close to the new economic center as well as the strategically important Rio de la Plata region. The northeastern backlands, the *sertão*, which had provided cattle for the sugar producing coastal area, now also started to supply the expanding market of the gold-mining region. A second indirect consequence of the mining expansion was the rise of sugar production in the south. Sugar could now be taken as return-freight on ships that had delivered goods to Rio. For Recife, the latter part of the 18th century was, at best, a period of stagnation (Singer, 1968:274-278).

Around the turn of the century, developments on the world markets for sugar and cotton temporarily boosted the city to new prominence. In response to the troubles in the Caribbean, such as the Haitian rising of 1792, Brazil's share in the world sugar market increased, though prices were rapidly falling. A factor that was of even greater importance to Recife's prosperity around the turn of the 18th

century was the expansion of cotton production during the American Revolution, when the Brazilian product came to replace American cotton on the British markets. This development put an end to the northeastern dependence on a single product and stimulated diversification of the economy. Although in some places cotton actually competed with sugar, its main areas of production were the *sertão* and the *agreste*² where it was linked to cattle raising and subsistence farming. After 1820, Brazilian cotton was once again rapidly defeated by North American competition. Sugar, by contrast, entered a new phase of expansion, this time on a much more competitive market due to the rise of beet-sugar production in Europe and preferential trade arrangements made by the industrializing countries with their areas of influence (cf. Eisenberg, 1974; Singer, 1968:284).

2.2. The process of regionalization in the 19th century

In spite of the expansion of sugar production in the 19th century, the Brazilian Northeast became a region that "did not make it." The "plight of the Northeast" and the emergence of significant regional differences in Brazilian economic development became evident in the course of the 19th century. Colonial Portuguese South America has often been characterized as an archipelago, in the sense that though various parts of the area might have been connected to the metropolis, they were hardly interconnected. The 19th century, however, witnessed the emergence and consolidation of a regionally differentiated but interconnected system under the hegemony of the coffee-producing and subsequently industrializing areas of the Southeast. Comparing 19th-century development to the earlier economic cycles of sugar and gold production, Dowbor (1982:117) points out that this time a sectoral disequilibrium -the dominance of the coffee sector- gradually turned into a durable regional disparity.

Whereas the share of coffee in total Brazilian export revenues rose from 19% in 1821-23 to 50% in 1871-73 and 60% in 1912-14, the share of sugar dropped from 30% in the 1820s to a mere 6% by the end of the 19th century. The volume share in the world market for sugar fell from about 10% in 1845 to less than 1% by the beginning of the 20th century (Eisenberg, 1974:15-31; Leff, 1982b:11-15). These indicators reflect declining shares in growing markets. The quantity of sugar produced in Pernambuco increased, but this was not accompanied by the kind of technological innovations that were taking place in other parts of the world. Relatively cheap slave labor, relatively cheap land, and the gradual decline of world market prices contributed to the technological backwardness of northeastern

² The *agreste* is the intermediate zone between the humid coast, the *zona da mata*, and the arid, occasionally drought-stricken, northeastern backlands, the *sertão*.

sugar production. This situation was not to change until around the 1870s, when the suppression of the slave trade started to make itself felt and world sugar prices dropped faster than before.³ By that time, regionalist feelings started to be clearly voiced by Pernambucan planters who felt discriminated by the new hegemonic core area (Eisenberg, 1974:142-145; Silveira, 1984).

From 1875 onward, the modernization of the sugar industry was to be stimulated by various government incentives. The first effort involved the promotion of *engenhos centrais* by the imperial government. The project failed because the *engenhos*, which did not have plantations of their own, depended on the supply of cane by independent planters who, however, could also turn to the less sophisticated sugar mills, the *bangüês*. After 1890 the Republican government adopted a policy of promoting *usinas*, which were vertically integrated with plantations. Partly due to huge state funding, the number of *usinas* in Pernambuco rose from 10 in 1885 to 46 in 1910. Nevertheless, in 1910 the state also still counted about 1,500 *engenhos bangüês* (Andrade, 1980: 71, 81-86; Eisenberg, 1974:85-118; Singer, 1968:285-301). The belated industrialization of the production process could not save the Pernambucan sugar industry from low profitability and further stagnation. By the early 20th century, part of Pernambucan sugar production was for the internal Brazilian market, located in the Southeast, rather than for export purposes. This internal trade did not make up for the losses due to the subordination of the Northeast to the new hegemonic core (Leff, 1982b:29; Singer, 1968:312).

Cotton did not fare much better. After its spread in the late 18th century, it boomed during the American Civil War, only to rather quickly lose its importance as an export product again. Technological developments in spinning techniques diminished the advantages of the long fibre varieties produced in the region, and after 1882, British industries were assured of an abundant supply of Egyptian cotton. The rise of the cotton/cattle economy contributed to the settlement of the northeastern interior, an occasionally drought-stricken region. With an increased population, the repercussions of droughts became more obvious. The drought that hit the area in 1877-79, after decades of sufficient rainfall, drove numerous hungry *flagelados* to the cities and occasioned the first central government aid for the afflicted. Beside the droughts, the northeastern interior became known for its *coronelismo*, i.e. virtually absolute rule by local bosses, and for the rural banditism and messianic movements that marked the late 19th and early 20th century

³ The redistribution of the slave population after 1850 indicates the emerging regional divergence. In spite of attempts by the northeastern planters to stop the interprovincial slave trade, the share of the total slave population -between 2.5 and 3 million- dropped from 54% in 1823 to 32% in 1872, whereas over the same period the southeastern share rose from 39% to 59% (Leff, 1982b:21). In the northeast the availability of a labour reserve was not as great a problem as it was in the southeast where, after 1888, European immigration was successfully promoted (Eisenberg, 1974; Huggins, 1985; Kowarick, 1987).

(Hirschmann, 1973:22; Levine, 1978:30-33, 93-99; Oliveira, 1977; Souza Martins, 1985:31-41).

By the first decades of the 20th century, sugar and textiles accounted for about three quarters of Pernambucan industrial output. The other quarter was basically accounted for by small food-processing enterprises. Industrialization had picked up during the last quarter of the 19th century with the installation of various textile factories, some of which were located in Recife and the surrounding municipalities. By 1915 Pernambuco had 6,180 textile workers and 3,154 looms. The mills produced rudimentary goods for the local market, such as sugar bags, gray cloth, burlap and coarse cotton shirts. Attempts at diversification toward higher quality products were thwarted by foreign owned trade companies (Goés, 1964; Levine, 1978:31; O, 1971; Oliveira, 1977:55; Singer, 1968:304-306). All in all, the industrial structure of the state remained weak and heavily dependent on foreign investments:

Foreign firms controlled the capital's urban transport system, the Recife-based regional railroad network, the gas works, and the telephone system. Foreigners dominated such local industries as cotton and vegetable oil processing and the small mechanized fishing fleet, besides operating several usinas and the two largest textile mills in the state. Foreign brokers and shippers handled a substantial portion of Pernambuco's imports and exports, including much of the traffic in hides, cotton, machinery, dried cod and beef, cement, pharmaceuticals, sugar, alcohol, flour, and wax. Twenty-three of the 37 leading firms in 1912 were foreign or had been founded by non-Brazilians in earlier times (Levine, 1978:37).

Contrary to what happened on a national level, the First World War severely hit the Pernambucan industries and was followed by a decline in foreign investments. The transfer of foreign holdings to other regions illustrates the consolidation of the Northeast's subordinated position in the early 20th century (Levine, 1978:39). The development of the Brazilian textile industry provides another indication. In 1866, 6 out of a total of 9 textile factories were located in the Northeast, but by 1885 only 15 out of a total of 48 were located in the region (Leff, 1982b:10). In subsequent years, this concentration was to become even greater (Singer, 1968:323).

Railways, banks and other institutions concentrated in the new hegemonic region provided the base for further differential development. The process can be described as a replacement of the bilateral relationship between Brazilian regions and external metropolises by a triangular relationship. The direct exchange of raw materials for manufactured goods was gradually replaced by an exchange in which the Rio-São Paulo axis exported manufactured goods to other Brazilian regions, whence it imported raw materials for consumption or for export to the exterior in exchange for capital goods and, still later, for technology (Dowbor, 1982; Furtado, 1969; Leff, 1982a, 1982b). The development is reflected in the concentration of industrial production as shown in the following table.

Percentage Shares of various States in National Industrial production

	1907	1920	1938
São Paulo	16.5	31.5	43.2
Federal District (Rio de Janeiro city)	33.1	20.8	14.2
Minas Gerais	4.8	5.5	11.3
Rio Grande do Sul	14.9	11.0	10.7
Rio de Janeiro	6.7	7.4	5.0
Pernambuco	4.0	6.8	4.2
Santa Catarina	--	--	1.8
Paraná	4.9	3.2	1.8
Bahia	3.2	2.8	1.7

(Source: Singer, 1968:320-328)

By the early 20th century, Recife had thus become the capital of a region subordinated to the hegemonic dynamism of the central south (Frank, 1969; Leff, 1982b:5-40; Eisenberg, 1974; Oliveira, 1977).

In Pernambuco the gradual decline of the old planter class was reflected in a reshuffling of political alliances. Levine (1978:82) pinpoints the presidential elections of 1911 as a turning point. Ever since 1896, politics in Pernambuco and its capital had been dominated by the old planter class via the *Partido Republicano Federal*. As a result of the restructuring of the sugar economy during the last quarter of the 19th century, their influence was on the wane, however. The *senhores de engenho* had increasingly been subordinated to the *usineiros* and their role had become one of simple cane-suppliers -*fornecedores*- leading to growing tension between the two groups. The 1911 electoral campaign exposed the cracks in the dominant alliance and the 1911-1930 period was to be marked by factional disputes among elite groups. The *usineiros* came to play a more prominent political role and the *coronéis*, the local bosses from the interior, gained influence in state politics. Meanwhile, the role of the urban electorate increased (Levine, 1978:82). By the late 1920s, various opposition groups formed a coalition around a new party led by the *usineiro* Carlos de Lima Cavalcanti who became *interventor* after Vargas' *coup*. Under his successor, Agamenon Magalhães, the *coronéis* of the interior were to dominate Pernambucan politics in the context of the *Estado Novo*-arrangements (see 3.1).

It was against the backdrop of these developments that the city of Recife expanded from 1820 to 1920, De Melo's (1978:115) "century of accentuated growth," though opinions diverge on the exact rate of growth. According to the data of the first census in 1872, the municipality of Recife counted 116,671 inhabitants. Although this is probably an overestimate, the population can be said

to have more or less tripled since the 1820s (Singer, 1968:302; cf. Andrade, 1979; Melo, 1978:115).

Since the census data for 1890 and 1900 seem to indicate a drop in population relative to the 1872 data, the late 19th century demographic development of Recife is subject to some discussion. According to Singer (1968:302-304) and Melo (1978:115-116), the 1872 census probably overestimated the population, whereas the two later censuses may have underestimated it. The restructuring of the sugar economy and the abolition of slavery in 1888 are likely to have contributed to some population growth. The proportion of migrants from the Northeast⁴ rose from about 13 or 14% of the city population in the early 19th century to 39% by the last decade of the century (Melo, 1978:119; cf. Levine, 1978:52). Levine (1978:13-20), on the other hand, felt that epidemic diseases and appalling living conditions in the city might have accounted for the sluggish demographic development. Conditions started to improve from the 1920s onward but even so, life expectancy in Recife was still dismally low in 1939: 28 for men and 32 for women.

Population Growth, Pernambuco and Recife, 1872-1980

Year	<i>Pernambuco</i>		<i>Recife</i>	
	Thousands of persons	Index 1872=100	Thousands of persons	Index 1872=100
1872	842	100	117	100
1890	1,050	125	112	96
1900	1,178	140	113	97
1920	2,155	256	239	204
1940*	2,688	319	348	297
1950	3,395	403	525	449
1960*	4,081	485	788	674
1970	5,161	613	1,061	907
1980	6,147	730	1,204	1,029

* For 1940, the Secretaria de Planejamento (1986) and Levine (1978) give a different figure for the Recife population, namely 384,000. For 1960, Levine (1978) and Melo (1978) give the Pernambucan population as 4,137,000 and like the Secretaria de Planejamento (1986) both of them give the Recife population as 797,000.

(Sources: FIDEM, 1982:108-115; Fontes, 1986:141-144; Levine, 1978:19; Melo, 1978:121; MINTER/SUDENE, 1984; 1985; Secretaria de Planejamento, 1986).

⁴ The Northeast in this case is defined as what Levine (1978:1) has called the "satellite bloc" of the city of Recife, consisting of the provinces of Pernambuco, Ceará, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba and Alagoas.

2.3. The "swollen city"

In the course of the present century, Recife became a *cidade inchada* -a swollen city-, with a rise in population but no concomitant increase in employment opportunities. The "swelling" of the city occurred against the backdrop of the increasingly subordinated insertion of the Northeast into the Brazilian economy. The process of industrialization in the Southeast, which had started in the late 19th century, was boosted after 1929 by the growth of import-substituting industries. After Vargas' take-over in 1930, the valorization-policies in support of coffee production were internally financed instead of relying on external loans, as had been the case before. One side-effect was that internal demand was sustained, despite the fall of export revenues, and that import-substituting production was promoted. Between 1933 and 1945, industrial production grew at about 10% per year, enhancing the predominant role of the southeastern region.

With the establishment of the *Estado Novo* in 1937, the state came to play a new role in restructuring the accumulation process. Import-substituting industrialization became a consciously pursued policy. Investments in the infrastructure and in primary industries, exemplified by the Volta Redonda steel complex in the state of Rio de Janeiro, exhibited a substantial increase. The state apparatuses themselves were restructured and a more modern techno-bureaucracy emerged. Fiscal and industrial policy-making powers were concentrated in the hands of the federal government and the harmonization of banking, taxation and marketing policies furthered the development of a national market.

The main northeastern products -sugar and cotton- came to face competition from the central south. As a result of the coffee policies, a frost period in 1918, and the 1929 crash, agricultural production in the southeastern states diversified. Between 1925 and 1929 sugar production in this region increased sevenfold and cotton production increased from 4,000 ton in 1930 to 300,000 ton in 1940 (Cohn, 1976:26-32). A large share of this increased production was exported to Germany and Japan, but the traditional cotton producing areas gained little from this development. During the Second World War, Brazil became one of the major textile exporters, a position that was however soon to be lost again. In 1933, as part of the political alliance building of the Vargas government, an *Instituto do Açúcar e Alcool* (IAA) was created to regulate the sugar market, which was plagued by overproduction. The quota system implemented by the IAA resulted in a freezing of the conditions of production in the northeastern sugar producing areas, which became ever more poverty-stricken (Andrade, 1981:29-32; Oliveira, 1977:60). Attempts to do something about the drought-stricken interior also failed to alleviate the problems of the poor. The funds channeled to the area through the

Inspetoria Federal de Obras Contra as Secas (IFOCs) principally served to boost the position of the *coronéis*. In the 1950s, as we will see, new attempts were made to do something about the "plight of the Northeast," resulting in the founding of the SUDENE in 1959 (Andrade, 1981: 38-49; Cohn, 1976:57-64; Hirschmann, 1973:37-66).

The growth of Recife, now a city with a "metropolitan vocation" (Andrade, 1979), can basically be attributed to the expulsion of the population from the countryside triggered by the "decomposition of the rural complex" (Singer, 1968:331-337).⁵ Production relations in the sugar industry were gradually modernized, implying the proletarianization of the labor force which until then had access to *sítios* -small subsistence plots- on the outskirts of the plantations. This process was accelerated with the recuperation of sugar exports after the Second World War. The sugar-producing areas accounted for the major influx into Recife, followed by the *agreste* where cattle raising was intensified from the 1950s onward (Melo, 1978:150). In the 1920s and 1930s, every year only an estimated 3,850 people migrated to the city, but this flow increased to 11,370 in the 1940s when De Melo's (1978:120) "decades of explosive growth" began. In the 1950s the number of migrants rose to an annual 14,875. In the 1940s three out of every four inhabitants of the Pernambucan capital was to be a migrant (Singer, 1968:335-337). Between 1940 and 1960, the population of the city doubled.

The annual growth rate of the Recife municipality population was about 4% in the 1940s and 1950s. It dropped to 3% in the 1960s and to 1.3% in the 1970s. This drop only partly reflects the decreasing significance of migration in the metropolization process. It also means the core municipality had become saturated. By 1980, it had reached a demographic density of 5,499 inhabitants per square kilometre (FIDEM, 1982: 116-131; Fontes, 1986:145). From 1940 to 1970, the annual population increase for the metropolitan region was about 4%, dropping to 2.8% in the 1970s. It was in the 1960s that the population of the metropolitan region started to grow faster than of its core municipality. If we calculate the annual growth of the metropolitan region without the municipality of Recife during the 1970s, it still amounts to 3.8%. The contribution of the migratory flow

⁵ Some data indicate the relevance of push rather than pull factors. In 1940 only 6.3% of the total population of the municipality of Recife was employed in industry, as compared to 13.2% in São Paulo (Singer, 1968:330). If we make a similar calculation for the metropolitan area in 1970, we see that of a total population of 1.7 million, 114,594 or 6.6% were employed in the secondary sector. Ten years later, the secondary sector was to employ 205,192 persons of a total population of 2.3 million or 8.6%. In relation to the economically active population of the metropolitan region, this means industrial employment increased from 24% to 27%. In 1970 as well as 1980, 62% of the economically active population was to be found in the tertiary sector. Over those ten years, primary sector employment dropped from 5.6% to 3% (Andrade, 1979:27; CONDEPE 1987:202-203). In 1978 about 70% of the employed population (*pessoas ocupadas*) in the metropolitan region earned no more than 2 minimum salaries and 45% was considered underemployed since they did not even earn one minimum salary (FIDEM, 1982:153-162).

leveled off to 20% of the growth of the metropolitan population in the 1960s and 12% in the 1970s. At the time, about a third of the population of the metropolitan region consisted of migrants. In 1960, 30% of the population of the state of Pernambuco lived in the metropolitan region and by 1980 its share was to be 38%. In both years, the share of the metropolitan region in the total urban population of the state was about 58%, indicating that urban population growth was also taking place in the cities of the interior. For the state of Pernambuco as a whole, the urban population rose from 45% in 1960 to 62% in 1980 (Andrade, 1979:23; FIDEM, 1982:108-115, 126; Fontes, 1986:140-144, 155; Melo, 1978:146).⁶

Population Growth, Recife and its Metropolitan Region (RMR) 1940-1980

Year	<i>Metropolitan Region*</i>		<i>Recife</i>	
	Thousands of persons	% growth over 10 years	Thousands of persons	% growth over 10 years
1940	554	--	348	--
1950	819	48	525	51
1960	1,226	50	797	52
1970	1,719	40	1,061	33
1980**	2,348	37	1,204	13

* The Metropolitan Region of Recife (RMR) was officially created in 1973 (see 5.2.3). It initially consisted of the municipalities of Cabo, Igarassu, Itamaracá, Jaboatão, Moreno, Olinda, Paulista, São Lourenço da Mata and Recife. In 1982 the municipalities of Abreu e Lima, Itapissuma and Camaragibe were created by redefining within the area of the RMR.

** For 1980, the data provided by FIDEM (1982) have been taken. They diverge slightly from those provided by Fontes (1986) and in CONDEPE (1987: 43-50).

(Sources: FIDEM, 1982:110; Fontes, 1986: 141, 144)

⁶ It should be noted that the population concentration around Recife was attenuated by the migratory flow toward the industrializing Centre-South. According to Melo (1978:146), in the 1960s 261,100 Pernambucans migrated to other states, particularly the Centre-South, whereas the flow to the Metropolitan Region of Recife only amounted to 165,200 persons. MINTER/SUDENE (1984:21; 1985:55) indicate even larger interstate migratory flows.

2.4. A final remark

In this chapter I outlined the development of Recife in its regional context. I noted that, despite some ups and downs, the regional economy has been stagnant since the decline of the sugar trade in the 17th century. The expansion of cotton production in the 19th century brought some diversification, but failed to revert the tendency toward stagnation. The modernization of sugar production after the 1870s similarly failed to bring about development in a broader sense of the term. The relative prosperity of the cotton trade nevertheless made for a reshuffling of economic and political power positions which, by the end of the 1930s, was reflected in a political dominance of the *coronéis* from the interior. As I shall explain in Chapter IV, the rise and decline of this specific regional socio-economic and political constellation may account for the political trajectory of Pernambuco and its capital in the 1950s and early 1960s.

First, however, I shall discuss the expansion of the "swollen city" and the development of urban policies during the first half of the 20th century in greater detail. I already traced the demographic development of the city in its regional context. In the following chapter, I shall discuss the spatial aspects of the city's expansion and how it was divided into rich and poor areas.

THE HILLS, THE SWAMPLANDS AND THE IN BETWEEN

"That was after the eclipse," he said. "Didn't you have an eclipse in your country?" I said I must have been too young to remember. "Everything went dark at mid-day...animals went to sleep. After that, people started having more children and that is how these hills became so crowded." A seventy-year-old man, he lives in the neighborhood of *Nova Descoberta* on the northwestern outskirts of the municipality of Recife. We are talking about the old days, when you could still take the *maxa-bomba*, the small suburban train, without having to worry about pickpockets. He was not very specific about the year of the eclipse. "Sometime in the 1940s," he said and when I asked him, he agreed that it must have been about the time when Agamemnon Magalhães governed Pernambuco. When I later checked on eclipses visible in Recife, I was informed that in the period we had been talking about, there were two of them. Eclipses are more frequent in the tropics than in "my country." It must either have been the eclipse of October 1st, 1940 or of January 25th, 1944.

Whatever the role of eclipses, the man had pinpointed the moment when Recife underwent the restructuration that gave it its new spatial dimensions. In the 19th century the *sobrados* and *mocambos*, the mansions and the shanties, weren't far away from each other (Freyre, 1986:140). Segregation followed vertical rather than horizontal lines. The "lower strata" tended to live at the sites of flooding when the rivers would suddenly swell due to inland rains (Bezerra, 1965). In the course of the 20th century, new vertical and horizontal dimensions of segregation were added, particularly after the 1940s, the starting point of the "decades of explosive growth." The population had increased by 46% between 1920 and 1940 and over the next two decades it was to do so by 129%. As a result of migration from the surrounding countryside, the natural population growth and the tendency toward the expulsion of the "lower strata" from the city center, the town sort of crept up the hills to the West. This tendency was to be reinforced by the first policies of eradicating "sub-normal" settlements in the 1940s. Until then, the people who had settled in the hilly parts had remained in the *córregos*, the narrow valleys between the *morros*, but now they increasingly constructed dwellings higher up the hills,

with altitudes up to 110 meters and slopes of over 30%. The heavy winter rains were apt to produce landslides, washing houses and their inhabitants downhill.

It was in the intermediate zone between sea level and the hills further inland, that the town of Recife -the "amphibious city" or "tropical Venice" to the poetically inclined- originally grew. With the growth of its population, "lower strata" were either pushed toward the swampy areas, as basically occurred in the 19th century, or up the hills, as occurred in the 20th, when the gradually consolidated swamp areas of the city center were claimed by the better off. The latter could live in relative security, but the poorer folks were exposed to floods and rain-provoked landslides.

3.1. Recife in a century of accentuated growth

The regency of Francisco do Rêgo Barros, the *Conde de Boa Vista* from 1837 to 1865, is cited as one of urban improvement. The harbor was improved, a Government Palace was constructed as well as the Santa Isabel theater and the Faculty of Law -which was now transferred from Olinda-, and various new bridges were built. A water supply system was installed and a sewerage system was constructed in the 1870s and reached its capacity in 1903, when gutters were flooded with fecal wastes (Levine, 1978:59).¹ The penitentiary and the public cemetery of *Santo Amaro*, which was opened when a yellow fever epidemic hit the town in 1851, were also new. At the time the cemetery was located outside the urbanized area. As Melo (1978:67) observes, the Faculty of Law and the neighboring *Parque 13 de Maio* in Boa Vista were built in areas recently recovered from the *mangues* (mangrove swamps), indicating some of the borders of the urbanized nucleus in the early 20th century.

The core area of the town was known for its *sobrados magros*, three to five story buildings. Some have attributed the architecture of these buildings, their narrow fronts, to Dutch cultural influences, whereas others have forwarded the more prosaic explanation of high land prices in the areas of *terra firme*, coupled to the distances between the various solid areas and the consequent inconvenience, if not expense, of transport. A contrast to this verticalization was the gradual horizontal occupation of the intermittently flooded areas, particularly from the latter part of the 19th century onward. These were the areas where *mocambos* were

¹ Until 1908, the sewerage system was the responsibility of the British-owned Recife Drainage Company. In that year, the contract was rescinded and a contract for a new sewerage system was signed. This system, with a capacity for serving an urban nucleus of 200,000 inhabitants, was inaugurated in 1915. In spite of the expansion of the city it was not until the 1960s that new initiatives in the area of public sanitation were taken (Andrade, 1979; Diário de Pernambuco, 20-10-1985; Melo, 1985a:48; FIDEM, 1982:191-196).

built: "Not far from them (the *sobrados*), or even adjacent to them, were the areas of *manguezais* which were not only abundant but also without price, without owner and improper for the construction of houses other than those of poor people" (Melo, 1978:68; cf. Andrade, 1979; Freyre, 1986). The *mocambos* they constructed were often of the *palafita* type, i.e. shacks on stakes. Josué de Castro, famous for his *Geography of Hunger* (Castro, 1957), coined the term *ciclo do caranguejo*, the cycle of the crab, for the symbiosis of the inhabitants of these shacks with their swampy surroundings. *Palafita*-dwellers eat the crabs they fish out of the mud under their huts, and the crabs in turn, live off the excrement of the *palafita*-dwellers.

Another 19th century development was the gradual incorporation of hitherto peripheral areas into the urban fabric, facilitated by the improvement of transportation. In the first part of the century, the use of carriages increased, replacing the palanquin or the hammock carried by slaves. By the middle of the century, regular *diligência* services started to connect various parts of the city. In 1871, the first *bonde de burro* (mule tram) headed for Madalena. More rapid *maxabombas* (steam trams) started to transport passengers to Apipucos, Caxangá, Casa Amarela and Olinda (Andrade, 1979). The strengthening of the ties with these areas contributed to a transformation of the sugar plantations which had been there since colonial times and now became the core of future neighborhoods. This process of suburbanization has been outlined by Melo (1978:64) as consisting of three phases. To start with, plantations were divided into smaller properties called *sítios*, producing fruit and vegetables and serving for residential purposes. In the course of the 20th century the *sítios* were subdivided into *loteamentos* for residential purposes and were eventually consolidated in urban areas (cf. Andrade, 1979; Ribas Neto, Lubambo & Souza, 1984).

By the early 20th century the gradual occupation of the suburban areas had started, but two of today's important neighborhoods were still non-existent. Casa Amarela, which largely consists of *morros*, was hardly populated (cf. Mendonça, 1986) and Pina and Boa Viagem, the latter now a highly valued upper middle class area, were not yet connected to the town. Changes were underway, however, which were to transform the old city with its *sobrados magros* beyond recognition. In the first decade of the 20th century the old neighborhood of Recife was partly demolished to make way for new access roads to the port area. The port itself was modernized and adapted for the new, larger ships, although this did not save it from a decline in importance. Eventually a French company, the *Société de Construction du Port de Pernambouc*, was contracted to carry out the work, but it went bankrupt during the First World War. In the 1920s, construction was taken up again. Simultaneously, the central neighborhoods of the city underwent a thorough metamorphosis (Andrade, 1979; Levine, 1978:43). Gradually, with the consolidation of the swamp areas, the *mocambeiros* were expelled from the central parts of the

city and from the 1940s onward Casa Amarela, or more precisely the *morros* between the Capibaribe and Beberibe Rivers to the northwest of the city, became populated. Starting with the Boa Viagem area the southward expansion of the city was facilitated by the construction of the *Ponte do Pina* in the early 1920s.

The 1913 Municipal Census and the 1923 Census of the Pernambuco Health and Assistance Department of the state of Pernambuco can give us an impression of the housing situation and dimensions of segregation during the first decades of this century and set the stage for our further discussion. According to the 1913 Municipal Census 34 % of the 37,735 houses were made of stone, 43% were *mocambos*, which were probably predominantly of the *palafita* type constructed in the mangrove swamps, and 23% had *taipa* or mud walls which were not yet a characteristic of poverty. A breakdown of the data by neighborhood shows some extent of spatial segregation, most of the stone buildings being located in the old core area of the city. In the peripheral areas the *mocambos* were predominant, whereas the *taipa* constructions were disseminated throughout the town.

This pattern is confirmed by the 1923 census, when 51% of the 39,026 houses in the municipality were classified as deficient, i.e. *mocambos*. An interesting feature of the 1923 census is that the breakdown was according to building materials used in various parts of the houses, although it is not clear how this breakdown related to the criteria of "deficiency" used in the overall classification. Thus, 59% of the houses had mud walls and 34% brick walls. In addition, 50% of the roofs were covered with tiles, 37% with straw and 12% with zinc roofs. The floor in 44% of the houses was of beaten earth. The data also provide some information on the distribution of different types of housing throughout the city. In neighborhoods like Recife and São José, 95% of the houses had brick walls and all of them were covered with tiles. In the still semi-rural Varzêa, however, 80% of the houses had mud walls and 52% were covered with tiles, the rest having straw roofs. Boa Vista exhibited a clustering of houses with zinc or wood walls. There over half of the dwellings were constructed with these types of material, as compared with a total of 2,632 for the whole city. So although this type of construction accounted for about 6% of the total housing stock in the city, in Boa Vista 16% of the houses were of the zinc and wood type. The remainder was divided between brick constructions (44%) and houses with mud walls (40%). A rather central area of the city was thus characterized by heterogeneity and a concentration of *palafitas*. It was to be a principal target for the program of *mocambo* eradication launched in 1938 (Fontes, 1986:184-194).

The census activities of the Department of Health and Assistance inaugurated an embryonic form of social policies in Pernambuco under the government of Sergio Loreto (1922-26) who, at the same time, repressed the emerging labor

movement (O, 1971:110).² Cheap meals were distributed by the newly created department, which also devoted attention to the housing question. The new policies were motivated by concern with "hygiene" and "delinquency" and must be viewed against the background of the first stirrings of trade unionism in Pernambuco.³ They denoted the emergence of something like a "social question" (Melo, 1985a:50-51).

Efforts to improve housing were accelerated by the flood of 1924, one of the worst the town had ever known (Andrade, 1979:107). With funding from the Department of Health and Assistance and Recife's business community, for aid to the *flagelados*, a *Fundação da Casa Operária* was created which constructed four so-called *Vilas Operárias* (Bezerra, 1965:44; Melo, 1985a). After 1926, under the state government of Eustácio Coimbra (1926-1930), very little initiative was taken in this area. It should be noted, however, that in 1929 the first recorded association of *mocambeiros* emerged, the *Liga Mista dos Proprietários Pobres da Vila de São Miguel (Afogados)*. Three years later, it had 280 members and was registered under the name *Sociedade a Bem da Nossa Defesa* (Bezerra, 1965:41; Cêzar, 1985:159).

It was in the year that Eustácio Coimbra became governor that a more clearly defined opposition to the established oligarchy took shape in Pernambuco. The dissident *usineiro* Carlos de Lima Cavalcanti founded the *Partido Democrático*,⁴ around which a heterogeneous coalition of groups gathered, all opposed to Coimbra, a rather traditionalist representative of the *usineiro* class. The new party joined the *Aliança Liberal*, the coalition supporting Vargas in the 1930 take-over, which put an end to the Old Republic (1889-1930) and the "pact of the oligarchies" that had sustained it. Carlos de Lima Cavalcanti was appointed *interventor* in Pernambuco. The cordial relations he had entertained with Communist groups in Pernambuco cooled off somewhat after 1930, when the new governor, as Paulo Cavalcanti (1978:89, 117) put it, showed his "real face," namely that of an "*usineiro* who has come to power by circumstance." Nevertheless, his admin-

² There had been an earlier, isolated effort toward state-sponsored housing with the establishment of the *Vila Proletária do Arrayal* in 1921 (Melo, 1985a:51).

³ In 1914 a *Federação dos Trabalhadores de Pernambuco* of anarcho-sindicalist inspiration was organized by José Elias. Workers of the *Great Western Railway Company* had staged the first important strike in Recife's history in 1909 and ten years later a first "general strike" took place followed in 1922 by participation in the national strike against the *Lei Monstro*, which imposed a 50% increase of consumption taxes. In the same year, a Pernambucan section of the Communist Party, led by Cristiano Cordeiro, was founded and gained influence, notably among the workers of the US-Canadian owned *Pernambuco Tramways*, which also supplied electricity and piped gas and operated the telephone system. It was the largest single employer in the city. Another important less radical labor leader of the time was Joaquim Pimento (cf. Barros, 1985; Cavalcanti, 1978; Levine, 1978: 82; Melo, 1985a: 48-49; O, 1971; Rezende, 1987).

⁴ In the early 1930s the party was converted into *Partido Social Democrático de Pernambuco*.

istration was marked by reformist liberalism and Cavalcanti was characterized as a "civilian with a *tenente* spirit." The appointment of progressive intellectuals such as Josué de Castro and Ulyses Pernambucano to official posts tended to displease the more conservative groups as well as the Church. The communist *intentona* of 1935 provided one of the pretexts for discrediting the governor, who was accused of collaboration.⁵ Cavalcanti's regionalist points of view, which contradicted the centralizing tendencies of the Vargas government, and his opposition to the *Estado Novo*-scheme were additional sources of friction and in 1937, he was removed from office and succeeded by Agamenon Magalhães (Barros, 1985; EFEM, 1988:25-27; Levine, 1978:69-72, 84-89; Pandolfi, 1984:44-47)

The main initiatives on the housing problem during the Cavalcanti administration were the proclamation of two decrees. In 1930 a rent reduction was decreed, reducing the lowest rents by 40% and the highest of four rent categories by 15%. Four years later a tax on rented *mocambos* was decreed, the proceeds of which were to be used for the construction of "modest brick houses to be rented or sold on installments to private persons" (Leitão, 1987: 74-75; Melo, 1985a:53). The effect of the measures, however, was negligible.

3.2. The time of eclipses

In 1937, Agamenon Magalhães was nominated governor. He belonged to a faction of the ruling PSD that had gradually broken with Lima de Cavalcanti. From 1934 onward, he had been Minister of Labor, Industry and Trade in the Vargas government. In January 1937, he also became Minister of Justice and helped Vargas prepare for the proclamation of the *Estado Novo*. Magalhães was one of its outstanding ideologists, drawing inspiration from Southern European Corporatism and neo-conservative Catholicism.⁶ In Pernambuco *Estado Novo* reformism acquired a

⁵ Shortly before being deposed, in 1937, Lima de Cavalcanti affirmed that he had faithfully complied with the orders of the Superintendent Commission of the State of War, but that he "could not 'invent' communists to fill up the prisons and make an appearance" (Pandolfi, 1984:47). Communists had made a good showing in the Pernambucan capital in the 1933 elections for the National Constituent Assembly and only fraud had impeded them from sending a delegate. In the elections at state level in 1934 their role was insignificant as a result of internal disunity. With the municipal elections of 1935 they managed to elect three representatives to the city council who, after much juridical tugging, only were allowed to take their seats in 1937 on the eve of the proclamation of the *Estado Novo*, when they were moved on to the prison of the Secretary of Public Security (Cavalcanti, 1978; 1986; cf. Rezende (org.), 1987).

⁶ In 1938, in one of his daily articles in the *Folha da Manhã* (March 13, 1938), Magalhães wrote: "Against the class struggle, which is proposed by marxism as a technique of violence and means of destruction of the capitalist system, there arose in Italy and also Germany a nowadays victorious experience of corporative organization of the national economy. Instead of an antagonism between capital and labour, cooperation realizes agreement, conciliation, the harmony between the factors of production. The concept of collaboration has taken the place of that of struggle through the integration

special dimension. The state "became sort of an exemplary social and political laboratory for the regime" as a result of the political stature and charisma of Agamenon Magalhães (EFEM, 1988:29-34). His administration was also the "time of the eclipses when these hills became so crowded."

In the context of the policies implemented by the Magalhães administration, those on the urban question are of special interest to us. It should be noted, however, that they were embedded in a larger project with strongly ruralist features. Manifestly aimed at the "fixation of man to the land" by promoting cooperative schemes, in practice this served to mount a political machine, resting basically on the *coronéis* of the interior, which would dominate Pernambucan politics until 1958 (Pandolfi, 76; cf. Vilaça & Albuquerque, 1965).⁷ Legal measures aimed at crop diversification and the promotion of the "social use" of land were adopted, but remained without effect. Reportedly Magalhães took the saying "to my friends, facilities; to my enemies, the rigor of the law" to heart. Whereas the elimination of the *mocambo*, regarded as a "cell of discontent and misery," was undertaken with enthusiasm, the measures to "fix man to the land" mainly served to boost the position of the local bosses.

Magalhães' measures with regard to the social question were backed by a rhetoric based on the opposition between the "communist menace" and the "voracious shark" of liberalism. They were accompanied by orchestrated popular mobilization in *festas cívicas* along corporatist lines aimed at the promotion of "maximal consensus." The theme of the "battle against communism" was pervasively present in the rhetoric accompanying the measures, and according to some Magalhães did not hesitate to occasionally invent a communist plot to make reluctant employers toe the line (cf. Pandolfi, 1984:55). In Recife, *Centros Educativos Operários* were created with the prime objective of "orienting the sectors of the working classes contaminated by communist propaganda." Alleged communists were persecuted. Soon after his installation as *interventor* Magalhães informed Vargas that he had already rounded up 269 communists in Pernambuco. This earned him the lion's share of the special credit extended by the Ministry of Justice for combating communism on a national level. The mixture of repression and state-directed "popular mobilization" of workers and employers alike, to be sure, also characterized the approach to Recife's "*mocambo*-problem." The attention devoted to the housing question exemplifies the "social and political laboratory" aspect of the Magalhães administration. On a national level, policies along similar lines were

of capital and labour in their economic and social functions. In this way capital and labour are one single economic category" (Magalhães, 1985:21; cf. EFEM, 1988:31; Pandolfi, 1984:38).

⁷ Sugar production stagnated in this period and did not recover until after the Second World War, whereas cotton production fared relatively well in the 1930s. Cotton-producers were less affected by the trade policies of the Vargas regime.

introduced in 1946 with the creation of the *Fundação da Casa Popular* (Pandolfi, 1984:60).

The first measure taken in what was called the "Social Crusade against the *Mocambo*" was a decree issued in April 1938 by the Mayor of Recife, Novaes Filho, prohibiting the construction of *mocambos*. Five months later a *Comissão Censitária dos Mocambos* was created to inventory the housing situation within six months. The Commission defined *mocambos* as constructions with

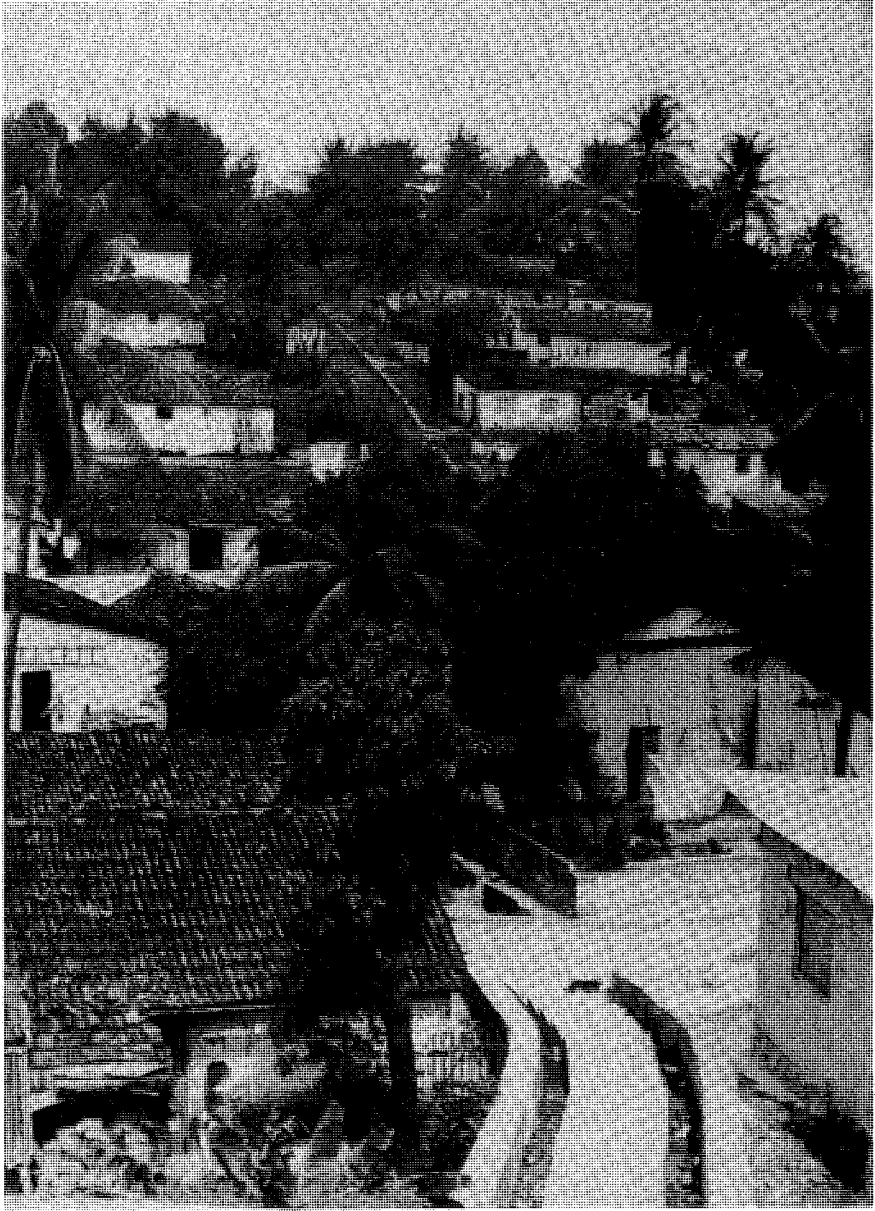
walls made of mud, used wood, zinc, iron sheets, *capim*-grass or straw. The floor is made of earth and the roof is covered with straw or tin plates. It has a room and a bedroom. The bedroom has no direct light and is no larger than 4 to 5 metres, whereas the minimal area should be of 8 square metres. In this space without light or floor, an average of 4 to 5 persons live. The excrements of the *mocambos* are left in the tidal creeks, in holes that are dug for the purpose every day or simply on the ground.⁸

The outcomes of the census were considered alarming. In a city of about 350,000 inhabitants, 164,837 persons lived in *mocambos* and the number of *mocambos* was rising about twice as fast as that of "normal" houses with either brick or mud walls. There were 45,581 *mocambos*, accounting for about 40% of the total housing stock; 34% of the *mocambos* was rented and 43% owned by the occupants who, however, still had to pay land rent (*foro*), whereas only 8% were owner-occupied and did not pay land rent. The annual return of renting out a *mocambo* represented more than 50% of the value of the *mocambo*, whereas a similar calculation for brick houses showed that the corresponding percentage was only 12%, so that the existence of a "*mocambo*-industry" was concluded from this data. The actual rent paid per year corresponded to about one tenth of what a middle-class house would cost. Of the *mocambo* population, only 3.3% was unemployed and two thirds were literate (Magalhães, 1985:198; Pandolfi, 1984:61; Melo, 1985a:56; 1985b:11).⁹

In the official analysis of the *mocambo* problem, it was argued that the *mocambos* themselves and not the political-economic model, were at the root of the problem. According to Agamemnon Magalhães, "one of the factors in the large concentration of people that migrate to Recife is the *mocambo*. As an improvised and easily constructed form of dwelling, in a city with immense areas without construction and with lowlying, occasionally flooded areas, it is the *mocambo* and not employment that attract the migrant." His conclusion was that "eliminating the

⁸ "O Mocambo tem as paredes de taipa, madeira usada, zinco, flandres, capim ou palha. O seu piso é de terra e a sua coberta de palha ou de folhas de lata. Tem uma sala e um quarto. Quarto sem luz direta de 4 a 5 metros, quando a área mínima devia ser de 8 metros quadrados. Neste espaço sem luz, sem piso, vivem uma média de 4 a 5 pessoas. Os despejos dos mocambos são feitos nos braços das marés, em buracos abertos diariamente para este fim, ou à flor da terra" (cf. Pandolfi, 1984:59).

⁹ The IBGE General Census of 1940 suggested a similar picture, counting about 18,000 brick houses housing one third of Recife's population, against 50,000 "wooden houses" (Fontes, 1986:197).



The *Morros* of Casa Amarela (1988)

mocambo, the urban concentration of Recife will adjust to the necessities of industry and commerce" (cf. Leitão, 1987:85-88). It was reasoned that the disappearance of the *mocambos* would contribute to an increase in the wages of those who remained in the city. The counterpart of these views were Magalhães' professed "ruralism" and his ideas about "fixing man to the land" through the promotion of rural cooperativism.

Through the *Liga Social Contra o Mocambo*, which was officially created in July 1939 (Pandolfi, 1984:59-77), the low income groups remaining in the city were to be provided with "popular housing." The *Liga* was a private agency of "humanitarian character, to promote the extinction of this type of housing and further the construction of popular houses with hygienic conditions and easy to acquire" (cf. Melo, 1985:55). Among the working population, private ownership of houses was to be promoted to strengthen their "sentiments of order and conservation." The *Liga* was to be financed by contributions from the state, associations of employers in commerce and industry as well as unionized workers' welfare and retirement funds. In 1940, the central government also made a contribution to the campaign against the *mocambo* in Pernambuco.

The "Social Crusade against the *mocambo*" should be viewed in the context of a large scale-urban intervention scheme, more comprehensive than earlier ones since it reflected the belief in *Estado Novo*-style planning (Magalhães, 1985:196). The increasingly valuated central areas of the city were provided with broad avenues, the mark of modernity, while low-income groups were evicted to make way for high-rise buildings. With the opening of Avenida 10 de Novembro (commemorating Vargas's take-over and now called Avenida Guararapes) and Avenida Dantas Barreto, the central areas of the town underwent a metamorphosis. Most of what was still left of the old core neighborhoods was demolished. Canals were dug or reconstructed to cope with the hydraulic problems of the city, the Duarte Coelho Bridge was built. "Africanized patches" in the central parts of the city were to be extinguished (Melo, 1978:74). Bezerra (1965: 46) calls the period, with its harsh treatment of the *mocambeiros*, a "time of pain and tears" and notes how the demolition program as well as the construction of new houses concentrated in some of the most visible parts of the city (cf. Leitão, 1987:91, 107-109; Melo, 1985:60). Rather than becoming areas of happy lower-class families gathered together along corporatist lines, as some of the names of the new *vilas* -*Vila das Lavadeiras*, *Vila das Costureiras*- suggested, they became middle-class residential areas, since the groups they were allegedly were built for were not able to pay the installments (Cavalcanti, 1978:318). The distribution of the newly built houses was strongly influenced by clientelist schemes (Melo, 1985a).

In its overview of the 1939-1944 period, the *Liga* reported that 12,434 *mocambos* had been demolished and some 5,500 houses had been constructed.¹⁰ That leaves a deficit of some 7,000 houses, meaning that as a result of the measures, about 30,000 people lost their homes. The government prided itself on having reversed the process of urban concentration and calculated that about 20,000 people had left the city, suggesting that they had returned to the countryside (Pandolfi, 1984:65). It is questionable whether that is true. The problems were simply shifted to peripheral areas, like the *morros* of Casa Amarela.¹¹ Significantly, in September 1939 a decree was issued which allowed the "adaptation" of existing *mocambos* in "determined areas of the city," requiring the replacement of straw or *capim*-covering with tiles (Leitão, 1987:86), a measure recalled by many of the older inhabitants of Casa Amarela. It was in these days that "the hills became so crowded" and the *sítios* of Casa Amarela were subdivided into small plots subject to the payment of *foro* -rent- (cf. Mendonça, 1986; Ribas Neto, Lubambo & Souza, 1984). The payment of *foro* and the location on the *morros*, exposed to rain-provoked landslides, were to be main themes for the neighborhood associativism that developed over the following decades.

3.3. Concluding remark

In this chapter I discussed the development of Recife in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century against the backdrop of economic and political developments. I noted the political decline of the old planter class and the *Partido Republicano*. In the 1930s the relatively liberal wing of the *Partido Social Democrático* (PSD), which governed Pernambuco, was increasingly under pressure from the more conservative authoritarian wing, which effectively came into power in 1937 with the nomination of Agamemnon Magalhães as state governor. The local *Estado Novo* government basically relied on the support of the *coronéis* of the *sertão* and the *agreste*, who were less affected by the Center-South oriented trade and industrial-

¹⁰ Throughout Pernambuco another 8,000 houses were said to have been constructed (Bezerra, 1965; Magalhães, 1985:229; Melo, 1985:59).

¹¹ Casa Amarela or more broadly, the area between the Capibaribe and Beberibe Rivers, was attractive since the area was traversed by the maxabomba-line going to the nucleus of the neighborhood, which had started to become populated since the early 20th century and where a market was built in the 1930s. Nearby was also the textile factory of the Othon Bezerra de Melo family, the Fábrica da Macaxeira, which in the course of the 1920s became an important employer in the area. Casa Amarela became the 'popular neighborhood' of Recife (FEACA, 1988; Mendonça, 1986; O, 1971; URB/DPU, 1987b).

ization policies of the Vargas government. The weakened sugar producers of the *zona da mata* were relegated to a subsidiary role.¹²

In February 1945, Agamemnon Magalhães was called upon by Vargas to head the Ministry of Justice once again and articulate the transition to democracy. "The regime is changing, I am changing as well," he said and set about producing the controversial Electoral Code of May 1945 and the equally controversial Anti-trust Law of June against monopolistic practices. On October 29, a few weeks before the elections due on December 2, 1945, Vargas was deposed by the army, which carried through the elections. Magalhães returned to Pernambuco as leader of the local *Partido Social Democrático* (PSD) and was elected Congressional Deputy in the December elections. The coalition that had sustained his governorship was to continue to dominate Pernambucan politics until the end of the 1950s (Pandolfi, 1984:87-91). In the following chapter, I shall discuss the erosion of this coalition and the accompanying radicalization of local politics which brought Pernambuco into the international limelight.

During the Magalhães administration, the city of Recife underwent a process of restructuration and it is against this background that the "social crusade against the *mocambo*" should be evaluated. In the absence of any comprehensive restructuring of the agrarian sector, despite the rhetorics, and in the context of economic stagnation, the crusade did not solve the *mocambo* problem. As the following table demonstrates, the number of *mocambos* continued to grow in the "decades of explosive growth" that started in the 1940s.

Number of Mocambos in Recife, 1939-1983

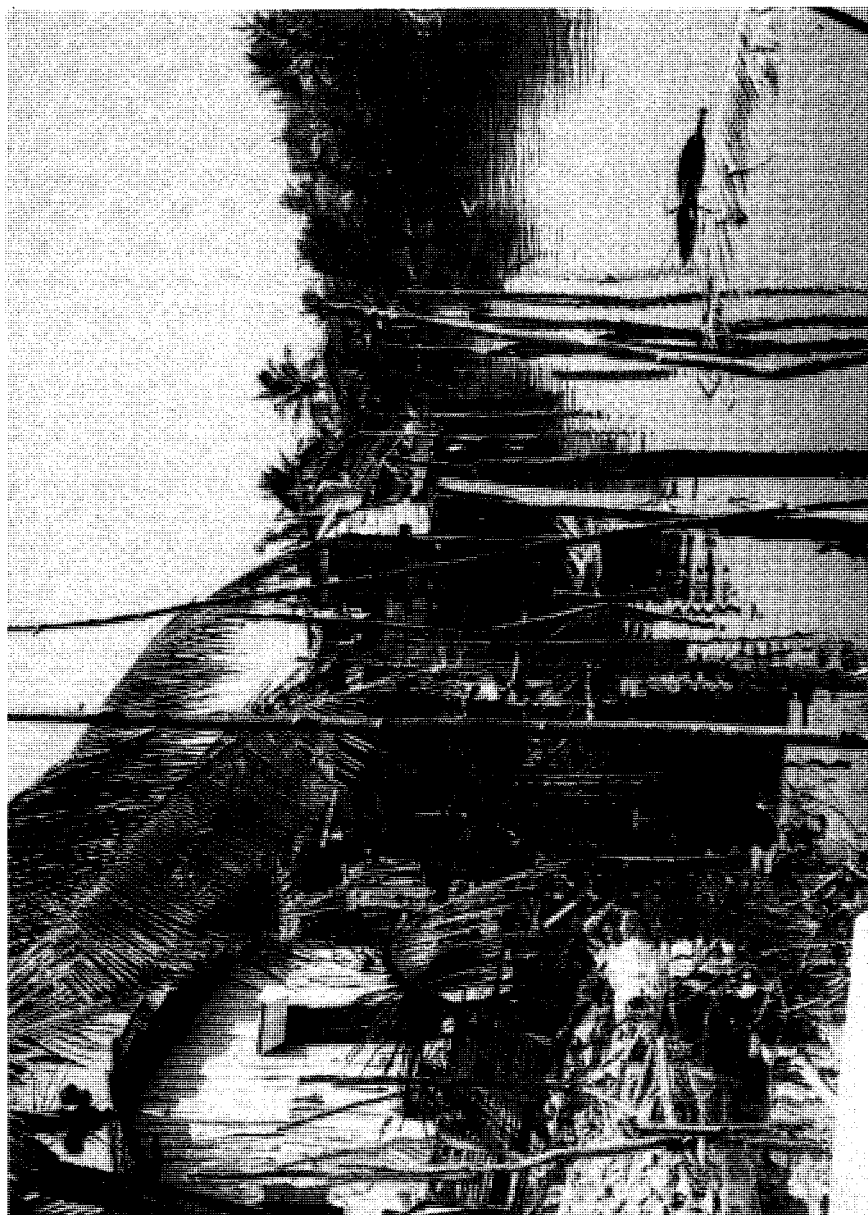
	1939	1960	1973	1983
Mocambos	45,000	90,000	120,000	150,000
Residents of Mocambos	165,000	440,000	650,000	780,000
% of total population	50%	55%	60%	60%

(Source: Fontes, 1986:273)

The policies of the Magalhães government resulted in a relocation of *mocambeiros* from the more visible and valorized areas of the city center toward the *morros* of the periphery. In spite of the governor's call for the construction of modest housing rather than skyscrapers (Magalhães, 1985:213; Pandolfi, 1984:64), the latter prevailed. A popular housing construction company created simultaneously with the *Liga Social Contra os Mocambos* relied largely on private donations and did not

¹² The *usineiros* were wholly marginalized by the Magalhães administration, whereas the *bangueseiros* and *fornecedores* were coopted through cooperative schemes.

survive the Magalhães administration for long. In 1945 the *Liga* was renamed the *Serviço Social Contra o Mocambo*, which was to receive 1.5% of the Pernambuco state budget. After 1945 the role of the *Serviço Social Contra o Mocambo* (SSCM) gradually diminished with the emergence of the *Fundação da Casa Popular* (FCP), which operated on a "national level" but in fact focussed its activities in the Southeast (Shidlo, 1990: 44). When Agamemnon Magalhães returned to the Pernambucan government in 1950 and reanimated the *Serviço*, its main concerns were the distribution of sewing machines and the provision of dental and medical services. *Empreguismo* and the payment of exorbitant prices for construction material became salient features of the organization. Between 1945 and 1961, the SSCM constructed about 5,000 houses in Recife and pension funds built another 5,000 houses for the lower income groups, at any rate those of them who could afford to pay the installments (Bezerra, 1965:50; Melo, 1985a:62; Pandolfi, 1984:137-139).



Palafitas in Pina

SPOTLIGHTS ON PERNAMBUCO

In the early 1960s the T.V. documentary *The Troubled Land* shocked the North American audience. It brought them face to face with a gun-waving landowner from the Brazilian Northeast threatening to kill any peasant who dared take part in the emerging peasant organizations. The broadcast and newspaper reports made it clear that due to malnutrition, conditions in the Northeast were producing a people of mentally retarded dwarfs. Recife was called the "Calcutta of the Western Hemisphere." Conditions this poor could not help but breed social unrest, the reports warned, and noted the activities of the *Ligas Camponesas* in the rural areas and the rise of a left-wing coalition that had governed Recife since 1955 and had become increasingly strong in Pernambucan politics. In the wake of the Cuban revolution, another revolutionary situation might be in the making.

In Brazil, concern with the misery of the Northeast, the regional disparities exacerbated by the process of import-substituting industrialization in the Center-South and their potential consequences for "national security" had been voiced from the mid 1950s onward. The 1958 draught served as a catalyst for the foundation of the regional development agency, the *Superintendência do Desenvolvimento do Nordeste* (SUDENE), in 1959. Initially it looked as if the SUDENE would be joined in its efforts to develop the Northeast by the Alliance for Progress. Quite soon, however, with Cold War paranoia on the rise, and influenced by intelligence reports based on conversations with the few Northeasterners who could speak English, USAID efforts shifted towards combating what was perceived to be the greatest danger, the militant talk of Peasant League leaders and the rise of the Pernambucan Left. Since "another Cuba" had to be averted at all costs, Alliance for Progress funds were used for immediate political purposes. SUDENE, with its plans for reform, was suspected of harboring fellow-travellers and was circumvented. Such attitudes soon turned the Alliance for Progress into another target for nationalist and leftist grievance (Page, 1972:64-74, 120-145; cf. Hirschmann, 1973; Oliveira, 1977:106-110; Robock, 1963).

Among the events eventually precipitating the 1964 military take-over, those in the Northeast and in Pernambuco in particular played a striking role. For

Brazil as a whole, the years from 1945 to 1964 have been characterized as the period of populist democracy, ushering in a "crisis of populism." However, in the context of Brazilian populism, Pernambuco presented some distinctive features. It is a matter of some debate whether political developments in the Northeast, and Pernambuco in particular, can adequately be understood in terms of populism.¹ Manuel Correia de Andrade (1982) outlines the question, distinguishing populism from popular politics. The characteristic feature of populism, he argues, is the class compromise whereby sectors of the dominant group ally themselves with the popular layers in order to take power. Though concessions are made, the popular layers (*camadas populares*) are not permitted effective participation in decision-making. Popular politics, on the other hand, would result from a class alliance or from an electoral victory of the less favored classes, enabling the dominated classes to really participate in power. By these standards, Andrade argues, Vargas, Goulart and Quadros should be characterized as populist politicians, but Miguel Arraes, who became governor of Pernambuco in 1963, would be a popular politician.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the events that provide the fuel for this debate and, at the time, brought the region into the national and international limelight. To begin with, I shall briefly review the period of populist democracy in Brazil. This will allow me to stake out the specificities of the period in Pernambuco and its capital, which was governed from 1955 to 1964 by left-wing mayors. Finally, I shall discuss the emergence of neighborhood associations as a factor in municipal politics in the 1950s and early 1960s. As such, this was not exceptional. In São Paulo, for instance, the *Sociedades de Amigos de Bairro* (SABs) emerged during this period. However, whereas the SABs in São Paulo were linked to the rise of right-wing populist Jânio Quadros, the neighborhood associations in Recife were linked to a left-wing popular front. The populist and clientelist features of the Paulista SABs were to turn them into a negative reference for the "new urban social movements" as they emerged from the Ecclesial Base Communities (CEBs) by the mid-1970s (Singer, 1980). By contrast, after some twenty years of administration by imposed mayors, when Recife was to have an elected mayor again in 1986, the experiences of the 1955-1964 period could be invoked as an historical precedent of democratic government and popular participation.

¹ Soares (1982), Weffort (1978:38), Debert (1979:69) and Aguiar (1987) have characterized the political trajectory of Pernambuco in the 1950s and early 1960s as an instance of populism. Camargo (1979) regards it as a borderline case in the conceptual framework elaborated by Touraine (1973). Brayner (1987), Oliveira (1977) and Andrade (1982) argue that the populist label is inadequate and that the Popular Front which came to govern Pernambuco in the late 1950s should be characterized as "popular government." Alluding to the 1964 turn of events, Page (1972), who is not concerned with the labeling-issue, refers to "the revolution that never was."

4.1. Populist democracy: 1945-64

In his review of the Brazilian debate on populism, Cammack (1988:27) comments that the party system that emerged in 1945 "reflected and exacerbated the tensions within the political compromise over which Vargas had presided and could not outlive that compromise itself." The key features of the compromise worked out in the 1930s that populism now emerged from as a latently unstable political solution were:

1. the division and partial incorporation of the landed elites
2. the authoritarian incorporation of the urban popular classes
3. the exclusion of the peasantry
4. the launching on this basis of a program of industrialization backed by the state (Cammack, 1988:28).

The arrangement, a stalemate or compromise between the relatively weak industrializing groups and the landowning oligarchies, gave rise to a relative autonomy of the state, as both accomplice of the decadent agrarian elites and fortuitous ally of popular movements it attempted to harness for its own purposes. It also meant the agrarian question remained unresolved, and in time might become an obstacle for future development. Control over the growing working class was only partial and the peasantry might eventually attempt to break out of its exclusion. In the course of time, the dynamics of development would reveal the latent contradictions of these arrangements and in conjunction with the dynamics of the political system, result in the "crisis of populism" that precipitated the military intervention of 1964.

With the prospect of democratization, various parties emerged in the final years of the *Estado Novo*. The *Partido Social Democrático* (PSD) and the *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB), reflected the compromise Vargas drew support from. Both of them had actually been founded by Vargas. The PSD was a conservative party sustained by the landed oligarchies of the interior as well as urban groups who had benefited from the Vargas years. The PTB, the *trabalhista* party some characterized as the "progressive wing of the PSD" drew its support from the corporatist trade-union machinery and a segment of the "national" bourgeoisie. Apart from the brief Quadros episode (1961), Brazil was to be governed by uneasy coalitions between the PSD and the PTB, with the latter gradually gaining weight in the course of this period.

Most of the opponents of the *Estado Novo* initially banded together in the *União Democrática Nacional* (UDN), but soon the left-wing formed the *Esquerda Democrática* which subsequently gave rise to the *Partido Socialista Brasileiro* (PSB). Thus the UDN came to represent the ultra-liberal conservative groups opposed to nationalist tendencies, restrictions on free trade and what was called the *república sindicalista*, the populist mode of working-class incorporation by way of more or less controlled trade unions. The party drew its main support from the traditional export-oriented rural oligarchy, especially the coffee planters, the

export-linked banking sector and conservative elements among the urban professionals and small businessmen.

The *Partido Comunista Brasileiro* (PCB) made a good showing at the 1945 presidential and congressional elections and the 1947 elections for state legislatures, particularly in the larger urban agglomerations of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Recife. This ranked the PCB as the fourth most powerful party in the country, but it was outlawed in March 1947. For some time it adopted an "insurreccional line," but that changed again with the 4th Party Congress in 1954 when the PCB started to pursue a united front policy in favor of national and democratic development against the landed oligarchy and US imperialism and thus gained influence within the trade-union structure (cf. Chacon, 1981:334-358).

After the Dutra presidency (1946-51), during which the foreign reserves that had been built up during the war were recklessly squandered on non-essentials, Vargas once again became president. This time he was duly elected on a platform advocating nationalist industrialization and the expansion of social legislation. One of the main achievements in this period was the creation of the state petroleum company PETROBRAS. During the second part of Vargas' mandate, there were economic problems entailing increasing inflation, a balance of payments deficit and more and more strikes. To counter these problems, a stabilization program was prepared. Meanwhile Vargas cultivated labor support and appointed militant PTB leader João Goulart to the Ministry of Labor. Goulart was soon dismissed again as a result of strong opposition to the proposal of a 100% minimum wage increase to protect the working population from the consequences of the stabilization program. The wage adjustment was nevertheless carried through by Vargas in May 1954.

After the troubles caused by Vargas' suicide in August of that year had been resolved through General Lott's constitutionalist *coup*, Juscelino Kubitschek was able to assume the presidency in 1956. He launched an ambitious development program, the *Plano de Metas* inspired by *nacional desenvolvimentismo* and aimed at "fifty years of development in five." The economy was opened up to unprecedented foreign penetration by transnational corporations, which sustained the process of import-substitution. Huge subsidies were passed on to industrial enterprises, the role of state enterprises was massively expanded and large sums were invested in the construction of highways, thus promoting the growth of new automobile industries. The capital of the country was relocated to the interior with the construction of the new city of Brasília. Whereas over the GDP had increased by 35.4% over the 1951-1956 period, an increase of 48.6% was recorded between 1956 and 1961. By 1961, however, the growth model and the political arrangements sustaining it ran into increasing difficulties. Over the next five years (1962-1967), the GDP only increased by 18.3% (Baer, 1979:79; Singer, 1976:72).

The exuberant economic growth between 1956 and 1961 was concentrated in a limited number of sectors and heralded the shift from the import substitution of mass consumer goods -the "easy phase"- to the import substitution of capital goods and durable consumer goods. The transport sector, the automobile industry in particular, grew by 32.8% annually and the electronics and communication sector, including durable consumer goods, exhibited a 24.2% annual growth. The growth in these sectors was sustained by a concentration of incomes through inflation, while the large labor reserve and wage policies kept the incomes of the working population at a low level. Together with these "forced savings" of the working population, the *confisco cambial*, the manipulation of the exchange rate to the detriment of export agriculture propped the import-substituting growth model. This mechanism became particularly problematic when, after the Korean war, the international terms of trade for agricultural exports started to fall. Agricultural production for the internal market was another bottleneck. The increase of output was based on expanding the frontier and became increasingly unable to keep pace with the rise in demand accompanying the urbanization process, thus adding another inflationary pressure which contributed in turn to social unrest. Simultaneously the widening income gaps between regions as well as income categories contributed to the strain. Last but not least, foreign debts that had partly financed the growth became an ever heavier burden in view of the failing dynamics of the agricultural export sector (Baer, 1979:57-85; Goodman & Redclift, 1981:128-144; Oliveira, 1976; Singer 1976).

As industrial trade unions radicalized and the rural population became increasingly restless, the populist mode of political regulation became increasingly unstable. Kubitschek was succeeded in 1961 by UDN-supported Jânio Quadros, who promised to pass a broom through the corrupt state apparatuses. After seven months he resigned and Vice-President Jango Goulart (PTB), whose popularity rested on his links with the trade unions, became president after some of the restrictions advanced by conservative and military sectors had been overcome.² By that time, the situation was marked by economic stagnation and growing political polarization. Celso Furtado's three-year plan to save the situation remained largely without effect. By 1963, several strikes were organized to express support for Goulart, but they also demanded that he do something about the promised "basic reforms" and advanced demands for higher wages and better working conditions. The hitherto excluded rural population had now also started to play a role on the political scene, particularly in the Northeast where the *Ligas Camponesas* demanded a radical land reform while vociferously expressing solidarity with the Cuban revolution. On the other side, polarization was fueled in part by US-financed

² Presidential powers were restricted, however, by the introduction of a parliamentary regime. Through a plebiscite in January 1963, presidentialism was restored.

organizations such as the *Instituto Brasileiro de Ação Democrática* (IBAD), which promoted a crusade against the "communist menace." Caught between two fires, Goulart gradually took a more radical stand, culminating in the famous *comício* of March 13 1964, where he promulgated two presidential decrees, one nationalizing privately-owned oil refineries (all of which were owned by Brazilians), the other expropriating land located within six miles of federal highways, railroads, dams, and irrigation projects, and classified as "underutilized." He also promised to take agrarian and tax reform measures and to give illiterates and servicemen the right to vote. Although as such, the measures were far from spectacular, they served as a justification for the military intervention of April 1, 1964.

4.2. The troubled land

The developments that propelled the Northeast, and Pernambuco in particular, into the spotlights were related to the erosion of the power bloc that had consolidated in the region during the *Estado Novo* period. Although economics, in itself, does not explain much, it should be noted that from 1949 to 1959 the contribution of cotton to Pernambuco's GDP declined from 33% to 19%. At the same time, sugar production entered a period of renewed expansion that played an important role in triggering rural unrest. In political terms, the 1958 gubernatorial elections can be regarded as a turning point in the region, reflecting the demise of political domination by the agrarian oligarchy from the interior. In Pernambuco the PSD was ousted from power (Cohn, 1976:92-98; Oliveira, 1977:94; Soares, 1982:71).

At the outset of the discussion of these developments, I should draw attention to two peculiarities of Pernambucan politics. Firstly, the UDN and the PSD presented themselves with "inverted signs" in relation to their presentation at a national level. Whereas at a national level the UDN came to represent the most "retrograde forces" in the Pernambucan circumstances the PSD was regarded as the more "retrograde." Secondly, the role of the PTB was rather insignificant in Pernambuco and its capital whereas, by contrast, the PCB played an influential role. This also meant the "political expression" of the Pernambucan version of the *aliança desenvolvimentista* was in the form of a -shortlived- coalition between the UDN and the PCB, rather than the populist PSD/PTB tandem, as was the case at a national level. The break-up of this local coalition in 1961/62 paved the way for the emergence of a "popular government" in Pernambuco.

State Governors - Pernambuco, 1946-1964

<i>year</i>	<i>elected governor</i>	<i>other candidates</i>
1947/50	-Barbosa Lima Sobrinho (PSD): 91,985 votes.	-Neto Campelo (UDN, PSD dissidents, PDC): 91,410 votes; -Pelópidas Silveira (PSB): 58,155 votes; -Eurico Souza Leão (PR): 1,685 votes.
1951/52	-Agamemnon Magalhães (PSD): 196,880 votes.	-João Cleofas (UDN): 186,857 votes.
1953/54	-Etelvino Lins (PSD): 211,393 votes.	-Osório Borba (PSB): 57,400 votes.
1955/58	-Osvaldo Cordeiro de Farias (PSD): 239,315 votes.	-João Cleofas (UDN): 203,611 votes.
1959/62	-Cid Sampaio (UDN): 311,258 votes.	-Jarbas Maranhão (PSD): 210,249 votes.
1963/64	-Miguel Arraes (PST): 264,499 votes.	-João Cleofas (UDN, PR): 251,146 votes; -Armando Monteiro Filho (PRT): 36,499 votes.

(Source: Pandolfi, 1984: 100)

The electoral strength of the PCB in Recife became clear in the presidential elections of 1945.³ After a brief campaign, PCB candidate Yedo Fiúza scored 40% of the vote in Greater Recife, as compared to a national score of 9.7%. The 1947 elections for state legislatures and governors confirmed the PCB electoral position in Recife and elsewhere in the country, notably in cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Pernambuco, where the party claimed to have 25,000 militants, was considered one of the PCB strongholds. The PCB aim at the time was to consolidate the newly won democracy, and it advised its supporters to vote for the "most progressive candidates" for governor. Since neither the Pernambucan UDN nor the PSD was eager to enter into a coalition with the communists, the latter came to

³ Extensive discussions of electoral developments in this period can be found in Lavareda & Sá (1986), Pandolfi (1984) and Soares (1982).

support the *Esquerda Democrática* candidate Pelópidas Silveira.⁴ PSD candidate Barbosa Lima Sobrinho, former director of the IAA who had the support of Agamemnon Magalhães, was elected governor with 37.8% of the Pernambucan vote. With a slight difference, Manuel Neto Campelo, the UDN candidate who also had the support of PSD dissidents, ended second and Silveira ended third with 23.9% of the vote. In Recife, however, he got no less than 57%. Moreover, the PCB elected nine of the 55 delegates to the state Legislative Assembly. As a result of outlawing the party, they lost their mandates again in early 1948.

There were new elections for the presidency and for state governors in 1950. It was the year of Vargas' return to power. Agamemnon Magalhães was the PSD candidate for the Pernambucan governorship, whereas the UDN advanced *usineiro* João Cleofas. The Pernambucan section of the PSD was strongly committed to Cristiano Machado, the PSD candidate for the presidency, and refused to support Vargas who then turned to the local UDN for support. Although Vargas supported Cleofas in return, the latter could not beat the PSD machine supporting Magalhães. For these elections, the PCB had called for blank votes, since it deemed none of the candidates worth voting for. The electoral outcome in Recife nevertheless once more diverged from the state results. In the capital, Cleofas got 42,567 votes against 39,467 for Magalhães, who reacted by calling Recife a *cidade cruel*. Cleofas was appointed to head the Ministry of Agriculture in the Vargas government.

The sudden death of Agamemnon Magalhães necessitated new elections in 1952. This time an exceptional reconciliation took place between the PSD and the UDN, who united behind Etelvino Lins, Secretary of Public Security during the *Estado Novo* period, who had replaced Magalhães when the latter was called to the Ministry of Justice to articulate the democratic transition in 1945. In those days, Lins had gained national publicity with the brutal repression of a demonstration against the dictatorship, producing two martyrs for democracy. This time he not only gained the support of the UDN and the PSD, but also of nine smaller parties that joined the *Coligação Democrática Pernambucana*, also known as the *União Sagrada dos Partidos*, to counter the menace of the Left. The leftist candidate, PSB member and journalist Osório Borba, was accused of being an atheist and supporting the right of divorce. These accusations gained the Sacred Union the backing of the Church. Borba was swept away in the following elections, but once more Recife was the exception with 36,316 votes going to Borba against 30,276 for Lins.

⁴ In various states the PCB entered into rather improbable coalitions with conservative or right-wing populist candidates in the run-up to these elections. Pelópidas Silveira was a socialist and the Pernambucan coalition had a markedly "popular character." Silveira had become popular during the six-month period when he was Mayor of Recife in 1946, combating market speculation by regulating fish prices during the Semana Santa and opening new feiras livres.

Etelvino Lins attempted to use his short mandate to construct a coalition of anti-Vargas forces to carry him to the presidency in 1955. He represented the PSD segments that were unhappy about what they saw as Vargas' leftist tendencies and sought the collaboration of the UDN, which also saw Vargas as a promotor of subversion and disorder and abhorred the *república sindicalista*. However, with his anti-Vargas unity schemes, Lins also managed to alienate the *pessedistas históricos* of Pernambuco, notably the *coronéis*. Giving in to pressure from his coalition partners, Lins abrogated their traditional "right" to appoint the police in the areas under their control. Things came to a head when, against the wishes of the *históricos*, Lins started to articulate the extra-partidarian -and not even Pernambucan-candidature of General Cordeiro de Farias, strongly opposed to Vargas, for the gubernatorial elections of 1954. One of the famous *coronéis*, Chico Heráclio from Limoeiro, commented:

For my part I am proud of having decisively contributed to three victories of my party, and in the last elections I gave 6,062 votes to Etelvino Lins against only 48 to his opponent and those came from traitors, communists and assassins.....With his stubbornness the governor may finish off the party (cf. Pandolfi, 1984:158).

At the same time, the candidature of Cordeiro de Farias provoked a crisis in the local UDN. At the national level, there was strong pressure to support it, but at a local level the decision was finally made to launch João Cleofas. In the end, Cordeiro de Farias became the candidate of the Pernambucan PSD, whereas João Cleofas was supported by the UDN, the PSD dissidents, the PST, the PTN, the PTB, the PSB and the PCB in its "anxiety to rout the retrograde forces of *pessedismo*." Cordeiro de Farias won the elections by some 36,000 votes of a total of about 440,000. In Recife, Cleofas did just a bit better than Cordeiro de Farias. The negligible size of the difference can partly be explained by the fact that many of the voters who supported the PCB preferred not to follow the party's advice and cast a blank vote. The difference between the two candidates was between ultra-conservative and extremely ultra-conservative (Cavalcanti, 1978:268).

The emergence of the ideology of *nacional desenvolvimentismo* and the 1954 change of the PCB strategy, which now started to explicitly pursue a strategy of "national democratic" anti-imperialism allowing for alliances with the "national bourgeoisie," served as the background for the events of the 1955-1964 period (Jaccoud, 1990; Soares, 1982:40-43). In 1955 the *Liga de Emancipação Nacional*, an organization where communists and various kinds of nationalists played a prominent role, and which would soon be disbanded by the Kubitschek government,

organized the *Congreso de Salvação do Nordeste*.⁵ One of the results of the rapprochement among communists, the PTB and other left-wing nationalists, was the formation of the *Frente do Recife* at the city elections for mayor in 1955 (the first time the city was allowed to elect a mayor since 1892). Pelópidas Silveira was the candidate of the *Frente*, a combination of the PCB, the PTB and the PSB. The UDN did not participate in the elections, but some of its supporters were active in the campaign for Pelópidas. In spite of Church efforts to keep people from voting for a candidate so manifestly supported by communists, he received 67% of the vote. There were three other candidates. The PSD candidate ended last. From that moment until the military *coup* of 1964, Recife was administrated by progressive mayors -Silveira, Arraes and Silveira again- who promoted neighborhood associations and "popular participation," a point I will discuss later.

