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Interest groups in Brazil: a new era and its challenges

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This article provides general and specific insights into Brazil's developing interest group system. In doing so, it presents a theoretical foundation for understanding this group activity, past and present. The general insights of the role of interest groups under limited political participation and authoritarian regimes down to the 1980s plus the period of democracy since then, provide background for the specific insights of the article. The specifics focus on three aspects of Brazil's contemporary interest group activity: (1) utilization of a neo-institutional analytical approach for understanding the interest group environment; (2) an analysis of the types of lobbying activity that takes place in Brazil today, including a case study; and (3) an assessment of the level of development of the group system by placing it in a comparative perspective with both advanced liberal democracies and other Latin American countries. The findings show that Brazil is, indeed, taking on many of the characteristics of a developed interest group system; but its past, its political culture, its political economy, and, paradoxically, its new-found status as an international power, work to present several challenges to its group system and thus to a full democratization of the country. Copyright © 2014 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

INTRODUCTION

Since the early 2000s, Brazil has gained increasing international attention for a number of reasons. One is that it has been designated as a BRICS country (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), viewed as the five major emerging economies of the world. Second, in its quest to secure status among the world's leading nations, Brazil hosted a major international environmental conference in 2012 and gained an even higher profile by securing the World Cup for football (soccer) for 2014 and the Olympic games for 2016 (Rohter, 2012). When, in October 2009, the world learned that Rio de Janeiro had been selected for the 2016 Olympics, Brazilian President Luiz Inácio da Silva (popularly known as "Lula"), commented "our hour has arrived" (Judd, 2011, p. 8). A third reason is that, in June 2013, Brazil hit the headlines across the world because of mass street demonstrations (termed manifestations by Brazilians). These protests highlighted the political paradox of the government spending billions of reais (the Brazilian currency) to get ready for the World Cup and the Olympics while extreme poverty persists all across the nation (Romero and Neuman, 2013).

The course of the demonstrations offers important insights into Brazil's evolving interest group system and how this relates to the nation's developing pluralist democracy. In focusing on the Brazilian interest group system, this article has four purposes: (1) to provide a general overview of the contemporary group system; (2) to explore the evolving process of lobbying activity, past and present; (3) to present a theoretical context for understanding the country's past and present group activity; and (4) to place Brazil's developing group system in a comparative context.

Interest group activities are often reported in the Brazilian media, although usually from a sensationalist perspective, such as in covering and exposing corruption. Regarding academic work, as Brazil is one of the major countries in the region, there has been more written on its interest group system than

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on most Latin American countries, but to date, no general scholarly treatment. Although now over 40 years old, Philippe Schmitter's (1971), *Interest Conflict and Political Change in Brazil*, written during the military dictatorship, explores the development of group activity in the 20th century down to the late 1960s. The book stresses the importance of political culture and particularly the corporatist element in Brazilian group development. Although there are lasting characteristics of interest group activity that Schmitter identified, the past 40 years has seen many changes in Brazilian interest group activity. Scholarship has not kept up with these changes, however.

Lack of focus on interest groups as such means that there is little literature in English on the Brazilian group system and only a small amount in Portuguese. Furthermore, the work that has been produced is mostly case studies of specific interests, such as Schneider's (2004) work on Brazilian business associations. Some Brazilian scholars have also produced case studies (e.g., Araújo, 2008; Baird, 2012; Mancuso, 2007; Ramos, 2005; Taglialegna, 2005). Understandably, these studies are narrowly focused and say little, if anything, about the general context and operation of interest groups in Brazil's increasingly pluralist system. Moreover, an interest group approach is rarely used to understand the nation's past or present political system or its policy process. For instance, neither a recent chapter on what shapes public policy in Brazil (Alston *et al.*, 2008) nor a book on Brazilian politics (Montero, 2005) mentions interest groups as political organizations or lobbying. As in other Latin American countries, the focus has been on social movements, such as the landless movement, and on elite organizations and cliques or power groups (as they are referred to in this special issue of the journal).

Original research and data sources on the Brazilian interest group system are also sparse.[1] To get a picture of the group scene, past and present, it is necessary to extrapolate from related sources, such as political histories, case studies of policy-making, and group and organization websites. This article draws on these existing sources but mainly on the lead author's doctoral work (Oliveira, 2004), her post-doctoral research, and interviews conducted with political consultants, group leaders, and government officials in Brasília and São Paulo in 2012 and 2013. The article's methodology combines a descriptive explanation for the general overview and a new institutional approach for analyzing the specific aspects of the system.

To set the scene, we first provide background on political and economic development and on contemporary government and politics. This is followed by an explanation of the neo-institutional approach and its particular relevance to Brazilian interest group activity. Next comes a description of the interest group system under restricted political participation and authoritarian regimes, followed by an overview of the contemporary group system. Then a case study of the formulation and consideration process of the Brazilian Biosafety Law (1995–2005) is used to illustrate recent developments in group activity. The next section considers the relationship between the group system and the democratic process. The conclusion summarizes the connection between the interest group system and the political system and briefly comments on where Brazil's group system fits in relation to other Latin American countries.

FACTORS SHAPING BRAZIL'S INTEREST GROUP SYSTEM: POLITICAL AND SOCIOECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONTEMPORARY POLITICS AND GOVERNMENT

Skidmore, Smith, and Green (2014) refer to Brazil as "the awakening giant," because of its economic potential and increasing role on the world stage. In this and other ways, Brazil is different from most countries in the region (Wiarda, 2014). It accounts for close to a third of the land area of Latin America and over half of South America (the southern sub-region of Latin America) and is the fifth largest country in the world. At an estimated 200 million in 2014 (World Population Statistics, 2014), its population also ranks fifth in the world and that year accounted for over half of the 386 million inhabitants of South America and a third of the estimated 570 million of Latin America overall. Moreover, Brazil has the largest number of Roman Catholics of any country in the world. And in contrast to the rest of Latin America, Brazilians speak Portuguese—not Spanish.

As to its economy, Brazil is by far the largest in the region and ranked at seventh in the world in 2012, just behind the United Kingdom, with the United States at number 1. By 2016, Brazil is expected to overtake the UK and France. Brazil has a gross domestic product larger than that of all other South American countries combined (Judd, 2011, p. 8). The

[1]There is, however, a comprehensive study of group activity in the Brazilian Congress currently being conducted, titled "Governance and Representation: Interests representation in Congress and the role of interest groups in the decision making process." The coordinator of the project is Manoel Duarte Santos of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais). The results of this study will become available through publications over the next 5 years of so.

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only other regional economies that make the world's top 25 are Mexico at 14th and Argentina at 25th (World Bank, 2014).

Yet, in several ways, Brazil is very similar to other Latin American countries. This is especially true of its political development since 1889, and particularly in the 20th century. As a central aspect of all political systems, from the most authoritarian to the most democratic, the interest group system in Brazil has simultaneously been shaped by these developments and, in turn, shaped the nature of the various regimes. Moreover, Brazil's contemporary interest group system is a product of both the nation's differences and similarities with the rest of Latin America. Most of all, however, as this article explains, Brazil's contemporary group system is primarily the product of the following: its deeply embedded political culture, particularly the private and public nature of "family" and "family loyalty"; the legacy of a strong executive; recent developments in the nation's political economy; and the expansion of political pluralism under democracy, particularly an increasing role of the legislature (Congress). All these developments, plus the persistence of old political practices, have major implications for the nature and success of Brazilian democracy.

Political development

Another way in which Brazil differs from other Latin American countries is that it did not achieve sovereign status through a revolution. Instead, it declared its independence from Portugal and established the only monarchy to exist in the region.[2] Independence came under Dom Pedro I in 1822 and, after 1831, his son, Dom Pedro II, with the monarchy lasting until 1889. In line with all countries of the region, however, since the fall of the monarchy, Brazil has alternated between various forms of authoritarianism (both military and civilian) and participatory and democratic government through to the democratic era since 1985. Also like the rest of the region, Brazil's economy has been subject to extensive levels of government control and ownership mixed with private ownership and freedom of enterprise.

Following the end of the monarchy, the First Republic, in which there was limited political participation, ended with the revolution of 1930. For the next 15 years, the dominant figure in shaping the nation was Getúlio Vargas, president from 1930–45 (and again from 1951–54). Vargas' first term was a dictatorship in which in 1937, he established the *Estado Novo* (New State). Congress was dissolved, and executive power, often exercised extra-constitutionally, was firmly established to consolidate power centrally and push civil society in what Vargas saw as a positive direction economically and politically. This involved instituting both state corporatism and state capitalism. Vargas' actions shaped Brazil's political economy and interest group system for many years to come. Parts of his legacy persist today.

Partly as a result of Brazil's participation in the Second World War on the side of the Allies and pressure on Vargas to loosen his dictatorship, the Second Republic came into being in 1945. This expanded political participation, but as the Cold War intensified, some radical elements that had long been in the forefront of Brazilian politics alarmed the military. In particular, the presidency of the left-leaning João Goulart alarmed many in both the middle class and the military with his support for land reform, trade unions, and expansion of aid for the poor. As a consequence, a coup in March 1964 ousted Goulart and instituted a 21-year military dictatorship of so-called bureaucratic authoritarianism in which there was a semblance of pluralism with a government political party and an opposition party. Nevertheless, although the dictatorship was not as repressive as those in Argentina and Uruguay during the same period, opposition was stifled, and disappearances of political critics and other human rights abuses occurred on a major scale.

Growing political opposition to military rule and the world economic crises of the 1970s and early 1980s led the military government to move toward a return to a participatory political system. This involved a period known as the *abertura*—an opening toward democratic governance. In 1985, this culminated in the New Republic, which is the contemporary system operating in Brazil. Aided by the new constitution of 1988, the New Republic has seen a gradual move toward a pluralist democracy with the establishment of several political parties and the re-emergence of several hitherto banned or controlled interest groups, and the establishment of many others. Major economic reforms began in the late 1980s under President Fernando Collor (1990–92) and were continued by President Itamar Franco (1992–95) and particularly by President Fernando Cardoso (1995–2003). These were neoliberal reforms, in line with the Washington Consensus, that opened up the economy to foreign goods and services and sold off many of the state-owned businesses to the private sector.

Although feared as radical by many of his opponents, Lula da Silva, a major opponent of the military

[2]This overview of Brazil's political development and other political background draws, in part, on the works of Blake (2008), Chaffee (2012), Skidmore (2010), Skidmore *et al*. (2014), and Wiarda (2014).

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regime who served as president from 2003 to 2011, was moderate in his years in office and more or less followed the economic policies of his predecessors. Dilma Rousseff, another strong opponent of the military regime, who took office in 2011 as Brazil's first woman president, has also continued economic liberalization policies. Since early 2013, though, Brazil's economy has been faltering, and this has exacerbated political tensions between the rich and poor and Brazil's quest to acquire legitimacy as a world power in the eyes of developed nations.

Contemporary government and politics: a fragmented policy process

Regarding the formal structure of government, Brazil is a federal republic with 26 states and a Federal District in Brasília. The head of state is an elected president who serves a 4-year term and is limited to two terms in office. The legislature is a bicameral national Congress with a Chamber of Deputies (513 members directly elected by citizens for a term of 4 years) and a Senate (81 members directly elected for a term of 8 years) with representatives of 26 states, plus the Federal District of Brasilia. Following the return to democracy in 1979, a multi-party system was re-established. Today, the five major parties are: three right-of-center parties, the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), the Democratic Party (DEM), and the Party of Brazilian Social Democracy (PSDB); the once left-wing but now centrist Workers' Party (PT); and the left-wing Brazilian Socialist Party (PSB). For many years, the PT was led by Lula da Silva, and Dilma Rousseff is also from the PT. There is also an increasing range of interest groups. These are covered in the sections to follow.

