

Deliberative Democracy and Advocacy: Lessons from a Comparative Perspective

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Abstract

This study focuses on the meanings of advocacy and lobby as well as how these activities are performed in Brazil and the United States. By considering different contexts and historical developments, we analyze the activities of three civil society organizations to understand how they operate as legitimate groups whose advocacy activities expand the concept of democratic representation. The study concludes that advocacy fosters a deliberative type of democracy, which presumes that citizens have the right to participate in public discussion and deliberation. The study indicates that different stages of advocacy and lobbying processes, the influence of regulatory framework, the difficulties to act in coalition due to ideological differences, and members' private interests shape the main characteristics of civil society organizations' (CSOs) advocacy policies. Copyright © 2011 ASAC. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

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Résumé

La présente étude s'intéresse aux sens des expressions «défense d'une idée» et «groupe de pression» et à la façon dont les deux concepts sont mis en œuvre au Brésil et aux États-Unis. L'examen des contextes et des développements historiques différents permet d'analyser les activités de trois organisations de la société civile pour comprendre comment ces dernières fonctionnent comme groupes légitimes dont les activités vont au-delà du concept de représentation démocratique. L'étude conclut que la défense d'une idée s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un type de démocratie délibérante qui présuppose que les citoyens ont le droit de participer aux discussions et délibérations publiques. Elle montre aussi que les différentes étapes des processus de défense d'une idée et de lobbying, l'influence du cadre de régulation, les difficultés à agir collectivement en raison des différences idéologiques et les intérêts privés des membres façonnent les principales caractéristiques des politiques de défense des organisations de la société civile. Copyright © 2011 ASAC. Published by John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Mots-clés : défense d'une idée, groupe de pression, organisations de la société civile, démocratie délibérante, participation

Major political events of the late 1980s, such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of Soviet style regimes in Eastern Europe, the transition to democracy in Eastern Europe and Latin America, and the implementation of “pro-market” reforms in these regions, were interpreted as the “end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama, 1989, p. 4). Accordingly, the reign of representative democracy and its institutions (e.g., elections, political parties, representative parliaments, and public service bureaucracies) were anticipated on a global scale.

Yet, the events that followed ultimately demonstrated the fragility of free market economics. In the history of humanity, violence, inequality, exclusion, famine, and economic oppression have never affected as many people as they do today (Derrida, 2006). A clear example of how this post-Cold War order has been rejected is the resurgence of local and transnational social movements demanding justice, equity, and participation. Representative democracy—that is, the act of electing representatives that should represent the people’s will—has also been challenged on the grounds that it hinders the potential realization of a democratic ideal. Nowadays political parties are limited in their classical representational role, and, especially in Brazil, they are often involved in corruption scandals and represent vested interests that diminish their credibility. To increase the potential for achieving a strong democracy, it has

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become necessary to incorporate a higher degree of civil society participation in the deliberation of several issues in the public sphere. In contemporary societies, this increased participation has manifested itself in new forms of political representation. Social movements and associations, such as advocacy groups, have legitimately expanded the concept of democratic representation.

Advocacy is a broad concept that can accommodate a number of different interpretations. The word *advocacy* originated in the legal field in reference to lawyers' defense of their clients. Later, civil rights' movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the US expanded the use of this term in three key directions, all of which were linked to the concept of justice. The term was initially used in relation to defending the interests of excluded groups, to refer to a proactive public interest strategy in order to change a number of established rules, as well as to defend against the abuse of public power. Some civil society organizations' (CSOs) advocacy efforts, for example, may try to change laws or budgets, while others may focus on their implementation. Advocacy campaigns may also emphasize public education and mobilization around a specific issue (Fox, 2001).

Advocacy is regarded as a core role of CSOs (Andrews & Edwards, 2004; Boris, 2006; Salamon, 2002; Van Tuijl, 1999). Nonprofit organizations (NPOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) can be considered CSOs active in the public sphere. CSOs are also referred to as third sector organizations, a term coined in the 1970s and then revived in the 1990s, and is highly influenced by the academy, especially in Ibero-American countries.

Advocacy is widely considered a traditional practice in the US where there is a historical constitutional right to free assembly and association contributing to the shaping of the country's political, economic, and social characteristics (Boris & Krehely, 2002). Most scientific studies in the field of advocacy and CSOs have originated in the US by American academics and have become influential in a number of countries. Yet in the case of Brazil, despite the considerable attention social movements and CSOs have received in the past twenty years—from the contentious role of the Landless Workers Movement (MST) in the struggle for land reform (Gohn, 1997) to institutionalized NGOs that pushed an agenda for participatory budgeting—the concept of advocacy has been seldom discussed and few studies on the subject have been published. Hence, research is required to determine how advocacy operates within the Brazilian public sphere.

This paper analyzes how policy advocacy takes place and is institutionalized in Brazil through the analysis of an in-depth literature review, interviews, and case studies. In particular, we compared Brazil and the US—a country where advocacy activity is established and where the political culture surrounding public interest advocacy has greatly influenced transnational CSOs and coalitions. More specifically, we compared the policy advocacy role of two

CSOs in Brazil (Group of Institutes, Foundations and Companies [GIFE] and Brazilian Association of Non Governmental Organizations [ABONG]) and one CSO in the US (Independent Sector [IS]). The comparisons focused on how these organizations advocate, how advocacy has been interpreted, and the role of advocacy in fostering a deliberative type of democracy—one that presumes citizens' rights to discuss and deliberate upon matters of public interest (such as the elaboration, enactment, and monitoring of public policies).

Theory and knowledge can only be developed when issues are considered in the context of relevant social processes and historical determinants. As such, a comparative analysis between Brazil and the US allowed us to analyze how the Brazilian reality both coincides with and differs from models and paradigms imported from abroad “that take for granted the legitimacy and efficacy of established patterns of thinking and action” (Alvesson & Willmott, 2003, p. 1), especially with regard to the ideal of civil society that southern countries have adopted from northern ones. This comparative study also led us to find that while CSOs may provide a path to creating autonomous and emancipated individuals free from alienation and domination, in doing so they also present challenges that must be overcome in order to achieve a strong civil society and deliberative democracy.

Theoretical Framework

Hereafter, we introduce the theoretical framework that supports this comparative study. First, we discuss the concept of deliberative democracy and some of its critiques to elucidate the main political issues surrounding advocacy. Next, we present a literature review concerning CSOs, their different denominations, forms, and potential roles. Finally, the limitations of applying this theoretical approach to the Latin American context are discussed.