If the 1955 municipal elections witnessed the first manifestation of the *Frente do Recife*, it was the 1958 gubernatorial elections that brought the demise of PSD dominance in Pernambuco. It was brought down by a local variety of the *aliança nacional desenvolvimentista*, consisting of the parties united in the *Frente* and the UDN as representative of the *classes produtoras*, a designation marking them off from the parasitic and backward oligarchy of the interior. In the opposition against a new tax code proposed by the Cordeiro de Farias-administration, the *Oposições Unidas* came into being. The new code, which passed the state legislative with the support of the "situationist" group, met with the fierce opposition of the Pernambucan industrialists and businessmen, who had not been consulted. They subsequently issued a manifesto and called for a general one-hour strike, paralyzing Recife as well as various other municipalities. Moreover, the movement gained the support of the trade unions, who argued that the new code went against workers' interests. From that moment on, the Cordeiro de Farias administration became increasingly isolated and clear opposition was articulated in the Legislative Assembly, where Miguel Arraes (PSD at the time) and communist deputy Clodomir Moraes (elected on a PTB ticket) played a prominent role. A second clash occurred

⁵ The outcome of the Congress was the *Carta de Salvação do Nordeste*, which partly reflected the theses adopted by the PCB at its 4th Congress (1954) (cf. Cavalcanti, 1978:233-235; Soares, 1982:51-63). At the time, concern about Northeastern underdevelopment and its social and political implications was growing. In 1956 the *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* (CNBB), which had been created in 1952, organized the *Encontro de Campina Grande* to debate the problems of the Northeast. Further contributions to the discussion of the Northeastern problematics were made at the *Encontro de Salgueiro* of 1958, where PSD politicians of the *sertão* and *agreste* presented their views, and the *Seminário de Garanhuns*, sponsored by Pernambucan industrialists and with President Kubitschek attending the opening ceremony (Cohn, 1976:78-103). Meanwhile the government had created the *Grupo de Trabalho para o Desenvolvimento do Nordeste* (GTDN). The severe drought of 1958 served as a catalyst for the discussions and in 1959 the "Furtado Report" (GTDN, 1959) was published, which diagnosed the increasing regional differences between the Northeast and the Centre-South. The recommendations made in the report provided the basis for the creation of the SUDENE in December 1959, though the agency was not to become operational until two years later, due to obstruction by northeastern power groups (cf. Hirschmann, 1973).

over the nomination of Clélio Lemos, the author of the new tax code, as president of the legislative. Another *lock out* was called, which was to last 72 hours this time, but could not prevent Lemos' nomination by the "situationist" majority.

Following this clash, relations between the state government and the *classes produtoras* improved somewhat. Internally the PSD made an effort at reunification which was successful in that the party managed to come up with a unanimously approved candidate for the 1958 elections, Jarbas Maranhão. However, the PSD now alienated the small parties that hitherto had remained in its gravitational field. The *Oposições Unidas* came up with Cid Sampaio, president of the *Federação de Indústrias de Pernambuco*, who had distinguished himself in the opposition to the tax code, for governor and Pelópidas Silveira for vice-governor. The coalition of UDN, PTB, PSB, PSP and the illegal PCB was officialized in April 1958, when they issued a statement promising to

march together in the upcoming gubernatorial election, aiming above all at the economic and political recuperation of the region and combating all the retrograde methods of exercising of public power (Soares, 1982:67; cf. Pandolfi, 1984:187).

During the subsequent campaign, the left-wing segments of the new coalition managed to convince their supporters to vote for *usineiro* Cid Sampaio by stressing the *desenvolvimentista* theses of industrial growth, regional planning, economic development according to nationalist norms, political and economic recuperation of the region and combating retrograde methods of exercising public power. The need to vote for Sampaio was underscored by the appearance of Luís Carlos Prestes at a famous *comício* in *Casa Amarela* on September 25, 1958, and the support given by Goulart. In spite of a counter-campaign by the Church, emphasizing the communist support for Sampaio, he gained 60% of the vote in Pernambuco and even scored 79% in Recife. PSD domination had come to an end.

The local variety of the *aliança desenvolvimentista* did not last long. The creation of an *assessoria sindical* seemed promising and Sampaio enthusiastically set about dismounting the PSD influence inside the state apparatus. He soon announced, however, that left-wing electoral support did not mean it could influence his governmental program. UDN collaboration regarding the social-economic reforms proposed by the Left was minimal at best. A newly created *assessoria sindical* played a role in the negotiations of a dockers' strike in 1959, but opportunities for reform reached their outer limits where the increasingly difficult situation in the countryside was concerned. In 1959, after peasant demonstrations, the *Engenho Galiléia*, where the Pernambucan Cattle Raisers and Planters Society

(SAPP)⁶ -the precursor of the *Ligas*- had been founded, was expropriated. A *Companhia de Revenda e Colonização* (CRC) was set up to mediate the sale of parts of privately owned estates to the peasantry. The proposal for a land tax which would weigh heavier on underutilized land was undercut when the federal government decided this type of legislation was of federal competence. For the Left, the alliance with Sampaio's UDN resulted in disappointments.

Meanwhile, Miguel Arraes, who had been Sampaio's Secretary of Finance for some time, had become the *Frente* candidate to succeed Pelópidas Silveira as mayor of Recife in 1959. He also had the support of Sampaio and the UDN against PSD candidate Antônio Pereira and a third candidate launched by the PR. Arraes won the election with 52% of the vote.

The presidential elections of 1960 led to a final break between Sampaio and Arraes. The Pernambucan UDN now fell in line with the UDN on a national level in its support for Jânio Quadros. Arraes and the Left supported General Lott. Even in Recife, however, Quadros got 51% of the vote, against 37% for Lott and 12% for Adhemar de Barros. During the Quadros presidency and thereafter tension between the *Frente* and the UDN steadily mounted in the general climate of polarization. In close collaboration with the IBAD and the Alliance for Progress, combating "subversion" became one of the primary aims of the Sampaio administration (Jaccoud, 1990). A case in point is the creation of the *Fundação da Promoção Social* as an alphabetization agency. It was the conservative response to the *Movimento de Cultura Popular* (MCP), which was promoted by the municipal administration of Recife under Arraes.⁷ Moreover, Sampaio attempted to bring the SUDENE under the control of the Northeastern governors, an idea that met with strong opposition from the leftist *desenvolvimentistas*. The final break between the *Frente* and Sampaio did not come until 1962, when the PCB published an open letter stating that

Cid has turned his back on the measures defended during the electoral campaign. He has started to suppress the workers' movement. He established an exclusively *Udenista* government, associat-

⁶ The *Sociedade Agrícola de Plantadores e Pecuáristas de Pernambuco* (SAPP) had been founded in 1955 as a mutual benefit association. Its aims were to hire a school teacher and purchase seeds and implements. Another concern was to buy decent coffins instead of the cardboard boxes provided by the municipality for charity burials. There are various accounts of the early years of the SAPP, some (e.g. Moraes, 1970) claiming that it was inspired by the PCB, which had made similar attempts in the 1940s, others emphasizing the role of Francisco Julião (see also: Andrade, 1986; Castro, 1969; Forman, 1971; Hewitt, 1969; Julião, 1972; de Kadt, 1970; Souza Martins, 1985).

⁷ The aim of the MCP was alphabetization in an effort to enfranchise segments of the population that until then had been kept from voting, rather than wait for the literacy requirement to be dropped. The method developed by Paulo Freire could teach people to read and write in about forty hours, hence the slogan that it would make a "revolution in forty hours." It promoted the *concientização* of the pupils, which is why it was deemed subversive, all the more so since communists participated in the movement in uneasy coexistence with radical Catholics (Batista Neto, 1987; Farias, 1986; Kadt, 1970; Weber, 1984).

ed himself with American imperialism and attempted to undercut SUDENE (cf. Soares, 1982:78).

This left the *Frente* free to come up with its own candidate for the gubernatorial elections of 1962: Miguel Arraes.

Arraes did not solely rely on the support of the *Frente*. In his earlier career, he had established good contacts with some of the old PSD groups in the interior. Arraes's campaign was to be financed by José Ermírio de Moraes, the nationalist owner of the Votorantim group who had earlier contributed to Quadros' campaign and was now was in the running for a senate seat. The PSD was divided. One of its leaders, landowner-politician Paulo Guerra, readily accepted the vice-gubernatorial nomination on Arraes' ticket. Part of the PSD did not follow suit, however, since Arraes would not publicly denounce communism or promise not to appoint any communists in his administration. In the end, this group gave its support to Armando Monteiro (PRT) who stood no chance of winning. Arraes' principal opponent was UDN's perennial loser, João Cleofas. He was backed by Cid Sampaio, who had tried at first to find a "more dynamic candidate," and received ample support through the Alliance for Progress and the IBAD, which channeled funds provided by a number of multinational corporations. They mounted a campaign against "atheist communism" and Cleofas' supporters even built a replica of the Berlin Wall in downtown Recife. Their campaign was successful in that it diminished middle-class support for Arraes, but it could not keep him from winning the election with 48% of the vote against 45% for Cleofas. The vote in Recife tipped the balance, with 58% for Arraes against 34% for Cleofas. In the "interior," Cleofas got 50% against 43% for Arraes.

In a famous inaugural address, Arraes reiterated the main points of the radical *nacional desenvolvimentista* electoral platform he was elected on, without failing to stress the regional dimension. The election, he declared, marked the emergence of the People as an historical category. It had now made itself government in Pernambuco. The time had come to put an end to paternalism and godfather-like governments that concede favors, and to create a government that enables the people to participate in the administrative process (cf. Farias, 1986:147-160; Debert, 1979).

However, the new administration had little room to maneuver in. In Arraes' cabinet, there were a number of technicians who backed the popular front program, but the PSD group that had supported him also had to be taken into account. Moreover, the PSD had the majority in the Pernambucan legislative. Soon Vice-Governor Paulo Guerra started to articulate what he called a "parallel government." At the same time, Arraes could hardly count on support from the federal government, since Goulart regarded him as a rival and suspected him of communist leanings. Brizola, on the other hand, thought Arraes too conciliatory. In the climate of polarization that marked the final years of populist democracy, the *Frente* also

gradually lost its middle-class support. That became clear at the municipal elections of 1963. Pelópidas Silveira was the *Frente* candidate to succeed Arraes at the head of the municipal executive. He only won by a small margin from Cid Sampaio's brother, Lael Sampaio, while Augusto Lucena of the UDN opposition bloc was elected vice-mayor.

During the Arraes administration Pernambuco became "the most democratic state of the Union," as reporter and well-known author Antônio Callado (1979) put it in one of his articles. Labor disputes were no longer police matters, but had to be negotiated. There was room for a host of initiatives, for example in the field of popular education. The principal concern, however, was the situation in the countryside. The Peasant Leagues had come to adopt increasingly radical points of view, but their influence was on the wane. Communists of various sorts as well as more or less radicalized Catholics had, in frantic competition, substantially increased the organization of rural workers, particularly in the sugar zone (de Kadt, 1970). Shortly before Arraes assumed the governorship, the first large strike in the history of Pernambucan sugar production broke out. Through the mediation of the governor elect, the strike ended four days later and a wage increase of 80% was conceded. Later negotiations resulted in the *Acordo de Campo*, fixing the pay for various tasks in the sugar fields in detail. After the *Estatuto do Trabalhador Rural* was proclaimed by the central government in June 1963, it was most strictly applied in Pernambuco, suddenly bringing relative prosperity to many sugar workers. As to the Leagues, Arraes mediated in some of the cases where estates were invaded and simultaneously called for the implementation of the *reformas de base* by the Goulart government.

By 1963, however, developments were clearly on a collision course. Early that year, the Pernambucan *usineiros* obstructed the sugar supply in the state of Pernambuco. The government intervened, seizing 40,000 bags of sugar, to guarantee the supply to the population. In the first months of 1964, the crisis intensified. There were rumors of impending federal intervention by Goulart, who might thus rid himself of the right-wing governor of Guanabara, Carlos Lacerda, and of Arraes in one fell swoop. Peasants had occupied one of the Pernambucan sugar mills and students were staging demonstrations against the decision to grant SUDENE's tax incentives to foreign investors. In March 1964 business circles staged another *lock out* in response to the call for a general strike by the trade union movement in support of the labor legislation. Through Arraes' mediation, the dispute was settled and the *lock out* only lasted one day. The Pernambucan right wing had by then become deeply involved in plotting for the April 1st *coup*.

As elsewhere, the take-over met with little resistance. Two students were killed in Recife at a demonstration backing the governor, but there was hardly any organized resistance. After some hesitation among the military command due to Arraes' refusal to resign, he was arrested. The Pernambucan legislature debated the

matter and concluded with 45 against 17 votes and one abstention that Arraes was no longer able to perform the functions of his office. Vice-Governor Paulo Guerra, who stood in close contact with the conspirators, took charge. The next day the Municipal Council of Recife voted 20 to 1 to oust Pelópidas Silveira. Vice-Mayor Augusto Lucena (UDN) took charge.

4.3 Neighborhood associations and municipal politics, 1945-1964

It was the developments above that distinguished the neighborhood associativism in Recife from neighborhood associations elsewhere in the country. The years after 1945 witnessed the emergence of associations viewed as the precursors of the ones that would later would be sponsored by the *Frente* administration. In some cases, initiative was taken by communists, who promoted the formation of *Comitês Populares e Democráticos de Bairro* at the time. Other associations focussed on defending the interests and the rights of the residents of certain areas and promoting progress there by demanding schools and medical posts to promote the well-being of their members. Still others tried to "moralize" their members and establish harmonious relations between workers and employers (Bezerra, 1965:41; César, 1985:162; Melo, 1985a:59). The organizations with a left-wing orientation were subject to regular police harassment.

A real expansion of neighborhood associations took place from 1955 onward, promoted by Pelópidas Silveira during his campaign for the mayoralty of Recife. He had picked up the idea during a trip to São Paulo, where he became acquainted with the activities of the *Sociedades de Amigos do Bairro* (SABs).⁸ The groups supporting Pelópidas, notably the PCB, set about forming similar organizations in Recife to pressure the *vereadores* (city councilors), since Pelópidas could not count on a majority in the City Council. The municipality provided a model for the Statutes of the associations, but did not interfere in their internal affairs, nor did it require the legalization of the associations in order to recognize them as interlocutor (Jaccoud, 1990:54-60). The general objective was "to promote the well-being of the community and struggle for improvement of the neighborhood," but some associations went further and included the "promotion of the proletarian class" in their Statutes or the education of their members "according to democratic

⁸ Most of the SABs in São Paulo had been created on the basis of electoral committees that had supported Jânio Quadros in his campaign for the mayoralty of São Paulo in 1953. They seem to have developed into representative neighborhood organizations, but after 1964 became increasingly dominated by politicians of the ARENA party, which supported the new regime. The SABs were transformed into essentially recreational entities, whereas from the late 1960s onward the emerging ecclesial base communities provided for a new mode of organization in the neighborhood movement (Moisés, 1982; Singer, 1980).

and nationalist principles, the economic independence of the country and the structural reforms needed for its social development" as the *Associação Defensora dos Moradores do Alto do Mandu* put it (cf. César, 1985:163-164; URB/DPU, 1987b).

A related innovation was the organization of biweekly *audiências populares* in the Santa Isabel theater attended by Silveira himself as well as his cabinet members, the directors of the various municipal departments and the chief engineers of the various districts of the city. At a later stage, these audiences were also organized in the neighborhoods to facilitate access by the population. Some of the demands made by the newly created associations revolved around the urban land question. The payment of the *foro* increasingly became a source of conflict. In 1961, discussion raged on this issue in the *Sociedade de Amigos de Casa Amarela* (SACA, 1961). In the adjacent area of Bomba do Hemetério and the surrounding *altos*, people I interviewed recalled a *foro*-collector who used to ride his horse back and forth through the *mocambos* if no money was forthcoming at his call for *foro*, and how people started contesting the *foro* in the early 1960s. In subsequent chapters, I shall examine examples of the struggle for land in greater detail.

Other demands pertained to paving streets⁹, lighting, assistance with landfills, building schools and installing distribution posts of the municipal program aimed at reducing food prices by eliminating intermediaries. Demands were also made for new bus lines, which were partly met by a newly founded municipal *Companhia de Transportes Urbanos* (CTU) and the introduction of trolleycars in Recife (cf. César, 1985:164; Mendonça, Cavaleira & Pereira, 1987).

The *Frente*-mayor's initiatives met with fierce hostility on the part of the *vereadores*, however, since they saw the clientelist hold over "their constituencies" undermined. They overcame party allegiances to form a united front in the debate on neighborhood associations, claiming that the associations were a cover-up for communist cells, a view shared by the Secretary of Public Security of the staunchly anti-communist Pernambucan government under Cordeiro de Farias. In an official document, they stipulated that the number of associations should be limited to five per neighborhood, and that the leaders should be selected by the *vereadores* with influence in the area. Pelópidas, however, refused to take their complaints into consideration, arguing that the executive should not interfere with the organizations of civil society and that during the electoral campaign, he had promised that popular participation would be based on genuinely popular organizations, a promise he intended to keep. The problems assumed crisis dimensions when Vice-

⁹ The introduction of the *mutirão* system, with the municipality providing the construction material and the community the labor force for various tasks, was another non-conventional approach. In richer areas like *Boa Viagem*, the residents' contribution might be in cash and the works were executed by hired labor.

Mayor Vieira de Menezes, who replaced Silveira during a trip to Rio in May 1956, issued a series of measures in total contradiction with the policy hitherto pursued. He was backed in this attitude by a majority of the City Council, but it led to the resignation of the municipal secretaries. The crisis was resolved with the hasty return of Silveira, who was welcomed by a popular demonstration of support (Cavalcanti, 1978:259; C  zar, 1985; Pandolfi, 1984:178).

Nevertheless, the decision to organize *audi  ncias populares* in the neighborhoods themselves partly seems to have been designed to meet the demands made by the *vereadores*. At meetings with the municipal authorities

the *vereador do bairro* would be present, no matter what party he belonged to, as well as the doctor, the priest, the teacher, the parson - in a general climate of concurrence of wills to do something about the most important problems (Cavalcanti, 1978:257).

These policies were to be continued when Arraes became mayor in 1959.

With Cid Sampaio as governor of Pernambuco and Arraes as mayor of the capital, the relationship between the two became one of the principal sites of conflict, whereas the conflict between the municipal executive and the legislative authorities was attenuated somewhat, since Arraes was more flexible in his dealings with the *vereadores* (Cavalcanti, 1978:284; C  zar, 1985:169). The divergence between the two executives was already evident when they presented different options to solve the water supply problem in Recife. The municipality advanced a project of public *chafarizes* (fountains). The state government, by contrast, argued for domestic connections. Whereas the former solution would broaden access to drinking water, the latter would be more profitable for industrial enterprises. In the end, the proposal advanced by the municipality prevailed, gaining the support of the SUDENE and resulting in the construction of 53 fountains in the poorer parts of the city. This contributed to the fall in state government support for SUDENE (Oliveira, 1977:96; IAB, 1982:17).

The relationship between the two executives became increasingly marked by the polarization of the early 1960s, as also could be noted in the competition with respect to adult alphabetization. Similarly, the organization of neighborhood associations became a bone of contention. In April 1962, shortly after the break between the *Frente* and the UDN, an *Uni  o dos Bairros do Recife* (UBR) was launched. It was sponsored by Cid Sampaio to counter the left-wing influence in the neighborhood associations. The UBR promoted the creation of *Uni  es de Moradores*. According to the Statutes of the organization the aim was to struggle for neighborhood progress of the neighborhood and stimulate civic-mindedness. Neighborhood youths, between the ages of 15 and 18 years were to be organized into "legions" to cooperate in social assistance campaigns. Younger children could become *soldadinhos do bairro*. The president and organizer of the UBR was Severino Barbosa, a radio reporter closely linked to Cid Sampaio. With his daily

radio talks in the program *Dramas da Cidade*, Barbosa was in a good position to undertake the endeavor. The UBR was a strongly hierarchic organization under the surveillance of its president. There is no doubt that it was partly financed and supported by the Alliance for Progress, the Food for Peace Program and the IBAD, and it played a part in the efforts to mobilize popular support for Cleofas in the gubernatorial elections of 1962.

From early 1962 onward, the forces supporting the *Frente* had also been articulating the formation of a master organization, which resulted in the creation of the *Federação das Associações dos Bairros do Estado de Pernambuco* (FABEP) in July 1963. By that time, there were tens of neighborhood associations. The decision to create the FABEP was made at a joint meeting of *Frente*-oriented trade unions (COSINTRA), the administrative council of the Peasant Leagues, the Pernambucan Union of Students (UEP), the Federation of Civil Servants and neighborhood associations. According to the Statutes, the FABEP aim was to install and defend "revindicative associations of legitimate collective and nationalist interests." It was to promote the establishment of an *Associação dos Foreiros do Recife*. Apart from defending democracy, nationalist principles and development, the FABEP was to promote debates on a range of themes concerning "national developmentalism" (e.g. agrarian and urban reform, nationalization of banks and foreign enterprises, housing, health, education, transportation) and support the mobilization of "workers, students and other classes" in the pursuit of justified demands and in "rebellion for democratic legality and the defence of national sovereignty." Delegates from the affiliated associations met biweekly and in the first months of 1964, various departments were founded.

The FABEP actively participated in the *I Diálogo Governo-Povo*, organized in March 1963 by the state government now under Arraes. Trade unions, rural associations of various types and students also participated in this *Diálogo*. At the end of that year, the FABEP organized the *1^o Encontro de Associações de Bairro* and sent a letter of demands to Mayor Pelópidas Silveira and Governor Arraes. It demanded more frequent meetings with the neighborhood associations, the foundation of a Council of Neighborhood Associations and participation in municipal planning commissions. In March 1964, these demands were discussed with the mayor and his secretaries. Silveira called for a stop of the payment of *foro* and announced that the local associations would have the support of the Legal Department of the municipality. He also sent a letter to the City Council to grant the associations access to the planning commissions. Further developments were cut short by the *coup* of 1964 and the activities of the FABEP were terminated. The UBR, which had expected its role to be enhanced, also ceased to function (Cézar, 1985).

4.4. The populist and the popular

As has been noted above, it is a matter of debate whether the events in Pernambuco between 1955 and 1964 can adequately be understood as an instance of populism. In the usual theorizations, the emergence of populism is related to late capitalist industrialization in peripheral countries.¹⁰ Populist leaders can emerge in a situation of hegemonic deadlock between an emerging industrial bourgeoisie and a still powerful agrarian oligarchy. This balance of forces allows for a great relative autonomy of the state and political leaders, usually from the middle classes, who mobilize the urban "masses" to further industrialization, but then clamp down on them again in an attempt to avoid the threats posed by this very mobilization. The "masses" and the working class in particular, are not allowed to play an autonomous role but serve as a "mass of maneuver" to support political projects that are not their own.

Authors who identify the developments in Pernambuco with populism (e.g. Debert, 1979:69; Soares, 1982; Weffort, 1978) usually cite Arraes' use of the word *povo* and his references to the "national community" to conclude that his government should be characterized as a form of populism in which real conflicts, i.e. class conflicts, are mystified. Authors who argue that the developments culminating in the election of Arraes as governor can not be interpreted as an instance of populism (e.g. Brayner, 1987; Camargo, 1979; Oliveira, 1977) argue that the dynamics of the process were different. Rather than being mobilized in support of a project alien to their own interests, the popular sectors in Pernambuco increasingly assumed a leading role. Although the Arraes government can not be characterized as "the people in power," it can be regarded as a popular power-to-be in a conjuncture of hegemonic crisis of the traditionally dominant classes. The local variety of the *aliança nacional desenvolvimentista*, i.e. the electoral coalition between the local *classes produtoras* and the popular sectors in support of Cid Sampaio, was but an episode in this process. The main deviation from "classical populism" is that in the case of Pernambuco, in the absence of a fraction of the dominant classes willing or able to mobilize the masses in support of a hegemonic project, effective participation of the masses in politics was promoted rather than contained. Instead of relying on individualizing and manipulative relations with the state through a leader, the local constellation made for an extension citizenship and

¹⁰ Thus the populist mode of political regulation is regarded as an intermediary mode between central capitalist democracies and countries industrializing under authoritarian socialist regimes. See, for example Touraine (1973, 1978). Poulantzas (1974) takes a similar tack in his theorization of the "exceptional state" which provided the spring board for Laclau's (1977) elaboration of a general theory of populism.

democratic participation articulated with a radical version of *nacional desenvolvimentismo*.¹¹

The neighborhood associations which emerged during the 1955-1964 period, were promoted by the *Frente* administration to strengthen its position. In her study of this development, C  zar (1985:179) stresses that this "absence of spontaneity" did not have a counterpart in a lack of authenticity. Her evaluation links up with the view that the *Frente* represented and was closely articulated with popular movements.¹² The radical version of *nacional desenvolvimentismo* provided the discursive matrix for the associations regarded as supports for the struggle of workers or "other classes," rather than a force in their own right, as would be the case after the introduction of the "urban social movement"-discourse in the 1970s. The *Frente* provided the organizational matrix. The nature of the *Frente* and the fact that the executive did not directly interfere in the directives of the associations (C  zar, 1985:163-164; Jaccoud, 1990:91) contrasted with the neighborhood associations that emerged in S  o Paulo in the 1950s under the tutelage of right-wing populist J  nio Quadros. Through the dynamics of the process in Recife, urban politics started to come out of the "parliamentary and palatial spheres" with the emergence of an alternative forum for debate over urban policies and more general political issues (Brayner, 1987:214-217). The recognition of neighborhood associations as legitimate interlocutors and representatives of the popular sectors effectively called into question the representativeness of the right-wing dominated City Council (Jaccoud, 1990:54-60). This development was cut short by the military *coup*.

It was the specific constellation of Pernambucan politics and the emergence of a "popular politics" that infused the neighborhood associations in Recife and their relations with the local executive with a specific meaning, contrasting with that attributed to the Paulista neighborhood associations of the 1950s. In Recife, they were part and parcel of what became known as *O Tempo de Arraes*, the "Time of Arraes." This signification turned the 1955-1964 period into a legitimate reference when, after some twenty years of military rule, a new attempt would be made to democratize municipal politics in Recife.

¹¹ The *Ligas Camponesas* proposed a revolutionary socialist project with the peasantry as protagonist, but by 1962 their influence was on the wane.

¹² To put it differently, one might say that in the case of the *Frente*-promoted associations, practical interests were not dissociated from strategic interests. The UBR, by contrast, stood for inauthenticity, or a dissociation of practical and strategic interests.

ORDER.....AND PROGRESS?

"It was in those days," said *dona* Eunice, "it was at the time of the war." "Ah! You say "at the time of the war."...." Fernando exclaimed, "the war you are talking about is the revolution of 64?!" "That's it, at the time this son of mine was in the army." "Ah!" said Fernando, "The revolution of 64....this is the first time I hear anyone speak of the revolution of 64 as a "war'." "Well, it was a war, wasn't it?" said *dona* Eunice, "my oldy said it was a war."¹

Though it may have come as a surprise from *dona* Eunice, a washerwoman in her sixties from the Alto Santa Terezinha, the reference to the "Revolution of 64" as a "war" was not that far-fetched. Actually the Armed Forces regarded it in quite the same way in 1964. Inspired by the doctrine of National Security, they turned their attention to the "internal front" and the battle against what they perceived as a Communist threat to Western civilization. It was an aspect of the "new professionalism" of internal security and national development (Stepan, 1973). It provided an ideological justification for the intervention at a time when the Brazilian economy was stagnating and the populist mechanisms of political control seemed to be on the verge of breakdown, and for the subsequent attempt to reformulate the accumulation model in response to the crisis.

In this chapter, I shall discuss the 1964-1979 period, that is the period from the military take-over to the announcement of the *abertura* (opening), the gradual return to civilian government, by General Figueiredo, who became president in 1979. After a brief outline of the period, I shall review the main features of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime's urban policies and show how they worked out in the case of Recife, focussing on the problems they failed to resolve, exacerbated or created. These problems and strains provide the raw material for the possible responses from the grassroots. In the final part of this chapter, I shall analyze how

¹ *Dona* Eunice: "Foi nesse tempo, foi no tempo da guerra". Fernando: "Ah! A senhora está dizendo 'no tempo da guerra'....A guerra que a senhora está chamando é a Revolução de 64?!" *Dona* Eunice: "É aquela, agora que esse filho era soldado". Fernando: "Ah! A revolução de 64....É a primeira vez que eu ouço falar na....chamar a revolução de 64 de guerra". *Dona* Eunice: "É uma guerra né? Meu véio dizia que era guerra" (From an interview, October 13, 1988).

these responses were articulated and how in the course of the period under discussion, mostly under the protective wing of the church, new forms of neighborhood associativism emerged.

5.1. Love it or leave it: Brazil 1964-1979

Like the subsequent military take-overs in other Latin American countries, the intervention in Brazil showed that the linear relationship between economic growth and democracy predicted by modernization theories failed to materialize. The country became a model for the theorization of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes (O'Donnell, 1973) and associated dependent development (Cardoso, 1973). In these theories, the rise of this new type of regime and the new accumulation model was linked to the exhaustion of the "easy phase" of import-substituting industrialization and the populist policies it had sustained.² The transformation of the post-war model of growth had already started during the Kubitschek administration, when the country became more clearly integrated into the circuits of transnational capital. From 1961 onward, however, Brazil witnessed a crisis of transformation, with declining growth of the GDP from 10.3% in 1961 to 5.3%, 1.5% and 2.4% in 1962, 1963 and 1964 and the increasing mobilization for "basic reforms" (Baer, 1979:79; Singer, 1976:69). The economic growth of the 1950s had exacerbated social, sectoral and spatial disparities and given rise to an increasing gap between the volume of production and the effective demand for the new products. The authoritarian intervention, sustained by a coalition of segments of the internal bourgeoisie, transnational capital and technobureaucrats, including the newly professionalized military, furthered the transition to a new model of accumulation. The shift toward the production of durable consumer goods and the internationalization of the economy were accompanied by a shift toward an "exclusionary model," in contrast to the faltering previous "inclusionary model" of expansion of the internal market for basic consumer goods which had sustained the populist mode of incorporation of the "urban masses." Army intervention broke down the population's defense mechanisms and facilitated a concentration of income that propped the internal market for the products of the new dynamic industries. At the same time, the low wages for the majority of the population were instrumental in creating new forms of integration into the international circuits of capital.

A profound restructuring of the economy and society was under way. Between 1960 and 1980, the share of the primary sector in the Brazilian economy

² Since Brazil served as the model for these theories, we need not concern ourselves with the problems of generalizing the "model" to other Latin American countries (cf. Collier, 1979; Cammack, 1985). The "simple stage model" has been replaced by accounts examining the specifics of various countries.

dropped from 22% to 13%, whereas the secondary sector increased from 25% to 34%. The share of non-durable consumer goods in the production of the transformative industries dropped from 56% in 1959 to 34% in 1980. This process of restructuring was accompanied by a rapid "bureaucratization of society" (Diniz, Boschi & Lessa, 1989:39-42). The proportion of scientific and technical personnel in the economically active population increased from 11% in 1960 to 19% in 1980. The rapidly expanding state apparatuses absorbed a significant part of these new middle classes. Meanwhile, the urban dwellers who accounted for 45% of the Brazilian population in 1960 rose to 68% twenty years later, a process accompanied by a growth of the *favelas* (Santos, 1985; cf. Faria, 1983). The "exclusionary" nature of the process is expressed in the declining share of the poorest 50% of the population in GDP, which dropped from 17% in 1960 to 13% in 1980. The share of the richest 10% rose from 40% to 51%, leaving the country with one of the worst income distributions in the world (Santos, 1985; Smith, 1987). The real minimum wage index fell from 100 in 1960 to 62 in 1980 (Kucinski, 1982: 103).

The performance of the Brazilian economy in the first years after the *coup* remained sluggish, but by the end of the 1960s it entered a period of "miraculous" growth. In 1970, the growth rate of GDP was 8.8% and in 1973 it reached 14%. It was the period of *Brasil Grande*, "Love it or leave it," of "making the cake grow before dividing it," and of huge projects such as the Trans-Amazonian Highway. It was also the period when repression was harshest. Through Institutional Act No. 5 of December 1968, all constitutional guarantees were suspended and the national security regime was installed for an indefinite period in order to cope with student and labor opposition and an uncooperative Congress. Under the presidency of General Garrastazu Médici (1969-1974), the repressive apparatuses had a free hand in dealing with guerrilla movements and any other elements they deemed subversive.

By the mid 1970s, the growth model had started to generate its own tensions, which were exacerbated by the oil crises of 1973 and 1979. The 1975 growth rate of 5.6% compared bleakly to the exuberance of the preceding years. After some fluctuations, Brazil entered the 1980s with a negative GDP growth rate of minus 3.2% in 1981. This recession was triggered by the adjustment policies the Brazilian government adopted, independently of the IMF, in an attempt to cope with the mounting debt problem.

In this context, the *distensão* (decompression) President Geisel had announced in 1974, aimed at the institutionalization of an autocratic but *salonfähig* regime after the mafia practices of the Medici government, acquired a dynamics of its own. Electoral turn-outs in 1974 showed a pronounced increase in votes for the MDB opposition, which took the regime by surprise and encouraged more open opposition. Moreover, groups of entrepreneurs started pressing for a "dialogue," since they feared that economic policies might shift the burden of the downturn to

them, while protecting the state sector whose magnitude had rapidly increased in spite of the military's professed liberalism. Discontent also tended to grow among segments of the new middle classes that had rapidly grown in the context of conservative modernization. The emergence of these new middle classes was accompanied by a rapid growth of professional associations, particularly during the second half of the 1970s (Diniz, Boschi & Lessa, 1989). The discontent they expressed was not only related to the fact that the relatively favored position they had come to occupy during the miracle years was threatened. It was also related to an affirmation of the professional interests and outlooks of sectors of these new middle classes. Professional networks played an important role in the articulation of criticism of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. There also was a revival of student politics and there was a campaign for amnesty for political prisoners and exiles. Furthermore, the popular sectors started to stir again. The metal workers' strike in the ABC region of São Paulo in 1978 played an important role, as did the Cost of Living Movement, supported by the Ecclesial Base Communities (CEBs), neighborhood associations and similar organizations. It collected some 1,200,000 signatures on a petition for wage increases, a price freeze and land reform. The "new social movements" had made their entrance (Alves, 1985; Cruz & Martins, 1983; Sader, 1988; Skidmore, 1988). With the coming to power of President Figueiredo (1979-85), *distensão* turned into *abertura*, the gradual return to civilian government discussed in the next chapter.

5.2. Urban policies

In the aftermath of the Goulart administration, urban issues had become incorporated into the list of "basic reforms" and some steps were taken towards the formulation of a comprehensive approach, but these initial formulations were abandoned in 1964 to make a "fresh start" (Schmidt & Farret, 1986: 22, 32; Shidlo, 1990:47; Villaschi & Medeiros, 1990). The policies adopted by the new regime were marked by a high degree of political and financial centralization making the Brazilian municipalities dependent on federal and state level administrative apparatuses. After 1964 a National Housing Bank, the BNH, came to play a central role in financing urban development. "Planning," for which these arrangements provided the institutional framework, was *en vogue* under the new bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. All kinds of plans were manufactured to mark the path toward becoming a great nation. In the 1960s the formulation of "integral local development plans" at the municipal level became a requirement and from 1973 onward, an institutional structure aimed at a comprehensive approach to the "urban problem" emerged. In this section I will briefly discuss these developments before turning to the ones in Recife in the 1970s.

5.2.1. Administrative and financial centralization

The aspect of administrative centralization is clearly born out in the inaugural speech of Gustavo Krause, one of the last *biônico* (appointed) mayors (1979-1982) of Recife. The description of what he called his "peregrination of confidence" aptly describes the pecking order at the time:

It began with the indication of my name by Governor Marco Maciel in whom we can glimpse the public vocation and the stature of a ruler -the political hope of Pernambuco and its people.

Thereafter came the homologation by the people of Pernambuco, through the sovereign vote of their representatives in the state legislative.

And now, the installation attended by Recife, in the person of its city councilors, the democratic synthesis of the citizens of this city (Krause, 1979:18).

With the 1966 revision of the electoral system (Institutional Act No. 3), direct elections for the mayors of 202 municipalities, including 25 capitals and cities in other areas considered vital for national security, such as mining centers, were abolished. The mayors were now appointed by the state governors who, in turn, were elected indirectly by state legislatures upon the "suggestion" of the President.³

Within the municipalities, the position of the executive -the mayor- was strengthened. Through the Constitution of 1967 and Constitutional Amendment No. 1 of 1969, the mayor was granted the right to submit legislative proposals and veto laws approved by the Municipal Council. Moreover, the budget became the exclusive competency of the executive and the Municipal Council did not have the right to amend it. The Municipal Council was left with the right to control and accept the accounts of the mayor. It was virtually subordinated to the executive and was left with very little to do but trivial pursuits.

The executive, in turn, was strongly subordinated to state and federal organs, partly due to the centralization of fiscal revenues. As a result of the 1966 fiscal reform, the municipalities were left with two direct sources of tax revenues (*recursos próprios*) instead of the previous five (Brasileiro, 1973:38). The municipalities' direct sources of revenue were the *Imposto Predial e Territorial Urbano* (IPTU) and the *Imposto Sobre Serviços* (ISS). These revenues were complemented by constitutionally transferred resources (*receitas de transferência*) consisting firstly of the *Fundo de Participação do Município* (FPM), which was managed at a federal level. This fund covered 17% of the amount collected through the *Imposto de Renda* (IR) and the *Imposto sobre Produtos Industrializados* (IPI). A second

³ The only significant elections remaining after 1966 were for a weakened federal congress, for state and municipal legislatures, and for the mayors of mostly small towns and rural municipalities.

source of transferred resources was the *Imposto de Circulação de Mercadorias* (ICM), managed at the state level, 20% of which was shared out among the municipalities.⁴ Besides these two sources of revenue, municipalities could apply for transfers through *convênios* for the financing of specific projects. Finally, municipalities, could apply for credit from various agencies. The principal sources of long-term credit and main urban policy instruments were the *Banco Nacional de Habitação* (BNH) and the *Fundo Nacional de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Urbano* (FNDU) (Dowbor, 1987: 70, 111; cf. Brasileiro, 1973; Schmidt & Farret, 1986:71). Thus the municipalities were strongly subordinated to higher level state apparatuses and came to depend heavily on funding through the BNH and the FNDU for the implementation of municipal plans. In fact the municipalities, the larger ones in particular, became the executors of plans devised at the federal level. Centralization and the elimination of meaningful elections were regarded as beneficial to efficient planning. The private consultancy firm that elaborated the *Plano de Desenvolvimento Local Integrado* (PDLI) for the municipality of Recife in 1970 commented, for instance, that this situation eliminated the friction between the various administrative levels, since the distribution of personnel over these levels could now be realized in a "harmonious way" (PDLI, 1970; cf. Fontes, 1986:339).

5.2.2. The National Housing Bank

The *Banco Nacional da Habitação* (BNH), created in 1964 together with the *Sistema Financeiro da Habitação* (SFH), became one of the main agencies for the implementation of urban policies. The central agency of the new housing policy, the BNH, was financed through "compulsory savings" imposed on the working population via the *Fundo de Garantia por Tempo de Serviço* (FGTS) founded in 1966. These funds were complemented by forms of voluntary saving. At the state level, housing policies were executed by the *Companhias de Habitação Popular* (COHABs), contracting private enterprises to do the actual building. The *Serviço Federal de Habitação e Urbanismo* (SERFHAU) was created as a coordinating agency in 1964, to strengthen planning mechanisms and promote technical train-

⁴ Of the total fiscal revenues in 1983, only 5.2% was directly collected by the municipalities against 57.8% by the federal government and 37% by the states. Redistribution of the available resources resulted in 48.8% for the federal government, 35.2% for the states and 16.4% for the municipalities. In the USA, by contrast, municipalities manage about 35% of the public resources (Dowbor, 1987:75, 111; cf. Schmidt & Farret, 1986:70-77).

ing.⁵ At first the main aim of these new institutions was to provide housing for the poorer strata of the population in an attempt to legitimize the new regime. At the same time, the policies were intended to boost the construction industry and thus facilitate the economic recuperation from the crisis of the early 1960s (Shidlo, 1990:56).

Such objectives were not easy to reconcile, however. The overall economic policies contributed to a decrease in purchasing power of the minimum wage and thus undercut the possibilities for paying off installments on a house. The BNH, on the other hand, operated like any other commercial bank. The solution was presented by a policy reorientation converting the BNH into a second-line bank, in 1971. Rather than being directly responsible for the financing of housing and the surveillance of individual borrowers, the BNH was now to finance projects implemented by state or municipal agencies that were also made responsible for the surveillance of the borrowers. Simultaneously, attention shifted toward the financing of urban development, and in particular of the urban infrastructure. The share of housing programs in the activities of the BNH dropped from 93% in 1969 to 48% in 1976, after which it was to rise again to about 65%. The applications in urban development rose from 4.1% in 1969 to a high point of 34% in 1976, and stabilized at about 30% in the following two years (Azevedo & Andrade, 1982: 86; Maricato, 1987: 33-41).

Where housing policies are concerned, the initial BNH aim of providing housing for the lower income strata lost its prominence and was replaced by a policy aimed at the middle-income strata, which were in a better position to pay off installments. During a debate on urban policies in Recife in 1983 the BNH ventures in the area of popular housing were summarized as follows:

Initially the idea was to eradicate the *favelas*, but it did not fit with the income level of the inhabitants of the *favelas*. So they came up with the solution of building smaller houses to make them cheaper, but that did not work. So still smaller houses were made, but even then they were too costly in relation to the income level of the people they were built for. So it was diminished still further, and they made the *casa embrião* and that did not work either. So they did not make houses anymore, but started making terrains, so we had the *lotes urbanizados* (sites), the PROFILURB, but the urbanized sites also were expensive. It did not work. So instead of providing sites they turned to the consolidation of *favelas*, the

⁵ According to Bolaffi (1982) the creation of the SERFHAU would have been regarded as a joke, were it not for the tragic circumstances. The motive for its creation was the preoccupation with the effects of the huge number of houses that was supposed to be built with BNH financing. The SERFHAU regulations stipulated that the financing of municipal projects would be dependent on municipal development plans to be drawn up by private consultancy firms. This resulted in a proliferation of costly plans. Bolaffi estimates that between 1965 and 1972/73 about U\$ 200,000,000 was spent on "plans" which actually "were not worth the paper they were printed on."

PROMORAR.....In those eighteen years the *Banco Nacional de Habitação* "got out of the *favela* and returned to the *favela*" (cf. FIDEM, 1983:95).

In 1973 a *Plano Nacional de Habitação Popular* (PLANHAP) had been launched to retrieve the initial aims of the BNH. It was announced that in ten years the housing deficit for families earning between one and three minimum wages was to be eliminated, but the effects were negligible. The target population was redefined in 1975 so as to include people earning between three and five minimum wages, with the result that the poorest groups were excluded again. Other programs aimed at the lowest income groups, such as the *Programa de Financiamento de Lotes Urbanizados* (PROFILURB) launched in 1975 and reformulated in 1977, similarly failed to have much impact.

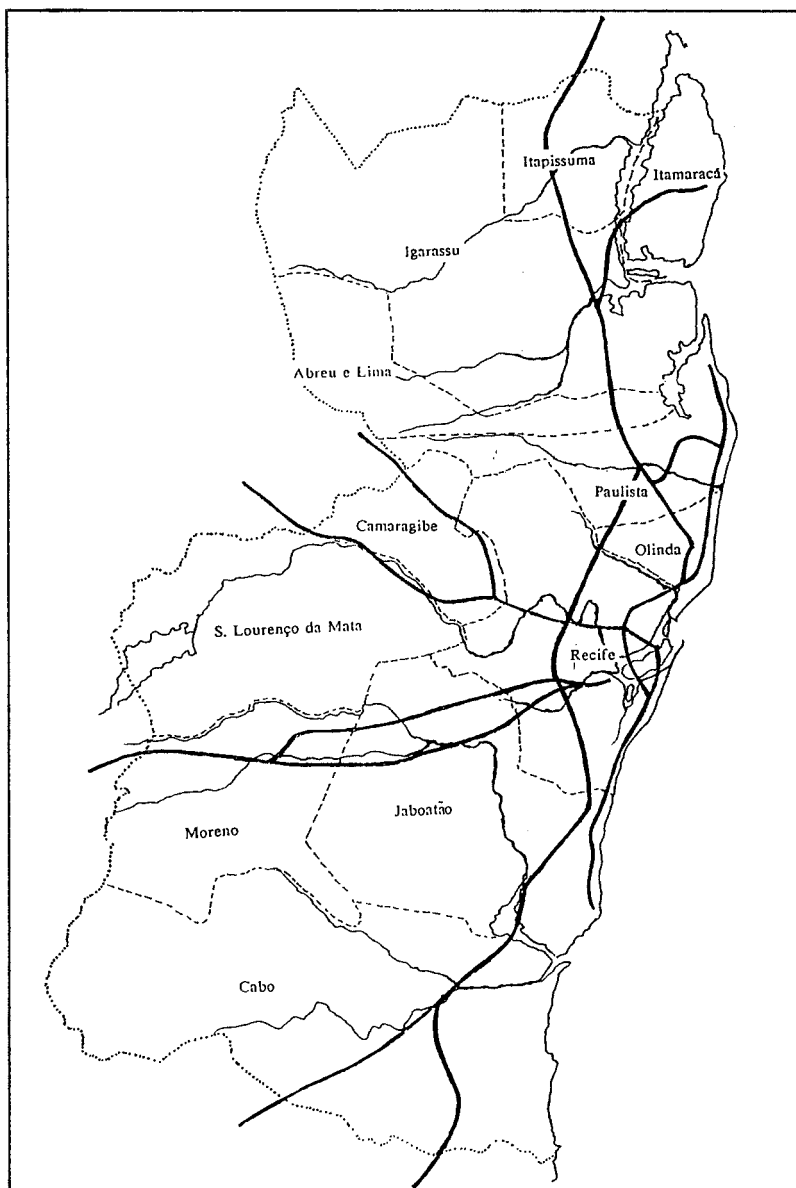
The *Programa de Erradicação da Sub-Habitação* (PROMORAR), once again aimed at the retrieval of the initial BNH-aims, was launched in 1979 partly in response to the increasing activity of neighborhood associations. The groups that had been marginalized due to the managerial logic of the urban and housing policies of the 1970s started to receive more attention in the context of the "politics of *abertura*." PROMORAR provided funds for the urbanization of *favelas* and rather than aiming at the removal of *favelas*, policies were now turned to the improvement of housing conditions through self-help programs. As we shall see in the next chapter, the PROMORAR-program was extensively propagated, particularly during the run-up to the 1982 elections, which were crucial in the return to civilian government.

By then the BNH was heading for bankruptcy, however. With the mounting economic crisis and the consequent impoverishment of parts of the middle classes it had come to focus on, the bank was faced with an increasing number of defaulters (cf. Azevedo & Andrade, 1982; Azevedo, 1988; Maricato, 1987; Shidlo, 1990; Valladares, 1981). In 1986, under the *Nova República*, the BNH ceased to exist and its possessions and debts were transferred to the *Caixa Econômica Federal*.

5.2.3. Metropolitan planning

A third important feature of the post-1964 urban policies started to take shape in 1973. It marked a shift from sectoral approaches to a more comprehensive approach to spatial policies, the geo-politics for *Brasil Grande*, which also informed the 2nd National Development Plan of 1974. The institutionalization of nine metropolitan regions is one aspect of this shift.⁶ The groundwork for the "metropolitan regions"

⁶ São Paulo, Porto Alegre, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte, Salvador, Recife, Fortaleza, and Belém. In 1974 Rio de Janeiro was added to the list.



Metropolitan Region of Recife: Municipalities

had been laid with the promulgation of the Constitution of 1967, which stipulated that the federal government could specify the municipalities to be incorporated in metropolitan regions without consulting either the municipalities concerned or the state legislatures. In June 1973, the metropolitan regions were defined through the *Lei Complementar 14*.

The newly created regions fell under the competencies of the state governments. Decision-making power was vested in Deliberative Councils presided over by the state governor, who also appointed three further members to these Councils. The mayor of the regional capital was also included in the Council, as well as one representative for the remaining municipalities in the region. A Consultative Council, presided over by the state governor, was to consist of the mayors of all the municipalities in the region. A third branch of the metropolitan administrations was the technical organ under the responsibility of the state government. This new institutional structure was to implement "integral planning" for social-economic development (FIDEM, 1983; Schmidt, 1983: 159-175; Schmidt & Farret, 1986: 41-51).⁷

In 1974 the *Serviço Federal de Habitação e Urbanismo* (SERFHAU) was discontinued and replaced by a *Comissão Nacional de Regiões Metropolitanas e Política Urbana* (CNPU), under the Presidential Secretary of Planning. This inter-Ministry commission was to supervise the introduction of the metropolitan regions and to manage the *Fundo Nacional de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Urbano* (FNDU) as well as a fund for the promotion of public transportation which, was converted in 1976 into the *Empresa Brasileira de Transportes Urbanos* (EBTU) (Schmidt, 1983:118). In 1979 the CNPU was replaced by the *Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Urbano* (CNDU), under the Ministry of the Interior. The aim of this new council was to strengthen the institutional structure of the metropolitan regions and promote the formulation of metropolitan development plans.

Simultaneously, however, due to the fiscal crisis of the Brazilian state in the context of a faltering economy, the financial means for urban investments dwindled rapidly. By 1984 the resources passed through the CNDU were only 12% of those passed by the CNPU in 1976. From 1982 onward, external funding, particularly by the World Bank (BIRD), became increasingly important. These funds were for a special program to promote the "intermediate cities" and for investment in the northeastern metropolitan regions of Salvador, Fortaleza and Recife (Schmidt, 1984; Schmidt & Farret, 1986:48-50; Villaschi & Medeiros, 1990).⁸

⁷ Sanitation, water supply, legislation on urban land, transport and roads, the gas supply, water resource management and the restriction of environmental pollution.

⁸ Furthermore, an important share of the available resources went into the improvement of urban transport systems, recognized as an important focus of tension after the quebra-quebras in cities like São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Salvador during the latter part of the 1970s.

Thus far I have discussed some of the distinctive features of urban policies as they developed during the period of bureaucratic authoritarianism in Brazil. The process of administrative and financial centralization left little leeway for the municipalities to develop their own policies attuned to local circumstances. The financing policy, mainly implemented through the BNH, mainly benefited large construction companies and the upper strata of the population. These developments were accompanied by a huge institutional build-up of federal, state and municipal agencies, including those concerned with metropolitan planning. In the following sections of this chapter I shall note how these bureaucracies were mounted in Recife and analyze the policies implemented.

5.3. A metropolis for distorted development

Since the 1960s the Northeastern economy has been thoroughly restructured, with the SUDENE playing a central role. Urban policies were geared toward facilitating this process and providing an infrastructure for the projected function of Recife as a growth pole and service center for the region.

A main instrument to integrate the Northeast into the national economy, was the "34/18" tax incentive scheme implemented through the SUDENE. The investments promoted by this scheme were characterized by a high level of capital intensity, a high level of integration with enterprises located in the Center-South and concentration around a few urban centers in the Northeast. Goodman (1976:2) characterized the fundamental feature of this process in the Northeast as the selective integration of certain urban sectors and restricted social groups in isolated regional centers into the production system dominated by São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Cities like Recife, Salvador and Fortaleza thus became the production outposts and commercial entrepôts of this dynamic core region. The restructuring of the Northeastern economy is reflected in the declining importance of agriculture and the growth of the secondary and tertiary sectors.

Northeastern gross product by sector (%), 1960-1980

year	agriculture	industry	services
1960	30.4	22.1	47.5
1980	18.6	27.3	54.1

(Source: SUDENE, 1983:172)

Despite the growth of the Northeastern gross product by an annual 7.2% between 1960 and 1980 (SUDENE, 1983, 1984), there were no substantial improvements in

the employment and income situation of the Northeastern workforce (SUDENE, 1984:46; Carvalho, 1986a:14).

In Recife (RMR), which accounts for 70% of Pernambucan production in the secondary sector (FIDEM, 1982:143), this was partly due to the modernization of the textile industry and a growing importance of non-traditional capital-intensive industries.⁹ Despite the growth of the secondary sector product it generated very little employment and the process

demonstrated the relative incapacity of the transformative industry to generate employment at a rate sufficiently high to justify any confidence in the process of industrialization in the sense of alleviating the increasing under-utilization of human resources in the urban areas (Jatobá, 1976:30).

The tertiary sector, which was partly "modernized" to be sure, became the main outlet. By the end of the 1970s, this sector absorbed about 70% of the employed population in the Metropolitan Region of Recife (RMR). About 6% of the economically active population in the RMR was openly unemployed. Taking remuneration under the minimum wage as a criteria, 45% of the employed population (*peessoas ocupadas*) was considered underemployed and 72% of the employed population earned under two minimum wages. Out of a sample of 438 children between 4 and 6 years in 1976, 53% was found to be *bastante desnutridas* (FIDEM, 1982:139-166, 254). In the context of the 1980s crisis, the 1980s the situation deteriorated (SUDENE, 1984:46; 79; CONDEPE, 1988).

The SUDENE thus contributed to the reorganization of the Northeastern economy, but hardly lived up to the expectations. When the Northeastern bishops issued their famous statement in 1973 *Eu Ouvi os Clamores do meu Povo* (I Have Heard the Clamour of my People), they wrote:

Now, ten years after the creation of the SUDENE, we should ask ourselves if the agency (*autarquia*) played the role which it had been assigned in the struggle against the underdevelopment of the region and we should question the sense of the modifications which its development policy has undergone (cf. Lima, 1979:180).

The agrarian reform measures that figured in the original plans had not been carried out and the agency had become the victim of the "logic of the system to which it was linked." Urban policies in the city of Recife, designed to become a growth pole in the region, were similarly dominated by the "logic of the system" and geared to the interests of the upper strata.

According to an overview of the urban policies of the municipal administrations governing Recife until 1983 (Prefeitura, 1983), the main characteristics of the planning process at the municipal level were a lack of continuity, systematicity

⁹ This restructuring went hand in hand with a relocation of enterprises toward the peripheral municipalities of the metropolitan region and contributed to the virtually total destruction of the urban trade unionism which had existed in Recife before 1964 (Soares, 1985).

and productivity. Every administration had come with its own plans whereas continuity, as far as it existed, was based on contractual obligations related to external financing. Nevertheless, I shall illustrate the continuity in the agenda, in the elitist aspect of the urban project and in the preoccupation with the providing an infrastructure for the type of economic "development" promoted by the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime.

One feature of this preoccupation was that such a very large share of investments went into the construction of roads, bridges and viaducts. This was not only related to the promotion of automobile transport during the miracle years but also to the provision of an infra-structure for the city's projected function as a regional growth pole for "distorted development" (Goldsmith & Wilson, 1988:37). In the words of the poet Joaquim Cardoso, the city was "nailed to the cross of the new avenues."¹⁰

A second feature was the preoccupation with upgrading the city center, linked to its assigned role as regional administrative and service center and the overall elitism of the urban project. This prompted constant attempts to remove *favelados* to peripheral areas. After the period of popular administrations the policy of active eviction was taken up again. The eviction efforts were justified with arguments about "their own good," since the people who lived along the riverbank had been victims of floods in 1965, 1966 and 1975.¹¹ However, the actual direction of such interventions revealed ulterior motives. The efforts usually focused on increasingly valorized areas close to the city center. Barely a day went by without some *mocambos* being demolished. Sometimes the tenants received a small fee for their shacks. Usually they had little choice but to accept whatever indemnity was offered and move elsewhere. The *favelas* of Brasília Teimosa, Coelhos and Coque, also were the targets of persistent removal attempts. The hypocrisy of the alleged concern with the well-being of the *favelados* was underlined by the fact that the bulk of urban infrastructure investments was concentrated in the already privileged areas.

A third feature of the approach to urban issues was the technocratic authoritarian style of policy execution in the context of the repressive climate of the time. In the next chapter, I shall discuss the shift to the "politics of *abertura*"

¹⁰ "Recife,

O clamor desta hora noturna e trágica

Vejo te morto, mutilado, grande,

Pregado à cruz das novas avenidas..."

(cf. Diário de Pernambuco, July 28, 1985)

¹¹ Floods were already reported in 1633 and 1641 and over the centuries, Recife would occasionally be flooded. Due to changing land use in the interior, floods tended to become more frequent and larger. The 1975 flood was particularly devastating (Andrade, 1979:107). During the second half of the 1970s, the Capibaribe river was regulated, resulting in a rapid valorization of some areas near the city centre. Hence the increasing efforts to remove the *favelas* from these areas.

and the accompanying change in policy style. Here I shall discuss the developments up to 1979. First I review the "spontaneous" and "planned" development of the city, and then turn to the reemergence of urban associativism.

5.3.1. Nailed to the cross of the new avenues

It was in the "time of the war"¹² when *dona* Eunice's life companion *seu* Manoel, a retired baker's mate who was in his seventies when I met him in 1988, noticed the new approach to the construction of the urban environment in 1964. They live in a *mocambozinho* in the *Rua do Chafariz* on the Alto Santa Terezinha. The street derives its name from one of the fifty-three controversial *chafarizes* built during the Arraes administration. "Yes," Manoel commented,

the *chafariz* was there. When he (Arraes) became mayor, he constructed six laundry sheds here and up there on the *Alto* he made ten laundry sheds for the women to wash clothes. When they took away his power, they broke down the *chafarizes*, the *chafarizes* were abandoned, it was said they were communist and no good. They undid everything and this is what is left, it is in the same state they left it in...."¹³

Manoel vividly remembered how, during the governorship of Eraldo Gueiros (1971-1975), a piped water system was later installed in the area. He had to buy pipes and taps to get connected, though he did get the water for free. And *dona* Eunice added: "Not even a tap or anything, we did not gain anything, only the water" (*Nem torneira nem nada. Nós num ganho nada, só a água*). Other houses in the area were provided with a hydrometer, however. Despite these ambiguities, the logic of commodification and large-scale investment, which had been at stake in the controversy over the *chafarizes*, prevailed after 1964.

"Fresh starts" were made in 1964. Arthur de Lima Cavalcanti, who had been Vice-Mayor of Recife from 1959 until his election as federal deputy in 1962, later related how the archives of 1963 symposiums on urban reform and housing politics, disappeared from his home during a military raid "in search of arms" (FIDEM, 1983:68). On another occasion, he described how he found the maps that went with a plan for a metropolitan region of Recife, worked out in the early 1960s, "aban-

¹² During the first days after the coup busses of the municipal transport company, created under Pelópidas Silveira's administration in 1959, were attacked (Mendoza & Pereira, 1987: 70) and, aside from other acts of torture, persecution and revenge, the parading of the 63 years old communist Gregório Bezerra through the streets of Recife in his underwear has become a notorious episode of the period.

¹³ "Já, pois o chafariz já estava pronto. Quando ele inaugurou, ele fez aqui seis lavanderias, lá no Alto fez dez lavanderias, pras mulher lavar roupa. Quando eles tomaram o poder dele, os chafariz tudo quebraram, acabaram com o chafariz, disse que é comunista num presta. Demanchou tudo, ficou esse, esse tá na relação como derrubaram...." (Interview, October 13, 1988).

doned and torn up". "If they were torn up, it was before I entered the prefecture," said Augusto Lucena, who had succeeded Pelópidas Silveira in April 1964 (IAB, 1981: 49, 56).¹⁴

During Lucena's first mayorship (1964-68), his interventions were not based on any specific plan. They were influenced by the "emergency situations" after the military intervention, the floods of 1965 and 1966 and his "feeling with the people." As a populist-style politician, he was preoccupied with "the humble." Years later, discussing populism, Lucena said: "The two words mean the same thing, populism is popularity and popularity is integration with the people" (IAB, 1982:58). In this light the priority granted to founding a municipal COHAB (subsequently integrated into a state level COHAB), which constructed 1,300 houses during his administration, can be understood. The 1965/66 floods also prompted efforts to construct canals to improve the city's drainage system. Another preoccupation was the road system. During Lucena's first administration, this resulted in the construction of various bridges and the reconstruction of bridges in the 1966 flood. On the whole, however, due the paucity of financial resources during the first years of the military regime, the role of the municipality in urban policies remained modest.

Urban policies had been characterized by a "method of trial and error" during Lucena's first administration, but his successor, Geraldo Magalhães (1969-71) talked about plans for a "New Recife." Popular participation "was no outstanding feature" as the review of urban policies drawn up by the *Prefeitura* in 1983 under the last of the "bionic" mayors, put it rather euphemistically. The approach to the urban question was becoming markedly technocratic and elitist. By that time, more resources were available for *obras de arte*. Recife acquired its first viaducts. Streets and avenues were broadened and new ones projected. It was the "era of the car" and of "great works" such as the *Ginásio de Esportes Geraldo Magalhães*, a "majestic and efficient" construction with a capacity for 12,000 spectators and a parking space for 520 cars, commonly known as the *Geraldão*. In order to deal with the legal problems related to projects of this magnitude, a Legal Department was created during the Magalhães administration.

In 1970, on the advice of the SERFHAU, the consultancy firm Wit-Olaf Prochnik produced a *Plano de Desenvolvimento Local Integrado* (PDLI) for the municipality of Recife. After a study of the "social, economic, territorial, physical and institutional aspects of the problem", some general recommendations were

¹⁴ At least Lucena could say that in 1963 he had been elected as Vice-Prefect representing the oppositional UDN (see 4.2.), in contrast to his successors who, during a debate organized by the IAB-PE in 1982, turned to rather strange arguments to prove they had been as good as elected. Antônio Farias, mayor between 1975 and 1979 argued that he had been elected state deputy in 1962 and 1966 (IAB, 1982:46, 53, 54, 102, 105, 112). The mayors of the 1964-1979 period were: Augusto Lucena (1964-1969), Geraldo Magalhães de Melo (1969-1971), Augusto Lucena (1971-1975) and Antônio Farias (1975-1979).

formulated, guided by a concern with adapting the city to its economic functions. Legislation on urban land use had to be revised, river beds regulated and the basic drainage structure improved. The road system had to be expanded. "Sub-normal areas" had to be "remanaged," and in this connection the area bordering the rapidly growing upper middle class neighborhood of Boa Viagem was specifically referred to:

The area of the Ponte do Pina, where the picturesque spontaneous settlement called Brasília Teimosa is located, should undergo landscape treatment (*tratamento paisagístico*) to adjust to its future destination as a hotel area (PDLI, 1970:187).

The population of areas of this kind, regarded as an "enormous social group that has still not learned to work and conforms to models of the most aberrant primarism" (cf. Fontes, 1986:340) was to be relocated to the periphery.

In most Pernambucan municipalities the *Planos de Desenvolvimento Local Integrado* were soon forgotten, but in Recife some of the administrative reform and road improvement recommendations were taken into account during Augusto Lucena's second administration (1971-75). Municipal budgeting procedures were reformed and municipal tax collection was computerized (cf. Pires, 1988). A municipal urbanization company (URB) was created in 1973 (Prefeitura, 1983:42; Prefeitura/URB, 1986). The URB was to be a rather "flexible agency" of indirect administration. In some way or another, it became involved in virtually all the plans and projects in the municipality. By the mid-1980s, the URB had become an unwieldy bureaucracy, employing some 2,000 persons due to *empreguismo*, and a prime target for grassroots pressure.

Throughout the 1964-1979 period, the road system and the city center were the main concerns of the Recife municipal administrations. This resulted in a proliferation of large avenues and monumental viaducts. Under the second Lucena administration (1971-1975), large parts of the historical neighborhood of São José were destroyed to broaden the Avenida Dantas Bareto, which links "nothing to nowhere," but provides parking space and serves well for Carnival parades.

When concern with rising petrol prices grew in the course of the 1970s, this served as another justification for investment in the road system to promote the "efficient" use of private cars.¹⁵ During the Antônio Farias administration (1975-1979), work on the road system absorbed between 60% and 80% of the available

¹⁵ The existing municipal transport company, the CTU, was largely left to fend for itself in competition with private enterprises. The number of CTU diesel and trolley busses in operation dropped from 458 in 1970 to 222 in 1975. The subsequent introduction of luxury busses to attract the high income population only contributed to a further degeneration of the CTU. Public transportation became increasingly chaotic (Mendonça & Pereira, 1987). During his second administration, Lucena proposed the installation of a metrô superficial, an electric monorail with trains "nearly like flying carpets," but the project met with a ministerial veto (IAB, 1982:57). A surface metro with connections to Jaboatão and the Terminal Integrado de Cargas e Passageiros was built in the early 1980s.

municipality resources. Nearly 60% of the investments by the municipal Roads and Works Department went to already privileged areas. Investment in *muros de arrimo*, walls to protect the inhabitants of the *morros* from landslides, by contrast, only represented 1.1% of the budget (Fontes, 1986:346-349; IAB, 1982:115).

The link between the transportation policy and the upgrading of the city center was clearly expressed in the title of the Farias administration policy document: *A Estrutura Urbana; As diretrizes de um Sistema Integrado de Transportes, a Revitalização da Cidade*. Part of the city center was declared a pedestrian area. Informal trade was to be "regulated," an initiative that could rely on enthusiast approval of the Commercial Association and the Club of Shopowners (FIDEM/UFPE, 1986:20). The document actually licenced police action against informal traders. Sidewalks were to be paved and provided with "urban furniture" and lighting was to be improved, including the illumination of historical monuments. These revitalization plans linked up with the plans for an "integrated transportation system", with an integrated traffic terminal on Ilha Joana Bezerra. The large-scale removal of inhabitants, the *favela* of Coque, was required to make way for a terminal for road traffic, railways and boat transport on the Capibaribe as well as an airport, a parking lot, a shopping center and a hotel area. Only a parking lot and a metro station would eventually materialize. Nevertheless, all this illustrates the continuous attempts at relocating the low-income population towards the periphery, as also was the case with the population of other areas along the Capibaribe River.¹⁶ The preoccupation with incorporating these areas into the adjacent privileged parts of town increased after the Capibaribe was regulated and the riverbanks became even more rapidly valorized at the end of the 1970s.

Another area once again focussed on by the Farias administration was the old "bone of contention," the *favela* of Brasília Teimosa. A plan was elaborated to convert it into an area for housing and tourism. Most of the inhabitants, with the exception of a few picturesque fishermen, were to be relocated to make way for hotels, a Seaquarium "like the one in Miami," a shopping mall, facilities for a boat connection to the city center, bars, restaurants and boutiques. In the housing section, high-rise buildings were to contain 1,800 units for people who would contribute to the *nobreza* of the area. This project triggered one of the main movements opposed to the urban policies of the bureaucratic-authoritarian municipality (see 5.5.2).

The conclusion of this review of municipal plans and projects in the 1964-1979 period can only be that, in contrast to the evaluation by the *Prefeitura* (1983), there was a large measure of continuity and a rather systematic obsession with the

¹⁶ Another notable case is the *favela* of Coelhos in Boa Vista, which was also to be turned into a parking lot and along with Coque and Brasília Teimosa, became an early core of resistance to policies of this kind (cf. FASE, 1980).

road system and the upgrading of the city center to make it fit for the upper strata and for its assigned role in the context of the regional division of labor.

The assigned role also informed the planning on the metropolitan level. In 1968 the borders of the metropolitan region to be created had been defined by Federal law. Three years later, the *Conselho de Desenvolvimento de Pernambuco* (CONDEPE) set to work on a preliminary diagnostic of the area. In 1973, the metropolitan region was legally established and in the next year a Deliberative and a Consultative Council were created. In 1975 the CONDEPE, which had produced a relatively critical "Preliminary Diagnostic" of the region informed by pre-1964 views, was relieved of its responsibility for the metropolitan region (cf. FIDEM, 1987). This function was taken over by the new *Fundação de Desenvolvimento da Região Metropolitana do Recife* (FIDEM). In contrast to the municipal URB, the FIDEM was more of an insulated bureaucracy, not directly involved in the execution of works and the attendant wheeling and dealing. It presented plans based on the directives of the National Development Plans and set the parameters for policies at the municipal level. For their financing, the city was dependent on the fiat of the FIDEM bureaucracy (FIDEM/UFPE, 1986:19; FIDEM, 1987:51; cf. Fontes, 1986:360; Zancheti, 1986).

In 1976, the FIDEM presented a *Plano de Desenvolvimento Integrado* (PDI-RMR, 1976) for the metropolitan region of Recife. It foresaw the development of four functionally differentiated *nucleações*. The central municipalities of Recife and Olinda were to concentrate on specialized services like banking, shopping and leisure. Westward, the axis formed by the municipalities of Moreno, Jaboatão and São Lourenço was to constitute a second metropolitan pole, specialized in transport services, wholesale supply and public administration. Here a *Terminal Integrado de Cargas e Passageiros* (TIP), "one of the largest in the world" (Zancheti, 1986), would be constructed. Southward, a third pole would consist of the municipality of Cabo. Here the industrial harbor complex of SUAPE, highly controversial due to the expected ecological and employment effects, was to be located (FIDEM/UFPE, 1986). Northward, the Paulista-Igarassu connection was to be the fourth axis, designed as a site for industries. Of course the various nuclei would be interconnected by an "efficient road system." Together with large scale sanitation infrastructure to serve the central nucleus, the roads were to absorb over half the investments foreseen in the plan.

One look at maps of the municipality of Recife is enough to see that the pattern outlined in this plan was actually taking shape thanks to the interaction of "spontaneous" developments and the "plans." In the municipality one can observe the formation of three relatively affluent "corridors" going north, south and west out of the city center. The areas to the northwest (Casa Amarela) and southwest (Ibura), which partly consist of *morros*, are characterized by the concentration of low-income housing.

5.3.2. The "logic of the system"

The "spontaneous" tendencies of urban growth and the "planned" interventions both followed a segregative logic, and tended to dislocate the low-income population. This generated much of the tension underlying the urban conflicts that became increasingly visible in the second half of the 1970s. The principal causes of these dislocations were the conversion of residential areas into commercial or service areas, as in the central part of the city and along some of the main roads. In the area of Boa Viagem, speculation and the eradication of *mocambos* contributed to dislocations. Further dislocations resulted from the construction of new roads and viaducts. Finally, the floods of 1965-66 and even more so of 1975 as well as the interventions aimed at regulating the riverbed and the attempts to "upgrade" the shores, contributed to the dislocations (cf. FIDEM, 1982:120).

A look at the population distribution in the municipality of Recife can provide some insight in what was going on. The central areas of the city, the neighborhoods of Recife, Santo Amaro, Santo Antônio and São José, underwent a process of negative demographic growth as a result of the construction of new avenues and an all-round conversion into areas predominantly geared to commerce and services. In 1970, respectively 65% and 80% of the buildings in Recife and Santo Antônio were already being used for such purposes, notably banking and commercial enterprises. São José and Santo Amaro still had an important residential function, and included significant proportions of low-income dwellings: 41% and 35% respectively by the end of the 1970s. The population of Santo Amaro increased by 0.8% in the 1960s, but decreased by 0.5% in the 1970s. These neighborhoods were being incorporated into the economic-commercial core area of the city, and this was accompanied by a decrease in population.

In the course of the 1970s, the neighborhoods of Graças, Boa Vista and Madalena witnessed a slight population increase as a result of the construction of high-rise apartment buildings. Boa Vista serves as an extension of the commercial-economic core of the city and 16% of its buildings were used for economic purposes in 1970. In all three areas, housing for the high-income strata predominates, but Madalena also has an important proportion of middle-class housing.¹⁷

Finally, the population of Afogados, Beberibe, Boa Viagem, Casa Amarela, Encruzilhada, Tejió and Várzea increased rapidly during the 1960s and somewhat less rapidly during the 1970s, indicating a process of saturation. Of these areas, Boa Viagem underwent the most rapid growth: 10.4% a year in the 1960s and 4.6% in

¹⁷ Boa Vista, Graças and Madalena not only score high on high income residences but also on "white residents": 57%, 78% and 55% against a citywide white person average of 27%. São José, Santo Amaro, Casa Amarela and Beberibe score high on "black" and "brown" persons as well as on low income housing (see: CONDEPE, 1984:57; Fontes, 1986: 148).

the 1970s. This was basically a result of the conversion of the area into one of upper and middle-class housing, particularly along the coastline where high-rise residential units, many of them veritable marble palaces, mushroomed. As noted, the urbanization and upgrading of this area was a continuous concern in the urban plans, and it received an important share of the investments. It is also an area of conflicts over the *favelados*, like those of Brasília Teimosa and the settlements on the west of the rapidly valorized coastline area. Afogados and Encruzilhada are predominantly inhabited by middle and higher-income strata, while in Várzea and Tejipió the middle and low-income groups predominate. Casa Amarela and Beberibe are neighborhoods where low-income housing accounted for 72% and 62% by the late 1970s. Ibura/Jordão, the southwestern cluster of low income settlements, was in the making at the time (cf. Fontes, 1986:148, 153, 226).

Some of the people dislocated by these developments were absorbed into COHAB housing projects on the periphery of Recife or in other municipalities of the metropolitan region. Between 1967 and 1980 the COHAB-PE constructed 32,137 housing units¹⁸ in the metropolitan region of Recife; 6,832 in 1967-70, 5,246 in 1971-75 and 20,059 over the following five years, indicating the dip in activities in the popular housing sector in the early 1970s. Within the municipality of Recife 8,299 units were constructed, the majority in Ibura in the southwest of the municipality, which was populated during this period. The other units were mainly in the municipalities in the north of the metropolitan region.

The inconvenient location of the *conjuntos habitacionais* is due to the scarcity and the high cost of areas close to the urban center, thus explaining why they are so far from the infra-structure and basic services. As the FIDEM (1982:241)¹⁹ observes:

The expansion of housing construction over the past two decades had serious consequences for the urbanization process, above all where spatial ordering and conservation of the environment are concerned, thus contributing to the reduction of the level of well-being of the population which is evident in the spatial distribution of the *conjuntos habitacionais*. An example is the overconcentration of the *conjuntos habitacionais* in the *Nucleação Norte*, totaling about 32 thousand units, which corresponds to about 40% of the residences in the RMR (....)

The distance of the *conjuntos habitacionais* from areas with an infra-structure leads to other socio-economic problems for the resident families if we take into account that they have to cope with

¹⁸ Figures have been taken from CONDEPE (1984:245). FIDEM (1982:118) indicates that the COHAB constructed 23,200 houses and apartments in the RMR over the 1970-1980 period.

¹⁹ This diagnostic is rather critical. It reflects the professional frustrations of some of the technicians employed by the FIDEM and their sensitivity to the criticism of "civil society," which they themselves often helped to articulate by the early 1980s (see 6.4.3.).

higher expenses for transport, education, health, etc. To this we have to add, moreover, the inadequacy of the housing offer, particularly in view of the real purchasing power of its clientele who frequently do not succeed in paying their debts to the financing agencies, thus promoting the transfer of the residences to families with a higher income.

In fact the residences were basically built for people with an income between three and a half and five minimum wages, which was true of less than 15% of the working population in the RMR.²⁰

For 1979 the total housing deficit in the RMR was estimated at 173,400 units and an increase to 190,400 units in 1982 was forecasted. For families earning less than two minimum wages, the deficit was estimated at 86,700 in 1979 and for those earning between two and seven minimum wages, it was estimated at 73,900 units (FIDEM, 1982:233). For these income groups, a "normal" residence was extremely difficult to acquire, if not virtually out of reach.

Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that over half the families in the RMR live in "subnormal settlements" occupying an area of about 3,300 ha with about 210,000 residences, most of them of the *mocambo*-type and located in areas with little or no social and physical infrastructure. The following data outline the situation around 1978 in the municipality of Recife and in the metropolitan region (RMR):

	Recife	RMR
Population		
total	1,174,000	2,246,000
mocambo	681,000	1,135,000
%	58%	53%
Housing		
total	235,000	413,000
mocambo	126,000	210,000
%	54%	47%
Area		
total	209 km ²	2,201 km ²
mocambo	19 km ²	33 km ²
%	9%	1.5%

(Falcão, 1985)

²⁰ Of the total employed population (*pessoas ocupadas*) in the RMR in 1978, which was 760,927 persons, 126,587 or 16.6% earned between two and five minimum wages and 72.2% earned less than two minimum wages (FIDEM, 1982:162).

These data indicate that about half the residences are of the *mocambo*-type. The surface occupied by this type of dwelling in the municipality of Recife amounted to 9% of the total. The corresponding percentage for the RMR was 1.5%. The data point to the concentration of the "sub-habitation"-problem in the core municipality. Other important concentrations were located in Olinda and Jaboatão. Furthermore, the data reveal the high population density of the *mocambo* areas, which strongly contributed to making Recife one of the most densely populated municipalities in Latin America (cf. Moura, 1987:153). By the end of the 1970s about 65% of the residences in the RMR had running water from the public system, and 20%, mostly in the core area of the RMR, were connected to the sewerage system. Only half the residences benefited from some form of regular garbage collection (FIDEM, 1982:232-241, 265; cf. Fontes, 1986:216-218).

The proportion of owner-occupied as against rented houses -the famous *casa própria*- in the RMR increased from 54.5% in 1970 to 57.9% in 1978. As the FIDEM observed with some irony, this growing number of *casas próprias* did not result from any positive impact of the governmental housing policies, but was strongly associated with the spreading phenomenon of "invasion" of areas situated nearby or in the central nucleus of the RMR, by low income families who construct their dwellings on terrains belonging to others, thus originating the wellknown sub-normal settlements (FIDEM, 1982:235)

This brings us to the issue of urban landownership. The data, which refer to owner-occupied residences, reveal that in 60% of the cases, the land the residence was located on was also owned by the owner-occupant of the residence; 21% of the residences were located on leased or rented land (*aforamento* and *arrendimento*) and 18% on "invaded" terrains.