Turning to the practical operation of government, which is a major factor in shaping interest group activity, the policy-making process is, in theory, a strong presidential system. In practice, however, the policy process is fragmented. On the one hand, the president appoints his or her cabinet, which theoretically gives the president influence over the operation of the executive bureaucracy; most legislation—as much as 85%—comes from the president and the chief executive; he or she controls the national budget; and the president can act by provisional measures by legislating in urgent and needy circumstances.[3]

[3]Presidential authority to act through provisional measures originating in the constitution of 1946 and was continued by the 1988 constitution. In part, its continuation was based on the need to deal with the extensive poverty in the nation and to aid in developing a welfare state. However, Congress must ratify or reject a provisional measure during the 60 days following issuance of the measure.

This situation led Pereira and Mueller (2004) to develop the "theory of executive dominance" to describe this phenomenon, which, in essence, they argue encapsulates the nature of contemporary Brazilian government. In regard to executive–legislative relations, the constitutional power of the executive has led two other political scientists, Figueiredo and Limongi (1999), to argue that the legislature in Brazil operates to some degree as agents of the executive. Therefore, lobbying in Brazil, and particularly in regard to the Congress, can be viewed as largely reactive to executive actions. Constitutional authority is one thing; however, the realities of practical politics are often quite another.

So, on the other hand, several factors tend to undermine presidential influence. One is the weakness of political parties. Although the Brazilian electoral system is competitive, parties in Congress are only important when the executive needs to have a measure approved (Pereira & Mueller, 2003). Party weakness results, in part, from the youth of many of the parties and a high turnover of Members of Congress, particularly in the Chamber of Deputies. But it is mainly stems from the proportional electoral system that facilitates the election of many legislators representing special interests from agriculture to business to various trade unions. These Members of Congress form blocs or factions representing their particular interests and often place loyalty to their organization or interest above party. For instance, in 2014, 191 Members of the Chamber of Deputies and 11 Senators were members of the agricultural/agribusiness bloc, known in Brazilian political parlance as the "agricultural bunch."[4] In recent years, the agricultural bunch has accounts for about a third of the total Members of Congress. This gives the bloc considerable influence. In fact, it has exercised considerable influence for some time, as we will see below in the case study.

Paradoxically, the increased influence of Congress since the enactment of the Constitution of 1988 also works to fragment the policy process in certain circumstances. For instance, the College of Leaders in the Chamber of Deputies, composed of members from parties with at least six members, the President of the Chamber and the Majority and Minority leaders, sets the agenda for the Chamber. In effect, nothing is considered by the Chamber without agreement between the College of Leaders and the executive branch. Consequently, the College of Leaders possesses considerable power, and no Deputy would dare to vote against it (Figueiredo and Limongi, 1999).

[4]These figures were obtained from the website of the Brazilian Congress accessed on 1 June 2014 at www.camara.gov.br/internet/deputado/Frente_Parlamentar/356.asp

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As a consequence, the term "coalition presidentialism," coined by political scientist Sergio Abranches (1988), is the best way to describe national policy-making in Brazil. This involves the president working to form coalitions in Congress to get his or her proposal through. It involves a system that Brazilians call *fisiologismo*, best described as old-fashioned clientelism and pork-barreling in exchange for votes (Montero, 2005, p. 64; Alston *et al*., 2008).

Added to this is another power center that adds to policy fragmentation—the federal bureaucracy. Almost all policies (including commercial, financial, and industrial development) in Brazil are regulated by federal laws and controlled by federal agencies. This means that federal civil servants exercise considerable political influence. Although the Brazilian civil service has become increasingly professionalized since the return to democracy, there are many entrenched relationships between ministries, other state agencies and client groups and political interests of various types. And whereas presidents and legislators come and go, other than top appointed executive officials, civil servants are more or less administrative fixtures. In addition, federal employees have a strong union.

Finally, the federal system and localism often work to fragment the policy-making process. Vargas weakened federalism in his efforts to centralize Brazil. But for years and still today, many of the governing bodies of many organizations are based on representation from the states, often to the detriment of large metropolitan areas like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. This for many years was true of business associations (Schneider, 2004). And with weak parties, Members of Congress work to represent their constituents, and this often gets in the way of coordinated policy-making.

Although not an exact equivalent, the Brazilian policy-making process exhibits a similar fragmentation to the federal and state systems in the US. In effect, the Brazilian version of separation of powers often leads to political standoffs. Consequently, there is a need for skillful politics on the part of legislative leaders and the president and executive branch personnel to overcome stymied policy-making. Sometimes, this political puzzle can be put together; on other occasions, there is deadlock.

Three major elements of Brazil's contemporary political environment

This fragmented policy process operates in a political environment that has three significant elements. In this case, however, these are largely in contrast with the situation in the US.

As across the rest of Latin America, one of these elements has been the role of the military as a protector of the nation, not just regarding external threats but also domestic law and order. Since the fall of the monarchy, the military has taken on the role of "a moderating influence" (*poder moderador*) in society, and this role was not eliminated by the democratic Constitution of 1988 (Wiarda, 2014). Nevertheless, since 1985, this domestic role has been gradually reduced, and the military no longer has a major presence in presidential cabinets. The military is still a political force to be reckoned with, however, and its activities affect the democratic process. For instance, the military police, which are separate from civilian police and not under civil jurisdiction, play an important role in internal security. They did so in some very heavy-handed responses to the demonstrations of 2013–2014.

The second and third factors of poverty and economic inequality and of corruption are more significant in affecting contemporary politics.

Despite advances in recent years, in a region where poverty is still widespread, and economic inequality is the most extensive of all the regions of the world, Brazilian statistics are far from positive, with major inequalities in education and income distribution. As Chaffee (2012, p. 411) notes: "The income of the top 10 percent of society is twenty-six times the income of the bottom 40 percent. Brazil has the greatest wealth inequalities of any major nation in the world." Even by Latin American standards, based on World Bank data from 2008, Brazil ranked fifth in the region in maldistribution of wealth, with Bolivia having the most maldistributed and Venezuela the least (World Bank, 2008).

Two other aspects of inequality are regional economic variations and land distribution. The south-eastern and southern parts of Brazil are the wealthiest regions producing the bulk of industrial output and commercial services. The São Paulo metropolitan area accounts for about half and, together, the states of Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Rio Grande do Sul for 70% of national industrial output. In contrast, the northeast, primarily an agricultural region, is the poorest area. Like most of Latin America, land is highly concentrated in a few hands, with 2% of landowners owning 50% of the land (Blake, 2008, p. 168). Land reform has been promised by many governments, including the military government of 1964–85; but few steps have been taken in this direction. The inequalities spawned a Landless Movement that has been very active politically.

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As to political corruption (defined here as the illegal use of public resources for private benefit), also like many countries in Latin America and the developing world in general, corrupt political practices of all types persist in Brazil. In 2013, the anticorruption non-governmental organization Transparency International ranked Brazil at 72nd out of over 180 countries in the world in terms of its level of corruption perception (Transparency International, 2014). Denmark was ranked at number 1 as the least corrupt, and Somalia at 175 as the most corrupt. Of the 20 Latin American countries listed in the 2013 survey, Brazil falls at number 4, with Uruguay being the least corrupt at 22nd in the world ranking and Venezuela the most corrupt in the region at 160th.

Despite the attempts of the two most recent presidents—da Silva and Rousseff—to combat corruption and making it a major plank in their election platforms this aspect of Brazilian politics persists. Several of da Silva's staff are in prison for corruption, and some of Rousseff's staff are currently under investigation for taking bribes (Taylor, 2009a; Boadle, 2012). And in April and May of 2014, the Senate launched a major inquiry into alleged corruption within Petrobrás, the state oil company (Romero and Thomas, 2014; *LatinNews Daily Briefing*, 2014). These and similar incidents have inhibited the two most recent administrations from getting things done. Two major steps were taken to increase government transparency and combat corruption with the Freedom of Information Act of 2011 and the Anticorruption Act of 2013. The former provides for the disclosure of government agency actions, including extensive information on their websites; the latter is aimed at prosecuting private businesses and other organizations that engage in corruption.[5] But, as elsewhere in Latin America, this deep-rooted aspect of the political culture makes efforts to combat corruption a continual challenge to which the experiences of the da Silva and Rousseff administrations attest. Working to combat corruption is probably the most challenging aspect of improving the political system and advancing democracy.

The consequences for the perception, role, and understanding of interest groups

When the current influences of fragmented policy-making, poverty and income inequality, corruption, and to some extent, the role of the military are combined with this evolutionary process, we can begin to see why Brazil's group system has taken on its contemporary characteristics. Four fundamental points about the consequence of these influences provide a foundation for the analyses in the rest of this article.

First is the major role that the executive, particularly the presidency, has played in shaping the group system and the nature of political advocacy. In particular, the Vargas dictatorship of the late 1930s and early 1940s and the military regime from 1964 to 1985 placed major controls on group organization and operations and stymied political pluralism, which had long-term consequences. This major influence on group activity shaped the other three fundamental points.

The second is that Brazil has not developed a vibrant civil society. This is in contrast to her South American neighbors Chile and Uruguay, both of which experienced long periods of participatory rule before their military dictatorship took power in the 1970s. In this regard, in his early life as an academic, President Cardoso observed that the Brazilian "bourgeoisie never had effective political organization or pressure instruments" (Cardoso, 1973, p. 148, as quoted by Schneider, 2004, p. 94). Lack of a vibrant civil society combined with weak political parties and a fragmented policy process means that there has been a range of connections between parties and interest groups. For instance, business has been rather divided and not formed strong relationships with parties. Unions, on the other hand, have had a closer relationship, particularly since the 1980s. The Central Union of Workers (CUT) and the PT have had close ties, although CUT has become more independent in recent years; and the old corporatist trade union General Confederation of Workers (CGT) reorganized in 1986 and developed ties with the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party. Generally, however, party–group ties are less extensive than in countries like Chile and Uruguay.

Third, the corruption and special privilege of certain groups under corporatism and the influence of moneyed interests has meant that Brazilians have a particularly negative view of interest groups in a region where they are generally held in low esteem (dos Santos, 2013; Umbelino Lobo, 2013). Even with the Freedom of Information Act and Anticorruption Act, Brazil still has no comprehensive lobby law and thus only limited transparency of political advocacy activity. Plus, media exposés of lobbying corruption exacerbates this negative public attitude to interest groups and undermines acceptance of

[5]For more on the general issue of corruption in Latin American politics and attempts to regulate it in Brazil down to 2010, see the second to last article in this volume, "The contribution of lobby regulation initiatives in addressing political corruption across Latin America."

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their broader role in advancing Brazilian democracy (Umbelino Lobo, 2013).

Fourth, although lobbying activity has increased considerably in Brasília over the past 30 years, the long interruptions in opportunities for political participation by a broad range of civil society groups have meant, in part, that the knowledge of effective lobbying techniques is not widespread in Brazil. According to Schneider (2004, pp. 93–97), even business associations have not been effective political advocates. And although there have been many expressions of the democratic right to vent their political discontent by the less well-off members of society through protests and demonstrations, such as those in 2013–14, the effectiveness of these in terms of policy change often does not materialize.

UNDERSTANDING THE OPERATION OF BRAZILIAN INTEREST GROUPS: AN INSTITUTIONAL APPROACH AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO CORPORATISM

Given the four fundamentals of Brazilian interest group activity just outlined, a theoretical framework for understanding the development and current status of the group system must take these into account. That is, we need a theoretical explanation grounded in the confluence of particular conditions, past and present, which provides a general understanding of the specific evolution and contemporary characteristics of the Brazilian system. We contend that the most appropriate explanation is in the institutional approach and its relationship to corporatism and modified corporatism.