Deliberative Democracy

The idea of deliberative democracy arose as a reformist and even radical critique of the standard practices of liberal democracy. An initial definition of deliberative democracy may suggest that it refers to a broad set of views, which hold that public deliberation by free and equal citizens is at the core of legitimate political decision making and self-governance (Bohman, 1998). The idea of “public deliberation of free citizens” itself is not new. On the contrary, it is a foundational value of ideal democratic processes that has been strongly rooted since it was developed by the Athenians. However, the liberal democracy crisis, deformed by elitist standards and the inappropriateness of classical representation models, initiated a critical reappraisal of democracy that fostered the development of a “deliberative

turn” in the last twenty years. As Chantal Mouffe (2000) has argued, deliberative democracy can be divided into two main schools: the first broadly influenced by John Rawls (1971), and the second by Jürgen Habermas (1996). In this study, we assumed the Habermasian version of deliberative democracy for three reasons. First, it is the most sophisticated account of deliberative democracy because it incorporates the important development of communicative reasoning; second, it has been developed from the reflections of critical theory (Benhabib, 1986; Habermas, 1996), which maintains an emancipatory perspective on politics; and third, it is by far the most influential line of argument on the subject.

According to Habermas (1996), civil society is part of the public sphere and plays an important role in the construction of a deliberative democracy. In a legitimate democratic process, members of civil society can “push topics of general interest and act as advocates for neglected issues and under-represented groups,” dialoguing with government and exerting influence on lawmaking (p. 368). Elster (1998) further emphasized that the process of deliberative conversation does not simply involve discussing and arguing to convince another party of a particular view, but also involves some sort of negotiation that involves the exchange of threats and promises.

Hence, while decisions are made by the formal political process rather than by citizens, citizens nevertheless take part in discussions that lead to decision making and are responsible for keeping intact the communication structures of the public sphere. Ultimately, the mechanisms of participation and deliberation may help accomplish a key goal of critical theory—namely that of seeking out the emancipation of individuals and society itself from oppressive forces (Dryzek, 2000).

Gambetta (1998) reviewed some of the criticisms on the idea of deliberative democracy, especially those that emphasize the cooptation of weaker groups and the manipulation of information by stronger groups. The author concluded that the benefits of the deliberative process (in terms of the quality and legitimacy of decisions) outweigh its disadvantages. He suggested that deliberative democracy offers new and better solutions for different problems, protects weaker groups, creates public discussions that lead to the dilution of individual interests and a greater consensus in decision making, and can generate more just decisions, especially for minorities.

Perhaps the key criticism directed at deliberative democracy is the question of “how democratic are advocacy activities?” Some argue that deliberation is an ill-structured and “chaotic” mechanism that fosters exclusivity. They suggest that it is limited to including only the kinds of voices and people it can hear, thereby marginalizing those who struggle to communicate effectively or who cannot participate in a deliberative forum (Dryzek, 2000). Another criticism is that by participating and deliberating, individuals

undergo an educational and disciplinary process that ultimately restricts the participation of individuals whose opinions differ from those of the majority. Therefore, democracy can act as a disciplining force in which participation actually limits an individual’s opportunity to express views because participation in deliberation requires self-restraint and an ability to conceal personal views (Hindess, 2000).

The most radical critique of deliberative democracy comes from Chantal Mouffe (2000). She criticized the way supporters of deliberative democracy argue that the more democratic a society is, the less power would be constitutive of social relations, and that legitimacy is only gained through free and unconstrained public deliberation. She insisted that power and legitimacy are entwined and that the concept of the political should be critically appropriated within the context of a proposal for an agonistic model of democracy. This model would avoid the naturalization of the boundaries of democracy and of clashes among political actors. For Mouffe (2000), political actors should take on the role of adversaries—not enemies—who share and simultaneously dispute a set of values as well as ethical and political principles. Despite the fact that we share most of the concerns of deliberative democracy critics, particularly Mouffe’s concern that power is a constitutive element of deliberation, we still maintain the use of deliberative democracy as a normative-analytical principle because we understand that the concerns of critics do not render the principle valueless. The opening of deliberative democratic spaces results in institutions that can be correlated to sovereign authority, such as deliberative forums that deals with particular needs rather than general values, which may be treated in broader centripetal electoral arenas (Dryzek, 2005) and that diminish *de facto* power asymmetries among actors, enabling free and undistorted communication to flow (Habermas, 1987, 1996).

Civil Society and Civil Society Organizations

Defining civil society is a complex task since there is considerable debate over the meaning and scope of the term in academic circles. However, in order to maintain coherence to the concept of deliberative democracy, we rely on Cohen and Arato’s (1992) definition, mainly because it is closely derived from the Habermasian mode of understanding the entwined connection between democracy and the public sphere. Thus, civil society is conceived as “...the sphere of social interaction between economy and State, composed above all of the intimate sphere (especially the family), the sphere of associations (especially voluntary associations), social movements and forms of public communication” (Cohen & Arato, p. IX). Cohen and Arato observed that the participation of civil society associations in the public space is the defining trait of contemporary social movements. The traditional views of

social movements, based on theories of mass action and collective behaviour, which focus on the irrational aspects of human behaviour, are no longer appropriately used to explain today's social movements. New collective action involves specific forms of association and strategies (such as new social movements) in the modern context of pluralistic civil society. This context includes "public spaces, social institutions (press, mass media), rights (association, speech, and gathering), representative political institutions and an autonomous legal system, all of which are the targets of social movements attempting to influence policy or set change into motion" (Cohen & Arato, p. IX).