There was a clear relationship between income level and landownership. Whereas 87% of the high-income owners of residences also owned the land, this was only the case for 44% of the low-income group. Conversely, 27% of the low-income residence-owners lived on "invaded" land, whereas this was only the case for 3% of the high-income group. The relationship between location on leased land and income strata was similar, the lower the income the more often the land was leased.

**Owner-occupied urban residences by legal condition of terrain, according to
income classes in the RMR (1978)**

	<2sm *	2-7sm	7-15sm	>15sm	Non resp.	TOTAL	%
Property of occupant	34,300 (44%)	66,400 (61%)	25,400 (79%)	18,200 (87%)	2,800 (58%)	147,100	60%
Aforamento (leased)	16,500 (21%)	19,800 (18%)	4,200 (13%)	1,600 (8%)	1,000 (21%)	43,100	18%
Arrendamento (rented)	4,800 (6%)	2,700 (2%)	300 (1%)	100 (1%)	200 (4%)	8,100	3%
Invasion	20,800 (27%)	19,100 (17%)	2,200 (7%)	700 (3%)	800 (17%)	43,600	18%
private terr.	10,200	9,300	1,100	100	400	21,300	
public terr.	10,600	9,800	1,100	400	400	22,300	
Non response	1,700 (2%)	1,600 (1%)	100 (-)	400 (2%)	--- (-)	3,800	2%
TOTAL	78,100 (100%)	109,600 (100%)	32,200 (100%)	21,000 (100%)	4,800 (100%)	245,700	100%

* sm = minimum wage

N.B.: Residences are classified according to the principal family (owner/occupant). Part of the residence may be rented out.

(Based on FIDEM, 1982:237)

I have outlined some of the urban contradictions and potential sources of conflict in Recife as they took shape during the 1964-1979 period. By way of the "spontaneous" land-rent mechanism, reinforced by the "planned" interventions of the bureaucratic-authoritarian state apparatuses, the urban poor tended to be relegated to the less valuable areas increasingly distant from the employment opportunities they depended for survival. The attempts at forceful eviction from the city center had their counterpart in the continuous efforts to remain or to return, resulting in a highly irregular occupation of urban land. A second contradiction revolved around the issue of collective consumption, i.e. the public services required for the reproduction of the urban population, including the urbanization of the areas occupied by the urban poor. In the remaining part of this chapter, I shall discuss some of the conflicts generated by these contradictions and the forms they took in the course of the 1964-1979 period. The last year of this period

marked the shift to the "politics of *abertura*," which will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.4. The hills, the swamplands and the Church: urban associativism, 1964-1979

The urban associations that had come into existence in Recife in the 1950s were disbanded in 1964. People involved in neighborhood associations and similar organizations were persecuted and imprisoned, which often meant they were beaten or worse, and the population feared getting involved in anything that might even remotely resemble a "communist plot." The point is stressed again and again in interviews about the period, and without a doubt repression was particularly harsh in the "troubled land."

In the preceding sections, I outlined the contradictions that could become thematized in forms of neighborhood associativism. I now shall examine this process of "many mediations" (cf. Salman, 1990:129) as it took place in Recife between 1964 and 1979. The reemergence of neighborhood associativism, its forms and its pace, resulted from an interplay of factors. At a most general level, the political conjuncture should be taken into account, i.e. the tightening of the regime by the late 1960s and the subsequent *distensão*, which provided some more leeway for the stirrings of civil society from 1974 onward. The floods that hit Recife in 1965, 1966 and 1975 were a rather specific factor, as the rains of 1980 referred to in the next chapter. Such whims of nature affected the inhabitants of the city of "the hills, the swamplands and the in between" in very different ways and therefore can not simply be regarded as "natural calamities." They served as a catalyst in the efforts to promote neighborhood associativism.

A major factor in the reemergence of neighborhood associativism, however, was the changing role of the Church, which was to provide much of the organizational as well as the discursive matrix for the new associations. When the military took over, the *Conferência Nacional dos Bispos do Brasil* (CNBB) issued a "Statement on the National Situation" welcoming the new regime as the savior of the country from communism (cf. Lima, 1979:147). Although the text clearly supported the intervention, it was somewhat schizophrenic, being a concoction of two documents, one presented by the conservative wing and hailing the *coup*, the other presented by Dom Hélder Câmara, warning the new regime against excesses and reaffirming the commitment to the poor and the victims of persecution and injustice (Salem, 1981:27). Since the 1950s, when he was active in the articulation of the CNBB and played a role in the debates over the "plight of the Northeast" that eventually resulted in the creation of the SUDENE, Dom Hélder had become a prominent representative of the progressives within the Brazilian Church. Shortly after the *coup*, he was appointed Archbishop of Olinda and Recife and immediately

after his consecration, his residence in Recife was invaded by soldiers who pretended to be looking for a sister of deposed governor Arraes.

During the first years after the military intervention, the relatively progressive northeastern bishops were more or less marginalized. The CNBB became dominated by conservatives. This change in the CNBB contributed to the demobilization of the Brazilian lay movements, which had been radicalized in the early 1960s (Della Cava, 1988:233; Lima, 1979). Meanwhile, within the Latin American Church, the ideas of the Second Vatican Council (1963-65) were worked out at the Medellín Conference (1968). Inspired by Liberation Theology, the Conference sanctioned the "option for the poor" and recommended the creation of Ecclesial Base Communities (CEBs) (Lehmann, 1990:88-147). Thus, while the Catholic Church as a whole tended to adopt the positions represented earlier by the CNBB, the CNBB tended toward a more conservative position (Bruneau, 1982:53).

By the early 1970s, the Brazilian Church once again fell in line with this development towards more progressive positions. The assassination of one of Dom Hélder's assistants in 1969 by a *Comando de Caça aos Comunistas* (CCC) and other acts of repression made many bishops change their minds about the new regime. In 1970, a new less conservative directory of the CNBB was elected. The Church now closed its ranks in opposition to the increasingly repressive regime and became an institutional support for the CEBs and initiatives like the *Conselho Indigenista Missionário* (CIMI) and the *Comissão Pastoral da Terra* (CPT). With the appointment of Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns as archbishop of São Paulo, the southeastern Church joined the northeastern bishops in denouncing torture and criticizing the economic policies implemented by the regime (Della Cava, 1988). In the course of the 1970s, the southeastern Church gradually assumed the leading role in the radical Catholic movement. This shift was related to the different political dynamics of a city like São Paulo, which was to be the cradle of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT). It was also related to the position taken by Dom Hélder who, while expressing political commitment in a broad sense, opted for a somewhat vague "third way," refractory to more concrete political involvement. Elsewhere the Church was somewhat less restrictive about this kind of involvement, though it posed dilemmas everywhere (Martins, 1990; Salem, 1981).

The reemergence of neighborhood associations in Recife after 1964 was strongly linked to activities deployed by the local Church. The first initiatives in this direction were related to the *Operação Esperança*, set up after the 1965 flood, which made the promotion of neighborhood associations one of its objectives. As a result of the increasingly repressive climate, however, these activities were scaled down by the late 1960s. The 1975 flood was a stimulus for a new flourishing of the *Operação*. In the aftermath of the emergency assistance measures, the lay social workers and clergy involved in the activities of the *Operação* discussed its contribution to "social transformation." This discussion was related to the initial influence

of the discursive matrix of urban social movement theory. Whereas *Operação Esperança* was inspired by a discourse of developmentalism through communitarian self-help, the "urban social movement" discourse provided a different signification for neighborhood associativism. Rather than aiming at a multifaceted and somewhat mystical "integral development" of the human being within the local community, it was proposed to turn the issue of urban land use into the main theme of activity. This shift away from the more cautious communitarian developmentalism generated a controversy that can be regarded as an initial example of the dilemmas the Church and the organizations related to it came to face when new political opportunities started to emerge, partly as a result of their own activities. The controversy contributed to the discontinuation of *Operação Esperança* in the urban areas in 1977. Meanwhile, a local variety of the Ecclesial Base Communities, the *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro dos Irmãos* had developed since 1969 and became the main support for the articulation of neighborhood associativism.

With regard to the role of the Church, 1979 can be pinpointed as a turning point in relation to the previous conjuncture. At a general level, the Puebla Conference heralded a retrenchment, which would become ever more obvious in the course of the 1980s. At the local level, where this institutional retrenchment did not immediately make itself felt, an administrative reorganization of the Archdiocese in 1977 may be said to mark the end of the period under discussion. It included the foundation of a *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, which in the first years of its existence was mainly concerned with the defense of political prisoners, but by 1979 made the defense of *favelados* one of its priorities. As I shall demonstrate in the next chapter, this contributed to the new dynamic of the conflicts over landownership and of the articulation of neighborhood organizations in Recife in the early 1980s.

5.4.1. Operação Esperança

Operação Esperança was launched in the aftermath of the relatively small flood of 1965 to provide assistance to the afflicted. The flood of June 1966 further broadened its scope. This time 60% of the city was affected by the waters rising more than seven meters above their normal level. The city was declared a "disaster area." Through the SUDENE, a relief action for the victims was set up, and efforts were made to attend to the 15,000 requests for help. Because of its acknowledged capacity to work in poor areas, *Operação Esperança* was charged with the coordination of a *Campanha de Reconstrução*, where it collaborated with the state and municipal government, the armed forces, USAID and CARITAS. With material provided by the SUDENE and financial resources gathered through donations and a tombola organized by employers' associations, the Rotary and the Lions Club,

Operação Esperança, in cooperation with the still municipal COHAB (see 5.3.1.), coordinated the (re-)construction of 6,767 houses. The organization of mutual help reduced the costs of reconstruction by 30% (*Operação Esperança*, 1966).

Once the Reconstruction Campaign was concluded, *Operação Esperança* "turned from the emergency of the flood to the daily and anonymous emergency of life in the areas of challenge (*áreas desafio*) of Olinda and Recife." It was to be an "interdenominational movement embracing all religions and races, extra-partidarian, with the objective of preparing the people for the struggle for development (human solidarity, love)" (*Operação Esperança*, 1966).²¹ The *Operação* had been active in 50 areas during the reconstruction campaign, but now the efforts were focused on fifteen neighborhoods.²² They aimed at founding dwellers' councils (*conselhos de moradores*) and commissions or groups of neighbors. The *conselhos de moradores* were designed to be the deliberative body of "the community," whereas the commissions were to be involved with specific more localized issues. Each group would have a representative in the *conselho*.

In 1969 the activities of the *Operação* were reorganized. Four "sectors" were created to coordinate and structure activities in the areas of health care, education, infrastructure and "formation and orientation of groups". In the following year, the institutional structure was further elaborated. By that time the *Operação* had signed agreements with various agencies to carry out its projects. Thus, in cooperation with the SUDENE, USAID and the CNBB, programs were launched to improve sanitation in various areas; the FNBEM (*Fundação Nacional do Bem Estar do Menor*) contributed to the construction of community centers and the LBA (*Legião Brasileira de Assistência*) helped with the purchase of audio-visual equipment. Furthermore, the *Operação* involved students at the *Escola de Serviço Social de Pernambuco* in its activities.

Meanwhile the climate had become ever more repressive. On various occasions, Dom Hélder was accused of promoting subversion. In 1966 sociologist Gilberto Freyre described him as "The Brazilian Dr. Goebbels, pale, ascetic, intense, eloquent, gesticulating, dramatic and theatrical" and accused him of nurturing the ambition of becoming President of Brazil, and of being a "para-

²¹ On other occasions the aims were defined as "the transformation of the 'mass into people' (*massa em povo*)" (*Operação Esperança*, 1970) or as "human promotion of the marginalized masses of Recife, Great Recife and, eventually, of the Northeast" (*Operação Esperança*, 1973). These formulations indicate the continuity with the radical developmentalist discourse of the early 1960s. In 1973, after the climate had become increasingly repressive, it was specified that "human promotion" had nothing to do with "subversion and playing into the hands of Communism."

²² Alto José Bonifácio, Brasília Teimosa, Beberibe, Campo da Vila, Ilha do Joaneiro, Sítio das Palmeiras, Sítio do Bevenuto, Nova Descoberta, Vasco da Gama, Alto do Mandu, Alto da Iracema, Coelhos, Ponte dos Carvalhos, Rio das Velhas and Vila São Bento. The latter three areas lie outside the municipality of Recife.

politician" rather than a priest. The harassment and confrontations did not end there. In 1968 two North American priests working in Recife were extradited and the campaign against the Belgian-born liberation theologian Joseph Comblin, who taught at the Regional Seminary in Olinda, eventually led to his extradition in 1972. In 1968, it was prohibited to broadcast or publish statements by Dom Hélder and even mention his name, a ban that was to last for several years. In 1969 Padre Henrique Pereira Neto was murdered. In 1971 and again in 1973, soon after the publication of the document *Eu Ouvi os Clamores do meu Povo*, offices of the archdiocese were invaded by the police. In 1973 eight of Dom Hélder's assistants, some of whom were active in *Operação Esperança*, were imprisoned and tortured. In 1975 participants in the local variety of Ecclesial Base Communities were the target of a similar action (cf. Castro, 1985; Prandini, Petrucci & Dale, 1986/1987).

Pressured by circumstances of this kind, the activities of *Operação Esperança* were scaled down after 1970. Collaboration with government agencies faltered and the *Operação* increasingly turned to funding and donations from foreign groups (e.g. MISERIOR, CARITAS). From 1971 onward, the activities were extended to rural areas. Three *engenhos* were bought, partly with the Nobel Peace Award money Dom Hélder received in 1974. Cooperative small-scale production was set up, involving some hundred families.

The flood of 1975 went a full meter higher than the 1966 flood, took over a 100 lives and left an estimated 60,000 people homeless (Freyre, 1975). It revived the initial concern of the *Operação*. This time, however, the *Operação* was not charged with coordinating government assistance, but coordinated various groups of volunteers. Assistance to victims of the flood was taken up again with the objective of leaving an "organizational saldo":

but you can see it before you. Imagine there are thousands of victims who have lost everything, fighting over wood, sand, cement, rafters, anything to reconstruct their house and you want to do educational work...(....)....So after nine months, when we came back from this experience we had a completely different conception of the realities of the people. The invasion of terrains, occupation and the problem of housing were issues identified as socially the major problems of this city. So we, that is to say some of the people who were working (for *Operação Esperança*), at the time thought a survey of the housing situation in Recife should be taken and on the basis of these data, the question of support to communitarian organizations should be rethought in their function as popular organization geared to the housing problem, and that the housing issue is not just a matter of infrastructure, but that it was the issue of land (*questão da terra*) which was at stake... (Interview Pantoja, November 25, 1988).

The debate about the orientation of the *Operação* reflected the changing political climate after the 1974 elections, and linked up with the disputes over

urban land that were *pipocando* (popping like popcorn) at the time, partly as a consequence of the dislocations caused by the flood. The proposal implied a politicization in relation to the earlier activities, i.e. a shift from communitarian self-help projects for human promotion to challenging "the social structure" (*Operação Esperança*, 1976a; 1976b).

Some opponents of the proposal argued that it was an attempt at "infiltration by left-wing party cadres." More likely, however, the discussion was initiated by some of the social workers and clergy active in *Operação Esperança*. They criticized the assistentialist features of the *Operação* from the perspective of a commitment to "the popular movement" and more specifically the urban social movement theories their professional training was starting to familiarize them with. These theories contributed to a specification of notions about emancipatory professional practice and provided a framework for deducing the strategic interests of their target groups and rethinking "the question of support for communitarian organizations." This support should be rethought in connection with what was regarded as the fundamental issue, namely the *questão da terra* and the disputes over urban land use, in contrast to communitarian self-help in creating infrastructure.

The discussion coincided with a similar debate involving the rural branch of *Operação Esperança*. There the relation between the rural cooperatives and the perspective of an agrarian reform was at stake. As an exemplary alternative of communitarian self-help, occasionally buying an *engenho* to set up a cooperative, did not present a real challenge to the agrarian structure, it was argued. The cooperatives should be more actively engaged in the struggle for agrarian reform.

The divergences resulted in the resignation of some of the *Operação* staff and the disactivation of the urban branch in 1977. A small team remained to manage the three *engenhos*. Some of the lay personnel in the urban team decided to work for FASE.²³ This is an early example of what Fernandes (1988:9) has described as a "typical trajectory." Confronted with the limitations of the organizational and discursive framework of the Church, people involved in Church-promoted social work tended to switch to, or even create, independent secular non-governmental organizations, while the assistentialist work of the early days evolved toward a more politically informed practice (see 6.8.).

It should be noted that though they continued to permeate discussions in Recife, the tensions described here never resulted in open conflict. Dom Hélder's charisma and his clear "option for the poor" gave no reason for such a confrontation and, as one of the people who left the *Operação Esperança*-team stressed, the

²³ Federação de Orgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional, was founded in 1961 and was initially concerned with motorizing the clerus. FASE later turned to social work and by the mid-1970s, it had become active in projects of popular education. Nowadays it is one of the biggest NGOs in Brazil.

resignation had been voluntary.²⁴ They continued to cooperate closely with the increasingly intricate network of Church-related organizations. A local variety of the Ecclesial Base Communities, the *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro de Irmãos*, was part of this network and had started to become a major organizational framework for Church-related neighborhood associativism.

5.4.2. Movimento de Evangelização Encontro dos Irmãos

The *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro de Irmãos* had been launched in 1969. The objective of the *Encontros de Irmãos* was "evangelization of the poor by the poor" following the method of "Seeing, Judging and Acting," i.e. to appraise life in the light of the Gospel and to act accordingly.²⁵ During the first five years of its existence, the *Encontros de Irmãos* remained rather "spiritual" or "inward oriented." It was the period of *grupos de reflexão* and the training of *animadores*, i.e. people animating the discussions.

One of the main instruments for articulating the evangelization movement was the program *Palavra da Bíblia* broadcasted by Radio Olinda. Initially it was broadcasted weekly. After 1972 there were daily broadcasts, but the program was suspended in 1976, to return on the air two years later after a series of protests and petitions. The program encouraged reflection on a passage from the Gospel, a word from Dom Hélder, an event or a song. Nelson Barbosa da Silva, the *Poeta dos Morros* who composed innumerable songs animating the struggles of the inhabitants of Casa Amarela, remembers his role as follows:

I sang for Radio Olinda. I remember that there was a program of mine on Radio Olinda and that it was censured, perhaps....I don't remember, perhaps by the censors, perhaps by the SNI or by the Federal Police. I'm not sure, but they said it was...(.....)....I sang a song of protest like "This shack, clinging to the hill / Is asking for assistance from the city at its feet / Oh shack, I'm listening to your voice / I don't forget you for a minute because I know who you are / Shack made of zinc, tradition of my country / Shack of zinc, poor

²⁴ The rather cordial "parting of ways" is in sharp contrast to the situation under Dom Hélder's reactionary successor Dom José Cardoso Sobrinho, installed in 1985, who unleashed a veritable purge against the "Church of the Poor" (SEDIPO, 1988). In 1989 priests took to the street in protests against the new Archbishop.

²⁵ The "method" was developed in Belgium in the 1920s and was adopted by various Catholic lay movements. It was also a source of inspiration for the alphabetization method developed by Paulo Freire and the activities of the *Movimento de Educação de Base* (MEB) and other such movements in Brazil in the 1960s (de Kadt, 1970; Lehmann, 1990:88-104).

and unhappy..."²⁶ (...) (That one was) censured (Interview Nelson Barbosa da Silva, 09-28-1988).

Throughout the city, people came together in small groups to listen to these programs. People like *seu* Manoel and *dona* Eunice, who recalled decorating their *mocambo* for these occasions. Or *seu* Cipriano from the nearby Alto do Brasil, who recalls that

it was on Tuesdays. We used to go to a house. We would ask people if we could come together in their house to read the Gospel, you see. And to participate. We turned on the radio to pick up the program from the start and we began the meeting, reading a passage from the Gospel, you see? On the journey of the people (*a caminhada do povo*), how the people developed, the Old Testament etc. And then we commented a little, you see? The *caminhada* was linked to Radio Olinda, because Radio Olinda had a program about the *Encontro dos Irmãos* and we picked that up on the radio so that people could listen during the meeting...(....)....So it was like this: we listened to the radio and then there was always a link to the Gospel. We always established a link, interpreting what was being said on Radio Olinda, you see? At the meetings of the *Encontros de Irmãos* in the areas we always journeyed with the Gospel. That is, conscientizing the people about what to do. Because many people knew that they were suffering and thought that they were made for suffering, just because they were poor. And that God had made things like that....that they had to suffer with patience, just because they were poor....But they had not yet found out that there were people making this poverty. People that make others suffer. Because they always referred to God, saying "God has made things like this....," you see? We had been brought up like that: "If you suffer, it is because God wants things to be like that." But through the *Encontro dos Irmãos* we found out, through the work in the communities, that God is the father of everybody, you see? He is not stepfather to the one and father to the other. He is everybody's father. So if I am suffering, why? Because somebody makes me suffer. So we should find out who that is who makes us suffer. So, that was what the *Encontro dos Irmãos* was about (Interview, November 10, 1988).

By the end of the 1970s, there between 200 and 300 more or less active local groups, providing a framework for a new neighborhood associativism. The activities were coordinated by teams in each of the sectors -8 in 1977 and 12 in 1988- the Archbishopric was divided into. These sectoral teams, were represented in turn in higher level councils which were in charge of annual planning and the monitoring of its execution (Castro, 1987:95).

²⁶ "Ei, barracão pendurado no morro / vem pedindo socorro a cidade a teus pés / ei, barracão tua voz eu escuto / não te esqueço um minuto pois eu sei quem tu és / barracão de zinco, tradição do meu país / barracão de zinco pobretão e infeliz..."

The *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro de Irmãos* was embedded in the overall organizational structure of the Archdiocese, which had been reorganized in the course of the 1960s and 1970s according to Dom Hélder's participative proposals for a *Governo Colegiado* of the Archdiocese. An administrative reform in 1977 abandoned the organization of pastoral work according to social strata in favour of an organization through Commissions by Priority: the poor, the "world of labor," the youth, and human rights. In fact the youth and the poor, including *Encontros de Irmãos*, were given priority in terms of practical pastoral work (Castro, 1987: 93, 120-124).

All these activities were part of what Salem (1981:177) called "a great structure" that rapidly grew in the late 1970s. The education and training of priests at the *Instituto de Teologia do Recife* (ITER) was one of the noteworthy features of the mode of Archdiocesan operation. Priests and novices were to share the life of the poor in their communities rather than be locked up in seminaries and cloisters. The ITER curriculum included courses in a broad range of subjects including Philosophy, Social Sciences and Theology, and was also made accessible to young men who had not completed secondary school and of whom only a minority eventually would be ordained. The Archdiocese premisses in the center of the city became a veritable beehive, harboring all sorts of commissions. Their activities were backed by the *Setor de Documentação e Informação Popular* (SEDIPO) which became a "factory" for the propagation of the northeastern Church among the masses. The *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, created in 1977, also operated in this context and was to play an important role in the promotion of neighborhood associativism from 1979 onward (see Chapter 6). This network of institutions and commissions was the breeding-grounds for a new generation of neighborhood leaders, who would later play an increasingly important role as spokespersons of the movement (cf. Lehmann, 1990:144, 173).

The reorganization of the Archdiocese in 1977 coincided with a shift in the orientation of the *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro de Irmãos*. During the first five years of its existence, the movement's meetings had mostly been devoted to parochial animation, liturgy and the formation of reflection groups. Campaigns were developed to install water filters and teach people how to use them, or to install garbage incinerators. Activities like these linked up with those of the *Operação Esperança*, which distributed the material. By the mid-1970s, the emphasis shifted toward outward-directed activity and a more clearly political orientation.

The shift was not simply a predetermined logical sequence of a "phase of preparation" and a "phase of doing things and solving problems," as Castro (1987:91) has suggested. It was related to the evolving debate over the role of the Church and its relationship to political issues and action in the context of the "awakening of civil society" (*o despertar da sociedade civil*) in the second half of

the 1970s. The conflict that arose in the *Operação Esperança* was part of this process, which involved working out of what Sader (1988:146-147) called "the discursive matrix of the christianism of the Ecclesial Base Communities." This specification of the meaning and content of the "option for the poor" was often inspired by the increasingly influential theorizations of "urban social movements." These theorizations provided a framework for deducing the "strategic interests" of "the poor," and thus for the formulation of an agenda for action. The Church in Recife, however, was reluctant to accept specifications of its commitment to the poor. Salem (1981:175), reviewing the role of the Church in different parts of Brazil at the end of the 1970s²⁷, noted that although there was much talk in Recife about organizing and uniting the people, there was little specification of how to concretely go about this liberation: "No perspectives are opened for the people and neither is their engagement in the general political struggle stimulated." Such attitudes can not only be attributed to the extreme repression the Church of Recife suffered during the 1969-1974 period, but also to the influence of Dom Hélder's somewhat mystical "third way" of "communitarian developmentalism," which viewed "the community" as the locus of "liberation" but remained rather vague when it came to more concrete earthly politics. Moreover, the other discursive matrixes distinguished by Sader (1988), i.e. of the marxist Left and the new trade unionism, were much less influential in Recife than in São Paulo, where "pathways to encounter" (Kowarick, 1985) contributed to the founding of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) in 1980 (cf. Gadotti & Pereira, 1989). The situation in Recife amounted to a virtual ban on any discussion of more concrete politics at "the level of the masses." More than elsewhere, the discussion of political issues tended to be dismissed as a form of "corruption" and "infiltration." This delegitimation of political discussion became increasingly problematic as the opportunities for political engagement broadened.

While the development of more outward-oriented activity on the part of local CEBs and forms of neighborhood associativism promoted by the Church in Recife was accompanied by the discussions and frictions described above, conflicts over urban land rapidly proliferated in the city, as had already been observed by the *Operação Esperança* team in 1976. The perspective of the Church-promoted forms of organization continued to be a matter of debate, but there was no question as to which side to take in these conflicts. At the same time, the Church-promoted forms of organization provided the framework for organized demand making. In the following sections, I shall briefly review the proliferation of conflicts and then devote attention to two more organized movements.

²⁷ At the time, with the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* in the making, the debate was raging over the degree of commitment to some form of socialism as a concretization of the "option for the poor" (cf. Salem, 1981).

5.5. Conflicts and movements in the 1970s

"Invasions" are a relatively recent feature in Recife's urban history (Fontes, 1986:269). Recent in the sense of being perceived as a problem as well as in the sense that the mode of urban land occupation by the lower income strata changed from piecemeal occupation to massive invasion. Although conflicts certainly existed before the 1970s, the occupation of urban land by the lower income groups was often legitimized by the payment of *foro* or remained altogether undisturbed for the time being. With the increasing density of the urban tissue and the consequent valorization of urban land, the situation became increasingly conflictive and the dislocations due to the 1975 flood further exacerbated the problems. In its Bulletin of November 1977, the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife estimated that 58,000 families, totaling some 300,000 people, lived under the threat of eviction. Particularly in the central areas of the city, the opening of a new avenue, the construction of a viaduct, the regulation of the Capibaribe riverbed or even the creation of touristic areas were regarded as sufficient arguments for the demolition of some dozens of *mocambos* every day. Moreover, often by violent means, private owners, or people who claimed to be owners, started to recover terrains now being valorized. The people who were evicted would often occupy areas further from the center or less coveted, like the southwestern part of the municipality (Ibura). Public land became a more important target for increasingly organized invasions, since subsequent negotiations in this case were affected by the "political moment." At a time when electoral politics started to gain importance, violent repression became less feasible (Barros e Silva, 1985; Fagundes, Lacerda, Zancheti & Pontual, 1981; Falcão, Moura & Pereira, 1984; Falcão 1985; FIDEM/UFPE, 1986:9; Fontes, 1986:269, 278, 297; Moura, 1990:65-129; Pantoja, n.d.).

Based on a review of the local press, Fontes (1986:265-302) recorded over 180 invasions in the RMR between 1970 and 1980. In 146 cases, the location of the event could be verified, showing that 94 (64%) cases occurred in the municipality of Recife, whereas Olinda came second with 28 cases or 19%. He also noted an increase of conflicts from 1975 onward. Out of 94 cases between 1950 and the end of 1981, 55 occurred in the 1976-1980 period. Barros e Silva (1985) and Pantoja (n.d.), whose information was based on the work of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, mentioned 80 new invasions in the RMR between 1978 and 1981, involving some 250,000 persons. Falcão mentioned the same number of invasions, but estimated the number of persons involved at 150,000. Fagundes, Lacerda, Zancheti and Pontual

(1981:54) noted 60 invasions in RMR during 1978-81 period involving 150,000 persons.²⁸

The characteristics of the invasions in the wake of the 1975 flood can be gauged from accounts from the Caxangá area. People stayed at schools and other public buildings for some time, and then started to construct new dwellings side by side with already existing *mocambos*, the inhabitants of which were paying *foro*. In some cases, newcomers were forced by police action to abandon the place, in other cases they remained undisturbed and sometimes received building material from the municipal assistance programs or from city councilors. Similar stories are told in many other parts of the city. A general feature of the process is that, in as far as it was organized, the organization was precarious and shortlived. In some cases, however, a more durable form of organization emerged as a result of Church support for the invaders. This was what happened in the case of the settlement called *Planeta dos Macacos* in Curado, inhabited by people dislocated by the flood. In September 1976, a large police contingent succeeded in destroying 200 dwellings, but about 90 remained and the settlement later expanded again. Before and after the police intervention, the "Planet of the Apes" was visited by Dom Hélder and the organization of the community was strongly stimulated by the Church, which promoted the installation of infrastructure through communitarian self-help. In the mid 1980s, the settlement counted about 750 dwellings and negotiations aimed at regularization were ongoing. This is an early example of a scenario that was to recur with increasing frequency by the turn of the decade, when the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* came to play a prominent role in the defense of "invaders" (see 6.5.3.).

In most of these cases, some extent of organization developed after an invasion and Church-promoted neighborhood associativism also provided an organizational framework for demand-making by older settlements. During the second half of the 1970s, two movements attracted attention, the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* in Casa Amarela against the payment of *foro* and the resistance of Brasília Teimosa against the intentions of city planners. These two movements can be regarded as the culmination of the "formative period" of the new neighborhood associativism in Recife.

²⁸ Although rough approximations have been made, principally by examining newspaper items, this hardly adds up to a reliable quantification of the occupation of urban land through "invasion", since press reports focus on conflicts, and not even all the conflicts are reported. Moreover, they usually fail to specify crucial information like the number of people involved. The problems of quantification can be gauged if we look at the different calculations of the number of "low income areas" or *favelas*, for which the irregularity of occupation is one criteria. By the early 1980s official sources acknowledged the existence of 72 *favelas* in the municipality of Recife. In 1985, 193 *favelas* were recorded and in 1988 the number was 484. The increase is not simply due to an increase in the number of invasions, but also results from an "individualization of communities previously included in one single area" (SEHAB/URB, 1988:12). Thus Casa Amarela, which had been considered a single "low income area," was split up into some 100 specific "areas," each with its distinctive features and history.

HINO DE CASA AMARELA

Lá pras bandas da zona norte do Recife
existe um bairro com grande população
onde mora gente nobre, gente humilde.
Ela é cortada por belos corregos e morros
onde um dia edificaram-se palacetes e
casas singelas, mocambo e barracão.

Hoje cantada es tú,
Casa Amarela,
bairro boémio, hospitaleiro torrão.

No cemitério de Casa Amarela
lagrimas regam as flores.
É Casa Amarela
chorando saudades dos seus amores,
na grande Casa Amarela
tem risos, prantos e dores.

Quem deixou Casa Amarela
e nas Cohabs foi morar
tem saudades dos seus morros
tem vontade de voltar.
O país é Casa Amarela
está a vos esperar.

Casa Amarela querida,
Eu te amo de coração.
Nos teus corregos e morros
quando a vista eu levanto
contemplo o azul do manto
da Virgem da Conceição.

Nova Descoberta é linda,
tem beleza, tem povão.
Tem crianças pobres na rua
tem pobre, triste, sem pão.
Mas é um povo que luta
para conquistar o chão.

Deus quando veio ao mundo
papel de terra deu não.
Apareçam donos de terra
que enganam a população.
Invade terra minha gente,
que essa terra é do povão.

Nelson Barbosa da Silva, o Poeta dos Morros (1988)

5.5.1. The Earth trembles....

One of the most important movements in the latter half of the 1970s was undoubtedly the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* in Casa Amarela, which was strongly related to the *Encontros de Irmãos* and was also supported by oppositional politicians of the various groups operating under the MDB umbrella. The movement's target was one of the "major urban latifundios in the country," some 350 ha or 40% of the neighborhood of Casa Amarela.

There are various versions of the history of the area's ownership. According to the alleged legal owners, it goes back to the early years of Portuguese settlement when a sugar plantation, the Engenho São Pantaleão do Monteiro, was established in the area. The name derived from the founder of the enterprise, Pantaleão de Siqueira, and the owner at the time of the Dutch invasion, Francisco Monteiro Bezerra. Due to the decline of the sugar trade, the plantation was gradually abandoned from the mid 18th century onward. By the early 19th century, sugar was no longer harvested and the *engenho* was subdivided into *sítios*. Subsequently, some of these *sítios* were further subdivided and incorporated into the urban tissue, and a number of them were sold. By 1943 the remaining area, basically less accessible terrain due to its hilly character, was owned by 35 co-proprietors (*condomínio*), each of whom collected *foro* from the inhabitants of the part they claimed was theirs. To regulate this chaotic situation, an agreement was reached in 1952 dividing the area into three parts. One part went to the Othon Bezerra de Melo Group, owner of the *Fábrica da Macaxeira*, the textile factory that was the largest employer in Casa Amarela. A second part went to the heirs and successors of Manuel Alfredo Marinho do Passo and Primitiva Marinho. The remaining part was incorporated into an *Empresa Imobiliária de Pernambuco Ltda*, managed by Dr. Roberto Rosa Borges. The shareholders were the people who claimed to be the owners of parts of the area. This enterprise started to reorganize the collection of *foro* by employing *cobreadores*.

The popular version of the story is different: the land had belonged to an *Irmandade de Cosme e São Pantaleão*, and at a certain moment it abandoned the area. The Marinho family then took possession, collecting *foro* from the inhabitants. In 1946 a Rosa Borges married into the family and the *Empresa Imobiliária* was created (cf. Folha dos Bairros, 1988: no. 15). According to the testimony of Arnaldo Rodrigues da Cruz, one of the leaders of the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém*, "Rosa Borges was never the owner of anything." The terrain belonged to the *Santa Casa de Misericórdia*. They would send a *cobrador* to ask for money and if there was no money, he would take a chicken: "Saints do not eat chicken, do they? So the bloke (*cara*) would eat the chicken himself." Afterwards Santos Marinho took charge as *cobrador* and still later, when Marinho was already old,

Rosa Borges "infiltrated" the family and started to act as if he was the owner of the terrain:

So the Church lost. But the Church kept silent because the Church also thieves, you know? Forgive me the word, if you are Catholic. But the Church doesn't mind some theft, does it? So they kept silent. And Rosa Borges took charge. Nowadays nobody really can say he isn't the owner, because it was all done according to the law, he made it all lawful because he knows of those things. They have a Registry (*cartório*), the whole family studied, took degrees, they have judges in the family, lawyers, everything, so they arranged things all right. Like "you are my family and I do everything for you." So everybody agreed because they had their bread to eat. That was how Rosa Borges did it. And today Rosa Borges is here, rich, the owner of everything. You want a small plot? Not possible. But, if God would come here now to ask for a plot: how much would he make God pay? Because it is God who made the earth (FEACA, 1988:89-92).

The dispute in the area has antecedents going back at least to the 1950s, when the Empresa Imobiliária was created and *foro* collection was reorganized. These protests were linked to the activities of the Communist Party and the textile workers' union of the *Fábrica da Macaxeira*. In the early 1960s, a group of members of the *Sociedade de Amigos de Casa Amarela* protested the sale of parts of the terrain by the Marinho family, arguing that they did not possess any valid deed. They also protested the unwarranted increase of the *foro* (cf. SACA, 1961). Partly due to the repression after 1964, when people were not allowed to meet, "not even to preach the word of God" (cf. FEACA, 1988:87; *Folha dos Bairros*, 1988: no. 13 & 15) nothing came of these protests.

Sometime in the early 1970s, people started to discuss the problem again at prayer meetings (*reuniões do terço*), linked to the *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro dos Irmãos*. Active roles in these discussions were played by Arnaldo, nicknamed "the Prefect" since he did so much for the community, João do Cigarro and Zé de Aguiar, "the Prophet," "who preached of Christ and the struggles of the great men of the Bible, who gave their lives for him, because Christ was a revolutionary" (Interview Nelson Barbosa, September 28, 1988) and who would announce at meetings in the Church of the Morro da Conceição that "the earth is trembling. The earth trembles and the powerful do not want to understand....You cannot take what belongs to everybody." Nelson "the Poet" would underline the point with his songs, stressing that whatever the exploiters who pretend to have inherited the Engenho São Pantaleão may say, "Saints do not have heirs" and that "when God came to the world, he issued no deeds giving rights to the land. But then came the 'owners' to deceive the population. So invade these lands, people, because they

belong to the populace"²⁹ (cf. FEACA, 1988:105; Folha dos Bairros, 1988: no. 15; Nelson Barbosa da Silva -songs-, October 1, 1988).

In May 1974, oppositional city councillor Marcus Cunha (MDB) publicly denounced the exploitation by the bogus owners. In June 1975, the decision was made to organize weekly meetings instead of the initial prayer meetings. Gradually the movement started to assume a more definite shape and on Easter Sunday 1976 six parishes of the area participated in a collection to strengthen the movement. By that time, the press had been invited to investigate the documents proving the exploitation through the *foro*, as well as the documents proving that houses had been sold various times. MDB federal deputy Jarbas Vasconcelos now also publicly supported the movement. With the relaxation of censorship in the context of the *distensão*, publications followed in the nation-wide weekly *VEJA*, the *Diário de Pernambuco* and *O Globo*. It was from the article in *VEJA* (May 26, 1976) that the movement derived its name *Movimento Terras de Ninguém*. Rosa Borges responded by producing documents allegedly proving their rights. About the same time, the parishes in the Casa Amarela sector of the Archdiocese sent letters to the municipality and the state government to complain about the situation. In July 1976, the first official anniversary of the movement was celebrated with a Mass on the Morro da Conceição.³⁰

On July 17th a year later, the movement gathered again³¹ under the protective blue and white mantle of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição*, who also represents Iemanjá, the Queen of the Sea, mother of the *orixas* and Goddess of fertility.³² By eight o'clock in the evening, the Church began to fill. While some

²⁹ "Casa Amarela, Casa Amarela do meu coração / as tuas terras estão servindo de exploração / A história diz que suas terras / pertenceram ao engenho São Pantaleão / Os que a exploram dizem que são herdeiros / Santo não tem herdeiro não. // Deus quando veio ao mundo / papel de terra deu não / Aparecem donos de terra / que enganam a população / Invade terra minha gente / que a terra é do povoão".

³⁰ The statue of *Nossa Senhora da Conceição* was commissioned in Paris in 1904 and placed on the hill named after it in the same year. The hill was gradually deforested to be covered with *mocambos*. It became a highly significant nucleus of the emerging neighborhood of Casa Amarela (Mendonça, 1986).

³¹ The following account of the anniversary commemoration of the movement in 1977 is based on a detailed report by Alvaro Luiz Pantoja Leite (July 20, 1977) entitled *Um Dia na Luta das "Terras de Ninguém"*, found in the FEACA Archives.

³² Particularly in Casa Amarela, the *Xangô* pantheon is palpably present on many occasions, including gatherings of neighborhood movements, giving them their particular flavor. As a matter of course, people may switch from Hallelujahs to hymns in honor of the African deities. Nelson "the Poet" often serves as a lead singer in the procession of the statue of Santa Isabel whom the *morro* where he lives is named after. He also wears a small amulet "just bought from a street peddler, has something to do with spiritism." Asked what saint it was related to, he said it was "São Jorge, Ogum the warrior," but that he does not participate in spiritism: "we only admire, like we admire Che Guevara who to me is a saint, an idol, idealist, socialist, warrior. Pro-communist....I don't know, but a guerrillero he was. We are not communists, but neither do we belong to the Right" (Interview Nelson Barbosa da Silva, September

tried out the music and songs for the evening, Padre Romano, a member of the *Ação Católica Operária* (ACO) who was threatened with extradition, appeared and people clustered around to greet him (cf. Prandini, Petrucci & Dale, 1986/1987 (V):187-204). Nelson "the Poet" intoned the "Hymn of the Struggle" and gradually people joined in:

It is now two years ago that the struggle started / It is now two years ago that the people fraternized / And that Sector Casa Amarela united / hands joined in the struggle against the exploiter // Let's go ahead / It is the struggle of the people / The voice of the people is the voice of God / Let us have faith / God never abandons / His poor and humiliated children.³³

Some 500 people were present. A young priest read articles 1, 2, 3 and 25 from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the *Poeta dos Morros* intoned yet another song about the people of the *Terras de Ninguém* and the injustices they suffered. One of the ten members of the Coordinating Committee, representing the parishes of the area, preached a "sermon" saying that "Jesus knows of our needs, we need a free plot of land to live and to work" and everyone present responded that "God gave the earth to the people."

For two years, the authorities had remained mute in the face of the protests of the movement, but the priest who took the floor doubted whether they were not listening and addressed them directly:

I have three messages....The first is for the authorities, who must have their informers (*portadores*) here tonight. They may carry the following message. Let them tell the authorities of this city, of this state and of this country, that the people who gather here tonight on the Morro da Conceição did not come together for agitation. It is a people that seeks a true order where, to begin with the humble (*os pequenos*), all have their opportunity (*vez*). Because the God in whom we believe wants the humble to be raised; those who have no land to construct their house....Let them say to these gentlemen, the authorities of this land, that all authority derives from the people, because the voice of the people is the voice of God (applause). Therefore, they only merit our obedience if they support the cause of the people, the rights of the humble and if they make participation in progress possible for all the people who construct it, the

28, 1988). At an earlier moment, he had already included Jesus Christ -another warrior- in the list, pointing to the pictures of São Jorge/Ogum, Che Guevara and the crucifix which decorate the walls of his house.

Even communism and spiritism are not totally incompatible, as became clear from the words of José Sobreira da Franca, who was a founder of the Dwellers' Association of the adjacent Alto do Mandu in 1960s: "I'm a spiritist, that seems contradictory but I have been a communist for over 50 years and I am also a spiritist; I'm an atheist but not a materialist" (Interview, October 1, 1988).

³³ Faz 2 anos que a luta começou / Faz 2 anos que o povo se irmanou / E o Setor Casa Amarela se uniu / De mãos dadas contra o seu explorador // Vamos avante / Que a luta é do povo / A voz do povo é a voz de Deus / Tenhamos fé / Deus nunca abandona / Os pobres humilhados filhos seus.

arms of the workers present here at this moment (applause). The second message is for the people who want to be the owners of the world, the people who pretend to be the owners of this land. These lands belong to nobody, because they belong to all of us. They are surely listening to us at the moment and their agents (*fiscais*) probably received one of our invitations and are present here. So tell your lords that the people who are gathered here do not bear hatred in their hearts. We so badly want good for those who oppress us that we can not let them go on oppressing us. We want that at least, before dying, you do what Zacchaeus did. Divide what you think you possess with those who have nothing and give it back to those whom you have robbed fourfold, like Zacchaeus did (laughter). So we shall only end our struggle when you are equal and as humble as we are (applause). And finally, a last message to you, to us who are here together. We are here on the Morro da Conceição. This hill is to us what Mount Sinai was to Moses. Here we plant and here we will harvest liberation. That this land, which belongs to nobody, may really be ours, because God created it for us (applause).

After *Orações de Fiéis* for a hospitalized member of the Coordinating Committee and for Padre Romano, threatened with extradition, the gathering ended with the reading and distribution of a leaflet. It called for participation in the movement and listed "Ten Ways to Exploit and Cheat the People of the Terras de Ninguém," from collecting rent without being the legitimate owner of the land to forcing people to buy the land and cheating them on top of that.

The movement was gathering momentum and, at a time when opposition also began to stir in other parts of the country and, locally, the *Movimento the Evangelização Encontro dos Irmãos* became more outward oriented, the decision was made to gather signatures under a petition to the President of the Republic.

On April 13, 1978 Document 002447 was registered by the Documentation Service of the Presidency of the Republic.³⁴ It was read by Jarbas Vasconcelos in the Chamber of Deputies that same day. After denouncing the injustices perpetrated by the Rosa Borges family and their Empresa Imobiliária, the 2,650 signers of the petition wrote that they had

resolved to make an appeal to the authority of the President of the Republic in the hope that the Government would expropriate these lands to sell them at prices compatible with the inhabitants' means. Only in this way will our right to shelter (*direito de morar*) be officially guaranteed, avoiding exploitation by people who enrich themselves with what is not theirs, through the improvements the government makes in the area (light, water, paving, etc.), extorting the poor down to their last penny and subjecting them to the worst affronts. We are certain that we are on the side of Justice and Truth

³⁴ For a translation of the full text, see appendix.

and that in this Country there are Laws to defend the humble. In the assurance that Your Excellency will take into consideration this plea for Justice we sign respectfully....

It was not until a year and a half later, after *distensão* had become *abertura* and the governmental attitude toward urban protests had undergone a substantial change, as will be described in the next chapter, that a reaction came to the plea of the inhabitants of the *Terras de Ninguém*.

5.5.2. Stubborn Brasília

A second mobilization that drew attention in these years was on the part of the inhabitants of Brasília Teimosa. This settlement is located to the south of Recife between Boa Viagem and the port area on a 50-hectare peninsula made up of successive landfills. The most important landfills were executed after 1934, when the state of Pernambuco bought parts of the area from the heirs of the Viscount of Livramento. The intention was to build oil tanks. They never materialized, however, and in spite of some attempts at repression, parts of the area were gradually occupied. The occupation peaked in 1957-58, when a draught struck the interior of Pernambuco. People also moved in from the nearby settlement around Pina Bridge, notably fishermen whose access to the sea through the Barra da Jangada -an opening in the reef- had been closed at the time of the landfills. In April 1958, a local newspaper reported the existence of 3,000 shacks in the area. The Port of Recife Administration and other interested parties began pressuring for intervention. Although police harassments increased and some houses were destroyed, the population resisted eviction, "rebuilding at night what had been destroyed in the daytime." Referring to the stubborn resistance of its inhabitants and the construction of the other new city -Brasília- in those years, the settlement became known as Brasília Teimosa: Stubborn Brasília. Neither the municipality nor the state government pushed the case. The consolidation of the settlement took place by way of contacts with local politicians from various parties. One of them was known around this part of town for selling or distributing water from a *carro pipa* (tank car). He also occasionally helped out by bringing in carloads of rubble to consolidate parts of the terrain. In some parts the installation of some extent of infrastructure and of electricity and running water was also with the help of politicians. By the early 1960s, more independent forms of organization emerged, manifesting themselves in street demonstrations and petitions for the improvement of the settlement (cf. Moura, 1987a:155-156; 1990:38; Silva, 1990). These forms of organization disappeared in 1964.

A *Conselho de Moradores* was created in 1966 in the context of the *Operação Esperança*. During the first ten years of its existence, the Council did not

exhibit much activity, however. This changed during the administration of Antônio Farias (1975-79) when rumors spread about the pending urbanization of the area. At the same time a youth group, backed by the local *padre*, brought more activity into the council and replaced the old directory through elections in 1977. In the press the inhabitants of the area -about 20,000 by that time- could see pictures of the projected transformation of their habitat and its integration into the skyline of Boa Viagem, where huge high-rise apartment buildings had mushroomed during the past decade. In collaboration with the FIDEM, the municipal urbanization company URB was drawing up the plans for transforming Brasília Teimosa into a tourism area (see 5.3.1.) As it became clear that the massive removal of the area's inhabitants would generate a huge conflict, URB started to elaborate a scenario aimed at the "humanization" of the *favela* and invited the *Conselho de Moradores* to cooperate. The elaboration of this plan and the invitation to cooperate reflected the change in urban policies on low-income settlements in the context of the redemocratization process.³⁵

Rather than collaborate with the URB on the "humanization project," the Council devised a plan of its own. A Planning Commission was created to produce an alternative plan that would respond to the wishes of the inhabitants. It was supported and advised by a *Centro de Pesquisas e Ação Social*, a private enterprise whose members belonged to the opposition and dedicated part of their time to "support for popular projects." The general aim of the project was to prevent an *expulsão branca* -gradual removal of inhabitants as a result of the upgrading process and the consequent rise in the value- and to carry out a project for the settlement in a democratic participative manner. The activities started with the distribution of information concerning the area and possible solutions to its problems. Subsequently, in the course of 1979, 92 public meetings were held to discuss the proposals and to involve the population. Leaflets, featuring the story of Teimosinho -a fictive inhabitant of the settlement- and explaining aspects of the project, were distributed. Two plays, one relating the history of Brasília Teimosa and the other addressing the sanitation problems of the area, were staged with the same aims. A final draft of the project, as elaborated by the *Centro de Pesquisas e Ação Social* in close collaboration with the *Conselho de Moradores*, was submitted to a plebiscite in November 1979. It was estimated that over 50% of the population somehow participated in the mobilizations accompanying the elaboration of *Projeto Teimosinho* (FASE, 1980). The main feature of the project was that it simultaneously addressed three aspects of the problems of Brasília Teimosa. Legalization of the possession of land by its occupants was coupled with infrastructure im-

³⁵ A mobilization to have a bus-line enter the settlement had taken place earlier. One reason for the success of this mobilization seems to have been that people would no longer have to walk through the zona on the southern fringe of the settlement.

provements and the creation of employment. Otherwise, it was argued, the process would only result in the *remoção branca* of the inhabitants.

While the *Projeto Teimosinho* was being drawn up, on the occasion of its 13th anniversary in August 1979, the Council also launched a *Manifesto* to influence public opinion. In the subsequent months, the Manifest was discussed in the neighborhood and signed by its inhabitants. When President Figueiredo visited Recife in October 1979, marking the shift to a new approach to the urban question³⁶, the Council expected a visit to Brasília Teimosa and wanted to use the occasion to bring the Manifest to the attention of the President. Instead, a Council representative was only allowed to give a short speech, previously discussed with the people in charge of the protocol, during the President's visit to the *favela* of Coque. Nevertheless, the Manifesto³⁷ was launched from a platform erected in Brasília Teimosa. It stated that

Taking advantage of the political moment, we resolved to address the Government and public opinion to communicate the following decisions which have been approved at three general assemblies:

1. First and foremost, we demand the legalization of the land for us, the actual inhabitants, through *aforamento* (direct lease), to provide us definitive security.
2. We are elaborating our own urbanization project with the participation of the whole population, which we consider indispensable for any such project.
3. When the project is ready we shall present it to the Public Power, asking for approval and collaboration in its realization.
4. We do not accept the eviction of any inhabitant for whatever reason (*em hipótese alguma*). Eventual relocations will be permitted only if they take place within the neighborhood.
5. In our urbanization project, we give priority to the most needy part of the neighborhood, which is the seashore (*beira-mar*), or the area of *palafitas*.
6. We demand that, if necessary, special laws be adopted to effectuate the legalization and urbanization, as well as special measures so that, afterwards, everyone will be enabled to pay for the improvements.
7. Any collective matter shall be dealt with through the *Conselho de Moradores*.

Elucidating these points, it was observed that leasehold (*aforamento*) had to be understood as a way of recognizing the "right to land" for everyone: "For free. Without burden (*onus*), because God gave the land without asking a penny from

³⁶ This change in urban politics will be further discussed in the next chapter. On the occasion of this visit, agreements were signed in which the Federal Government leased the area of Coque and Joana Bezerra to the municipality. In view of a regularization of the terrain, the area of Brasília Teimosa was transferred to the municipality.

³⁷ See Appendix.

anybody." Taking this as a starting point, the Council went on with a description of the type of urbanization it had in mind:

Most of us are poor people. Therefore, our urbanization must be for poor people. Without luxuries, without motorways (*autopistas*). But with the comfort we were denied during the long and hard years. The comfort of being able to walk a street without puddles, without mud and without the dust of the summer.

The comfort of having running water in our houses. The comfort of having more hygienic sanitation. The comfort of having a school, a health post, a maternity ward and a market nearby. And above all, the comfort of God's blessing, having the legal guarantee that we can not be sent away (*mandados embora*) due to egotistic and paltry interests.

An urbanization project, finally, that does not come down from the top, imposed without the participation of the population. An urbanization project for us, inhabitants, and made by us like we are doing now, because only through discussion and the unison of all will we win greater justice for the majority of the population.

Other significant features of the position taken by the *Conselho* are the attention for the most needy areas and for the people in rented dwellings -about a third of the families- and the emphasis on the demand to be recognized as the sole legitimate representative of the community, to which every measure has to be submitted before being implemented. With these demands the *Conselho* had formulated an alternative urban project that was to serve as an exemplary model for future initiatives on the part of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and "the popular movement" concerning the regularization of land use and urbanization of low-income settlements (see 7.7.). In the following chapters, I shall discuss the response to Brasília Teimosa's demands by the municipal administration in the context of the "politics of *abertura*."

5.5.3. A changing conjuncture

The two mobilizations described above were embedded in changing conjuncture of the late 1970s and illustrate it in exemplary ways. Just before the *distensão* became *abertura*, the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* addressed a letter to the President of the Republic. A little over a year later, the Dwellers' Council of Brasília Teimosa directly addressed the new President on one of his goodwill trips to legitimate the *abertura* project.

The two movements addressed the presidents in different terms, indicative not only of the national political conjuncture but also of a shift in discourse and mode of organization. The *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* was strongly related to the local CEBs. Its imagery was predominantly religious and often represented an

appeal by the meek and humble to the President in the name of Justice and Truth. Imagery of this kind was much less prominent in the mobilization of Brasília Teimosa. Its Manifesto was an appeal of hard-working citizens to the public authorities in the name of people's rights. One of the processes underlying this difference in discourse between the two movements, was the emergence of new leadership groups, as was the case in Brasília Teimosa. The networks consisting of the Youth Pastoral, the *Instituto de Teologia do Recife* (ITER), *Ação Católica Operária* (ACO)³⁸ and other initiatives were producing a new group of younger leaders more apt to analyze society in socio-political terms. Networks of this kind were an important ingredient in the later efforts toward citywise articulation of a "neighborhood movement" and their dynamics (cf. Lehmann, 1990:173).

Another distinguishing feature was the different attitude to the relation between land rights and urbanization in the two documents. The *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* was against the payment of *foro* and proposed the legalization of the area by way of state-supervised sales and purchases at reasonable prices. Full ownership of their plot would protect the inhabitants from rent rises resulting from the gradual urbanization of the area. While the imagery of a society of equals informed the *Movimento*, the means of achieving this were worked out more concretely in the views on urbanization and land rights of the Dwellers' Council of Brasília Teimosa and its counsellors (*assessores*). For pragmatic as well as ideological reasons, it demanded legalization through perpetual leasehold (*aforamento*). This would be easier to attain than a donation of public land, and it would be less costly to the inhabitants. However, it was also a way to combat real estate speculation and eventual *expulsão branca*. Restrictions on ownership rights and the stipulation of a maximum plot size guaranteed that the urbanization process would benefit the low-income population. This procedure also provided one of the levers for control of the area by the inhabitants through their Dwellers' Council. The sale of a house and the consequent transfer of the plot would be subject to the approval of the Dwellers' Council, which would see to it that the future inhabitants would be of the same status as the present ones. Similarly the Council came up with a popular urbanization project, and demanded a full say in its future execution. As such, it set an example for initiatives elsewhere in the city and for subsequent proposals for legislation on land rights and urbanization as elaborated by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the "popular movement" in 1985 (see 7.7.).

³⁸ The ACO, created in the 1960s, reemerged in the 1970s as virtually the only oppositionist group concerned with trade unionism and the promotion of the Novo Sindicalismo in Recife (Soares, 1985).

5.6. Concluding remarks

In this chapter I discussed the installation of the bureaucratic-authoritarian planning machinery and the "formative" period of the new neighborhood associativism. This brought into view some of the actors and agencies that play a prominent role in the "politics of *abertura*" discussed in the following chapter.

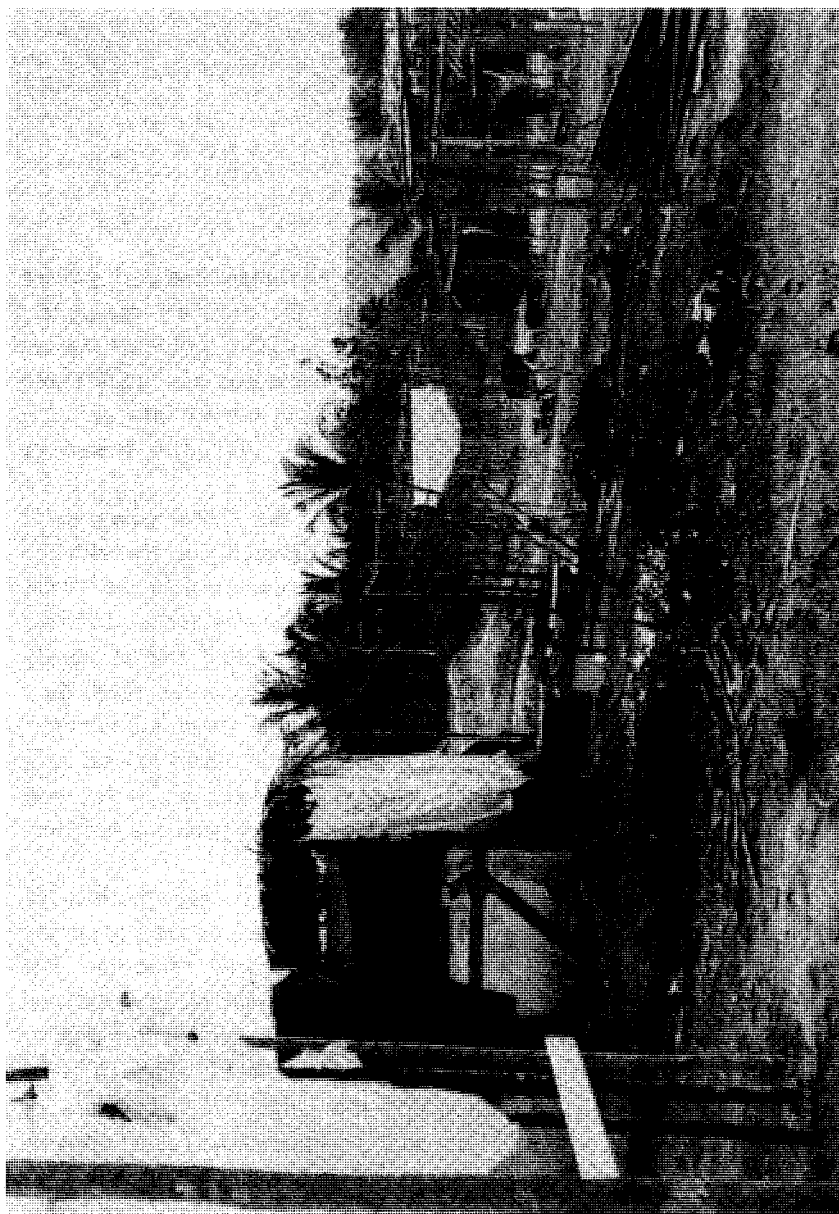
I started this chapter with the general features of bureaucratic-authoritarian urban policies in Brazil, the administrative and financial centralization, the role of the BNH and the institutional framework for the implementation of metropolitan and municipal policies. By the late 1970s, the high degree of centralization started to give rise to debate, eventually resulting in the decentralizing aspects of the 1988 Constitution. The period under discussion in this study thus continued to be marked by the centralized framework installed in the 1960s and 1970s. Where the BNH is concerned we noted how its policies increasingly diverged from its stated aim of providing housing for the low-income strata. Investment in large-scale urban infrastructure became one of its main activities, furthering the interests of large construction companies and contributing to the "miracle"-economy. The housing policies of the BNH became geared to providing housing for the better-off. With the advent of the *abertura*, social concerns once again occupied a prominent place in the BNH policies, as illustrated by the launching of the PROMORAR housing program in 1979. The new turn in urban policies reflected the efforts to boost the legitimacy of the regime in managing the transition to a civilian government. The actual effects were, however, restricted by the economic downturn. The changing political conjuncture also was to affect the planning bureaucracies that came to play a new role in the context of the "politics of *abertura*." In the following chapter, I shall discuss how this politicization resulted in an "identity crisis" of the planning agencies.

The discussion of the urban policies implemented in Recife has demonstrated how little consideration there was for the majority of the population. Investment was concentrated in large-scale infrastructure, the road system and the upgrading of the city center. As far as the low-income population was concerned, the "logic of the system" and the interventions of planning agencies contributed to the relocation of low-income settlements in peripheral areas and actually promoted the growth of *favelas*, since BNH housing was beyond the purchasing power of most of the population. The tensions generated by this logic and accentuated by natural disasters came into the open during the latter half of the 1970s, when the indiscriminate repression of earlier years slackened and Church-related organizations could expand the boundaries of their activities, providing an infrastructure for a new neighborhood associativism as well as much of the discursive matrix for articulating such activities.

The role of the Church in the emergence of the new neighborhood associations can hardly be overestimated. It helped overcome the fear of joining associations or, as *seu* Manoel put it, quoting Dom Hélder: "Communists do not exist in Brazil, what exists is hunger." We have seen how in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the *Operação Esperança* was the main vehicle for promoting neighborhood associativism through the efforts to achieve an "organizational advantage" from the assistance to victims of the floods that hit the city in 1965/66 and again in 1975. By then, *Operação* social work had become largely independent of state agencies as a consequence of the tensions between Church and regime. Foreign funding had become its main resource, and it had started linking up with the emerging Ecclesial Base Communities, the *Movimento de Evangelização Encontro de Irmãos*, to carry out local projects as the distribution of water filters.

If the emergence of the Base Communities was one of the reasons for the eclipse of *Operação Esperança*, the dispute over its political orientation was another. The conflict had its parallel in the working out of the discursive matrix of base community christianism which resulted in the transition from a "phase of preparation" to a "phase of doing things and solving problems." In its broadest sense, it revealed the tension between a religiously inspired approach and a more socio-political one. More concretely, it involved the perspective of social work practice and the relationship between the Church and political activities. What did it mean to do things and solve problems? One orientation tended toward human promotion through communitarian self-help. Its politics were those of denunciation and an appeal to the authorities to right wrongs, while secular politics were often regarded as corrupt as well as corrupting. The other orientation was partly inspired by the urban social movement theorizations, starting to exert influence at the time. This orientation tended more toward confrontation with the authorities and commitment to the newly emerging "popular movement," including its uncorrupted political expressions, a commitment beyond the boundaries of the institutional Church. The two orientations coexisted uneasily rather than in overt conflict and it should be noted that the people who resigned from *Operação Esperança* did so voluntarily, in stark contrast to the purge under Dom Hélder's successor after 1985.

I analyzed the emergence of two movements that can be regarded as outcomes of the formative period of the new neighborhood associativism, and commented on the shifts in discourse and mode of operation taking place in the context of the changing political situation. Both movements were successful in eliciting a response from the authorities. The essentially repressive attitude of the bureaucratic-authoritarian regime made way for the "politics of *abertura*."



Invasion Guabiraba (1988)

THE POLITICS OF ABERTURA

Preparing to assume the presidency, General Figueiredo exchanged the dark glasses he used to wear as Chief of the Intelligence Services for ordinary spectacles, learned to mix socially, make jokes and act the part of a folksy politician. In his inaugural address, in March 1979, the new president expressed his "unshakable intention to make of this country a democracy." *Distensão* turned into *abertura* (Cruz & Martins, 1983:46-48; Kucinski, 1982:76; Skidmore, 1988: 212; Wesson & Fleischer, 1983:39).

In response to internal and international critique, the Geisel government had already taken the sharpest edge off the regime and expressed concern with the national income distribution and the fate of the poor. This concern with the "social question" had, for instance, resulted in the construction of *Centros Sociais Urbanos* (CSU). These multifunctional buildings were "rather monumental" and of hardly any use to the population as Antônio Farias, Mayor of Recife at the time, later admitted (IAB, 1982:114-115). Nevertheless, the construction of these "monuments" and the growing employment of social workers and other professionals to deal with the *carentes* (the needy), as they were now officially called rather than *pobres* with its "subversive" ring (Arcoverde, 1985:82), indicated a shift away from the predominantly repressive attitude.

This shift was strongly accentuated after 1979, when the "politics of *abertura*" was designed to regain some legitimacy among the mass of the population and steer the transition to civilian government in the desired direction. The PROMORAR housing projects (Valladares, 1981) and the launching of a national policy for communitarian development (Arcoverde, 1985:85) were cases in point.

The change, however, can not simply be reduced to a mere change of style, directly resulting from the political situation and the pursuit of new forms of legitimation. It was embedded in the expansion and modernization of state apparatuses and the broader "bureaucratization of Brazilian society," the emergence of the "new middle classes" and new professional groups (Diniz, Boschi & Lessa, 1989:40). Though related, the emergence of professional groups with their own professional organizations and networks, and the expansion of state apparatuses and the

employment of new types of professionals have different dynamics. The importance of the emerging new middle classes for the Brazilian political process has been noted by various authors (e.g. Boschi, 1987; Diniz, Boschi & Lessa, 1989; Oliveira, 1988). Oliveira (1988) observed an interesting aspect when he argued that the technicians employed by the state had their counterpart in the *assessores* (counsellors, advisors) of the "social movements." As such, these agents functioned as "articulators and translators of social demands." In fact it has become clear that the role of middle-class professionals and their professional networks is indispensable if we are to understand the development of "popular movements" and their impact (e.g. Alvarez, 1990; Gohn, 1991:16, 168; Oliveira Neto, 1991; Scherer-Warren, 1991). The "external agents" as well as the technicians employed by state apparatuses belong to these groups. They have often had the same professional training and both groups take part in the dynamics of "professionalization."¹

Social workers and social scientists are a case in point. The increasing employment of these professionals to deal with the "social question" in the context of the "politics of *abertura*" was supposed to defuse the potential impact of the emerging neighborhood associativism. The promotion of "communitarian action" programs had paradoxical consequences, however. It was accompanied by a politicization of the professional groups involved. Some of them, at any rate, tended to be rather critical about the new assistencialism. Like other professionals working with the disadvantaged groups, such as priests, lay social workers employed by the Church or in the growing number of NGOs, their notions of professional practice were partly inspired by the increasingly influential theorizations of "urban social movements." As a result of the questioning of professional practices under the pressure of the democratization process, this broad development contributed to what locally became known as the "identity crisis of the planning mechanisms". Through the work of the *assessores* in particular, it also contributed to the self-identification of neighborhood associations as "urban social movements."

In this chapter, I shall analyze the "politics of *abertura*" in Recife and the vicissitudes of the neighborhood movements in this context. I shall start with a brief overview of the national situation in the 1979-1985 period. Then I shall discuss the advent of the 1979 *abertura* in Recife and the accompanying change in governmental discourse and policy style. Subsequently, I shall discuss the urban plan for Recife that took shape during this period, the *Projeto Recife*, largely financed by the World Bank. I shall also discuss the mounting of the System of

¹ The issue only really became obvious in the course of the 1980s, when the opposition came "to power" and professionals committed to the "popular movement" came to occupy administrative positions. It already existed before then, however, though it was hardly ever analyzed or discussed. Santos' (1981) discussion of his role as state-employed technician with sympathies for the "urban social movements" is exceptional in this context.

Communitarian Action as a major exponent of the new "participatory" policies to promote neighborhood associations under government tutelage in an effort to outflank the existing organizations. One consequence was the "identity crisis of the planning agencies" resulting from the politicization of some of their staff and cadres. I shall discuss the new policies in urban land conflicts. These themes, the *Projeto Recife*, participation and urban land use will be taken up again in the next chapter, when I analyze the contrasting experiences in these areas after 1985.

In the second part of this chapter, I shall turn to the vicissitudes of the "authentic"² neighborhood movement in the context of the "politics of *abertura*." As a result of the active promotion of neighborhood associations by state agencies, this neighborhood associativism "ceased to be a reserved terrain of the 'authentic' movement" (ETAPAS, 1989:60). The struggle for hegemony in this field led to a rapid proliferation of neighborhood associations. On the side of the "authentic" movements this proliferation and the formation of supra-local articulations was promoted by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or *assessorias* as they are locally called, while the role of the Church became less prominent in the social production of "urban social movements." The number of neighborhood associations rapidly increased. In the second half of the 1970s their number had gradually increased, and this process accelerated after 1979. Over half the 151 associations in the municipality by 1985, the end of the period under discussion in this chapter, were founded after 1979 (ETAPAS, 1987; Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988). This development was accompanied by organizational changes, secularization and a changing relation to politics.

6.1. Brazil "in transition"

The return to civilian government, a process that had gradually been taking shape since the mid-1970s, when the Geisel government spoke of "relative democracy," changed gear in 1979. Civil society was "reawakening" and manifesting itself in a variety of ways, and since 1974 elections assumed a plebiscitary role against the military regime. For subsequent elections, the regime resorted to generous doses of electoral engineering to limit the damage to the ARENA Party in the 1976 municipal elections and in the 1978 elections for the federal Senate and Chamber and the State Assemblies. On the eve of the *abertura*, the prior censorship of printed material was lifted and a number of the national security laws, such as the infa-

² *Autêntico* is in contrast to *pelego*, which originally referred to the blanket between the saddle and the horse to "make the going easy" and was used for coopted leaders. The notion of "authenticity" and the related notion of "autonomy" gained great relevance -practically as well as symbolically- in the face of the promotion of neighborhood associativism by state agencies in the context of the "politics of *abertura*."

mous Institutional Act No. 5, were revoked. In 1979, after Figueiredo had taken office, there was a general political amnesty (which also exempted the military from trial for human rights violations). Exiles were allowed to return, and by the end of the year the two-party system, created in 1965 but now inconvenient due to its plebiscitary tendencies, was dissolved and the founding of new parties allowed.

Most of the *Aliança Renovadora Nacional* (ARENA) politicians now flocked into a new "situationist" party, the *Partido Democrático Social* (PDS). The MDB changed its name to *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB). A number of more conservative MDB politicians, including Tancredo Neves, formed a *Partido Popular* (PP). The old *Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro* (PTB) reemerged and after a dispute about the party name, Leonel Brizola founded a new party, the *Partido Democrático Trabalhista* (PDT), which presented itself as a social democratic party. Further left, the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) emerged, priding itself on being "the only Brazilian party which has emerged from the grassroots," namely the base communities, the neighborhood associations, the new trade unions and various leftist groups, particularly in the state of São Paulo.³ In order "not to endanger the fragile democratization process," the municipal elections due in 1980 were postponed until 1982.

The 1982 elections were crucial to the *abertura* project and marked the period under discussion in this chapter. They were to yield the Electoral College, consisting of the federal Senate and Chamber and delegates of the State Legislatures, which was to elect a civilian president in 1985. On November 15, 1982, the population elected new state Governors, Senators, Deputies, State Legislatures, Municipal Councilors and, areas of national security such as the municipality of Recife excepted, new Mayors. It was in this context that the "politics of *abertura*," implying the distribution of favors -including public works and PROMORAR housing- were most prominent. As a result of these policies, and of electoral gerrymandering⁴, the pro-government party PDS (*Partido Democrático Social*) managed to retain control over the Electoral College. However, opposition candidates won ten out of 23 governorships, including those of the economically most important states. In the northeastern states, by contrast, pro-government candidates were elected.

Meanwhile the artificial economic boom, created to sustain the *abertura* and dependent on heavy foreign loans, had collapsed. Several months before the

³ There was definitely a Machiavellian aspect to the fact that the party was allowed to enter the arena, since parties whose names referred to class, religion or race remained banned. Communist parties like the PCB and the PCdoB operated semi-legally within the PMDB and were not allowed to participate in elections until 1985.

⁴ The electoral rules drove the small Partido Popular, which had become known as the Bankers' Party, back into the PMDB.

November elections Brazil had run out of foreign reserves, but readjustment policies were postponed until after the elections. No sooner were the ballot boxes closed, than negotiations started with the IMF and creditor banks. The following years would be marked by austerity policies resulting in a contraction of public spending, an economic downturn and a rapid deterioration of the living conditions for the majority of the population. When in theory the moment had come to divide the cake, it was found to have vanished (Serra, 1990). The 1980s started and ended with recessions, each of which were referred to as the "crisis of the century."

The year 1983 witnessed a recession accompanied by political demonstrations, strikes, riots and a rapid fall in the legitimacy of the military government (cf. Roddick, 1988:138). At the end of the year and in the first months of 1984, the issue of direct presidential elections became the focus of oppositional activity. In spite of *Diretas Já*, the huge campaign for direct presidential elections, Congress turned down the amendment by a narrow margin of 22 votes. However, part of the PDS including Pernambucan governor Marco Maciel subsequently split off to create the neo-liberal PFL (*Partido da Frente Liberal*), which joined forces with the oppositionist PMDB in an *Aliança Democrática* to support the candidacy of Tancredo Neves against "official" PDS candidate Paulo Maluf. In January 1985 Tancredo Neves and his Vice-President José Sarney were elected by the Electoral College and after the dramatic illness and death of Tancredo Neves, it was José Sarney who became president in March. The municipal elections of November 1985, the first to enable Recife to elect a mayor since 1963, close the period under discussion in this chapter.

The period under discussion thus covers the state administrations of Marco Maciel (1979-1982) and Roberto Magalhães (1983-1986) and the municipal administrations of Gustavo Krause (1979-1982) and Joaquim Francisco (1983-1985). The 1982 elections in Pernambuco resulted in a reshuffling of positions among the situationist politicians. Roberto Magalhães, who had been vice-governor during the Marco Maciel administration, became governor, defeating PMDB candidate Marcos Feire with a difference of 5% of the vote. The PDS victory resulted from the votes cast in the interior, whereas in Recife as well as the *zona da mata*, the PMDB was in the majority (Araújo, 1986:53-57; Falcão & Lavareda, 1986). Marco Maciel won a seat as senator. Gustavo Krause traded his post as Mayor of Recife for that of vice-governor. Joaquim Francisco, who had been Secretary of Labour and Social Action under the Moura Cavalcanti government (1975-79), became the last "bionic" mayor of Recife.⁵ His municipal administration contrasted with the neo-populism of Gustavo Krause in that it projected a more technocratic image. In all but two of the other municipalities of the metropolitan region, PMDB candidates were elected mayor in 1982.

⁵ In the meantime Jorge Cavalcante served as interim mayor (*mandato tampão*) for some months.

6.2. A metamorphosis of political discourse

While General Figueiredo announced *abertura* on the national level, in Pernambuco the advent of these new policies was announced in March 1979 by the new Governor Marco Maciel, who had been duly elected by the Pernambucan Legislative in September 1978 after being "indicated" by both Geisel and Figueiredo. The new governor, who had made his career in the years of "Security and Development," now promised "Development with Participation" (cf. Maciel, 1988).

A week later, on March 22, another step down the ladder, Gustavo Krause completed his "peregrination of confidence" (see 5.2.1) and enacted another "metamorphosis of political discourse" (Pires, 1988:60). After having been "indicated" by the governor and "homologated" by the Pernambucan State Legislative, Krause now took office as mayor before the City Council of Recife. He rhetorically asked the Assembly what offering he was bringing to the city and its inhabitants. And he answered: "More than ideas - I have faith; More than intentions - I sign an alliance; More than a discourse - I swear an oath." He promised to seek the improvement of the quality of life, especially for the low income groups, because the "common good is the highest aim of the exercise of power." However, since well-being is not the exclusive task of the government, the new mayor would mobilize "all the men of Recife for the edification of the common work" and after affirming his faith in the democratic regime, Krause went on to promise that

the people will not make demands on me because I will anticipate the satisfaction of their wishes. I will climb *morros*, I will visit *palafitas*, I will walk avenues, I will drink knowledge from popular intuition and learn the wisdom of lived experience: the government will be from the city to the prefecture and not from the prefecture to the city. The people are the source of power and the government is the instrument of their will.

Among further promises about efficiency, the position of the civil servant, public transport, the promotion of micro-enterprises and so forth, the new mayor announced that the Capibaribe riverside would be urbanized, but that the riverside dwellers would not be driven away by the cement. Green areas would also be created and concrete would not be allowed to advance everywhere. And he pledged to

stimulate the communitarian spirit by way of the *Centros Sociais Urbanos*, and by strengthening neighborhood associations, because without participation society is anemic and without mobilization the people will not make themselves the masters of their destiny. The city is an organism, the municipality is the basis of the democratic process and the communities are its cells (Krause, 1979).

In this speech, Krause outlined his municipal administration's main concerns and expressed the new philosophy in governmental circles, revolving around the notion of "integration between the people and the government."