Institutional and historical institutional theory: an overview

With the development of the behavioral approach in political science in the 1960s, the structural–functional perspective focusing on institutions—legislatures, executives, judiciaries, parties, and interest groups, among others—lost favor with many scholars. Institutions were seen as less important in shaping policy than the decisions of individuals. Thus, several new theories, including rational choice, game theory, and elite theory, came into vogue. Since the early 1980s, however, there has been a reaction to this downplaying of institutions. Their explanatory role has been revived often under the mantra "institutions matter." When used in conjunction with other approaches, institutionalism (sometimes referred to as new institutionalism, or neo-institutionalism by Europeans), and its variant of historical institutionalism, are useful theoretical approaches for understanding Brazil's interest group system.

There are several variations on institutionalism, and its literature is extensive (Gorges, 2004). In essence, however, and for our purposes, the institutional approach is as follows. To quote Thelen (1991, p. 22), institutionalism is "concerned with illuminating how institutional arrangements shape political outcomes by structuring relationships among contending social groups." In general, new institutionalists focus on two aspects of politics: the conditions under which the institutional environment has an effect on politics: and institutional change and the process of institutionalization. As regards the policy process, they argue that the institutional environment shapes the goals and means of the participants in developing policy. In turn, this environment is shaped by two major forces: the state and political interests. Thus, new institutional analysis of interest groups attempts to explain the relationship between institutional structures, interest intermediation, policy choice, and policy impact (Gorges, 2004, p. 64).

The variation of historical institutionalism applies the institutional approach in a historical context to explain the development of power groups, interest, and interest group systems and their effect on policy. Over time and in contemporary politics, institutions and those involved in politics—elected officials, civil servants, lobbyists and group leaders, political party officials, and so on—are interdependent. The actions and patterns of operation of one affect the actions of the others. Institutions affect and constrain those involved in politics, and in turn, their actions shape institutions.

Two debates have been central to the institutional approach: that regarding the definition of institutions and the extent of the role that institutions play in socioeconomic and political life. Whereas most scholars include formal institutions (such as legislatures and executives and their various committees and agencies) and informal institutions (such as informal rules, like those regarding seniority in a legislature) in their definition, others go further and include such factors as social norms of various types and class structure (Thelen, 1999). For our purposes, the second definition is most appropriate. This is because, similar to the rest of Latin America, as formal institutional practices have been slow to develop in Brazil, politics and interest group activity have been particularly shaped by the informal institutions of social and cultural norms. As explained later, the influence of the institution of the private and public family is particularly all-pervasive.

As to the second debate, which, in essence, is about the extent to which institutions matter, there

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are three contending perspectives. The first school, rational choice institutionalists, view those involved in institutions as utility maximizers. The second, historical institutionalists, criticise the rational choice perspective for not taking into account personal preferences and the interaction of various groups over time, which is the motive force of institutional development. The third approach, that of sociological institutionalists, see what amounts to the need to use the broad definition of institutions, outlined earlier, as essential for understanding the real role and impact of institutions. We base our analysis on this sociological institutional approach.

The institutionalism–corporatism link and its relevance to the Brazilian case

Even from this short overview, it is clear that the institutional approach is particularly relevant for understanding the development of societies that have experienced a major role of the state and its involvement with prominent interests in the form of state corporatism and neo-corporatism. As Collier and Collier (1979, p. 967) have commented, corporatism "takes as its starting point the role of the state in shaping interest representation." The state plays an active role as the architect of political order, favoring and promoting some groups at the expense of others and therefore profoundly affecting group dynamics (Gorges, 2004, p. 65). This is the case with all types of corporatism, from a brand of state corporatism highly controlled by the state to a form of societal or neo-corporatism that is part of a pluralist democratic system. In the words of Schmitter (1982, p. 260), "the state is a constitutive element engaged in defining, encouraging, regulating, licensing and/or repressing the activities of associations."

Given Brazilian history and particularly the role of government and its use of various forms of corporatism, plus the nature of informal cultural and social institutions, the institutional approach has much to offer in developing a theoretical framework for understanding the nation's group system.

With regard to formal institutions, there are several reasons that make the institutional approach particularly appropriate. First, although other explanations have insights to offer, such as rational choice, various theories of pluralism, and particularly elitism, these alone do not explain Brazil's interest group system, past and present (Ramos, 2005). Including the role of institutions, and particularly government, is essential. In fact, we argue that the institutional approach should be the central element in any such theoretical explanation. It has major relevance to the development of the system and its contemporary characteristics.

Second, and a related point, as we have noted, Brazil has a long history of government involvement in society. This has been the case in both periods of authoritarian rule and participatory government, through the ownership of enterprises like the state oil company Petrobrás, as well as the government's major funding of infrastructure and events like the World Cup and Olympics. Because it is the government, particularly the national government, that has created and shaped many of the prominent institutions, including, as we will see later, many advocacy associations, institutional influences are central to understanding group activity. Furthermore, government decision makers are not neutral participants and have used the government's institutional capacity to shape the group system.

Third, the tradition of a strong executive has shaped much of the way that power groups, interests, and interest groups have gone about doing their political business. Even in the contemporary democratic era, with more power in the Congress and a fragmented policy process compared with authoritarian times, the presidency is still the major power broker. And regarding increased Congressional influence, institutions such as the College of Leaders and Congressional committees wield considerable influence, as do the representation of various special interests through Members of Congress and Congressional blocs supporting them. Moreover, because of its major role, the government has been an important lobbying force, particularly since the return to democracy. To be sure, various agencies and levels of government are major lobbying force in all democracies; but the history of major government involvement in Brazil has perhaps made lobbying by the government more significant over time than in the developed democracies.

Fourth, and as in Latin America in general, because of the colonial heritage and debt crises, among other factors, international institutions have worked to shape elements of interest group activity in Brazil. This includes national governments, particularly the US and some European countries, as well as agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

For all these reasons, over time and currently, institutions have really mattered in shaping Brazilian interest group activity. And even though Brazil has become less and less corporatist, this element of new and historical institutionalism is a very valuable framework for understanding Brazil's contemporary interest group system. As mentioned earlier, however, this is not to say this theoretical

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approach is the only explanation: it is part of a combination of explanatory factors, as will be seen in the rest of the article.

POWER GROUPS, INTERESTS, AND INTEREST GROUPS UNDER LIMITED PARTICIPATION AND AUTHORITARIANISM

In many ways, the development of Brazil's interest group system (more accurately, its systems of power groups, interests, and formal interest groups) under the cycle of restricted participation and authoritarianism has much in common with the experience in other Latin American countries and those with similar histories throughout the world. In other ways, it manifests unique features. Down through the transition to democracy in the late 1980s, the interrelationship of these common elements and particular Brazilian circumstances falls into five periods reflecting the political developments outlined earlier in the article.

From independence to the first Vargas presidency

The size and diversity of Brazil have meant that it has always had a variety of interest groups, many of which have reflected the regional divisions in the nation and the federal system. Yet, the stability and relative freedom provided by the monarchy and the peaceful transition to the First Republic in 1889 meant that institutionalized interests were slower to develop than in other Latin American countries with more turbulent histories, such as Uruguay, Chile, and Argentina (Wiarda, 2014, pp. 106–107).

To be sure, Brazil had a similar array of power groups to other Latin American countries during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, such as the military, the Catholic Church, large landowners, and business interests. As we saw, however, the military was not a dominant interest in government. And although the Catholic Church is a prominent force in society, the separation of church and state in 1890 worked to undermine its political influence. Agriculture and business certainly organized in these years and particularly after the First World War, mainly through local and state associations. For instance, the major center of economic activity in the nation, the state of São Paulo, established its major industrial association, the Central Industrial Association of the State of São Paulo (CIESP) in 1928 (Schneider, 2004, p. 98).

The first labor organizations were established among dock and railroad workers in the 1880s and were largely self-help associations (Skidmore, 2010, pp. 90–92). Then, in the early years of the 20th century, as industrial centers grew, labor unions became more militant. On a par with Argentina, many unions were run by anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists, and these unions staged a series of strikes (Skidmore et al., 2014 pp. 313–314). In the 1920s, CIESP and the unions became bitter enemies over various wage and working condition demands by labor.

Vargas' brand of corporatism: from 1930 to 1945

Vargas's first stint as president saw a major institutionalization of economic interests, particularly business and labor. This involved a move toward state corporatism. It was a highly concentrated and rapid process of institutionalization taking place in less than two decades in contrast to the formalization process in other Latin American countries, like Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay, which took place over half a century or so. Second only to the period since 1985, these years of Vargas' rule have had the most influence on the contemporary interest group system.

In an attempt to deal with the political fragmentation resulting from federalism and years of industrial strife and to put Brazil on a new path of economic development, through a series of acts, decrees, and constitutional provisions, Vargas organized business (particularly industry) and labor into compulsory sectoral and encompassing organizations or *sindicatos* (Schneider, 2004, p. 100). To comply with the 1931 law, CIESP changed its name to the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo (FIESP). Then, in 1933, FIESP, together with the industrial federations in the states of Rio de Janeiro and Rio Grande do Sul, created the Industrial Confederation of Brazil, renamed the Confederation of National Industry (CNI) in 1939. Unlike Mexico and Chile, Brazil has never had an economy-wide business organization embracing all sectors of business.

Cultivating an image as *pai dos pobres* (father of the poor), Vargas sought to aid the mass of impoverished workers flooding into the cities from rural areas by striking a bargain with the unions. The minimum wage was raised, and a social security system introduced that provides the foundation of the social welfare system to this day. Strikes and lockouts were declared against the public interest, and a system of state-sponsored unions was organized in which membership was compulsory. Sector unions all eventually became members of the encompassing CGT established in 1945. This *quid pro quo* arrangement kept labor under control and supportive of the government (Chaffee, 2012, p. 400; Blake, 2008,

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p. 168). For those unions and members that did not buy into the plan, the government used the law, intimidation, and even violence to force compliance.

The corporatization of agriculture did not come until early in Vargas' second stint as president (1951–54). The Brazilian Rural Confederation was established in 1951 and later became the National Confederation of Agriculture (CNA). CNA underwent a major reorganization and transformation after the return to democracy and is a major force in the political arena on behalf of agriculture today.

A major factor contributing to the long-term institutionalization of major economic interests was that along with compulsory membership in business *sindicatos* and unions came compulsory membership dues. The fact that a portion of these dues was returned to the associations and union organizations for training and other purposes gave these corporatist entities a major financial foundation. In particular, it gave business a major political prominence in Brazil for more than two decades following Vargas' dominance of the nation' politics. This funding was, in part, a factor that turned business' initial opposition to Vargas' program of state capitalism, in which the government established and owned major production facilities, such as steel manufacturing and petroleum, into tacit support.

The Second Republic: pluralist beginnings

From the bloodless coup that removed Vargas in 1945 until the military coup of 1964, Brazil saw the beginnings of a pluralist interest group system develop alongside the corporatist system established by Vargas. A new constitution came into force in 1946, Congress was reopened, free and fair elections were held, and a multi-party system developed. The 1950s saw the peak of success of corporatist entities like the CNI and FIESP. Vargas' system was too rigid to be adaptable to Brazil's changing economy. To fill the void, non-corporatist organizations in business developed in such industries as automobiles, chemicals, and electrical equipment. The political representation of business began to fragment (Schneider, 2004, p. 104).

This period also saw the origins of the bloc system in Congress made possible by the proportional representation electoral system that weakened political parties. As many as 13 parties were represented in Congress during the Second Republic. Advocacy techniques, such as mass demonstrations, reappeared; old interests and interest groups, such as individual businesses and students, reasserted themselves; and new ones emerged, such as women and rural workers and the landless. It was, in fact, President Goulart's encouragement of rural workers to organize that was partly the cause of his downfall as it raised the ire of large landowners.