CSOs' advocacy activities have been emerging in deliberative spaces, thereby creating an environment for deliberative democracy. CSOs perform different kinds of roles. A normative definition of these groups, one through which some organizations could be considered more legitimate than others, is at the centre of a complex ideological dispute based on the definition of form, function, and intent (Anheier & Salamon, 2006). For the most part, proposed definitions of CSOs assume a functional perspective. Korten (1990), for example, took an evolutionary stance and identified four generations of CSO roles based on the strategic orientation of these organizations. The first generation focuses on the provision of services to meet an immediate need such as the supply of food, water, and shelter. Several organizations still operate in this way, but many have changed their immediate relief orientation to that of local development, which is regarded as the second generation of CSO strategies. This generation focuses on local community development so that members of a given community can meet their own needs. The third generation consists of organizations developing sustainable systems and focuses on developing communities and on changing specific policies and institutions at the local and global levels. This type of strategy usually arises from the failure of the second generation of strategies, which are very focused on the local environment and require constant CSO presence. Because CSOs cannot provide benefits to many communities through this kind of strategy, the second generation is ultimately inefficient. The third generation, however, is a far more comprehensive strategy for action, as it focuses on public policy and on attaining results that have a greater influence on local sustainable development. The fourth generation orientation focuses on social movements that are driven by ideology and a vision of a better world. These movements try to mobilize a critical mass of initiatives that support a similar worldview.

CSOs may also be defined by how they act and what types of tasks they perform. Salamon (2002) offered a definition of CSOs that considers a number of criteria: service provision, advocacy, expressive role (e.g., expression of artistic, ethnic, cultural, religious characteristics), community development, and guardianship of values. Van Tuijl (1999) also classified CSOs in terms of their

function, defining them either as operational or advocacy organizations. Operational CSOs are service providers (e.g., education, health, social services), while advocacy organizations are those that lobby in government and international organizations (e.g., United Nations, World Trade Organizations). Mintzberg et al. (2005) defined these organizations based on forms of association, suggesting that there are four kinds of associative organizations. These can be categorized according to whom CSOs benefit (members or nonmembers) and to their purpose (providing services or advocating).

As such, the types of actions performed by CSOs can be seen as a constitutive aspect (Mintzberg et al., 2005; Salamon, 2002; Van Tuijl, 1999) or as an evolutionary aspect (Anheier & Salamon, 2006; Korten, 1990) of the organizations themselves. By extension, the advocacy of CSOs (through which they identify, adopt, and promote a cause and show willingness to shape public perception or achieve change) can be viewed as a constitutive or evolutionary action that takes place in the public sphere of a deliberative democracy.

Deliberative Politics, Civil Society Organizations and Latin America

In this context of participation and deliberation, it is important to analyze some peculiarities of Latin America. Over the last twenty years, we have observed in many countries the transition from military dictatorships to democratic regimes, public management reforms, political and economic decentralization, and, consequently, the affirmation of local power. The Latin American shift, from the two-tiered hierarchical state to a social model in which there are multiple centers of decision making, transformed the configuration of civil society and created "hybrid" modes of public action that involve state actors working with social actors or CSOs in deliberative processes. In Brazil, there are also hybrid organizations such as policy councils and forums (Pereira, 2007).

Gambetta (1998) called attention to particular cultural features, specifically the "Claro" tendency, which shape the deliberative process in Latin America. Influenced by Hirschman (1986), Gambetta depicted Latin American cultures as "Claro cultures" ("Obvious!", "I knew it all along!", "Nothing you say surprises me!"), where people usually have strong opinions from the outset of a discussion. Since strong opinions inhibit some individuals from taking part and offering arguments in a discussion, this tendency adversely affects deliberation. Hence, in "Claro cultures" there is a risk of particular interests being served and of collective losses being created by the culture itself during the process of building democratic institutions. In more analytically-oriented societies where people are willing to admit lack of knowledge about a given topic, deliberation can take place more easily and fairly.

Research Design and Data Collection

This article is the result of a comparative case study developed in 2006 and 2007 that aimed to understand the phenomenon of advocacy in two different societies: the US, where most of the literature on advocacy was produced, and Brazil, where this paper's authors live and, which has been identified as a country where social movements and other CSOs have had interesting deliberative experiences in the public sphere (e.g., participatory budgeting and public policy councils). The method used is that of comparative case studies (George, 1979; Ragin, 1987) or comparative history (Goldstone, 1990). In analyzing similar processes in different social and historical contexts, these methods attempt to develop specific explanations of phenomena grounded in general variables rather than universal laws. The ultimate goal is the development of a useful theory that identifies a variety of potential causal patterns and possibilities. A useful theory typically involves combining a credible narrative with the construction or use of sound theory (George, 1979; Goldstone, 1990).

This comparative study research design is a combination of a literature review, case studies, and in-depth interviews contrasted with a historical view of CSOs. The literature review attempts to elucidate the meaning of advocacy and lobbying in Brazil, the US, and, more generally, within deliberative democracy. Though the term advocacy shows an increase in usage in Brazil, we found few local theoretical references to it. As advocacy and lobbying are well-developed concepts in the American tradition, they served as a reference for conceptualizing the meaning of these terms in the Brazilian context. Through the case studies, we attempted to provide a qualitative analysis of the act of advocating in both countries. Thus, we conducted our research in three umbrella organizations—Independent Sector, GIFE, and ABONG—that represent and advocate for CSOs' interests in an explicit or nonexplicit manner (when members do not recognize their activities as advocacy). Interviews were conducted in person (16) and by telephone (4), with the directors and employees of the chosen organizations (11), with other civil society organizations active in policy advocacy (3), and with researchers of CSOs in both countries (6). Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analyzed, and were essential in obtaining information for the case studies, as well as in understanding the concepts of advocacy and lobbying.

In terms of the comparison, the following were taken into consideration: a historical perspective of the constitution of CSOs and a comparative analysis at the organizational level between the organizations and how they act with different agents in the public sphere. The organizations were analyzed in a public sphere context where information and points of view are communicated via networks interacting with: government, member organizations, "pair" organizations (organizations that develop similar activities), corporations,

international agencies such as the United Nations and World Bank, and GONGOs (government operated or government created NGOs).

Results

The case studies allowed us to compare the development of CSOs in Brazil and the US and how advocacy and lobbying evolved in both contexts in order to connect the case studies to the concepts of civil society, public policy advocacy, and deliberative democracy. The findings of this study have been summarized for the purpose of this article.

Though there are significant differences between the US and Brazil, to understand the growth of advocacy activities in Brazil, it is necessary to compare the Brazilian context to that of the American for a few reasons. First, the concepts of advocacy and lobbying by CSOs were developed in the US. Second, American CSOs have been considered a benchmark model in the study of civil society in general since the publication of Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, which has been widely influential. And thirdly, there is tremendous pressure from international development agencies, international NGOs, and Western financial institutions from North to South to develop the advocacy role of CSOs—in an American manner—as well as to deepen democracy in developing countries due to the perception that US democracy is a success model to be emulated. Certainly, the idea of applying American notions of civil society to Latin America has been heavily criticized by Perez-Diaz (1995). However, even Perez-Diaz defends comparative research because he recognizes that no singular civil society exists, but rather a variety of civil societies exist in different contexts. Comparative research allowed us to foster knowledge of civic activities and experiments in democracy in different settings. As such, analyzing how advocacy activities develop through the lens of influential American literature was a useful means of analyzing the Brazilian context.