With his populist style, Gustavo Krause was a relatively radical exponent of the new attitude. He was a virtuoso in the "'appropriation' of the discourse and the platforms of the neighborhood movement" (ETAPAS, 1989:49) and was "always trying to occupy spaces" (Fontes, 1986:362). Examples of such "appropriation" are Krause's critique of the subordinate position of the municipality in the administrative hierarchy (Prefeitura, 1980; FIDEM, 1983:30; IAB, 1982:161), a point hitherto stressed by the MDB opposition, and his adoption of a communitarian discourse which often mimics the discourse of human promotion and communitarian self-help proffered by the less radical sectors of the Church. It was accompanied by state-sponsored communitarian projects, and there was no need for mobilization beyond that, since the government would anticipate the people's wishes.⁶

6.2.1. A "New Conception of Planning"

The new attitude was further specified in the main policy document of the Krause Administration, the *Plano de Desenvolvimento do Recife* (PDR) (Prefeitura, 1980), which announced a "New Conception of Planning." Planning was now to be based on "broad consultation with the population," complemented by the promotion of "communitarian mobilization." In its political aspect, it was argued, this would contribute to the democratization of public decision-making. From a social point of view, it would enrich the programs to be executed by incorporating suggestions from the community and assure that the programs were attuned to the community problems. At the individual level, the new approach was to promote the psycho-social integration of the individuals and contribute to their understanding of the role they should play in society:

The community participates, alongside the *Prefeitura*, in identifying social needs so as to indicate and chose the assortment of works and services to be realized with priority; in formulating programs to assure the idealization of simple solutions, compatible with the stage of development and the level of aspirations of the local population; in executing the works, aiming at broadening employment opportunities by incorporating individuals in labor-intensive programs; and in managing of communitarian equipment so as to use it in ways

⁶ Governor Marco Maciel, Pernambuco's political whiz-kid who had made his career as an adherent of "Security and Development," lapsed into a rather queer quasi-populism extolling the ethical qualities of the State, Humanism and "Development with Participation" which, according to Maciel, has profound inherent ethical qualities and contributes to the rationality of the process through its influence on the technicians (Maciel, 1988; cf. Maciel 1989).

most coherent with the customs (*habitos sociais*) of the communities (Prefeitura, 1980:31).

Besides the concern with participation, the references to the "level of aspirations of the people" and "simple solutions" are a constant in the document. People who live in absolute poverty have humble needs, it was argued, which made it clear that after the years of catering to people with big needs, very little funding was available.

The "Development Policy" proposed by the PDR had two tracks, "social integration" and "the ordering of urban space." The policy of social integration was to include a "real transfer of income" to the low income classes by expanding public services and the promotion of the informal sector. As to second track, the "ordering of urban space," the PDR proposed to

seek a general reordering of urban space with a maximum of realism in the face of consolidated situations, the elimination of which would involve excessively high social costs in proportion to the benefit.

This reflects the policy shift from removal of such settlements to a policy of upgrading, which also informed the PROMORAR program (see 5.2.2.). Other items under the heading of reordering urban space were drainage, sanitation, environmental protection and a revision of the road system to improve public transportation.

These considerations ushered into a "Plan of Action" for the 1980-1983-period, consisting of two types of activities. The first pertained to public services⁷ and the second to promoting productive activities by supporting the informal sector, and "dynamizing" the city as a regional "pole," supplying specialized and social services.

On the prefecture level, activities were to be coordinated and monitored through a "System of Accompaniment and Control of the Execution of Projects." To effectuate the participation of the local population in the operational execution of programs focused on poor areas, *Núcleos de Planejamento Comunitário* were to be established in the communities concerned. These were the basic operative units of the "System of Communitarian Action" designed to promote neighborhood associativism in competition with the existing "authentic" associations. I shall demonstrate how in the face of this competition, notions of "authenticity" and "autonomy" became central to their discourse.

Before turning to the workings of the "System of Communitarian Action," attention should be devoted to two of the "Special Programs" of the *Plano de*

⁷ Basic social services such as public health, primary education and markets, communitarian equipment such as roads, water supply, day nurseries and public telephones, infrastructural services such as housing and transportation, and "Special Programs" for the regularization of landownership and use, and a Projeto Recife which will be discussed in the following section.

Desenvolvimento do Recife, the introduction of "urban zoning" as a policy instrument in the regularization of land use in the city and the *Projeto Recife*. An examination of these two special programs will provide a clearer picture of the strategic aims of the urban policies between 1979 and 1985, and of what was at stake in the controversies over these policies.

6.3. Urban zoning and the Projeto Recife

In October 1979, President João Figueiredo was on one of his many goodwill tours. Together with Governor Marco Maciel and Mayor Gustavo Krause, he stood on a platform in the *favela* Coque to celebrate a number of agreements and announce the PROMORAR program for the low income population of Recife. On the platform the President, the Governor and the Mayor solemnly signed agreements formally transferring the areas of Coque/Ilha Joana Bezerra (134 ha) and Brasília Teimosa (49.5 ha) from the federation⁸ to the municipality, which was to see to the regularization of landownership there and to their urbanization within five years. The official speeches conveyed the new concern with the poor and the downtrodden so well that people who took part in some of the invasions during the following weeks quoted the president himself as having said the occupation of unused lands was a perfectly right thing to do (Moura, 1990:96). Brasília Teimosa, as we saw (5.5.2.), took advantage of this opportunity to launch its manifesto and protest that its right to speak out was curtailed.

The measures announced from the platform were presented as ingredients of a still somewhat vague plan called *Projeto Recife*, which promised to benefit twenty-nine low income areas in the city. Negotiations about the "eradication of two hundred thousand *favelados*" (*Governo erradica 200 mil favelados*) as the *Diário de Pernambuco* (August 12, 1979) put it, had been underway for some months, involving various government agencies including the recently created PROMORAR program. The festive event in Coque was an official confirmation of the new approach to the *favela* problem.

The *Projeto Recife* would eventually grow into the *Projeto Grande Recife*, claimed to be the:

major urban project financed by the WORLD BANK in LATIN AMERICA, covering the whole METROPOLITAN REGION OF RECIFE and directly benefitting about 700,000 persons (FIDEM, 1987b:16).

⁸ These were *terras da marinha*, i.e. parts of the land strip bordering on open water and falling under federal jurisdiction because of its importance for national defense.

This was one of the programs for northeastern metropolises endorsed by the World Bank in 1982 (see 5.2.3.).

Before turning to the *Projeto Recife* and the opposition it generated, I shall discuss the introduction of urban zoning in Recife. The definition of urban zones was supposed to provide the legal framework for the *Projeto Recife* and revealed some of the features of the urban project which informed it. However, as we shall see in the next chapter, the legal framework thus introduced also served in the elaboration of a piece of "popular legislation" on the regularization and urbanization of *favelas*.

6.3.1. Urban zoning

The proposal for regularizing urban land was announced in relation to the issue of Brasília Teimosa and other problem areas.⁹ In the background, however, there was the project for new legislation on urban land use necessitated by the introduction of the policy instrument of urban zoning at a federal level in 1979 and 1980 (Schmidt & Farret, 1986:47). Locally, a legal framework for the implementation of *Projeto Recife* was needed. The outcome of these various considerations was the municipal *Lei de Uso e Ocupação do Solo, No 14.511* of January 1983, which replaced the outdated legislation of 1961.

Law No. 14.511 distinguished two types of area in the municipality of Recife. The "area of urban expansion" was the part considered of interest for the preservation of nature, special protection and low density occupation. The "urban area" was the part destined for urban occupation. It was subdivided in six types of zones¹⁰, which in turn had their subcategories.

In the category of "Special Zones," the *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS - Special Zones of Social Interest) are of particular interest to us. They were characterized as consolidated areas of spontaneous settlement where special urban norms were to be applied in view of the social interest of promoting their legal

⁹ The PDR stated that "for the regulation of the tenure (*posse*) and use of land, the areas of Brasília Teimosa, Coque, Ilha Joana Bezerra, the Várzea of the Capibaribe and the hills of Casa Amarela are given priority. Some of these areas will initially be transferred by the Federal Government to the Prefecture in conjunction with the Secretary of Housing, and will then be gradually transferred to the present occupants."

¹⁰ Residential zones, zones of multiple activity, special zones, industrial, green and institutional zones.

regularization and integration into the urban structure.¹¹ In Annex 4B to the law, the ZEIS were specified.¹²

The classification of twenty-seven areas as potentially consolidable was criticized from the start by the *Comissão de Justiça e Paz* and others. The Prefecture itself acknowledged the existence of seventy-two "subnormal settlements" in the municipality, whereas the more realistic unofficial figure was approximately a hundred (cf. Fontes, 1986:370). The listing of twenty-seven areas implied that the majority of the existing settlements were considered potentially removable. The criteria for the choice of settlements to be consolidated were not very clear, at least from the formal point of view (cf. Fontes, 1986:365-370). Rather than reflecting concern with "subnormal settlements" in general, the choice of settlements concentrated in two areas, namely Boa Viagem (*Litoral Sul*) -fourteen settlements- and the Capibaribe area -thirteen settlements-. It revealed a preference for areas that were rapidly increasing in value and were consequently often sites of tension: the coastline and the riverside near the city center, which had increased in value with the regulation of the Capibaribe through the construction of dams upstream.

Rather than heavy-handed eviction, the critics asserted, the concentration on just these areas was indicative of the intention to clear them of their inhabitants by other means, the *expulsão branca* through the combined effect of the areas' upgrading and the market forces. This suspicion was reinforced by the fact that the special urban norms to be applied to the *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS) never were clearly defined.

In the next chapter I shall examine how in collaboration with the "popular movement," the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* elaborated a law proposal on the regularization and urbanization of the ZEIS, which makes it possible to increase the number of such zones and defines the urban norms to be applied. This grassroots proposal, which drew inspiration from the *Projeto Teimosinho* (see 5.5.2., 5.5.3.), became a law in Recife in 1987.

¹¹ "Caraterizadas como assentamentos habitacionais surgidos espontaneamente, existentes e consolidados, onde são estabelecidas normas urbanísticas especiais, no interesse social de promover a sua regulação jurídica e sua integração na estrutura urbana" (Lei 14.511, Art. 14-II).

¹² In 1980 a preparatory document *Delimitação das Areas Especiais do Município do Recife* (Prefeitura/URB, 1980) had defined Special Areas as "subnormal settlements with a potential for consolidation and whose removal certainly would involve high social and/or financial costs." It listed 26 areas, totalling 1691 ha. The areas are: Cavaleiro (61.33 ha), Pacheco (23.17 ha), Areias (25.90 ha), Barro (28.22 ha), Capuá (6.31 ha), Vila Redenção (5.34 ha), Caçote (7.84 ha), Mangueira (64.63 ha), Vietnam (11.04 ha), Torrões (7.49 ha), Sítio das Palmeiras (10.79 ha), Cuba (6.88 ha), Casa Amarela (895 ha), Alto Santa Isabel/ Alto do Mandu (63.33 ha), Vila São Miguel (16.10 ha), Jiquiá/Remédios (40.2 ha), Novo Prado (7.25 ha), Prado (10.13 ha), Madalena (13.13 ha), Dois Unidos (34.34 ha), Coque (134 ha), Linha do Tiro (62.40 ha), Encanta Moça (42.31 ha), Fundão de Fora (26.97 ha), Brasília Teimosa (49.51 ha), Ilha do Joaneiro (37.45 ha). Later the settlement of Coelhoos was added to the list.

6.3.2. Projeto Recife

The city zoning was attuned to the Projeto Recife, which gradually took shape and volume. It had been announced from the platform in Coque as a project to benefit the low-income settlements, which were also going to benefit from the PROMORAR program.

Projeto Recife figured again in the *Plano de Desenvolvimento do Recife* (PDR), which was published in 1980. The focus was on the two abovementioned areas, where the *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS) were in the process of being defined: the *Litoral Sul* (Boa Viagem) and the Capibaribe area including its fringe toward the Avenida Norte.¹³ The Capibaribe project was to become central to the Projeto Recife. As depicted in the PDR, it consisted of the creation of a metropolitan park, the conservation and restoration of historical sites, a study of the viability of river navigation and its incorporation into the public transportation network, and "controlled housing projects," principally of the *padrão médio*. As such, it can be considered a continuation this increasingly valued area's incorporation tendencies which had been at work since the early 1970s (see 5.3.1). The same applies to the Ilha Joana Bezerra, which was now destined to become a park rather than a traffic terminal, while the *favela* of Coque was to be upgraded.

In the following years the *Projeto Recife*, as outlined in the PDR, became embedded in a *Projeto Grande Recife*. This development was related to the shift to external financing of urban development programs in the context of the economic downturn. From late 1980 onward, the FIDEM became involved in a project to be submitted to the World Bank. In April 1982, an agreement was reached for the metropolitan region of Recife, involving the sum of \$374,000,000. The Project was to be concluded by 1985. The World Bank/BIRD would contribute 35%, the Federal Government 15%, the State Government 35% and the municipalities of Recife and Jaboatão 15% (cf. FIDEM, 1987a: 53; FIDEM, 1987b:16; FIDEM/UFPE, 1986:41; Prefeitura/URB, 1987; CEAS, n.d.).¹⁴

¹³ This linked up with two projects already underway, financed through the BNH credit line for Comunidades Urbanas para Recuperação Acelerada (CURA). According to a later evaluation, they contributed more to the municipal debt than to the well-being of the population (cf. BNH/DEPEA, 1987:59-61)

¹⁴ This arrangement was renegotiated in 1985, when the duration of the project was also extended to 1988. The total projected investment was reduced to \$247,000,000. The World Bank contribution remained nominally equal, increasing its share in the total to 50%, whereas the shares of the Federal and State Governments and the participating municipalities became 15%, 25% and 10% respectively. By that time, 44 different state agencies were involved in the project, 35 operational agreements had been signed and 280 contracts for the execution of works had been signed (cf. Diário de Pernambuco, May 7, 1985 and December 18, 1985). Ricardo Couceiro, who was president of the URB at the time, stated that "Until this day I never saw an integration between municipal, federal and state organs as now through this project" (Diário de Pernambuco, July 28, 1985). The subsequent municipal administration found the tangle of agreements and contracts "practically impossible to administrate" (Prefeitura/URB, 1987:4).

Thus the *Projeto Recife* became a sub-project of the *Projeto Grande Recife*, an investment project according to the spatial structuring of the metropolitan region in the *Plano de Desenvolvimento Integrado* (PDI/RMR) of 1976 (see: 5.3.1.) and a more recent version of this plan, the *Plano de Desenvolvimento Metropolitano* (PDM) (FIDEM, 1983). The World Bank was to finance projects in three of the four *nucleações* of the metropolitan region, the central, the northern and the western one. The southern *nucleação* was to receive investments through the SUAPE harbor project (FIDEM, 1987).

The *Projeto Recife*, the sub-project for the *nucleação centro* agreed upon with the World Bank, did not include the Boa Viagem area, where projects were financed in other ways. It consisted of the Capibaribe Project and a program for employment and income, which was to promote the informal sector and micro-enterprises:

A. Program for the Revitalization of the Capibaribe:

1. Occupation of vacant areas
 - housing (PROMORAR, COHAB, INOCOOP, SBPE)
 - parks
2. Urbanization of poor areas
3. Urban complementation

B. Program for Employment and Income:

1. Project for *Núcleos de Prestação de Serviços*
2. Project for support of micro-enterprises
3. COOPESCA Project (support for fishermen's cooperative).

The Capibaribe-Project had the largest impact and generated the most criticism, whereas the employment and income program was mainly criticized for its ineffectiveness and slow implementation.

6.3.3. Revitalizing the Capibaribe

The program for the occupation of "vacant areas" was at the heart of the Capibaribe Project. It involved a total of 228 ha, of which 90 ha were to be turned into parks and the remaining 138 ha were for housing. This intervention was to be financed through a scheme called *financiamento cruzado*: with resources obtained from the sale of urbanized lots on the left bank of the river, the urbanization and regularization of low-income areas on the other side of the river was to be fi-

As a result of the financing procedure (*cláusula de ressarcimento*; the payment after presentation of bills for actual expenses) and the austerity policies of the period, much less money was spent than was foreseen in the projections (FIDEM/UFPE, 1986:43; Prefeitura/URB, 1987). Schmidt (1984) argues that the financial scheme contributed to the increase of Brazil's foreign debt since an interest of between 7% and 11.6% was due, as well as a *taxa de permanência* of 0.75% on unused funds.

nanced. This implied the removal of low-income inhabitants from the "vacant areas" on the left bank.

This scheme was complemented by the housing program. Initially this program provided for the construction of 10,118 residences, for four different income strata. Supposedly in order to render the scheme financially viable (Diário de Pernambuco, July 28, 1985) the housing program was subsequently readjusted to cater to the high-income strata. By 1985, the difference between the initial proposal and the then current project was as follows:

H o u s i n g	income strata	1981	1985	Difference
Standard*		(units)	(units)	
SBPE	A	1,017	3,422	+ 2,405
INOCOOP	B	3,640	3,378	- 262
COHAB	C	2,425	-	- 2,425
PROMORAR	D	3,036	2,641	- 395
TOTAL		10,118	9,441	- 677

* Padrão Habitacional, referring to the type of housing and the type of financing. The SBPE (Sistema Brasileiro de Poupança e Empréstimo) and the INOCOOP (Instituto para Orientação de Cooperativas) cater to the middle and upper income strata. (Prefeitura/URB, 1987)

In order to preserve the self-financing aspect of the scheme, the number of housing units for the highest income class tripled, whereas those for the lower income classes were reduced; the 2,425 COHAB units were dropped altogether. It was a case of "systemic logic," generating a feeling of *déjà vu*.

According to Ricardo Couceiro, President of the URB, the project involved the removal of some 1,700 families (Diário de Pernambuco, July 28, 1985). In actual fact, 1,074 families in four communities were registered. By 1985, 504 families had received an indemnification in cash and 570 had moved to PROMORAR dwellings. As far as PROMORAR was concerned, only 730 dwellings were actually built until 1985.¹⁵ This means that in spite of the rhetorics of the housing program, 47% of the families involved received an indemnification and went to live in another *favela*.

What happened can be illustrated by the developments in one of the first *favelas* removed from the "vacant areas" on the left bank of the Capibaribe. With the support of the Church and the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, the inhabitants of the *favela* Vila da Prata, who had lived in the area for some 40 years, initially demanded that their *mocambos* be exchanged for brick houses without any payment

¹⁵ No fewer than 160 dwellings were distributed to people who had not been registered as "target population."

required from the inhabitants who had never had to pay for their housing and whose incomes were precarious, to say the least. The URB, for all its new concern with "the social," countered with the proposal to pay indemnifications to those unable to cope with the costs of PROMORAR housing. More than half the families accepted this proposal. Some of them went to invade elsewhere, whereas others rented some new place. In most cases the amount of the indemnification was not enough to buy a new plot. The other families, backed by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, reached a verbal agreement with the URB, which promised the houses would be handed over at no cost. By that time the dwellings for the low-income groups, originally supposed to measure 30 m², had already been reduced to *casas embrião*, measuring 16.8 m². Giving in to the criticism, the "house for a house" scheme was formally adopted by Joaquim Francisco in October 1984, but nothing was done to render this promise financially viable (cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, October 13, 1984; July 21, 1985; September 29, 1985; October 6, 1985; Prefeitura/URB: 1987).

The actual implementation of the *Projeto Recife* was partial and selective. Between 1983 and 1985, only the first of the four phases was more or less executed and only 10% of the programmed resources was actually spent. This was due to the austerity policies of the federal government and the crisis of the BNH, as well as to conflicts and misunderstandings between the various bureaucracies involved, such as the SUDENE, the FIDEM and the URB. Within this context of modest performance, the *áreas vazias* program received priority, however. A "Qualitative Evaluation" by a URB/FIDEM/SUDENE team of the interventions in Torrões, one of the two areas where something was actually done in the program for the *áreas pobres*, stated that:

The implementation pace of the Project in Torrões, if compared with that of the "Áreas Vazias," reveals that the latter was given priority by the public authorities (*poder público*). This fact reveals its link with the interests of real estate capital, since the interventions in the "Áreas Vazias" are characterized by the production of space for future private investment through the removal of favelas, the acquisition and reclaiming (*aterro*) of the area, the introduction of physical infra-structure and social facilities (URB/DPU, 1986:53).

The upgrading process in Torrões did not benefit the poorest strata of the population, which tended to move out of the area due to rising rents and probably also taxes. The rent rises and the expulsion of renters in other ways was fueled by the delay and uncertainty over the legalization of the area. Furthermore, the team noted that the quality of the works in the area was rather low. This evaluation reflected the criticism of the *Projeto Recife* and its interventions in the Capibaribe area, which had become an issue of public debate, particularly in the run up to the 1985 elections.

The Project had been criticized from the very start by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* whose president, Pedro Eurico de Barros e Silva, denounced it as early as 1979 for promoting real estate speculation at the expense of the *favelados*. In 1982 Pedro Eurico was elected City Councilor for the PMDB and in 1983, he promoted a debate on the Project in the City Council. The Council "questioned the Project," but without any consequences. Criticism of the project was mounting, however. People evicted from their old dwelling site expressed dissatisfaction with their new conditions and the quality of the PROMORAR dwellings. There was also resistance to eviction, notably in the case of the *favela* Poço da Panela, which could rely on support from the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*.

In July 1985, oppositional candidate Jarbas Vasconcelos announced that if elected mayor in November of that year, he would promote a substantial revision of the Project. Later that month, the Regional Council for Engineering, Architecture and Agronomy organized a public debate on the Project, and Pedro Eurico was one of the people to voice their criticism. A week later the president of the URB, Ricardo Couceiro, responded with an interview extolling the Project as being all *em cima do social*. Simultaneously the Institute of Brazilian Architects (IAB) published a memorandum stating that the Capibaribe Project only served urban speculation and arguing that the evicted population had been pressed to accept an indemnification instead of being relocated in acceptable dwellings (Diário de Pernambuco, July 7, 1985; July 21, 1985; July 28, 1985). Similar criticism was voiced by other groups, such as the Pernambucan Association of Sociologists (ASPE) and the local branch of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB). In September, Pedro Eurico once again resumed the critique of the Project, drawing an acid response from the URB, which accused him of electoral propaganda and lying (Diário de Pernambuco, September 29, 1985; October 6, 1985; October 8, 1985). The debate and the eventual outcome of the elections provided leeway for an effort toward the participative reorientation of the *Projeto Recife*, which I shall discuss in the next chapter.

To resume, the *Projeto Recife* was supposed to benefit the low-income settlements and their population. Whatever the original intentions, and doubts are justified, it turned out to be a continuation of the elitist urban policies of the 1970s, though the utopia informing the projects did change. It had hitherto entailed huge traffic terminals, shopping centers, hotels and parkings, and the emphasis now shifted to upper and middle-class residential use and parks. Through adjustments and the selective implementation of the interventions that had been announced, the old policy aim of incorporating the area to the benefit of the better-off was pursued. This turned the *Projeto* into a symbol for opposition to bureaucratic-authoritarianism, now in its aftermath.

6.4. A changing policy style

The general direction of urban policies tended to conform to the earlier pattern, but the style of implementation changed significantly with the advent of the "politics of *abertura*." This change of style, should be analyzed in the context of the expansion of the new middle classes and the modernization of the Brazilian state, including the institutionalization of planning agencies. This process was not without contradictions. Planners can feel frustrated by the subordination of their plans and professional ethics to "the logic of the system" and it is no mere coincidence that professional associations like that of architects and engineers became a platform for debating alternatives (IAB, 1982) and joined in the critique of the *Projeto Recife*. Professional networks, were the medium for the exchange of ideas between technicians employed by the state and those banned from official state employment, but perhaps contracted for specific projects as employees of private consultancy firms.¹⁶

Nor is it a coincidence that sociologists joined in the critique. After an initial period of marginalization (Abranches, 1982), the years of dictatorship also were the years when the social sciences in Brazil "came of age" and the years of the increasing employment not only of social scientists but also of social workers, particularly in the latter half of the 1970s (cf. Amorim, 1983; Figueiredo, 1988, Ortiz, 1990; Resnick, 1983). The institutionalization of professional groups accompanied these developments and, like other professional groups, the social science sector was caught in the process of "the awakening of civil society" resulting in a rapid radicalization of at least some of the new professionals who sought to develop a professional practice of commitment to the popular movements (cf. ANAS, 1987). This involved questioning their own education and the central role of concepts like "community" and "communitarian action" and their professional practice, including a critique of "assistentialism." The fact that the works of Castells (1977), Borja (1975) and Lojkine (1981) on "urban social movements" became increasingly available¹⁷ at the time had a pervasive influence on the discussions of professional training and practice and resulted in the displacement of

¹⁶ "It was quite funny (*engraçado*), because to set up a project they would have to contract a serious team and most often those people would not identify (*compactuar*) with the regime because they had a view of society (*visão social*) in which they believed" (Interview with architect, July 14, 1988).

¹⁷ Castells' books on *The Urban Question* and on *Urban Social Movements* were published in 1972 (Spanish translation in 1976) and 1973 (Spanish translation in 1974), Borja's book was published in 1975 and Lojkine's in 1977 (Portuguese translation in 1981). Previously circulating in covert circuits, they now rapidly came into the open.

"community" by "social movement" in professional discourse (cf. ANAS, 1987; Arcoverde, 1985; Sposati, 1988:273-318).¹⁸

The implications of the growing role of the social sciences and their politicization resulting from imbrications of this process with the political conjuncture, were manifold. The process was complicated. The "communitarian" discourse propagated by the Church was now "appropriated" by governmental circles. At the same time, in the "authentic" neighborhood associations the growing influence of the "social movement" discourse contributed to the shift from a biblical discourse and attendant moral economy to a more socio-politically informed discourse. The latter shift was (see 5.5.3.) already under way in the late 1970s, but was significantly boosted by the increased availability of the new literature on social movements (see 6.7.). In this section, I shall focus on the "appropriation" of the communitarian discourse in governmental circles, with the aim of depoliticizing the "social question" and outflanking the oppositionist neighborhood associations. I shall demonstrate how the new policies contributed to the politicization of the bureaucracies, which eventually resulted in what became known as the "identity crisis" of the planning agencies.

6.4.1. The System of Communitarian Action

The participatory policies Gustavo Krause had announced when assuming the mayorship started to take shape in the course of 1979 with the launching of the *Projeto Um por Todos*. It mimicked the Church-promoted self-help projects in the mobilization of communitarian labor for projects in the neighborhood such as the paving of a street with material supplied by the municipality. Various streets were paved and provided with a *placa* (plaque) to commemorate the Krause administration, particularly in Casa Amarela (cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, October 8, 1979; *URBIS*, 1979:40-41; 1980:51). As a consequence of the critique of oppositionist neighborhood associations and with the 1982 elections approaching, "communitarian labor" tended to be replaced by wage labor financed by the municipality.

By mid-1979, an *Encontro de Bairros* was organized under the slogan "Raise your hand and defend your neighborhood" (*Levante a mão e defenda o seu bairro*) to promote a dialogue between the people and the government and work together for the construction of a better city (Prefeitura, 1979). A number of oppositionist associations attended the event to file demands and see what the new politics was

¹⁸ Arcoverde's (1987) book is particularly interesting since her critique of the harmony model of "communitarianism" reflects the local situation and the views held in university circles on the involvement of social workers in the government-promoted "communitarian action" programs.

about. The event, as we shall see later, was a catalyst for efforts to articulate the "authentic" movement in the face of the new policy style.

In February 1980, the new policies went a step further with the foundation of a *Sistema de Ações Comunitárias* (SAC) as a dependency of the municipal Secretary of Planning and Urbanism. It was presented as a system of mediation between "the People and the Government" and was to allow for the identification of the real needs of the population, the effective decentralization of municipal services, and "communitarian mobilization for participation in the process of development." This was to be realized by promoting the coordination and integration of interventions by the various municipal agencies in low income communities and by setting up *Núcleos de Planejamento Comunitário* (NPC), or *barracões*, in these communities. The localization of these NPCs was related to programs for the urbanization of *favelas*. By 1983, twenty *barracões* had been set up (Prefeitura, 1983b).

The "method" of introducing the NPCs, as described in the official documents, started with a recognizance of the area, involving the identification of leaders and organizations active and drawing up list of priorities. Subsequently the area was divided into sub-areas, meetings were organized with the selected base groups to discuss the problems and the community was oriented in forming a representative *núcleo* "through the strengthening of the existing groups," so as to collaborate in carrying out projects. Between 1980 and 1983 the NPCs, which were claimed to benefit 192,183 persons, deployed activities in nine fields: 1. Issuing documents (36,305 documents); 2. Support for groups and organizations (*entidades*); 3. Promotion of events; 4. Health care (53,647 medical consultations and 2,883 extracted teeth -*exodontia simples*); 5. Education, culture and leisure; 6. Provision of water filters; 7. Productive activities; 8. Legalization of landownership (*posse da terra*); 9. Water supply.

The "support for groups and organizations" clearly was an attempt to counter the oppositionist influence in the existing neighborhood associations. In various cases (e.g. Coelhos, Brasília Teimosa, areas in Casa Amarela), parallel organizations were set up. The dialectics of this process contributed to the rapid increase in the number of associations in the early 1980s. The aim of the municipal support for groups and organizations in low-income communities was "to strengthen their social structure and make it more participative and integrated with the Prefecture of Recife."

According to the Report on its activities in 1980-83, about a hundred groups (clubs, schools, *templos religiosos*, health posts, carnival groups, *terreiros de umbanda*) in the *Barracões* activity areas were stimulated by the support and orientation of SAC-teams. In addition, Mother Groups, Groups of Young People, Groups of Neighbors, Commissions of Representatives, Groups for Productive Activities, Groups of Adolescents, Groups for Folkloristic Markets (*Feirinhas*

Típicas), Nutrition and Health Groups and Water Filter Groups were promoted. During the three-year period, the SAC patronized (*patroncinados*) 543 "events" to stimulate the participation of local groups in "events traditionally celebrated by the community" such as Carnival, Easter, Labor Day, the *Festas Juninas*, Mothers' Day, Fathers' Day and Childrens' Day and civic-religious events. There was also elementary health care and "professionalising" courses, diversified "according to the vocation of the participants and the social economic conditions of the community" (crochet, manicure, embroidery, ceramics, dactylography, hairstyling, etc.).

The SAC was also involved in the titling of land, with priority for the communities of Brasília Teimosa, Coque and Coelhos. In Brasília Teimosa some 2.000 titles were granted during the run-up to the 1982 elections. In 1984 these titles, granted for clear electoral purposes, proved to be a fraud (Moura, 1990:31, 48). Later on, I shall come back to the regularization of land use (see 6.5.1.).

The participatory policies of the Krause administration were accompanied by a process of centralization, facilitated by the computerization of the municipal bureaucracy (Pires, 1988:67). Since the Lucena administration (1971-1975), the use of computers in the municipality had increased significantly. They had basically served the Secretary of Administration and the Secretary of Finance. By 1980, however, the Cabinet of the Prefect set up a *Cadastro de Relações Públicas* and a *Sistema de Controle de Solicitações*. These two systems served to help concentrate the decision-making power in the Cabinet of the Prefect, who had the final say on

the definition of the settlements that will be worked on during the administration; the definition of the resources to be allocated per settlement on the basis of the resources for actions for the low-income groups (*ações de baixa renda*); the definition of the actions to be executed in the settlement and the approval of the Program of Communitarian Action (cited in Pires, 1988:67).

This served as a back-up for the efforts of the Krause administration to control, outflank or coopt neighborhood associations, a form of computerized clientelism and populism he was to pursue after 1982 as Vice-Governor.

6.4.2. The Caminhos Comunitários Program

The 1982 elections modified the situation described above, in that there was a reshuffling of positions among the situationist politicians (see 6.1.). In the new Pernambucan government, the presidency of the Deliberative Council of the *Fundação de Desenvolvimento da Região Metropolitana do Recife* (FIDEM) was assigned to Vice-Governor Gustavo Krause as a new platform for his participative policies. Until then the FIDEM had been an "insulated bureaucracy," not directly involved in the execution of plans, but it now was restructured and became involved in interventions in low-income settlements that were part of the *Projeto*

Grande Recife (FIDEM/UFPE, 1986:45). This meant the system of *barracões* was transferred from the municipal to the state level and became a FIDEM responsibility. The municipal administration under Joaquim Francisco was more technocratic than under Gustavo Krause, who is widely remembered for his visits to the *morros* where he used to mix with the people and have a *cachaça* or two. In contrast to the Krause administration with its emphasis on "the social," the new administration stressed its focus on "the city as a whole" and was more technocratic in its approach. Governor Roberto Magalhães is said to have described the new mayor as 50% Antônio Farias, the *tocador de obras*, and 50% Gustavo Krause, the neopopulist. The Krause administration's computerized system was geared to Joaquim Francisco's public relations scheme. Nevertheless, a *Grupo de Ação Comunitária* (GRAC), partly consisting of communitarian leaders on the municipal payroll, remained active in conjunction with the System of Communitarian Action.

Activities in this field picked up again in the course of 1984 and in October of that year the *Caminhos Comunitários* Project was launched by the state government's Secretary of Labor and Social Action (STAS/DPASI, 1984). The program was aimed at seventy low-income communities in the metropolitan region and sought "to awaken communitarian consciousness, which will lead (*conduzirá*) to the solution of their problems, the discovery of their social identity and the valorization of the local culture." This was expected to reduce the consequences of urbanization for the quality of life in these communities. There also was an increase in "acts of support to strengthen the communitarian leadership and the organization and structuration of groups, so as to prepare them for the occupation of their socio-political space."

Four specific areas of activity were outlined in the *Caminhos Comunitários* Project:

1. Social integration, consisting of the commemoration of events (e.g. start of school year, Carnival, the Folklore Week, Week of the Deficient, of the Fatherland, of the Community and of the Elderly) and a round of campaigns and lectures, centered on ecology, hygiene and the cleanliness and maintenance of public roads.
2. Incentives to structure groups, mobilizing existing groups, identifying interests, promoting the formation of new groups, training and meetings¹⁹;
3. Strengthening Communitarian Leadership by training, supervising elections for local councils and associations, organizing encounters for leaders, plebiscites, meetings, seminars and *simpósios*;

¹⁹ The project staff attended meetings to assess the "degree of growth (grau de crescimento) of the groups," the counterpart of concientização.

4. Diffusion of Communitarian Culture by promoting *Feirinhas Típicas* and exhibitions, organizing contests and festive events.

The Project had a staff of forty-six. A core group of "technicians" consisted of four *assistentes sociais*, three sociologists, three psychologists, one pedagogue and one researcher (*pesquisador*). This group was complemented by *bolsistas* (students): ten from the *serviço social*, ten sociology students, seven psychology students and three pedagogy students. Lastly, there were a typist and a driver.

The aim of the System of Communitarian Action and related activities, to outflank the "authentic" associations, was clear from the mode of operation and the choice of areas where the greatest activity was deployed, Casa Amarela being a good example. In areas where an authentic association already existed, a common course of action was to select a number of people with "leadership capacities" from a local football club, the domino league or a PDS *cabo eleitoral*. Statutes for the new association were drawn up, it was provided with a meeting place and then the transfer of resources would start. Significantly, these transfers were not to the association but to persons active in the association. The entries in the prefectures computerized monitoring system referred to persons rather than organizations, revealing the personalism characteristic of a clientelist network. Parallel organizations were thus created in various areas of Casa Amarela, in Brasília Teimosa and Coelhos, to mention some of the most notable examples.²⁰

In other cases, an association was set up to cooperate in executing plans for the area. In Torrões, one of the *Projeto Recife* areas, a neighborhood council was created in early 1983 under the direct influence of the local *barracão*. Its directors were appointed by System of Communitarian Action technicians and the activities were virtually inseparable from those of the *barracão*, notably the organization of festivities, athletic events and the like. Elections for a new directory were held in March 1985 with four groups participating. An oppositionist group won the elections. From then on, the prefecture ignored the Council and continued to channel resources to the Chairman of the Domino League, who had been defeated in the elections (cf. URB/DPU, 1986:11-12).

Rather than being concerned with the kind of *concientização* of the "authentic" associations, the state-promoted associations were thus involved in organizing festivities like "Miss Neighborhood" contests, commemorating the *Dia das Crianças*, involving the distribution of presents and toys, and patriotic events. Individualized assistentialism played an important role. The associations also served to mobilize "communitarian labor" for neighborhood improvement projects drawn up by the prefecture. The strategy thus consisted of "appropriating" elements of the

²⁰ In some cases, an existing association might establish a relatively good working relationship with a *barracão* team of social workers, but such teams were marginalized or simply replaced by people involved in PDS campaigning during the run-up to the 1982 elections (cf. FASE, 1983:11).

communitarian action methods that characterized the forms of neighborhood associativism promoted by the Church, and rearticulating them into a new discursive and organizational matrix. The communitarian self-help method of the *mutirão* was adopted by state agencies as a form of "participation," but the reference for communitarianism was "the nation" rather than "the poor" or "the popular classes," as is clear from the celebration of patriotic events. Rather than promoting horizontal solidarities, these activities were embedded in verticalist and personalized relationships of clientelism and patronage.²¹

Based on activities of this kind, two federations of neighborhood associations were created. The *Federação das Associações de Moradores dos Núcleos Habitacionais de COHAB e Similares de Pernambuco* (FEMOCHOHAB) was founded in 1980 as a statewide federation. Affiliated groups were usually founded by COHAB teams of social assistants, as happened in the *unidades residenciais* in Ibura, but other "similar" groups were also linked to the federation. They were partly financed by a "communitarian support fee" controlled by the COHAB. The FEMOCHOHAB claimed to represent 536 organizations, ranging from domino leagues to *centros comunitários*, but this was surely an overestimate. A common feature of these groups was that they served as electoral committees and participated in the communitarian action programs of the Krause administration and in the subsequent *Caminhos Comunitários* program. The *Federação Comunitária de Pernambuco* (FECOPE) was founded in 1983 based on groups related to the populist mobilization schemes of Gustavo Krause's municipal administration. In contrast to the FEMOCHOHAB, an almost entirely manufactured affair, the FECOPE also included coopted groups.

6.4.3. The politicization and "identity crisis" of the planning agencies

The launching of the Communitarian Action programs implied a politicization of the planning agencies. They became directly involved in attempts to outflank oppositionist neighborhood associativism. This also meant a rise in the number of a new type of "frontline personnel," trained in the social sciences and often critical of the tasks assigned to them. Their professional ethics urged them to make people aware of the possibilities for "structural solutions," rather than organize adhesion to governmental policies or even become involved in electoral policies. As Arcoverde (1985:154), put it:

²¹ The new communitarian discourse adopted in governmental circles fitted well with World Bank thinking about "community development" but, as various informants stressed, its emergence in Recife was a mainly local development related to the abertura process.

In the midst of the authoritarianism which informs the programs in which they actuate, the social assistant learns of a conflictive reality in the general context of the social relations.

Such people became concerned with "cooptation of professional practice." Similar processes affected other professional groups, such as architects and engineers (e.g. IAB, 1982). These developments contributed to what became locally known as the "identity crisis" of the planning agencies.

It was most notable in the case of the FIDEM, until 1982 an "insulated bureaucracy." That changed when it came to resort under Vice-Governor Gustavo Krause. The FIDEM became involved in executive activities of the *Projeto Recife* and the communitarian policies that had now expanded to a metropolitan scope. For its involvement in the *Projeto Grande Recife* and in the neo-populist policies of the state government, the agency became a target of multifarious criticism. The *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, oppositional City Councilors and professional associations, like those of lawyers, architects and engineers, all debated issues of metropolitan politics and expressed criticism of the current and planned interventions. FIDEM's "target populations" became less prone to accept its interventions without any question. Technicians within the FIDEM participated in the debates organized by their professional associations and shared, if not formulated, much of the criticism (cf. Pires, 1988:94; FIDEM/UFPE, 1986; Zancheti, 1986).

The position of the FIDEM as an agency of metropolitan scope was further undermined by the outcome of the 1982 municipal elections in the satellite municipalities. Recife continued to be administrated by an appointed mayor, but most of the other municipalities in the metropolitan region came to be governed by PMDB mayors. They tended to develop their own policies, employing critical technicians, and to avoid involvement with the state government. In the course of 1983, the Consultative Council of the FIDEM, where these municipalities were represented, ceased to meet. It only started to meet again after the oppositional victory in the capital in the 1985 municipal elections²², this time as a platform for opposition and negotiation between the municipalities of the RMR and the state government, which remained in the hands of the PDS until the end of 1986. Controversial projects, notably a huge centralized system for metropolitan garbage disposal, were cancelled and replaced by more decentralized solutions, and others were modified, including some planned *Projeto Grande Recife* interventions. By that time the FIDEM had become quite demoralized.

A similar development occurred with respect to the municipal urbanization company, URB. As has been noted above, the URB was created in 1973 and had rapidly grown into a huge bureaucracy (see 5.3.1.). Although it was involved in

²² This also changed the situation in the Deliberative Council, where the prefect of the capital has a seat.

most of the plans and projects in the municipality, it was not even able to implement its own internal planning (Prefeitura/URB, 1986). This situation did little to boost the morale of the employees or the quality of the activities deployed. When salaries deteriorated and the "voice of civil society" made itself increasingly heard by the early 1980s, the ingredients for an "identity crisis" were in evidence. For the first time in its existence, in response to criticism voiced by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* the URB felt obliged to defend its involvement in the eviction of "invaders" (Diário de Pernambuco, 3-9-1980). Involvement in the *Projeto Recife* and in the System of Communitarian Action contributed further to the agency's bad reputation. Some of the more critical technicians refused to cooperate with the *barracão* scheme and in 1982, a team was summarily fired for engaging in political campaigning for the opposition. Many of the remaining employees sympathized with their views. The bottled-up frustrations were evident on the occasion of the oppositional victory in the 1985 municipal elections, when employees gathered for a festive celebration in front of the URB premises to express their relief.

In his discussion of "urban popular movements" in Brazil, Mainwaring (1987:152) argued that the efforts to construct populist and clientelist mechanisms represented a victory for the urban popular movements in Brazil in the sense that they helped force the authoritarian regime to redefine its political strategy. I discussed the way this redefinition took place, and showed that it was not without ambiguities. The professional groups involved in the execution of the new political strategy tended to join the critique of this redefinition, voicing frustration with their assigned role as organizers of adhesion to governmental policies. As was the case with the *Projeto Recife*, such professionals played a role in the articulation of critique. One might say that the "effect" of the independent neighborhood movements actually resulted from the convergence of their activities with the critique formulated by professional groups, notably in the case of the "identity crisis" of the planning agencies. They tended to converge in the "democratic opposition." In the following chapter, I shall discuss the democratic opposition's pursuit of an alternative, non-clientelist and non-populist mode of participation, relying on the "organized social movements of civil society." Alternatives were developed after 1985 where the participation of "urban social movements" in the general formulation of urban policies was concerned, as well as in the more specific cases of a reorientation of the *Projeto Recife*, and the regularization of landholding in *favelas*. In the next section, I shall discuss the approach to conflicts over urban land in the context of the "politics of *abertura*."

6.5. Conflicts over land

In the preceding chapter, we saw that the use of urban land was one of the issues at stake in Brasília Teimosa and the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém*. I noted that the mode of occupation of urban land by the impoverished sectors of the population changed by the end of the 1970s. In this section, I shall first discuss the policy of regularization of landholding at the municipal level through the System of Communitarian Action, devoting particular attention to the case of Brasília Teimosa. I shall briefly discuss the case of the *Terras de Ninguém*, which involved the state government. The new ways of dealing with new "invasions" will be discussed and I will analyze the spectacular conflict over the construction of the Tancredo Neves viaduct in Imbiribeira in 1985.

6.5.1. The System of Communitarian Action and the regularization of landholding

At the municipal level, the *Sistema de Ações Comunitárias* (SAC) was involved in the regularization of landholding. Actions focussed on Brasília Teimosa and two minor areas; the achievements in the *favelas* of Coque and Coelhos remained insignificant. In 1983 the municipality presented the following data:

COMMUNITY	Still to be titled	Titles delivered
Brasília Teimosa	150	2,083
Coelhos	1,300	55
Coque	3,086	50
Córrego da Areia	49	49
Alto Dr. Caeté	47	47
TOTAL		2,284

(Prefeitura, 1983b)

Although the distribution of titles in Brasília Teimosa did not nearly settle the issue of landholding in the neighborhood, the regulation procedure and form proposed by the *Conselho de Moradores* should be noted.

After a march of the residents of the neighborhood to the City Council, the *Projeto Teimosinho*, drawn up in 1979 with the participation of the population (see 5.5.2.) was finally accepted by the municipality in 1980. The *Projeto* included proposals for the regularization of landholding and for urbanization, and was to be executed with PROMORAR funding. According to the project, legalization should precede urbanization. This would assure, it was argued, that the area residents would benefit from the urbanization process, an argument which also used by the

Movimento Terras de Ninguém and in other cases. The *Projeto Teimosinho* also stipulated the conditions for the regulation of landholding. Individual leases (*aforamento individual*) were to be conceded to the inhabitants. The plots should not exceed 150 m². The leases were to be transferable, but only to persons in the same economic situation as the average resident. The aim of these stipulations, to be monitored by the *Conselho de Moradores*, was to give priority to dwelling rights over ownership rights. It was the leasehold arrangement which was to put these aims into practice. In contrast to ownership, it would provide leverage for the local association through a "Legalization Commission," which would monitor and approve or disapprove transfers. In this sense the legal mechanism of the *Concessão do Direito Real de Uso*, which gained rapid popularity as a progressive instrument of regularization by the mid-1980s, provides similar leverage (see 7.7.1.).²³

To proceed with the promised regularization according to the stipulations of the *Projeto Teimosinho*, a Legalization Commission was installed by Gustavo Krause in November 1980. Besides the municipality (prefecture and URB), the state government (SEHAB), the *Conselho de Moradores*, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the OAB (*Ordem de Advogados Brasileiros*) were involved. With the presence of these *entidades da sociedade civil*, the composition of the commission reflected the political moment of *abertura*. The commission and its subcommissions were designed to accompany the legalization process and to evaluate disputes, particularly cases where the owner of a house tried to evict tenants. In most of these cases, the final decision was in favour of the tenants (cf. Moura, 1990:38-49).

With the approaching 1982 elections, the actual distribution of titles gained momentum. In March 1982, President Figueiredo handed out the first fourteen titles at a political rally on the beach, which marked the start of the PDS electoral campaign in Pernambuco. Titling proceeded through a special arrangement, which was approved by the newly created Ministry of Debureaucratization.²⁴ Instead of transferring titles through a Registry Office (*cartório*), the prefecture proposed a private transfer (*escritura particular*). In this way 2,200 titles were distributed. The arrangement was not contested until 1984, when it was discovered that the titles could not be legally transferred to third parties through the *cartórios* (Diário de Pernambuco, September 16, 1984). Meanwhile, the Ministry of Debureaucratization had been dissolved. Thus the validity of the titles was questionable, to put it mildly. In the course of 1985, with municipal elections in view, some 200 titles were distributed in the neighborhood. Some of them were passed through the Registry Office and required substantial registry fees to be paid by the municipali-

²³ In the case of Brasília Teimosa, opting for aforamento was related to the legal status of the area (terras da Marinha).

²⁴ This Ministry was only in existence for a few years.

ty.²⁵ Thus only a few legally valid titles were distributed during the 1979-1985 period and the landownership regularization in the area remained unresolved, leading to a new mobilization in 1988 (see 7.7.5.). Meanwhile, under the pressure of the *Conselho de Moradores*, the urbanization of the area had proceeded slowly but surely and by the end of the 1980s, most of the measures foreseen in the *Projeto Teimosinho* had indeed been executed (e.g. the paving of streets, installation of a drainage system and the construction of a day nursery and schools).

In the case of Coque, despite reclamations by the inhabitants and the support of oppositional City Councilors, only a few titles were distributed. These titles were as dubious as the ones distributed in Brasília Teimosa. Meanwhile, work on the metro had started, as had the urbanization of the area, though the latter often proceeded rather slowly. In March 1985 the municipality once again announced greater efforts in this connection. However, four months later the *Grupo Comunitário do Coque* protested that the cessation of construction had turned the area into a sea of mud and that most of the work that had been done was related to the construction of the metro, rather than for the benefit of the neighborhood. The housing constructed by the PROMORAR project for Coque was not sufficient to house the 800 families dislocated to make way for the metro and some of them received an indemnification. The *Grupo Comunitário do Coque* denounced this as a case of *expulsão branca*. It also complained that work on the metro had resulted in the inundation of various streets, provoking the invasion of PROMORAR houses by people who were not on the list. The metro was finished but Coque was still one big puddle of mud.

In 1986 new agreements about the projects in the area were signed by the municipality and the state government. By that time, the municipality was headed by Jarbas Vasconcelos. Gustavo Krause had become governor, replacing Roberto Magalhães, who had been a candidate for a seat in the Senate in the 1986 elections. The new arrangement involved financing the legalization of the possession (*posse*) of plots, the transfer of rented houses to the tenants, construction of 1,855 housing units, the improvement of another 1,704 houses and the connection of all the houses to the water supply. Due to the austerity measures of the *Nova República* the execution proceeded slowly.

The third important area included in the titling and urbanization scheme was Coelhos, a *favela* often threatened with removal because of its location near the city center. A *Comissão Central dos Coelhos* had been in existence since the time of *Operação Esperança*. It contained various factions, one of which tended to be favored by the municipal administration and the local *barracão*. Its leader was to become President of the *Federação Comunitária de Pernambuco* (FECOPE).

²⁵ These Registry Offices are privately owned and operated by concession as Public Registry Offices.

The examples discussed thus far are representative of the new governmental approach to some of the "older invasions" and conflict areas. The threat of eviction was replaced by promises of urbanization and eventual regularization of landownership. In the process, the priorities established by the dwellers' associations tended to be inverted in the sense that regularization lagged behind urbanization. Despite the propaganda accompanying the announcement of landholding regularization in 1979, up to the present day the problem has not been resolved in any of the three cases. Urbanization proceeded relatively quickly in the case of Brasília Teimosa, which was to be a showcase of good intentions, but in the other cases the process was rather sluggish. In the case of Coque, in shrill contrast to the rapid construction of the metro, it was a stop and go process. Meanwhile, attempts were made to divide the local population by promoting a parallel organization or favoring a faction of the existing organization. In the cases of Brasília Teimosa and Coelhos groups of this kind effectively gained some influence.

6.5.2. Terras de Ninguém

In the case of *Terras de Ninguém*, the state government's response to the Movement's petition came in 1979. In early May of that year, Governor Marco Maciel received a Movement delegation. The delegates repeated the demands that had already been addressed to President Geisel a year earlier, denounced police harassment and connivance between the municipal administration and the alleged landowners. The governor promised that he would look into the matter and by the end of the month, he appointed a study commission. Two months later, the commission reported that, in the absence of any documentation disproving them, the property claims of the *Empresa Imobiliária de Pernambuco* should be acknowledged. However, the commission also argued that intervention was necessary and did not disregard the possibility of expropriating the area on the grounds of "social interest," which was also the basic Movement demand.

Nevertheless, this suggestion was not followed by the governor who, "considering the dimension of the social problem in the areas called *Propriedade Marinho*," created yet another commission in early August. In line with the governor's liberal conceptions, it was to serve as "mediator" in negotiations between the *Empresa* and the *Associação de Moradores* so as to promote the acquisition of the area by the residents.

The Movement reacted with indignation, arguing that the government was dodging its responsibilities. A ten-point declaration, recently drawn up on the occasion of the Fourth Anniversary of the Movement, called for expropriation and nothing less, from a government that claims "to be willing to attend to the needs of the majority of the people." Thus pressure for expropriation continued. During a

visit of World Bank President McNamara, *padre* Reginaldo Veloso of the Morro da Conceição²⁶ caused discomfort among the officials present when he brought the matter to the attention of the visitor. A week later, on November 11, 1979, the area was declared to be of "public utility": "In five months the government resolved a problem that has been dragging on for 30 years," said the propaganda. The area was not yet expropriated, however, and it was to be another nine years before the inhabitants received titles to the land.

A week after the area had been declared to be of "public utility," a Movement delegation was invited by the Secretary of Housing to discuss the price to be offered for the land, some 1.4 million m². The delegates stated that "after extensive study, we have reached the conclusion that the government should not pay more than Cr\$ 5.00 per square meter." On November 30, the Secretary responded that he could not agree with the proposal, since current land prices were higher and this had to be taken into account.²⁷

Meanwhile, the Movement had called for a payment stop of *foro* or installments on the purchase of land to the *Empresa Imobiliária*. The latter, in turn, started legal procedures to evict people and succeeded in a number of cases, leading to attempts to evict tenants and demolish their dwellings. Tension rose rapidly during the first half of 1980, and the number of who attended Movement meetings increased from about 200 in January to some 400 by March. At the latter meeting, government representatives once again promised the area would soon be expropriated. While negotiations dragged on, the *Empresa* continued to harass the inhabitants. In May the Movement announced it would mobilize the population to make the government stick to its promise. The *Empresa Imobiliária* was putting increasing pressure on Arnaldo "the Prefect" as well as other Movement leaders. Arnaldo was singled out for his "aggressive behaviour inspired by deputy Marcus Cunha." He had stopped paying *foro* in 1976, and now the *Empresa* demanded the overdue payments or else the immediate purchase of the plot. This was a miscalculation on the part of the *Empresa*. Not only did the Movement mobilize 200 people to the court session, the legal argument did not hold, as the Movement lawyer was quick to point out. Arnaldo had been pensioned by the municipality for health reasons, and according to the *Empresa's* own formal regulations, retired people

²⁶ A year later the *padre* caused discomfort again when he expressed his solidarity with Pe. Vito of Riberão, who had refused to celebrate an Independence Day Mass ordered by the Local PDS. Pe. Vito was expelled by way of the *Lei do Estrangeiro*, which had virtually been devised to cope with the likes of him. Pe. Veloso composed an "offensive" song, which landed him before the court for endangering National Security. In 1990, Pe. Veloso was dismissed by Dom Hélder's successor for "insubordination." The new priest appointed for the parish only could enter the church with police backing in the face of an angry local population (VEJA, November 21, 1990).

²⁷ The square meter price for plots sold by the Enterprise was Cr\$ 65.00 at the time. The square meter price the government paid for the major part of the area when it was expropriated in December 1980 was Cr\$ 47.15.

were exempt from further payments. Thus the outcome of the legal proceedings was that a contract for free occupation of the terrain for the rest of Arnaldo's life was drawn up. The Movement considered this a victory, and its 200 followers at the court session left the building singing Nelson "the Poet's" Hymn of the Movement and Geraldo Vandré's famous *Caminhando*. The Pastoral Council of Casa Amarela issued a note welcoming the decision.

Pressure continued throughout following months. The June rains and the flooding of the Beberibe, causing the death of at least 60 people, provided another occasion for protests in Casa Amarela and for voicing the demand for expropriation of the *Terras de Ninguém* and similar areas.²⁸

In September, the Secretary of Housing announced that a PROMORAR project for the area had been submitted to the BNH, to regularize the landownership of 9,200 families, improve the houses and the sanitation system and build 77 new dwellings. In December 1980, Governor Marco Maciel came to Casa Amarela to sign the act of expropriation in the presence of 5,000 inhabitants. The *Empresa* received the sum of Cr\$ 70,000,000, which the Movement denounced as far too high, as it was about ten times the price the Movement had proposed. Thereafter, things came to a standstill. The state government of Roberto Magalhães dragged its feet and the distribution of titles did not start until 1988, during the government of Miguel Arraes.²⁹

6.5.3. New invasions

The attitude towards "new invasions" also changed in 1979. In contrast to the predominantly repressive attitude of earlier years, *abertura* made negotiation possible. Meanwhile, the "new invasions" were less gradual and often more highly organized than the earlier ones.³⁰ This was a consequence of various factors in addition to the somewhat less repressive climate. The overall background consisted of the urban, housing and income policies of two decades of authoritarianism (see Chapter 5). The more organized nature of the "new invasions" can partly be

²⁸ In July the Pope toured Brazil. Visiting Recife he mainly paid attention to rural conflicts.

²⁹ The titles were distributed under the modality of the Concessão do Direito Real de Uso, regarded as a progressive form of landholding regularization. It makes it possible to deliver titles free of charge (see 7.7.) rather than through the sale and purchase arrangements proposed by Marco Maciel.

³⁰ According to the Secretary of Housing (SEHAB), the number of invasions in the RMR increased from 16 in 1979 to 24 and 22 in 1982 and 1983 respectively, thereafter dropping to about ten per year. In 1986, when gubernatorial elections were held, the number of invasions again rose to 21 and then to 55 in 1987. In March of that year, when Miguel Arraes took charge as governor, 19 invasions took place, involving some 6,400 persons (cf. Moura, 1990:89-107).

attributed to the fact that they were often related to demographic growth in existing low-income settlements, which simultaneously provide the networks for organized "invasions."³¹ Furthermore, "invaders" could rely on an increasingly efficient support structure capable of mobilizing public opinion. If they could hold out against the first police action or raids by armed "representatives" of a presumed landowner, a negotiated settlement would be the most likely outcome.

One well-known case was the "invasion" called Escailabe, which derived its name from the "Skylab" falling out of orbit at the time, without anybody knowing where it would land, just as the squatters did not know where they would land. The "invasion" occurred on a Friday evening in July 1979, an obviously strategic hour since the police were unlikely to be in full force just before the week-end. Overnight some two hundred families built shacks on a waste land on the western fringe of Casa Amarela. The police and a group of thugs arrived on the scene quite soon, but did not succeed in intimidating the invaders. Meanwhile, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* had been mobilized and was pressuring governmental circles, while the owner of the terrain arrived with reinforcements. They managed to destroy about twenty shacks, bringing the situation to a boiling point. More violence was averted by the arrival of Dom Hélder and a group of oppositional politicians, calling for peaceful negotiations. After three days of negotiations, through the intermediation of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* an agreement was reached with the owner. He was to rent out the area for five years. At the end of this period, in 1984, the owner wanted to renew the contract. However, the "invaders" then demanded the right to buy their plots, simultaneously rejecting government interference in such a transfer so as not to get saddled up with some COHAB installment scheme. Engineer Pelópidas Silveira, the Popular Front Mayor of the 1950s, visited the area and concluded that in view of its steep slopes, the terrain hardly had any value. The 300 shacks crowding the area by then were worth more than the terrain itself, he estimated (cf. Silva, Santos & Silveira, 1985; ETAPAS, 1982; Falcão, Moura & Pereira, 1984).

There was a somewhat similar pattern of events in the case of the "invasion" Bola na Rede, the difference being that in this case the owner insisted on clearance of the area. The invasion occurred in April 1981, not far from the Skylab area. The "invaded" terrain had been abandoned for many years, so invading it was like scoring in an open goal: *Bola na Rede*.³² However, an owner, Crecinorte S.A., soon showed up and harassment of the "invaders" started. They, in turn, received

³¹ According to a recent (1990) calculation, this density is as high as 251 persons per hectare, against an average density of 59 for Recife. Today's invaders are "produced" in the city and do not come from rural areas.

³² The name derived from a local press item and alluded to the fact that for many years, the owner had been president of the local football club Santa Cruz.

the backing of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, Dom Hélder, the local parish priest³³ and others. In September the squatters were summoned by the court, and it was decided that all of them –some 400 families by then– had to go. On their way to attend the session they learned, however, that the trial was postponed for one month. The verdict was unfavorable to the squatters. The *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and Dom Hélder then paid a visit to the Secretary of Housing, obtaining the promise that the squatters would not be simply evicted. Meanwhile, an eviction order had been issued. A march to the Governor's Palace to protest this decision resulted in a reaffirmation of the promise that "the people would not be left without a roof" and that a negotiated settlement would be found. The government arranged for two busses to carry the demonstrators back to their "invasion." After some months of negotiations, they accepted removal to a terrain bordering Paulista, but in the course of the year many of them returned to Casa Amarela because they could not find a job in the area of resettlement (cf. ETAPAS, 1982; Diário de Pernambuco, September 4, 1981; November 11, 1981; May 27, 1982).

In other cases, similar arrangements were negotiated. Direct confrontations became less frequent and were replaced by legal procedures and negotiated settlements.³⁴ The result was that "invasions" gradually became less spectacular (cf. Fagundes, Lacerda, Zancheti & Pontual, 1981:56). After 1982 the number of invasions dropped in any case, which can partly be attributed to a firmer stand on the part of the state after the elections, and partly to a certain extent of restraint on the part of church-related groups in view of the pending selection of a new Archbishop (Falcão, Moura & Pereira, 1984; Moura, 1990:95).

6.5.4. Coronel Fabriciano versus Tancredo Neves

The 1979-85 period nonetheless ended with a spectacular clash over the construction of the Tancredo Neves viaduct in Imbiribeira. In a way it was a relapse to the "old times" on the part of the state agencies. The *favela* Coronel Fabriciano, which had emerged from an "invasion" in the late 1970s, was to be removed to make way for the new viaduct. As 1985 was an election year, the pressure was great to conclude an *obra de arte* of the size of the new viaduct. The "invaders" of part of the area were already involved in a legal proceedings against a private owner and

³³ I never came across clear evidence that priests were actively involved in organizing "invasions," though they certainly would not discourage them.

³⁴ One case where squatters were dislodged, subsequently invading another terrain, was the Vila das Crianças. In the case of Vila Camponesa, most of the squatters were finally transferred to another terrain (cf. Falcão, Moura & Pereira, 1984). Other attempts to violent evict favelados were the cases of the favela Pousada do Sol in August 1984, and of the Vila dos Inocentes in September of that year.

had established links with the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*. When URB³⁵ started pressuring for removal of the *favela*, its inhabitants thus easily found their way to the *Comissão*.

As the viaduct had to be finished rapidly, URB wanted to reach an agreement over indemnification (*desapropriação amigável*). The *Comissão Justiça e Paz* explained to the families involved that nobody was forced to sign any agreement, and that they could reject the rather meager bid by the URB. Actually the *Comissão* wanted to negotiate a "house for a house" scheme, as had been agreed upon in the end for the areas involved in the Capibaribe Project (see 6.3.3.). URB increased its pressure, eventually threatening to bulldoze the shacks. On behalf of fifteen families, the *Comissão* demanded a *Liminar de Interdito Proibitório*, a prohibition by a judge to prevent the URB from carrying out its threat. For good measure, a list of the value of *benfeitorias* (improvements) twelve families had made on their plots was annexed. It ranged from CR\$ 6,800,000 to CR\$ 55,000,000, the average being CR\$ 13,700,000. Meanwhile, URB continued to send letters urging people to "solve the problem amicably, without any undue pressure on your person." A number of families left, accepting indemnifications of between CR\$ 1,000,000 and CR\$ 2,000,000. Fifteen families rejected these offers, and finally negotiated sums approaching the above mentioned average of CR\$ 13,700,000.

The problems now shifted to the remaining part of the *favela*, and some nearby settlements. The idea of removing them had been abandoned, since the land they were located on did not belong to the municipality. However, as a result of the construction of the viaduct, rain and sewage water started entering the dwellings and the heavy machinery damaged them. As the prefecture remained deaf to their complaints, the inhabitants decided to stop the construction work on the part of the viaduct bordering the *favela* by blocking the access road. They could rely on the support of the recently founded Pernambucan branch of the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados* (MDF) (see 6.9.5.), the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and some oppositional members of the City Council, notably Pedro Eurico, the ex-president of the *Comissão*, who had been elected in 1982.

The action resulted in negotiations, with URB promising to supply building material and the sum of CR\$ 20,000,000 to be distributed by the dwellers' council to repair the dwellings. The next day the URB delivered some material, but not the quantities and quality that had been agreed upon. It was decided to paralyze the works again, until Mayor-elect Jarbas Vasconcelos would take office. This inter-

³⁵ The construction of the viaduct was the responsibility of the EBTU, which had signed an agreement with the state government and the municipality in November 1984. The actual execution of the works starting in early January 1985. The municipality, through the URB, was responsible for the expropriation of the area required.

ferred with the schedule of the present Mayor Joaquim Francisco, according to which the viaduct was to be opened on December 28. While work on other parts of the viaduct proceeded on a 24-hour schedule to get the job done in time, the police were called in to end the protests.

At 2 a.m. on December 18, a week before Christmas, sixty Military Police occupied the area where the last access road was to be constructed. Soon Pedro Eurico arrived, as well as the President of the *Conselho de Moradores* of Brasília Teimosa, the parish priest of Brasília Teimosa and members of the local base communities. They sat down on the road blocks to prevent them from being removed. PMDB deputies Cristina Tavares and Luciano Siqueira and City Councilor Carlos Eduardo also made their appearance and attempted to talk the shock troops out of violent action. In a "climate of tension," the police started dismounting the road block, arresting ten persons who resisted passively. They³⁶ were carried off to a police van which -after a one hour ride at high speed through the city- eventually took them to the *Diretoria de Ordem Política e Social* (DOPS), a branch of the Civil Police. Meanwhile the construction company started doing its work under police protection.

It was particularly the arrest of City Councillor Pedro Eurico, and his account of the ride through the city, that caused a stir. After a two-hour stay at the DOPS, he was released on the order of the Secretary of Security, who apologized on behalf of the whole police force. The City Councilor, however, did not accept the apologies and held Governor Roberto Magalhães directly responsible for his arrest. He filed a complaint with the *Comissão Estadual Contra a Violência*, which had recently been installed by Governor Magalhães. This Commission against Violence called for an extensive investigation, as did the City Council. The new Archbishop of Olinda and Recife protested the arrest of the parish priest of Brasília Teimosa, a North American.

Meanwhile, the viaduct had been opened to the public on December 21, anticipating the official dedication since "it proved impossible to keep the public from using this new traffic option." The gesture even had the touch of a Christmas present to the population, since the viaduct made it easier to reach the burgeoning commercial center of Boa Viagem by car. The fact that one access road to the "revolutionary technical achievement" -10,000 m³ of concrete, 1,300,000 kilos of steel, 6 lanes- had not yet been altogether finished did not matter. It was "not that important for the flow of vehicles" and it would be finished before the official dedication, one of Joaquim Francisco's last acts as mayor in 1985.

³⁶ City Councillor Pedro Eurico, the parish priest of Brasília Teimosa and the President of its *Conselho de Moradores* and people identified with the local base communities were all arrested. The first person arrested that day was the President of the Association of nearby Vila Apulso.

6.6. Interlude: the "politics of abertura" revisited

I have examined some of the main developments in the area of urban policies during the 1979-1985 period. I have focussed on the *Projeto Recife* and the related policy of urban zoning, on the new policy style and the way it sought to promote "participation," and, on the issue of urban land use. In the next chapter I shall discuss the development of policy alternatives on these three points after 1985. Let me reiterate the main points so far.

The *Projeto Recife* was announced in 1979 as a project for the benefit of low-income settlements. It included most of the *favelas* later defined as Zones of Special Social Interest (ZEIS) in the 1983 Law on Urban Zoning. In subsequent formulations, the Project was focussed on the revitalization of the Capibaribe riverside and it became increasingly elitist. Moreover, the policy items included in the *Projeto Recife*, as it figured in the World Bank funded project for the metropolitan region, were partially and selectively implemented. As such, the *Projeto Recife* continued the policy tendencies of the earlier period. It generated anxiety among the population of some of its target areas, and broad criticism of this type of urban intervention was voiced by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, joined by various professional associations and opposition politicians. The criticism of the project was one of the themes in the 1985 electoral campaign, and during this campaign the future mayor of Recife promised to reconsider the Project. In the following chapter, I shall briefly discuss the reorientation of the *Projeto Recife* after 1985. It involved making it less elitist, and efforts were made to promote popular participation, different from that of the 1979-1985 period, in reorienting the project.

This brings us to the second issue, the policies of participation. During the 1979-1985 period, the forms of "participation" promoted as part of the "politics of *abertura*" were designed to outflank the emerging "new" urban movements. The new policies consisted of an "appropriation" of elements of the communitarianism hitherto promoted by the Church. These elements were reframed in a discourse which represented the community as the "essence of the nation," rather than referring to "the poor" or "the popular classes." Rather than promoting horizontal solidarities, the policies strongly relied on clientelist and neo-populist mechanisms. The new policies were not without problems of their own, however. The change in policy style imbricated with other developments such as the rise of the new middle classes and the formation of new professional groups in pursuit of social recognition. Social workers active in the execution of the new policies, were preoccupied with the "cooptation of professional practice" (Arcoverde, 1985:153). Planners, engineers and architects also were concerned about these issues. Preoccupations of this kind eventually contributed to the "identity crisis" of the planning agencies. The new policies and the criticism they provoked from the "public" as well as from those who were to execute them thus contributed to the fissuring rather than to the

unification of state apparatuses. They also contributed to counterarticulation attempts on the part of the groups they were designed to outflank and marginalize, as we shall see in the following part of this chapter. These developments helped clear the way for efforts to create less manipulative forms of participation after 1985.

Thirdly, I have examined the changing policy style in a number of cases involving the use and occupation of urban land. The irregular occupation of urban land by low-income groups now came to be regarded as a "fact of life" to be coped with in new ways. The creation of 27 Special Zones of Social Interest was related to this policy change. The choice of these zones, which was related to the projected interventions of the *Projeto Recife*, and the lack of effective guarantees that urbanization would not result in *expulsão branca*, prompted the criticism by the *Comissão de Justiça e Paz*. In the next chapter, I shall discuss the initiative taken by the *Comissão* in the elaboration of a law on the regularization and urbanization of *favelas* in collaboration with the "popular movement." This *Plano de Regularização das Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (PREZEIS) was partly inspired on the proposals of the *Projeto Teimosinho* of Brasília Teimosa.

In spite of the pomp the new policies on the *favelas* were announced with in 1979, urbanization only proceeded relatively rapidly in the case of Brasília Teimosa. In two other areas designated as high priority areas (Coque and Coelhos), it proceeded much slower. In fact the regularization of landholding only consisted of the distribution of fraudulent land titles during the run-up to the 1982 elections. On the other hand, new invasions increasingly ended in negotiations involving the squatters, the owner, state agencies and organizations of civil society (*entidades da sociedade civil*) such as the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*. Repressive action became increasingly unfeasible. In that sense, the clash over the Tancredo Neves viaduct was an exceptional case. At the same time, it demonstrates the form such conflicts assumed by the end of the 1979-1985 period, with the rapid mobilization of informal and formal support networks. The remaining part of this chapter concentrates on the vicissitudes of the "authentic" movement and its networks during the 1979-1985 period.

6.7. The making of urban social movements

The rapid rise in the number of neighborhood associations after 1979 was a result of the rivalling efforts to hegemonize this type of organization. Neighborhood associativism ceased to be "a reserved terrain for the 'authentic' movement" (ETAPAS, 1989:60). The promotion of neighborhood associativism by state agencies and the partial appropriation of the "communitarianism" discourse in order to contain and outflank the emerging oppositionist organizations catalyzed or

prompted attempts at counter-articulation on the part of the "authentic" movement. This was by no means a simple process. It involved reworking the discursive matrixes that informed the neighborhood associativism of the 1970s in the context of a rapidly changing situation, i.e. redefining these organizations as actually belonging to an "authentic urban social movement." The "identity" of movements is not simply inherent to them, it results from the intersection, imbrication and articulation of a variety of processes and relations.

The increasing influence of the theorizations of "urban social movements" played an important role in shaping of identity of the "authentic" movement. The notion of "urban social movement" had rapidly found broad acceptance among social scientists, social workers, priests and other groups professionally or politically involved with the urban poor, adding a new dimension to neighborhood associativism. This development was reflected in the proliferation of urban social movement studies gathering momentum in the late 1970s. It contributed, in turn, to the identification of neighborhood associations, particularly by their leaders and cadres, as urban social movements or parts of an urban social movement.³⁷ As if to illustrate the tenets of structuration theory (Giddens, 1984) or other "theories of practice" (cf. Ortner, 1984), the new knowledge developed in the social sciences had immediate transformational implications for the existing social world (Giddens, 1984:341). The theorizations of "urban social movements" gave the emerging neighborhood associativism a new name, and provided a discursive matrix for the formulation of "strategic interests" at a moment when the progress of the *abertura* required increasingly practical ideas on how to go about "social transformation." This implied further controversy over the relations to politics.

With the opening of new political opportunities after 1979, the discursive and organizational framework provided by the Church was increasingly felt as a constraint by "the movement," which had developed a dynamics of its own. At the same time, the Brazilian Church underwent a reorientation. In general terms the reorientation was related to the conservative offensive taking place in the Catholic Church as a whole. In Brazil it felt obliged to "dissociate" itself from political involvements as the return to a civilian government progressed (Della Cava, 1988:250). The increased role of party politics and in particular, the formation of the PT with its strong links to the Ecclesial Base Communities, posed dilemmas (cf. Perani, 1981; Souza, 1981). The earlier simple identification with "the opposition" would not do any longer, and the Church now increasingly tended to mind its "institutional interests" and eventually set about dismantling the "Church of the People."

³⁷ By the mid-1980s the terms "urban social movements" and "organized social movements of civil society" had even become incorporated into common political discourse.

These developments assumed a specific form in Recife. Elsewhere the debate mostly revolved around opting for some form of socialism and more specifically for the PT, but in Recife the "third way" option of with its emphasis on a politics of "moral pressure," was particularly influential. This influence was accompanied by a certain "protective paternalism" in relation to the "social movements" when it came to more concrete political proposals and involvements (Salem, 1981:176; Lehmann, 1990:172). I shall examine how this tension worked itself out in Recife during the 1979-1985 period.

Beside the segment of the Church-related personnel who sought to protect the grassroots from what they tended to regard as political manipulation, it involved various actors. The group of younger leaders formed in the circuits of the Youth Pastoral, the ACO, and so forth was significant. They were the people who most often attended the seminars organized by the various *assessorias*, and they were to become the spokespersons of the movement in the public arena. The *assessorias* partly consisted of groups of social workers who increasingly disassociated themselves from the Church-related organizations to find their way to the NGO circuit. Existing NGOs loosened their ties with the Church and new NGOs emerged. They provided the space for alternative professional practices and constituted a core in a network of people at the universities, the Church and left-wing parties willing to render services to the "popular movement" (cf. Landim, 1988). It was the time when the *assessores* often virtually acted as militants of "the popular movement." This was to change by the end of the period under discussion, when the *assessorias* started to define their role more clearly and took a closer look at "the movement" they were helping to shape.

These developments should be set against the background of the political conjuncture. In a way the appointment of Joaquim Francisco as mayor, "50% Gustavo Krause and 50% Antônio Farias," symbolizes the state of affairs after the 1982 elections; more ambiguous than many had hoped. On the other hand, with the IMF-inspired recessionist policies introduced after the elections, dissatisfaction with the regime increased. It was channeled into the campaign for direct elections, which was a show of force the "authentic" movements greatly contributed to. In Recife, it was paralleled by a campaign against the bus ticket price rises under the slogan *Congelamento Já* (Price Freeze Now), illustrating the intertwining of the neighborhood movement and the political moment. The objective of the campaign was not only to do something about the bus ticket prices but simultaneously to articulate the local associations into a citywide organization.

I shall first approach the developments in Recife with a brief discussion of the emergence of the *assessorias*, the NGOs "at the service of the popular movement" (Landim, 1988). They emerged from the late 1970s onward, and were to play an increasingly important role in "counseling" neighborhood associations and supporting broader articulations of "the movement," while the Church receded into

the background. I shall then discuss the emergence of these broader articulations, accompanied by the local version of the "emancipation of the social movements from the *pastoral*" (Doimo, 1986:112), i.e. the complicated and often contradictory process whereby the Church "disengaged" itself from its former direct involvement with "the social movements," which sought in turn to become more independent from the Church. I shall also discuss the general development of neighborhood associativism at the grassroots from 1979 to 1985. While the number of associations increased, the mode of operation changed from a "communitarian" model to a more "formal" one (Durham, 1984) in the context of the rapidly changing "environment."

6.8. "At the service of the popular movement"

Summarizing the "myth of origin" of the Brazilian NGOs, Fernandes (1988:9) writes that the typical trajectory was one from organizations associated with the Catholic Church toward a secularization and from assistentialist work to a more socio-political outlook. This image applies to Recife, but it can be filled in more concretely. We might say that in its later years, the *Operação Esperança* operated as a proto-NGO. As a result of the loosened ties between the Church and the state in the early 1970s, the links with state apparatuses had been severed and foreign funding, partly resulting from Dom Hélder's international fame, had become the most important resource. The *Operação* worked with a partially lay staff, backed up by students from the social science departments of the universities in Recife and volunteers. The two processes mentioned by Fernandes were in evidence in the conflict over the orientation of the *Operação*. The outcome of this conflict was that some of the personnel switched to FASE, an NGO that had been in existence since 1961 and was becoming one of the largest Brazilian NGOs with offices throughout the country. By the mid-1970s, FASE itself was "reorienting" and questioning its earlier practice. It had initially it had been involved in providing motorbikes for the clergy active in the rural education programs. It had subsequently turned to social work and in the mid 1970s, discussions on the nature of social work started when it sought to define the role it was to play in relation to the emerging "popular movement" in the changing political context.