Large landowners, who had a major bloc in Congress, were just one of several power groups that maintained their influence during the Second Republic's process of interest group pluralization. The military was very much in the wings; though some Air Force officers rebelled soon after the election of Juselino Kubitschek (1956–61) as president (Blake, 2008, p. 161). Perhaps more of a foundation of the military's long-term influence as a power group over the years was the establishment in 1949 of the Superior War College that not only trained many future politicians but had, and continues to have, a major role in policy-making. Its significant number of both military and civilian alumni form a loose power group in itself (Wiarda, 2014, p. 116). Then there was the Catholic Church that reasserted itself in these years. The Brazilian National Confederation of Bishops (CNBB) became more politically active. The Church was very divided over Goulart's policies, however. In the northeast, some priests helped the landless occupy vacant lands, whereas demonstrations of the faithful against the Goulart government helped in its downfall.

Finally, always in the wings of the political stage as a potential power group was the US, especially in these years of the Cold War and fear of communism and because of Goulart's perceived flirting with socialism of various types. Although, likely, the US did not take an active role in helping to oust Goulart, even though Washington, D.C. opposed many of his policies (Wiarda, 2014, p. 109).

Military dictatorship: the stymieing of interest articulation

The overthrow of Goulart's government in March and April 1964 was a major setback for Brazil's fledgling pluralist interest group system.

Following the coup, the military temporarily closed Congress and an electoral college-type system replaced direct election of the president. The multi-party system was abolished and replaced by a government party, the National Renovating Alliance (ARENA), and a token opposition party, the Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), although these were collections of ideological factions rather than parties.

As to interest groups, the major encompassing trade union, the CGT, was abolished, and unions were strictly controlled and subject to government intervention. Union leaders were chosen by the government to insure industrial peace so as to aid in the military's plan to attract foreign and domestic investment (Wiarda, 2014, pp. 110–111 and 114).

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There were also crackdowns on student activities with the major National Student Union being abolished; and suppression of other forms of political opposition particularly mass protests and demonstrations. Because the military regime needed them, business got somewhat better treatment. Major financial and industrial organizations were, in fact, among the few interests that continued to formally lobby the government focusing entirely on the executive branch. Because of their special access, and as the economy was doing well, organizations like FIESP and CNI initially supported the military regime (Schneider, 2004, pp. 108–112).

By the mid-1970s, however, and following the oil crisis of 1973, the economy turned sour, and the regime began to feel its legitimacy among its supporters slipping away. There had always been strong opposition from the unions, left-wing groups and large segments of the Catholic Church. This was in part because the military had broken with tradition and not returned to the barracks after putting the Brazilian political house in order. They remained in power to institute Brazil's version of bureaucratic authoritarianism. By the late 1970s, an increasing number of interests were organized against the regime. Trade unions were especially active, particularly in São Paulo where the CUT was eventually established in the early 1980s. Large segments of business also turned against the regime, although according to Schneider (2004, pp. 112–114), their opposition was disorganized. Large segments of the Church, too, including the Brazilian National Confederation of Bishops, concerned about human rights abuses, was opposed to the military government by 1980. Many priests worked to aid dissidents.

Other major interests were also opposed to the regime. The Brazilian Order of Lawyers worked for the restoration of the rule of law and legal protections. The Brazilian Press Association opposed censorship and publicized the plight of persecuted journalists. Several women's groups emerged to oppose the government after the International Year of the Woman in 1975. The National Student Union continued to work underground and eventually more openly (Wiarda, 2014, p. 116).

The mounting opposition had its affect on the military government. Originally disdainful of any form of democracy, as they saw bureaucratic authoritarianism as the sure path to political stability and economic success, they eventually moved to a slow transition to democracy with the *abertura*. Even so, over 20 years had been lost in the development of a competitive system of interest group intermediation. Certainly, new interest groups had developed or been reconfigured to oppose the regime; but for many, their largely confrontational tactics did not serve them well for a more sophisticated group system under democracy.

The New Republic: developments since 1985

The next section of this article focuses specifically on Brazil's contemporary group system. So here, we make three brief related observations about key development in the system since 1985.

First, similar to the early Vargas years, the democratic years under the New Republic have seen a rapid process of interest group institutionalization. Unlike the earlier period, however, it has seen a much broader range of groups develop. Moreover, although corporatist processes of access and influence continue to be important, there have been major advances in pluralist group activity and, along with it, the adoption, in some quarters, of more sophisticated strategies and tactics. In effect, the developments that took half a century to evolve in long-standing democracies, like the US and in Western Europe, have been concentrated into less than 30 years, although as explained later, not all the attributes of developed group systems are characteristics of the Brazilian system.

Second, in the major area of economic advocacy, several rivals to corporatist groups emerged or new interests developed. This was the result of several forces: the association of some groups, particularly big business, with the military regime, which discredited them; the giving of certain groups and organizations more political flexibility; and, in some cases, an increase in their effectiveness. As we have seen, in the labor sector, the CUT became a rival to the corporatist CGT. Rural workers first organized by the military regime, as the National Confederation of Workers in Agriculture (CONTAG), became increasingly independent of its corporatist beginnings and affiliated with the CUT in 1996 (Chaffee, 2012, p. 417). In large-scale agriculture, a renewed push for land reform toward the end of the military regime led landowners to bring together several agricultural groups and establish the Rural Democratic Union (UDR), which has had some influence in both the executive and legislative branches (Blake, 2008, p. 168) but is less prominent as an agricultural advocacy group than the CNA.

More than unions and agriculture, however, business has built up a parallel set of voluntary organizations to the existing corporatist ones to promote its role as a political advocate. As noted earlier, this development began in the early 1960s and continued under the military regime as the old corporatist entities like CNI and FIESP were not easily adapted to

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embrace new businesses in a rapidly diversifying economy. So voluntary associations emerged in computers and other forms of technology, among other new businesses. Then in the late 1980s and early 1990s, business leaders in the State of São Paulo, unhappy with FIESP, set up two voluntary organizations, one representing small business and one larger enterprises.

Business in general and CNI in particular did improve their lobbying effectiveness in the 1990s, including a fly-in to Brasília by over 3,000 business leaders in May 1996. But CNI's lobbying efforts languished after the CNI president, Fernando Bezerra, who had been behind the new political strategy, moved to an appointment in the Cardoso administration (Schneider, 2004, pp. 121–122). The general political ineffectiveness of the old corporatist business associations led individual national businesses and multinationals to do much of their own lobbying, and they were generally viewed by the business community as more politically effective than CNI or FIESP (Schneider, 2004, pp. 95–96). However, since Schneider's research in the late 1990s and early 2000s, CNI has considerably revamped its lobbying effort and in 2013 launched a major advocacy network program with its membership, today, it is probably the most professional of the major Brazilian associations.

The third observation about changes since 1985 is a consequence of the first two developments and relates to how Brazil's contemporary interest group system can be described. The pluralization of various aspects of group activity and the development of voluntary and more independent economic interests, means that the present system is a combination of corporatism and pluralism, or modified corporatism as argued by Thomas (2009, pp. 19–22). In this regard, Brazil's group system is far more corporatist than that of Chile, where neoliberal policies began much earlier, but less corporatist than that of Mexico, with its long history of party corporatism that lasted until 2000 and that still has contemporary hangovers.[6]

The importance of government institutions in a constrained pluralist system

This overview clearly shows the major influence that governmental institutions have had on the characteristics of Brazil's interest group system, particularly during Vargas' first stint as president and the military regime from 1964 to 1985. The first was a form of state corporatism, the second was less systematic but, nevertheless, strongly restrictive of interest group activity. Thus the value of new institutionalism for understanding the country's interest group system, past and present.

This influence of government means that Brazil's interest group system developed in a fundamentally different way than those of the US, Canada, and most Western European countries. In these places, interest group pluralism and freedom of the right to associate, to form organizations, and to lobby were foundations of the system (even in neo-corporatist systems like those of Scandinavia, Switzerland, Austria, and post-1949 Germany).

Even though there has now been a sustained period of pluralism of over 30 years, together with elitism and clientelism, corruption, and economic inequality, this history of governmental institutional influence on the interest system has very much shaped Brazil's contemporary political system of political advocacy. These factors have also very much influenced the relationship between interest groups and Brazil's version of democracy.

BRAZIL'S CONTEMPORARY INTEREST GROUP SCENE: STRUCTURE, OPERATION, AND LEVEL OF PUBLIC SUPPORT

In covering the present interest group scene in Brazil, we first provide an overview of the major categories of organizations operating and their strategies and tactics, followed by comments on the role of particular groups and interests, and observations on the influence of culture on contemporary interest group activity.

First, however, some guidelines on the use of terminology of interest group activity and lobbying in Brazil. It will help prevent confusion, not only in this article but also for academics and practitioners as they study or deal with the nation's political advocacy processes. Several terms used in the US and Europe have different meanings or signify different activities in contemporary Brazil. Two examples will illustrate. One is that the term "public lobbying," usually associated with "public interest" lobbying in most democratic societies, in Brazil usually refers to governmental (public) bodies lobbying other governments. A second is the term "public affairs." This does not usually include lobbying, but more often public relations, the organization of professional conferences or other events, and the marketing of products. Government affairs is the term generally used to refer to dealings with government and

[6]For an overview of the extent of corporatism, particularly as it relates to business, in contemporary Chile and Mexico, see the articles on business in these two countries in this volume.

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lobbying. The lesson is that one should not assume that terms used in political advocacy in Brazil are the same as in other countries.

Interest group activity in overview

Insert 1 provides an overview of contemporary Brazilian interest group activity. It identifies six major categories of advocacy entities operating in the national capital in Brasília as well as across the nation and the strategies and tactics that they use. Some brief comments will clarify the information in the insert.

First, the six categories differ slightly from the categorization of interests set out in the introductory article to this issue of the journal. That introduction identified three major types of power groups, interests, and interest groups: individual membership groups, organizational interests (organizations of organizations), and institutional interests, such as government and think tanks. This categorization certainly applies to Brazil; so we are not taking issue with it, as all three standard categories are included in the insert. Given the developing nature of Brazil's interest group system, however, for the purposes of this article, it is more useful to present the lobbying entities in this six-part categorization. It enables us to identify both the prominent forces, such as the continuing importance of power groups, the fundamental importance of government institutions as lobbying forces, the emergence of a lobbying corps, and the variation in the use of strategies and tactics.[7]

The second, third and fourth points relate to strategies and tactics. Second, like other emerging democracies in the region (and around the world), the strategies and tactics range from the most sophisticated, particularly in the case of some businesses—that have for years used lobbyists of various types, contributed to campaigns, and presented information in various forms—to the rather unsophisticated tactics, such as demonstrations with little focus on identifying the political power points or using these protests to open the door for more focused lobbying.

Third, although, as category 6 of the insert indicates, there is a growing area of private lobbying and consulting to aid businesses and other organizations dealing with the government (Cury, 2013; Macário, 2013; Ricardo, 2013; Umbelino Lobo, 2013), contract lobbying as it exists in the US is not a major aspect of this advisors-for-hire business. Many, like Umbelino Lobo Assessoria e Consultoria and Patri, two of the oldest of these firms in Brazil established in the early years of democratization, do tracking and advising for businesses seeking to hire government affairs personnel. These government affairs personnel are essentially in-house lobbyists (Cury, 2013) in the US and European sense. The government affairs profession is, however, a new and developing profession in Brazil, and many Brazilian firms and organizations are only just becoming aware of the need to have representation at the various levels of government. Though some multinationals, like home appliance manufacturer Whirlpool and Dow Chemical, have had such operations in Brazil for many years (Judd, 2011, pp. 14–19).