Comparative Analysis at the Societal Level

Historical Perspective of Civil Society Organizations in Brazil

It is challenging to fully understand the historical background of CSOs in Brazil given the minimal data available about the sector. The emergence of CSOs in Brazil differs significantly from that of the US, as government and civil society formed differently in these two countries. Contemporary Brazilian society developed under state centralization, a high level of influence of corporate interests over public policy, and a fragile civil society. As Landim (1993) affirmed, the colonial era in Brazil was not favourable to the emergence of CSOs that could offer

public services. During the colonial period, with the support of the state, the Catholic Church provided the main social services in Brazil, including education and health care. When Brazil proclaimed itself a Republic and the industrial period began, the symbiotic relationship between the Catholic Church and the state ended. At the same time however, with the arrival of immigrants from the US and Europe, evangelical churches emerged in the country, establishing their own social assistance and educational activities. Yet, besides religious organizations, CSO activity is hard to detect in this period.

With the emergence of the first trade unions and charity funds in the country by the end of the nineteenth century—a period of rapid industrialization in Brazil—there was a proliferation of CSOs, mainly established by European immigrants. This development led to a significant alteration in the membership associations' sector since these associations became the first political interest groups. From this point onwards, political orientation and class interests moved to the center of the CSO movement. Trade unions became very important organizations in Brazil, fighting for workers' rights and improvements in the welfare state. However, in the 1930s, when the country was experiencing its first populist government, the unions became strongly linked to and controlled by the state. The dictatorship of Getulio Vargas (1937–1945) began to restrict and control political associations, which had, up until then, flourished. Independent civil society organizations (whether politically inclined to the left or to the right) were suppressed. From 1950 onward, politically oriented associations began to reappear, but after the 1964 military coup, these organizations fell under a new wave of repression and censorship (Landim, 1993).

Under the military regime, social movements and organizations linked to the Catholic Church gained new strength, steering the social assistance sector and spreading the ideas of the liberation theology, a movement that emphasized fighting for equality and for the improvement of human living conditions. New organizations aiming to discuss democratization also started to appear, thereby regaining some of the ground lost by political CSOs. Having recognized the important role CSOs play in helping nations innovatively face socioeconomic challenges, in the 1990s the state partnered with CSOs to develop government policies. In a similar way, based on alliances with CSOs, corporations undertook corporate social responsibility strategies mainly consisting of community investment programs. As a result of these developments, the concept of the third sector expanded to accommodate the increasing variety of emerging CSOs.

In 2002 and 2005, a study categorized the activity of Brazilian CSOs based on the United Nations' definition of civil society organizations, which identified CSOs as being bodies that are institutionalized, separate from government, self-governing, nonprofit distributing, and not requiring

mandatory membership (IBGE/IPEA, 2008). According to IBGE/IPEA (2008), in 2005 there were 338.162 organizations registered as private foundations or nonprofit organizations in Brazil, which represents a growth of 215.1% compared to 1996, and a growth of 22.6% compared to 2002. These organizations represented 5.6% of the total number of registered organizations, whether public or private, for-profit or nonprofit. The study classified each CSO based on its mission: housing (0.1%), health (1.3%), culture and entertainment (13.9%), education and research (5.9%), social assistance (11.6%), religion (24.8%), professional and/or employers' associations (17.4%), environmental and animal protection (0.8%), development and defense of rights (17.8%), and other (6.4%). These organizations employed approximately 1.7 million people. However, 79.5% of the nonprofit organizations did not have any employees, which reflects the importance of volunteer work in maintaining the operations of these institutions. Around 68% of the organizations were established after 1990, in particularly those working with development and defense of rights groups, as well as professional and/or employers' associations and environmental CSOs. Of the total number of organizations, 60, 259 (17.8%) were grouped as development and defense of rights organizations, and 58, 796 (17.4%) as professional and employers' associations (35.2%), which, for the purposes of this study, will be considered advocacy activities.

The number of organizations registered as development and defense of rights groups grew 437.4% between 1996 and 2005. The group of professional and employers' associations grew 364.4% during the same period. It is important to note, however, that advocacy activities may be underestimated because they may also be present in organizations defined in housing, health, education, environment, culture, or other types of CSOs. This extensive growth represents a significant change in advocacy activities in Brazil and demonstrates that growth in the CSO sector is a trend rather than an isolated occurrence. For the most part, advocacy organizations were established after 1990 during the democratization period after the military dictatorship (1964–1985) and since then, CSOs have become more professionally oriented, which means they began hiring specialized people for the execution of the organizations' activities.

Historical Perspective of Civil Society Organizations in the United States

Civil Society Organizations have existed in the US since the colonial era (e.g., Harvard University was established in 1636), but the concept of nonprofit organizations as a united and cohesive sector emerged around 1970. In the US, as in Brazil, CSOs vary in scale and form of action. Some examples of American CSOs are grassroots organizations, membership organizations, foundations, universities, and

religious organizations (Hall, 2005). However, US legal and government institutions, as well as civil society, developed very differently from those of Latin American countries, which are mainly Spanish and Portuguese colonies. In “Democracy in America” (1840), Alexis de Tocqueville (2003) observed the habits and values of US social and political institutions and exposed the associative power of Americans who gathered in different types of associations (e.g., commercial, religious, cultural), contributing to the development of a liberal and democratic society.

Between the time of the Civil War and 1920, there was a steep growth in the number of US civil society organizations due to an increase in funding from corporations, wealthy families, and religious groups (Hall, 2005). In many cases, corporate and family donations were encouraged by means of tax exemption during a period named “The Golden Age of Philanthropy” in the early part of the 20th century (Grobman, 2004). According to Hall (2005), 90% of US nonprofit organizations were established after 1950 and gained importance in the 1960s when poverty spread across the country and urban rebellion forced the government to increase its investment in social policies. CSOs were used as service providers by the government as it expanded the welfare state network.