This "reorientation" was related to the growing role of the social sciences and was influenced by the new "urban social movement" theories. Fernandes (1988) characterizes the NGOs as moving within a triangular field of reference, constituted by the universities, the churches and the left-wing parties. Perhaps one should speak of a quadrangular field, a further pole of reference being the state, as the notion of NGO so clearly implies. In the course of the "democratic transition," this fourth pole has become increasingly important as an interlocutor/opponent. Within this field of reference, the NGOs provide a space for "alternative" professional

practices "at the service of the popular movement." This position implies that the "field of reference" itself should be taken into account. In this sense, the NGOs are part of the broader circuits involved in discussions about alternative professional practices. They are a "space" where such practices can develop most clearly, but at the same time their employees maintain contacts with their professional counterparts in the poles constituting the "field of reference," i.e. Church-related personnel, students and university teachers and dissenting technicians in state apparatuses. It was through such circuits of middle-class professionals sympathizing with the "popular movement" that the "urban social movement" discourse propagated and "signified" neighborhood associativism in its own unique way.

A report on the situation in Recife, written on the request of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* by students at the Faculty of Urban and Regional Development of the Federal University of Pernambuco (Fagundes, Lacerda, Zancheti and Pontual, 1981), is a good example. In a classical form, the theoretical framework described as "the paradigm of the 1970s" (see 1.2.) informed the report. According to the "paradigm of the 1970s," the role of "urban social movements" is particularly important under conditions of peripheral capitalism. In view of the heterogeneity of the working class, the neighborhood and the "reproductive sphere" become an important front of struggle with the capitalist state rather than the employer as adversary and, as some (e.g. Moisés, 1982) argued, therefore being "directly political." In the report on Recife it was argued that if the observation about the importance of neighborhood associativism goes for São Paulo, it must even be more valid for a backward region like Pernambuco. Although neighborhood movements do not directly address the principal contradiction -between capital and labor- they may take a particular significance in concrete historically determined conjunctures, since they may be conducive to questioning the political power of the state. The report admitted that the demands forwarded by the movements existing in Recife at the time were of an immediatist nature, which did not question the system. Therefore, it was argued, a unification of the movements with a broader political movement was needed, since structural changes could only be attained at a political level. The authors were quite optimistic about the future development of the neighborhood movements and their increasing consciousness about their engagement in a common struggle. The movements, it was asserted on the eve of the 1982 elections (which eventually would cast some doubts in this respect) "nowadays constitute themselves as communities that can define the electoral situation in the state, in spite of the veto on the vote by illiterates" (Fagundes, Lacerda, Zancheti & Pontual, 1981:75).³⁸

³⁸ A noteworthy feature of the report is that it focussed on the issue of urban land, rather than on collective consumption. This not only reflected the prominence of conflicts over land in Recife, but also the emphasis on the part of the Church on the land issue, evident in the opposition between "land to live" (*terra de moradia*) and "land for business" (*terra de negócio*). Furthermore, this provided a link to

Thus the study contained a description of the movement, which was characterized as "immediatist," as well as a recommendation for unification of the neighborhood movements and, in line with the sources of inspiration of the "urban social movement" literature, their articulation with a broader political movement. It provided a rationale for the activities of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and other *assessorias* in their option to focus on neighborhood associativism. And through them, as organizers of seminars and other modes of self-reflection, the ideas percolated to people engaged in local associativism as well, being incorporated into their discourse and influencing their self-understanding. The theorizations of "urban social movements" came to play a role in the social production of such movements. The argument of a neighborhood leader about his activities, during a meeting promoted by one of the *assessorias* in 1983, is illustrative in this respect:

The movement of dwellers' associations, in contrast to the trade unions, works in direct confrontation with state agencies (*órgãos do estado*). The union works with enterprises -and logically involves the Ministry of Labor- but the associations work against the organisms of the state, the prefecture, the Secretary of Health, etc. So with the complexity of the present Brazilian state and its traditionally authoritarian character, we are only very small charges confronting this grandiose structure.³⁹ But also because our work is really revolutionary, since we are in a direct confrontation with Power (FASE, 1983:16).

The last point also indicates the importance of the relation to the state, which became the touchstone of authenticity. In the face of the "politics of *abertura*," autonomy and extra-institutionalism were highly valued and this was directly supported in the theorizations of the time. Castells (1977) worded his argument in terms of the opposition between "social movement" and "planning," together with institutional politics regarded as the negation of "social movement." It provided a perfect rationale for rejecting the governmental proposals for "participative planning," the cooptative aspects of which were rather conspicuous. Borja's (1975) writings were equally clear in conveying the message that reform could only strengthen the system. That such views were rooted in the opposition between

the struggles of the rural *sem terra*. When preparing its statutes in 1988, the Pernambucan branch of the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados* even discussed whether agrarian reform should be its top priority. With a reference to the urban character of the Movement, the proposal was turned down.

³⁹ The notion of "small charges" in this context reflects the sobering experience of the 1982 elections. Before these elections, many people shared the belief expressed by Fagundes, Lacerda, Zancheti & Pontual (1981:75) about the electoral importance of neighborhood associations. The argument quoted is from an evaluation of the role of neighborhood associations in these elections, which often reflected the disappointment with a population that rejects the involvement of neighborhood leaders in "dirty politics" and prefers to vote for upper-class candidates, albeit oppositional, rather than for "popular candidates."

"real" and "formal" democracy was not problematized at the time.⁴⁰ What mattered was that they backed and helped shape a discourse of autonomy and authenticity in the face of the "politics of *abertura*."

The activities of the *assessorias* evolved over time. Initially the *assessoria* personnel often virtually acted as militants of the movements, though with specific tasks. It was the time of mobilizing people in the neighborhoods for protest, and of organizing "the movement." The *assessorias* promoted discussions on organizational issues and themes of mobilization. These activities were very much an experience shared with some groups of "authentic" leaders. This also meant their actual active role was often obscured, to themselves as well as to students of "the movements" (cf. Assies, 1990:84). Increasingly, the role of "external agents" would be thematized in studies and became an object of self-reflection among the *assessores*. The rather direct and somewhat ingenuous identification with "the movement" was replaced by more distanced and critical involvement. More intimate knowledge of the day-to-day activities of neighborhood associations was one reason for the *assessorias* to develop their own criteria for supporting organizations and defining their own aims and institutional identities.⁴¹ On the other hand, as negotiations with state apparatuses became more important the *assessorias* became increasingly involved in technical issues and the development of alternative proposals. This contributed to the emphasis on professional and technical competence and the definition of their role. Let me briefly list the main *assessorias* involved in promoting "urban social movements."

In many ways, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* can be regarded as one of the *assessorias*, though its institutional relation to the Archdiocese and its broadly defined aims meant that officially, it did not aim at becoming a permanent legal service for the popular movement. In 1980 it played an important role in organizing the first citywide platform for the articulation of local neighborhood associations, the *Assembléia de Bairros* (see 6.9.2.). The involvement of the *Comissão* in conflicts over land has been mentioned above. This focus on the issue of urban landownership was the combined outcome of the rising number of conflicts over urban land and of theoretical reflection on the strategic interests of the "urban social movements." Involvement in conflicts always involved efforts to promote local organization and educate the local population about their rights and legal procedures. This eventually resulted in the elaboration, in cooperation with the

⁴⁰ The seminal article by Ruth Cardoso (1983), with her critical analysis of the radical features often ascribed to neighborhood associations, which were quite generously labeled "urban social movements" despite Castells' (1977) specification of the term, marked a turning point in this respect. Other influential critiques of the "paradigm" were formulated by Boschi and Valladares (1983) and by Machado da Silva and Ribeiro (1985).

⁴¹ An *assessoria* might, for instance, deny its services to an association where no regular elections were held.

"popular movement," of a legislative proposal on the regularization and legalization of Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS) (see 7.7.).

In 1978 the *Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional* (FASE), which was to become Brazil's largest NGO, opened an office in Casa Amarela. The activities were largely financed by a two-year grant from CEBEMO. This office provided much of the logistics for the local and citywide articulations of the early 1980s. The official aims were to provide immediate legal assistance for the inhabitants of the area, particularly where land rights were concerned, and to form cadres for the popular movement. This included the promotion of discussions and the production of leaflets on the history of the movement. The evaluation of this experiment resulted in the creation of the *Gabinete de Assessoria Jurídica às Organizações Populares* (GAJOP) in 1981. It received funding from OXFAM, Catholic Relief Services and Operation Esperanza and employed two lawyers and two assistants (*estagiários*). It could rely on the support of eight committed lawyers. FASE also became active in promoting urban and rural trade unionism.

In the late 1970s, the *Centro Luiz Freire* in Olinda, "adapted itself to the new socio-political context of the country." Created in 1972 it had, at times precariously, succeeded in providing an "open space" for all sorts of cultural manifestations. In 1980 it altered its articles of association and underwent an institutional reform that "expressed a greater and deeper involvement with the socio-economic realities of the region." It shifted towards educational activities, communitarian work and legal assistance and research on behalf of these activities. In 1981 a project for "communitarian legal counseling" was planned with the aim of carrying out a one-year experiment in the municipalities of Olinda, Paulista and Igarassu. It was financed by the Ford Foundation and the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace. The team had two lawyers and two assistants. By 1983 the GAJOP team, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* team and the Centro Luiz Freire team regularly met to coordinate their activities, eventually contributing to the integration of the Luiz Freire team into GAJOP.⁴² Besides providing legal services, the GAJOP contributed to the organization of the transportation prices campaign from 1982 to 1984.

Lawyers were one important group of professionals engaged in the work of the *assessorias*, social workers were another. The *Escritório Técnico de Assessoria, Pesquisa e Ação Social* (ETAPAS) had its origins in the activities of the Social Action Department of the Archdiocese. By 1980 the practice of "direct accompani-

⁴² When the opposition won the elections in 1985 and 1986, the team provided various high level functionaries in the municipal and state administration. Meanwhile, the emphasis in GAJOP activities shifted towards the issue of violence in general and police and para-police violence (*esquadrão da morte*) in particular (cf. GAJOP, 1987). Para-police violence increased in 1986. This was a general Brazilian phenomenon, but probably also constituted a form of defiance to the new state government of Miguel Arraes (cf. GAJOP, 1987).

ment of local communities" started to be questioned by some of the social workers. This practice involved promoting all sorts of "communitarian" activities, from organizing soccer clubs to working with youngsters and women. The critics, though not denying the importance of such activities, preferred to focus on neighborhood associativism, which they regarded as more comprehensive and of greater political relevance. In 1982 this resulted in the foundation of ETAPAS. In 1983/84 the group promoted two seminars for the the *Assembléia de Bairros* to discuss issues of internal organization, and in 1985 the group helped organize a seminar that contributed to the foundation of a metropolitan federation of neighborhood associations (FEMEB) in 1987 (see 6.9.4.). The activities of ETAPAS focused on three issues, the organization of courses on the internal organization of neighborhood associations (minutes, administration, etc.), studies and surveys, and communication through various publications, including the *Folha dos Bairros* that started to appear in 1987.

Whereas ETAPAS was wholly geared to the neighborhood movement, the *Centro de Estudos e Ação Social* (CEAS), like FASE, covered a more diversified field, including rural and urban trade unionism. CEAS started in 1963 as a reflection group for Jesuits in Salvador (Bahia) (CEAS, 1984) and branched out to Recife in 1978. In 1980 CEAS-Recife started to operate effectively with an urban and a rural team. CEAS involvement in neighborhood associativism focussed on the neighborhood of Pina near Brasília Teimosa and with similar problems, and on more general counselling, promoting the articulation of local associations and the formation of cadres.

From 1982-83 onward, participants in the various *assessorias* started to meet regularly, though of course informal contacts already existed, to coordinate and discuss their activities and divide the tasks through *Interentidades* (Mora, 1987).

These various *assessorias* thus aimed to contribute to the neighborhood movement. Virtually all of them were somehow related to the Church, but in the context of the political ferment of the late 1970s, they opted for greater independence and a clearer commitment to "the popular movement." In combination with the actual conflicts over urban land and the reemergence of neighborhood associativism, the theorizations of "urban social movements" helped specify this commitment. The *assessorias* were to play an important role in discussing and forming a federation of neighborhood associations to enhance their political efficacy as a social movement. Furthermore, they counselled local associations, promoted discussions and increasingly monitored local elections as neutral observers. In the course of time, they also became increasingly involved in negotiations between

state apparatuses and neighborhood associations.⁴³ Let us take a look at the movement the *assessorias* helped to make. I shall first discuss the development of supra-local "sectoral" and citywide "articulations of the movement" and the transportation-prices campaign by the *Assembléia de Bairros*, and then the development of grassroots neighborhood associativism from 1979 to 1985.

6.9.1. Articulating the movement: "sectoral" articulations

The idea of articulating the dispersed neighborhood associations into a broader movement was discussed in 1978/79 by the newly emerging cadres in the Casa Amarela area, who were linked to the circuits of the youth pastoral, the *Ação Católica Operária* and FASE. The *Comissão Justiça e Paz* also showed interest. The new policies of the Krause administration served as a catalyst, since it was felt that a common response was needed to counter the attempts to outflank the *autênticos* and disperse the movement through the *barracão*-system, which through its decentralized assistentialism served to localize issues and decrease their visibility at the municipal level. The process was accelerated by Krause's convocation of a *I Encontro de Bairros* in mid-1979. People from "authentic" associations in Casa Amarela came together to discuss the event and draw up a unified list of demands to be presented. It was thus that the *Pró-Federação de Casa Amarela* came into being, gradually becoming more structured by forming commissions concerned with such problems as protection against landslides (construction of *barreiras*), health care, land rights, education and transport.⁴⁴

Casa Amarela was one of the areas particularly targeted by the Krause administration. Small projects, notably the paving of streets, were executed, partly in relation to the CURA program, while at the same time the formation of parallel organizations was promoted. The *Pró-Federação* criticized the fact that the projects were never really discussed with the population concerned, although their "participation" in the execution was expected. The criticism of the *Pró-Federação* resulted in the modification of some of the projects as well as the mode of operation, though this influence was never acknowledged by the municipal administration. The *mutirão* system (communitarian labor in the *Um por Todos* projects) only

⁴³ The role of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB) and the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* as "representatives of civil society" in the Legalization Commissions created by Gustavo Krause to supervise the regularization of Brasília Teimosa and other areas can be considered a precedent for the role NGOs often played after 1985 under the *Nova República*.

⁴⁴ For a *II Encontro* in 1980, as well as another one in 1983, many "authentic" were not invited and others decided to boycott the meeting in solidarity, thus leaving the event without great significance.

worked for some time in some areas.⁴⁵ The critics argued that it was a return to slavery and that in the rich areas of the city this type of cooperation was not expected. Moreover, paving was not an easy job and required experience, which most people did not have. Often the communitarian contribution thus came to consist of collecting money to hire professional pavers and after some time it was the prefecture that started hiring the pavers as well, in addition to providing the material. All in all, some 400 streets were paved during Krause's administration, an advance as compared with the preceding administrations (cf. Prefeitura, 1983).⁴⁶

In 1982 the *Pró-Federação* acquired legal status as *Federação das Associações, Centros Comunitários e Conselhos de Moradores de Casa Amarela* (FEACA), with 25 to 30 affiliated associations. By that time, two other "sectoral articulations" had also emerged. The *Coordenação Setor Sul* or *Reunião dos Conselhos e Associações de Moradores do Setor Sul* was closely linked to the *Encontros de Irmãos* and had its base in the *favelas* of Imbiribeira. This *coordenação* took the lead in organizing a demonstration in front of the governor's palace in 1980, with some 3,000 participants demanding improvement of the water supply (*Passeata de Água*). In Ibura a *Comissão de Luta* emerged in the course of 1982 to protest the FIDEM plan to set up the metropolitan refuse dump in the area, and to struggle for improvements of the *Vilas da COHAB*, which had been constructed without any adequate infrastructure, particularly roads - a responsibility of the municipality - and the drainage system - a responsibility of the COHAB.

6.9.2. The Assembléia de Bairros

In addition to these three "sectoral articulations," a citywide articulation, the *Assembléia de Bairros*, emerged in 1980 as the main platform of the "authentic." The articulation of the *Assembléia* was, once again, related to a "natural" disaster: the heavy rains of June 1980 accompanied by high waters in the Beberibe-River. According to official sources about sixty people lost their lives in landslides or other related calamities and a great number of dwellings was damaged or totally destroyed. To protest the lack of foresight or measures on the part of the state and municipal administration, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the Social Action Department of the Archdiocese promoted a march to the Governor's Palace. The disaster was not simply a natural one, it was argued, but was mainly due to the lack of interest in investing in poor areas. Some 5,000 *flagelados* demonstrated in front

⁴⁵ As an incentive, Krause promised exemption for a number of years from the IPTU and the refuse collection fee for streets paved by their own residents.

⁴⁶ Nevertheless, and contrary to expectations, the opposition scored above average in Casa Amarela in 1982 (Araújo, 1985:32).

of the Governor's Palace to demand assistance as well as structural measures to avoid a repetition of the disaster.

During the following months, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the Social Action Department of the Archdiocese took the initiative of promoting regular meetings of association representatives, with support of the *Encontros de Irmãos* as well as the FEACA and FASE. The *Assembléias* thus were heavily dependent on the Church provided infra-structure and coordination was nearly completely in the hands of Church-related agencies. This was to change in 1981, with the local version of the "emancipation of the social movements from the *pastoral*" (Doimo, 1986:112).

The role of the Social Action Department and the *Encontros de Irmãos* in the *Assembléia de Bairros* was a source of friction. It was felt that these agencies "interfered" too much and restricted the development of "the popular movement." The *Encontros de Irmãos* had been the main promotor of the mobilization around the issue of water-supply in 1980, but its mode of operation had given rise to questions about who was "coordinating" the neighborhood movement. These questions were related to the tension between a socio-political orientation and the more religious orientation of the *Encontros de Irmãos* (cf. ETAPAS, 1983; 1984; FASE, 1980; Interentidades, 1985). The discursive and organizational matrix provided by the Church had become too narrow, and tended to narrow down even more under the pressure of the conservative offensive against Liberation Theology.⁴⁷ As a result of these various pressures, the Social Action Department, the *Encontros de Irmãos* and the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* scaled down their formal activities in the coordination of the *Assembléia de Bairros* and "the militants of the neighborhood movement assumed the Coordination of the Movement" (Folha dos Bairros, No. 9). This secularization seems to have been rather traumatic for some of the groups involved.⁴⁸ Most agreed that the situation should be clarified, but some argued that the role of Church personnel in the coordination of the movement should have been extinguished more gradually.

The most direct consequence of the new autonomy was a crisis of the *Assembléia*, since the group now coordinating it could only invest part of its time in "keeping the thing alive." In this group, the relatively politicized younger-generation cadres were most active. Meanwhile, the newly emerging *assessorias*

⁴⁷ The impending retirement -in 1985- of Dom Hélder contributed to a somewhat more cautious stand of the progressives so as not to attract the ire of the conservatives.

⁴⁸ The somewhat tense climate in which the separation occurred was partly due to the fact that some of the Church personnel had come to think of themselves as "organic intellectuals" of the popular movement, which was coupled to a certain "protective paternalism." On the other hand, when criticism of these features led to the severance of formal ties -though influence remained considerable- it came as a shock. On the local level a similar process of secularization often resulted in a "functional differentiation" between base communities and neighborhood organizations (see 6.8.).

became cores of a new and more diversified support structure. The *Assembléia* Coordination could also occasionally make use of the facilities of the metal-workers' union, which had had new "combative" directory since 1978 (Soares, 1985), and the *Ação Católica Operária* (ACO).

During these years, various efforts were made to find a common cause to unify "the neighborhood movement" for a show of strength. Of these, the *Passeata de Água* of 1980, which was still tightly linked to the base community movement, was relatively successful. The following year -the coordination of the movement now in the hands of "neighborhood militants"- was marked by the search for a new common cause. With the help of *assessorias*, seminars were organized on the housing question and the PROMORAR program. They served to strengthen the conviction of the participants that, in the face of "generalized policies," the movement should articulate a generalized political response. The discussions linked up with the ongoing debate over the nature of the *Assembléias* -a platform for exchanging experiences or a coordinating body- and the desirability of creating a federation. Those who argued that the *Assembléia* should be a "space for exchanging experiences" expected coordination to eventually spontaneously arise and felt matters should not be rushed. In essence they tended to be suspicious of "organization" and adhered to direct democracy models as practiced in the base communities. A touch of "protective paternalism" was not alien to this *basismo*.

Things petered out in the course of 1982, however, since virtually everybody became active in the electoral campaign. Whereas normally anywhere from 50 to 100 people attended the meetings of the *Assembléia de Bairros*, participation dropped as election day approached and in the end even the Coordination was paralyzed.

Ideas about the influence of "urban social movements" on the political process were put to a test in the elections, with disappointing results. As has been noted above, Fagundes, *et al.* (1981:75) expected the neighborhood movements to be able to "define the electoral situation (*quadro*) in the state." This view was widely shared by the Left and Right alike. On both sides, "neighborhood leaders" ran for seats in the City Council, but none of them were elected.⁴⁹ The new council contained 22 representatives of the PMDB and 11 of the PDS. Only one member of the PMDB faction -Pedro Eurico, the former president of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*- could be regarded as clearly identified with the neighborhood movement.

The elections confronted the "authentic" leaders who had been candidates or had been otherwise involved in the campaign, with some of the problematical

⁴⁹ There were 232 candidates from four parties (PMDB, PDS, PDT and PT) in the City Council elections. Through the system of the voto vinculado, the municipal vote was linked to the elections for the other legislative assemblies and the governorship.

aspects of the relation between neighborhood associations and politics. Much to their dismay, the population tended to regard politics as something that should be left to politicians, though they did vote for the opposition, and hardly voted for "popular candidates" like themselves. Direct political involvement by neighborhood activists tended to be regarded with distrust, a view that besides being "traditional" had often been emphasized by the "authentic" themselves in previous years. Furthermore, it became clear that the "authentic" leaders were hardly given any credit for the improvements in their neighborhoods. In this sense, the strategy of the Krause-administration had at least been effective in some areas.⁵⁰ Although responding to demands voiced by the "authentic," at the same time these groups were ignored and were not invited to make speeches at inaugurations, for instance. For a large part of the population, the works in the neighborhood appeared to result from the policies of the municipality, rather than the "force of the organized people." Similarly, the hiring of road builders by the municipality instead of the *mutirão* system was often attributed to the goodwill of the administration, rather than to popular resistance and the ways it had been voiced by its leaders (cf. FASE, 1983).

Nevertheless, some changes in the relations between inhabitants of low-income settlements and politicians were under way. One innovation, introduced by the *Pró-Federação* of Casa Amarela, was the organization of debates with various candidates as a form of *concientização* and as a way to break with the "traditional" association with a single politician. On the whole, the "authentic" were also much more reluctant to turn an association straightforwardly into an electoral committee, as happened with associations related to situationist politicians (cf. FASE, 1983). During the following months, relations between the newly elected oppositionist faction in the City Council and the neighborhood associations remained a subject of debate. Politicians sought the debate with associations, which was welcomed. At the same time, the associations tried not to relate to individual politicians, but rather to the faction as a whole.

6.9.3. The transportation prices campaign

After the 1982 elections, the *Assembléia de Bairros* started to meet again and decided to focus on public transportation as a unifying cause to strengthen the movement and serve its articulation, an issue that would be continuously present in the discussion on the transportation prices campaign. The choice of focus reveals

⁵⁰ Some of the peripheral areas where misery was rampant tended to vote for the PDS, as did Brasília Teimosa, where fraudulent titles to land had been distributed with the manifest aim of gaining votes. Surprisingly, however, despite all the efforts, the "situationist" position in Casa Amarela was relatively weak (Araújo de Moraes, 1985:32).

the continuing influence of the Church. From the late 1970s onward, the Brazilian Church had been promoting mobilization on the transportation issue as an outgrowth of the Cost of Living Movement that had emerged in São Paulo in the mid-1970s (Doimo, 1989).

While public transportation had been a neglected policy area during most of the 1970s (see 5.3.1.), things had changed by 1979. In November of that year an *Empresa Metropolitana de Transportes Urbanos* (EMTU) was created for the metropolitan region of Recife. Activity in this field had become more pressing in view of the transportation-linked disturbances (*quebra-quebras*) in various cities in the late 1970s and as a result of the second oil crisis. As GAJOP (*Gabinete de Assessoria Jurídica às Organizações Populares*), one of the *assessorias* in Recife, notes:

From March 1980 to December 1982, the measures implemented by the EMTU revolutionized the jammed structure of the existing system, directly benefitting the user who became the grand ally of the Company when it took more drastic measures against some concessionaires of the system. In this period the number of Concessionaires dropped from 37 to 23, but the fleet in operation expanded from 1,255 busses to 1,270. The number of radial lines, going directly from the suburbs to the center, increased from 125 to 153 and the number of local lines from neighborhood to neighborhood, which were only four in number in 1980, increased to 26 (GAJOP, 1985: 2-3).

Various measures, such as the definition of concession areas to prevent predatory competition, the definition of tariff zones and the construction of special drive-ways in some of the main arteries, further contributed to an improvement of the system.⁵¹ Meanwhile the price development of public transportation between 1980 and 1983 was moderate, although this did not necessarily mean the tariff problem for the low-income groups was actually alleviated (GAJOP, 1985:6).

The municipal transportation company, *Companhia de Transportes Urbanos* (CTU) also underwent a revitalization, now as one of the concession-holders in the EMTU system. One of the main achievements was the recuperation of the trolley-bus system, which was to serve the northern part of the city, while the metro system was to provide electrified transportation in the southern part. After 1982, however, the CTU once again failed to receive much attention from the municipal administration (cf. Mendonça & Pereira, 1987:97-110).

The mobilization around public transportation received its impetus from the regular tariff increases from 1982 onward, and was part of the more generalized mobilization that marked the last years of military government. The transportation issue had been discussed in the *Assembléia de Bairros* in July 1982. At the

⁵¹ The role of the metrô de superfície, completed in 1983, which accounts for about 10% of the passenger flow and required relatively large investments, is controversial.

time, the municipal tariff had increased from Cr\$ 18 in January to Cr\$ 32 in three phases. Proposals had been made about demands and how to go about mobilizing the population, but the elections interrupted the activities for some time.

The issue was taken up again in November at a meeting of the *Assembléia*, which was attended by representatives of fifteen "areas." By then the municipal tariff had increased to Cr\$ 100. After a round of discussion about new proposals for action, including *quebra quebra*, three commissions were set up: one to arrange the financial resources for the campaign, another to see to the propaganda and information and a third to formulate the right demands. Meanwhile the campaign was to be started in the neighborhoods themselves by way of discussions with the population. In December a delegation went to the EMTU to protest the intended price increase of January 1, 1984. The demands included a price freeze for six months, popular participation in the study on future increases, twelve free rides a week for the unemployed and government steps to keep prices down.

The action had little effect. At the end of January 1984, the *Assembléia* discussed its future strategy and decided to focus on the next price hike, due in April, rather than spend more time studying the issue and trying to reach consensus about demands at a seminar. This could be done afterward, it was decided. For the moment, there was the need to make a maximum of noise (*zoada*), even if not wholly coordinated. A "Metropolitan Day of Protest" on March 18 was mainly an occasion for localized activities prior to a larger manifestation on April 12. Brasília Teimosa, Casa Amarela, Ibura and Totó were most active in promoting the "Metropolitan Day of Protest."

On April 12, 1984, 3,000 people took part in a march to the Governor's Palace under the slogan *Congelamento Já*, carrying a petition also addressed to the State Legislative and the City Council. They were accompanied by oppositionist politicians, notably Carlos Eduardo⁵² (PMDB-City Council) and Luciano Siqueira (PMDB member of the State Legislative), and the PMDB conceded its speaking time at the Legislative Assembly to the protesters to read their petition. The petition took the stipulations of the Labor Law of 1938⁵³ as a starting point, arguing that by law transportation expenses should not exceed 5% of the minimum wage. Actually, however, transportation absorbed between 15% and 40% of the budget of a family living on one minimum wage. Furthermore the deplorable quality of the services provided by the concession-holders was mentioned and their

⁵² Carlos Eduardo presented various proposals about reorganizing public transportation to the City Council, one about the problem of "free tickets" for various groups of public employees and one for the introduction of a horário social (low tariffs at peak hours) and the gradual establishment of a public enterprise.

⁵³ Decree Law 88.930 of October 31, 1938. At a later stage reference would be made to Decree Law 90.381 of 1984.

pressure for price raises was denounced as an expression of their greed. The economic policy of the federal government, it was argued, was aimed at making the workers and low-income population pay for the crisis:

It is impossible to go on like this, why should only we pay for the crisis? We perceive that it is true that the whole economic policy of the Federal Government aims at massacring the workers and the low-income population. Yet, the governor promised an administration concerned with the social: why does not he put an end to this situation?

The petition concluded by demanding that the state government force the transportation companies to make their accounts public (*contas na mesa*) to thus gain insight in the real profits⁵⁴, that representatives of the neighborhood movement intervene in setting tariffs and that prices be frozen until a solution in keeping with the condition of the low-income families is found. The immediate results of the mobilization were a postponement of further price rises and an invitation to a meeting at the EMTU to discuss the issue.

At that point the strategy of "making a maximum of noise which does not need do be conjoined" ran into difficulties. The *Congelamento Já* slogan had a wide variety of sub-slogans which were sometimes mutually incompatible and tended to change with the composition of the *Assembléia* from one meeting to the next. On a Saturday the *Assembléia* met to prepare the meeting with the EMTU, on April 23, two days later. Although everybody agreed about the need for a price freeze, a *horário social*, a "change of policies" and the publication of accounts, no common line of action was adopted. Some argued in favor of "making clear the position of the people who can not put up with any more" without entering into technical issues, whereas others wanted to address the demand for popular intervention in setting tariffs, and wanted to know what should be done if the transportation company accounts were made public. The result was that the meeting at the EMTU ended in confusion. The EMTU accepted the proposal to appoint a *Grupo de Trabalho*, composed of representatives of the *Assembléia*, the state government, the transportation companies and politicians sympathetic to the movement.

While confusion reigned about what to do next, the start of the rainy season and the concomitant range of calamities combined to make activities around the transportation issue ebb. In June the Coordination of the *Assembléia* met to diagnose the situation and concluded that participation in the *Grupo de Trabalho* was not very effective, not only because the government did not take the matter seriously, but also because the *Assembléia* did not have any clear policy. The

⁵⁴ Officially the EMTU operated a compensation system aimed at equalizing the profit of more or less profitable operations by the concession-holders at 12%. A counterargument was that actual profits were much higher since the concession-holders applied their cash in the financial market before it entered the compensation scheme.

Assembléia Coordination proceeded to discuss the relation of the transportation struggle to the class struggle and the organizational question. As to the first point, it was stated that the class struggle was present in the struggle over transportation, which was a struggle between those who exploit the (transportation) sector and those who are exploited (*A luta de classes está presente nessa questão de transportes: o que explora o setor e os que somos explorados*). The organizational question was presented in the following terms:

How can a direction for the Assembléia be developed?

The ideal is that clarity arises from the struggle, but at the moment the development of the struggle depends on clarity.

There are two ways to go on with the struggle:

-Getting the local people to take to the streets (repeating the anterior process);

-Discussing the new price rise in the next Assembléia - rethinking the slogan of the price freeze or discussing what to do now (and here is where the *Grupo de Trabalho* comes in).⁵⁵

Meanwhile a *Pesquisa Popular* (Popular Research Project) had been carried out on behalf of the Assembléia. According to the survey, transportation costs took about 20% of the minimum wage and more than 30% for people who lived in more distant neighborhoods (that is in terms of "zones") like Ibura and Camarajibe. The repercussions for family life were registered, as were a variety of popular opinions on what to do, ranging from *quebra quebra* to the promotion of competition between companies in the same concession area to keep prices down. On the basis of this research, a video film was produced to promote neighborhood discussions.

In July the Assembléia protested new tariff increases and deplored the fact that the users had played no role in setting the transportation prices which "also contradicts, in practice, the discourse of the democratization of society." However, the Assembléia could not decide upon a common line of action and felt it was losing the initiative in the debate on public transportation. From December 1983 to November 1984, it came up with at least three different lists of demands. It was not clear to the delegates in the Assembléia whether these lists should be understood as demands, slogans or proposals.

By then a proposal to set up a "Support Fund for the Users of Collective Transportation" had been launched through the FEMOCOHAB and was "taken into consideration" by the EMTU. This proposal rejected the *horário social*, subventions or a price freeze as non-viable and proposed setting up a special fund to reduce

⁵⁵ "Como se forja a direção para a Assembléia de Bairros?"

O ideal é que a clareza venha na luta, mas no momento o encaminhamento da luta depende da clareza. Tem 2 maneiras para partir na continuação da luta.

-Cutucando a áreas (agitando) para ir às ruas (repete processo anterior)

-Na próxima Assembléia discutir novo aumento - refletir sobre a bandeira do congelamento ou colocar o que agora se faz (e aí joga o GT)" (A.B, 6-9-1984).

tariffs for students and other special groups (mailmen, policemen, ex-soldiers, etc.), who would receive *vales transporte*. The oppositionist faction in the City Council also presented proposals.

The *Assembléia* went on studying and discussing, and it managed to schedule a second march on the Governor's Palace on November 14. Financial support from the *assessorias*, and others, went toward hiring buses to transport protesters to the manifestation.⁵⁶ This time about 5,000 people took part. The demands were:

1. An end to the current transportation policy.
2. Collective transportation to be provided by the government.
3. Adherence to the Decree Law (90.381/84) stipulation that a family's expenses with transportation should not exceed 5% of the minimum wage.
4. A price freeze.
5. The end of the EMTU.

The call for action (November 8, 1984) ended with the following words:

Finally, we want to say that this struggle is part of the more general struggle, in which all of us are involved, for the democratization of our society. And democracy is made through exercises of citizenship, that is WITH THE PEOPLE MANIFESTING ITSELF IN THE STREET (*se faz com exercícios de cidadania, isto é COM POVO NA RUA SE MANIFESTANDO*).

About a month later, Governor Roberto Magalhães stated in a radio interview that a price freeze was out of the question and that he would not seriously consider the demands made during the demonstration, since they were not made to solve anything, but only to "create confusion and tumult."⁵⁷ In response, the *Assembléia* protested the Governor's attitude which was set against the democratic discourse he propagated as one of the leaders of the *Frente Liberal*. It also argued that the price freeze was not designed to be indeterminate, but to allow for time to study and negotiate other solutions.

In January 1985, the *Assembléia* clarified its policy on the issue and decided to focus on the demand for government funds to help reduce transportation prices by way of a *horário social*. By then, however, the changing political

⁵⁶ The demonstration was promoted by the *Assembléia de Bairros* and could rely on support from the Sindicato dos Metalúrgicos, Sindicato dos Securitários, Oposição Sindical Comercial, Instituto dos Arquitetos do Brasil (IAB), Ação Católica Operária (ACO), Associação dos Sociólogos (ASPE), Comissão Justiça e Paz, Movimento de Cristãos Universitários, Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU), Jovens do Meio Popular, Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), Centro Luís Freire, FASE, CEAS, ETAPAS, GAJOP, ECOS, Vereadores Carlos Eduardo, Pedro Eurico e Roberto Arraes, Deputado Sergio Longman and Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT).

⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the state government now seriously considered a thorough restructuring of the EMTU. Eventually representatives of the FEMOCOHAB and the FECOPE accepted a seat in the Administrative Council of the EMTU.

situation brought new issues to the fore, and the problem of transportation prices lost some of its mobilization potential due to the economic policies adopted by the Sarney government. In the course of the year, attention shifted to the elections for a municipal executive in November 1985 and the role of neighborhood associations under a future elected municipal administration.

6.9.4. The Federação de Bairros da Região Metropolitana do Recife

An issue which had been latent throughout the years, the formation of a federation, simultaneously acquired new urgency, since it was felt to provide for greater political effectiveness under the changing circumstances. The rather informal organization of the *Assembléia*, which gave rise to questions about the role of the people attending (could anybody vote?) and the role of the Coordination, had been discussed at seminars organized by ETAPAS in late 1983 and early 1984. Although it was generally agreed that a clearer definition of the organizational structure and of concomitant responsibilities would be useful, talks on practical solutions immediately gave rise to sharp differences of opinion, not only about the criteria for participation in a more formalized organization but also on the "unification of struggles and the direction of a common struggle." Such issues, which had been "resolved" in the transportation-campaign by the failure to define clear strategies or aims, immediately triggered political and ideological disputes.

The discussion was taken up again in January 1985, this time promoted by the cooperating *assessorias* (*Interentidades*) and with the specific aim of setting up a federation. It was not until September 1987 that a *Federação de Bairros da Região Metropolitana do Recife* (FEMEB) took shape (cf. GAJOP, 1987: 10). On that occasion, 107 local associations from seven municipalities in the metropolitan region sent delegates. The 412 delegates with the right to vote could choose from two lists for a board. The *Organização e Luta* group consisted of militants of various left-wing parties as well as independents. The competing list, *Autonomia e Luta*, was drawn up during the congress itself and was linked to the segment of the local PT most adverse to alliances with other groups. The former list received 262 votes against 88 for the latter.

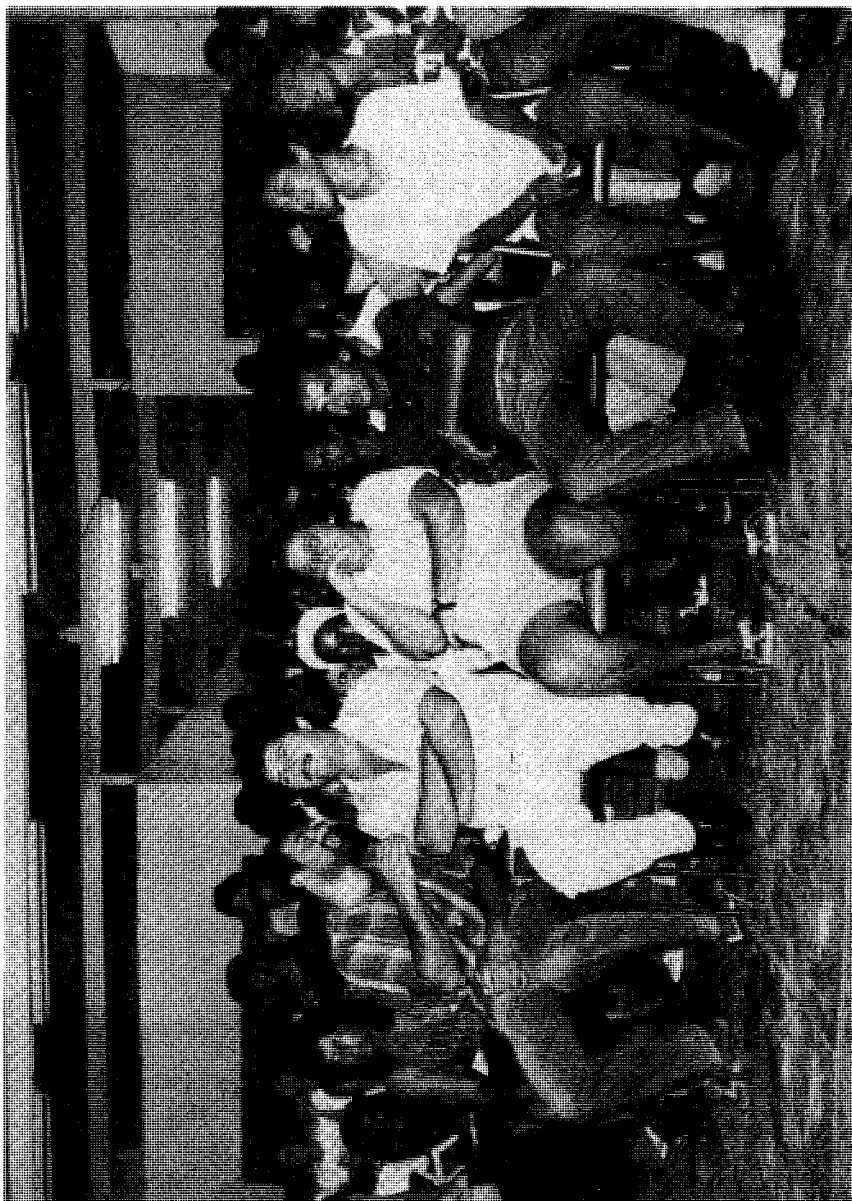
6.9.5. The Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados

By 1985 another "articulation," the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados* (MDF), which had originated in São Paulo, also started to play a role in Recife. At the Fourth National Congress of the MDF in São Luis do Maranhão in 1984 it had been decided that the next National Congress was to be held in Recife. From that

moment on, several people started to visit *favelas* to articulate the Movement locally, and the Fifth National Congress in July 1985 was attended by 120 *favelados* from Recife. The Congress theme was the production of new Brazilian Constitution and the need for organization to influence the process (*Participação dos Favelados na Constituinte*). A wide range of proposals on issues like housing, healthcare, access to land, labor, transportation and education were discussed in keeping with the "methodology" of group discussions alternated with *canticos*, which was well known from the Ecclesial Base Communities. On the whole, the Movement strongly relied on the infrastructure of the Archdiocese, and this also held true for its mode of operation. Eventually, however, the local MDF went its own way, rejecting the notion that it was basically a religious movement. Its meeting place was at the *Associação dos Orientadores Educacionais de Pernambuco* building in the center of the city.

The MDF attended the meetings of the *Assembléia de Bairros/FEMEB*, but the relationship was often one of rivalry. Officially the MDF aim was the organization of *favelados* -the poor among the poor- and it argued that the *Assembléia/FEMEB* was more closely related to more consolidated settlements. The actual differences in orientation, however, were hard to pinpoint. The main point was perhaps that the influence of Liberation Theology and the radical Catholic wing of the PT and the concomitant imagery was more pronounced in the MDF.

The 1979-1985 period was thus one of efforts to consolidate and articulate the neighborhood associativism that had gradually emerged in the second half of the 1970s into an "urban social movement." The efforts resulted in a number of "sectoral articulations" covering parts of the municipality and in the citywide *Assembléia de Bairros*, which later was joined by the MDF. These organizations sought to articulate an "authentic" movement in the face of the "communitarian action" policies adopted in governmental circles. Neighborhood associativism had become an arena of intense hegemonic struggle. How did neighborhood associativism at the grassroots develop in this context and what was it like by the mid-1980s?



FEACA meeting (1988)

6.10. Associativism in transition

By 1985 one of the *assessorias* -ETAPAS- recorded 151 associations and similar entities in the municipality, over half of which had been created after 1979 (ETAPAS, 1985).⁵⁸ This process was accompanied by changes in the nature and mode of operation of the existing local associations in interaction with a changing "environment." There was the growing influence of party politics and the formalization and secularization of the organizations, paralleled by attempts to broaden their local base and the changing relations with state apparatuses.

The trajectories of the associations in existence by the mid-1980s were multifarious. Some were the outcome of a process of "functional differentiation," with the informally organized base communities giving rise to more formal neighborhood associations:

The first independent council created here was the *Conselho de Moradores do Alto do Pascoal e Bomba do Hemetério*, which was a council created with the force of the people (*com a força do povo*). That is to say we got people from the *Encontro de Irmãos* and people from the community itself to collaborate. So we had 13 persons and we made the council. The council made honest articles of association, without *pelegagem*, and we really struggled as we still struggle today (Interview, October 20, 1988).

As is also clear from this quote, other groups emerged as a result of the policies adopted by state agencies from 1979 onward. In still other cases, the establishment of a local association seems to have been the result of "contagion" by the climate of neighborhood associativism. By the late 1970s, "everybody was crazy about associations," as one neighborhood leader put it.

As to the orientation of the associations in the mid-1980s, a very rough estimate holds that about 30% were "authentic" (Assembléia de Bairros/FEMEB, FEACA, MDF) and another 30% oriented by government-sponsored articulations (FEMOCOHAB, FECOPE). The remainder, including many less active associations, were less clearly "aligned" (cf. ETAPAS, 1987; Silva Amorim & Montenegro, 1988:92).⁵⁹ The associations are formally a-partidarian. In practice, of course, the

⁵⁸ This listing of organizations ("grupos de moradores que desenvolvem atividades de articulação ou que encaminhem as lutas gerais da Comunidade (Questão da posse da terra, programas de governo implantados nos bairros, reivindicação de serviços básicos - água, luz, saneamento, barreiras, posto de saúde, escola, canal, ponte, etc.)") (ETAPAS, 1985) was the first phase of a project gathering data on the neighborhood movement in Recife and the RMR.

⁵⁹ In 1984 FEACA counted 23 officially affiliated associations six of which were, however, rather insignificant (Cadernos GAJOP 2, 1985:36). By 1986 the number of affiliates had increased to 26. FEMEB counted some 30 affiliates. The official founding congress of the MDF in Pernambuco (June 1988) was attended by people from 34 areas. FECOPE claims to represent 220 local groups, including sports clubs and domino leagues. The groups related to FEMOCOHAB are similarly diversified.

distinction between the competing *autênticos* and *pelegos* is linked to the distinction between left and right of the political spectrum.⁶⁰ According to a survey of 90 associations by ETAPAS in 1986, in 60% of the cases the leaders interviewed were affiliated to political parties, basically the PMDB (41%), the PFL (16%), the PT (14%) and de PDT (6%). The relation with party politics was less obvious to the people the associations claimed to represent, 51% of whom did not know the party affiliation of the leaders or did not answer to the question (Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988:26, 32). This shows that the socially desirable distinction between party militancy and neighborhood activism is at least partly effective in relation to the rank and file.

Over the 1979-1985 period, the mode of operation of neighborhood associativism changed. The above account of how a *Conselho* emerged with "the force of the people" illustrates an aspect of this change and shows the trajectory from a group involved in the *Encontros de Irmãos* to a formalized secular Dwellers' Council. The process of secularization or "emancipation from the *pastoral*" discussed in relation to the *Assembléia de Bairros* was paralleled by a similar process at the local level. At the same time, the "communitarian" model related to the Base Communities was replaced by a "formal" model of organization. With the broadening opportunities of the political *abertura*, local groups sought to involve greater numbers of neighborhood residents and to broaden the scope of their activities.

The survey by the ETAPAS team provided some insight in the typical formation process of neighborhood associations, as it was taking place by the mid-1980s (Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988). The initial activities usually took place in the home of one of the leaders or in a room at institution (e.g. church, school or local club). By way of public meetings throughout the area, leaflets, a sound car (*carro de som*) and similar means, the local population was convened to participate in the first meetings, which were mostly concerned with formalizing the association, electing a directory (president, secretaries, treasurer)⁶¹ and approving the articles of association. The most often stated aim of the associations was "to resolve the problems of the community," mainly by exerting pressure on public agencies through petitions and commissions.

This suggests a shift away from the traditional clientelist arrangements in which a "neighborhood politician" served as mediator in solving individualized

FEMOCOHAB claims to represent about 450 groups in the state of Pernambuco.

⁶⁰ Broadly speaking, the division runs between the left wing of the PMDB, the PDT and the PT, and the right-wing of the PMDB and the PFL. Political divisions and alignments in Recife are discussed more extensively in Chapter 7.

⁶¹ Though women are prominent in the day-to-day activities at a local level, their role in the formal structure of the associations and in outward representation has been reduced (cf. Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988:29).

problems. The modes of exerting pressure and acquiring resources for local activism have become diversified and the role of City Councilors has become that of "parallel channel" rather than "gate keeper." The normative criteria for relating to any specific politician has become that he or she puts himself or herself "at the service of the community" (cf. ETAPAS, 1987; Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988: 54-55, 61).

The numbers of association members varied. Out of a sample of 90 associations 26% had up to 200 members, while 11% had over a thousand members. Membership was not essential, however, and 41% of the associations did not have any formal registration of members. Becoming a member was a political act rather than something that could be expected to bring any direct benefits. The associations themselves usually attached greater importance to the local "community" they addressed than to formal membership. Thus in many cases, formal membership was not a requirement for attending meetings or voting in the elections for the directory of the local association; the whole "community" was invited to participate. The electoral process itself was geared to this conception and served as a means of propagating the association and increasing its legitimacy. The first directory was usually elected by acclamation at a meeting. Subsequent elections tended to be organized with ballot boxes at strategic spots in the neighborhood (e.g. school, bakery, association's headquarters). In these elections, the voters usually had a choice among various lists. General meetings were most often held when specific issues required them (50% out of 90) or monthly (30%). Meanwhile, the directories would meet regularly while specific task groups or commissions would organize activities around such issues as urbanization of the neighborhood, sanitation, healthcare, and education.

The ETAPAS team also tried to assess the knowledge about the associations in their areas of activity and the degree of local participation. It noted that 42% of the people knew of the existence of an association in their neighborhood, while about 17% participated in the activities in some way. For most of the residents, the association remained something rather distant, which they did not know much about. In spite of this reduced active participation, the associations claimed a significant number of "victories" in their dealings with state apparatuses. These "victories" had been won by active minorities. The claiming of "victories" was often controversial in the context of the "politics of *abertura*," since the role of "authentic" associations in bringing them about was not acknowledged. The "victories" most often claimed were related to the paving of roads in the neighborhood and the installation of a water supply (Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988:52, 54).

A striking feature of the survey by the ETAPAS team, as well as of similar research carried out by GAJOP in 1984 on behalf of the FEACA (Cadernos GAJOP 2, 1985), was the confrontation of the *assessorias* with the "reality" of neighborhood associativism. This more intimate knowledge of the wheeling and

dealing of local associations prompted some critical reflections on the part of the *assessorias*. The associations were different from what they expected. ETAPAS, in particular, noted the rapid increase in the number of associations and the accompanying shift to a more formal model of organization. The team expressed its concern about this formalization of the movement, which it regarded as a sort of contagion of an essentially "communitarian model" by its environment, i.e. as a repetition of the relations of power and knowledge in Brazilian society and a consequence of state influence in particular. Thus they argued that

The need to be recognized as official interlocutors gives rise to some questions. The establishment of legal parameters is a form of state intervention which occurs at the very moment when dwellers seek recognition. The spontaneous movement is quickly legalized and turned into the public representation forum of neighborhood interests (Silva, Amorim & Montenegro, 1988:27).

Internal power struggles, the introduction of representative mechanisms rather than direct participation, and the crystalization of power in leaders who perpetuated themselves in a dominant position were similarly attributed to the formalization vehicled by the state.

An assessment of this kind overlooks some points, however. It was not without pride that a local leader told me that in the first half of the 1980s, "the time had come to officialize things." They could not be ignored anymore, and could no longer be denied the right to organize more or less according to their wishes. As Durham (1984) observed, the "formal" organization model could be furthered by the state, but it also was part of the "popular cultural patrimony". Moreover, she argued that the "communitarian" model should not be romanticized. It has its limitation in that it only seems to function in small groups, and these groups usually fail to develop mechanisms to deal with internal divergences. Authoritarian mechanisms could also crop up in these groups, to maintain cohesion. Power can very well operate informally. Furthermore, the development of representative mechanisms reflected a concern with the lack of representativeness in the "communitarian" model, which derives its legitimacy from its capacity to mobilize. Mobilization then may become an end in itself and that may result in parochialism (cf. Assies, 1990:82; Durham, 1984; Vigevani, 1989).

The formalization of neighborhood associations in Recife was related to an expansion of their scope of action, and efforts to broaden their local base. As such, more formal organization and representative mechanisms might well be required for this expansion and might contribute to the transparency of responsibilities and organizational positions. It is no guarantee for democratic functioning, but neither can it be regarded *a priori* as less democratic.

In this sense, the reaction of the GAJOP team to the confrontation with "reality" is interesting. They also noted that the activities of the associations were often rather centralized in a small number of persons who tended to perpetuate

themselves in the "power positions," and that there was often a negligible exchange of information between the leaders and their base. Rather than citing "formalization" as the cause of the problems, the team recommended effective institutionalization and formalization. The GAJOP survey was carried out as a step toward the eventual establishment of "legal commissions" in the local associations affiliated to the FEACA. These commissions were to deal with a broad range of legal questions in relation to landholding and the institutional functioning of the associations (e.g. elections, purchase of headquarters, functions of the board members). The confrontation between the expectations and the "reality" of neighborhood associativism made them alter their project to focus on the democratization of the organizations by way of stricter adherence to the formal rules laid down in their internal regulations as well as greater attention devoted to bureaucratic chores (Cadernos GAJOP 2, 1985:39).

The two *assessorias* confronted a rapidly evolving "reality." While the number of associations rapidly increased, the mode of operation changed. The increase in numbers implied a diversification of neighborhood associativism. Beside the relatively politicized *autênticos* and the professedly "anti-political" associativism promoted by state agencies, some less outspoken associations were emerging by the mid-1980s. For their lack of "consciousness" and their rather pragmatic a-political attitude to state agencies, they were often regarded with suspicion by the "authentic." The growth in number was accompanied by the formalization and institutionalization of the associations. They changed their mode of operation, but this should not be *a priori* regarded as the cause of a "repetition of relations of power and knowledge." Perhaps they only made them visible by formalizing them.

6.11. Concluding remarks

In the first part of this chapter, I examined three aspects of urban policy in Recife during the 1979-1985 period, the *Projeto Recife* which defined the main policy lines, the policies with regard to urban land use, and the communitarian policies as the clearest illustration of the new policy style adopted in the context of the *abertura*. In the next chapter, I will examine the development of policy alternatives in these three areas under an elected left-wing municipal administration.

I have shown how the *Projeto Recife*, announced as a project to benefit low-income settlements, became a sub-project of the World Bank-financed *Projeto Grande Recife*, which became operative from 1982 onward. Due to the austerity measures hitting the country in full force after the 1982 elections, the implementation of the *Projeto Recife* was sluggish. Furthermore, it was partial and selective. The Program for Revitalization of the Capibaribe received the bulk of the attention, and within this program the urbanization measures for the "poor areas" lagged

behind the occupation of "vacant areas." Measures favouring high-income housing and the creation of parks in adjacent areas received priority and were accompanied by the removal of low-income settlements. This made the *Projeto Recife* increasingly elitist.

The removal of low-income settlements and the mode of removal (indemnifications rather than real relocation) generated anxiety and unrest among the people who lived in the "empty areas." With the help of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, which had been quick to voice suspicions about the *Projeto Recife*, this resulted in more organized forms of protest. Thus the municipality was pressured into accepting a "house for a house" scheme, though the houses would only be *casas embrião* of 16 m². On the other hand, the elitist character of the *Projeto* became a matter of public concern. In the course of the years, professional organizations of engineers, architects, sociologists and lawyers voiced their agreement with the views of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*. The convergence of local resistance and the criticism voiced by these various middle-class groups turned the *Projeto* into a symbol for opposition to the regime. In the next chapter, I shall briefly discuss the attempt at participative reorientation of the *Projeto Recife*.

Along with the *Projeto Recife*, a new approach to the issue of urban land use had been announced, accompanied by the transfer of Brasília Teimosa and Coque/Joanna Bezerra to municipal jurisdiction. One feature of the new approach was the elaboration of new municipal legislation on urban land and the definition of "zones." The "zoning" was geared to the requirements of the *Projeto Recife*. One particular type of zone was the *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS), i.e. "subnormal settlements" considered capable of being consolidated and urbanized. The actual designation of 27 *favelas* out of about a hundred as ZEIS, and the vagueness about who was to benefit aroused the suspicions of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*. Moreover, the regularization of landholding in a number of *favelas*, which had been announced with some pomp in 1979, had hardly made any progress. Brasília Teimosa seemed to be the exception, but the land titles distributed on the eve of the 1982 elections turned out to be without legal value. In the next chapter, I shall examine the elaboration of a more specific piece of legislation on the regularization and urbanization of *favelas* by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* in cooperation with the "popular movement," the *Plano de Regularização das Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (PREZEIS). This "popular initiative" was to be consecrated by the City Council in 1987.

Beside these two more specific policy areas, I have examined the shift in policy style in the context of the *abertura*. The most notable feature was the adoption of "communitarian action" programs. As a result, neighborhood associativism ceased to be "a reserved terrain for the 'authentic' movement" (ETAPAS, 1989:60). The new policy aim was to create parallel organizations by sponsoring coopted leaders (*pelegos*). It relied on an appropriation of elements from the

"communitarian" discourse hitherto promoted by the Church, but instead of promoting horizontal solidarities the governmental policies relied on clientelist and neo-populist mechanisms. In the next chapter, I shall examine the efforts to develop mechanisms for the democratic participation of neighborhood associations in municipal planning and the implementation of urban policies.

At the beginning of this chapter, I suggested that the emergence of the Brazilian "new middle classes" should be taken into account if we are to understand some of the features of the "urban social movements" and their "impact." According to Gohn (1991a: 13), the first half of the 1980s witnessed the somehow "crossing" (*cruzamento*) of activities of segments of the "middle strata" and of the popular classes. This phenomenon was related to the rapid growth and changing role of the "new middle classes" observed by Oliveira (1988) and Boschi (1987). Oliveira discussed the role of these groups as "translators and articulators" of social demands. Boschi discussed middle-class neighborhood and professional associativism in Rio de Janeiro, and noted that its "extremely politicized nature expressed in terms of democratic values and a broader perspective of change" was a "fundamental characteristic" of new middle-class militancy.

The analysis of developments in Recife suggests that these developments played a role in the "social production of 'urban social movements'." I have noted the role of professional associations in turning *Projeto Recife* into a matter of public debate, and the presence of representatives or militants of these associations was noted on various occasions. More broadly, it might be suggested that the "identity crisis of the planning agencies" and the rise of the *assessorias* "at the service of the popular movement" were somehow related phenomena.⁶² Both were associated to "reflection on professional practice" and the search for alternatives.

This was particularly evident in the case of the social science and social work sector, with its concerns about "the cooptation of professional practice" by state agencies with their new "communitarianism" (Arcoverde, 1985) and its criticism of "assistentialism" which also played a role in the discussion in Church-related agencies. It was the groups of this kind that took up theorizations of "urban social movements" as a reference for professional practice and propagated the notion. While professional training and networks played a role as platforms of discussion, the Church and to an increasing extent, the NGOs provided the institutional space for the practical development of "counterpoints."

These "counterpoints" were the points of encounter with leaders of "the movement," notably younger activists who had become involved in neighborhood associativism through pastoral work and who actively participated in the discus-

⁶² This implies that the "identity crisis of the planning mechanisms" partly derived from "internal" dynamics and not only from the "impact" of popular mobilization or the pressure of public opinion. It was also part of the development of "professional identities" in a specific institutional setting.

sions and seminars and the development of supra-local articulations. They were active in the FEACA and other "sectoral" articulations, in the Coordination of the *Assembléia de Bairros* and as organizers of the transportation prices campaign. They most clearly assimilated the "urban social movement" discursive matrix and became the spokespersons of "the authentic movement." This group also became increasingly involved in left-wing party politics, particularly from 1982 onward. In that year, many neighborhood activists were candidates in the elections, with frustrating results.

Meanwhile, local neighborhood associativism expanded and went through a process of change. The competing efforts to hegemonize neighborhood associativism contributed to the expansion, while at the same time the changing political climate provided new opportunities. Neighborhood associativism became more diversified as it acquired a dynamics of its own in the course of the 1979-1985 period. By the mid-1980s, new associations were emerging, less clearly aligned to either of the two camps of the early 1980s.

This expansion and diversification of neighborhood associativism was accompanied by a trend toward secularization and more formal organization, which took place in the case of the *Assembléia de Bairros* as well as at the local level. In the case of the *Assembléia*, it was related to the efforts to become an effective organization. The organization of the transportation prices campaign was accompanied by constant discussions on organizational issues and the ways of doing politics. The diffuse and rather informal mode of operation were the theme of the two seminars organized by ETAPAS in 1983-84. They aimed at a certain formalization of the supra-local organization and involved discussions over the representativeness of those involved, the definition of responsibilities and the role of the coordination group in developing initiatives regulating the formulation of coherent and effective strategies for "the neighborhood movement."

A somewhat similar process of self-institutionalization took place at the local level, evoking questions about the nature of "the neighborhood movement" that preoccupied ETAPAS. The research carried out by the ETAPAS team and by the GAJOP team and the questions they addressed reflect the development of more critical views on the "urban social movement" discourse which had so enthusiastically been adopted in earlier years. It was related to the eclipse of the "paradigm of the 1970s" in the Brazilian discussion on "urban social movements." Neighborhood associations had been rather indiscriminately labeled "social movements," and a potential for radical societal change had been attributed to them without proper analysis of what was actually going on in the neighborhoods themselves. By 1982-83 various authors called for more critical analysis, which was to reveal that the "social movements" were much more precarious than initial analyses and the rhetorics of spokespersons suggested and that the radical anti-capitalism and frontal antagonism to the attributed to neighborhood associativism should be

qualified (Cardoso, 1983, 1987; Boschi & Valladares, 1983; cf. Assies, 1990:79). While further analysis contributed to a more sober assessment of the potentialities and possible limitations of neighborhood associations, the conception of the state that had informed earlier theorizing as well as the rhetorics of the spokespersons of "the movement" was also subjected to scrutiny. This conception, as Telles (1988:281) put it, not only dissolved itself in the context of political change which was taking place and which in practice introduced elements of ambiguity. It also became less convincing in theoretical terms as a result of the rethinking of the distinction between "formal" and "real" democracy that had informed left-wing thinking up to the 1970s and which converged with other theoretical approaches in the strong emphasis on the extra-institutional character of the "new social movements."

Throughout the period discussed in this chapter, and particularly in the face of the neo-populism of the Krause administration, autonomy and extra-institutionalism had become highly valued features of "authentic" neighborhood associativism. The content of these terms derived from various sources, and is at stake in a constant play of interpretation and hegemony. Thus, the meaning of "autonomy" can range from a "different way of doing politics," mainly through communitarian self-help and denunciation, to an option for involvement with an "authentic" political party. The conceptualization of the movements as totally opposed to the state was functional in the resistance to cooptation. Citizenship was defined as "the people manifesting itself in the street." The advent of the *Nova República* and the municipal elections of 1985 posed new questions, however. Was the strategy of systematic opposition still viable or would it lead to isolation and what were the alternatives? Such were the questions debated during a seminar organized by the *Assembléia de Bairros* and the *assessorias* in early 1985 (Interentidades, 1985). The pursuit of alternatives became even more pressing with the municipal elections of 1985.

EXERCISES IN INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATION

The Brazilian transition was what Share and Mainwaring (1986) call a "transition through transaction," strongly controlled by the departing authoritarian regime. In 1983-1984, the time of the *Diretas Já*, it had verged on the more radical variant of negotiated transition, "transition through extrication" where the terms of negotiation are less favorable to the regime.¹ But direct elections for the presidency did not take place and by a twist of fate José Sarney, ex-president of the pro-regime PDS, was propelled into the presidency. The *Nova República* was sustained by the *Aliança Democrática* of the PFL and PMDB. The latter had become an increasingly heterogeneous coalition of "historical" and less authentic oppositionists. The PMDB, as Fleischer (1986:102) put it, "should not be considered an 'old party with new clothes' but the ex-MDB with 'less clothes'." More radical groups, like the PT and Leonel Brizola's PDT, had been excluded from the negotiations that produced the *Nova República* (Castro & Faria, 1989:211). One consequence of this transacted transition was that in political terms, the *Nova República* was characterized by "invertebrate centrism" (Souza, 1988).

Nevertheless, the entrance of "new actors" and the upsurge of popular protests in the aftermath of military government contributed to the expectations about the new civilian government:

Expressing its resistance and opposition in electoral turn-outs, in the campaign for direct elections and in various sorts of civil organizations, the presence of the popular sectors on the political scene had contributed to an accelerated loss of the regime's support and legitimacy. It created and propagated a generalized hope for change in the direction of a more democratic society, which the negotiated transition project of the *Nova República* somehow sought to incorporate.

From the start of the transition, however, these hopes and expectations have been frustrated. In spite of all the governmental

¹ Democratization "through collapse" and "through extrication" are both processes that occur "by necessity," though in the latter case the transition is negotiated. Transition "through transaction," by contrast, takes place "by choice" of the authoritarian government (Share & Mainwaring, 1986).

rhetoric, the changes in the fields of public and economic policies were not substantial. In fact the authoritarian and centralized structure of the state apparatus, which had been consolidated during the military regime, remained practically intact during the gradualist transition, and even after a civilian had become president. This significantly affected the renovation of mechanisms of intermediation between political and civil society and inhibited real changes where democratization of society is concerned (Carvalho & Laniado, 1989:111).

Initially the new civilian government seemed to be heading for reforms to alleviate the "social debt" generated by 21 years of bureaucratic authoritarianism. Two basic areas of intervention were defined by the new government. Emergency measures were taken to alleviate the most direct problems such as hunger, misery and unemployment through topical interventions, e.g. the federal *Programa Nacional de Leite para Crianças Carentes* which was launched in 1986 (Moura, 1986). In addition, more structural reforms were envisaged, notably in the areas of social security, housing, education, the tax system and public administration. The fate of these promises was to be the same as that of the famous National Plan for Agrarian Reform. Hardly any action was undertaken and, as regards what little did happen, the tendency was towards liberalization rather than toward democratization (Carvalho & Laniado, 1989:112). Meanwhile the emergency programs were given priority as they were well adapted to the type of clientelist bargaining characteristic of the Sarney government (Carvalho & Laniado, 1989; Castro & Faria, 1989; Lamounier, 1990).²

In the area of economic policy, the launching of the *Plano Cruzado* in February 1986 brought the population a brief period of *bonanza* and gained the government the popularity it had lacked until then, which contributed to the landslide victory in the November 1986 elections. In 22 of the 23 states, PMDB governors were elected and the party gained a comfortable majority in the Congress, which was to elaborate the new Constitution. Readjustment of the *Cruzado Plan* had been postponed until after the elections, and the population was obviously taken aback. The following years witnessed the rapid decline of the Sarney government's popularity and increasing economic difficulties resulting in widespread disappointment and exasperation (*perplexidade*) with the *Nova República* (cf. Munck, 1989:128-155). What about the developments as to "urban social movements?"

In general terms and with due qualifications, Carvalho and Laniado (1989:123) also noted, some "conquests" in the relations between "urban social movements" and the state under the *Nova República*, namely:

² The Sarney government made extensive use of the "trade of favors" to get a five-year mandate and to influence voting over the new Constitution (Lamounier, 1990:23).

1. the recognition of popular leaders and organizations
2. the creation, at a local level, of representation bodies such as communitarian councils or regional administrations
3. a certain space for the influence of social movements on the definition of priorities and the orientations of state interventions.

This trend eventually found some expression in the new Constitution adopted in September 1988. The tenth paragraph of Article 29 of the Constitution refers to "the cooperation of representative associations in municipal planning." It is a watered down version of the preliminary Consitution proposal published in October 1987 (Nascimento, 1988), which called for stipulations to allow for "the participation of the communitarian organizations in the planning and decision-making process of the municipality."

This chapter focusses on the "experiment" in municipal democratization, involving new forms of participation by neighborhood associations, that took place in Recife from the beginning of 1986 to the end of 1988. It was "specific" for various reasons. Firstly, it was one of the first efforts at municipal democratization to be carried out under a clearly left-wing administration in a Brazilian state capital. The election of Jarbas Vasconcelos was one of the striking outcomes of the elections for municipal executives on November 15, 1985. They were the first elections under the *Nova República*. They resulted from the lifting of national security legislation, which had until then prohibited direct elections in 202 municipalities, including 25 capital cities (Fleischer, 1986:111). The outcome of the elections in Recife was noteworthy because the new mayor was supported by a left-wing coalition, a sort of resurrected *Frente do Recife*, and could hardly be identified with the *Aliança Democrática*. It was one of the indications of the fracturing of the hegemony of the *Aliança Democrática*, which was temporarily be reversed in 1986 with the popularity derived from the *Plano Cruzado*.³

Secondly, the "experiment" was carried out while the authoritarian Constitution of 1967 and the institutional framework for urban policies installed by the military regime (see 5.2.) were still in force. When the draft was published for the new Constitution, with its stipulations on the participation of communitarian organizations in planning and decision-making, the *Jornal do Brasil* (October 27, 1987) called the ongoing experiment in municipal democratization in Recife a pioneering and relatively successful experiment in this direction. However, the fact that the old Constitution was still in force also meant that Recife's left-wing administration had little room to maneuver in. Moreover, the Sarney government used its prerogatives to delay and obstruct the transfer of funds to administrations

³ Other surprises at these elections were the defeat of Fernando Henrique Cardoso by Jânio Quadros in São Paulo and the breakthrough of the PT in Fortaleza (Ceará), where Maria Luísa Fontenelle was elected. Brizola's PDT won the elections in Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre as well as in a number of other municipalities.

opposed to its designs. Theoretically at least, the 1988 Constitution provides for a larger share of the total public resources for the municipalities.⁴

Thirdly, the policies in Recife verged on the rather generically formulated proposal for "popular councils" propounded by the PT and regarded as the most radical form of participation by neighborhood associations in the municipal administration. In many ways, the policies developed in Recife were similar to those proposed by PT administrations in cities like São Paulo and Vitória after the 1988 municipal elections. However, in 1985, when these policies were tried out in Recife, the PT followed a course of frontal opposition to the *Nova República* and anyone suspected of complicity with the Sarney government, while the rejection of alliances had virtually become an article of faith to many within the party.⁵ Controversy over such issues in terms of practical policy, i.e. the attitude to be taken in relation to Recife's left-wing administration, resulted in a split in the local PT and contributed to the difficulties encountered in the development of a new type of municipal policies.

With the election of a left-wing executive in Recife, the two fundamental conditions for the promotion of popular participation, noted by Jacobi (1990:135) seemed to have been fulfilled:

The existence of popular organizations with a certain presence at the local level and the occupation of the political posts in the municipality by parties or individuals who favour such participation.

In this chapter, I examine how the fulfillment of these conditions gave rise to the democratization experiments in Recife, and I argue that one cause of the problems encountered was the particular political conjuncture in which they took place. Besides the political conjuncture, other issues such as the more general question of the relation between social movements and the state, are at stake as well.

In the next section, I situate the issues at stake in Recife within the debate on democracy and the Brazilian "transition." Then I discuss the local political context for the experiment in Recife in greater detail, and examine the debate on participation and municipal democratization as it developed during the run-up to the 1985 elections in Recife. Finally, I discuss the policies actually implemented, focussing on the more general proposal for "participation of the organized social movements of civil society," the effort toward the participative reorientation of the *Projeto Recife* and the developments regarding the regularization of urban landownership and urbanization of *favelas*.

⁴ Paula (1989) estimated that as a result of the new redistribution of tax revenues, the municipal share would rise by 30% by 1993. For comments on changes introduced by the 1988 Constitution where "popular participation" is concerned, see: Demo, 1989; Nunes & Vigevani, 1989; Souza, 1989.

⁵ This stance was to be modified during the V Encontro Nacional of the party in December 1987 (Gadotly & Pereira, 1989:240).

7.1. Whither democracy?

It was no coincidence that in her attempt to sober up expectations about the transformative potential attributed to the "urban social movements," Ruth Cardoso (1983:218) reminded students that anti-governmentism should not be mistaken for a radical critique of the state as such. The period of authoritarianism had given rise to an anti-statist rhetoric, but with the progress of the "transition" the manichean representations of the relations between state and social movement rapidly lost credibility, legitimacy and "practical" usefulness.

In the earlier conceptualizations of "urban social movements," the relation between movements and the state had been regarded as one of frontal opposition. Now, however, attention shifted to the relation itself and the question of the role "urban social movements" might play in the democratization process. As such, Cardoso's intervention should be viewed in the context of the "reconsideration of democracy" by the Left (Munck, 1989:1-21; 178-198). It was directed against the people who held "essentialist" views of the state (cf. Jacobi, 1989a:12). The opposition between "social movement" and "institutional system," whether inspired by the old marxist opposition between "formal" and "real" democracy or by the newer theorizations revolving around the opposition between "strategy" and "identity," came under scrutiny from about 1982 onward. Such oppositions not only obscured the changes and ambiguities introduced with the "politics of *abertura*," they also left little room for thinking about the role social movements might play in effective democratization (Boschi, 1983, Cardoso, 1983, Machado da Silva & Ribeiro, 1985; cf. Jacobi, 1987; 1989a). These concerns linked up with the "re-evaluation of democracy" by the Left, which triggered the pursuit of ways to incorporate the "new social movements" in a democratic project for social change. What role could they play? There was a general feeling that they should play a role in the new democracies, but very few ideas about how this might take place. The issues involved pertained to what Barros (1986:64) outlined as the dilemma facing the Latin American Left now that democracy had been "re-evaluated," and was being "restored":

How can institutions designed to minimize the extent of post-authoritarian transformations both be strengthened and at the same time subverted?

Faced with the "democratic transition" effectively getting under way, Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1981:9) candidly admitted feeling like a "theoretical orphan" and produced an overview of the existing proposals not unlike the one suggested by Barros (1986). Both authors regard the liberal democratic option of "democracy without socialism," as Barros put it, as too shallow, and orthodox marxist doctrine or "socialism without democracy" as obsolete. Meanwhile, proponents of a third

"radical democratic" (Barros, 1986) or "movementist" (Cardoso, 1981) alternative perhaps provided a normative indication of what democracy should be all about, but failed to come up with any practical proposals or "at least, a tentative elaboration of strategies of institutional reform" (Barros, 1986). "The contempt for the state," Cardoso wrote (1981:19), "makes this type of thinking noble, but at the same time impotent before the challenge of controlling complex societies."

Such problems resulted in the recent interest in "innovative institutionalization," i.e. devising new institutions involving a redistribution of power in the context of "democratic transitions" and they call into question the notions of "autonomy" and "extra-institutionality" so central to most social movement theories (Boschi, 1987:23-36; Jacobi, 1989:12-13). Alvarez (1990:34) made the point succinctly when she argued that under authoritarianism, absolute autonomy from regime-sanctioned parties and State-controlled labor unions was seen to be necessary for advancing radical social change:

working for change outside established institutions was equated with "freedom" by all social movements emerging in military authoritarian contexts. Any State concession to movement demands tended to be viewed as co-optative and any institutionalization of the movements or absorption of their demands by the State was equated with "unfreedom."

This equation, however, began to be altered with the gradual return to a civilian regime:

The democratization process, however restricted, in theory opens up new possibilities for nonco-optative institutional mediation of movement demands, channels through which women's movements and other movements seeking social change could impact existing structures of domination (Alvarez, 1990:34).

In their essay on social movements and democracy in Latin America, Calderón and Dos Santos (1989:14) addressed similar issues and noted that the interesting thing to know

is whether processes of institutional experimentation are the fruit of innovative orientations of collective action which assumes "global tasks" in impelling changes in the institutional norms (*marcos institucionales*), or if they are mere institutional adaptations in the context of a crisis and/or a change of regime, needed by the political systems in order to secure the governability of the system.

In the preceding chapter, I have discussed what was clearly an example of adaptive policies, namely what Gustavo Krause, the cunning appropriator of discourses, called the "capilarization of the democratic system" (cf. Mendonça, 1984:178). In this chapter, I discuss processes of institutional experimentation which, by intention, pertain to the category of innovative experimentation.

By 1986, when the experiments in Recife got under way, some experiences in rural municipalities had virtually become paradigmatic references in the

discussion of popular participation. These were the municipalities of Lages in the state of Santa Catarina, Boa Esperança in the state of Espírito Santo and Piracicaba in the state of São Paulo. The three cases stood out since they were implemented at a time when authoritarianism was in full force. The total marginalization of political parties as channels of participation and representation and the dependence of these experiments on the initiative of the local mayor were striking features (Grossi, 1989: 117-120, Nunes & Jacobi, 1982; Souza, 1982). However, by the early 1980s and particularly with the reestablishment of direct gubernatorial elections in 1982, the theme of participation became prominent in the political discussion and experiments in "popular participation" at a municipal level became more frequent (Grossi, 1989:120-123). At a state level, the PMDB governments of Franco Montoro in São Paulo and Newton Cardoso in Minas Gerais announced decentralization and participation (Garcia, 1984; Prates & Andrade, 1985; Somarriba & Afonso, 1987, 1988). The 1985 municipal elections provided an opportunity for new experiments in the expansion of local democracy, including those in Recife (Fischer & Texeira, 1989; Souza das Virgens & Dos Santos, 1989), and the outcome of the 1988 municipal elections gave rise to new experiments and further discussion (Gohn, 1991b; Jacobi, 1990). Thus there were few precedents for the "experiment" in Recife, since hardly any comprehensive policies to promote "popular participation" in larger cities had taken place before 1986.⁶ I shall examine the generation of proposals for municipal democratization in Recife, which will provide insights in the issues at stake in the Brazilian context.

7.2. The 1985 municipal elections in Recife

Before turning to these issues, attention should be devoted to the elections in Recife and the emergence of a recycled *Frente do Recife* supporting the candidacy of Jarbas Vasconcelos. He was one of the "historical" or "authentic" members of the Pernambucan PMDB. In 1969, he had become General Secretary of the Pernambucan MDB, and in the following year he was elected State Deputy for the party. In July 1971 he participated in a national encounter of the MDB in Recife, proposing a greater effort to convoke a constituent assembly to end the dictatorship, rather than aiming for the mere modification of the scenario imposed by the military. The initiative was not accepted by the party top, but it gave rise to the internal party division in "moderates" and "authentics." In 1974 Vasconcelos was elected Federal Deputy. Four years later, he ran for a senatorial seat. Although he drew 43% of the vote, thus outstripping the two ARENA candidates -Nilo Coelho (24%) and Cid

⁶ The policies of the Covas administration in São Paulo (1982-1985) had remained segmented, and were implemented in their own ways by various administrative sectors (Cardoso, 1988:371).