Fourth, in effect, Brazil has three capitals. One is Brasília, the federal capital that has only existed since 1960 when, through the major efforts of President Kubiitschek the capital was moved from Rio de Janeiro. Another is Rio itself, which is the cultural capital and where Petrobrás has its headquarters and the city that is the center of Brazil's expanding oil industry with the major finds of recent years located in the nearby ocean. A third is São Paulo, the financial capital and the headquarters for most industrial and service companies. This poses a challenge to many businesses and organizations regarding where to locate their government affairs activities. In recent years, however, as Brasília has developed and shed its backwater image, most lobbying entities have an office in Brasília as well as in one or both of the two other "capitals." As Eduardo Ricardo of Patri explains it, more companies:

> …are realizing that, like Washington, D.C. or Brussels, it is important to have a government affairs firm or office in Brasília where all the action happens. It is important to live and breath the environment if you really want to understand what is going on (Judd, 2011, p. 14).

Points 5 and 6 concern the access points and power structure in contemporary lobbying in Brazil.

Fifth is the role that blocs or factions play in the Congress in linking some interest groups with legislators. Unlike in the US and many European countries, having close ties and formally working for an interest groups while an incumbent legislator are not considered a conflict of interest in Brazil. Two examples of such blocs are that of large landowners and Evangelical churches. The agricultural bloc was mentioned earlier.

[7]This six-part categorization of interests expands on the lead author's previous work where a four-part categorization was used. See Oliveira (2004).

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Insert 1

Lobbying Strategies and Tactics Employed by Six Major Types of Contemporary Lobbying Entities in Brazil

Main Characteristics	Major Strategies and Tactics
1. Political Elites and Traditional Power Groups	
These have existed from colonial times and are the basic and original form of advocacy groups. They are informal, non-institutionalized entities. Examples include: the Catholic Church; the military; large landowners and industrialists; and governments and their agencies, both domestic and foreign. Power groups continue to exist today as both formal and informal organizations, sometimes within institutionalized entities. But they decreased relatively in numbers, though were not necessarily less influential, as the interest group system becomes more developed and institutionalized as part of a pluralist democracy.	• Utilization of close social relationships—often family ties—between civil society elites and their power groups with government personnel. • Often, the civil society elites are appointed to government positions and can represent their interest —power group—inside the government. • Most power group–government interactions and influence on policy are informal and conducted behind closed doors. • Influence on policy often involves corrupt practices, although corruption is defined differently over time: what might have been considered acceptable practice a hundred years ago may be considered corrupt today.
2. Private Sector Lobbying	
Performed mainly by the public affairs departments of business associations and individual businesses. Focuses on relations with the legislature and various government agencies, including the president's office.	• Providing technical and political information. • Conducting legislative and political monitoring. • Identifying political allies to aid in defending or promoting issues and proposed legislation. • Improve the association's/company's public image as well as present ideas and information to the public in general.
3. Traditional and Professional Labor Lobbying	
Performed by traditional labor unions (electricians, plumbers, construction workers, etc.) and professional unions (such as teachers and nurses) and their general sector or peak associations. These work to influence the executive and Congress to defend and promote the interests of their members or affiliate organizations.	• Providing information based on cogent arguments. • Tracking legislative and executive activities. • Seeking allies on certain issues. • Mobilizing their members or affiliate unions to ensure visibility with public officials and the public. • Proposing bills and popular initiatives. • Producing publications as sources of information for their members and affiliates, and for government officials, for securing increased political legitimacy regarding their actions with various sectors of society.
4. National Government Agency and State and Local Governmental Lobbying	
Performed by ministries, government-owned companies, regulatory bodies and other national agencies, and by state and local governments. These exert pressure on the executive and Congress to maintain their existing status, including their budgets (and flows of funds to state and local governments), and/or to secure additional benefits.	• Providing information on issues that involve a public agency or a particular government's interests and goals. • Monitoring legislative, executive, and political activities. • Identifying allies to aid in achieving their goals, including using client groups served by the agency or government. • Working to influence the choice of the member(s) who will analyze reports on bills in committees of Congress and in executive agencies, that will affect their interests.

(*Continues*)

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Insert 1
Continued

Main Characteristics	Major Strategies and Tactics
5. Lobbying by New and Outsider Interests and Interest Groups	
Performed by a wide range of two types of interests. One is relatively new on the Brazilian lobbying scene. They include women's groups, environmentalists, human rights interests, new religious interests (such as Evangelicals), and gay rights groups. The second range of interests are more long-standing but outsider, non-establishment interests. These include students, indigenous rights, and landless interests, and the recent movement of 2013 and 2014 against the public cost of the World Cup and the Olympic Games. New and non-establishment interests vary widely in their available resources and sophistication of lobbying skills. Some have major resources and use highly skilled lobbying techniques. Others have less resources but use some traditional lobbying techniques. Still others have minimal resources and often unfocused advocacy goals and little knowledge of effective lobbying techniques.	• In some cases, providing information based on research by their organizations. • Legislative, executive, and political monitoring. • Sometimes seeking allies on issues and joining coalitions to enhance their prospects of political success. • An increasing number use mass lobbying techniques, such as letter-writing and e-mails, usually by mobilizing their grassroots membership. • Some outsider groups, in the past women's groups and currently landless interests, among others, use mass demonstrations and protests to vent their political frustration and to gain public attention. • The recent street protests of 2013 and 2014 have used social media, mainly Facebook, to aid in organizing their demonstrations. The use of such media follows an increasing global pattern of such protests, as in the Occupy Wall Street sit-ins in the US and in several Middle Eastern countries during the Arab spring.
6. Private Lobbying and Political Consulting Firms	

Performed by lobbying and consulting firms, publicity, communication and public affairs agencies, law firms, and political analysts. These represent particular interests, usually businesses and trade associations. They increasingly represent state and local governments and outsider interests that are transitioning to become more accepted interests, such as environmentalists and indigenous rights groups.	• Unlike contract lobbyists in the US but similar to the European Union, for-hire advocates rarely lobby without being accompanied by clients. Lobbyists usually act as facilitators for their clients with public officials, and perform one or more of the following tasks:
	  • Identification of their client's objectives, including the political/advocacy problems they may be encountering.
	  • Tracking legislative, executive, and political activity, and providing analysis of these for their clients.
	  • Advising on strategy and tactics to solve their client's problem(s) by such activities as making appointments with decision makers, presenting them with technical and political information, and taking them to educational events or to visit the client's facilities; presenting a proposal, bill, or an amendment; and developing a communication strategy.
	  • Aiding their client in exerting political pressure.

Source: Developed by the authors.

One member of the blocs, Senator Katia Abreu from the northern state of Tocantines, a well-known national figure, is also a former head of the UDR (Forero, 2013). Although Catholicism is still the major religion, Evangelicals have made major inroads in the past 30 years and now are estimated to account for about 20% of all Brazilian Christians. The Evangelical bloc can count on about 10% of the members of the Chamber of Deputies. Out of necessity, President Rousseff has established an uneasy alliance with the bloc (Bevins, 2012). As indicated earlier, this direct link between interest groups and their supporting blocs in Congress is facilitated by generally weak parties, although, as we have also seen, there are also relationships between interest groups and parties, particularly the unions. Interest groups linked with party leaders generally have more influence than those not linked to these leaders.

Sixth is the role and influence of the federal bureaucracy. To be sure, research shows that

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bureaucracies are significant players in most political systems. So why place emphasis on the bureaucracy in Brazil? There are three good reasons. First, the tradition of state enterprises and corporatism, and the hangovers of both, give it a particular influence in policy-making, likely as much as any bureaucracy in the world, including that of Japan. Second, and a product of the first factor, government agencies have long been geared to deal with other agencies, state and local governments, the presidency, and most recently the Congress. All departments and state agencies and public enterprises have sections or a division that deals with the Congress and other government agencies, similar to what are legislative liaisons in the US and Europe. Third are the phenomena of *papelada* (red tape) and *jeito* (to bend the rules, fix things, or build relationships that can smooth over adverse events or circumstances). Brazil is famous for its red tape, and this causes many lobbying organizations, particularly those from outside Latin America, used to more efficient governments, much political heartburn. This is where *jeito* commonly referred to by its diminutive, *jeitinho*, comes in as we explain more fully later when looking at the role of political culture in contemporary interest group activity (Wiarda, 2014, p. 118; Judd, 2011, p. 19).

Three prominent contemporary interests largely shaped by the international political economy

In this section and throughout the article, we have identified many of the contemporary interests and interest groups, as well as power groups that continue to operate in Brazil. This wide range of advocacy organizations includes business, agriculture, labor, religious groups (both the Catholic Church and Evangelicals), and students' and women's groups as well as the military and a host of government agencies. Space permits only a cursory coverage of other interests currently operating in Brasília, state capitals, and local governments. Three, however, are of particular note because they epitomize the challenges referred to earlier that Brazil's recent development and international status presents for the development of its interest group system. These three interests are the foreign lobby, the environmental movement, and the mass street demonstration—the manifestations—of 2013 and 2014.

A diverse foreign lobby

Like all Latin America countries, Brazil has a long history of the influence of foreign governments and interests. The origin of this influence was, of course, as a colony of Portugal. After independence, Brazil's natural resource extraction and agribusiness economy, many elements of which continue today, meant dependence on exports and the involvement of foreign corporations working to both protect and advance their interests politically (Lopes, 2003). And since the Vargas years and Brazil's industrialization, many international corporations from Mary Kay Cosmetics to Google have set up shop in Brazil. Some, particularly automakers such as Toyota and Volkswagen, set up manufacturing plants. As the population increases and the purchasing power of Brazilians expands, more and more businesses will come to Brazil and seek a political voice and thus become a major element in the range of interests operating in the country. It was these foreign companies, particularly from the US, that were among the first to become involved in political advocacy in Brazil and have broadened the range of lobbying strategies and tactics used to influence the government.

Two other elements of the foreign lobby have had far-reaching influence on Brazil's interest group system since the return of democracy. One has been the institutions that are part of the so-called Washington Consensus, particularly the World Bank and the IMF, which in exchange for loans in times of economic crises required that Brazil move away from state capitalism and pursue neoliberal policies. In the 1980s and early 1990s, these foreign institutional interests—some might call them power groups—were major forces in determining public policy in Brazil. The austerity measures that resulted spawned protests and the development of several interests representing the disadvantaged and led to many non-governmental organizations setting up in Brazil as social aid organizations, some of which took on a political role. In addition, Brazil's membership in regional organizations, such as MERCOSUR (the South American Common Market) adds another external set of interests to its domestic interest group system.

The second element is in many ways a product of the globalization of issues and in some cases the product of so-called post-industrialism: the development of values and causes beyond those of pure economic benefit. In recent years, a host of foreign organizations have come to Brazil to advocate a cause or aid existing Brazilian organizations on various moral, human rights, civil rights, individual rights, and conservation issues, among many other causes. Such groups include: Amnesty International for prisoners' rights; Survival International working to protect indigenous peoples; various church organizations on abortion and gay rights issues; and the National Rifle Association (NRA) from the US. For instance, in 2005, the NRA helped resoundingly defeat a referendum on banning civilian guns despite the high crime rate

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in Brazil (Fock, 2005). Perhaps the most visible foreign advocacy organizations, however, are those for environmental protection and resource conservation that question various types of development, as well as protecting endangered species.