The late 1940s and the 1950s saw more stringent government control over CSOs due to the anticommunist movement lead by Senator Joseph McCarthy and to new control measures imposed on the tax exemptions given to the organizations and to donors (Grobman, 2004). CSOs are classified by the US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) under two categories: They can be identified as charitable organizations and private foundations (as 501 c(3)), which are institutions that work for public welfare and are tax and fee exempt while their donors are allowed tax deductions, or CSOs can be classified as civic organizations (501 c(4)) and may take part in political campaigns. In the latter case, only the organization itself can deduct taxes, while donors are precluded from doing so (Hall, 2005). Tax exemption in the US was a benefit established by the English Parliament during the colonial era (1601) (Grobman, 2004) and continues to be a strong incentive for making donations in the country. CSOs are viewed as institutions that help improve public welfare and, therefore, deserve government support through tax exemption. This is a notable feature of the US system since Brazil does not have these incentives on a large scale.

In 2005, there were approximately 1.5 million CSOs in the US, with 1.4 million registered as 501c(3) and 140, 000 as 501c(4). These organizations were further subdivided into categories that are similar to the Brazilian system of classification: arts, culture and humanities, education and research, environment and animals, healthcare, social assistance services, international issues, public welfare, and religion. Between 1987 and 2005 the number of CSOs registered a growth at the IRS that was two times higher

than the growth of for-profit organizations registered in the same period. Notably, churches and other religious organizations are not required to incorporate or apply for tax exemption status (Independent Sector, 2010). In 2005, nonprofit organizations employed 12.9 million people, equivalent to 9.7% of the total economy, and provided 5% of the US Gross Domestic Product (Wing, Pollack, & Blackwood, 2008).

Advocacy and Lobbying from a Comparative Perspective

According to Avner (2002), advocacy involves identifying, adopting, and promoting a cause as well as a willingness to shape public perception or engender change through legislation or some other means. According to Jenkins (2006), political advocacy is a specific form of advocacy that aims to influence the decisions of an institutional elite in favour of a collective interest. Advocacy can be undertaken on behalf of individuals, specific populations or causes, the interests of an organization or sector, or broad public interests (Boris & Krehely, 2002). Lobbying is a specific form of advocacy intended to influence public policy (Avner, 2002; Berry, 1977; Boris & Krehely, 2002). A review of Brazilian literature tells us little about the term advocacy, which even lacks an accurate Portuguese translation. More frequent are references to the political participation of civil society, which can be found in relation to a number of topics such as participation and deliberation, civil society, public spaces, and participative democracy, among others. These are close to the notion of public policy advocacy (also called lobbying in the US), but are not exact substitutes for the term.

While advocacy is not part of the Brazilian lexicon, *lobby*, according to the Houaiss Dictionary of Portuguese (2001, p. 1775), means: “an organized (interests, propaganda) group’s actions to exert pressure on politicians and public powers, intended to exert any influence possible over them, but without seeking formal control of the government; campaigning, lobbying.” According to Oliveira (2004), the discussion of lobbying in Brazil is complex in part because the practice is stigmatized by an implication of corruption. This, coupled with the lack of information about the topic discourages researchers from pursuing the subject and contributes to maintaining the study of Brazilian lobbying in a sort of theoretical limbo. Lobbying is often used as a synonym for exerting pressure, influence peddling, or political corruption, and is generally regarded as the exclusive domain of major corporations that wield their economic power to achieve certain self-serving objectives. Though it has been perceived as a corrupt practice, lobbying legally takes place in Brazil (Mancuso, 2008; Oliveira, 2004; Rodrigues, 1996). There has, however, been some discussion about the ability of lobbyists to advocate successfully. On the one hand, Schneider (1997–1998) called attention to the political

fragility of Brazilian business lobbies and their inability to act collectively. Conversely, Mancuso (2008) affirmed that the Brazilian business sector is indeed able to act collectively, as it is able to identify relevant bills, defend its position, and obtain positive results. According to his research, two thirds of legislative decisions were classified as successful for business interests and a third as unsuccessful. While negative connotations continue to be associated with lobbying in Brazil, the lobbying activities carried out by civil society must be acknowledged as legitimate. This political pressure, from citizens to rulers, is undertaken on behalf of a common cause or public good and stimulates deliberation of public interests (Rodrigues, 1996).

Given the perceived corruption associated with lobbying, when comparing advocacy in Brazil and the US it is important to highlight that in Brazil, lobbying is not a regulated activity, whereas in the US it is regulated at both the federal and state levels. In the US, lobbyists have to register separately with different levels of government and must comply with all the requirements of the Lobbying Disclosure Act (LDA), approved in 1946 and amended in 1995 (Grobman, 2004). In Brazil, a bill (PL 6.132/1990) based on the American LDA was proposed in 1990. The bill proposed to increase the transparency of group or individual activities aimed at influencing government decision making, as well as impede possible abuses of influence and power. However, the bill was never approved. While Rodrigues (1996) concluded that Brazilian democracy is mature enough to have an effective lobbying law that guarantees a legitimate and transparent participation process for all organized groups, Bill 6132/1990 should be revised because it is highly influenced by the US law and does not consider Brazilian particularities (e.g., in Brazil, lobby activities are also directed at the executive power and the bill only considers the legislative power; state-owned companies and public sector groups also lobby in parliament and are not considered in the bill).

In-depth interviews allowed us to identify differences in how advocacy and lobbying are understood, but generalizations cannot be made. The Americans who were interviewed defined these terms similarly, which speaks to an existing awareness of lobbying in a country where the practice is legitimate, regulated, and long standing. Brazilian interviewees who were asked to define advocacy and lobbying did not show a similar level of agreement and understanding in their responses. Two types of groups prevailed: (a) those who see advocacy and lobbying in a manner similar to the American definitions in which lobbying is a legitimate activity and part of advocacy, and (b) those who perceive lobbying as something negative, involving corporate interests, and who use the term advocacy to define activities intended to influence public policy. They did not understand advocacy as a broader activity applicable beyond public policy. For these respondents, CSOs advocate and corporations lobby. The second

group, critical of the term lobbying, accounted for a larger number of respondents (7 of a total of 11 responses; note that not all the 20 interviewees were asked to define each concept). The following represents some examples or responses:

American Interviewee:

Advocacy really means that citizens have the right, they're granted the right, to speak out about their own needs....It is both the freedom of citizens to represent themselves, and others, and the fact that the citizens take advantage of those rights and do indeed speak out strongly, and usually in groups, to correct things or improve things that they think need change in their communities or their world. Lobbying is simply one means by which citizens' join together to influence their surroundings; it means close understanding and connection with elected and appointed officials. Advocacy is much beyond that...it is public education, it is contact with public officials; it is broad campaigns. (B. O'Connell, personal communication, September, 5, 2006)

Brazilian Interviewee:

Lobbying from my point of view is an older concept that was used for a long time, to define what today we call advocacy. Unfortunately, it gained a pejorative tone, as if lobbying meant money transfers in order to obtain something...corruption. And advocacy is a concept that came to substitute the concept of lobbying that was a little worn down. I think that nowadays...lobbying is more a corporate action, of private groups seeking their interests before State powers; while advocacy is an action of civil society organizations and of social movements. (L. Arantes, personal communication, January 4, 2007)

In Brazil, the term advocacy loses its broader sense of identifying, adopting, and promoting a cause, which may or may not involve lobbying. The scope of the concept is limited in a way that serves to lend legitimacy (partly in a legal sense) to the act of influencing public policy. That is, CSOs with public interests "advocate," while corporations with private interests "lobby."

Reflections on Advocacy and Deliberative Democracy

American social and political scientists have differing opinions regarding the benefits of advocacy and lobbying activities carried out by CSOs. On the one hand the positive role of these organizations involves strengthening the democratic processes and the civic drive of citizens (Berry, 1977), correcting unbalanced political representation and ensuring democratic participation (Jenkins, 2006). On the other hand, researchers also raise doubts regarding the legitimacy of organizations that are supposed to advocate for "major interests." They have asked: what are these interests? Whose interests do these organizations represent? Who defines these interests? (Urbinati & Warren, 2008). To

whom are these organizations accountable? (Skocpol, 2003). It is important to analyze these issues in order to evaluate the benefits of the role of CSOs in the public interest. What is considered to be in the public's interest by some may not be considered such by others.

We have already affirmed that American civil society developed based on advocacy and the protection of different interests. Fiorina and Skocpol (1999) consider civil society democratic when individuals and social groups influence the government and public life. Nevertheless, in recent studies, Skocpol (2003) identified significant changes in US civic engagement patterns in the last few decades, and consequently, changes in the nature of democracy. There is a growing tendency for US citizens to stop taking part in membership-based advocacy organizations and to start making donations to advocacy organizations which, in some cases, have no members and are managed by a small group of professionals. The decisions made by these groups are highly influential and they lack the perceived legitimacy of the decisions of membership associations, which are made by a large number of participants. Furthermore, Skocpol stated that these advocacy organizations tend to serve only as a political voice for the interests of wealthy Americans. This tendency is troubling contemporary analysts across the political spectrum (Jenkins, 2006). Analysts affirm that advocacy activities in the US have grown to a level that has overloaded the political system, generating political paralysis and discredit, causing the weakening of governmental institutions and contributing to economic stagnation.

New ways of organizing, advocating, and participating (e.g., Internet campaigning, network engagement, affluence of new social movements) are part of the contemporary political process. The social gains of this new advocacy and civic engagement model are open to discussion, but its influence is unquestionable and calls for future research (Boris & Krehely, 2002). Democracy accommodates the representation of small groups' interests, so it is of critical importance that civil society participation is conducted in a transparent, organized, and regulated manner. As Skocpol (2003) suggested, some groups may have a privileged voice and therefore regulation and social control could help ensure the inclusion of a diversity of opinions through the active participation of different groups in the political process, while still helping to safeguard against abuses. Changes in the American advocacy model may help to develop a better institutional framework in Brazil.

Comparative Analysis at the Organizational Level

The three case study organizations are umbrella organizations and nonprofit associations that defend the rights of other civil society organizations and adopt public policy advocacy as part of their strategy. These organizations maintain relationships with governmental bodies

through direct influence over public policy making, through oversight of governmental activities, and through involvement in committees, public hearings, and meetings with congress leaders and local bureaus. Their descriptions are presented below.

Independent Sector (IS). Founded in 1980 in Washington DC, the IS is composed of 575 members, which include foundations, corporate foundations, and corporate grant programs. It is the resulting organization from a merger of two coalitions, one of grant seekers and the other of grant makers. Its key objective is to mobilize CSOs to achieve a more inclusive society with effective institutions and active citizens, strengthening democracy (IS, 2011). The IS has 40 staff members and policy advocacy is done directly by professionalized staff. The organization's financial support is made up of annuities, donations, and a national conference (budget 2005: US\$ 11.5 million). In terms of funding, the IS strongly emphasizes that it does not receive resources from government, as doing so would put its autonomy at risk.

Grupo de Institutos Fundações e Empresas (GIFE). This organization is based in São Paulo, Brazil and is composed of 101 members, including corporate foundations and companies that make private social investments. It was founded in 1995, and despite the fact that its policy advocacy role was not prominent at the onset, this activity is central in the organization's strategy to improve CSOs' regulatory framework. Its resources come from annuities, donations, events, and workshops (budget 2005: US\$ 641,000). It has 11 employees and advocacy activities are outsourced to another CSO located in Brasília, Brazil's capital city, because the other CSO has more experience in advocating for public causes than GIFE, and because this option reduces transaction costs. However, as GIFE gains maturity and know-how on policy advocacy, it has given greater consideration to the possibility of establishing an office in Brasília.

Associação Brasileira de ONGs (ABONG). Based in Sao Paulo, Brazil, it has 270 members with strong ties to social movements, grassroots organizations, and Liberation Theology. It was created in 1991 by a group of NGOs alongside social movements that have advocated for democracy and social justice since the 1970s. It believes that NGOs are crucial to the formulation, monitoring, and social control of public policy. Its resources come from annuities, donations from NGOs, and book selling. (budget 2006: US\$ 450,000). It has 11 staff members and advocacy activities are done directly through the Brasília branch by a professional who is dedicated full-time to policy advocacy in order to serve ABONG's goal of strengthening deliberative public spaces.