Sampaio (21%)—, the Senate seat went to Nilo Coelho as a result of the electoral legislation in effect at the time.⁷ In 1982 Jarbas Vasconcelos ran for federal deputy. With 172,004 (8.8%) votes he was the candidate with the second most votes in Pernambuco after Miguel Arraes, who received 191,234 (9.7%) votes.⁸ In the municipality of Recife, Vasconcelos drew even more votes than Miguel Arraes. As a defender of direct presidential elections, Vasconcelos refused to participate in the Electoral College voting which yielded the first civilian president in January 1985. Later, when the failure to vote for Tancredo had acquired a dimension of outright blasphemy, the fact that "he had not voted for Tancredo" would be held against him by his opponents in the municipal elections of November 1985.

Although Vasconcelos's electoral performance made him the "natural candidate" for the PMDB in the mayoral elections, things turned out differently. During the tumultuous and chaotic party convention elections in July, another candidate, Sérgio Murilo, gained the day as a result of his strategy of affiliating supporters to the party. He stood for the local version of the *Aliança Democrática*, the PFL-PMDB compromise which sustained the *Nova República*. In 1981, the incorporation of PP (*Partido Popular*) adherents into the PMDB had already contributed to a swelling of the more conservative wing of the Pernambucan PMDB and to the emergence of a distinction between the "historicals" and the more "moderate" newcomers. In Recife, this alliance's aspect of continuity in change was brought out in the *palanque* (platform) gathered around "official" PMDB candidate Sérgio Murilo. His supporters included Roberto Magalhães, Marco Maciel, Gustavo Krause, Joaquim Francisco, Cid Sampaio and MR-8, one-time guerrilleros but now unconditional and vociferous backers of the Sarney government and the *Aliança Democrática* (Diário de Pernambuco, July 14, 1985; November 26, 1985). Ulysses Guimarães, national president of the PMDB, and Marcos Freire, at the time president of the *Caixa Econômica*, also voiced their support of the Alliance candidate.

Vasconcelos did not back the outcome of the local party convention, however, and a few days later he left the PMDB to run for the mayorship on the "borrowed" PSB ticket (*Partido Socialista Brasileiro*), making it clear that his supporters would remain within the PMDB as dissidents. In this move he was effectively supported by a majority of the Pernambucan PMDB Federal Deputies (8 out of 11), 14 out of 21 PMDB delegates to the Pernambucan State Legislative and a majority of the City Councilors the Pernambuco PMDB had elected in 1982. Support also came from various party organs, such as the Regional Directory and

⁷ The *sublegenda* system counted the results of various candidates from the same party together. Thus the two ARENA candidates had 45% against the 43% of Vasconcelos.

⁸ The third best placed candidate was ex-Mayor (1975-79) Antônio Farias (PDS) who drew 83,202 votes (Araújo, 1986:70).

the Regional Executive Committee. The "jarbistas" included Miguel Arraes, Pelópidas Silveira and Arthur de Lima Cavalcanti, prominents from the pre-1964 *Frente Popular*. In the course of a legal battle over the use of t.v. propaganda time, the *Guia Eleitoral*, the "jarbistas" even got hold of the PMDB broadcasts for some days, allegedly as a result of direct intervention by the Minister of Justice, the Pernambucan Fernando Lyra on a nightly mission to Recife. During this short period, they could use the 20 minutes of propaganda time allotted to the PMDB rather than be confined to the two and a half minutes the PSB could claim (*Diário de Pernambuco*, July 10, 1985; October 19, 1985; October 23, 1985; November 18, 1985).

Eventually the "jarbista" support scheme gave rise to a sort of reconstructed *Frente do Recife*, incorporating -besides the PMDB "dissidents"- the PSB, the PTB (*Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro*), the PC do B and dissidents from the PDT (*Partido Democrático Trabalhista*) and the PT. One striking feature of the reconstructed *Frente* was the absence of the PCB. Celebrating its recent legalization, the party ran its own candidate in the municipal elections, the highly respected Roberto Freire, who had been elected Federal Deputy on the PMDB ticket in 1982. Freire's candidacy was actually a compromise solution to internal division in the PCB on whether to support Murilo or Vasconcelos, and large part of the PCB electorate was to vote for the *Frente* candidate. A second feature was the adherence of PDT dissidents who did not join their party candidate João Coelho, who had been elected City Councillor on the PMDB ticket in 1982. Thirdly, there was the question of the adherence of PT-dissidents. The party actually split on the issue, the PT "*Light*" backing the *Frente* in an effort to bar the right from electoral victory, and the more fundamentalist PT "*Roxo*" (purple) rejecting anything that might resemble a compromise with the *Nova República*. The "official" PT "*Roxo*" thus presented a candidate of its own, engineer Bruno Maranhão (*Diário de Pernambuco*, July 26, 1985; November 29, 1985; December 8, 1985).⁹

The singular constellation resulting from the split in the PMDB and its reverberations throughout the party system made the *Frente* campaign significantly "movementist" rather than a party campaign. A broader involvement of "movements" was not uncommon in Brazil at the time (Alvarez, 1990:176), but in Recife it was reinforced by the turmoil in the local party system. Large segments of the neighborhood and other "popular" movements became active in the campaign, not simply as propagandists but also in the discussion of future policies and "ways of doing politics" during the campaign. After the *Frente* victory, the movements were to have a significant influence in the appointment of a new administrative team.

⁹ To complete the picture, we should note that ex-Mayor Augusto Lucena was the candidate for the rightist PDC-PDS combination.

One possible reason for Vasconcelos' success was that it opened a prospect for the victory of Miguel Arraes in the gubernatorial elections scheduled for 1986. Another reason may have been that the local variant of the *Aliança Democrática* was so blatantly continuist that voting against the official PMDB candidate clearly amounted to voting against the sitting PFL state government (cf. *Diário de Pernambuco*, December 3, 1985). What eventually seems to have tipped the scales, however, was the disclosure of the fact that Sérgio Murilo had shot a man in the 1960s. Murilo said it had been in self-defence, but rumor had it that the man had been shot in the back. PDT candidate João Coelho benefitted most from the episode, propelled as he was into third place at the elections, whereas Vasconcelos just ascended sufficiently to outpace the descending Murilo. In the end Jarbas (PSB) got 33% of the vote, Murilo (PMDB-PFL) 28%, João Coelho (PDT) 22%, Augusto Lucena (PDC-PDS) 8%, Roberto Freire (PCB) 2% and Bruno Maranhão (PT) 1% (cf. Lavareda, Andrade, Sá & Markman, 1986). The slogan of the new administration was *É Povo de Novo* (The People are Back), in homage to the pre-1964 *Frente Popular*.

This was thus the start of a municipal administration which in its first year, 1986, was clearly at odds with a hostile PFL state government.¹⁰ The gubernatorial election of Arraes, who assumed his post in January 1987, provided more leeway for the municipal administration, though not without some extent of tension. These often are attributed to the different styles of government, the state government being regarded as more traditional in its way of doing politics (Lavareda, 1987).

7.3. The issue of "participation" in the 1985 elections

The 1985 elections, leaving the traditional mud-throwing aside, had one really prominent feature: the issue of "participation/decentralization." Virtually all the candidates used these magic words. Sérgio Murilo talked about the creation of administrative regions headed by an administrator elected by the "base communities, dwellers' associations of each administrative region." The mayor, he argued, did not have the eyes to keep track of all the holes in the street (*burracos*), so he would install regional administrations as well as a telephone to receive the complaints. Murilo's main concern, however, was with tax reforms that would allow the municipality more maneuvering room. This *municipalista* point of view was contested by people who might have agreed on the need for such a reform, but insisted it should be complemented by effective democratization. Jarbas Vascon-

¹⁰ Vice-Governor Gustavo Krause became governor during the run-up to the 1986 elections, when Roberto Magalhães unsuccessfully ran for a Senate seat.

celos talked about resuming the "popular administration" experiences of Silveira and Arraes in the 1960s and proposed institutional participation by the popular movements, transparency and decentralization (Diário de Pernambuco, July 7, 1985). In PT circles ideas circulated about the formation of *conselhos populares*. When the PT "Light" dissidents announced their support for the *Frente* candidate they simultaneously launched proposals for a program including the "participation of class organizations and neighborhood associations in urban planning" (Diário de Pernambuco, July 26, 1985). Members of this group were to play a central role in the experiment in "democratic administration" under Jarbas Vasconcelos.

Once "participation" was in the air, the *assessorias* picked up the issue to promote public debate and render the commitments of would-be mayors more substantial under the pressure of the neighborhood movements. On September 21, 1985, *Interentidades*¹¹ promoted a debate between the candidates and the "popular movement" to evaluate and elaborate proposals. A document had been issued at an earlier date to prepare for the debate, containing information about the functioning of the prefecture, democratic administration and the participation of the neighborhood movements in the municipal administration, the urban land question, the *Projeto Capibaribe* and its implementation and the issue of public transportation. As to the issue of democratic administration and participation, reference was made to the rhetorics of the candidates and the document stated that

There is a need not to be taken in tow by the proposals of the candidates and therefore the movement should, for itself as well as for society, elaborate its proposals with regard to the participation of the citizen in the municipal administration.

In this respect two questions have to be taken up:

1. What channels of effective participation should be created in the sphere of local power?
2. What should be the attributions of these spaces, that is to say their competencies and power (dealing with and deciding about what) (*trata e decide sobre o que*)? (Interentidades, 1985).

The document went on to state that intervention in two basic topics should be considered, namely the elaboration of the municipal budget and the definition of the priorities and goals of the municipal administration. Attention should also be

¹¹ At the time it relied on the participation of CEAS, FASE, GAJOP, Comissão Justiça e Paz, ASPE and ETAPAS. It should be noted that the position of the Church had changed profoundly under Dom Hélder's successor, Dom José Cardoso Sobrinho: "Counselors of the popular pastoral and teachers at the Theological Institute were accused of doctrinary deviation. Pastoral agents with tasks in the regional coordination were dismissed. Whole teams were dismissed as in the cases of the rural pastoral, the SEDIPO, the Centre for the Defence of Human Rights and the Comissão Justiça e Paz of the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife. Institutes like the ITER and SERENE II were closed. Priests identified with the Church of the Poor were removed from their dioceses and one of them was even suspended from his order" (v.d. Ploeg, 1991:164; cf. SEDIPO, 1988). This purge resulted in the foundation of two new *assessorias* in the early 1990s: the Centro Dom Hélder Câmara de Estudos e Ação Social (CENDHEC) and the Serviço Comunitário de Justiça e Paz do Recife (SCJP) (Ostendorf, 1991).

devoted to "spaces of participation" not directly related to the municipal administration (*prefeitura municipal*)

that is, which are not within the sphere of local power, but in themselves constitute autonomous and independent spaces in relation to the municipal administration (*espaços autônomos e independentes frente a Prefeitura municipal*).

This is the case with the municipal popular councils which consist of dwellers' associations, mother clubs, communitarian centres, recreational clubs, etc.....

These councils generally have the function of studying and deciding on: plans and programs of communitarian interest, budgets and priorities as well as mobilizing the population for discussion and presenting demands (*encaminhamento das questões*). However, it is worth emphasizing that the important point is that the popular movement occupies both possible spaces:

1. within the sphere of power, the state
2. autonomous and independent spaces of movement representation (Interentidades, 1985).

This last distinction should be noted. As we shall see, the *Assembléia de Bairros* proposed the creation of a Popular Council and Special Commissions "in the realm of the combative movement" without specifying how they were to be created. As to the relation to the state, it proposed that the Council and the Commissions should have access to information and would form their own opinions (*opinar*) on issues of their concern, including the municipal budget. In the course of the debate, the *Assembléia* radicalized its position in that it came to regard itself as the "Popular Council" and demanded that it be recognized by the municipal executive as a "deliberative" agency, virtually implying that it would replace the City Council, rather than "form opinions" or be "consulted."

7.3.1. Movement demands

On September 21, the meeting between the movements and the candidates took place. The *Assembléia dos Bairros*, the MDF and the FECOPE presented proposals. The FEMOCOHAB did not participate. The meeting was attended by about forty neighborhood associations, the FEACA and the *Comissão Setor Sul* as well as the *Associação Profissional de Assistentes Sociais*, the *Conselho Regional de Assistentes Sociais*, the *Associação Pré Sindical de Sociólogos de Pernambuco*, the *Associação de Empregadas Domésticas*, the *Comissão Nacional dos Desenhistas Industriais* and the *Instituto dos Economistas*. The candidates present were Jarbas Vasconcelos (PSB-Frente), João Coelho (PDT), Roberto Freire (PCB) and Bruno Maranhão (PT). Augusto Lucena (PDC-PSD) never responded to the requests to attend the meeting and Sérgio Murilo (PMDB-PFL) stated that he was abstaining

on medical advice, being "out of voice (*afônico*) and unable to speak this afternoon."

The movement representatives were the first to take the floor, presenting their proposals more or less in the form of petitions. The *Assembléia de Bairros* was the first to present its ideas. After a brief general presentation, it stated¹²:

1. Forms of representation:

In general, we demand the creation of a Popular Council and of Specific Commissions, constituted in the realm (*constituídas no âmbito*) of the combative organizations (*entidades*) of the neighborhood movement. The discussion of the details of these forms of participation is being deepened (*aprofundada*) by our movement.

2. As to finance:

The struggle for a tax reform on a national level so as to attend the needs of the most indigent sectors of society. Secondly: To grant the neighborhood movement access to information on the budgetary situation of the municipality (*prefeitura*) and to grant the movement the right to give its opinion (*o direito de opinar*) according to its priorities with regard to the application of the funds and to monitor (*fiscalizar*) their application. Thirdly, to seek alternatives to make the municipality (*prefeitura*) financially independent from contractors, transportation enterprises, etc.

3. As to the question of land and housing:

To revise together with the Popular Council and Specific Commissions all the current projects of the municipality in line with the priorities and requirements of the needy neighborhoods (*bairros carentes*). Secondly, new projects should be elaborated together with the communities, taking into account the priorities of these communities and putting an end to cabinet projects. Thirdly, the administration of day nurseries, health posts, schools, etc. by the community.

As regards the construction of houses, they should comply with the directives established in the *Código de Obras* of the municipality.¹³

Observation: the representative entities which demanded them should participate in the inauguration of the works. On these works there should be no plaques with the name of the Mayor.

4. As to transportation:

Progressive *estatização* of collective transport service by strengthening the CTU. So, what are these forms? How is this *estatização* going to take place? By way of the increase and modernization of the fleet. Secondly, by creating new lines. Thirdly: by way of the

¹² Unless otherwise indicated, quotes are from the literal transcription of the debate, checked against the actual documents presented on the occasion.

¹³ A reference to the 16m² casas embrião proposed in the context of the Projeto Recife. The municipal directive establishes 32m² as a minimum.

redistribution of the lines circulating in the city to put an end to monopolies.

A second issue in relation to transportation is the lowering of tariffs. The CTU should be an instrument to reach fair tariffs (*para chegar à verdade tarifária*).

Furthermore, there is the *vale transporte*: the municipality should issue and commercialize the *vale transporte*. Salaried workers should not spend more than 4% of their salary on the fare of the *vale transporte*. Thirdly, the retired, the unemployed, the *biscateiros* (fixers), the *ambulantes* (street vendors), domestic employees and minors should benefit from the *vale transporte*.

The presentation ended by summoning the candidates to approve the document presented by the *Assembléia*.

After the applause, the representative of the FECOPE took the floor and presented the following demands:

1. The *Federação Comunitária de Pernambuco* -FECOPE- accords priority to discussing the formation of a Communitarian Secretary (*Secretaria Comunitária*), or of communitarian affairs, whose holder (*titular*) shall be exclusively and rigorously appointed by the communitarians themselves (*pelos próprios comunitários*), through free and open elections.
2. The promise of the candidates (*prefeituráveis*), publicly and formally, to the communitarians that they will attend to what is formulated (*explicitado*) under item 1 of this proposal.
3. Directories of departments should be similarly appointed by the communitarians through the same democratic process.
4. Municipal grants to dwellers' councils and communitarian associations, with the objective of attending to the most immediate needs of these organs, such as: functioning, conservation and maintenance in suitable and human conditions.
5. The creation of a Control Council (*Conselho Fiscal*) to accompany and collect (*cobrar*) these grants.
6. Priority in directing funds for urbanization and infrastructure to the most needy communities.
7. The creation of a Cultural Communitarian Centre in the city of Recife.
8. The establishment of fortnightly audiences with the Mayor of the City of Recife and the representatives of the FECOPE and other dwellers' councils, for a discussion on the Secretary level of the problems affecting their communities (*afetos às suas comunas*).

Third to take the floor was the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados*, which started with a brief overview of its history and some general reflections on the cause of problems, the failure of the *Nova República* to alleviate them and a listing of the projects carried out in Recife to the detriment of the *favelados*. The movement presented a list of proposals based on the work of the Fifth National Congress of the MDF (Recife, July 1985):

1. On employment:

- a. Creation of labor fronts (*frentes de trabalho*)
- 2. On housing:
 - a. The immediate legalization of *favelas*, and their urbanization and sanitation through special funds for investment
 - b. The legal indemnification of dwellings in the event of transference due to the execution of works or in case of danger
 - c. A minimal social tariff for water and light
 - d. The planned reclaiming of flood prone areas.
- 3. On land:
 - a. Possession of land for all the *favelados*, a matter the municipality should struggle for side by side with the *favelados*
 - b. The municipality should be committed to the struggle of the *favelados* and the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* for the approval of the *Projeto de Regulamentação das Zonas de Interesses Especiais*, PREZEIS.
- 4. On health:
 - a. Installation of health posts in the *favelas*, with complete equipment and under the control of the associations or representative organs of the dwellers
 - b. Incentives for communitarian health groups and new groups under the control of the community and financed by the municipality
 - c. Promotion of the alternative means which the communities create in the area of health and alimentation.
- 5. On education:
 - a. Maintenance of existing communitarian schools and incentives for the creation of new schools under the administration of the community
 - b. The creation of a Communitarian Education Council to participate in the Municipal Education Council decisions; criteria for this Communitarian Council should be discussed in the communities.
 - c. Direct election of the principals of the schools of the *Fundação Guarapes*.
- 6. On transportation:
 - a. Free passes for the unemployed, workers who earn minimum wages, the elderly, invalids and children under 14
 - b. Removal of the turnstiles (*borboletas*) at the back doors of the busses
 - c. Modification of transportation policies broadening the CTU area of activity so as to lower the price of tickets, resulting in the process of *estatização* of transportation.

The next round in the debate consisted of the proposals and responses of the candidates.

7.3.2. The candidates respond

PCB candidate Roberto Freire was the first to speak, and started by noting that neighborhood associations had been created by the people themselves. There might be, he argued, more or less strong ties to political parties, but the associations were mainly based on the need to defend the people against the aggression of capitalist society. After referring to the "socialization" of problems as well as of collective consumption under capitalism, Freire stated that

In view of this, we call and designate our project, our proposal for municipal administration, socialized administration (*administração socializada*). That is not to make Recife socialist; I would like that, but it would only be possible in a socialist Brazil. Even within the capitalist system, something can be done to change the logic of the system. And you are actually breaking this logic by spontaneously organizing in the struggle against the transportation problem, in the struggle for landownership. You organize, create movements, you start and try to break the logic of the system, of real estate speculation (*especulação imobiliária*) which expels you from the most valuable areas or the areas they wish to valorize. Then come the projects for revitalization of the Capibaribe, removing the *favelas* which had been built there. You break this logic in your struggles, organizing and creating dwellers' associations.

Now, I want to say something very clearly right away: this business of specifying who is "combative." I am not in the possession of the truth (*Eu não sou o pai da verdade*). In the communitarian movement, some may act more in line with my thinking, but it is not for that reason that I am going to call them combative. All the neighborhood movements should be represented, whether they are, in my view, combative or not. That is the first point: to also socialize the representation of all the organized communities and not only those who agree with my thinking or my ideology. Any organized movement of the community. Organized, integrated and participating in the administration, that is the idea of socialized administration (*gestão*).

That is no new idea (....) In São Paulo they have the so-called administrative regions. We should adapt this, create administrative regions in Recife, taking advantage of the division of Recife in twelve large *bairros*. Twelve administrative regions and to create in each of them a Consultative Council of the organized social movements of that region. Institutionally created, with what attributes? Not to superpose, not to exclude the political representation of the City Council, but to be consulted in determining priorities at the budgetary level, because based on the division in administrative

regions, the budget will be decentralized and regionalized. Definitions of priorities by these Consultative Councils representing all the organized movements of the region and not only the dwellers' organizations, not only the combative ones, but all those present there. And elected by whom? By the whole collectivity of the administrative region and with a mandate that can be revoked at any time by the community. Thus, any movement, any organized association, will define priorities and the allocation of resources, so that the Prefecture can include them in a plan, in a project to be submitted to the City Council, because we are not going to abolish the City Council. We might even wonder whether in a new society, after a revolution, it should be abolished.

Admittedly, Freire went on, in spite of relying on an oppositionist majority, the present City Council has not been of much use. Nonetheless such an institution should be maintained and should decide about the budget. Mass organizations like neighborhood associations should not be confused with or thought of as substitutes for parties and the representative system.

PSB-*Frente* candidate Jarbas Vasconcelos was the second politician to present proposals. After referring to the meetings with community representatives during the electoral campaign and to the justness and democratic character of their demands, he stated

that the popular movement always walked alone (*andou sózinho*). If I as Mayor can help it go faster, I will. But the popular movement must walk by itself, as always, before and after 1964 (applause). I told the *companheiros* that, from our point of view, it would be incorrect to come to this event, organized by various organizations of the popular movement, and say I have a perfect and accomplished picture of what popular participation in my administration is going to be like. What I want to make clear is the commitment, made in public (*na praça pública*) and the commitment I made in the dwellers' councils and during the visits I make to the *favelas*. The commitment to democratize and to conduct (*fazer*) an administration committed to the cause and to the popular movement. I will have to find a formula together with the organizations (*entidades*). I can not come here with the forms, nor can I visit the communities of Recife with everything already written down on paper about what this popular participation is going to be like. Participation is necessary. All the organizations here have clearly pointed out that this practice has not existed in Recife for many years, above all during the 21 years of bionic administration which infested the city of Recife, and which we will be free of from January 1, 1986 onward. So, until January 1 I would like to go on discussing with the dwellers' councils and organizations, with the *favelados* in general, the most correct form, the most practical and objective way for the popular movement to make itself felt in the administration by the *Frente do Recife*. They should have the right to intervene in

the municipal organs, in the secretaries of the URB, in the *Empresa de Obras* and above all in the elaboration and execution of projects.

Vasconcelos then referred to the *Vila da Prata* and its protests against the top-down Capibaribe Project. Technicians would play a role in the elaboration of projects under his administration, but according to the priorities of the community and with its effective participation. As to the issue of unemployment, Vasconcelos promised that contractors would have to hire locally available workers. Where property rights and housing were concerned, conflicts like the one over the Tancredo Neves viaduct would no longer occur. To ameliorate transportation the CTU, an inheritance from the Arraes-Silveira epoch, would be restored with a view to the *estatização* of public transportation. Finally, Vasconcelos observed that during his campaign, he had encountered many organizations that had not been legally registered. Under his administration, there would be no discrimination among organization, legalized or not, registered or not. What would count was that the organization had a correct practice and really had an identity with the community it represented. It would not be the Mayor who would judge that, but the community involved in controlling the services provided by the municipality (e.g. health posts). On January 1, 1986, the candidate wanted to introduce a "democratic and popular administration."

The next to formulate his views was PDT candidate João Coelho, who announced that he felt no embarrassment at all in confronting his audience, since "City Councillor João Coelho always was present in the struggles." In the distribution of grants¹⁴ as City Councillor, he claimed he had never sought to "instrumentalize" the agencies receiving them. In response to Roberto Freire's remark about the poor performance of the City Council, even with the opposition in the majority since 1982, Coelho noted he had consistently been among the few who voted against the annual budget proposals. This served as a step up to an attack on the IMF policies of the *Nova República*. Turning to the issue of participation, the PDT candidate stated that¹⁵

A democratic administration must guarantee instruments of deliberation, participation and popular control. Therefore he proposed creating Councils of Popular Administration, through which the people can deliberate and administrate the municipality resources. Thus the Council of Popular Administration has a deliberative character.

Such councils will be implemented in each of the fifteen sub-prefectures in which he proposed to divide the municipality.

¹⁴ Special shares in the municipal budget are reserved for the City Councilors to distribute according to their own criteria. An example is the grant for the education of "health agents."

¹⁵ Due to a tape switch, the statement has not been recorded. The quote used here is from the summary by *Interentidades*, published in Cadernos GAJOP 3 (1985: 45).

The communities will elect representatives, whose legitimacy will only be evaluated (*aferida*) by the popular movement itself.

The councils will define priorities in keeping with three criteria: the necessity of the service to be realized; those already operating or in effect and the participation of the people in the concretization of these services. Once the priorities have been defined, they will be submitted (*encaminhada*) to the City Council and their approval will depend of the popular pressure on the Legislative Power.

The remaining part of João Coelhos speech was devoted to a critique of the *Nova República* scheme and the support it received from the PMDB.

Fourth and last to present his views was the candidate Bruno Maranhão (PT). He first discussed the struggle for urbanization of *favelas*, the transportation question, the *Projeto Capibaribe* and then referred to the municipality of Diadema, part of the São Paulo agglomeration administrated since 1982 by the PT, as an example of how problems could be tackled:

There you have popular councils which consist of dwellers' associations, mothers' clubs, the whole organization of the popular movement which had its delegates in a great Popular Council of Diadema, and this council determined the priorities together with the municipality, defined the budget together with the prefecture and then took it to the City Council to have it approved. That is what we think of doing here in Recife.

After a plea for the *estatização* of collective transportation and a critique of the participation policies of Joaquim Francisco and Marco Maciel, Maranhão elaborated on the role of a Popular Council:

And we say it clearly, it is not a consultative council. It is deliberative. It is deliberative because only then can we say that there is a real commitment to the working class and the popular movement.

In the event that the PT is elected, the candidate said, "the popular movement will govern this city," after which he turned to the oppositionist role of the PT against the *Nova República*, the IMF and the PMDB and affirmed his faith in the struggle for socialism in which the PT did not and would not compromise.

7.3.3. The debate

Jarbas Vasconcelos never referred to "popular councils" in his speech, nor did he do so during the following debate. Asked more concretely about forms of budgeting intervention, he referred to "transparency," which would allow interference by the population in general, not only by the neighborhood associations. Nevertheless, it may be assumed that the communitarian participation in municipal administration would take on council-like forms, be it sectorwise (e.g. health, education), local or at a municipal level (Cadernos GAJOP 3, 1985:60). Two issues dominated the

debate following the presentation of proposals, namely the status of the councils and their composition. The first issue pertained to whether they should be "consultative" or "deliberative," and at what level they should operate: regional or municipal. The second issue was that of the composition of the councils and revolved around the opposition between "representativeness" and "combative-ness."

Whereas João Coelho and Roberto Freire respectively mentioned localized sub-prefectures/popular administration councils or consultative councils. Bruno Maranhão spoke of a "great Popular Council." In the first two cases, the regional councils would play an auxiliary role in the administration of localized budgets and in the formulation of the municipal budget to be submitted by the executive to the legislative. In contrast to Roberto Freire, João Coelho used the term "deliberative." That point had also been made by the PT candidate, who actually proposed having the Popular Council define budget allocations, although in the course of the debate he also stated that the budget would also have to be submitted to the City Council. Invoking the image of his party as having emanated from the "combative base," Bruno Maranhão declared that he would back the proposal put forward by the *Assembléia de Bairros*

in the assurance that it will be endorsed by the party, because it is a proposal that advances the struggle of the workers. More than that, I think it is still timid. In Diadema, for example, where a proposal was made by the movement, the Council would also be involved in the definition of the budget. Here, only reference is made to access to information about the budget, but I think there is more to it. We think the movement should have information on the budget and at the same time should be in a position to really decide about the allocation of resources.

If Roberto Freire talked about consultative councils, it was because they could be legally institutionalized. The PT proposal of a "deliberative" Popular Council on the municipal level implied that this type of council would virtually take over the legislative functions of the *Câmara de Vereadores*. The implication was highly ambiguous, however. In the course of the debate the PT candidate stated, though not very clearly, that the *Câmara de Vereadores* would have the final say. The Popular Council he was talking about would actually be a deliberative body of the popular movement, without any institutional links to the state apparatus or legally defined status.¹⁶

¹⁶ In May 1989, the Paulista PT "in power" came up with the following verbal acrobatics: "The popular councils take position of various themes and thus are deliberative. Another matter is if the *petista* municipal administration endorses the deliberations. That depends on a series of factors: the representativeness of the council, the issue concerned, the coherence of the deliberations with the PT government plan, etc." (Gadotti & Pereira, 1989:292). In recent studies various authors have commented on the problematic relationship between rhetorics and "the reality of being government" (Gohn, 1991b; Jacobi, 1991).

Roberto Freire's observations on "combativeness" made "combative" groups present rather uneasy. The idea that they would be treated on an equal footing with "bionic associations" led to the comment that "combativeness was underestimated in the face of representativeness." The PSB-*Frente* candidate as well as the PDT candidate, both more or less directly confronted with the question, endorsed the position taken by Roberto Freire that it was not the task of the municipal administration to decide such issues. The PT candidate was not directly questioned on this point and could remain comfortably ambiguous.

Throughout the debate, which touched upon such issues as urbanization and land-legalization policies, unemployment, transportation, and grants to local associations by the municipality, the PT and PDT candidates, neither with any serious prospects of winning at the time¹⁷, played out their oppositionism to the *Nova República*¹⁸, while PCB candidate Roberto Freire aired his Eurocommunist views.

A comment on the debate in *Cadernos GAJOP* 3 (1985:60) reflecting the views of the *assessorias*, stated that a proposal involving something like popular councils in an auxiliary role in the municipal administration, was assimilable by any progressive candidate. The state organs, including those at a municipal level, the article noted, remain intact and in any event the City Council remains the instance of final decision.¹⁹ The mayor is only morally committed. Nevertheless, the article concluded, such popular councils would represent a step forward in the consolidation of democracy in Brazil. A well functioning Popular Council could serve as a springboard for further popular conquests, the progressive assumption of power by the people and the control of the municipal machinery for its own benefit. The task was now to elaborate criteria for the composition and functioning of popular councils.

¹⁷ The Coelho "phenomenon" emerged at the very last moment. At the time of the debate, the PDT and PCB candidates polled about 5% and the PT candidate 1%.

¹⁸ These issues came up when the City Councilor and ex-President of the Comissão Justiça e Paz asked the PDT, PT and PCB candidates to step back in favor of Frente candidate Jarbas Vasconcelos. That allowed the PT and PDT candidates to attack the Nova República scheme, which Vasconcelos and Eurico were allegedly supporting, and the PDT to complain about the failure of a coalition with the Frente, allegedly because it had vetoed a visit to Recife by Leonel Brizola. Roberto Freire, who in passing praised the Frente candidate, said his party should participate by itself now that it had been legalized. Jarbas Vasconcelos returned the point by stating that Sérgio Murilo was his target and that if others chose different targets it was their responsibility.

¹⁹ Earlier, the article noted "limitations of a practical and legal order", the former referring to scale and the latter to the legal attributes of City Councils, which would impede direct democracy. In its conclusion, it remarked that "In contrast to what happens in the City Council, which is excessively independent of the electorate, the popular delegates in the Municipal Council would transform political representation from a convenient fiction into a concrete and palpable reality," mainly as a result of the direct revocability of the representatives. Therefore, it is suggested, a Popular Council would be more "authentic" than the City Council.

The PSB-*Frente* candidate had not been very specific and avoided coming up with any ready-made solutions. Meanwhile a *Frente* task group, an articulation of "technicians, politicians and organized society" (Diário de Pernambuco September 1, 1985), was working on this aspect of the *Frente* program and a "campaign document" on "Popular Participation in a Democratic Administration" was eventually issued.

7.3.4. The "campaign document"

Various "task groups," often operating rather informally, were created in early September to work out such aspects of the *Frente* program as environmental and health policies or the transportation issue. Among these groups, the one concerned with democratic administration and popular participation played a prominent role. It could rely on the participation of people from the PT "*Light*" and neighborhood leaders. A "campaign document" was eventually issued, resulting from the work of this group and ideas launched at a large campaign meeting attended by representatives of neighborhood associations. The document began with a reference to Jarbas Vasconcelos's commitments to the institutionalization of popular participation and then outlined the three basic criteria for the participationist policies of an administration by the *Frente Popular do Recife*:

1. A democratic administration should assure that the public has access to information on decisions and actions (*transparência*) of administrative organs (*órgãos governamentais*). The people should know what the government is doing or is going to do, where funds are used or are going to be used.
2. A democratic administration should be structured in the most decentralized form (*de forma mais descentralizada*), establishing close relations with the population.
3. A democratic administration should promote and institutionalize direct and indirect popular participation in the day-to-day administration (*no cotidiano da administração*).

The document then noted that the future Constitution would grant the municipalities the right to formulate their own regulations. Pending the adoption of the Constitution, the document proposed measures to further direct and representative democracy. In the area of direct democracy it proposed:

- the right of initiative, allowing groups of citizens (*determinado grupo de cidadãos*) to submit legislative proposals to the City Council.
- popular consultation, allowing direct pronouncement by the electorate on questions of great importance to the community.

Such mechanisms were indeed to be included in the 1988 Constitution (Demo, 1989; Nunes & Vigevani, 1989). As we shall see, legislation adopted in Recife in

1987 on regularization and urbanization of *favelas* was regarded as an example of "popular initiative."

In the area of representative democracy, the document proposed re-evaluating the City Council "in which the City Councilors legislate, control and are the spokesmen of the citizens as well as co-participants in municipal government." Secondly, it proposed democratizing and revitalizing the Municipal Councils, that is restructuring the barely active existing councils (Culture, Education, Urban Development, Environment and Taxpayers)²⁰ and creating new ones (Socio-Economic, Health, Women's Affairs), reviewing their objectives, competencies and composition. Thirdly, it proposed that the municipal secretaries and enterprises be democratized to promote increased participation and hence responsibility of the functionaries, and that channels should be created for public participation in municipal enterprises and foundations (CTU, EMPREL, URB, Fundação Guararapes, etc.). Finally, the document proposed

creating politico-administrative regions - RPAs, which decentralize and democratize the municipal administration, making for a greater flexibility of governmental actions and guaranteeing the community participation by creating popular councils. These councils should define the priority of works to be executed in their areas, and control and inspect the services rendered by the prefecture: school, health post, garbage collection, lighting, etc.

A draft document, which served as the basis for the campaign document, had been somewhat more specific about the Political Administrative Regions, stating that they should have a "reasonable degree of autonomy," particularly to deliberate the budget for the RPA (before it is submitted to the City Council). Furthermore it suggested that the Mayor and his team should regularly dispatch and hold public audiences in the RPAs.

As to the institutional structure, the work document proposed the founding of two councils in each RPA. A Popular Council was to consist of the representatives of "organizations of civil society," such as dwellers' associations, recreational clubs, or religious entities. Some regulation on representativeness should be outlined, it was stated, to avoid participation by "ghost entities." As an example, the document described how a council might function in the Political-Administrative Region of the city center (*RPA-Centro*):

the council of RPA-Centre, composed of the central areas of the city, would include representatives of the inhabitants, the union of traders, associations of shopowners, street vendors, etc., in a heterogeneous didactic composition (*convivência heterogênea, didática*)

²⁰ These councils were barely active. They consisted of appointed citizens representing groups interested in the matter at hand, e.g. the organization of literary contests and judging art works in the case of the Culture Council or advising on applications for grants to students in the case of the Education Council.

which would reveal (*por a nu*) the asymmetry of the needs of these diverse social groups, having them interact, measure forces and decide about the most rational utilization of municipal resources.

In addition to this council, a Political Council was envisaged, composed of representatives of the directories of the political parties according to their local force. This mechanism, it was argued, would "reinvigorate local representation and dynamize the various party directories."

As these specifications were controversial, particularly concerning the role of political parties, and since the debate on alternative formulations was ongoing, these suggestions were not included in the "campaign document." The points on the "heterogeneous didactic composition" and on "ghost entities" are worth noting, however. They reflected the dilemmas an administration would face in assessing the representativeness of organizations. The idea of "heterogeneous didactic composition" was also viewed as a way to assess representativeness by confronting various organizations claiming to represent neighborhoods with each other. As such, it would be a guideline in the future policy.

7.4. "Listening to the Movement"

Once the elections were over, the mayor-elect proceeded to appoint his team, all the while discussing the detail of programatic commitments. Soon after the elections, the *Federação das Associações, Centros Comunitárias e Conselhos de Moradores de Casa Amarela* (FEACA) made a statement claiming the right to participate in the appointment of municipal secretaries and referring to the necessity of a Popular Council "with the function of elaborating projects that reflect the needs of the communities, with the help of the technicians of the municipality" (Diário de Pernambuco, November 19, 1985). While discussions and negotiations were ongoing, a meeting between the mayor-elect and the neighborhood movement was set for December 14.

By that time, negotiations on the new administrative team had been concluded. As a result of his particular relationship to the party structure, in this respect the mayor-elect had been relatively autonomous in his choice of co-workers and the team included several people "identified" with the popular movement:

So after he was elected, we started to propose some names of people we thought capable of proceeding with the project (of democratization). So we presented "Peixe." Another *companheiro*, João, and he also indicated that he would take Zé Arlindo, who was related to us, that he would take Edla, related to education. He accepted the proposal of João Francisco, Paulo.....he accepted all the proposals we made and we even thought that it was demagogy. Was this Jarbas

really that good? We thought we were dreaming (*A gente estava meio cismado*) (Interview Arnaldo da Holanda, December 15, 1988).

João do Nascimento or "Peixe" ("the Fish"), a now dissident founder of the Pernambuco PT, became General Director of Political Administrative Decentralization. Left-wing sociologist José Arlindo Soares, with "good entrances among the new middle classes," became Secretary of Social Action. Edla Soares was involved with the *escolinhas comunitárias*, João Francisco with popular culture and Paulo Dantas with health movements, notably in the *favelas* of Coque and Coelhos.

In preparation for the meeting of December 14, *Interentidades* produced a document resuming the proposals the mayor-elect had committed himself to during the campaign. In its introduction, the document stated that

We can say that the slogan DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION OF THE CITY was very strong and had broad appeal. So a perspective was created for all the *Recifenses* and specifically for the neighborhood movement, that Recife was going to change. Now the time has come to have the promises honored (*cobrar*), to start and demand (*cobrar*) in a clear and transparent manner, through our organizations, political parties and people who exercise mandates, that the promises made by candidate Jarbas Vasconcelos, who is now Mayor of Recife, be fulfilled (Interentidades, 1985).

The *Assembléia de Bairros*, deemed the most representative organization of "the popular movement"²¹ and expected to play a major role in the development of a popular and democratic administration, came to the meeting with a document stating that

Now that the new administration is being prepared and we are being consulted on our positions we should clarify that (*nos cabe esclarecer que*):

1. The popular movement of Recife will not nominate persons to occupy the various levels of the municipal administration.
2. We deem it necessary to create a Popular Council that, acting together with the *prefeitura*, will put forward the positions of the population with regard to the various problems of the municipality.
3. The details on the functioning and the structuring of the above-mentioned Popular Council are being discussed in the communities we represent and we will communicate our positions in due time.
4. We put forward that it is our concern that the administration's various posts of command (*cargos de mando*) should be filled by citizens of recognized capacity and experience in dealing with the majority of the population that lives in the poor and least assisted neighborhoods of Recife. We can no longer put up with the cabinet bureaucrats, who conceal their disrespect for the sovereign decisions

²¹ The MDF was still in a formative phase and often aligned with the *Assembléia de Bairros/FE-MEB*. On the other hand, little was expected from either the *FEMOCOHAB* or the *FECOPE*. The two organizations kept a low profile on the matter and local affiliates would later attend the meetings of the Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros.

of the organized popular movement behind their supposed "technical competency."

5. We reaffirm our autonomy -constructed in long and hard struggle- in the face of all the apparatuses of Power (*instâncias do Poder*) and express our firm intention to maintain it.

In a further elaboration of these points, it was observed that a real and profound change in the country could not yet be perceived and that it was necessary to struggle for a just society without the exploitation of *nosso trabalho*. Only through organization in dwellers' councils and associations, trade unions, etc., the document argued, could the objective of an egalitarian society be attained. Therefore, it is argued,

we can not associate ourselves with any movement of a partidarian character or any agency of Power (*instância do Poder*). We seek the support and the commitment of all those who share our objective.

Popular participation in the decisions, democracy, concentration of resources in the most needy neighborhoods and respect for our decisions are our priorities, together with the maintenance of our autonomy.

The mayor-elect made it clear that he had no other intention than to respect the autonomy of the popular movement, that he looked forward to the details for a Popular Council and that the movement could count on the support and logistics of the municipality, if needed for the articulation of such a Popular Council. The general attitude was one of "listening to the movement" and being prepared to discuss further suggestions, rather than imposing cabinet-prepared schemes. Simultaneously the new administration made it clear that it wanted to proceed with the creation of administrative regions, where the population was to somehow be consulted on its priorities and what to do about them.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of the opposition coming to power, the meeting between the mayor-elect and the neighborhood movement was not very productive. Opinions were divided in "the popular movement" over the attitude to be taken to the new *instâncias do Poder*. This included the question of whether offers of administrative posts could be accepted: if one had supported the *Frente* candidate, should one also take responsibility for the execution of policies or was all that a matter of cooptation by the bourgeois state?

At the end of February, *Interentidades* organized a two-day internal seminar to try and make up the minds of the *assessorias* (Interentidades, 1986a). In the analysis of the general political situation, some elements of frustration with the *Nova República* were observed, but so were the changing relations with the "social movements" which had become recognized as interlocutors. Although the municipal elections had been barely politicized and the *Frente Popular* only gained one third of the votes, the composition of the Municipal Secretary implied the promise of realizing the campaign promises, the seminar participants concluded. However, the

bogged down administrative machinery²² presented one problem, and the absence of clearly defined proposals on the part of the would-be popular administration and its attitude of "listening to the movement" was another. The latter point was deemed particularly grave "in view of the fragility of the popular movement, since the latter does not have proposals for a municipal administration either."

In fact, it was argued, the popular movements remained at the level of making basic demands, without discussing or pressuring for a major "space" within the municipal administration. The movement is not politicized, concluded the seminar participants and they observed how individual leaders had accepted jobs as individuals, rather than as representatives of the movement.²³ As a collectivity, the *Assembléia de Bairros* had rejected any involvement in this matter. In view of this state of affairs, *Interentidades* envisaged the possible emergence of a strong "populism of the Left" in the event that the neighborhood movements failed to gather force.

This diagnosis also informed the attitude on the question of a Popular Council. In the Brazilian context, such a council could not be expected to exercise power or be as concrete and autonomous an alternative to capitalist power as the *soviets*, the Cuban Committees for Defense of the Revolution, the Sandinista Defense Committees in Nicaragua or similar bodies in the Chilean "experience":

In Brazil the question of the popular council assumes another shape (*assume uma outra realidade*) since it does not present itself as an alternative to the dominant capitalist power, but as an instrument in the struggle for the democratization of this power.

Thus the seminar participants agreed on the importance of popular councils in the accumulation of forces by the popular movement. Nevertheless, it was concluded that:

In the neighborhood movement, in view of the actual fragility of the movement, no priority should be accorded to the discussions on a popular council, but rather to questions as they now present themselves, such as: *barracão*²⁴, or the formation of new leaders.

²² Early in February the new Mayor announced that the conditions of the municipality were worse than expected. The municipality had over 20,000 generally poorly paid functionaries on its payroll. The municipal deficit amounted to some Cr\$ 47 billion and many departments were in a state of emergency (Diário de Pernambuco, February 2, 1986).

²³ The *assessorias*, in turn, discussed the possibility of collaborating with the administration on some points, such as the execution of projects, or by accepting resources for the promotion of events, provided these resources did not involve any interference. Opinions on such collaboration in projects or the acceptance of "public funds" were divided, but it was also clear that in practice the *assessorias* would often play some role in negotiations and have contacts with the technicians of the municipality.

²⁴ Whereas the *barracões* had until then often served electoral purposes, they were to be democratized by way of the direct election of the administrator.

Rather than promoting a municipal Popular Council, the *assessorias* should promote a strengthening of articulations at a sectoral level, it was decided.

This attitude was actually close to the one held by the people involved with the democratization program, which started to take shape within the municipal administration. Rather than aiming primarily at the formation of a municipal-level Popular Council, they tried to link administrative decentralization and the formation of administrative regions to democratization. A process of decentralization was a common feature of urban administration in Brazil at the time and, as such, did not necessarily involve effective democratization, which, however, was a stated aim of the new administration in Recife. The *assessorias* as well as the people involved in the municipal plans for decentralization accorded priority to the intermediate level, i.e. sectoral articulations and political administrative regions, which might eventually become the basis for a council on a municipal scale. Otherwise, they suspected, a municipal Popular Council would remain suspended in mid air, with no organic relations to the grassroots.

The *Assembléia de Bairros*, by contrast, had committed itself to a council on the municipal level, autonomous from state and parties and with deliberative powers. In the following months, this proposal was to be further discussed with the help of the *assessorias*, in spite of their doubts about the project's viability. Meanwhile the municipal administration started to implement its decentralization and democratization policy at the local level, leaving open the possibility for some platform at the municipal level in the event the neighborhood movement managed to articulate such a platform.

I shall first review the further discussion within the neighborhood movement about the articulation of a Popular Council, which principally took place at a seminar in April 1986. I will subsequently discuss the decentralization and democratization policies which started to be effectively implemented by the new administration at the end of February.

7.4.1. Discussing a Popular Council

With the local administration "listening" for suggestions, it was up to "the movement" to come forward with its views on how to go about the founding of a Popular Council and what it should be like. While discussions were going on informally and the issue was occasionally mentioned in the press (*Diário de*

Pernambuco, February 23, 1986)²⁵, the *Assembléia dos Bairros* and the MDF asked *Interentidades* to prepare a seminar on the matter.

In the course of March, just after the *Plano Cruzado* had been launched, a document prepared by *Interentidades* (1986b) started to circulate. In a brief outline of the political situation it noted that significant changes for the better had taken place at the local level. Respect for the autonomy of the organizations and leaders of the popular movement had become evident. However, it was argued, there was a certain *impasse* due to the lack of clarity about the issue of participation, since the movement had not been able to respond to the questions of the day. It was also noted that 1986 was an electoral year, when a Constitutional Assembly as well as a state governor were to be elected. In this situation, the document warned, the dominant classes were capable of "giving up the rings, to save the fingers." The popular movement should therefore be on guard.

Turning to the issue of the Popular Council, the document took up the argument earlier elaborated at the *Interentidades* (1986a) internal seminar: in the Brazilian context, popular councils should be regarded as an instrument of democratization rather than as a power alternative. In Brazil, popular councils could serve the accumulation of the popular movement forces in the face of bourgeois hegemony:

The popular councils can constitute a strong instrument if they are capable of articulating, representing and elaborating alternatives in relation to the problems which concern them. In that sense it is not sufficient to merely protest. Alternative proposals are needed so that the occupation of these spaces can structure them as a force for the Popular Movements (*para que as ocupações desses espaços se estruturam em um Poder para os Movimentos Populares*).²⁶

²⁵ On that occasion, a number of the neighborhood movement representatives were asked their opinion on the new administration. They registered a significant change in accessibility and discussed the problem of relating to people who, with the "opposition in power" had now found employment in the administration. An MDF representative stated that knowing those people meant "doors now are open", but "the people were not in power." That would be the case if Jarbas created a Popular Council and respected its decisions, he argued.

²⁶ As an example, the document discusses the experience with a popular council in Osasco, one of the municipalities of the São Paulo metropolis. According to the account, ideas about a popular council had been discussed by local movements in 1980 when the local (PMDB) mayor also proposed to create such a council. This resulted in a struggle (*briga*) about the composition of the council. In the end, however, the proposals of the local movement prevailed in the discussion about the internal regulation. Membership of any City Councilor was rejected in favor of maximum power (*máximo poder*) for the Popular Assembly; instead of a presidential regime a *coordenação colegiado* was opted for; interference in the municipal budget was included in the competencies of the Council. In May 1981 the Osasco Popular Council of the Communities was officially installed by decree law. However, with the 1982 elections upcoming the Mayor and Vice-Mayor retired from their posts to be succeeded by the President of the City Council, a PSD politician who revoked the decree installing the Council. His attempt to dislodge the Council from its headquarters, conceded by the previous mayor, failed however. In 1983, a newly elected PMDB mayor took office and relations became somewhat less tense, but he attempted to link the Council tightly to his own politics, so as to legitimize them. He also tended to question the legitimacy and representativeness of

As part of the round of local level discussions on the basis of this document, the FEACA organized a seminar with the support of the GAJOP. It was concluded:

That a Popular Council should be the intermediary between the people and the prefecture, should be independently articulated, work with the people and be an instrument of change. It should participate in the administration of the prefecture, monitoring (*fiscalizando*) and expressing opinions (*opinando*) where matters of budget, health care, transportation, urban land, education, etc. are concerned.

To arrive at this objective, the popular forces should unite and convoke a general assembly to form one council (*conselho único*) for all of Recife.

That the consultative council foreseen (*previsto*) in the Constitution should be modified by way of popular pressure so as to gain decision-making and deliberative power (Jornal de Casa Amarela, no. 4, April 1986).

A few weeks later, on April 5 and 6, the seminar organized by the *Assembléia dos Bairros* and the MDF with the support of *Interentidades* took place. The presence of 49 organizations was registered. The first day started with a discussion of the political situation and reflections on the need to reconsider the relation with the local administration. A representative of the municipal administration presented the basic outline of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, which started to be implemented with "transparency, decentralization and participation" as its aims. The municipality was to be divided into 12 political-administrative regions (*Regiões Político-Administrativas*, RPAs). This would facilitate devoting attention to the demands, which were to be discussed collectively by the organizations in the region to establish priorities. Decentralization was to be promoted by way of regular visits by the mayor and his first-level secretaries to each region to reach decisions in debate with the popular organizations.

The second day of the seminar was devoted to the question of what a Popular Council should be like in Recife.²⁷ Opinions were somewhat divided on the priority to be accorded to the formation of a Popular Council. Some felt that the time was not ripe for such a council and that priority should be given to the

the Council members. The objective of the Council, by contrast, was to get hold of "pieces of power" (*arrancar pedaços de poder*). Aspirant members would be admitted if two thirds of those already present were in favor. By 1985 the council counted 46 *Sociedades de Amigos de Bairro*, representatives of the six trade unions existing in Osasco and representatives of other organizations and movements. At the time, the Osasco Council was discussing the idea of sub-prefectures as a means of enforcing the control over "material" issues.

²⁷ The seminar was expressively announced as non-deliberative. The objective was "to create a space where participants could reflect on the importance, the objectives and the structure of a Popular Council" (*Interentidades*, 1986c).

existing articulations. Others argued that in the political conjuncture at the time, the creation of a council was extremely important, since it would be a channel for the expression of popular struggles. The seminar proceeded to discuss the objectives of a council. Those present agreed that it should be an articulation of diverse movements, where workers' and community demands would be united. It should serve the prioritization of demands and the broadening of struggles, be an organ of denunciation solely expressing the interests of the popular classes, serve the interchange of experiences, strengthen the lower-level organizations without interfering with their autonomy and be composed of authentic leaders of the popular movements. Furthermore, the council should participate in the general struggles of society, for instance as regards the new Constitution, and it should serve as an instrument in the transformation of "ourselves as well as society." It should make itself present in all the areas of the city, be involved in the elaboration and control of the municipal budget and decide on the priorities in its application. Through rigid control of the administration, an end should be put to clientelism and the Popular Council should be represented in the public organs. While consensus was reached on these points, opinions diverged on the question of whether a council should only put forward (*encaminhar*) the demands of the communities or also elaborate projects. Those who defended the latter position argued that the time had come to go beyond simple demand-making, and that proposals should be made to point the way forward.

As to the form of a Popular Council, two proposals were put forward. In one case, it would consist of representatives of the various existing organizations, such as the *Assembléia dos Bairros*, the FEMOCOHAB or the sectoral articulations (see 6.9.1.). In the other case, the proposal was that the council consist of representatives of the various sectors the municipality was to be divided into. Representatives of these sectors would be elected through the various types of local associations. The participants in the debate agreed that the council should be rather broad and that all sorts of organizations, such as mothers' and youth clubs, neighborhood associations or domino leagues, should participate as well as the various sectoral articulations and the *pelego* organizations such as FEMOCOHAB and FECOPE. While there was also consensus about the exclusion of political parties, opinions were divided on the participation of trade unions. As to the character of a council, it was said that it should be "consultative so as to obtain information and deliberative so as to have decision-making power in the face of the prefecture." Its scope should be municipal since, the argument went, the budget was a municipal concern.

After two days of debate, the seminar participants decided it had been worthwhile. The preliminary outcomes were to be taken to the areas for discussion and thought would be given to what an appropriate forum would be to decide about the actual foundation of a Popular Council. If anything, the outcomes of the two-day seminar illustrate the heterogeneity of ideas on what a Popular Council

should be about and how it might relate to the *instâncias do Poder*. In the discussion on objectives, there was a consensus of opinion that it should be composed of "authentic," but in the discussion on the composition of a council, *pelegos* were also admitted. It should be "consultative" to get information and be represented in public organs, but it should also "deliberate" somehow, though it was not very clear how this would relate to municipal policies and what its attributes should be in such a case.

The announced follow-up never took place:

So things stopped there, people lost interest. There were two attempts to continue the discussion but it went dead. When Jarbas was elected we demanded a commitment to the creation of a Popular Council, but as the Federation²⁸ did not come up with a proposal, the Jarbas administration, which had the idea of the *Prefeitura nos Bairros*, launched their proposal. But we had not succeeded in formulating a proposal for a Popular Council to confront the proposal made by the administration, which was the *Prefeitura nos Bairros*. So in a sense we were participating and a bit overwhelmed, because we did not agree with the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* but we could not really pull out either and just leave the population there, rushing to participate (*participando a toque de caixa*) (Interview Edna Teotônia, 9-26-1988).

Thus after months of discussion during which the *Assembléia* initially had the initiative, it failed to articulate a coherent attitude toward the issue when it came to more concrete initiatives. However, its "base" started to participate "headlong" in the program promoted by the new municipal administration, which now gradually started to devise a strategy of its own.

About a year later, when someone accused the administration of "never having consulted the popular movement" on its participation policies, the municipal Secretary responsible for the policies felt "some formal clarifications" were needed. He enumerated a series of meetings with the *Assembléia de Bairros*, FEACA and MDF and recalled:

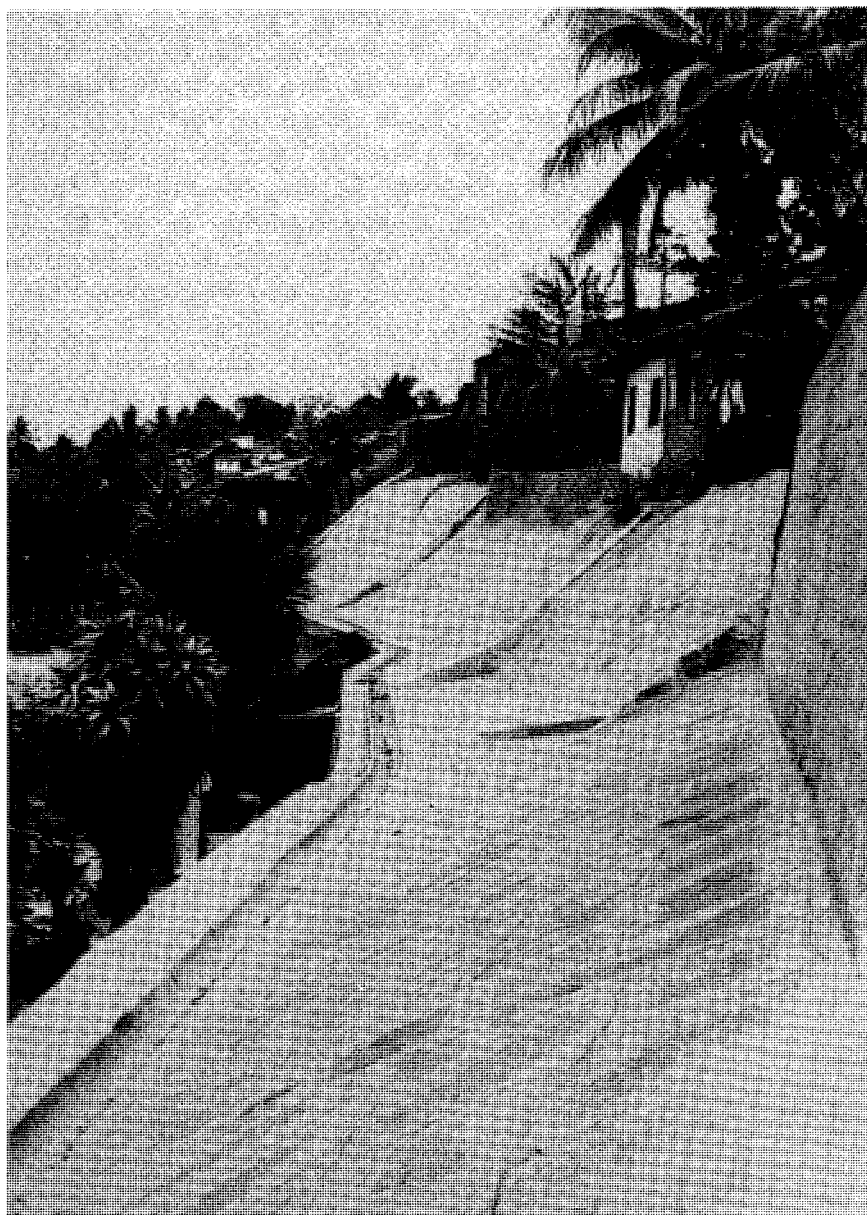
So they said "We want a Popular Council" and the Mayor said, "But it is not up to me to create a Popular Council if that is to be a platform of the movement itself. You make your Council and you present the criteria for participation and I accept." They said, "But we don't have the resources." And the Mayor responded, "You can use the infrastructure of the municipality" and today we are still waiting, waiting for the proposal of the Popular Movement... (Seminário de Avaliação do Programa 'Prefeitura nos Bairros'-Plenária Final, 24 de Maio 1987, fita no. 4, pp. 15-16).

²⁸ The Federation referred to here is the FEMEB, which was created in September 1987 as a continuation of the *Assembléia de Bairros*. The interview is with the president of the FEMEB, a PT dissident who remained within the party when it came to a split.

Through the rather confused discussion within the *Assembléia*, there was a polarization between those who continued to see the relation with the state as a "constant" and could only think in terms of "confrontation" as the right policy -as long as "the people are not in power"- and those who thought participation in "institutional channels" could be helpful. Throughout the discussion the distinction, which had initially been referred to by *Interentidades* and by the *Assembléia de Bairros*, between institutional channels of participation and platforms pertaining to the "popular movement," tended to be blurred rather than clarified. The more fundamentalist view was voiced by the remainder of the local PT, the PT "Roxo," which regarded any association with the *Nova República* as immoral. Part of the more flexible PT "Light" became engaged in the decentralization and democratization program of the new administration: the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*. In the *Assembléia de Bairros*, the divergences these positions reflected were resolved by a non-decision on the issue of popular councils and institutionalized participation. Referring to the episode, the president of the FEACA, a *Frente* sympathizer, later remarked:

As to the relation between governmental organs of the previous administrations and the Federation, as movement of Casa Amarela, this relation was of sharp confrontation. Today, with the administration of Jarbas Vasconcelos, after the mobilization of the leaders in his electoral campaign (*a mobilização das próprias lideranças na sua campanha eleitoral*), the movement started to be restrained by its reluctance to enter into relation with the Prefecture of Recife. For over three months, the movement did not want to discuss any project with the new municipal administration. This embroiled the movement a bit. Today our relation with the prefecture is a bit backward (*atrasada*) and should be at another level (CESE, 1987:25).

The dilemma which confronted the movement, she said, was "whether or not to occupy these spaces in the municipal administration." While the *Assembléia* failed to define any clear policy, local neighborhood associations, less concerned with the more abstract ins and outs of "autonomy," started to participate in the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*.



Muros de Arrimo in Casa Amarela

7.5. Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros

By February 1986, 12 *Regiões Político Administrativas* (RPAs) had been created²⁹ in the municipality of Recife as a preliminary step toward the implementation of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, aiming at decentralization and simultaneous democratization. The Program resorted under the secretary of Social Action.³⁰ A PT dissident, who accepted the post of General Director of Politico-Administrative Decentralization, was in charge of the project, and worked with a staff of forty.

The general aim of the Program was democratization by furthering participation of "organized social movements of civil society" in the decision-making of public authorities.³¹ In this way, it sought to break with the paternalism of authoritarian planning and its assumption that it knew the needs of the population, as well as with the exclusively revendicatory attitude of the social movements and the related lack of commitment to solutions to the problems they have presented (Prefeitura, 1987:14). The more specific central aims were:

- To further (*viabilizar*) popular participation in the decision-making process of the municipal government by creating institutional forums of representative organizations (*entidades*) of the neighborhood social movements, with the function of proposing, accompanying and monitoring (*fiscalizar*) the actions of the municipal public powers on the level of the neighborhoods, the RPAs and the municipality.

- To stimulate popular mobilization and organization by legitimating its organizations as representatives (*interlocutoras*) of the community in the relationship (*articulação*) between the government and society.

- To guarantee that the institutionalization of mechanisms and channels of popular participation is consolidated through a democratic practice of direct articulation between the government and organized social movements.

- To make possible the formulation of a municipal government Minimal Action Program for each RPA to attend to the priorities established by the population, developing a new form of partici-

²⁹ The division into RPAs was officialized through Decree 13.893 of May 20, 1987. The division had been discussed with the Assembléia de Bairros, FEACA and MDF and took the "sectoral articulations" (e.g. FEACA, Coordenação Setor Sul) into account. An Articulação Caxangá (with strong influence of the PT "Roxo") emerged in January 1987, partly in response to municipal policies in the RPA Várzea.

³⁰ Initially it resorted under the Secretaria Extraordinária de Coordenação, which had recently been created during the Joaquim Francisco Administration to coordinate "special programs," but was abolished again in early 1987.

³¹ "Organized social movements" were defined as the "political representation of the diverse interests which share the space of the city (convivem no espaço da cidade)" (Prefeitura, 1987:14).

pative planning and increasing the decentralization of municipal services.

- To stimulate the integration of the various branches (*orgãos*) of the municipal administration, taking as its starting point the demands made by the population of the City of Recife through its representative organizations grouped per RPA.

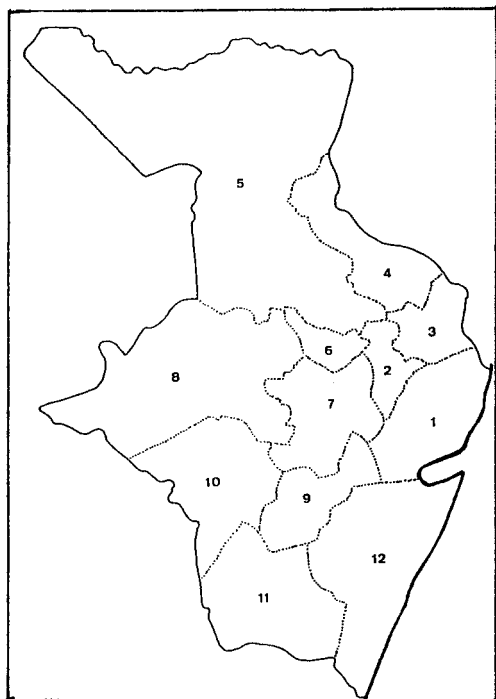
- To make the actions of the prefecture in each politico-administrative region transparent to the population (Prefeitura, 1987:16).

Guidelines in the implementation of the Program were "respect for the autonomy of the social movements" and "the plurality of the forum of popular representation."³²

In a "preliminary phase" the Secretary of Social Action was to realize a survey of organized neighborhood groups in each region. By early 1988, about 440 groups had been registered in this way. In this phase the municipality also tried to gain insight into the socio-economic situation and the actual distribution of urban equipment, infrastructure and services to inform the formulation of a Minimal Action Plan. During a subsequent "preparatory phase," the Secretary of Social Action convoked the associations (*entidades e grupos*) to inform them of the aims and proceedings of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, which also were explained in a *cartilha* (leaflet). At these preliminary informative meetings, the groups and organizations were invited for a plenary meeting to mark the beginning of the "phase of implementation" of the Program.

At the initial plenary meetings of this third phase, demands were registered and a date was set for the visit by the Mayor and his team to discuss them and formulate a plan. The demands were then processed with the help of the *Sistema de Controle de Reivindicações*. In this way, the computerized system for monitoring "social action" installed by the previous administrations was put to new use. Through the system, print-outs of the demands were channeled to the various branches of the municipal administration to enable them to work out action plans, and the local organizations were also provided with print-outs of demands made in "their" areas and information on whatever action was envisaged. An Action Plan for each RPA, on the basis of the demands made, was to be drawn up by the municipality, to be presented on a day when the "prefecture dislocated itself to the neighborhoods." On such a day, the Mayor and his team would hold office (*despacho*) in some public premises in the area. The day would start with a visit to the most critical areas in the region. After a meeting where a general plan for the region was presented, the various secretaries would hold office to discuss and define the respective short, medium and long-term action plans for the region.

³² This latter point linked up with notions about "heterogeneous and didactic *convivência*" which would make it possible to assess the representativeness of organizations and to sort out what needed to be done in an RPA instead of imposing the despised "cabinet solutions."



Political Administrative Regions

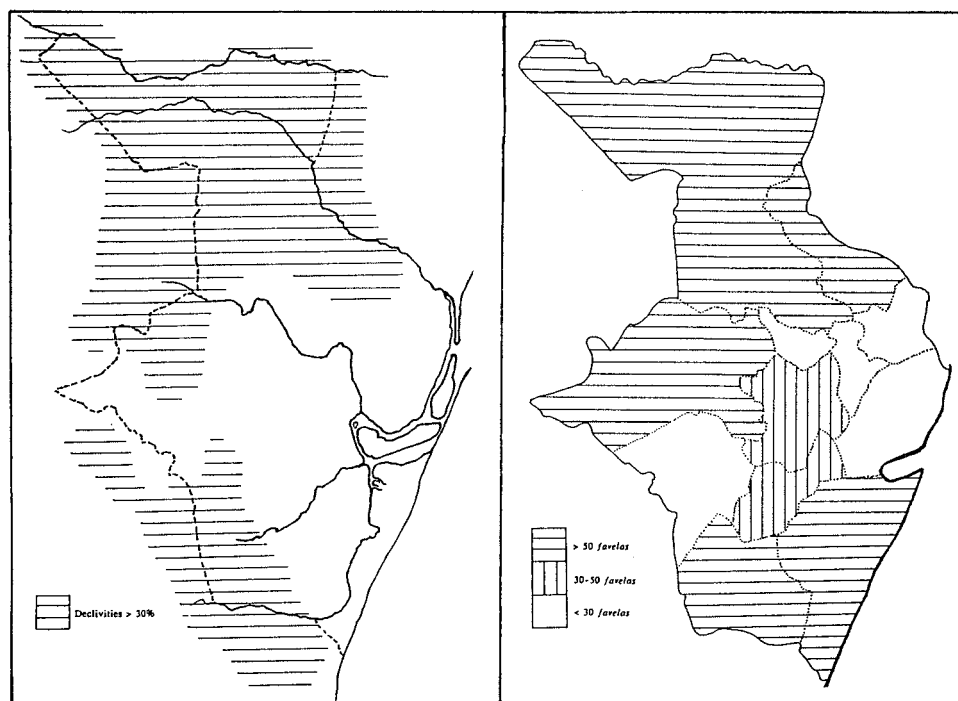
1. Boa Vista
2. Graças
3. Encruzilhada
4. Agua Fria
5. Casa Amarela
6. Casa Forte
7. Cordeiro
8. Várzea
9. Afogados
10. Tejipió
11. Ibura
12. Boa Viagem

During a fourth "phase of evaluation and accompaniment," regular meetings were held between the associations of the RPA and the various Secretaries of the municipality as well as plenary meetings. Print-outs of the demands made and the responses on the part of the municipal agencies concerned were provided bimonthly, so that they could be monitored. The end of this "First Cycle of the Program" was marked by a general Evaluation Seminar at the end of May 1987, making it possible to adjust the project. A second "cycle" involving an updating of regional plans and the supervision of their execution ran from 1987 to the end of 1988. During this period, an effort was made to articulate a *Conselho de Planejamento e Orçamento* to discuss the municipal budget.

To summarize, one might say the strategy consisted in creating something like popular councils at the level of the politico-administrative regions, which would subsequently serve as a platform for the creation of a more general council to help elaborate the annual municipal budget and an accompanying plan of action.

7.5.1. The implementation of the Program

The implementation of the Program started in RPA 11, Ibura, in the last week of February 1986. During the following months it also started in Várzea (RPA 8), Centro (RPA 1) and Casa Amarela (RPA 5). The priority granted to RPAs 11, 8 and 5 reflected the aim of attending to the more neglected, peripheral areas first. Implementation in new regions was temporarily suspended in the second semester of 1986, during the run-up to the gubernatorial elections to avoid interference of the electoral process. By September 1987, the Program had been installed in all 12 RPAs.



Hill Areas and Numbers of *Favelas* per Political Administrative Region

In the course of this implementation, the issue of "autonomy vs. participation" and the related problem of "representativeness" briefly reemerged when the first Program meetings were organized by the municipality in Casa Amarela in June 1986. Nearly simultaneously, the FEACA convoked an extraordinary assembly. According to some, the municipality should be present at this extraordinary assembly and thus recognize the FEACA as mouthpiece of Casa Amarela. The idea was at variance with the views of the municipal administration on respecting the

plurality of the neighborhood movement.³³ The FEACA meeting resulted in a document with general demands for the Casa Amarela area signed by 28 affiliated organizations (Jornal de Casa Amarela, 1986: nos. 5 and 6). A few days later, the document was presented at the meeting organized by the municipality attended by over 70 local organizations and all in all 48 petitions were filed.

In spite of this kind of friction, the great majority of neighborhood associations in the municipality became involved in the Program. According to municipal records, 314 out of 428 groups (*entidades*) registered by the municipality had in some way or other participated in the Program by early 1988 (see Table I). Essentially this meant these groups had at least filed demands. The non-participation of 27% of the registered groups did not have any clear ideological or political reasons. It was more likely that a number of inactive organizations as well as groups not involved in demand making had been registered on the mailing lists by the promoters of the Program in their zeal not to exclude anyone.



Meeting of *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*

³³ Along Rua Nova Descoberta some 2 kilometers long, in Casa Amarela, which is an extreme case, there were about 20 associations claiming to represent the interests in the area. Quite often internal quarrels resulting in split-offs contribute to such a proliferation of local associations. A woman from a neighboring area commented on her activities in the local Mothers' Club: "That is not because I am into crocheting or knitting (*não sou de fazer crochê nem tricô*), but I am in the Mothers' Club because it was the space (*espaço*) where I could continue my work" (Reunião sobre Planejamento e Orçamento-RPAs 3, 4, 5, 6: Fita 3, p. 44).

TABLE I

**Distribution of Population, Registered Groups, Groups Participating in the
"Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros" and Demands Made in the various Political
Administrative Regions in % (1988)**

P o l i t i c a l Administrative Regions	Population ¹		Groups registered ²		Participat- ing groups ³		demands made ⁴	
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%
01. Boa Vista	98,360	8	23	5	17	5	385	5
02. Graças	44,766	3	5	1	2	1	20	-
03. Encruzilhada	94,863	7	30	7	27	9	404	5
04. Agua Fria	143,833	11	54	13	42	13	991	12
05. Casa Amarela	195,065	15	96	22	72	23	2,592	31
06. Casa Forte	23,699	2	11	3	7	2	72	1
07. Cordeiro	151,284	12	33	8	24	8	454	5
08. Várzea	92,355	7	32	8	28	9	796	10
09. Afogados	101,389	8	26	6	14	4	280	3
10. Tejipió	70,577	6	31	7	22	7	841	10
11. Ibura	82,198	6	58	14	38	12	979	12
12. Boa Viagem	199,165	15	30	7	21	7	480	6
Total	1,306,554	100	428	101	314	100	8,294	100

¹ Estimated population in 1987. Data supplied by the Prefeitura.

² Groups (*entidades*) registered by the Prefeitura by the beginning of 1988. A later (March, 1988) overview of existing groups records 444 *entidades*.

³ Groups which in some way had participated in the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* by early 1988.

⁴ Data on demands (*reivindicações*) supplied by Prefeitura (June-14-1988).

By June 1988 8,294 demands (*reivindicações*) had been registered by the municipality; 81% of these demands had been filed through the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* which effectively became the major channel for demand making. Other channels of demand making were audiences with the Mayor (6%), the Secretary of Social Action (5%) and the campaign meetings for the municipal elections of 1985 (3%).

The geographical patterning of demand-making and associativism was interesting in the sense that a large number of *favelas* per RPA, which may be taken as a rough indication of the geographical distribution of "needs," was associated with an above average level of demand-making and an above average level of associativism (see Table II). The pattern tended to exhibit geographical polarization towards the northeast and the southeast of the municipality - Casa Amarela and Ibura - as areas scoring high on "needs," associativism and demand making. Casa Amarela was a "traditional" popular area and hotbed of popular movements. Ibura had been recently incorporated in the urban tissue with the

construction of COHAB housing schemes, which had been left without adequate infrastructure and became surrounded by *favelas*. The high level of associativism in this case was partly related to the implantation of FEMOCOHAB bases in the COHAB housing schemes and the provision of organizational alternatives by competing groups articulated in the *Comissão de Luta do Ibura*. The relatively high level of associativism in the case of Casa Forte was related to the fact that it included a number of *favelas* involved in the removal programs of the *Projeto Recife*, as well as to the fact that it was virtually the only area of (upper) middle class associativism in Recife, which basically revolved around resistance to the advancing highrise construction.

TABLE II

Distribution of Favelas and Patterns of Associativism and Demand-Making

Political Administrative Regions	Favelas per RPA ¹ abs. %	Associa- tions/po- pulation ²	Demands/ population ³	% of demands made
01. Boa Vista	15 3	2.3	39	5
02. Graças	3 1	1.1	4	-
03. Encruzilhada	12 3	3.1	42	5
04. Agua Fria	68 14	3.7	68	12
05. Casa Amarela	87 18	4.9	132	31
06. Casa Forte	8 2	4.6	30	1
07. Cordeiro	44 9	2.1	30	5
08. Várzea	58 12	3.5	86	10
09. Afogados	43 9	2.6	28	3
10. Tejipió	20 4	3.8	106	10
11. Ibura	70 15	7.0	119	12
12. Boa Viagem	56 12	1.5	24	6
Total	484 102	3.2	63	100

¹ SEHAB/URB (1988): *Cadastro das Favelas da Cidade do Recife, Relatório Geral*. This suggests the geographical distribution of the low-income population and may be taken as a rough indicator for a "geography of need." The term *favela* refers to: *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS), precarious settlements liable to removal, precarious settlements liable to reabsorption in the urban tissue through continuous improvement and/or government intervention or resettlements (SEHAB/URB, 1988:5)

² This rough index of associativism yields the number of associations per 10,000 inhabitants. The calculation is based on the number of associations registered by early 1988 (a total of 418) and a population estimate for 1987 (Data provided by Prefeitura).

³ This yields the number of demands made per 10,000 inhabitants.

The great majority of the 8,294 demands was directed to the *Empresa de Obras* (36%) and the URB (31%), followed by the Secretary of Social Action (9%), the Secretary of Healthcare (6%), the Secretary of Transportation and Works (5%),

the Secretary of Education and Culture (3%) and the Secretary of Legal Affairs (3%). This distribution was obviously related to the contents of the demands, which concentrated on issues of urbanization (25%), the road system (15%), sanitation (11%), healthcare (6%), street lighting (6%), garbage collection (4%) and education (4%).

The demands made were quite diverse in form. They could be very specific, as in the case of the *Comissão Central do Bairro dos Coelhos*, which presented something like a shopping list for its Integrated Health Project, consisting of over 40 items like stethoscopes, scissors, thermometers, needles, gloves, cotton and a scale as well as a biologist, a dentist, a gardener for the medicinal garden and a doctor. The *Conselho de Moradores do Alto do Pascoal e Bomba do Hemetério* presented a list of over 80 demands, most of them for the construction of *muros de arrimo*, walls to prevent landslides, in places specified by the address of the houses in need of such measures. The FEACA, by contrast, presented a generic list of demands concerning "the whole of Casa Amarela," such as the construction of *muros de arrimo* in the whole neighborhood and similar demands regarding basic sanitation, drainage, paving of streets, cleaning of drainage canals, medical posts, garbage collection, day nurseries, telephones, bus lines, community pharmacies as well as some more specific demands like those concerning the legalization and/or urbanization of specific areas and "invasions."