The environmental movement
Brazil's environmental movement, one of the most high profile and effective in the region, is certainly not the sole product of international influences. Air pollutions in megalopolises like Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have led to political activism to deal with this problem and other environmental issues. However, international forces have had a major influence in shaping the environmental movement. The major international interest is the vast region of Amazonia in the north and west comprising 60% of the nation's territory that contains unparalleled plant and animal life as well as over 10% of the world's fresh water. As the rainforest is a major factor in regulating the world's climate and combating climate change, there has long been international concern about deforestation. This began in a major way with the building of the Transamazon Highway under the military regime and has continued under the New Republic. These developments were a major factor in international environmental organizations like the World Wildlife Fund and Greenpeace taking an interest in Brazil. Then, in 1992, in a United Nation's (UN)-sponsored environmental summit in Rio, 500 organizations formed the Amazon Working Group, which remains a major environmental group in Brazil (Blake, 2008, pp. 169-170). The continuing international high profile of this issues was evidenced by the UN's "Rio + 20" sustainable development conference of 2012, to assess progress 20 years after the 1992 meeting.

As in most nations around the world, a major consequence of the rise of the environmental movement in Brazil has been the intensification of political conflict. The core of this conflict has been with developers and landowners, and also with some segments of labor and the indigenous community fearful of losing jobs. The conflict has been particularly intense between landowners wanting to clear land for agriculture and environmentalists as well as those landlords and segments of labor dependent on the forest for their livelihood. Political conflict between the UDR and environmentalists is particularly fierce, with the landowners aided by the rural bloc in Congress and the leadership of Senator Katia Abreu. These efforts have succeeded in thwarting restrictions on some land development (Forero, 2013). On the other hand, environmentalists have had considerable success in convincing businesses to pursue conservation strategies, particularly recycling (Judd, 2011, pp. 25–31).

The manifestations of 2013 and 2014 and beyond?
These manifestations were not the result of foreign interest influence on the Brazilian public policy process but rather of Brazil seeking to expand its reputation and influence in the international community. Although the use of demonstrations as such has long been practiced in Brazil, those of 2013 and 2014 were a new departure in scale and origin for such actions. They may signal a new element in interest group politics, even though their goals are vague and so far unrealized.

The seemingly minor trigger for the protests was a proposed increase in bus fares in São Paulo (Romero and Neuman, 2013). The protesters were loosely associated with the Free Fare Movement or *Movimento Passe Livre* (MPL), an organization advocating decreases in public transportation fares. MPL had emerged a decade earlier in the cities of Porto Alegre, in the far south and Salvador on the northeast coast. Then, it consisted mainly of students and activists.

The June and July 2013 demonstrations are estimated to have included over a million people in cities across the nation. The police brutality against the original protests, who opposed the bus fare hikes, brought out many young middle-class people to protest these actions and also middle-aged workers and parents with children in strollers (push chairs), among other groups. As the protests grew, so did the list of grievances. The unifying force was general anger against bus fare increases, new stadium and infrastructure construction in preparation for the World Cup and the Olympics, heightened inflation, a low minimum wage, and lack of upward mobility (Romero, 2013; *The Economist*, 2013a; *Latin American Weekly Report*, 2013). President Rousseff, the Congress, and several town mayors met some of the demands of the protesters, but not enough to placate them (*The Economist*, 2013b). The protest resumed during Carnival in February 2014, although with smaller crowds.

The 2013 and 2014 manifestations have been the largest in number and the most widespread nationally in Brazilian history, and they indicate some important developments in political advocacy in the country. They show that many Brazilians, largely a new generation who have come of age since the military dictatorship, have little fear in coming out into the streets to vent their disapproval of government actions. The protests show, indirectly at least, that those originally demonstrating believed they could have an effect on public policy: that, in political science terminology, their actions would be politically

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efficacious. The protests also show an increasing ability for mass publics to organize through social media, like Facebook. And they show a rising sense of political consciousness among the poor and less well-off to some of the major issues in Brazilian politics as identified earlier in this article. The protests sent a message to politicians that economic inequality, corruption and subordinating the needs of the poor to promote Brazil's international reputation are concerns worth fighting to change.

On the other hand, the manifestations have only vague goals and exhibit more of the characteristics of a social movement than a focused political advocacy effort. In part, lack of effective leadership caused the protests to dwindle even as early as a month after they began (Garcia-Navarro, 2013). And also the fact that the protests were infiltrated by violent elements like the "Black Bloc", an anarchist group alienated many middle-class people who originally supported the protests (*The Economist*, 2014). Thus, the protesters were unable to cash in on their early political gains to achieve major reforms. This included a promise from President Rousseff to establish a constituent assembly to consider the grievances, which was never set up.

It remains to be seen how future protests will unfold. Brazil's poor showing in the World Cup did not help matters as many see the billions spent on Cup preparations as wasted money. As a result, it is likely that more demonstrations will occur in opposition to the money being spent on the Olympic for 2016. However, although the authorities were caught by surprise in June 2013, they are now well prepared to deal with such manifestations.

Interest groups, lobbying, and the contemporary political culture

Empirical evidence from several studies demonstrates that the political culture (and the process of political socialization) in a nation, state, or locality has a major influence on the role of interest groups (Nie, 2004; Hrebenar, McBeth, and Morgan, 2008; Thomas, 2009). Among other factors, political culture appears to shape: the attitude of the public toward interest groups and lobbyists and their level of legitimacy; the extent to which citizens join and utilize advocacy organizations; the type and level of acceptance of various strategies and tactics; and the extent (or lack) of lobby regulation. The influences of political culture certainly appear to be evident in contemporary Brazil even with the limited amount of original research that has been conducted. Here, we first make some general comments on the essence of this culture. This is followed by four specific aspects of its influence to briefly expand upon points mentioned earlier in the article: long-standing methods of personal lobbying; the attitude of the public and public officials to interest groups; an aversion to and lack of understanding of the need to lobby; and a minimal knowledge of sophisticated advocacy techniques.

Regarding the general foundations of Brazilian political culture, this differs considerably from the largely egalitarian culture of the US and the countries of western and northern Europe. From the very early stages of Portuguese colonization, the family, particularly its hierarchical and patriarchal elements, and personal relationships were key. The family took precedence over the state, the individual, and any economic unit, particularly businesses. This dominance of the family and kin relationships influenced politics (Freyre, 1973; Rohter, 2012, Chap. 2; Judd, 2011, pp. 18–19). These relationships persist to this day rather akin to the political cultural traits of southern Europe. One legacy of this, particularly the hierarchical element, is a "top down" psychology in society where, for many Brazilians, the government and politicians are seen as very remote (dos Santos, 2013). This perception of distance from the government, and an aversion to interacting with it, was reinforced by the military regime that ended just 30 years ago. One of the many consequences of this essentially elitist political system and non-involvement of the average citizen is that grassroots lobbying has been slow to develop, although it has gained some momentum in recent years among certain groups as noted earlier (Judd, 2011, p. 16).

Historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1995) argued that a particular way that this social phenomenon of the family is dominant in Brazilian politics is in guiding actions in the form of the "cordial man." This does not mean that conflict and disagreements cannot take place between human beings. Rather, it refers to the predominance of personal relationships rather than technical expertise or meritocracy in dealings in the public—state or government—sphere, and the difficulty in distinguishing between the public and private spheres.

Turning to specifics, the family tradition has shaped the long-standing methods of personal lobbying. Although the exchange of technical information between political advocates and public officials is important in Brazil, it takes second place to personal relationships as a sort of extension of the family. This means that introductions of advocates to public officials through friends or associates have a high degree of political legitimacy and less so than a technical expert approaching a public official on his or her own: although a friend or acquaintance who is also a technical expert is ideal. Fernando Cardoso's

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(1975) identification of bureaucratic rings (intimate personal networks) under the military regime is evidence that these types of relationships exist under both authoritarian and democratic systems.

This sociopolitical phenomenon of the family and cordial man places an even higher premium on personal relationships in the lobbying business in Brazil than its major importance in all political systems. It also likely accounts for the minimal role of the third-party contract lobbyist in Brazil and the use of in-house lobbyists to deal with public officials, particularly politicians. Moreover, the fact that it is customary not to deal with an issue at the first meeting with a policy maker but to spend time talking about personal issues is also likely another manifestation of the sociopolitical cultural environment resulting from the influence of family and the cordial man.

Perhaps the most all-pervasive product of this sociopolitical cultural environment is *jeitinho* (fixing things, particularly problems) with the need to do so often arising because of the fabled Brazilian *papelada* (red tape), a long-standing legacy of the Iberian tradition of excessive bureaucracy (Umbelino Lobo, 2013). This is a deeply ingrained aspect of the national and local political culture (Rohter, 2012, pp. 14–17, 45–49, and 56–57). In many ways, *jeitinho* is the grease that makes the creaking political system run and contributes to blurring the line between the private and public spheres of Brazilian life.

As to the attitudes of the public and public officials to interest groups and those who represent them, using various sources, we can glean a fairly accurate assessment. As in long-standing group systems, the public tends to have a negative view, whereas public officials have a more positive perspective (Benedict, 2004, pp. 135–138). One stark example of this public attitude is that of the political role of large landowners. The public views their lobby in a very negative light (Garcia-Navarro, 2013). Political corruption and abuse of power are also associated with interest groups and their lobbyists. The persistence of *jeitinho*, which many members of the public may view as often leading to corruption, may reinforce this perception, as does the lack of comprehensive lobby regulations to make the activities of interests transparent.

The more positive attitude of public officials is, in large part, due to the value they see of the role of interest groups and their lobbyists as purveyors of information (Cury, 2013; Macário, 2013; Ricardo, 2013; dos Santos, 2013; Umbelino Lobo, 2013). The interest group–legislator connection bloc system in Congress is also evidence of the positive way that advocacy groups are viewed by many politicians. Though politicians and civil servants alike are not blind to the problems that interest group activity can produce and, as in most long-standing democracies, are very aware of the negative attitude toward lobbyist. As a result, government agencies and businesses do not use the term "lobbyist" for those who engage in political advocacy on their behalf, although many of these, including some government affairs personnel, will admit that, in effect, they are lobbyists (Cury, 2013).

Then there is the aversion to and lack of understanding of the need to lobby among many Brazilians. Although some interests, particularly big business (including foreign businesses), unions, and several professional groups, have lobbied for generations, many businesses and other organizations do not lobby for several reasons (Judd, 2011, p. 16). One is the general aversion to interest groups considered earlier and not wanting to get involved with a "dirty business." Another is the hangover from the military regime when belonging to an interest group could have dire consequences. As a consequence, many of the younger generations brought up during the military regime did not go through the process of political socialization regarding the value of interest groups; they were schooled only in the negative effects of special interests. So in contrast to the public in most advanced democracies, where even though they have a skeptical attitude toward interest groups, they still see their advantages and join them by the tens of millions and strongly defend their right to do so, many Brazilians do not see the positive political benefit that can accrue from political advocacy groups.

Lack of political socialization during and since the military regime added to the lack of understanding among many Brazilians of the working of their government is probably at the root of the minimal knowledge of sophisticated advocacy techniques. Again, what we might call the advocacy elite, mainly major economic interests, have long understood and utilized a range of lobbying techniques and adjusted these to changing political circumstances, particularly the transition from military to democratic rule. And increasingly, several other interests, including environmental and religious groups, are learning fast, as set out in Insert 1. Likely, however, in part, the modern-day effects of family hierarchy and social elitism led many Brazilians to feel that being involved in politics is either not for them or above them. Many citizens, and even some organizations, do not realize that they can go to the government to present their cause (Judd, 2011, p. 16).

Moreover, several interests, schooled as they were in the protests of the latter years of the military regime and the Brazilian penchant for manifestations, have not moved beyond this indirect form of lobbying (dos Santos, 2013). They are not aware or do not

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have leaders who understand the new multifaceted nature of lobbying under democracy. This involves the need to monitor the activity of not only close to 600 federal deputies and senators, the president's office, federal ministries, and public companies but also state governors, deputies, and local government officials, as well as the new role of the courts (Aragão, 1994). As a consequence, some student groups, indigenous interests, and grassroots-generated political advocacy movements, like the manifestations considered earlier, do not take their lobbying efforts to the next stage by honing it down to specific issues and developing a lobbying strategy that is focused and sustained.