Both IS and ABONG were created as advocacy organizations. However, due to Brazil's recent transition to democracy and its openness to civil society participation, after the passing of its Federal Constitution in 1988, ABONG has less experience and strength in advocacy

activities than IS. For ABONG, public matters should not be managed exclusively by the state, which then requires that CSOs follow public policy discussions. In light of this, we affirm that in the cases of both IS and ABONG, public policy advocacy is a constitutive element of these organizations, insofar as it is the primary reason for which they were established. Conversely, in the case of GIFE, advocacy activities emerged as the organization evolved and underwent a maturation process. Despite the differences among them, these three organizations exhibit characteristics of Korten's (1990) third generation organizations, especially since they are all clearly involved in strategic campaigning, resource mobilization, and, above all, influencing public policy via institutional channels (e.g., legislative and executive powers). We could also classify ABONG as a fourth generation organization since it represents NGOs and grassroots organizations linked to social movements. However, most of its actions focus on participation within institutionalized spaces of deliberation to influence public policy. As a consequence, ABONG constitutes a hybrid of Korten's third and fourth generations, which is characteristic of CSOs that have emerged in recent democracies and which tend to occupy hybrid spaces in the polity.

It is interesting to note that while IS was created as a result of the merger of grant-providing and grant-seeking organizations, GIFE is regarded as an association of grant makers, and ABONG as an association of grant seekers. Given the example of the foundation of IS, we believe that within the context of a broader coalition that seeks to have a greater impact on CSOs' rights, closer ties between GIFE and ABONG would lead to significant gains for the Brazilian CSOs' advocacy sector, especially considering that both organizations share similar concerns about the creation of the sector's regulatory framework. However, a hypothetical merger of GIFE and ABONG—organizations with different ideologies and perspectives—is difficult to conceive of in the short term. One of the key differences between GIFE and ABONG lies in who they represent and the consequent political stands they take, the former being more business-oriented with ties to corporate social responsibility and private social investment movements, and the latter being strongly connected to social movements with a militant left-wing profile.

We note that, while they share several positions on bills and other issues, no formal coalition exists between GIFE and ABONG. Some interviewees affirm that there is a common awareness that by acting together the two organizations would have greater persuasive power, but they also note that the process of aligning discourse and establishing a dialog between the organizations is complicated given the intrinsic differences in GIFE and ABONG membership profiles. Deliberative spaces between these organizations are problematic. As noted by Forester (2003), when entering a deliberative space we find different interests

and intentions as well as political and social identities. In a complex and multilayered environment it is important to reveal the politics underlying power relations and hegemony as well as the effect these politics have on the formation of opinions, consensus, and credibility. As noted by Lavalle, Houtzager, and Castello (2006), understanding the roles of political actors and of CSOs as actors who perform the task of political representation is crucial in a democratic and participatory context. The main reason why a proper coalition is not formed between GIFE and ABONG has to do with differing ideologies, and is largely influenced by the differences between the organizations that GIFE and ABONG represent, which prevents them from undertaking consistent joint action initiatives. We perceived a marked difference here between the Brazilian organizations' strategy to that of the IS coalitions, where instrumental joint action to achieve the organizations' objectives apparently prevails over considerations of ideological differences.

The IS conception of advocacy is very different from that of the Brazilian organizations. As seen in the previous section, the meanings of these activities are very clear in the US, while in Brazil these concepts are, to a certain degree, still under construction, where advocacy appears to be a synonym of lobbying and still perceived to be strongly linked to corporate interests (see Table 1).

The three organizations understand that lobbying requires fluent knowledge of legislative and executive processes, and as a result, all three employ specialists in public policy advocacy. As previously noted, GIFE is the sole organization in this study to outsource this activity. Considering GIFE's advocacy role arose as a result of an evolutionary process within the organization, and that GIFE did not initially have the necessary skills to undertake advocacy directly, its decision to delegate advocacy activities to a third party can be interpreted as strategic. In addition, as GIFE was formed by corporate foundations and outsourcing is a common practice in corporations, it is possible to see how a CSO's membership might influence its profile and managerial practices, as well as the possible mimetic quality of CSO strategy. However, GIFE will gain more legitimacy and political expertise if it exercises advocacy activities directly. Unlike GIFE, ABONG, with a tradition of active mobilization and close ties to social movements, and IS, founded to defend the rights of the independent sector, usually take on a more straightforward approach towards government and advocate directly.

The three CSOs studied share similar internal deliberation processes in which thematic groups or committees discuss a variety of topics with members. The main difference between them lies in how they are organized. IS creates committees based on its own internal functions (e.g., public policy, resource development, membership, auditing); GIFE primarily uses affinity groups according to its members' activities (e.g., culture, education, youth, environment, regulatory framework development), and ABONG uses

Table 1
Comparative Analysis of the Cases – 2006–2007

	IS	GIFE	ABONG
Advocacy and lobbying	“Lobbying in this country has a very specific legal definition and that is the contact with elected officials or in some cases members of the administration, and that could be at the federal presidential administration or the state level, to influence specific bills and legislation that is going on. Advocacy is a much broader term. It is trying to shape public policies before they are formed, to create an atmosphere of awareness about an issue. Lobbying and advocacy are key parts of democracy.” (P. Read, personal communication, September 26, 2006)	“I don’t have a clear concept of lobby and advocacy. What we do is impact policies with the perspective that what is public is not necessarily the State (the public belongs to everybody). The problem with the concept lobby in Brazil is that it means the defense of private interests of a company or sector. We feel that we don’t do that because we are not defending the interests of the corporate foundations, we are defending the public interest.” (F. Rosseti, personal communication, November 9, 2006)	“We’ve started dealing recently with this idea of advocacy because in the NGO discourse you see the consensual idea of participation in public policies, control, pressure, monitoring and formulation of public policies. Advocacy comes close to this idea of participation and social control of public policies but also to the idea of demanding rights. There is a clear difference between the advocacy that NGOs do and lobby, which I consider being the defense of corporate interests.” (J.E.S. Durão, personal communication, October 18, 2006)
Government	Has a systematized way of policy advocacy and believes that the partnership with government is important but that eternal vigilance is necessary to ensure that government doesn’t have so much power that people are not heard.	IS is developing policy advocacy through a Regulatory Framework Committee. It is also stimulating affinity groups to think about policy advocacy as well as stimulating members to act locally.	Has a systematized way of policy advocacy. Public money is not from government so its destiny should be decided in democratic debates where conceptions about the state, society, and development are under discussion.
Members and pair organizations	Members: IS is open to new members stimulating plurality and claim to not intermediate particular interests. Pair Org.: Many of the other advocacy organizations are members and those that are not form ad-hoc coalitions. The IS works more with the idea of “similar causes and objectives” than with similar CSOs showing how they act to achieve their interests.	Members: There are risks of specific interests that should be constrained to not affect GIFE’s legitimacy. However, affinity groups are formed according to members’ area of action, enhancing this risk. Special attention is given to education, culture and environment affinity groups. Pair Org: They don’t work in coalition with ABONG.	Members: Affirms having to deal with private interests of members but at the same time pays special attention to racial and gender causes. Pair Org.: They claim they don’t have pair organizations in Brazil. GIFE is not a pair because it represents different organizations, not NGOs. Coalitions are mainly with social movements and NGOs.