Responses to the demands made by the FEACA give some insight in the workings of the Program. In response to the demand for *muros de arrimo*, the URB argued, by mid 1987, that the municipality was involved in the construction of walls, stairways, microdrainage systems, canals and protection works through 140 interventions in Casa Amarela and that these actions were being supervised by 34 street commissions involving 15 organized groups (*entidades*) in the RPA. The URB did not fail, on that occasion³⁴, to remark that this was considered a pioneering initiative, not only in view of the volume of the works but also of the basic conception of a departure from the individual and clientelist treatment which had until then governed the interventions in the *morros*. This same conception, based on the cooperation between neighborhood *entidades* and *Prefeitura* would also inform future interventions, the URB promised. The Health Secretary responded to the demand for the installation of health posts by stating that the installation of 12 health posts -one for each RPA- was foreseen. They were to be financed through an agreement involving the state government and the *Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social* (BNDES). The exact localization would be decided by the municipal Health Council, where local Health Councils from the RPAs were represented.

³⁴ Recorded in an overview of demands and responses by the *Prefeitura* information system, May 11, 1988.

TABLE III

Response to Demands in the various Political-Administrative Region

P o l i t i c a l Administrative Regions	Not taken into consideration		Taken into consideration		Concluded		Total of demands
	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.	%	abs.
01. Boa Vista	344	89	41	11	10	3	385
02. Graças	12	60	8	40	5	25	20
03. Encruzilhada	341	84	63	16	23	6	404
04. Agua Fria	698	70	293	30	115	12	991
05. Casa Amarela	734	28	1,858	72	100	4	2,592
06. Casa Forte	32	44	40	56	5	7	72
07. Cordeiro	193	43	261	57	91	20	454
08. Várzea	304	38	492	62	142	18	796
09. Afogados	208	74	72	26	20	7	280
10. Tejipló	631	75	210	25	41	5	841
11. Ibura	445	45	534	55	102	10	979
12. Boa Viagem	455	95	25	5	12	3	480
Total	4,397	53	3,897	47	666	8	8,294

(Prefeitura: June 14, 1988)

By the end of 1988, the administration claimed that it had attended to (*atendido*) 3,897 demands or 47% of the total number of demands made. To 666 demands, 8% of the total number of demands made, a conclusive response (*concluído*) had been given by June 1988 (see Table III). Assuming that the law of large numbers canceled out some of the differences between general and specific demands, a breakdown of responses by RPA³⁵ shows a geographical distribution of responsiveness concentrating in the RPAs of Casa Amarela, Casa Forte, Cordeiro, Várzea and Ibura, which quite consistently scored above average in the percentage of demands attended to by the various administrative branches. This pattern is confirmed by the absolute numbers of interventions (*atendido*) in the various RPAs, with a predilection for the more problematic regions of the municipality. Thus the patterning was consistent with the stated intention of the administration to decentralize its interventions and thus spread them towards the peripheral and more needy areas. It reflected a departure from the strategy of concentrated

³⁵ This pattern holds if we take into account the departments and municipal enterprises which had received most of the demands, that is the *Empresa de Obras*, Urb, the Secretary of Social Action, the Secretary of Health, the Secretary of Works and Transportation, the Secretary of Education and the Juridical Department.

intervention adhered to by the previous administrations which had aimed at the integral development of particular areas, as was the case in the projects for urbanization of "poor areas" in the context of the *Projeto Recife*.³⁶ Interventions were now effectively spread and principally aimed at resolving the most urgent problems of the less privileged areas (cf. ETAPAS, 1989:71).

Though all this may serve as a rough indication of responsiveness, the administration obviously did not simply respond to the demands that were made. Nor did it want to come up with the despised "cabinet solutions." Resolving this problem was the purpose of the follow-up meetings in the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* and the meetings between local people and technicians. The new municipal administration tended to regard the interaction with the neighborhood associations as a learning process, not unlike the idealization of the relationship in existence at the time of opposition to the authoritarian regime. This included respect for the plurality of popular movements, none of which should be accorded a privileged position on political grounds. One aim of the meetings at the RPA level, involving the various groups, was to promote the formation of "regional" articulations.³⁷ The meetings with the various Secretaries to discuss interventions per sector similarly were to stimulate the formation of "sectoral" commissions concerned, for instance, with urbanization, healthcare or education. Such commissions in the RPAs were in turn to become the bases for commissions at a municipal level, much as the general meetings at RPA level were to become the bases for a *Conselho de Planejamento e Orçamento*.

At a local level, the rejection of "cabinet solutions" implied discussions with local associations on the prioritization of works to be undertaken as well as negotiations on the "technical" features of the interventions, such as the proposal of non-conventional approaches. The URB, for instance, acknowledged that about 25,000 dwellings were in need of support walls, but that even at a pace of 500 walls a year it would take 50 years to attend to the existing needs if individual solutions were pursued. To do something about the problem, non-conventional methods were

³⁶ This part of the *Projeto*, lagged behind the interventions in the "vacant areas." As far as it was executed, investments had been concentrated in particular areas such as the Alto do Mandu, where streets were paved, the drainage system improved and other measures were taken. These areas were adjacent to the privileged neighborhood of Casa Forte, whereas the interventions in "poor areas" on the other side of the Capibaribe received less priority.

³⁷ The new policies effectively contributed to the emergence of an *Articulação Caxangá* and the conversion of the *Assembléia de Bairros* into the FEMEB.

proposed, such as planting the slopes with grass and an emphasizing the need for drainage works rather than *muros de arrimo*.³⁸

The limited capacity to respond due to the fiscal and financial crisis of the municipality was a major strain on the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*. It was part of the legacy the administration somehow had to cope with and it was aggravated by the general problems of the Brazilian economy in the 1980s and the politics of the Sarney government in pursuit of its five-year mandate.³⁹ In municipal budgeting, the social sector (education/culture and housing/urbanization) was given privileged treatment, i.e. growing percentage shares. Expenditure was reoriented in both sectoral and geographical terms during the *Frente* administration in favor of the low-income groups (Pires 1988:108-111; ETAPAS, 1989:71). Overall financial programming was aimed at the maintenance of the existing urban structure, the correction and recovery (*recuperação*) of the infra-structure and structuration through new investments. The latter two forms of intervention - correction and structuration- would mainly have to rely on external resources (Jornal do Recife, Janeiro de 1987). Response to demands thus was largely dependent on external resources, which were difficult to come by.⁴⁰

Looking back at the nearly three-year experiment in the democratization of planning, the URB referred to a "dialectic of contradictory and collective construction in the confrontation between original intentions and real possibilities" (URB, 1988). In spite of the commitment and good intentions of the new administrators, the budgetary position of the municipality and the inherited administrative apparatus put a severe strain on the whole process, since it not only restricted the opportunities to respond to demands, but also often led to delays in the execution of works.

The budget was one problem, the bureaucracy was another. Lehmann (1990:205) remarks that the problems of confronting the established bureaucracy⁴¹ are enormous. This, he argues, frequently leads politicians to appoint

³⁸ The complement to this approach was the monitoring of the actual works, which effectively mobilized many local commissions. This resulted in an improved quality of the works executed and, eventually, in the exclusion of three large contractors in October 1987 for not complying with the terms and quality of works that had been negotiated with the local populations (cf. Pires, 1987:133).

³⁹ Municipal revenues (see 5.2.1.) in 1987 were as follows: 28% "internal" (e.g. IPTU, ISS), 55% transfers (e.g. ICM: 30%; FPM: 12%) and 16.5% from credit operations. In 1987, 59% of the expenditures went to salaries for the 20,000 municipal functionaries, 17% was for paying off debts, 17% for the maintenance of agencies and services (*órgãos e serviços*) and 6.6% for investments.

⁴⁰ The reorientation of *Projeto Recife* in the course of 1987 (see 7.6.) involved a deconcentration and made funds available for interventions throughout the *morros* (URB, 1988).

⁴¹ The inherited bureaucracy was deliberately structured in such a way as to promote fragmentation of information. People working in one and the same room often did not know how their activities interlinked or how they fitted into a broader policy (cf. de Boer & Landim, 1987).

advisers who operate in parallel to the bureaucracy and try to override or undercut it. A tiny, over-worked activist staff coexists with, and struggles against an underpaid, under-motivated and underutilized mass of office-holders.

Lehmann illustrates the argument with a reference to the situation in Recife and his remarks, based on observations in 1986, and surely reflect (without ever mentioning it) the situation of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*,⁴² with its staff of 40 trying to cope with the unwieldy administrative machinery.

In his reflections on democracy, clientelism and grassroot movements, Lehmann (1990:205) argues that grassroot movements may play an important role in combating clientelism. What is needed, he argues, is a convergence of the bureaucracy with pressure from below. That might result in the development of clear and transparent, technical, "bureaucratic" procedures. Usually however, he goes on, politicians tend to bypass or subvert formal procedures and he points to the situation in Recife in 1986 to illustrate his argument. The remarkable thing about the argument is that it puts the blame on "the politicians" without paying much attention to the other side of the equation, the "social movements." The problems in Recife can not simply be attributed to the bureaucracy and politicians "appointing advisers who operate parallel to the bureaucracy." The *Programa* had an aspect of "pedagogy in relation to the movement," but it also had an aspect of "pedagogy in relation to the state" (Bitoun, 1988). Its promoters aimed at dynamizing the inherited administrative apparatus by exposing the bureaucracy to a continuous monitoring by the population. I would argue that this "activist staff" often remained suspended between the bureaucracy and the "social movement," largely due to the autonomism of the supra-local organizations. The *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* created opportunities, but what use did "the movement" make of them?

7.5.2. The movement's uneasiness

The *Assembléia de Bairros* had relinquished the initiative in the discussion on "popular councils" when it failed to come up with proposals. When the *Frente* administration started to implement its democratization policy, however, the great majority of the local neighborhood associations "started to participate *a toque de caixa*." Local leaders perceived problems as well as changes and new opportunities:

With the Jarbas administration many things changed, but not everything because we know that in the *Empresa de Obras* you still have a lot of *pelegos*, those engineers that served Joaquim Francisco and

⁴² Plans for administrative reform created such controversy among municipal employees that they could not be carried out during the 1985-88 administrative term.

Gustavo Krause, accustomed to making money. Those social workers who always sat in their office, you see? They never went out in the street or if they did, it would only be for a short time to discuss with the *comunidade* and then they would rush back to their office. With the previous administration we would go there sometimes. You had six or eight just sitting in their office. It was infuriating. And then at every door you had a girl deciding whether you could go in or not. So then came the Jarbas administration and he said: "Social workers, to the street. Engineers, to the street." So if you go to the URB now at 8 a.m. you see all these people packing their brief cases to go out. So what happened is this: a democratic government came (Interview, October 20, 1988).

When it became clear that the initial autonomism of the *Assembléia* spokespersons met barely with any response among local groups, the necessity to rethink the situation was increasingly felt:

...Before, the dwellers' associations really adhered to this practice of confrontation. That is to say you did things against the *prefeitura*, against the state. I mean that the situation made people act that way. So with this new administration, things changed. Also, because you had this problem of the elections; most of us worked for the election of this mayor and people from the movement itself found employment in (*passaram a trabalhar na*) the actual administration. So things changed radically. Now, all of a sudden (*de repente*) we are not simply going to be against things, because we know these persons are committed. So I think things became quite mixed up in the heads of the leaders themselves: not knowing what to do.⁴³

Such was the summary of the situation by one of the participants at a "Seminar on Negotiation" organized by ETAPAS.

The title of the seminar was significant in itself, as it reflected the uneasiness among the "authentic" about the attitude to adopt in relation to the new administration; the issue of "whether to occupy these spaces or not."⁴⁴ Some were of the opinion that the state was the state and that the Popular Front administration as well as the state government of Miguel Arraes, elected in 1986, should be dealt with in the same way as previous administrations, i.e. through confrontation. The state was there to administrate conflicts and "participative planning"⁴⁵ was another form of cooptation, the argument went. Another often repeated point was that the financial limitations of the municipal administration could not be accepted

⁴³ Seminário sobre Negociação em 06-06-87: fita I, p. 2.

⁴⁴ The *assessorias* also pressed for such rethinking, while the emphasis in the ideas about their role shifted to an emphasis on the "technical" and "professional" rather than the simple "militant" aspect (Interentidades, 1986; ETAPAS, 1987).

⁴⁵ The notion of participative planning had emerged in the early 1980s, when it was assimilated into oppositionist discourse as well as in the discourse of *abertura* (e.g. Gustavo Krause).

as an argument for failing to meet demands. Accepting the argument was regarded as a new form of cooptation and acquiescence to the limitations of the capitalist state. Not everyone shared such fundamentalist and maximalist views, however, and some argued that it had been the movement itself that had pressed for more participative policies. Simply turning down offers was not very productive, they argued, since it often reflected a lack of proposals on the part of the movement itself. One can not just walk out, though it was admitted that finding a balance between confrontation, negotiation and cooptation would be a difficult task. The way to resolve the problem was to work out viable proposals on the part of the movement.

A further issue was that of "parallelism." It was one of the central themes at the "Evaluation Seminar" organized by the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* in May 1987. Some 400 persons, representing over 170 organized groups, attended this seminar aimed at evaluating the Program and discussing possible adjustments (Jornal do Commercio, May 22, 1987; May 24, 1987).⁴⁶ The issue of "parallelism" came up again in relation to the proposal for the formation of "sectoral commissions" (e.g. healthcare, education, etc.) in the RPAs to accompany the various administrative departments and eventually become involved in drawing up regional budgets and action plans which, in turn, would provide the basis for involvement in budgeting and planning at a municipal level. The administration regarded the creation of such "institutional spaces" as a condition for its policy of respecting the plurality of neighborhood associativism. However, some segments of the movement argued that such commissions would create a parallel structure. The upshot of the argument, another variation on the theme of representativeness and autonomy/combativeness, was that the municipality should recognize the existing commissions of "the" movement. Others argued that the movement did not have qualified cadres for commissions of this kind. The debate at the seminar resulted in the somewhat ambiguous conclusion that for the time being sectoral commissions, their composition not clearly defined, would only monitor the works of the municipality. The administration would recognise the commissions and the "space" thus created would be occupied in function of the "rhythm of the movement" (Folha dos Bairros, maio 1987).

In a comment on the seminar, one of the *assessorias* concluded that if some of the problems with the smooth functioning of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* could be blamed on the *prefeitura*, the historical mistrust of the municipality, the lack of negotiation experience and the lack of creativity on the part of the movement in developing alternatives were equally problematic. The municipal

⁴⁶ This seminar was rather chaotic, as it was accompanied by recriminations of "cooptation" and wild accusations of "corruption" voiced by some of the participating groups. An issue that took quite some time was whether movement leaders could preside over sessions at a seminar organized by "the state."

administration, it was argued, could be a strong ally of the movement, but a great deal depended on initiatives on the part of the movement. The authors concluded that the formation of a federation might contribute to the deployment of initiatives on the part of the movement (Folha dos Bairros, maio de 1987). The foundation of the FEMEB in September 1987 (see appendix) contributed barely to the solution of the problems, however.⁴⁷

In March 1988, the relation between the movement and the state was discussed again at a seminar, this time organized by the *assessorias* at the request of the FEMEB. This "deliberative" seminar (Folha dos Bairros, março 1988) reflected the uneasiness of the movement with the tendency toward self-marginalization resulting from the ongoing efforts to redefine "authenticity" in terms of opponents and alleged supporters of the *Nova República* and the Sarney government. At a local level, denunciations of clientelist interference in the selection of health agents (*agentes de saúde*) had resulted in the withdrawal of the Popular Health Movement (MOPS) from the Municipal Health Commission. As a result of pressure from the "more combative" segments, the FEACA had also officially withdrawn from the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*.

Participants in this March seminar again deplored the fact that the government did not accord decision-making power to the movement and the points on cooptation and parallelism passed review. This time, however, more attention was devoted to the decline in the capacities of the movement itself; it had lost its claws (*perdeu sua garra*). The issue of participation in "institutional channels" remained too controversial to be resolved at the "deliberative" seminar, however. Some argued in favor of participation with preservation of autonomy, others for differentiated participation, while still others were against any participation at all, arguing that it only contributed to demobilization and demoralization. It was resolved to take up the issue again at a second seminar in June (FEMEB, April 22, 1988).

In a paper intended for the June seminar, one of the *assessorias* expressed concern over these developments and their significance. It started by reminding

⁴⁷ Political divisions had a paralyzing effect on the new federation, contributing to a rapidly waning interest of the grassroot organizations that had been quite well represented at the founding of the FEMEB. During the Congress, which was largely financed by OXFAM, CESE, the state government and the municipality of Recife, the PT "Roxo" articulated its own list (*Autonomia e Luta*) for the FEMEB board to oppose the more broadly composed *Organização e Luta* list (see 6.9.4.). The PT "Light" group, some of whom were involved in the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, referred to "disastrous interventions like those patronized by leaders of the Pernambucan PT in the first elections for the *Federação de Bairros da Região Metropolitana do Recife* - FEMEB. Without any consideration for an alliance which was being consolidated between communitarian leaders and forces of the Left, including an expressive participation of *petista* militants, at the last minute another list was launched, issuing from the brain of some leaders (*tirada da cabeça de alguns dirigentes*) and relying on support from right-wing cadres" (*Construir uma Unidade Combativa e Flexível - Pronunciamento de Dissidentes do PT/PE*, n.d.).

By June 1988, 7 of the 15 FEMEB directors renounced to candidate themselves in the municipal elections.

that the opening of institutional channels for popular participation within the state structure had been a longstanding demand and that a distinction should be drawn between such institutional channels and the popular organizations themselves:

The proposal of opening and occupying such spaces within the official structure "of power" expresses an awareness that it is not sufficient to "protest" and to "demand": what is needed is interference in the decision over goals and priorities of public administration (Folha dos Bairros, No. 14, Maio de 1988).

With the process of democratization, it was pointed out, some such spaces had been created and many sectors of the movement had started to participate. Some thought that it would resolve matters as if by magic, others rejected participation, arguing that it was all just a "swindle," while still others took a more critical view of the possibilities and limitations of such spaces. The *assessoria* clearly shared this last view, arguing that if the spaces of participation were limited and if one could not really speak of the "people in power," things could be changed through the organization and pressure of the popular movement. For all the problems and disillusion generated by the efforts at democratic participation, the question of alternatives proposed by the movement remained a central one:

As far as this is concerned, we observe the consolidation of a collective disillusion: "the government now receives the movement, but does not let it decide," "the forum is not decision-making so it is not worth participating."

We ask ourselves whether the question of the political force of the popular movement is being analyzed in realistic terms. Does it depend on the good will of the government to give them this decision-making power? Or will this power only exist if the popular movement conquers it?

The question then, the *assessoria* argued, was whether the withdrawal of the movement from such institutional spaces should not be evaluated in terms of the losses incurred by such a move. Who benefits from the absence of the movement? Isn't withdrawal a form of nostalgia for the times when you could simply be against? Why abdicate these spaces, which will not therefore cease to exist, if they can be used to construct a broader hegemony in relation to the communitarian organizations? To answer such questions, it was argued, it was important to realize that participation in these spaces could not simply be equated with a loss of autonomy. Autonomy requires that the movement itself has clear ideas about the interests it defends and that it is not just "against" but elaborates proposals and constructs alliances to realize them. Negotiating and alliance-making is not the same thing as cooptation. This only occurs if there is a process of adherence, dependence and subordination to the interests of the dominant classes. With this diagnosis, the *assessoria* attempted to awaken the FEMEB from its paralysis, which not only wore out the local administration, by then in its last months, but also wore out the new federation itself, which was losing its credibility. Local organizations

increasingly tended to cease attending the monthly meetings of the FEMEB Council of Representatives.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, the number of neighborhood associations at the grassroots rapidly grew in response to the new possibilities for demand-making at the municipal level as well as through the process of fission exacerbated by the political context and, finally, in response to the federal *Programa de Leite*.⁴⁹ Amidst these dynamics, the articulation at the municipal level increasingly lost its significance as a point of reference. It continued to try and get "the people out in the street" to express their discontent with the Sarney government and its accomplices, but this was not the most immediate concern for the people. Rather than simple generalized "paralysis," the problem was one of a disencounter between local level associativism and the more general articulations. The various seminars can be regarded as attempts to reflect on that situation. In spite of the efforts on the part of the *assessorias*, the June seminar where the paper of the *assessoria* was to be presented, never took place. The FEMEB, which had guaranteed the attendance of at least 30 people, only managed to round up a few people for the discussion.

7.5.3. The Budgeting and Planning Assembly

Without any potential allies in a dynamic problem-laden process of local democratization, the group implementing the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* gradually scaled down its expectations. They had initially thought of elaborating a policy through a process of dialogue -which might be conflictive at times- with the "popular movement" to devise mechanisms of participation to be rapidly formalized. However, they increasingly came to think of the Program as an "educative experience." As such, it might provide useful experience for the later elaboration of a new *Lei Orgânica Municipal*, which would eventually have to be drawn up once the new Constitution came into force. Thus the idea of using a rather singular

⁴⁸ At its Second Congress in September 1991, only 42 of the by then some 600 organizations of the Recife Metropolis showed up, in contrast to the 104 associations present at the First Congress. The number of delegates had dropped from 400 to 165. At this Second Congress, it was decided that both of the lists participating in elections would be proportionally represented in the directory, a formula that had been rejected at the First Congress. This time it resulted in a deadlock, as the lists received 82 and 81 votes respectively (Folha dos Bairros, September 1989).

⁴⁹ This thoroughly assistentialist milk distribution program provided milk coupons to be distributed through the local "communitarian" organizations. As such, participation in the program became virtually unavoidable, but also was bound to generate conflicts over the distribution of coupons.

conjuncture of "relative autonomy" of the municipal executive to take an advance on the new Constitution receded to the background.⁵⁰

The tuning down and slowing down could be observed in the process of implementing popular intervention in municipal budgeting and planning. The 1986 budget had been largely fixed by the outgoing administration. There was no systematic intervention in drawing up the 1987 budget. The administration did not really promote it, since it wanted to first articulate the level of Political Administrative Regions, but the possibility was left open in case "the movement" took initiative. As nothing serious came from that quarter, the idea of creating and formalizing a council to play a role in drawing up the budget gave way to a more flexible approach aimed at creating a *Plenária*, which would be broader than a formalized council, but would not have any clearly defined legal status.⁵¹ Rather than being directly involved in drawing up the budget, the *Plenária* was to discuss the *Plano de Ação*, which complements the budget but, unlike the budget, does not have the status of a law approved by the City Council.

Each of the RPAs was to elect a number of delegates to the *Plenária de Orçamento e Planejamento*, which would also include representatives of other "sectors of civil society." The initial idea was to elect one representative per 100,000 inhabitants, but since that meant that some RPAs would only have one representative, the ratio was brought down to one representative per 50,000 inhabitants. Furthermore, the "sectoral" and general articulations of the neighborhood movement were to be represented, as were the trade union centrals (CUT and CGT), business sector organizations (the Shopowners' Club and the Federation of Industrialists) and professional organizations. On the whole, the neighborhood movement would have 42 delegates and the other "sectors of civil society" 21.

This *Plenária* was mainly to be involved in drawing up the *Plano de Ação* in association with the broader process of municipal budgeting and financial management. The process started with a pre-budget (*pré-orçamento*), in which a "projection of the needs of the city" was roughly brought in line with a projection of available financial resources. Ideally "civil society" would actively intervene in the discussion of needs, but the "projection" was more or less derived from the demands made through the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* and the action plans of the various municipal secretaries. The *pré-orçamento* resulting from this procedure

⁵⁰ The case of urban land regularization, to be discussed later shows that a strategy aimed at formalization was not unfeasible in the context of the political conjuncture.

⁵¹ See: *Escolha de Representantes para o Conselho Orçamentário da Cidade do Recife*, RPAs 7 e 8 (14-06-88); *Reunião p/falar sobre Escolha dos Representantes do Conselho de Orçamento e Planejamento*, RPA 5 (n.d.); *Reunião sobre Planejamento e Orçamento*, RPAs 3, 4, 5, 6 (27-05-88); *Reunião com a URB*, RPAs 5 e 6 (07-05-88).

was submitted to the *Plenária Municipal de Planejamento e Orçamento*, intended to be the negotiation place for the prioritizations proposed in the *pré-orçamento*.

A circular on the role attributed to the *Plenária* stated that the communities were to study and criticize the budget proposal. The distribution of resources over the various Secretaries could be altered within the limits of the total budget, which were estimated at some CZ\$ 23 billion. An alternative proposal should contain:

1. a list of actions to be carried out by each of the organs (*cada órgão*)
2. an identification of priorities, or any other criteria for the selection of actions by the *Prefeitura*, in case there are no resources to carry out the whole *programação*
3. the categories of action to be realized with internal resources and those to be executed with resources from other origins (credit operations, agreements, etc.) (Undated circular, *Secretaria de Planejamento e Urbanismo*).⁵²

This procedure was to lead to a *Plano de Ação*, tallying with the simultaneously elaborated budget proposal to be submitted to the City Council for approval, thus acquiring the law status. The *Plano de Ação*, however, was more specific and would guide the actual work programming.⁵³ In this way the process would be linked to the "experience" of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* again, repeating and deepening the "cycle."

After discussions with the *assessorias* and the FEMEB in early 1988, the effective articulation of the *Plenária de Planejamento e Orçamento* started in May with three meetings where the municipal budgeting process and the purpose of the *Plenária* were explained to the participating organizations from four RPAs at a time. People from about 120 local organizations attended these meetings, where criticism of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* and of the FEMEB was voiced, the latter expressing the frustration about the immobility of the federation.⁵⁴ In the course of the following month, RPA representatives were elected by representatives of the local organizations participating in the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*. Usually attendance at the meetings where the RPA delegates were elected

⁵² The municipality argued that new investments largely had to be financed with external resources.

⁵³ The operational programming was to result from discussions at the level of the Political Administrative Regions and the semi-annual alignments with available financial resources. In 1988, through a Conselho de Política Financeira consisting of various municipal secretaries, such alignments took place every three months in view of the high inflation rate.

⁵⁴ The representativeness/combativeness issue reemerged when people argued that the municipality was setting up a parallel structure. The municipality, the argument went, did not interfere in the elections for the Shopowners' Club, but it did in the neighborhood movement. The counter-argument was that the FEMEB, the MDF, the FEMOCOHAB and FECOPE as well as sectoral articulations were represented, beside the shopowners and other such groups and that, moreover, RPA representatives were included.

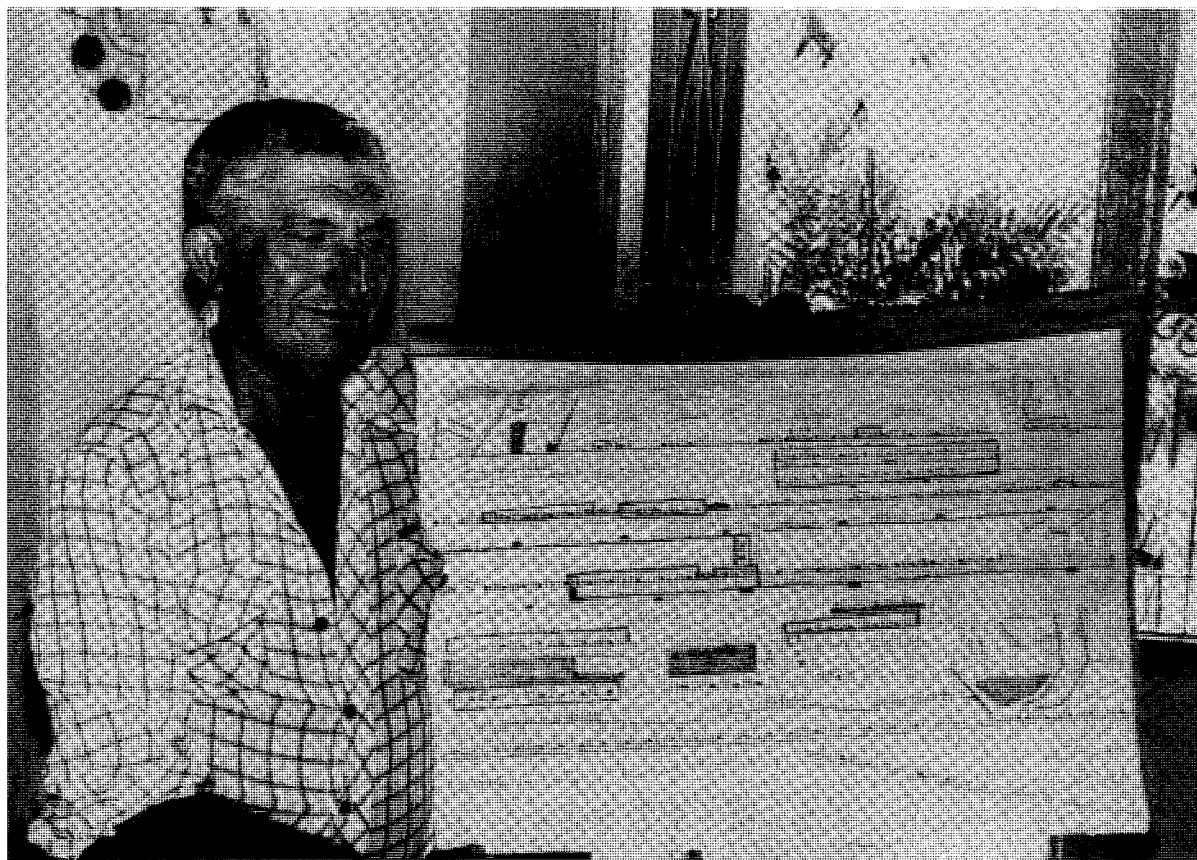
was not overwhelming, as the leaders of "more combative groups" and groups "purely" engaged in communitarian demand-making did not show much interest in the matter. The result was that the individuals elected ranged from the moderate Left to an occasional "traditional leader" seeking to enhance his or her prestige. Beside these RPA representatives, the various sectoral and municipal articulations occasionally attended the subsequent meetings of the *Plenária*, though not always officially. People from the FEMEB, for instance, showed up every once in a while, but without signing the attendance list so as "not to legitimate anything." Only a few of the other "organizations of civil society," such as the professional associations of economists and architects, would occasionally be present.

No wonder then that the *Plenária* remained rather anemic. None of the delegates had really been seriously prepared to discuss anything like a municipal budget or an action plan. They had to make do with the brief course in municipal budgeting delivered at the meetings preceding the installation of the *Plenária*. This lack of preparation and the absence of the supra-local articulations enabled municipal secretaries less committed to the democratization experiment to get away with unreliable information. Nevertheless, most of the RPA delegates tried to make the best of it. Aside from the series of meetings of the *Plenária*, which usually took place in the City Council hall, a parallel series of meetings was articulated to discuss movement strategy. It was felt that something should be done about this "old demand of the movement" and that at least a document should be prepared to clarify the movement's position, since otherwise the administration would only take advantage of the situation.⁵⁵

In the end, a document was effectively drawn up. It started by highlighting the impediments to effective participation in the discussion, such as the difficulty in assessing the reality content of estimated expenses by the various secretaries and the late stage at which participation in the budgeting process had started. These critical notes were followed by a list of demands addressed to the various secretaries.

The document was eventually signed by 14 RPA delegates. People from the MDF and the *Conselho Popular do Setor Caxangá* present at the *Plenária* did not sign the document, which they regarded as insufficient, though they could not really say why or advance any alternative proposal. The document was allegedly taken into account by the municipality in the elaboration of a more definitive *Plano de Ação*, which it was annexed to for good measure.

⁵⁵ "A gente não pode ficar fora porque é uma antiga reivindicação do movimento popular. Em mesmo tempo o prefeito tira proveito deste situação encima da gente" (June 6, 1988). The "more combative" groups argued that the whole operation was a sham in any case, since in spite of the slogan *É Povo de Novo*, the people were not really in power.



Neighborhood Activist with Map Indicating Sites Requiring *Muros de Arrimo*

With the subsequent change of administration, i.e. the return of Joaquim Francisco⁵⁶, the Action Plan was shelved and the participatory policies of the Vasconcelos administration abandoned. Five days after the 1988 municipal elections, the mayor-elect stated that he did not regard the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* as a great innovation, arguing that during his previous administration he had spent days on end discussing priorities with the local population (Diário de Pernambuco, November 20, 1988). That put an end to what many had regarded as one of the more promising efforts at municipal democratization during the 1985-1988 period (Jornal do Brasil, October 27, 1987; Jornal do Commercio, August 9, 1987; Fischer & Teixeira, 1989).

7.6. Reorienting Projeto Recife

Besides the general issue of participation, the elitism and authoritarianism of *Projeto Recife* had been themes during the 1985 electoral campaign (see 6.3.3.). With the electoral victory of the *Frente Popular* in 1985, the conditions for a revision of the *Projeto Recife* were in the making. The changing constellation of forces in the metropolitan area of Recife (RMR) contributed to what was described as the "identity crisis" of the FIDEM (see 6.4.3.) and opened the way for discussions with the federal Ministry of Urban Development and the World Bank on rescheduling *Projeto Grande Recife* and its sub-projects.⁵⁷ In 1986, however, the political situation at the state level, with Gustavo Krause standing in for Roberto Magalhães when the latter made his bid for a Senate seat, created a deadlock. Through the FIDEM an effective restructuring of the projects could be obstructed until the election of Miguel Arraes in late 1986.

At a municipal level, preliminary steps toward reorientation had been taken in the course of 1986 by a new URB team in charge of *Projeto Recife*. Rather than immediately involving the population in a discussion of how to go about things, the team strategy was to work out a proposal internally and then submit it for discussion (Interview José Marinho, July 14, 1988). Its proposal for the reorientation of the *Projeto Recife* was made public at the end of January 1987, to be first discussed at a local level and subsequently at various *seminários* organized by the

⁵⁶ In the elections of November 1988 Joaquim Francisco received 40.7% of the votes, followed by Marcus Cunha (PMDB-*Frente*) with 23.4%, João Coelho (PDT) with 11.4% and Humberto Costa (PT) with 6.1%.

⁵⁷ This implied greater municipal influence in the allocation of funds, i.e. a form of decentralization which was in turn to create the conditions for intra-municipal decentralization along with the development of alternative criteria for priorities. In October 1986, a World Bank mission and the Ministry of Urban Development endorsed the formulation of rescheduling proposals.

URB. The *assessorias* provided backing for the local organizations (cf. GAJOP, 1987).

The new proposal was not a new project but "fatally, the reformulation of a complex inheritance" (CEAS, n.d.). One objective of the proposed reorientation was greater flexibility in the execution of projects, putting an end to execution by "target areas" that had to be completed before moving on to a next one.⁵⁸ A second related objective was geographical spread, which made it possible to use *Projeto* funds for works (e.g. *muros de arrimo*) in a larger part of the *morros* (URB, 1988). Furthermore it was proposed to link the projects for the *areas pobres* into the PREZEIS structure, i.e. the new norms and institutional structure for the regularization and urbanization of the *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS) being elaborated by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the popular movement as a "popular initiative" for local legislation (see 7.7.).⁵⁹

The housing scheme, which had become increasingly elitist between 1982 and 1985, was rescheduled to give priority to popular housing. The municipality stuck to the controversial *financiamento cruzado*, which stipulated that the construction of popular housing was to be subsidized by the sale of urbanized terrains at market rates on the left bank of the river. The new proposal covered projects in the fields of macro-drainage systems, the road system, informative meetings on sanitation and the employment and income policies of the *Projeto Recife*.

During the *seminários*, criticism focussed on the *financiamento cruzado* scheme and the proposal to build a road connection between Casa Forte and the Avenida Caxangá, which was deemed to promote the speculative valorization of the area. The URB dropped the road construction plan but stuck to the financing scheme, arguing that it was part and parcel of the agreements with the World Bank and the *Caixa Econômica Federal*, the successor of the BNH. The financing scheme would remain on the agenda until April 1988, when the *Comissão Geral do Projeto Recife* agreed with the sale to render viable the "house for a house" proposal rather than pay instalments going up to a maximum of 10% of the minimum wage for a period of 25 years (Folha dos Bairros, Abril de 1988).

The *Comissão Geral* had been one of the results of the *seminários*, occasions for people from the various localities involved in the *Projeto Recife* to meet each other. By common consent, they divided the project area into five subareas

⁵⁸ Until 1985 works had basically been concentrated in two areas pobres (Torrões, Alto do Mandu) out of a list of 20.

⁵⁹ The proposal foresaw formulation of Planos Diretores for the consolidation of 18 Zones of Special Social Interest in the core project area, following the stipulations of the new legislation in the making. These plans were to include legalization, a scheme for renters to acquire property rights to their dwelling and schemes for housing improvements, communitarian equipment, infrastructure and green areas.

that would each send two delegates each to a General Commission. When the Commission was formalized in May 1987 and recognized as legitimate interlocutor by the URB, it also included two *assessorias* (CEAS and FASE) and a representative of the *Assembléia de Bairros*. The Commission was to meet weekly in the premises of the *Acção Católica Operaria* (ACO). It negotiated current issues with the URB, and mobilized 1,000 people for a large meeting with the URB and the State Secretary of Housing (SEHAB) at the end of 1987 to protest the favoring of macro-drainage works over the housing scheme and the financing proposals for the housing scheme. Some months later, the Commission agreed with the *financiamento cruzado*.

For the *assessorias*, the mobilization at the end of 1987 raised hopes that the *Comissão Geral* would really become a rallying point for popular mobilization accompanied by negotiations over the course of the project. It remained a one-time event, however. Gradually the expectations created by the reorientation of the *Projeto Recife* dissipated among the local population. During the first months of 1988, most of the works were virtually paralyzed by acute cash flow problems. Funds for the *Projeto Grande Recife* had been withheld by the federal government since December 1987 to force the Pernambucan administration of Miguel Arraes and the municipal authorities of Recife to support President Sarney's claim to a five-year mandate. Some of these funds were finally released in May 1988, after a trip by Jarbas Vasconcelos to Brasília⁶⁰ (Diário de Pernambuco, May 27, 1988; June 5, 1988). While the sluggish performance of the reoriented *Projeto* led to disappointment and a decline in the interest of the local population, the *Comissão Geral* itself failed to develop a dynamics of its own. According to one of the *assessorias*, the Commission met all the requirements to become an authentic "popular council" but it did not "take off," partly due to lack of commitment of some of the participants. In the course of 1988, the upcoming municipal elections also began to influence the workings of the Commission, as some groups started to avoid further discussions and negotiations over the execution of works.⁶¹ The idea was that the local population would radicalize if the promised works were not forthcoming. Such "political immediatism," however, only resulted in deadlocks and a burnout of the parties involved, to the detriment of local populations.

At the end of 1988 the *Projeto Recife*, in as far as it was financed by the World Bank/BIRD, was officially terminated. When Joaquim Francisco made his

⁶⁰ The liberation of these funds was indirectly negotiated, through the mediation of a Pernambucan federal deputy, after the Minister of Urban Development, Prisco Viana, had become abusive with Jarbas Vasconcelos, who refused to withdraw his support for immediate presidential elections.

⁶¹ In the Várzea area the execution of urbanization works was slowed down when "combative" groups claiming to represent the area did not react to URB invitations to discuss the plans. As a result, technicians started thinking of bypassing the organizations and calling meetings with the local population themselves.

comeback, he also set the tone for his administration by announcing a great mobilization of private initiative to retrieve the city's position as a tourist attraction, promising this would generate income and employment. Particular attention was to be devoted to the Capibaribe Project. The Project, Joaquim Francisco argued, had been *desvirtuado* (robbed of its virtues) during the *Frente* administration. He would set it on course again and realize an old dream of various Mayors of the Venice of Latin America, the navigability of the Capibaribe. The touristic development projects for the Capibaribe riverside and other plans, as always referred to under the broad name of *Projeto Recife*, would now mainly rely on private initiative. During the first months of the new Joaquim Francisco administration, the great emphasis on the Capibaribe project was questioned by local groups in the project area, who saw any hope of the further improvement of their situation evaporate, and by the City Council, which also wanted to know what was going to happen with the areas not directly involved in the riverside scheme.

7.7. The Special Zones of Social Interest

Besides the general issue of participation in municipal administration and policy formulation and the controversies over the *Projeto Recife*, the regularization of urban land and the urbanization of *favelas* was a major issue in the urban policies and conflict in Recife. It has been noted how the treatment of this problem changed at the end of the 1970s, when in the context of the *abertura*, and in relation to new federal policies on urban zoning, a new policy emerged aimed at urbanizing rather than removing the *favelas*. As an outcome of these policies and in connection with the *Projeto Recife*, a municipal law on the use and occupation of urban land (Lei no. 14.511) had been adopted in 1983, defining 27 *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (ZEIS). This choice of 27 areas out of a total of 72 officially acknowledged "subnormal settlements" was criticized by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* (see 6.3.1.). It suspected that the concern with these Special Zones of Social Interest was a covert attempt to remove the poor population from the more valorized areas of the city.

This suspicion motivated the formulation of a proposal for legislation, complementary to the 1983 law, on the initiative of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* in collaboration with "the popular movement": the *Plano de Regularização das Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* (PREZEIS). One aim of this proposal was to define norms for the urbanization and regularization of the ZEIS. Such norms had not been included in the 1983 law, which therefore provided no real guarantees for the population of the areas involved:

The law defines those *Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social* -ZEIS- but does not regulate them, so in practice they can not be guaran-

teed as preservation zones. This constitutes a legal gap which should be filled in (Comissão Justiça e Paz, August 24, 1988).

Another aim was to secure the participation of the population concerned throughout the process of tenure regularization and urbanization. The "pilot experience" of Brasília Teimosa, which had formulated its own urbanization plan and accompanied the execution, served as a source of inspiration.

Towards the end of 1984, an initial meeting was called by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* to discuss the implications of the legal gap with representatives of the "popular movement." It was decided that the Commission should draw up a proposal for legislation to be discussed with the popular movement. A draft was submitted in July 1985. In an introductory note, the drafters indicated what they viewed as the two main reasons for the existence of *favelas*, namely the expulsion of people from the countryside (*a falta de fixação do homem no campo*) and the cost of living. This resulted in an increase in the number of *favelas* as well as in policies to remove them from the increasingly valorized areas. Recently, the drafters pointed out, the administration had adopted a policy of legalizing *favelas* through urbanization projects and Brasília Teimosa, Coque and Coelhos were cited as examples. In themselves, however, these projects did not generate a new distribution of property in the neighborhoods. Although houses were expropriated and sold to renters in the process of urbanization, the situation would soon revert to the prior state of affairs:

In view of all this, we propose that the popular movement of Recife formulate (*que crie*) its proposal so as to sustain and guarantee the dwelling of the people (*a moradia do povo*) in those localities where the *favelas* are situated. A law is needed to prevent the plots which are being legalized in the *favelas* from being bought up, little by little, by real estate companies and large landowners (*as imobiliárias e grandes proprietários*) (Proposta a Todas as Entidades de Bairros, July 16, 1985).

Thus the draft was presented as a weapon in the struggle against *expulsão branca* through speculation.

7.7.1. The spirit of the law

The proposed legislation was based on an interpretation of the doctrine of social property in the light of Liberation Theology and took the "social function" of property as a guideline for the urbanization and legalization programs for the ZEIS. This point was further specified in the prioritization of the right to shelter (*moradia*) over ownership rights and the condemnation of speculation and *expulsão branca*.

The draft law consisted of nine chapters and had 37 articles. The first chapter defined the aim of the law as improving the quality of life in ZEIS areas,

their legal regularization and their integration into the urban structure. Furthermore, it stipulated that areas not yet considered ZEIS could demand designation as such through the *entidade* representing the residents. The second chapter defined the procedures for financing the *Plano de Regularização das Zonas Especiais de Interesse Social*. A specified percentage of municipal tax receipts should go into a "special fund" for the Plan. In the third chapter, a standard plot (*lote padrão*) of 150 m² was defined and a maximum size of plots was defined as being twice the standard plot. Chapters 4 and 5 dealt with the procedures for the division and recomposition of plots and the parcelating of the ZEIS areas in view of urbanization. Chapter 6 stipulated that only recognizedly poor people could receive a plot and that a second plot could be possessed for professional activities. Furthermore, tracts could be reserved for economic activities which should preferably be of an associative form, and for healthcare, educational, cultural, sports and leisure facilities. Chapters 7 and 8 listed the legal mechanisms to be used in regularizing the areas and the nature of the titles to be distributed. Here the legal mechanism of the *concessão do direito real de uso* (concession of the right to real use) was introduced and it was stipulated that any transfer of plots was liable to the approval of the public authorities and of the representative *entidade* of the inhabitants of the ZEIS. By using the legal mechanism of the *concessão do direito real de uso*, the law sought to substantiate the priority of the right to *moradia* over ownership rights. The final chapter defined the formation of a *Comissão de Urbanização e Legalização* or COMUL (Urbanization and Legalization Commission) in each area to intervene in and to monitor the execution of the urbanization and regularization project for the area. These COMULs were to consist of representatives of the municipality, of the local organization and of *entidades* of civil society. A sub-commission of inquiry (*sindicância*) was also to be created and the local representatives in this commission were to be remunerated by the municipality.

The fact that the *concessão do direito real de uso* was included was one of the outstanding features of the proposal.⁶² Particularly in progressive sectors of the Church, the *concessão do direito real de uso* was viewed as a weapon in the struggle against capitalism and for a more egalitarian and fraternal society (see Appendix) and the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados* was strongly committed to the idea. At the time it was one of the important issues in the struggles of the movement, notably in São Paulo.

The legal mechanism of *concessão do direito real de uso* itself was created in 1967 by federal legislation without the intention to use it in the regularization of

⁶² The draft law provided four legal mechanisms to be used in the regularization of areas, namely purchase and sale, expropriation, the *concessão do direito real de uso* and *usucapião* (the right to permanence and property rights after a period of steady and peaceful occupation of a plot. For urban land the period was set at five years in the 1988 Constitution).

land use in *favelas* (Moura, 1990:115). It was a form of leasehold, which accorded the right of possession but no full ownership rights, and concessions of over five years could be liable to payment of an occupation fee. It could be used to cede public land to civilian organizations or enterprises for purposes determined by contract. In the early 1980s, progressive sectors of the Church and left-wing groups reinterpreted the *concessão do direito real de uso* as a means of regularizing land use in *favelas*. It was viewed as a mechanism through which "the most advanced sectors" of the popular movement could avoid the system of private property (Gohn, 1988:328). This form of leasehold implied a restriction on the working of market forces and an impediment to speculation, since it provided the leverage for monitoring transfers of *favela* plots by the dwellers' organizations.⁶³

Boran (1989:91), noting the influence of the "idealism of the helper group" in its adoption by the São Paulo MDF, referred to the *concessão do direito real de uso* as

a socialist, collective type of land ownership which did not allow for the sale of land *per se*, but did permit the sale of any structure built upon it. Landownership based on land purchase was rejected.

In São Paulo the *concessão do direito real de uso* became the stake in confrontations between PMDB Mayor Mário Covas and the Montoro state government on one side and the *Movimento de Defesa dos Favelados* (MDF) on the other (Brant, 1989:101).

The PMDB sponsored a project which, unlike the *concessão de direito real de uso*,

gave no legal stability to the *favelado*. Permanence on the land was subject to tolerance by the Mayor, and eviction could take place at any time. Covas' project also envisaged payment for the use of land and no right of inheritance to it (Boran, 1989:97)

Boran gave two reasons for the unwillingness of the Montoro administration to negotiate over "the question of free land for the *favelados*." The first was the very composition of the PMDB, with numerous rich property owners who insisted on land purchase: "Power struggles within the party were strong but the mainstream party members were firm capitalists" (Boran, 1989:98). Secondly, the PMDB did not want to concede to pressure from what it considered a PT-led movement. After 1985, with Jânio Quadros as Governor of São Paulo, negotiations with the MDF broke down altogether.⁶⁴ These are reasons for which the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the MDF in Recife viewed the *concessão do direito real de uso* as a highly

⁶³ Other more pragmatic advantages stressed by the idea's promoters were that the *concessão do direito real de uso* could be hereditary, that it involved less bureaucracy and that it could be granted free of charge, in contrast to the sale and purchase arrangements effectuated through the *Sistema Financeira de Habitação* involving the payment of installments for twenty or thirty years, the despised *carne da COHAB*.

⁶⁴ The *concessão do direito real de uso* was finally introduced in the municipality of São Paulo after the election of Luiza Erundina (PT) in 1988.

significant feature of the legislation drawn up with the participation of the "popular movement."

The initial meeting to discuss the proposal and further procedure took place in August 1985 at the *Instituto de Teologia do Recife* (ITER).⁶⁵ It was decided that discussions should take place at a local level as well as at general meetings attended by representatives of local neighborhood associations, representatives of the supra-local articulations and the *assessorias*. A quorum was set, stipulating that at least ten representatives of local associations should be present. At the next meeting on August 29, it was decided that discussions should be concluded by the 15th of December, when the legislation proposal was to be submitted for voting (*plebiscito*) at a meeting attended by residents of the ZEIS areas. To promote the discussion at a local level, the first 17 articles of the draft law were "simplified into popular language." Meanwhile, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* had found financing for the project through the *Coordenadoria Ecumênica de Serviços* (CESE), notably for paying the bus fares for participants from the ZEIS. At the third meeting, which started an hour and a half late, it was decided that bus fares would only be paid for people who arrived on time.

Nine further meetings took place between the end of September 1985 and April 1986, when preparations started to be made for the presentation of the proposal to Mayor Jarbas Vasconcelos on May 24, 1986. At most of the meetings, between ten and fifteen grassroot representatives were present, though on one occasion in March 1986 the quorum required to formally proceed with the discussion was not reached. Besides that, two *assessorias* were generally present as well as several representatives of sectoral or citywide articulations. Given its primary concerns and orientation, the MDF was most clearly interested. Thus only a small group of the approximately 150 neighborhood associations in the city at the time took part the discussions. Participation from the grassroots seems to have broadened somewhat from late November 1985 onward. Like the other candidates present at the election debate organized by *Interentidades*, the mayor-elect was committed to the PREZEIS project. A further consequence of this change in the political situation was that from January 1986 onward, URB technicians were also present at a number of meetings.

In the view of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, the discussion with the "popular movement" did not result in any substantial modifications of the original proposal. The Commission tended to point out the importance of several added stipulations, for instance on the election of the presidents of Urbanization and Legalization Commissions (COMULs), who according to the original version would have been

⁶⁵ The meeting was attended by representatives of Brasília Teimosa, Comissão de Lutas do Ibura, IAB, ARRUAR, Comissão Central dos Coelho, FEACA, CEAS, Centro Luiz Freire, GAJOP and Comissão Justiça e Paz.

municipal appointees. Other new stipulations were the ones requiring the establishment of professionalising courses in the area, and the modification protecting long-time dwellers of an area, who had in time grown relatively rich, from eviction. That might have been one of the implications of a rigorous interpretation of the article reserving the plots in the ZEIS for "recognizedly poor persons" (*pessoas reconhecidamente pobres*). An article was also added stipulating that the municipality had to comply with decisions of the Urbanization and Legalization Commissions (COMULs).

Some other changes should also be noted. The original version stipulated that a second plot could be held for professional activities on the condition that these activities were executed under the "regime of the family economy" (*regime de economia familiar*), a point stressed elsewhere in the original version by the prohibition to hire employees (*sendo vedada a contratação de empregados*). These streaks of Liberation Theology egalitarianism were modified, allowing for the existence of "micro-enterprises." An article on "not legally constituted families" underwent a singular change. According the original version, a plot could be reserved for the children of the couple (*para residência dos filhos do casal*). In the later version, the legalization of plots for not legally constituted families was made subject to the judgment of the Urbanization and Legalization Commissions. Probably as a result of remarks by the municipal Legal Department, however, this article was not included in the final version of the law.

On May 24 1986, the *Plano de Regularização das Zonas de Interesse Social* (PREZEIS) was presented to Mayor Jarbas Vasconcelos at a festive occasion attended by some 500 militants from various quarters of the city and animated by theater groups, a children's ballet, *repentistas* and other local folklore performances. The procedure itself reflected the singular conjuncture of democratic transition. The draft law was heralded as an instance of *iniciativa popular* (Comissão Justiça e Paz, August 24, 1988), a form of democracy that would eventually become legalized in the 1988 Constitution (Demo, 1989; Nunes & Vigevani, 1989). As this possibility for direct initiative did not yet exist in 1986, in Recife the PREZEIS law was submitted to the Mayor who in turn submitted it to the City Council. Its content and the dimension of "popular initiative" both contributed to making the PREZEIS widely regarded as a significant advance of the "popular movement."

7.7.2. From proposal to law

Before the draft law was submitted to the City Council, it was scrutinized by the Legal Department of the municipal executive, resulting in some modifications that were discussed with movement delegates and most of which were accepted. One change was that local organizations demanding that an area be turned into a ZEIS

should be legally recognized. As to the financing of the PREZEIS, it was argued that the proposal as it stood was unconstitutional. The original proposal was that a fund for the execution of the PREZEIS was to be created by earmarking certain municipal tax revenues.⁶⁶ This idea was rejected by the Legal Department, which argued that the Brazilian Constitution prohibited such earmarking. A new version stipulated that the municipal executive submit a proposal for the creation of a *Fundo Especial do PREZEIS* ninety days after the promulgation of the PREZEIS law itself. A third point, which was to later become important, was that the remuneration for local participants in the *sub-comissão de sindicância* was extended to the local commissions involved in monitoring the urbanization and regularization process (*Comissão de Urbanização e Legalização* or COMUL).

The group involved in the discussion with the Legal Department protested three specific modifications. In the original version, it was stated that demands for redimensioning plots in the area should be dealt with through the *decurso de prazo*⁶⁷ to make for the rapid treatment of the proposal by the bureaucratic machinery. Secondly, the municipal obligation to comply with the stipulations of the local commissions (COMULS) had been skipped. Thirdly, the stipulation that the municipality should take on every cost deriving from the application of the law was also suppressed.

In spite of the reservations on these points, the group involved in the PREZEIS project felt its "autonomy had been preserved" and the renegotiated proposal should be submitted for voting to the City Council (*Comissão Justiça e Paz*, August 24, 1988; Lostao, 1991:63).

Thus on November 6, 1986, in the presence of a score of representatives of the *favelas*, Mayor Jarbas Vasconcelos handed the draft law to the President of the City Council, stating that it should be treated under a *regime de urgência*. This implied that if deliberation and voting did not take place within 45 days, the project would be approved by the executive. The *Diário de Pernambuco* (November 7, 1986) commented that the project "deals a heavy blow to real estate speculation."

It was some time, however, before the City Council actually fulfilled its functions. Some of the City Councilors argued that it had taken the popular movement a year to elaborate the project and that the municipal Legal Department had been studying it for some six months. Under the pressure of these arguments, the Mayor quietly withdrew the *regime de urgência*. When this became known, the movement responded by demanding an audience, which took place on February 24,

⁶⁶ The IPTU revenues and some real estate taxes gathered in the ZEIS areas were to go into the fund as well as 10% of the IPTU and some other municipal taxes and 10% of the municipal quota of the Fundo de Participação dos Municípios.

⁶⁷ A rule whereby a plan was adopted as it stood, unless acted on within a fixed short period of time (*decurso de prazo*).

1987. On this occasion, the President of the City Council as well as some councilmen were present. It was proposed that rather than putting the *regime de urgência* into force again, the law should be rapidly voted on so as to have it approved by the 450th anniversary of the city. Everyone agreed that this would be a nice gesture, and the voting was set for the 11th of March. Meanwhile one of the councilmen, well-versed in legal matters, discussed some of his objections with the delegates from the PREZEIS group. This resulted in some modifications, one being that room was created for more than one *entidade* to represent the local population in the legalization and urbanization commissions (COMULs), and the other referring to the mode of approval regarding the internal rules of the COMULs.

To the surprise of the initiative group, which had expected the capitalists and their representatives to put up more resistance, the City Council approved the law without further ado. It was sanctioned by the Mayor on March 30 and published in the *Diário Oficial* the next day. On April 9 a special session of the City Council was held at the Town Hall, where the Mayor presented the new law to the population.

Although the presence of 500 movement militants at the festive handing of the draft law to the Mayor on May 24 1986 had been somewhat below the expectations, this time some 2,500 people⁶⁸ showed up, which exceeded the expectations (Lostao, 1991:66). In the FEACA *Jornal de Casa Amarela* (Ano II, no. 12) the comment ran:

As someone said, this law is the best present the City could receive for its 450th anniversary. It is the gift from the organized people, the simple people who believe in themselves and persist in the struggle in defense of their rights. The people show through this organization their understanding of political mechanisms and how they seek to guarantee their political place within the civil community. It shows that they have ceased to be a mass which can be taken one way or another, a mass which does allow itself to be governed as if it has no opinion or a project of itself. It thus shows that the people are conscious and capable of finding ways to position themselves politically.

Now the time had come to demand the actual implementation of the law, the comment stated.

⁶⁸ Another document (Texto de Lei do PREZEIS, n.d.) even refers to 4,000 persons.

7.7.3. The operationalization of the PREZEIS

The final sections of the new law referred to its operationalization. They entailed the creation of a special fund, the *Fundo Especial do PREZEIS*, to finance the execution of the law and referred to the procedural regulation of the law. Though it was specified that the municipal executive should work out these points within 90 days after the promulgation of the PREZEIS law, only the regulation took place within that time span.

Procedure was laid down in Municipal Decree No. 13.925 of June 30, 1987, elaborated by the municipal Legal Department and discussed with the PREZEIS initiative group (Lostao, 1991:67). The decree stated that the PREZEIS law applied to all 27 existing ZEIS, whether an urbanization plan existed or not, as well as to any ZEIS to be created. Demands for the conversion of zones into ZEIS were to be addressed to the *Diretoria de Controle Urbanístico* (DICON) of the URB and should contain the credentials of the demanding *entidade*. Such demands could contain a request for immediate "freezing" of the area, pending the final decision on conversion into ZEIS by the City Council. "Freezing" implied the suspension of all licenses for construction, demolition and changes of landownership.

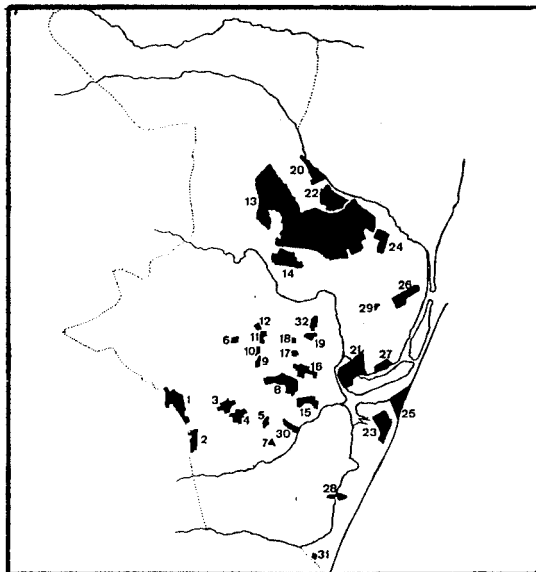
The DICON would then draw up a topographical and socio-economic description of the area, analyze the convenience of "freezing" and formulate an opinion on the merits of the demand for conversion into ZEIS. In the event of a favorable opinion, the recognition of the area as ZEIS would be proposed to the mayor, who would then submit the proposal to the City Council. In the event of a negative opinion, the area could appeal to the president of the URB. The procedure was to be concluded within 180 days.

Once an area was recognized as ZEIS a *Comissão de Urbanização e Legalização* (COMUL)⁶⁹ could be appointed to supervise the elaboration of concrete plans for the area. These steps, it should be noted, did not follow automatically but required initiatives on the part of the neighborhood association. The plans had to contain a register (*cadastro*) of the inhabitants, proposals as to zoning, parcelation, infra-structure, housing and a proposal on the form of legalization.

The period from mid-1987 to the end of the Vasconcelos administration in December 1988 witnessed a rapid increase in the number of ZEIS. By December 1988, sixteen demands had been filed and nine of them had actually been honored,

⁶⁹ These commissions included one representative of the municipal Legal Department, one of the URB, one of the public agency involved in the execution of the urbanization and legalization project, one of the Pernambucan Section of the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB/PE), one of an *assessoria* chosen by the community involved and two of the local community.

including the one for the Ibura/Jordão area with an estimated population of 15,000⁷⁰ In four cases, negotiations with the URB were ongoing. For the area residents the designation as ZEIS was primarily a guarantee against the threat of eviction and the URB technicians generally supported their claim, since they wanted to increase the number of ZEIS and thus make the PREZEIS scheme irreversible.



Special Zones of Social Interest (ZEIS) (November 1988)

1. Cavaleiro	17. Prado/Novo Prado
2. Tejipló/Pacheco	18. Prado
3. Areias	19. Prado/Madalena
4. Barro	20. Dois Unidos
5. Estância/Capuá	21. Bairro do Coque
6. Engenho do Meio/Vila Redenção	22. Linha do Tiro
7. Areias/Caçote	23. Encanta Moça
8. Jiquia/Mangueira	24. Fundão de Fora
9. San Martin/Vietnam	25. Brasília Teimosa
10. Torrões	26. Ilha do Joaneiro
11. Torrões	27. Bairro dos Coelhos
12. Engenho do Meio/Cuba	28. Entra Apulso
13. Casa Amarela	29. João de Barros
14. Alto do Manú/Alto Santa Isabel	30. Rua do Rio
15. Afogados/Vila São Miguel	31. Borborema
16. Jiquiá/Remédios	32. Sítio do Cardoso

⁷⁰ By December 1990, two more ZEIS were added to the list, reflecting the slowing down of the creation of new ZEIS after 1988 under the second administration of Joaquim Francisco.

City Council approval for new ZEIS was a surprisingly smooth affair, a point made by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, the URB technicians and city councilmen alike. None of the cases submitted, including the *favela* Entra a Pulso next to the prestigious Shopping Centre, met with significant resistance. The conversion of Entra a Pulso into the first ZEIS created under the new law was a festive occasion illustrating the significance attributed to the PREZEIS. The Mayor, five municipal secretaries, the presidents of the URB and the CTU, the president of the City Council and two councilmen, the state Secretary of Housing -former president of the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* Pedro Eurico-, the president of the State Electricity Company (Chesf) and the president of the FEMEB all attended the event (Diário de Pernambuco, July 10, 1988).

Although the URB generally supported the PREZEIS scheme, a conflict over the interpretation of the PREZEIS law arose in September 1988, when the URB made a negative recommendation on a collective request by 18 *favelas* in Imbiribeira for transformation into ZEIS. For the supporters of the PREZEIS scheme, the issue was of special interest since people from these areas, which included the *favela* Coronel Fabriciano (see 6.5.4.), had been actively involved in the formulation of the law. The collective request involved 18 *favelas*, ranging in size from 15 to some 200 dwellings. In response to this request, the URB specified its views on what a Special Zone of Social Interest (ZEIS) might be, arguing that in order to be eligible for transformation into a ZEIS, an area had to have a certain autonomy, based on the existence of certain basic services required for the survival of the community and some form of political organization representing the inhabitants.⁷¹

As many settlements were rather small and some of them were located in industrial zones, green zones, in roadbeds or along the railway line to the south, all sites considered unhealthy or unfit for the construction of housing, the URB only considered two areas eligible for transformation into ZEIS. It was argued that transformation into ZEIS was not the only way to solve the problems of legalization and improve conditions in the areas, and the URB submitted a proposal for a task group consisting of representatives of the URB, the communities involved and the *assessorias*.

In response the *assessorias*, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* and the recently created *Assessoria de Urbanização Popular* (ARRUAR) argued that the criterion

⁷¹ It further specified three criteria for future consolidation:

1. Political - the dimension of the settlement and consequently its real significance and role (*expressão*) within the zone where it is located.
2. Technical - the necessity of maintaining the urbanistic parameters for land use, taking environmental factors into consideration.
3. Legal - assessment of the occupation of roads and squares which may be detrimental to the equilibrium of the community and the city.

on the size of a settlement to be transformed into a ZEIS should be set at 10 dwellings.⁷² It was conceded that the settlement along the railway track could not be consolidated, but Coronel Fabriciano should be transformed into a ZEIS without delay, since an urbanization plan had already been drawn up for the area in 1986 after the conflict and the commitment of the *Frente* administration to find a solution. The other areas should be given careful consideration to find a dignified solution for the plight of the inhabitants.

In the course of several large meetings at the URB marked by an atmosphere of protest against the negative advice, it was decided to proceed with the negotiations in a commission formed by representatives of the inhabitants, the URB and the *assessorias*. Transformation into ZEIS was now recommended for two areas and Coronel Fabriciano effectively became a ZEIS soon afterward. For the remaining 16 areas, alternative solutions were to be sought, ranging from relocation within the Imbiribeira region to consolidation. It was the end of the administrative term, however. By the end of October, representatives of the local communities -the *Comissão da Terra da Imbiribeira*- and the URB reached a verbal agreement with one of the private owners in the area, but in December when it came to actually signing a letter of intent, the real estate company backed down on the deal, which would grant it a building permit in a nearby area, and said it was working on a counterproposal, expecting to get a better deal from the new Joaquim Francisco administration.

To resume, while the collective request of the 18 *favelas* in Imbiribeira was the major issue in the implementation of the PREZEIS scheme during the *Frente* administration, to the surprise of the promoters of the PREZEIS, the designation of new ZEIS areas had generally been a smooth affair. By December 1990 there were 38 ZEIS, including the two created after 1988. Together they covered a total of 1,819 ha or 8.3% of the municipality. For residents of these areas, this at least provided a guarantee against eviction and their organization could now devote greater attention to demanding urbanization measures.

Meanwhile, the number of areas with a fully formalized COMUL increased from four in July 1987 to seven in December 1988, and eight were in the process of formation. The four initial COMULS had resulted from the formalization of the commissions already supervising projects, such as the commission in Brasília Teimosa, which had been created in 1980 and had served as a model for other commissions, like the ones in Coelhos, Coque and Torrões. These commissions were formalized by the PREZEIS law, their competencies were enlarged and the creation of similar commissions in other areas became a rule. Most of the new commissions

⁷² Invoking legislation setting this limit as a criterion for expropriation of areas in view of "social interest."

were established in the newly created ZEIS, as a logical follow-up on their request for designation as ZEIS.

Each of the COMULs that gradually started to function held a weekly meeting in the URB, and the agenda for these meetings depended on how long the ZEIS in question had been in existence. The newer COMULs would mostly be involved with finding their own mode of functioning and discussing the PREZEIS law and how it was to be applied in their ZEIS, i.e. drawing up plans for regularization of landholding and for urbanization. Within this group, a distinction can be drawn between the COMULs created in existing ZEIS as an outcome of the promulgation of the PREZEIS law and those in the newly created ZEIS. In the former case, the incorporation into the PREZEIS scheme often resulted from the initiative of URB technicians or the *assessorias*, and these groups were usually less aware of the functioning of the PREZEIS. In these cases the commitment to the *concessão do direito real de uso* as a form of legalization of landholding seemed to be more controversial and often there was pressure for full property rights without restrictions. In the second case, the creation of a COMUL was often the outcome of a conflict over the permanence of a *favela* (e.g. Coronel Fabriciano, Entra a Pulso) and the organization involved had actively applied for incorporation into the PREZEIS. These groups had a greater familiarity with the functioning of the PREZEIS, but their primary objective was to guarantee permanence in the area, and the concern with urbanization usually came in the second place. For these groups that entered the PREZEIS scheme after 1985 as a consequence of a direct conflict, the eventual mode of regularization was secondary to the guarantee of permanence.⁷³ The groups involved in COMULs created through the formalization of the older Special Judgment Commissions (e.g. Brasília Teimosa, Coque, Coelhos) were more clearly aware of the broader intentions of the PREZEIS scheme. They went on supervising projects, pressuring for the allocation of resources and making efforts to resolve problems arising in the course of the execution (cf. Lostao, 1991).

⁷³ The concessão do direito real de uso usually was only understood by a few leaders, who explained it to the population at large in rather generic terms as a mode of "legalization of the land." Even among leaders of an association involved in negotiations about legalization through the concessão do direito real de uso, I found that the notions about the difference with full property rights were confused, to say the least. Transfers of plots in favelas usually eluded observation as long as they occurred between persons of a similar income level. The PREZEIS stipulations, however, were an effective check on large-scale buying of houses with the intention of claiming ownership of large tracts.

7.7.4. The Permanent PREZEIS Forum

Running into each other in the corridors of the URB, the neighborhood representatives in the COMULs eventually discussed their common problems concerning the interpretation and implementation of the law. In order to provide a platform for such discussions and to consolidate the PREZEIS, the *assessorias* and URB technicians proposed the founding of a *Fórum Permanente do PREZEIS*, which actually started to meet by August 1988.

Besides discussing the legislation, exchanging experiences and discussing current issues, from the very beginning the formalization and officialization of the Forum figured high on the agenda. URB technicians involved with the PREZEIS were interested in the issue, since it would strengthen their position within the bureaucratic machinery. This concern, which was also evident in the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, was clearly expressed by the president of the URB at a meeting of the Forum in early October. The necessity to officialize the Forum was partly based, he argued, on the fact that not everyone working in the URB was equally committed to the PREZEIS, which he regarded as one of the major achievements of the current administration.

This last remark reflected the uncertainty about the outcomes of the municipal elections scheduled for November 15. The election of Joaquim Francisco actually served to enhance the interest in the rapid institutionalization of the Forum on the part of everyone involved. The rejection on the part of the popular movement representatives of participation in "institutional spaces" lost its edge after the elections, as it became clear that there would be little room for any participation at all under the new Joaquim Francisco administration. Moreover, the strategy as such had increasingly come under discussion, expressing the uneasiness of segments of the movement with the lack of achievements under the *Frente* administration.⁷⁴ By mid December the Forum was effectively formalized by decree, which designated the Forum as "consultative" and broadly stipulated its functions, including participation in the formulation of a development plan for the municipality as prescribed by the new 1988 Constitution.⁷⁵ This provided the

⁷⁴ The discussion had been smoldering most of the time, but attempts on the part of the *assessorias* to make it more productive had failed. After the elections, the concern with at least consolidating the PREZEIS was clearly expressed by the FEMEB Directory (Diário de Pernambuco, December 15, 1988). In the course of 1988, the dearth of achievements, resulting from "the failure to distinguish between the state and those in government at a given moment" had been discussed on various occasions (see 7.5.2.).

⁷⁵ The Forum officially consists of two representatives of the URB, one of the municipal Legal Department, one of the Secretary of Social Action, one of the COHAB-PE, two for each ZEIS, three of the general articulations of the popular movement, two of professional associations (*entidades*) involved with the urban question and three of the *assessorias*.

legal basis for the continued existence of the *Fórum Permanente do PREZEIS* after the change in the municipal administration in January 1989.

Two issues played an important role in the Forum discussions during the last months of 1988. One was related to the allowance, or *jeton*, paid to the participants in the COMULS. It had originally been a small sum principally designed to cover the expense with attending the meetings.⁷⁶ That had changed substantially, however, with the introduction of new salary scales for civil servants in March 1988. The *jeton* had been indexed to the bonus system, which had been abolished with the introduction of the new scales. Now the *jeton* became indexed to the salary scale itself, resulting in a substantial increase of from Cz\$ 4,894 (about US\$ 20.00) in June 1987 to Cz\$ 79,668 (about US\$ 80.00) in November 1988. At the PREZEIS Forum officials of the departing administration tried to persuade local representatives in the COMULS to give up this unexpected benefit. The latter, however, argued that they worked hard for it, that the money would go to their association and that, in any case, the problem should be discussed at the local level. So the issue was postponed.

Payment of the allowance certainly had to do with the continuing functioning of the COMULS under the subsequent Joaquim Francisco administration. The new officials were hardly committed to the PREZEIS scheme and its prioritization of the *favelas* and argued that the local representatives were only after their allowance. This is nonetheless only part of the truth. The persistence of the PREZEIS-scheme was also due to the fact that it was regarded as a "major popular conquest." The locals continued to pressure for implementation of urbanization and legalization projects and at least some of them continued to frequent the PREZEIS Forum, which no allowance was being paid for and which continued by right to meet at the URB-premises. Gradually the PREZEIS Forum seems to have become capable of reaffirming itself as a serious interlocutor and as a platform for defending the PREZEIS, though with ups and downs and remaining in a precarious position.

The second issue discussed at the Forum in the first months of its existence was the Special PREZEIS Fund. The original proposal to reserve a certain percentage of municipal tax receipts had been rejected by the municipal Legal Department, and although the law adopted in 1987 foresaw legislation on some kind of PREZEIS Fund, nothing had happened. The opportunity to turn it into an issue for the Budgeting Council had not been utilized, so it was not until the very end of the administrative period that a last ditch attempt was made to do something. Meanwhile, the works executed by the municipality in PREZEIS areas were financed in a variety of ways. The aim of a PREZEIS fund was to make such financial flows more transparent, to secure a clearly defined share of the municipal budget for the

⁷⁶ No allowance was paid for attending the Forum meetings.

urbanization and legalization of *favelas* and to make it possible to devise a comprehensive plan of interventions in ZEIS areas to be discussed and monitored by the Forum.

After lengthy discussions with the Joaquim Francisco administration, a law came into force in July 1990 stipulating that the PREZEIS should be mentioned as an item on the URB budget but without specifying any financial commitments, and that the PREZEIS Forum could monitor the use of those funds. This hardly can be regarded as a "major conquest," but it did indicate that the PREZEIS scheme could not be wholly ignored. Similarly, the incorporation of the PREZEIS into the *Lei Orgânica do Município* of 1990 did not seem to have been much to the taste of the Joaquim Francisco administration.

The clearest effect of the PREZEIS law was the increase in the number of ZEIS and the greater security of permanence, which was a prime motive behind the new applications for designation as ZEIS. The formal PREZEIS structure with its COMULs only started to function in the course of 1988, supervising projects in the various areas, while the Permanent Forum was created at a still later date. These achievements were the result of an alliance between URB technicians, the *assessorias* and representatives of local neighborhood associations. The continuing existence of this PREZEIS structure and particularly of the Forum after 1988, was based on the support of the *assessorias* and a number of neighborhood associations committed to maintaining this "major popular conquest" under adverse circumstances. The changing circumstances were heralded by the spectacular conflict that marked the end of the period under discussion in this chapter.

7.7.5. Brasília Teimosa again

The issue of landholding regularization in Brasília Teimosa reemerged in December 1988 in a clash that revealed the attitude of the incoming Joaquim Francisco administration to the participatory PREZEIS scheme and the Brasília Teimosa's COMUL. After 1979 the urbanization plan of the *Projeto Teimosinho* had been largely executed by the Krause administration as a "pilot project." The promised legalization of landholding within five years after the transfer of the area from federal to municipal jurisdiction had been another matter, however. The land titles distributed until 1984 were devoid of any legal value (see 5.5.2; 6.5.1.).

During the Jarbas Vasconcelos administration, Brasília Teimosa's Legalization Commission, installed by Gustavo Krause in 1980 (see 6.5.1.), became a COMUL and a new plan for legalization and titling was negotiated. The municipality argued that the cost of public registration, which it would have to shoulder, was a major obstacle to titling. To resolve the problem, a deal was worked out between the municipality and the *Conselho de Moradores* through the COMUL of the area.

It involved the transfer of the area to state jurisdiction. Through the COHAB the state could issue valid titles free of charge.⁷⁷ The scheme was endorsed by the federal state in August 1988 and submitted to the City Council for ratification at the end of November, shortly before the Council recess.

For the ratification on December 7 the *Conselho de Moradores* hired a bus to transport inhabitants to the Town Hall. Events took an unexpected turn, however. Before arriving at the headquarters of the *Conselho de Moradores*, the bus was hijacked by the competing *Associação de Moradores*, which had been set up with support of Gustavo Krause in the early 1980s around a local *mãe-de-santo*. Underlying the legal arguments presented by this group, there was the concern regarding the allotment of only one plot per household. It would leave "people who subsist on the renting out of houses without income." Thus two competing groups appeared on the Town Hall galleries, one demanding approval for the transfer and the other calling for postponement of the decision. The latter had spread the rumor that the transfer would result in a COHAB installment scheme requiring the dwellers to pay installments for 25 or 30 years. The City Council session ended in a brawl between one of the Councilmen and supporters of the *Conselho de Moradores*. As it was the last session of the City Council before going into recess until March 1989, it looked as if the project would not be voted on till then.