The evolving Brazilian political culture

The elements of political culture as they affect interest group or any other political activity are certainly slow to change. But there is evidence that a political culture more conducive to political advocacy is developing. More and more businesses are realizing the value of hiring a government affairs person and even creating government affairs departments (Ricardo, 2013; Umbelino Lobo, 2013). As a result, the government affairs profession is expanding as is the number of consulting and lobbying firms. Moreover, several organizations now use a multi-pronged lobbying strategy of indirect lobbying—including demonstrations, media, and public relations campaigns—and direct lobbying of the Congress and the executive. These include environmentalists, elements of the landless movement and of the women's lobby.

Change will likely come much more slowly to the long-standing preferred methods of personal lobbying, including *jeitinho* and related practices. The tradition of personal lobbying is perhaps the most fundamental influence of political culture and results in a major contrast in the key political advocate/lobbyist–policy maker relationship with that of many highly developed group systems. We examine some of its implications for the relationship between interest groups and democracy after presenting a short case study.

A CASE STUDY: THE BRAZILIAN BIOSAFETY LAW OF 2005

A practical example of the modern dynamics of Brazil's interest group system illustrates the developments since the return to democracy and the importance of institutional structures to the outcome of policy-making. The example chosen is the biosafety law. This legislation involved many interests and interest groups, was laden with emotion, and illustrates several of the points about Brazilian political advocacy explained earlier.

Background to the law and its initial advocates and opponents

The major purpose behind enacting a biosafety law was to provide for the safe manufacture, inspection, and licensing of genetically modified foods (GMFs). The proposal also included provisions for research on human cloning through the use of human embryos in stem-cell research (Taglialegna, 2005). The interests and interest groups with a stake in the outcome of this proposal were wide-ranging. Partly because of this large number of stakeholders, passage of the law was long drawn out and very conflictual, taking 10 years from conception to enactment. There were two major sources of conflict: the degree of regulation required in licensing GMFs and the choice of which government agency or agencies should do the regulating. These two issues became politically intertwined. The stem-cell issue also proved contentious, although of secondary concern. Nevertheless, the issue played a crucial role in the final outcome of the biosafety proposal.

As with most legislation at the federal level, the primary sponsor of the law was the executive branch, although the executive was far from united on the proposal. The divisions within the executive, over the extent of the stringency for licensing GMFs, and the agency or agencies that would regulate them provided a rallying point for the stakeholders pro and con the lobbying effort.

Some interest groups argued that it would be sufficient if CTNBio, a multidisciplinary commission made up of scientists and linked to the Ministry of Science and Technology, was in charge of the process and had the final word. Others believed that more stringent regulations were necessary and argued, among other things, that the burden of proof should be on the developer to show no unreasonable harm from GMFs; and that environmental well-being be given major consideration. These interests argued that the Ministry of the Environment, among other ministries, should issue specific certificates, such as an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for GMF companies. Only after this would CTNBio evaluate each case carefully. Clearly, obtaining several certificates from different government bodies would make it much more difficult for a company to secure a license.

Major interests favoring minimal regulation included business corporations, agricultural and industry associations, and government agencies. Among the major business were Monsanto, Novartis, AgrEvo, and Pioneer DuPont. The associations

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included CNA, the Brazilian Organization of Cooperatives, the National Biosafety Association, the Brazilian Rural Society, the Brazilian Association of Seeds Producers, the Brazilian Association of Vegetable Obtainers, and the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science. Besides the Ministry of Science and Technology, these organizations had the support of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fishing, and Supplies, and of the government-owned Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA).

In addition to the Ministry of the Environment, the groups and organizations that favored more stringent regulations had the support of the Ministry of Agrarian Development and the Ministry of Health. These groups included the Brazilian Federal Bureau of Consumers Protection and the similarly named Consumers Protection Bureau; the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA), an agency under the Ministry of the Environment; Greenpeace; and Transgenic Free Nation.

The politics of enactment

The initial proposal, introduced in the Chamber of Deputies by the executive, included the following provisions:

(1) Restriction of CTNBio's authority and requirement of an environmental license certificate issued by IBAMA.
(2) Creation of the National Biosafety Council (CNBS) composed of representatives from 12 federal ministries.
(3) Required food labeling of GMF products.
(4) The prohibition of human cloning and the use of human embryos to produce stem-cells.

As predicted by the environmental community, the final provisions of the law were quite different. Its major provisions were as follows:

(1) CTNBio was designated the major body responsible for the licensing process.
(2) An environmental license certificate issued by IBAMA was not required.
(3) If requested by a ministry, CNBS can give the final word on the sale of a GMF and issue specific certificates, such as an EIR.
(4) Labeling of GMF products was required.
(5) It allowed the use of frozen human embryos of at least 3 years old for research with the consent of the parents.

Clearly, the forces supporting less regulation got a law closer to their position than those supporting more stringent regulations. What were the power dynamics that determined this outcome? Of the many elements involved, four are of particular note: (1) the influence of the "agricultural bunch" in Congress; (2) the success of lobbying tactics based on the "advantage of the defense" (advantage of the political status quo); (3) coalition building; and (4) the influence of government agencies.

The agricultural bloc was closely allied with the interests supporting minimal regulations and had close and regular contact with their representatives. The bloc was also able to secure a majority on the congressional task-forces that considered the proposal, the reports of which were considered for adoption by the plenary sessions of Congress. Although there was much maneuvering in the task-forces, with reports both pro and con increased regulation, aided by the agriculture bunch, the reports supporting minimal regulation got the upper hand.

While both sides involved in the issue used a range of sophisticated lobbying techniques, the forces opposed to extensive regulation had the advantage of the defense in their lobbying effort. It is almost always more difficult to change things in politics, as many political hurdles have to be crossed by those supporting change, whereas those favoring the status quo can kill a proposal by concentrating on one stage of the process. Not only did the con forces have the agricultural bunch on their side, but they were also able to use stalling and obstructionist tactics to slow the process down, hoping to eventually kill the proposal.

For instance, the con forces, through their connections with the agricultural bunch, were able to introduce hundreds of amendments. Plus, when the bill got to the Senate, the major political strategy employed by agribusiness, biotechnology companies, and senators opposing the bill was to request its consideration by the Education Committee. Even though the proposal had nothing to do with education, the committee chairman, Senator Osmar Dias, was a prominent agribusiness advocate. Many of the amendments opposed to the bill were sent to Dias' committee and, of course, received favorable consideration (Taglialegna, 2005, p. 82).

This did not mean that the forces supporting increased regulation did not have their contacts and worked to amend the various task-force reports both in the task-force sessions and on the floor of the chambers. They did: mainly by using members of the PT in Congress who were working closely with the head of the Ministry of the Environment, Marina Silva. And even though the task of securing the legislation as originally proposed was a major challenge

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for the pro-regulation forces, for a long time, their strategy prevented their opponents from killing the proposal or making major amendments to it.

A breakthrough eventually occurred, however, that favored the forces of minimal regulation. It involved a coalition. Like many coalitions in political advocacy campaigns, it helped resolve the issue by an agreement that was secondary to the main purpose of the legislation and with an "odd political couple" of coalition partners. The coalition formed around the issue of stem-cell research between groups favoring simplification of the licensing process and scientific interest groups, including the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science, who advocated the release of human embryos to produce stem-cells. A strong alliance was formed between them. To some extent, this alienated the "religious bunch" (religious bloc) in Congress who opposed stem-cell research; but those supporting minimal regulation had enough votes to secure a major part of their political objectives.

As the final outcome of the legislation indicates, however, the minimal regulation forces did not obtain all they wanted. Much of the reason for their qualified success was due to the influence of government agencies favoring regulation. In fact, although there were many forces involved in the fight over GMFs, the executive and especially the pro-regulation agencies tended to structure the debate in Congress. As a result, the GMF regulatory process became more centralized under federal government control. A major safety net was secured through the appeals process against CTNBio conclusions that could be requested by ministries. Moreover, there was the requirement that GMF products be labeled as such. So, although, overall, the licensing process was simplified, in effect, and particularly in situations of high controversy, CNBS would have the final word on GMF products.

The lessons and the implications

This lobbying campaign took place in Brazil; but given the complexity of the relationship of the various interests in and outside of government, the range and level of sophistication of strategies, the political maneuvering involved, and the mark of compromise on the final solution, this means that it could have taken place in any of a number of developed democracies from Washington, D.C., to Tokyo to Canberra. In many ways, the case study shows that a new era of lobbying has come to Brasília and to Brazil.

For instance, many in-house lobbyists, legislative liaisons, and consultants were used by the various organizations to press their case. There was sophisticated use of information as a lobbying tool: everything from scientific reports to group member attitudes to the emotional arguments regarding use of human embryos in stem-cell research. Plus, both sides used letter-writing and grassroots campaigns (including over 60 environmental groups and more than 100 scientific organizations). In a country where grassroots campaigns have not been the norm, this was a landmark in Brazilian political advocacy campaigns.

At the same time, the case study illustrates particular Brazilian characteristics of and approaches to lobbying campaigns. These include the new dynamic between the executive branch and the Congress that has developed since 1985, including the role of blocs of legislators supporting certain causes; involvement of many of the interests listed in Insert 1; most of the strategies and tactics set out in that Insert; the role of powerful individuals and the importance of personal connections with them; and the vicissitudes of a fragmented pluralist interest group operating environment.

To single out two of the most important of these Brazilian factors, they are the fragmentation resulting from the new executive–legislative relationship centered around the bloc system, and the continuing influence of government and its agencies. As we know, the bloc system of interests and their connection with outside power groups, interest and interest groups, forces the executive to build coalitions and can often stymie executive action or force modifications in it. This fragmentation is exacerbated when the executive is not united on an issue, as was the case with the biosafety bill. Nevertheless, government agencies still wielded considerable influence and structured the course of the debate. This means that, when the executive is united on a proposal, it can dominate the interest intermediation process in Congress to an even greater extent. The role of the bloc system and Congressional institutions, as well as the role of the executive, makes the new institutional theoretical approach very relevant to understanding contemporary group activity in Brazil.

This case study, however, is not typical of political advocacy in Brazil in terms of the groups involved and the strategies and tactics used. It might be termed an example of lobbying by the privileged sector of the political system—those with major financial and political resources, including influential political contacts, political know-how, and knowledge of lobbying techniques. As indicated earlier, most political advocacy in Brazil is of a much more indirect type and cruder form. This is for a variety of reasons, one of which is the interest groups–democracy connection.

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IS INTEREST GROUP ACTIVITY ADVANCING THE CONSOLIDATION OF BRAZIL'S DEMOCRACY?

An important point mentioned earlier is that, for most of its history, Brazil's political system was not based on a pluralist interest group system, but on an elitist and power group system with some major corporatist and authoritarian elements. Each period excluded certain interests and segment of society, usually the poor, parts of the middle class (such as some small businesses), and various minority groups, including women, Afro-Brazilians, and indigenous groups. So, other than a brief period in the l950s and early 1960s, the return to democracy in 1985 saw Brazil's first real experience with pluralist democracy. This means that since 1985, Brazilians have been learning democracy by trial and error, with little past experience to draw upon.

This pattern of political development likely accounts for many of the contemporary challenges facing the consolidation of democracy and the role of interest groups in that consolidation. These challenges are of concern because, as argued in the introductory article to this volume, there is an indispensable interrelationship between a vibrant interest group system and a sustained, deep-rooted pluralist democracy. This raises the following question: to what extent have recent developments in Brazil's group system aided in consolidating its democratic processes?

Research on the specifics of the interest group–democracy relationship in Brazil has not been conducted to date. However, we can develop an understanding of their connection by drawing on surveys on related attitudes and some secondary sources.[8] Three factors are particularly relevant to this relationship: support for democracy among the populace in general; public perception of the fairness of government actions; and the corruption–interest groups–democracy interrelationship.

Public support for democracy

Compared with the rest of Latin America, Brazil has support for democracy is below the average for the region. In 2013, 52% of Latin Americans felt that democracy is a preferred form of government, compared with just 49% of Brazilians. This ranked Brazil 13th in the region, on a par with El Salvador and Panama, although the Brazilian figure was up from 35% in 2003 and 45% in 2011. In 2013, Venezuela was the number 1 ranked, as it has been for several surveys, at 87%. At the bottom of the list, only 37% of Mexicans preferred democracy.

Viewed from another angle, an enlightening statistic is the percentage of Latin Americans who believe that, under certain circumstances, a dictatorship is preferable to a democracy. In Brazil, this figure rose from 10% in 2003 to 19% in 2013 (although it dropped from 22% in 2011). This compares with a regional average of 16% in 2013, the same as in 2003, but down from 17.7% in 2011 during the world recession. In 2013, Brazil ranked 16th across the region, on a par with Guatemala. That year, Venezuela was lowest with only 8%, whereas at the other end of the scale, 32% of Paraguayans would support dictatorship under certain circumstances.

General support for democracy is one thing, how well people see it working is quite another. In 2013, about 40% of Latin Americans were satisfied with the way democracy was working. This is down from 44% in 2010 but up from 25% during the economic slump of 2001. In contrast, in 2013, only 28% of Brazilians were satisfied with how democracy worked, 2% lower than in 2003 and 10% lower than in 2011. In 2013, this ranked Brazil 14th in the region. Uruguay topped the list at over 80%, and Honduras ranked at the bottom with only 20% satisfaction.

Perceptions of the fairness of government

Brazil scores low again region-wide regarding how citizens perceive the fairness of government actions. This attitude of fairness is closely tied to the extent of satisfaction with democracy. The level of satisfaction, in fact, appears to be less related to economic growth and the quality of institutions than to a sense that the government is acting on behalf of everyone rather than a privileged few (*The Economist*, 2013c). In 2013, only 19% of Brazilians felt that the government acts in the general interest, ranking it 16th in the survey, 10 points below the average for Latin America. Ecuador is the highest ranked at over 60%, whereas, again, Paraguay is lowest at less than 10%.

This combined perception of satisfaction with democracy and fairness of treatment is also related to the extent to which people feel that the government listens to the citizenry at large. Most Brazilians obviously feel that their government does not listen to them. The reasons for this are likely complex; but a lot of it probably stems from the major economic,

[8]Unless otherwise referenced, the attitudes toward democracy and related views are taken from research by the polling organization, Latinobarómetro. The organization has conducted surveys throughout Latin American (with the exception of Cuba and Haiti) over several years. The 2013 survey was conducted exclusively for *The Economist* magazine (*The Economist*, 2013c). See the Latinoborómetro website at http://www.latinobarometro.org/lat.jsp

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social, and political inequalities in Brazilian society and the persistence of elite access and special privilege. The attitudes strongly suggest that, as a major component of that democratic system, interest group activity is still seen as strongly biased in favor of a few interests. And this is despite a major effort over the past 10 years or so beginning in the early days of da Silva's presidency in 2003 when the Council of Economic and Social Development was set up to facilitate dialog between the government and civil society. Such dialog had not existed before (Schneider, 2004, p. 126). Also, access to government activities, particularly the Congress, has increased considerably.[9]

The biases of interest group activity (Jordan and Thomas, 2004) are more evident in Brazil than in many places. In Brazil, as in other countries, a successful interest group action must meet some requirements. Without money, knowledge and expertise, political skill, personal contacts, and a headquarters in Brasilia, in addition to the ability to mobilize supporters and gain public visibility, the chances of influencing the decision-making process are not very high (Macário, 2013; Ricardo, 2013; Umbelino Lobo, 2013). These resources are not available to the mass of Brazilians. So they cannot participate in the political advocacy process to the same extent as the political elite. Thus, this limits the extent of democracy.

Corruption, interest groups, and support for democracy

In reviewing Brazilian political culture earlier, we outlined public and public officials' attitudes to interest group. One factor mentioned there regarding the public's negative attitudes was that groups are often seen as corrupt.

Although this perception is a distortion of most lobbying activities, it is nevertheless a reflection of the high level of corruption that continues to exist in Brazil. The media and other organizations, like Transparency International, regularly unearth and report on such corrupt activities. And as we have explained, the political culture is such that even if acts are not blatantly illegal, as is bribery, activities like *jeitinho* can be seen as corruption or have the potential to develop into such, as Taylor (2009b) subtitled a chapter on corruption in Brazil, "Corruption as Harmless *Jeitinho* or Threat to Democracy?" Furthermore, allowing practices such as "success fees" for lobbyists (paying a bonus for achieving a certain goal), a practice outlawed in most western democracies, appears to encourage illegal practices in political advocacy and, in some cases, may well do so (Judd, 2011, p. 17).

As the public sees interest groups as a major part of the political process, in terms of what gets done and not done, they often have a low regard for the way their democratic systems works because of how they see the often nefarious influence of interest groups. From a practical perspective, not dealing with corruption more extensively, however difficult this may be, will continue to reinforce this negative attitude to interest groups and thus to the democratic process. This is because corruption and even practices like *jeitinho* inhibit professionalization and advancement of the group system and perpetuate the shady system of the past.

The implications for Brazilian democracy now and in the future

With the foregoing analysis in mind, we can return to the main question of this section: to what extent is interest group activity advancing the consolidation of Brazilian democracy? The answer is not a simple one; but in contemporary Brazil there are many aspects of the interest group system that are not conducive to the development of a consolidated democracy.

On the one hand, the development of a wide range of groups and the use of sophisticated lobbying techniques have seen major advances in pluralist group activity since 1985. This is illustrated by the case study earlier. Moreover, Brazilians do not hesitate to take to the streets when they are unhappy with the government, as in the manifestations of 2013 and 2014. These and other developments are essential components of a deep-rooted consolidated democracy based on a political culture of pluralism. On the other hand, ongoing distrust of interest groups due to perceptions of elitist control of the political system, continuing corruption, and an absence of knowledge of the operation of interest groups by the mass of Brazilians, among other problems, have stymied the development of a more institutionalized system embracing a wider range of Brazilians.

In effect, what this all means is that currently Brazil has a two-tier interest group system that produces a limited, in many ways elitist, form of democracy. The top tier of the group system, as illustrated in the biosafety case study, is every bit as sophisticated and advanced as many in developed democracies. The bottom tier includes the mass of Brazilians unschooled in the potential value and sophisticated techniques of political advocacy, who use indirect and often ineffective lobbying methods (dos Santos,

[9]See the Federal Chamber of Deputies website (www.camara.gov.br) and the Senate website (www.senado.gov.br).

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2013). The danger regarding the development of democracy with a large segment of the population not included within the broader interest group system is that it is susceptible to populism as in the case of Venezuela and to some extent Bolivia. This can ultimately lead to the exclusion of the erstwhile elite. The result is a form of democracy (as defined by its promoters) that is a far cry from a broad-based comprehensive pluralist democracy.

Although Brazil is unlikely to go down this populist democratic road, the manifestations and continuing incidents of corruption, as in the case of Petrobrás in early 2014, clearly point to the need to strengthen—advance the institutionalization of—the interest group system in order to strengthen democracy. So what can be done?

The major need is to transform the political culture to one of interest group acceptance. But this is a process that can take a generation or more. And without reducing corruption or somehow lessening *jeitinho*, which is unlikely given how deeply embedded they are in the culture, this major change in political culture may not be possible. Nevertheless, incremental steps could be made, such as increasing transparency and perhaps enacting a comprehensive lobby law; although to make a lobby law effective requires a fine balance between providing public information and too much Brazilian bureaucracy (Macário, 2013; Umbelino Lobo, 2013). The major action that should take place, however, is for the government to get involved in some way in working to organize and educate those groups as yet not versed in the best practices of political advocacy. Exactly how to do this is a million reais question. It is a major challenge for political practitioners and political scientist alike. And, of course, such a role of the government would likely meet considerable opposition from various established advocacy groups.

It could be, however, that like the rest of Latin America, Brazil's interest group system will develop along lines different from those in developed democracies and thus produce a different form of democratic system. It may take a generation or more to determine whether this is the case or not.

CONCLUSION: BRAZILIAN POLITICS AND A NEW ERA OF INTEREST GROUP ACTIVITY

What comes through clearly in this article is that, past and present, the core of Brazilian politics has always been interest group politics, with political power distributed, in large part, between various power groups, interests, and interest groups. Looking at Brazilian politics through the lens of this interest group relationship, which is rarely done either in Brazil or abroad, offers new and valuable insights into the changing power structure in the country. For instance, changes in the group system since the mid-1960s are a major indication of the way that Brazilian politics has developed.

In many ways, this interest group system has changed considerably since Philippe Schmiiter's extensive investigation in the late 1960s and Fernando Cardoso's evaluation of the system in the early 1970s. These changes are not only due to the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The system has, in many ways, evolved from the major corporatist influence that Vargas imposed on interest group activity and was, in fact, evolving away from its corporatist foundations before the advent of military rule. Furthermore, the system has made significant advances under democratic rule, including considerable expansion in both the number and range of interests operating in Brasília as well as a broader range of strategies and tactics. All this, together with the increased institutionalization of interests and some shift away from the old dominant influence of power groups, makes Brazil's interest group system and its pluralist democracy look more and more like the systems in long-standing pluralist democracies.

Yet, many legacies of the old power group system persist and raise questions about the future of the group system and what this might mean for democracy. This is in large part because of the resilience of many traits of political culture, such as *jeitinho* and the sociopolitical role of the family and friendship as well as ingrained aspects of the political system, such as elitism and corruption. The short time since the return to democracy has meant that only incremental changes have occurred in these long-standing characteristics of Brazilian political life. Consequently, the rapid change in the group system has been melded with old values and practices to produce a hybrid interest group system. In this regard, it is a system, like all group systems, that includes common elements of group activity and local characteristics owing to particular past and present influences.

As a consequence, the contemporary Brazilian system of modified corporatism continues to include large numbers of power groups, operating alongside governmental and institutionalized interests, with an expanding community of various types of lobbyists using increasingly sophisticated lobbying techniques, but still with no comprehensive lobbying disclosure law. Most significantly, over the years, and still today, it is a system that has been very much shaped by institutional influences, particularly government, social structures, and political cultural patterns.

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Stepping back and taking a broader view, where does Brazil fit in comparison with the development of other group systems in the region? Is it a leader in this regard on a par with its increasing economic and international status? The short answer is that it is not. Brazil would fit somewhere in the middle of the region's countries if we judge it against the following six criteria: (1) tolerance for political opposition; (2) development of civil society regarding the level of political advocacy and use of lobbying techniques; (3) institutionalization of interests; (4) level of political corruption; (5) extent of transparency of political activities; and (6) support for interest groups and thus for pluralist democracy. By these criteria, Brazil's group system would not be as developed as Uruguay's or Costa Rica's but far more so than Bolivia's, Paraguay's, or Haiti's. Likely it is on par with Argentina, Mexico, and Peru.

It appears that one major way in which Brazil fits the experience of other Latin American group systems is in the influence of institutions and particularly that of government of various political hues in shaping interest group activity over the years. In this regard, as in analyzing the Brazilian system, the use of an institutional methodological approach, including historical institutionalism, in conjunction with other methodologies, likely has a lot to offer in explaining the development and current status of other political advocacy systems throughout the region.

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