On December 11 the *Conselho de Moradores* organized a meeting to once again discuss the procedure for legalization through the COHAB. Pedro Eurico, now as State Secretary of Housing, confirmed that nobody would have to pay anything. It looked as if the Association group would now also support the proposal. The *Conselho* started to pressure the Mayor into convoking an extraordinary session of the City Council. Convocation by the Mayor would cost a lot, however, since it would involve payment of the presence fee (*jeton*) for an extraordinary session, so it was agreed that the *Conselho* would pressure the City Council to convoke itself. After some days of lobbying in the corridors of the Town Hall, the *Conselho* effectively managed to collect 22 signatures of Council members, sufficient for the Council's president to call an extraordinary meeting on December 27. Though 22 Councilors had signed in favor of the extraordinary meeting, only 15 showed up. In spite of two calls due to a lack of quorum no voting occurred on either occasion. Another attempt on December 29, to get the project voted failed as well, though the number of Councilors present had risen to 20, just two below the required number.

⁷⁷ The Arraes government, with ex-Comissão Justiça e Paz President Pedro Eurico as Secretary of Housing, had started an active titling program attuned to the PREZEIS stipulations, i.e. using the concessão do direito real de uso for the legalization of plots on public lands. It included the Terras de Ninguém and parts of Ibura. By 1990 it claimed that 30,597 "titulations had been effectuated" and that 247 ha in Recife had been acquired for legalization (SEHDUR, 1990).

A new City Council, reflecting the outcome of the November 15 elections, was installed in the next few days. The *Conselho de Moradores* managed to gather 22 signatures from the members of the new City Council at its installation ceremony. Apart from one dissident, who declared his mandate was "from the people and not from the party," the PFL faction refused to sign. Newly installed Mayor Joaquim Francisco, who had not exhibited any particular interest in the issue before, now also entered the fray to argue that the transfer to the state level COHAB was against the spirit of the new Constitution and the enhanced role of the municipalities it entailed. After the failure of the argument that COHAB titles implied the payment of installments, the ill-famed *carne*, the opposition to the transfer, found a new argument. According to the new Mayor the URB should now be turned into an agency of the *Sistema Financeira da Habitação*, similar to the COHAB, with responsibility for the distribution of legally valid titles. He also affirmed that a deal had been struck with the Registry Offices to lower the cost of registration. History repeated itself as far as the City Council was concerned. PTB, PDC and PDT Councilors who had supported the call for an extraordinary meeting did not show up on January 10 and the number of members present once again failed to exceed 20.

In the course of the following week, Joaquim Francisco showed up in Brasília Teimosa to distribute 23 land titles to followers selected by the phantasmagoric *Associação de Moradores* and more were promised. Thus it was not only the generally acknowledged *Conselho* and the local PREZEIS Commission (COMUL) that were bypassed. Irritated by this turn of events, "civil society" condemned the attitude in a manifesto signed by nineteen organizations.⁷⁸ On January 19, the City Council was in its ninth extraordinary self-convoked session. On this occasion, the number of councilors present had dropped to 19, since one wavering PDT councilman feigned illness. In the end, the transfer of the Brasília Teimosa area passed the City Council at its 12th extraordinary session through the *decorso de prazo* after 45 days of self-convocation. But the decision still had to be ratified by the Mayor and effectuated. Until this day, Brasília Teimosa is still without titles.

7.8. Concluding remarks

In this chapter I examined the exercises in institutional innovation which took place in Recife from 1985 to 1988. These experiments should be viewed against the background of the debate on social movements and democratization in Brazil. The

⁷⁸ The OAB, CREA, CUT, CGT, IAB, FEMEB, MDF, FEACA, ACO, the Permanent PREZEIS Forum, *Tortura Nunca Mais*, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, CEAS, FASE, Centro Luís Freire, GAJOP, ARRUAR, Centro Josué de Castro and ETAPAS.

debate's shift in focus, from the opposition between "social movement" and "the state" to the relation between the two, has reflected the practical and theoretical issues emerging from the democratization process, i.e. the pursuit of alternatives to the liberal representative model and obsolete marxist-leninist orthodoxy. How could the "social movements" be incorporated into a democratic project for social change?⁷⁹ I examined the debate in Recife over these issues during the 1985 electoral campaign and the subsequent efforts to implement such policies.

The experiments in Recife were embedded in and shaped by a particular constellation of forces at the federal, state and municipal level in the course of the Brazilian "democratic transition." The 1985 municipal elections and the concomitant debate on municipal urban policies, took place at a low popularity moment for the new civilian federal government and the political coalition which sustained it, the *Aliança Democrática*. The outcome of the elections reflected this situation, as did the rejection of the continuism represented by the local *Aliança Democrática* candidate. The resurrection of the *Frente do Recife* represented a local breach in the hegemonization of the Brazilian "transition" and thus provided leeway for experimentation in regime change beyond a simple restoration of electoral politics at the municipal level.

The result of the turmoil in the local party system, with splits in the PMDB and the PT and tensions in the PCB and PDT, was that "social movements" came to play an significant role in the dynamics of the *Frente*. Not only did large sectors of the neighborhood movement and other popular movements identify it as a point of reference and actively participate in the campaign. They also played a significant role in the discussion of future policies and "ways of doing politics" during the campaign and in selecting a new administrative team. This brought about a change in the relation to the municipal administration, which now became a "potential ally."

Until 1985, expressive and instrumental action had virtually coincided in the sense that neighborhood associations were accustomed to a confrontational practice to force responses from the administration and no other response was expected from a bionic authoritarian administration than unilateral measures. The origins of such measures were then a matter of dispute, in the sense that the administration made them appear as outcomes of its paternalist benevolence, while local movements claimed them as the outcome of the action of "the organized

⁷⁹ In an essay on "democratic and popular" municipal administrations Daniel (1990) argues that they should "point to a new model of society and outline a strategy of transformation, which simultaneously negates the capitalist option -the Brazilian *status quo*, neoliberalism or social democracy- and statism or "real socialism" while pointing the way to a radically democratic society where democracy is a strategic value, a means as well as a goal to be pursued." His basic criteria for assessing this type of administration are: 1. that investment priorities are reoriented, and 2. popular participation rooted in a political culture based on "rights" and the "right to participation" in particular, instead of a populist or clientelist "trade of favors."

people" and demanded recognition of their leaders and real participation. The situation fit the manichean opposition between movement and state that had become part of the imagery of the "urban social movement." The change of political regime at the municipal level and the dimension of movementist politics which it assumed in Recife resulted in a new situation and provided the opportunity for experiments in institutional innovation.

In the discussion about the decentralization and democratization of the municipal administration, little use was made of this opportunity. In a curious moment of resolution, the main articulation of the neighborhood movement, the *Assembléia de Bairros/FEMEB*, vindicated its autonomy when it came to actually negotiating the development of concrete policies and announced that it would soon forward proposals. Subsequently, however, it entered into a state of acute paralysis and relinquished all initiative in this area. The notions of what a popular council or popular councils might be like were highly confused and remained so in spite of internal discussions with the support of the *assessorias*. The groups that considered the *Nova República* illegitimate and were consequently opposed to anyone who could be suspected of collaboration with it, tended toward a rather maximalist view of creating a municipal-level Popular Council with large -but never defined-deliberative competencies, implying that it would virtually take over the role of the City Council. The distinction initially drawn between "spaces of the movement" and "institutional spaces" gradually was obfuscated in an increasingly stubborn rhetoric of autonomism and the suggestion that the *Assembléia de Bairros* or the Council of Representatives of the FEMEB should become recognized as *the* Popular Council. Thus the distinction gave way to accusations of parallelism against the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*, which started from the principle of respecting the heterogeneity and pluralism of neighborhood associativism in Recife. The autonomist rhetoric was compounded by the exacerbation of the opposition between "combativeness" and "representativeness" and the attempt at redimensioning the notions of "authenticity" and "autonomy" in terms of opposition to the *Nova República* and its suspected accomplices. The only imaginable politics in this perspective were those of confrontation and "getting the people out into the street."

Commenting on these developments, Pantoja (1990:2) argued that for the neighborhood movement and the articulations with the aim of giving it the dimension of a social and political movement, it was essential to distinguish between the state and the people who temporarily are in government. The leadership of the articulations, however, failed to make the distinction, bringing about the paradoxical situation that though the movement had long struggled for the recognition of its leaders and for a space for real popular participation in public administration, it turned to accusing an administration that took these points seriously of "attempting to coopt the movement." This confusion, Pantoja notes, "was more clearly present among the leaders of the movement than among the

bases, properly speaking." The FEMEB leader who commented that the grassroots organizations had started to participate *a toque de caixa* in the participatory schemes of the *Frente* administration said the same thing in different words.

This brings me to the distantiation that gradually took place between the group of "movement" spokespersons that had emerged in the early 1980s to take charge of the movement's articulations, and the neighborhood associations at the grassroots. The latter clearly experienced the change in municipal administration. They were recognized as interlocutors, their demands were taken seriously, access to the bureaucracy -now partly occupied by *gente da gente*- was greatly facilitated. This was accompanied by a clear shift in municipal policies towards a deconcentration of investment and a predilection for small works. This created a new dynamic of negotiation and sometimes of the recognition of limitations to the municipality responsiveness, which the leaders of the articulations tended to regard as a new form of cooptation. This view kept them from accompanying the dynamic of alliance-making going on at the local level and making it productive. The confrontationist rhetoric had lost much of its credibility and by persisting in it, the movement articulations increasingly marginalized themselves. They perceived the period after 1985 as a "phase of demobilization of the movement." This view should be qualified, however, in that the number of local associations actually rapidly increased. The leaders of the articulations tended to alienate the local associations by frowning upon their lack of conscientization. The perception of demobilization thus partly reflects the "vanguardism" of the leaders and their failure to provide the local neighborhood associations with a viable perspective.

As a result of this constellation the process of institutional experimentation in Recife hardly acquired a dynamics of its own. Let me return to the question posed by Calderón and Dos Santos (1989:14), who argued that the interesting thing to know about processes of institutional innovation is whether they are the fruit of innovative orientations of collective action or mere institutional adaptations in the context of crisis and/or change of regime, needed by the political system to secure governability of the system. The answer is paradoxical. The process of institutional experimentation in Recife was the fruit of innovative orientations of collective action rather than simply an internally produced adaptation of the system. On the other hand, partly as a result of the lack of coherence and further ideas on the part of the spokespersons of the forces that had prompted the experiments did not result in institutionalization. Invoking "autonomy," they failed to substantiate a "long-standing demand of the movement." The popular-council experiment in Recife gradually petered out.

The relative consolidation of the PREZEIS scheme -the "greatest conquest of the popular movement" during the 1985-1988 period- resulted from a different dynamic. It was promoted by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, which sought in this way to generalize the topical struggles over urban land use and to carry them to a

political level by way of a "popular initiative" for municipal legislation. Its relative consolidation resulted from a series of negotiations and alliances among municipal technicians, the *Comissão Justiça e Paz*, local neighborhood associations and the MDF as the most interested sector of the "popular movement." This alliance resulted in the rapid increase in the number of ZEIS and the institutionalization of the *Fórum do PREZEIS* to represent the generalized interests of the PREZEIS areas. With the change of administration after the 1988 elections, the commitment of the municipal technicians disappeared and the PREZEIS scheme only survived precariously. Nevertheless, recognized ZEIS now cover some 8% of the municipality, Legalization and Urbanization Commissions (COMULS) function in a number of these ZEIS, and recently two new *assessorias*, emerging from the ecclesiastical purge as independent NGOs, made the PREZEIS into one of their primary concerns (cf. Ostendorf, 1990). In addition the PREZEIS has been recognized as an instrument of urban policies in the new Organic Law of the Municipality. Under an administration more favorable to the PREZEIS scheme, this might give rise to a new dynamic, turning the PREZEIS into a rallying point to press for the urbanization and legalization of *favelas* and for budgetary allocations.

CONCLUSION

In this study I traced the re-emergence of neighborhood associativism in Recife after 1964 and the forms it assumed in the course of time. Neighborhood associativism has been used as a broad term for the variety of territorially-based associative practices related to "urban contradictions." It is shaped "in and by" diverse discursive and organizational matrixes and involves a variety of actors. Forms of neighborhood associativism should be understood as social constructs in constant transformation and re-elaboration. The differential impact of the various actors involved, including the "adversary," should always be taken into account.

The notion of "urban social movements" was bracketed to highlight its role as a discursive matrix in the construction and signification of the forms of neighborhood associativism that emerged in the 1970s. The notion, one might say, emerged at the time as the symbol of an alliance, a common ground for various groups in search of political as well as professional alternatives. This involved local leaders, pastoral agents and sympathising "technicians" in a process of "community formation" which contributed to the signification, the shaping and the impact of the "new urban social movements."

The role of "external agents" in this context has been linked to the broader process of the emergence of the "new middle classes" and the rapid expansion of technical/scientific and bureaucratic professions. Usually this development is viewed as being parallel and separate from the emergence of the neighborhood associativism of the popular classes. Nevertheless the pervasive, active presence of the often somewhat obscure "external agent" suggests that the "interface" between the two processes and the ensuing dynamics in the context of political developments in Brazil does play an important role. The interaction with processes of professional redefinition, as in the case of the clergy, or the emergence of new professions, as in the case of the social science sector, provides a key to understanding the emergence and trajectory of the "new urban social movements" in Brazil.

Reviewing the discussion of "urban social movements" in Brazil, I traced the emergence of a "paradigm of the 1970s" and its subsequent fracturing as a result

of the confrontation with an evolving "reality" and a theoretical shift from a reified dualism to a processual approach. The evolving "reality" drew attention to the increasingly important processes of actual interaction between neighborhood associations and state agencies, first in relation to the "communitarian" and neo-populist policies of the authoritarian government in its aftermath, and then in relation to the practical issue of substantiating democracy, exploring its margins of variation and searching for modes of their enlargement (Barros, 1986:58). The concomitant shift in focus to the "institutional dimension" implies a departure from the usual theorizations which, for a variety of reasons¹, view "movement" and "institutional system" as each other's negation. The imagery of social transformation as a totalizing event taking place outside institutional arenas, which had been a cornerstone of the "paradigm of the 1970s," lost its credibility in theoretical as well as practical terms. It was in this context that the reified opposition between "social movement" and institutional system was redefined in terms of a relation between two poles. This opened the way for thinking about the democratization of this relation and required a far more differentiated analysis of "the state" itself. The development of the complex relation between the contemporary Brazilian local state, democratization and neighborhood associativism and the concomitant transformations of the "poles" involved, was examined in this study, taking the municipal level as a vantage point. Including the pre-1964 developments, this relation has been analyzed throughout four periods.

The spread of neighborhood associativism during the 1955-1964 period was linked to the emergence of the *Frente do Recife*. Neighborhood associativism was promoted by the post-1955 *Frente* administrations. The aim was to support the municipal executive in the face of the right-wing dominated legislature. The organizational matrix derived from this aim, and I noted how a master organization -the FABEP- was created in 1962 through articulations of *Frente*-related organizations such as the trade unions in response to the activities of the right-wing state government, which sought to extend its influence by promoting neighborhood associations partly financed through the Alliance for Progress. The FABEP-related associations were thus strongly embedded in the *Frente* organizational framework and, in addition to defending neighborhood interests, they were aimed at the divulgation of the radical *Frente* version of national developmentalism. The radical content of the *Frente* discourse and its modes of organization and mobilization distinguished it from mainstream populism. In the specific case of neighborhood associativism, the absence of spontaneity did not have its counterpart in a lack of authenticity, as C  zar (1985:179) put it. In this Recife associations contrasted with

¹ These range from the old opposition between "formal" and "real" democracy, reifying oppositions between State and Civil society (Touraine, 1973, 1978; Castells, 1983; cf. Cohen, 1982) and alienation theories in their secular (Evers, 1985) and Liberation Theologist's versions to the post-industrialist emphasis in post-materialism and post-politicism (Melucci, 1980; 1985; Touraine, 1973, 1978).

their counterpart in São Paulo, the *Sociedades de Amigos de Bairro* which were initially related to right-wing populism and, after 1964, tended to be coopted into clientelist schemes. The populist and clientelist features of the Paulista SABs turned them into a negative reference for the "new urban social movements" that emerged from the Ecclesial Base Communities by the mid-1970s. The relation between *Frente* administrations and neighborhood associations in Recife, by contrast, could later serve as a positive reference in the attempts at municipal democratization after 1985, which went under the slogan *É Povo de Novo*.

The installation of a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime in 1964 heralded a restructuring of the Brazilian economy. Urban policies came to play a central role in this process. After the 1964 *coup*, urban policies initially focussed on the housing question in an effort to gain legitimacy for the new regime. It was not long, however, before the efforts were geared to boosting the construction industry through the BNH financing schemes. Meanwhile the BNH dissociated itself from the low-income sectors. This development was accompanied by the ascent of a highly hierarchic planning bureaucracy at the federal, state and municipal level, with the metropolitan agencies somewhat suspended between the nominally autonomous state and municipal levels. Analysis of urban development in Recife demonstrated how the policies implemented through these agencies contributed to the spatial division of the city and the deepening of the "urban contradictions" thematized in neighborhood associativism in the city, namely the issues of urban land use and urbanization.

Neighborhood associativism in the municipality started to be rearticulated in the wake of the 1965 and 1966 floods, which were the occasion for launching initially assistentialist emergency programs. Subsequently the focus of *Operação Esperança* shifted to promoting dweller's councils in a restricted number of neighborhoods. This shift linked up with the pre-1964 discourse of developmentalism, human promotion and the "transformation of the mass into people," though it maintained a low profile by relating this developmentalism to self-help by the local community. Nevertheless, activities of this kind were deemed subversive, particularly as authoritarianism hardened and the relations between Church and state deteriorated. The local variety of the Ecclesial Base Communities was initially also framed by this inward-turned developmentalism.

By the mid-1970s, involvement in neighborhood associativism began to be signified in terms of "urban social movements." Rather than aiming at the multifaceted and somewhat vague "integral development" of the human being within the community, strategic aims related to "social transformation," such as the issue of urban landholding, began to inform the practice of the promoters of neighborhood associativism. This did not take place without any friction, as the conflicts accompanying the attempt at reorientation of *Operação Esperança* reveal. Nevertheless, the new signification of neighborhood associativism played an important role

orienting and motivating the people involved in promoting neighborhood associativism, notably the NGOs, as well as the local leaders and *animadores* they were most directly involved with.

The mobilizations of the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* and of Brasília Teimosa in the late 1970s can be regarded as the culmination of this formative phase of the "new urban social movements" in Recife. A comparison of these mobilizations and their modes of operation reveals some of the dynamics of this reorientation. The *Movimento Terras de Ninguém* was strongly linked to the Church, though it also relied on a group of older cadres, some of whom had already been involved in the struggles in Casa Amarela before 1964. Its discourse was strongly religious and its practice remained somewhat traditional where the role of oppositionist politicians as mediators was concerned. The dynamics of the Brasília Teimosa mobilization were different in that the role of the Church was not as prominent, though it was far from negligible, and the discourse was more secular. This mobilization relied on a group of younger leaders in alliance with committed technicians and the local parish, while politicians played only a marginal role. In Brasília Teimosa the reorientation was marked by the election of a new directory for the Dweller's Council in 1977. In Casa Amarela a new articulation eventually emerged alongside the *Movimento Terras de Ninguém*, namely the FEACA.

This group of new leaders emerged through pastoral activity networks and the secularizing *assessorias*, and eventually became the spokespersons of the "authentic neighborhood movement." The cadres for supra-local articulations, such as the *Assembléia de Bairros/FEMEB*, came from their ranks. The dynamics of this process was gradually to set them apart from the rank and file. Discussions about the broader aims of neighborhood associativism and its "social movement" dimension with political implications tended to remain restricted to the leadership level and the circuits leaders were involved in.

The period from 1979 to 1985 was marked by the "politics of *abertura*," and the secularization or "emancipation of the social movements from the pastoral." The "politics of *abertura*" included a shift in policy style and a reorientation of urban policies, both aimed at boosting the declining legitimacy of the departing authoritarian government to influence the increasingly significant electoral process and facilitate the transaction with "reliable" interlocutors without too much outside interference. In the reorientation in urban policies, the policy of removing *favelas* made way for upgrading policies, complemented with a concern for "the social" at a moment when the resources for urban policies were diminishing due to the deepening recession of the post-miracle years.

In a number of *favelas* in Recife, upgrading programs were started. However, the new policy orientation was not accompanied by a clear deconcentration of investments. Rather than shifting investment to the areas of greatest need,

areas on the fringe of the historically privileged parts of the municipality were included. This choice of focus, was immediately criticized by the *Comissão Justiça e Paz* which suspected ulterior motives behind the *Projeto Recife* when it was launched in 1979. The *Comissão* increasingly focussed its activities on conflicts over land and the struggle against speculation and *expulsão branca*, all viewed as consequences of capitalist selfishness, which was syncretized with theorizations of "urban social movements."

The "politics of *abertura*" went together with a policy style the neo-populism of the Krause administration in Recife, with its "capilarization of democracy," was a relatively radical exponent of. It consisted of promoting "communitarian action" and involved the "appropriation" of elements of the communitarian action methods employed by the Church, and their articulation into a new discursive and organizational matrix. The communitarian self-help method of the *mutirão* was actively propagated by state agencies as a form of "participation." The frame of reference for this communitarianism was "the nation" rather than "the poor" or the "popular classes." In the case of these associations some forms of participation were sponsored, mainly in the execution of works. The relationship to "authentic" associations was however one of unilateralism in that a response might come to their protests or demands, but would hardly ever be discussed with the demand-making association. Brasília Teimosa, was an exception in this respect, thanks to its relatively strong local organization and outside support. Later, top level technicians of the Krause administration claimed that the institutionalized negotiations that developed in Brasília Teimosa and some other areas (e.g. Coque, Coelhos) should be considered "pilot projects" representative of the new policy style (cf. Lostao, 1991:53). The more generalized tendency toward unilateralism, and the attempts at creating parallel organizations through clientelist mechanisms, contradict this claim. The "pilot projects" did not result from the benevolence of the administration, but from the pressure of the local population and the groups supporting it.

Meanwhile, the clientelist features of the new policy style and the concomitant politicization of the planning bureaucracies fueled the debate over the "cooptation of professional practice" and contributed to the demoralization of the planning agencies. This process was therefore not simply the result of an "external" impact, but also of "internal" developments involving the pursuit of alternative professional practices and social recognition at a time of political redefinition. If, by the late 1970s, the NGOs emerged as a locus for alternative professional practice in a "field of forces" constituted by the Church, the universities, the parties and the state, the poles constituting the "field" also should also be taken into account. This outlines the circuits and professional networks through which the "urban social movement" discourse propagated and signified neighborhood associativism as a vehicle of social change. The notion of "urban social movement" did not just stand for a phenomenon, but also for a commitment, and the activities of some of the

clergy or *assessores* were exemplary cases of alternative praxis. More broadly speaking, among social workers the notion of "social movement" played a role in the critique of assistentialism and the thinking about more emancipatory professional practices. Among urban planners, in it played a similar role in the debates over "participative planning."

The post-1979 relatively responsive policy style and the dispute over the hegemonization of neighborhood associativism contributed to a rapid rise in the number of local organizations and a change in the mode of organization and operation of these organizations. The multistranded dynamics of this period resulted in a rise in the number of neighborhood associations, while neighborhood associativism "ceased to be a reserved terrain for the 'authentic' movement" (ETAPAS, 1989:60). These changes were related to the general climate of mobilization of civil society during the 1979-1985 period, including the shift to pluripartidarianism, and to the reorientation of the Church in the context of the "democratic transition" process and the broader reorientation resulting from the "retrenchment in Rome." The contradictory "emancipation of the social movements from the pastoral" and the climate of liberalization and mobilization contributed to the growth of more "formal," in contrast to "communitarian," forms of organization at the grassroots-level. More formal organization was not simply imposed by the state, as has sometimes been argued. It also provided the organizational framework for broadening the local population's involvement in neighborhood associations and it reflected a concern with representativeness on the part of local groups.

The range of political orientations may be said to have broadened in that, in contrast to the existing relatively politicized "authentic" neighborhood associativism, a professedly "anti-political" *pelego*-associativism was promoted by state agencies. Between these two poles, less outspoken associations emerged which, because of their "lack of consciousness" and their rather pragmatic non-political attitude to state agencies, were often regarded with suspicion by the more militant "authentic" leaders. In this respect, the development in Recife resembles that in São Paulo, noted by Ruth Cardoso (1988) in her description of the complex relation between "ideology" and "pragmatism" in dealing with state apparatuses or between manifestations of autonomy and "practical conquests" in neighborhood associativism at the grassroot level. Practical conquests often involve some form of negotiation with state apparatuses or politicians, which stand in a relation of tension to the affirmations of "autonomy." Though the rhetoric of "autonomy" suggested confrontation, local associations could hardly be that autonomous if they were to achieve anything. The virtual coinciding of "expressive" and "instrumental" action at the time when the authorities could only be pressured by way of public demonstrations, was replaced by an increasingly complicated process, related to the changing attitude to neighborhood associativism on the part of the state agencies. This process, which tended to undermine the confrontationist representations in

practice, was more clearly observed in São Paulo, where a PMDB mayor had been appointed by the newly elected PMDB state government in 1982, than in Recife which continued to be dominated by the PDS/PFL.

While the relationship between local associations and state apparatuses was undergoing a process of change, supra-local articulations of the "authentic" movement emerged in Recife with the aim of strengthening its position. The shift in policy orientation actually served as a catalyst for this development. The eventual selection of public transportation as the main theme for the mobilization and articulation of the "authentic" movement is a somewhat curious one, however. Rather than directly arising from "expressed needs" of grassroots organizations in Recife², it linked up with a nationwide Church-sponsored campaign stemming from the earlier *Movimento do Custo da Vida* (Doimo, 1989:9). Its mobilizational effectiveness partly derived from this continuing link to Church-related neighborhood associativism and from its coinciding with the *Diretas Já* campaign. This mobilizational capacity obscured the tenuousness of the relationship between local organizations and supra-local articulations, such as the *Assembléia de Bairros*. It showed a capacity to "get people out in the street" but it also obscured the fact that the action repertory of the local associations was broadening with the growing range of opportunities.

Beside the practically changing relationship between neighborhood associativism and state apparatuses, the revalorization of democracy and the practical issues arising in the process of democratic transition contributed to the crumbling of the "paradigm of the 1970s." It implied the pursuit of alternatives to the stark opposition between autonomy and clientelism, and to the unilateralism of the policies of the "bionic" administrations of the municipality of Recife. These features had turned the demand for "participation" into one of the "banners" of the "urban social movement." Participation and restructuring the relationship between civil society and the state at the municipal level became central issues in the 1985 electoral campaign in Recife.

By then, some scattered experiments in participation and municipal democratization had taken place elsewhere in Brazil, and after 1982 such experiments also started in larger municipalities which came to be administrated by oppositionists. The democratization policies of the PMDB administration in São Paulo remained segmented, implemented in their own ways by the various administrative sectors without any general guidelines (Cardoso, 1988:371). The effort in Recife after 1985 resulted from the peculiarly movementist character of the electoral campaign and tended to go a step further toward something like "popular

² Criticism of municipal policies on the regulation of urban land use or the Projeto Recife was articulated in a public debate where professional groups, e.g. architects and engineers, and the assessorias, including the Comissão Justiça e Paz, played the central role.

councils" at the level of political administrative regions and, eventually, at a municipal level. Besides this comprehensive attempt at democratization by creating popular council-like bodies, I have discussed the development of participatory policies on regularization and urbanization of *favelas* and the reorientation of the *Projeto Recife*.

Where the more comprehensive efforts and the issue of "popular councils" are concerned, we have seen how the discussion about the longstanding, but rather vague demand of "the movement" evolved during the electoral campaign and how "the movement" gradually lost the initiative in the discussion by failing to come up with operational proposals. Although "participation" had been a general slogan and ideas about "popular councils" had been ventured, practical forms had remained rather nebulous. The *Assembléia de Bairros* and its leaders were geared to getting people out into the street in support of slogans, a way of doing politics the leaders had derived their legitimacy from. It was in keeping with the circumstances as well as the imagery of "urban social movements" and the Church's views on "doing politics," i.e. a politics of denunciation rather than formulating specific solutions. These emphases tended to simplify complex issues and left people unprepared to cope with them. In the end, they reinforced the idea that practical politics should be left to politicians, which movements might appeal to or whom they might denounce. It presents a critique, but no alternative. Although "participation" and "popular councils" were demanded, the ideas about what this might mean in actual practice had remained nebulous. If they are not to be part of the administrative institutions, nor organs of parallel power or pretend to stand above the constituted powers, what should "popular councils" be (Gohn, 1991b:38)? Faced with such dilemmas, the movement spokespersons made increasingly maximalist demands regarding the competencies of a "popular council." Rather than setting in motion an expansive or cumulative dynamic, this resulted in a downward spiral, despite efforts of the *assessorias* to infuse the process with a different dynamic by organizing seminars aimed at breaking through the ingrained manichean representations by thematizing a triangular relationship between negotiation, cooptation and organized pressure (cf. ETAPAS, 1989:77). The spokespersons of "the movement" increasingly marginalized themselves due to their autonomist and anti-cooptationist discourse, which rejected any form of participation not fully under the control of "the movement." This orientation clashed with the new administration policy principle of respecting the pluriformity and heterogeneity of neighborhood associativism and refusing to implement a favoritist policy with inverted signs by granting privileged access to the "authentic movement."

The stalemate resulting from the opposition between "combativeness" and "representativeness" partly accounts for the absence of controversy over the municipal democratization program. The initial uneasiness among some of the city councilors dissipated when the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros* remained confined

to the local level and did not develop into a platform for substantial debate. In the absence of broader proposals on the part of the articulations of the movement, it remained a platform for topical demand-making presenting much less of a challenge than its promoters had hoped for. Some city councilors, particularly from the right-wing minority, may have resented the direct and tendentially non-populist, non-clientelist relation between the executive and the local population, but this never resulted in any clear opposition to the Program. More recent experiments, for example in São Paulo, seem to be more controversial in this respect.

This suggests that the vicissitudes of the municipal democratization program and the similar fate of the participative reorientation of the *Projeto Recife* should be due at least in part to local and conjunctural variables. As to the former, the heterogeneity of neighborhood associativism in Recife, due to the active promotion of parallel organizations during the 1979-1985 period may be one reason. The conjuncture played a role in the sense that issues tended to be polarized in relation to the question of the legitimacy of the *Nova República*.³ This polarized representation lost appeal in subsequent years.

In her review of participatory experiments in Brazil prior to 1985, Grossi (1989:122) attributes the lack of continuity and institutionalization of new channels of participation to their dependence on the good will of the executive. In the case of Recife the issue was more complicated. In addition to the good will of the executive, it makes clear that the commitment of the articulations of the movement and their capacity to organically relate to grassroot associations are required. Instead of imposing a ready-made scheme, the executive aimed at gradual institutionalization, but this strategy was thwarted by the paralysis of its main "authentic" interlocutor. As a result, the "margins of variation" in the democratization of the municipal administration were neither fully explored nor enlarged. The failure to institutionalize the participatory policies in Recife can not be simply extrapolated to subsequent attempts in other municipalities where the process may take a more dynamic form.⁴

The *Comissão Geral do Projeto Recife* met a fate similar to the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*. The case of the PREZEIS however demonstrated that a more dynamic process is not altogether inconceivable, though it can hardly be

³ At a later stage, this revolved around the priority accorded to direct presidential elections, against the five-year mandate pursued by Sarney. The "more radical groups" tended to regard this as the main issue, whereas others tended to accord relative priority to the confection of the new Constitution.

⁴ In Recife the issue of "popular participation" came up again during the elaboration of a new "municipal constitution," the *Lei Orgânica do Município*, in the course of 1990. The municipality was divided into political-administrative regions. The PT-proposal to institutionalize territorial "popular councils" to monitor the municipality interventions, including local budgetary allocations and the guidelines for local planning, was rejected by the City Council. On the other hand, "popular organizations" were granted some access to municipal "sectoral commissions" (e.g. healthcare, education, urban development) and to the technical commissions of the municipal legislative.

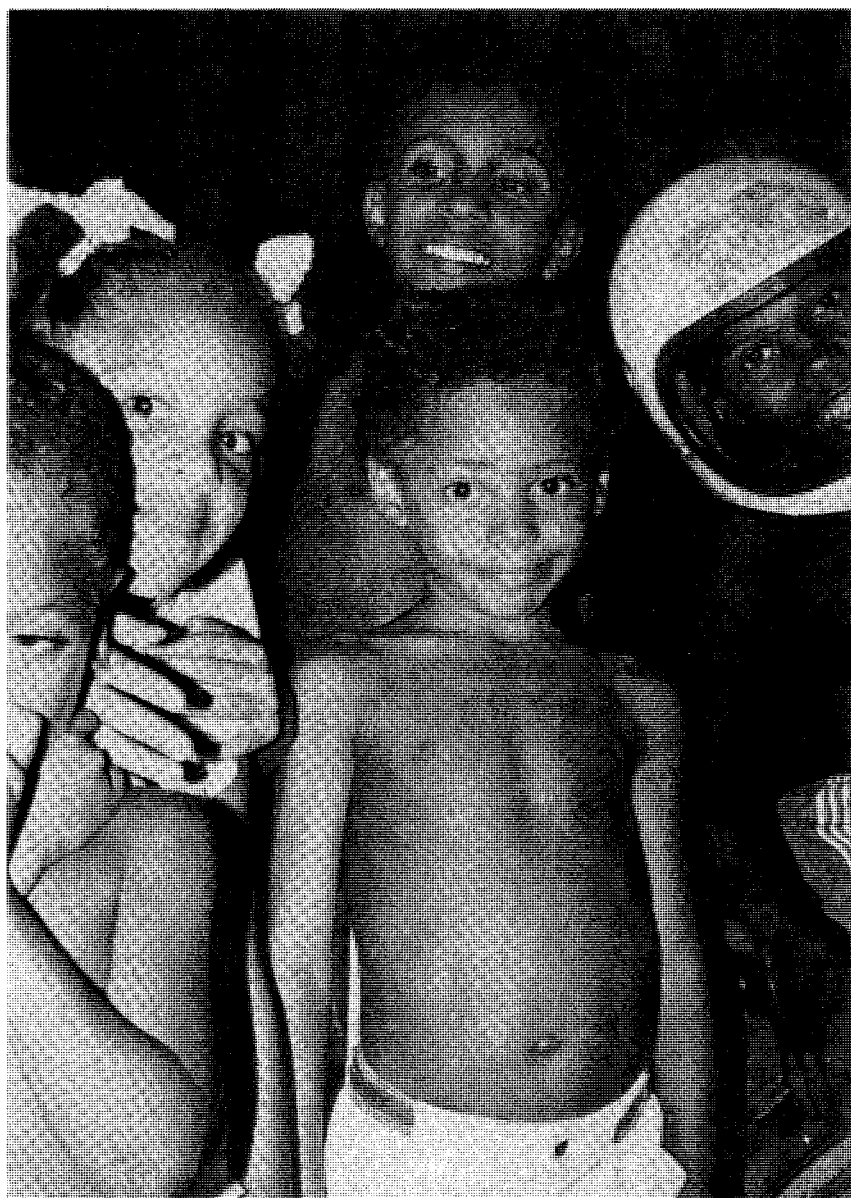
regarded as a success story. It illustrates that a process of alliance-making between *assessorias*, "urban social movements" such as the MDF and to a lesser degree the *Assembléia de Bairros/FEMEB*, and committed civil servants can result in an institutional platform for pressuring a municipal administration. The rise in the number of Special Zones of Social Interest and the increased tenancy security resulting from the adoption of the PREZEIS as an operationalization of urban zoning in favor of these areas served to generate some vague expectations among the local populations. At the same time, local organizations more or less transmitted these expectations through participation in local commissions as well as in a broader and relatively autonomous *Fórum*, which managed to withstand the marginalization by the right-wing municipal administration after 1988. The issues of tenancy security and the urbanization of areas so that people "can live in dignity" remains on the agenda. The PREZEIS serves as a tool in the struggle, and can become a rallying point as it is still regarded as a "major popular conquest." It can serve in reactive mobilizations if ZEIS are threatened by large real estate interests. In such cases, it can serve as a framework for mobilizing a defensive alliance between local groups and "sectors of civil society." It might even become a vehicle for more proactive mobilization. The new independent *assessorias* which emerged from the purge of the progressive Church are committed to the PREZEIS scheme, and are likely to reinforce the still existing core group revolving around the PREZEIS Forum. At the same time, they are strongly committed to grassroots pedagogical action. The PREZEIS was included in the *Lei Orgânica do Município*, elaborated in 1990, as an instrument for urban policies. In a more hospitable political climate than that of the post-1988 neo-liberal administration, this may contribute to turning the PREZEIS into a rallying point to pressure for the urbanization of areas and the allocation of budgetary funds.

For the moment, however, things seem to be going in another direction. They surely did not turn out the way people thought in the 1970s. The "transition to democracy," and the unrealized promise of reform gradually resulted in disillusionment with the *Nova República* when the country went from the "worst crisis of the century" in the early 1980s, to another "worst crisis of the century" in the late 1980s. It was accompanied by a gradual deepening of the "urban crisis" in the broadest sense of the term. In this context, neighborhood associativism evolved from a relatively unified movement in terms of organizational and discursive matrixes in the early 1980s to an increasingly dispersed and heterogeneous phenomenon ten years later. It was a process of "broadening" rather than "deepening." This process did not imply a simple relapse into populism and clientelism in the sense of a trade of favors. Though this aspect and the exclusively vertical relationship it implies certainly play a role, enhanced by the difficulties of survival in a deep economic crisis, a substantial number of the new neighborhood associations seems to have retained a relatively autonomous position by maintaining a multi-

plicity of connections.

In the 1970s the theorizations of "urban social movements" played an important role in shaping and signifying the forms of neighborhood associativism emerging under the protective wing of the Church. The imagery of the "paradigm of the 1970s" was not simply an optical illusion. It was functional to the self-understanding of the leaders of the newly emerging associations and reflected the actually repressive context. Although it served to define "strategic interests" for "the neighborhood movement," it took little account of the practical interests motivating local people to become involved in the associations, i.e. the interest in "getting out of the mud." When new opportunities arose to achieve this aim, replacing local Church-sponsored self-help and denunciatory demonstrations, the blind spots and the reifying features of the paradigm became ever more apparent. The spokespersons of "the movement" who had emerged in the "time of resistance" and their action repertory started to lose practical usefulness. At the same time, the dualist and cataclysmic imagery of social transformation that had informed "the movement" lost its legitimacy in the context of the "rethinking of democracy." It increasingly became the empty rhetoric of a "vanguard," dissociated from the practical concerns of the rank and file, who were criticized for their "backwardness" and "lack of conscientization." In the absence of viable proposals effectively relating the practical interests of the rank and file to more broadly defined strategic objectives, the appeal of the supra-local articulations diminished. Neighborhood associativism spread as an increasingly dispersed phenomenon.

Of course it is hard to predict future developments as they depend on the broader dynamics of the Brazilian political process. The hopes generated by the "democratic transition" have been dashed and Machado da Silva (1989:144) is probably right in describing the political moment in the Brazilian cities as one of "suspension." Such a term could be applied more broadly to refer to a situation of generalized hegemonic crisis and an incapacity to articulate particularistic and increasingly fragmented interests into a unifying political discourse that could sustain a project of progressive social change.



MOVIMENTO 'TERRAS DE NINGUÉM':

LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, APRIL 1978

Your Excellency the President of the Republic,

We, the undersigned, inhabitants of the Altos and Córregos of the hills of Casa Amarela in the city of Recife, want to make our situation known to Your Excellency in the conviction that this gesture will help to put an end to the exploitation we have been facing for so many years.

We are some ten thousand families of workers who live on the lands known as the "Propriedade Marinho," managed by the Empresa Imobiliária Pernambuco Ltd of Dr. Roberto Rosa Borges. This Enterprise, which claims to be the legitimate owner of these lands, although this was never proven through the competent channels, submits us to various forms of exploitation such as:

1. The Enterprise makes about five thousand families pay a monthly rent known as "foro" or "land rent" to an amount varying from Cr\$ 8.00 to Cr\$ 30.00 for each family that lives here. From time to time the rent is raised, according to the whim of the Enterprise. The tenants who are behind in their payments are submitted to constant pressure by letters and by collectors (*cobreadores*), receiving intimidations and threats of eviction;
2. The Enterprise urges, intimidates and even forces tenants to buy the land which they have been living on for so many years already, paying land rent. More than two thousand plots (*posses*) were already sold at prices varying from Cr\$ 7,000.00 to Cr\$ 40,000.00. The payment is divided into instalments that increase every year. If the tenant falls behind with the payments and can not pay the interest (which is very high), the Enterprise rescinds the contract: the tenant loses everything he has paid and, if he does not want to return to the position of rent-payer (*foreiro*), has to sign a new contract which is much more expensive than the first. In this way there are tenants who have bought the same plot of land three times over;
3. People who buy a plot and succeed in paying all the instalments receive a special document (*documento particular*) of proprietorship (*posse*), drawn up in the office of the Enterprise. If the tenant wants a legally valid document (*documento público*), he has to pay a fee of Cr\$ 400.00 to Cr\$ 600.00. There are few who succeed in having their ownership (*posse*) registered at the Registry Office for Real Estate (*cartório de imóveis*) and many who tried did not succeed;

4. The large majority of the houses belong to the tenants - in many cases we have constructed them ourselves. But we are kept from carrying out improvements and even repairs, because the municipality only gives licences to alter the houses if the Enterprise approves: that is if one is up to date with the payments for the plot. Moreover, if one of us wants to sell his house, the transaction has to take place at the office of the Enterprise, which accords itself the right to discount the back payments for the plot and in addition, collects 8% of the value of the sale.

Besides these, there are other forms of exploitation like taking a piece of land occupied by an old tenant and giving it to a new inhabitant. We are in the possession of an enormous number of testimonies and registered cases and also of documents proving what is happening in these lands. We ask: is this not against the law? Do we not have rights? The pressure against us has been increasing since 1974, when this situation was made public in the Municipal Council of Recife. There were also reports in the local (like the *Diário de Pernambuco* of May 26, 1974, June 1, 1976 and June 23, 1976) and national press (the weekly *VEJA* of May 26, 1976 and the daily *O Globo* of June 7, 1976). It was already a year ago that the parishes of the various sectors of the neighborhood sent a letter to the Governor and the Mayor asking them to take measures - but so far to no avail. In the face of the increasing difficulties that confront us, a group came together and hired a lawyer to defend their rights in the Court of Justice.

Casa Amarela is the most populous neighborhood of Recife, where 230 thousand people live on the Altos and 120 thousand in the *Córregos*. We are peace-loving and orderly people, simple and poor. What we earn is often not enough to feed our families. For thirty years now, we have been forced to take bread from our tables to pay for this land which we deforested, where we planted and where we built and made improvements. The Enterprise never realized a single improvement in all the thirty years of its existence in this vast stretch of inhabited land. We have only seen the Enterprise grow, progress and get richer, whereas our situation became more difficult by the day. We know from the oldest inhabitants of these lands that the Enterprise is not the owner, that it appropriated vast areas that were part of the legacy of an old *Irmandade* - and until now this has not been clarified. We ask: how is it possible that a single Enterprise is the owner of such a large area in a city and, moreover, exploits so many families?

We resolved appeal to the authority of the President of the Republic in the hope that the Government would expropriate these lands to sell them at prices compatible with the inhabitants' means. Only in this way will our right to shelter (*direito de morar*) be officially guaranteed, avoiding exploitation by people who enrich themselves with what is not theirs, through the improvements the government makes in the area (light, water, paving, etc.), extorting the poor down to their last penny and subjecting them to the worst affronts. We are certain that we are on the side of Justice and Truth and that in this Country there are Laws to defend the humble.

In the assurance that Your Excellency will take into consideration this plea for Justice we sign respectfully....".

DWELLERS' COUNCIL OF BRASÍLIA TEIMOSA:

MANIFESTO OF OCTOBER 1979

Your Excellency Mr. President João Batista de Figueiredo, Your Excellency Mr. Governor Marco Maciel, Your Excellency Mr. Mayor Gustavo Krause: We, residents of Brasília Teimosa, have been urbanizing the area for the past twenty years at the cost of many painful sacrifices and often in conflict (*contra*) with the Public Powers. The threat of eviction was always there. But we resisted stubbornly and with dignity, under the firm leadership of the Council. Today we are over 4,000 families, the majority living on a minimum wage.

We know very well that because of its good location, our area is becoming more coveted with each passing day. We do not deserve either blame or credit for that: it was the need to survive that brought us here. And it is for the same reason of survival that we must stay here: close to the natural resources of the sea and with easy access to work in the Center and in Boa Viagem.

Moreover, we can not permit the values that are so rare today's society but which abound in our way of life to be destroyed: good neighborhood, fraternity, a spirit of struggle and, in spite of everything, the joy of living.

Taking advantage of the political moment, we resolved to address the Government and public opinion to communicate the following decisions which have been approved at three general assemblies:

1. First and foremost, we demand the legalization of the land for us, the actual inhabitants, through *aforamento* (direct lease), to provide us definitive security.
2. We are elaborating our own urbanization project with the participation of the whole population, which we consider indispensable for any such project.
3. When the project is ready we shall present it to the Public Power, asking for approval and collaboration in its realization.
4. We do not accept the eviction of any inhabitant for whatever reason (*em hipótese alguma*). Eventual relocations will be permitted only if they take place within the neighborhood.
5. In our urbanization project, we give priority to the most needy part of the neighborhood, which is the seashore (*beira-mar*), or the area of *palafitas*.
6. We demand that, if necessary, special laws be adopted to effectuate the legalization and urbanization, as well as special measures so that, afterwards, everyone will be enabled to pay for the improvements.
7. Any collective matter shall be dealt with through the *Conselho de Moradores*.

Let us briefly examine these points:

1. The legalization of the land is a need all of us deeply feel because of the many threats against our right to be here in the past fifteen years. We believe every family should have a secure place to establish its household. A guaranteed place. It is necessary for every family to have a piece of land for its home. It is urgent to grant this right to people who do have no land. And free of charge, because God

gave this land without asking anyone a penny.

Why impede the poor from having a plot of their own? Why make it so difficult for the worker to have at least a place to rest after the daily struggle for survival?

The concession of the right of lease (*concessão do direito de aforamento*) would meet our need for a secure place to live (*morar*). Leasing, because we know that the majority of us should be spared the charge of another expense. Let the *Prefeitura* not be deaf and blind; let it recognize that most of us already paid for this land. Let the lease be free of charge.

2. A legitimate urbanization project must meet our requirements and needs. We are preparing a project because we are aware of the reality of our situation and we know of the absurdities produced by the administrative agencies (*administrações governamentais*) with public funds, which are the money of the people.

Most of us are poor people. Therefore, our urbanization must be for poor people. Without luxuries, without motorways (*autopistas*). But with the comfort we were denied during the long and hard years. The comfort of being able to walk a street without puddles, without mud and without the dust of the summer.

The comfort of having running water in our houses. The comfort of having more hygienic sanitation. The comfort of having a school, a health post, a maternity ward and a market nearby. And above all, the comfort of God's blessing, having the legal guarantee that we can not be sent away (*mandados embora*) due to egotistic and paltry interests.

An urbanization project, finally, that does not come down from the top, imposed without the participation of the population. An urbanization project for us, inhabitants, and made by us like we are doing now, because only through discussion and the unison of all will we win greater justice for the majority of the population.

3. The main directions of our political project of urbanization have been practically defined. To execute it, we accept the help of the Housing Department. We know no one but ourselves, if adequately organized and supported, is in a better position to take part in such a project.

We therefore demand that the public authorities collaborate technically and financially to realize this project soon. Ten months of meetings, debates and assemblies have passed. After having given its word, could the government go back on it and deny us its collaboration?

4. We regard the eviction of any resident as unnecessary violence, which is aggression against all of us. Those who live here with us shall only leave our neighborhood (*só sairão da nossa convivência, da nossa vizinhança*) if they wish to themselves.

People may be moved within the neighborhood if it is necessary for our common well-being. For us it is a matter of honor that before any removal (*remoção*) is undertaken, the families concerned receive a plot equal to or better than the one they had.

Now that we are on the topic of the inhabitants, we want to draw the attention to the *inquilinos*, tenants who rent a place. They should be granted the right to remain leaseholders of the plot they occupy. The houses can be confiscated or the owners can be indemnified (*Seja desapropriada a casa dos seus donos; sejam eles devidamente indenizados*).

A plan should be drawn up so that those who presently live in a rented house can eventually buy the house, paying small instalments every month.

5. Near the seashore, nearly 300 families live in houses on stakes (*palafitas*). This is where urban improvements are most urgently required. We would even accept moving some of these families to use the area for leisure and collective equipment. We know the urbanization of the seashore will require sizeable federal funding, to defend us from the violence of the sea. But even if it is expensive, the urbanization must be humble and simple, so as not to overly arouse real estate speculators. For us the situation of the people living in the houses on stakes (*palafitas*) is of special importance and interest and we shall be particularly attentive in monitoring the measures for the urbanization of the seashore.

We also think the Public Powers should take immediate action to end the unclear situation created by the Yacht Club. Thanks to an unjustifiable and incredible exchange or a donation, this club was given a lease to the area known as the Buraco da Velha and even controls access to the dike known as the Estrada de Santos. This happens to be the main leisure area, the beach for the majority of the population.

We think this measure was unnecessary. We want the area to be given back to us. We want the walls being constructed by the employees of the Yacht Club in an attempt to enclose this public area to be pulled down.

The problem of the Yacht Club should be resolved in a just way, but without depriving young children and adults of an opportunity for wholesome and tranquil leisure.

6. We think that, if need be, the urbanization of Brasília Teimosa should be as special as is required to guarantee the permanence of the present population in the neighborhood. We know about the greed our area arouses in the land exploiters or people in a better economic situation. Due to their voracity, we have to proceed cautiously. The technically best solution is not always in the interests of the inhabitants, since some urbanization measures may foster *expulsão branca*, indirect eviction. A specific process of urbanization might succeed in achieving in three or four years the eviction which could not hitherto be realized.

7. We residents know what we want and we are organizing ourselves, following the ideas of our Council, which we regard as the representative and protector of our interests.

We do not want any measure to be taken without first being submitted to the Council. We want the Council to be recognized as the legitimate representative of the resident of this neighborhood so that no measure can be taken, be it through clientelism (*apadrinhamento*) or in vengeance, against the interests of the majority of the population.

We demand that any decision concerning our neighborhood be submitted to our appraisal and judgment. So that the global project be respected. So that the sovereign will of the majority of the inhabitants be respected, because the voice of the people is the voice of God.

8. This also applies to economic activities and social measures that might seem at first to be beneficial for us. The economic conditions of the majority are very poor. Many perform the miracle of surviving, accustomed to receiving low wages

and to having daily expenses amounting to more than we earn.

This is why when we speak of urbanization, we should also speak of a just income distribution. It will not help to install a water supply, lighting, sewerage, medical posts and other improvements (*benefícios*) in the poor neighborhoods without substantially improving the wages of the workers.

Because the day when there is no food for the family, no money for the doctor or for the children to go to school, that is the day the worker will sell his house to provide these more urgent needs, and go to live in a worse place. We know the whole poor population is confronted with the same problems and we do not want anything to be done for us that might hurt the interests of other poor people. We do not want privileges, but only justice for all.

We think the improvements should be carefully and thoroughly examined in the light of the well-being of the majority. This is the criteria by which we shall evaluate the proposals for improvement, whether they concern health, education, work or leisure.

For example, if there is a project for establishing an industry here, we shall only approve it if we are convinced it will contribute to the general well-being.

9. Finally, though we are happy about the social and economic measures of the present federal and state administrations to benefit the people, we also, Mr. President of the Republic, wish to voice our protest because the chance for the population to express itself here was curtailed. Only one person from our neighborhood was allowed to speak.

And then only within the limits of a text which had to be previously submitted to your assistants. We hand you this petition, signed by nearly 7,000 inhabitants of our neighborhood, to underline what has just been said. We want our rulers to realize an authentically popular administration. This text was proposed, discussed and approved during the special meeting of our Council on the 14th of October. Brasília is ours. Thank you.

(Diário de Pernambuco, 10-17-1979)

FEDERATION OF NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE METROPOLITAN REGION OF RECIFE (FEMEB)

A. Structure of the FEMEB

- The Congress is the highest authority.
- The Council of Representatives is the highest organ of power after the Congress.
- The Directory consists of an executive and eight departments, bringing the total to fifteen directors.
- The eight Departments shall consist of representatives of affiliated organizations plus representatives of specific movements.

B. The Role of the Federation

- To guarantee internal democracy and make collective decisions.
- To unify the struggle of the Popular Movement.
- To guarantee the autonomy of the Movement from parties, the government, the Church and others.
- To prioritize a politics of mobilizing the masses and organizing the Movement.
- To seek articulation with other bodies and maintain a good relationship with the trade union movement.
- To struggle for a strong and representative Council of Representatives, respecting its decisions and measures.
- To strengthen the sector articulations, federations and already existing movements.
- To guarantee the participation of dwellers' councils and associations in the various internal participation bodies of the FEMEB.
- To guarantee its financial and political autonomy.

C. How the FEMEB views the National Situation:

-The José Sarney administration is a conservative government without an economic, social or political project capable of responding to the anxieties of the popular sectors. What we see are top level negotiations to guarantee the big interests of national and foreign capital to the detriment of the workers' interests. The National Plan for Agrarian Reform, despite all its limitations, was never more than paper and suffered various setbacks which increased the land conflicts and the murder of rural leaders, while the assassins go unpunished.

The economic plans Cruzado I, II and Bresser originated in the crisis the country is in, appearing to be attempts to stop inflation.

What we observe is the contrary. Unemployment and inflation are on the rise, the *arrocho salarial* (erosion of wages) is becoming insupportable and generates discontent and popular revolt (plunder and *quebra quebra* in various parts of the country), because these Plans only attend to the interests of national and international capital. All this has contributed to the popularity decline of the Sarney administration.

It is in this context that the popular forces seek alternatives and wish to mobilize the population for direct elections for the presidency and to pressure the National

Constitutional Congress to approve the Popular Amendments and preserve some of the conquests (*conquistas*) made in the Systematization Commission.

D. How we view the Municipal and State administrations:

There has effectively been a new type of relationship between the Popular Movement and the Prefecture of Recife ever since a local problem discussion process was established through the institutional mechanism of the *Programa Prefeitura nos Bairros*.

Nevertheless the widely expected participation and decentralization did not occur, popular organizations do not participate in the decision-making process concerning municipality budgetary priorities. In this new discussion process there is a certain confusion of roles. On the one hand the public powers try to establish forms of movement organization, on the other hand people in the movement have adopted the official discourse based on the lack of resources and thus justify the limitations of this power.

In this context, as an indispensable condition for our conquests, we have to advance in the political process and in popular organization. The situation is much worse in other municipalities of the Metropolitan Region, where we observe cooptation, clientelism and rigging (*aparelhamento*). The persecution of popular organizations is part of daily life in these municipalities.

As to the State Government:

Until now there has been no significant change. On the contrary: the recent price rises for bus tickets show the continuity in the policy of strengthening the transportation companies.

The Military Police continue to carry out repressive actions (as in the case of the demonstration against public transportation policies) to contain the advance of the Popular Movement. Besides, there is indiscriminate violence in the treatment of citizens.

Over half of the State Deputies are from the PDS and PFL. So the changes that have been promised and are desired so much by the population will have to be brought about by the organized sectors of civil society through pressure.

The state seeks to manage (*administrar*) conflict, asking understanding and patience from the popular organizations. To commit the state to the demands of the Popular Movement, it is necessary to mature and seek the growth and broadening of the latter's consciousness level. Therefore we think the most serious and correct policy is the policy of mobilization as the principal power of political pressure.

Our task, therefore, is to advance in mobilizing and organizing the popular movement, because WITHOUT STRUGGLE SOCIETY WILL NOT CHANGE.

3. GENERAL STRUGGLES

- Against payment of the external debt and for an inquiry about how and where the money was used so that the people guilty of irregularities may be punished.
- Broad, massive radical and anti-latifundarian agrarian reform under workers' control.
- Confiscation without indemnification of land owned by foreign groups.

- Immediate expropriation of unproductive land with an indemnification in agrarian debt bonds according the declared tax value over the past five years.
- Labor rights, trade union autonomy, 40-hour week, employment stability, real minimum salary (calculated by DIEESE), unrestricted right to strike, trade union rights for all workers.
- An end to the exception laws (National Security Law, Strike Law, Press Law, etc.) and the dismantling of repressive organs (DOPS, DOI-CODI, SNI, etc.).
- Punishment of the murderers of workers and the crimes committed by the "White Collars" (*Colharinos Brancos*).
- Urban reform that guarantees a housing policy in the interests of the people (guarantee of infrastructure, sanitation, etc.); the right to housing should prevail over property rights.
- Tax reform.
- Nationalization of collective transportation.
- Against privatization of state enterprises.
- A unitary healthcare system.
- Nationalization of the education system.
- Direct elections for president of the Republic in 1988.

4. SPECIFIC STRUGGLES

4.1. Transportation:

- For a new policy of nationalization of collective transportation.
- Vale Transporte*.
- Popular Movement participation in defining this new policy
- End of the EMTU.

4.2. Education and Culture:

- Free public education at all levels.
- Direct elections for schools principals and university deans.
- Real participation of popular bodies in the municipal and state education councils.

4.3. Housing and Sanitation:

- Installation of basic sanitation equipment.
- Progressive taxation for real estate speculation areas.
- Formulation of a housing policy to give priority to households with less than two minimum wages.
- Immediate guarantees for possession of occupied areas.

4.4. Health:

- Nationalization and unification of the healthcare sector.
- Strengthening of laboratories and health equipment at the state level.
- Nationalization of pharmaceutical industries and producers of vaccines, serum and processed blood.
- Installation of more health posts, hospitals and the improvement of existing ones, giving priority to preventive health care.

4.5. Security and citizens' rights (*direitos de cidadão e cidadã*):

- End of police violence at all levels.
- End of arbitrary imprisoning and torture and punishment of the torturers.
- Revision and transformation of the penitentiary system.
- Dismantling of the repressive organs and of the death squads.

4.6. Food supply:

- Promotion and technical support for gardens and concession of municipal and state fallow lands, under control of the popular bodies.
- Increase in the number of COMPARE (*Mesa Popular*) posts with a better supply of basic food products.
- For the perfect functioning of the PROAB and improved quantity and quality of the products and merchandise under the agreements and an expansion to all municipalities of the Metropolitan Region with rigorous control of the quality of products and the lowering of prices.

(From: FEMEB, 1987: *1º Congresso do Movimento de Bairros da Região Metropolitana do Recife*).

In July 1987 the PREZEIS law, in force by then, and the *Direito Real de Uso* (DRU) were presented in the FEACA *Jornal de Casa Amarela* (Ano II, no. 14) in the following terms:

LAW OF THE FAVELAS

PREZEIS WITH DRU

THE DRU REGULARIZES THE USE OF URBAN LAND - The Cession of the Real Right of Use also known as DRU is a legal rule (*jeito legal*) on land use. The DRU is a form of urban land regulation. Through the DRU, people who use the land are called CESSIONARIES. The DRU is conceded (*acontece*) by means of a CONTRACT.

2. WHAT GOES INTO THE CONTRACT - For any contract there are at least two persons interested in reaching an agreement. In the case of the DRU, the interested parties are, the owner called the YIELDER and the receiver of the land called the CESSIONARY. The contract has a TERM, a certain period during which it is in force. The contract also sets a price. This price can be low, so that it can be paid in full in one installment (*de uma vez*), so you can use (the land) as if you are the owner (*ficando-se no uso como se fosse proprietário*), without need to pay so much.

3. THE PREZEIS WITH REAL RIGHT OF USE - As you know, the PREZEIS is the Plan for Regulation of the Special Zones of Social Interest. The PREZEIS is a law, known as the LAW OF THE FAVELAS, in force in Recife. Some communities want the PREZEIS for their areas. But there are people who worry (*gente mordendo a corda*) about the DRU. According to the PREZEIS, if it concerns public land conceded free of charge, the duration of the contract is five years at most. But the dwellers have the right to demand the repeated renewal of the contract. However, it is difficult to adjust (*ajeitar*) the ideas on property.

4. THE ADVANTAGES OF THE RIGHT TO REAL USE OF URBAN LAND - The capitalist system of private property creates better opportunities for the people who possess the most. The people who struggle for an egalitarian and fraternal society want equal opportunities for all. Whoever struggles to create a fraternal society should know about the advantages of the DRU, which are: 1) whoever receives the land can negotiate the improvements (*benfeitorias*) he constructs; 2) the Public Power and the Dwellers' Council control who can and who can not live in the area; 3) the Public Power and the Dwellers' Council will have to approve the sale of any improvements. This is a guarantee to keep real estate agents or bourgeois persons (*burgueses*) from entering land improved by the people. There may be sales, but not just any sale (*não vender de qualquer jeito*). This may seem like an oppressive prohibition, but in reality it is a correct way to guarantee that the community be defended. Not just selling in any way is a means of assuring that the interests of the community (*os interessados da comunidade*) prevail over individual interests. It is in this way that an egalitarian community distinguishes itself: the well-being (*o bem*) of the community prevails over the advantage of individuals.

5. THE IDEAS OF CAPITALISM INSIDE OURSELVES - The world we live in is

dominated by capitalism, which penetrates everything, even our own minds. Capitalism invented private property with deeds registered at real estate registry offices (*cartório de imóveis*). Private property is one of the values of capitalism. The powerful have succeeded in planting the idea of private property within us, to the point of making us forget that God is the owner of the earth and that we are only strangers and pilgrims (Leviticus). To combat the capitalist idea we should deepen our understanding of the advantages of the DRU.

Against the background of the ongoing debate on "urban social movements" in Brazil, this study aims to reconstruct the development of neighborhood associations in the northeastern city of Recife (Pernambuco) between 1964 and 1988. It highlights the processual and relational aspects of this development and views neighborhood associativism as a diversity of practices and social constructs shaped "in and by" diverse discursive and organizational matrixes involving diverse actors. This approach brings into focus the interaction between the various actors and agencies involved in the process of social construction of forms of neighborhood associativism as well as the dynamics of this process in the context of the broader social and political developments in Brazilian society. Furthermore, it brings into view the role of theorizations of "urban social movements" in their double relation to neighborhood associativism, as a discursive matrix for "understanding" as well as a medium for "self-understanding," or as theory as well as project, subject to constant redevelopment.

The theorizations of "urban social movements" which became available in Brazil in the course of the 1970s effectively contributed to the shaping of the neighborhood associations that emerged after the disarticulation of this type of organization in the aftermath of the 1964 military *coup*. These theorizations articulated with, and served to specify the "discursive matrixes" of Liberation Theology and the Left in pursuit of a new relationship with "its base." They provided the groups most involved with promoting neighborhood associativism, as well as local leaders, with a theoretical perspective and a more specific program of action. This development contributed to a reification of the notion of "urban social movement" in what can be called "the paradigm of the 1970s."

The early 1980s witnessed the deconstruction of this rather consensual understanding of what the newly emerging neighborhood associations were all about, due to developments in theoretical reflection in conjunction with the practical process of "democratic transition" in Brazil. This deconstruction of the "paradigm of the 1970s" revealed the range of actors and agencies involved in the social production of forms of neighborhood associativism. In this study it is argued that the reemergence of neighborhood associativism in the 1970s and its impact should be analyzed in conjunction with the emergence of the Brazilian "new middle classes," the role played by segments of these groups as "translators and articulators of social demands" and its repercussions on the shaping of forms of neighborhood associativism. Furthermore the deconstruction of the "paradigm of the 1970s"

problematized the relation between "urban social movements" and the state. While until then it had been thought of in terms of mutual negation, the focus now shifted to the relation between "social movement" and "institutional system" itself and the exploration of ways to democratize this relation. In this way it linked up with the "reassessment of democracy by the Left" and the practical challenges of the transition to a civilian government.

After an introductory overview of the development of the city of Recife and its history up to 1964, the study follows the trajectory and role of neighborhood associativism in Recife through the period of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (1964-1979), the gradual political "opening" and the transition to a civilian government (1979-1985). Finally, it discusses one of the first large-scale experiments in municipal democratization carried out by a left-wing administration that sought to promote "the participation of the organized social movements of civil society" (1985-1988). During the 1964-1979 period, new forms of neighborhood associativism emerged under the protective wing of the Church. By the end of this period these groups increasingly came to be signified as "urban social movements" which were expected to contribute to a substantial transformation of Brazilian society. This new signification and its practical implications were a source of tension since they tended to subvert the discursive and organizational matrix provided by the Church, which simultaneously tended to narrow under the pressure of conservative Catholicism and the reorientation in the context of the Brazilian democratization process. The 1979-1985 period witnessed the efforts on the part of the departing authoritarian regime to steer the transition to civilian rule in the desired direction, including new policies aimed to outflank the oppositionist neighborhood associations. The dispute over the hegemonization of neighborhood associations resulted in a rapid proliferation and diversification of neighborhood associativism which increasingly took a dynamics of its own, taking advantage of the opportunities opened up by the changing "environment." In the 1985 municipal elections, the first to be held in Recife since 1963, a left-wing "popular front" carried the day. The issues of participation and democratization of the municipal administration played an important role in the electoral campaign and resulted in efforts to promote the "participation of the organized social movements of civil society" in the administration of the municipality. Despite these favorable circumstances, the groups that had become the spokespersons of the Recife "neighborhood movement" lost the initiative in the democratization experiments as they failed to develop any viable proposal. Meanwhile grassroot organizations started to actively participate in the democratization policies gradually developed by the municipal administration. This disencounter between the local organizations and the group of spokespersons of "the movement," in the context of the specific political conjuncture of the early years of the Brazilian *Nova República* contributed to the reduced impact of the democratization policies and the failure to result in significant institutional change.

Este estudo procura reconstruir o desenvolvimento das associações de moradores na cidade do Recife (Pernambuco) entre 1964 e 1988, tomando por base o debate sobre os "movimentos sociais urbanos" no Brasil. Destacam-se os aspectos processuais e relacionais desse desenvolvimento, considerando o associativismo de bairro como um conjunto de práticas e construções sociais diversas, moldadas por várias matrizes discursivas e organizacionais e implicando diferentes atores. Dessa maneira procura-se tomar conta da interação entre os atores implicados no processo de construção social de formas de associativismo de bairro como também da dinâmica desse processo no contexto mais amplo de mudança social e política no Brasil. Também toma-se conta do papel das teorizações sobre os "movimentos sociais urbanos" na sua dupla relação com o associativismo de bairro, tanto como matriz para "entendimento" quanto meio de "auto-entendimento", tanto como teoria quanto projeto, sujeito a constante reelaboração.

As teorizações sobre os "movimentos sociais urbanos", que começavam a ser disponíveis no Brasil no curso dos anos 70, efetivamente tiveram um papel no resurgimento do associativismo de bairro depois da desarticulação desse tipo de organização após o golpe militar de 1964. As teorizações serviram para especificar as matrizes discursivas da Teologia da Libertação, e da esquerda em busca de uma nova relação com a "sua base". Para os grupos envolvidos na promoção do associativismo de bairro e para as lideranças locais, as teorizações serviram como instrumento de análise da realidade e para a elaboração de programas de ação mais específicas. Isto contribuiu para reificação do conceito de "movimento social urbano" no que poderia chamar-se de "paradigma dos anos 70".

O início dos anos 80 foi o momento de uma desconstrução do entendimento bastante consensual do significado do novo associativismo de bairro, como resultado de desenvolvimentos na reflexão teórica em conjunção com o processo prático da "transição democrática" no Brasil. A desconstrução do "paradigma dos anos 70" também revelou a diversidade de atores e agências envolvidos na produção social de formas de associativismo de bairro. O resurgimento do associativismo de bairro nos anos 70, então, pode ser analisado na sua conjunção com: a ascendência das "novas classes médias" no Brasil; o papel de segmentos dessas classes como "tradutores e articuladores de demandas sociais"; e sua influência na moldura do associativismo de bairro. Além disso, a desconstrução do "paradigma dos anos 70" implicou uma reavaliação das perspectivas que enfocavam a relação entre os "movimentos sociais urbanos" e o estado, em termos de negação mútua. A atenção

deslocou-se para a mesma relação entre o "movimento social" e o "sistema institucional", e a questão da democratização dessa relação. A mudança foi relacionada à "revalorização da democracia pela esquerda" e aos práticos desafios da transição para um governo civil.

Após uma discussão do desenvolvimento da cidade do Recife e sua história até 1964, o estudo enfoca a trajetória e o papel do associativismo de bairro no Recife no período de autoritarismo burocrático (1964-1979), e a gradual "abertura" política e transição para um governo civil (1979-1985). Finalmente, discute-se uma das primeiras experiências de gestão democrática municipal, numa grande cidade brasileira, sob uma administração de esquerda, procurando viabilizar "a participação dos movimentos sociais organizados da sociedade civil" (1985-1988). No período 1964-1979, novas formas de associativismo de bairro surgiram sob a manta protetiva da Igreja. Ao final desse período, o significado desses grupos interpretou-se cada vez mais em termos de "movimento social urbano", na expectativa de que contribuirá para uma transformação substantiva da sociedade brasileira. A nova significação e suas implicações práticas foram fontes de tensões, porque tendencialmente subvertiram as matrizes discursivas e organizativas oferecidas pela Igreja, que no mesmo momento tenderam a estreitar-se sob a pressão do Catolicismo conservador e da reorientação da Igreja brasileira no contexto do processo da democratização. Os anos 1979-1985 foram um período de esforços por parte do governo autoritário para direcionar a transição para um governo civil na direção desejada, incluindo novas políticas apontadas para levar vantagem sobre as associações de bairro sob influência oposicionista. A disputa da hegemonia sobre as associações de bairro resultou numa proliferação rápida e numa diversificação do associativismo de bairro, que desenvolveu uma dinâmica própria, aproveitando-se das novas oportunidades oferecidas pelas mudanças. As eleições municipais de 1985 foram ganhas no Recife por uma "frente popular" de esquerda. Já na campanha eleitoral, os temas de democratização e participação desempenharam um papel importante, resultando num esforço para viabilizar a "participação dos movimentos sociais organizados da sociedade civil" na democratização do município. Apesar das circunstâncias favoráveis, os grupos porta-vozes do "movimento de bairros" no Recife perderam a iniciativa nas experiências de democratização por falta de propostas viáveis. Entretanto, as organizações de base começavam a participar ativamente nas políticas de democratização gradualmente desenvolvidas pela administração municipal. O desencontro entre as organizações locais e o grupo de representantes supra-locais "do movimento", no contexto da conjuntura específica dos primeiros anos da Nova República, foi uma causa pela qual foi reduzido o impacto das políticas de democratização e levou à falta de resultados significantes em termos de mudança institucional.

Onder verwijzing naar de debatten over "stedelijke sociale bewegingen" in Brazilië beoogt deze studie de ontwikkeling van wijkorganisaties in de noordoost Braziliaanse stad Recife, tussen 1964 en 1988, te reconstrueren. Daarbij wordt vooral aandacht besteed aan de relationele en procesmatige aspecten van deze ontwikkeling. Vormen van wijkorganisatie worden beschouwd als sociale constructies, die "in en door" verschillende discursieve en organisationele "matrixes" worden gevormd en waarbij een verscheidenheid van actoren betrokken is. Op deze manier wordt de aandacht gevestigd op de interactie tussen de verschillende actoren in de "sociale constructie" van vormen van wijkorganisatie en op de dynamiek van dit proces in de context van de bredere maatschappelijke en politieke ontwikkelingen in Brazilië. Bovendien wordt de aandacht gevestigd op de rol van theorieën over "stedelijke sociale bewegingen" en hun rol in het "begrijpen" maar ook in het "zelfbegrip" van wijkorganisaties, d.w.z. hun rol als theorie zowel als project dat aan voortdurende herformulering onderhevig is.

De theorieën over "stedelijke sociale bewegingen" die in de jaren 70 in Brazilië beschikbaar kwamen, speelden een rol in de opkomst van nieuwe vormen van wijkorganisatie in de jaren na de militaire machtsovername in 1964. Deze theorieën hielpen de "discursieve matrixes" van de Bevrijdingstheologie en van Braziliaans Links, op zoek naar een "nieuwe relatie met de basis" uit te werken. Voor de groepen die betrokken waren bij de opkomst van de nieuwe wijkorganisaties en voor lokale leiders leverden de theorieën een perspectief en een duidelijker visie op hun eigen activiteiten. Deze rol van de theorie droeg bij tot een zekere reïfikatie van het begrip "stedelijke sociale beweging" in wat "het paradigma van de jaren 70" genoemd zou kunnen worden.

In de jaren 80 kwam de relatieve eensgezindheid in de visie op de nieuwe wijkorganisaties kwam onder druk te staan als gevolg van ontwikkelingen in het theoretisch debat en van de praktische ontwikkeling in het Braziliaanse democratiseringsproces. De "deconstructie" van het "paradigma van de jaren 70" maakte duidelijk dat de ontwikkeling van de nieuwe wijkorganisaties een verre van eenvoudig proces was en dat daarbij een veelheid van actoren een rol speelde. In deze studie wordt de rol van de Braziliaanse nieuwe middenklassen in de opkomst van de nieuwe wijkorganisaties in beschouwing genomen. Bovendien hield de deconstructie van het "paradigma van de jaren 70" een problematisering van de relatie tot de staat in. De relatie tussen "sociale bewegingen" en de staat was gezien als een van wederzijdse negatie, maar nu verschoof de aandacht naar de relatie zelf

en de mogelijkheden deze relatie te democratiseren. Op deze manier was de theoretische heroverweging verbonden met de "herwaardering van de democratie" in linkse kringen in Latijns-Amerika en elders.

Na een kort overzicht van de geschiedenis van de stad Recife tot 1964, volgt deze studie de ontwikkeling en de rol van de vormen van wijkorganisatie gedurende de periode van Bureaucratisch Autoritarisme (1964-1979), de "democratische opening" en overgang naar een burgerregering (1979-1985). Tenslotte wordt één van de eerste pogingen tot democratisering op gemeenteniveau in een grote Braziliaanse stad, waarbij werd gestreefd naar de "participatie van de georganiseerde sociale bewegingen van de burgermaatschappij", besproken. Gedurende de eerste periode (1964-1979) ontwikkelden zich nieuwe wijkorganisaties waarbij de Katholieke Kerk een grote rol speelde. Tegen het einde van deze periode werd de betekenis van de nieuwe organisaties steeds meer gedacht in termen van "nieuwe sociale beweging" waarvan een belangrijke bijdrage aan een eventuele transformatie van de Braziliaanse samenleving werd verwacht. Deze nieuwe betekenisgeving en de praktische uitwerking daarvan, waren een bron van spanning omdat zij ertoe tenderden de discursieve en organisationele kaders van de Kerk te buiten te gaan. Tegelijkertijd was de Kerk onderhevig aan de gevolgen van de conservatieve heroriëntering in Rome en de veranderingen in de Braziliaanse Kerk als gevolg van het democratiseringsproces. In de daaropvolgende periode (1979-1985) deed de militaire regering pogingen de overgang naar een burgerregering in de gewenste banen te sturen. Dit ging gepaard met pogingen om de door de oppositie gesteunde wijkorganisaties de wind uit de zeilen te nemen. De verschillende pogingen om de hegemonie over wijkorganisaties te verwerven, resulteerden in een snelle groei van het aantal organisaties en een grotere verscheidenheid. Wijkorganisaties ontwikkelden in deze omgeving, die nieuwe mogelijkheden opende, een eigen dynamiek. De gemeentelijke verkiezingen van 1985 werden in Recife gewonnen door een links "volksfront". Participatie en gemeentelijke democratisering waren belangrijke thema's in de verkiezingscampagne en dit resulteerde in experimenten in gemeentelijke democratisering. Ondanks deze relatief gunstige omstandigheden, bleken de groepen van woordvoerders van de plaatselijke "stedelijke sociale bewegingen" niet in staat het initiatief op dit gebied te behouden en levensvatbare voorstellen te formuleren. Ondertussen begonnen de organisaties in de wijken deel te nemen in de democratiseringspolitiek van het nieuwe gemeentebestuur. Mede als gevolg van de gebrekkige articulatie tussen de organisaties in de wijken en de overkoepelende organisaties en van de politieke verhoudingen gedurende eerste jaren van de Braziliaanse *Nova República* resulteerden de experimenten in democratisering op gemeenteniveau nauwelijks in institutionele hervormingen.

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Against the background of the ongoing debate on 'urban social movements' in Brazil, this study aims to reconstruct the development of neighborhood associations in the north-eastern city of Recife (Pernambuco) between 1964 and 1988. It follows the trajectory of neighborhood associativism and its role in urban policies through the period of Bureaucratic Authoritarianism (1964-1979), the gradual political 'opening' and the transition to a civilian government (1979-1985). Finally, it discusses one of the first large-scale experiments in municipal democratization carried out by a left-wing administration that sought to promote 'the participation of the organized social movements of civil society' (1985-1988).

Willem Assies, an anthropologist, researched this study on location in Brazil and in Amsterdam at the Center for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) from 1984 to 1991.

The Center for Latin American Research and Documentation (CEDLA) conducts and coordinates social science research on Latin America, publishes and distributes the results of such research, and assembles and makes accessible documentary and scholarly materials for the study of the region. The Center also offers an academic teaching program on the societies and cultures of Latin America.