regional committees (e.g., south, southwest, northeast). Participation in committees in the case of IS is restricted, meaning members must be invited to attend. For both ABONG and GIFE, this is not the case and participation is open to all members, evincing a more participative process. All three organizations also hold frequent general meetings, and use email and e-bulletins as a means of communication. IS was the only organization identified to use and rely heavily on teleconferencing with members, possibly because the usage of this technology is still not very common in Brazil. IS, GIFE, and ABONG do not use consultation procedures such as surveys, polls, and votes with member organizations; decisions are made by each organization’s board of directors.

With regard to the organizations’ relationship with their members, IS affirms that there is no space for the discussion of any member’s particular interests if they are not of public

concern. On the other hand, the Brazilian organizations often have to restrain the particular interests of their members from setting the agenda of the organization as a whole. GIFE and ABONG claim to address these interests in such a manner as to benefit the “public interest.” Interestingly, it is possible to observe that GIFE pays special attention to education, culture, and environment bills, while ABONG emphasizes issues of gender and racial equality, which may be understood as a reflection of their members’ particular interests. By advocating for specific issues, GIFE and ABONG lobby for its members’ corporate interests when they should focus on the broader defence of CSOs’ rights and leave it up to their members to focus on their individual causes.

Hudock (1995) suggested that organizations can be influenced by those who control their resources. This is the so-called theory of resource dependency, according to

which the environment is a source of resources with which an organization interacts and which exerts influence over the organizational structure and individual behaviour within organizations. From the resource dependence theory perspective, GIFE and ABONG's tendency to advocate for specific causes may be a result of the effect their members' interests have on their respective organizational structures.

Furthering our analysis of deliberative processes, we observed that certain problems identified by Gambetta (1998) in the deliberative process, such as the manipulation of weaker parties and the issues of "Claro" cultures, are evident in both GIFE and ABONG. The process of "education and discipline" that inhibits individuals from expressing their opinions, identified by Hindess (2000), and the fact that individuals who can argue better have an increased chance of being heard (Sanders, 1997), are also important considerations when analyzing these two organizations. This is evidenced, for example, by a GIFE committee meeting discussing the regulatory framework of CSOs, where only a small number of committee members participated and made decisions. Also, at an ABONG promoted seminar on NGOs and Corporate Relations, we noted the lack of proper debate and deliberation within CSOs given the political homogeneity of the participants (7 of 8 speakers were connected to left-wing social movements and NGOs, while only 1 was linked to corporations).

Concerning their relations with the state, all organizations affirm that their relationship is marked by partnership and conflict. The American organization, more strongly influenced by liberal values, affirms that eternal vigilance is necessary to ensure that the government does not accumulate too much power. In Brazil, on the other hand, both GIFE and ABONG criticize the absence of state policies for CSOs. Several negotiations have been conducted with different governments; however, long-standing state policies affecting the sector's development and effectiveness are not devised or implemented. Moreover, the absence of an LDA in Brazil interferes in the development of policy advocacy in the country. As Brazil's is a recent democracy, disclosure and accountability would help to build the state and civil society relationship.

Discussion

Summary

We investigated the advocacy role of three CSOs through a comparative study between Brazil and the US. Through a literature review, in-depth interviews, and case studies with one organization in the US and two in Brazil, we were able to better understand how the terms advocacy and lobbying are understood in each context. In addition, it

was also possible to analyze how advocacy is developing in Brazil, where there is a significant American influence in the academic research taking place in the universities (Alcadipani & Rosa, 2011), from documents produced by international agencies targeted at CSOs. We conclude that the role of public policy advocacy strengthens democracy by facilitating a greater variety of CSOs presenting their views on public policy and other topics and by bringing such views to the forefront of deliberation processes.

Though there are risks that can limit equal participation in the process of deliberation, we conclude that, overall, public policy advocacy makes the deliberative process more participative. The study indicates that different stages of advocacy and lobbying processes, the influence of regulatory framework, and the difficulties acting in coalitions due to ideological differences and members' private interests shape the main characteristics of CSOs' advocacy policies.

Contributions to Scholarship

Brazilian civil society, since the colonial era, has been characterized by the absence of a participative tradition due partly to state authoritarianism and centralization of power. This resulted in the absence of more institutionalized spaces for deliberation, both in terms of quantity and in terms of their ultimate effectiveness. When analyzing the advocacy role of Brazilian CSOs, we observed that advocacy and lobbying traditions evolved more significantly in the US and that the meanings of these concepts are much broader than in Brazil. In Brazil, when talking about policy influence by CSOs, the term advocacy is used to avoid the term lobbying, which is loaded with negative connotations. When talking about the same activity, corporations lobby and CSOs advocate. The sophistication of the US advocacy system became apparent when we analyzed the Independent Sector—an organization created to advocate for CSOs rights almost thirty years ago, guided by instrumental goals and by a professionalized structure that strictly avoids the emergence of individual members' corporate interests. Although Brazilian organizations are also professionalized, their ability to advocate is still undergoing development, especially at GIFE, and they are more vulnerable to individual members' interests, which became evident when analyzing the importance given to very specific issues. Although they recognize the importance of acting as a coalition, paradoxically, the two Brazilian organizations studied have difficulty in establishing coalitions with organizations that do not share similar ideological perspectives.

Political deliberation involves a process of constant bargaining through a network of discourses that are meant to facilitate the rational solution of practical, moral, and ethical problems. Such a process requires the creation of a space for discussion and mobilization by both state and civil society. Though rarely achieved, a communication community is the ideal model to be pursued. In this model, argumentation is

left to those that are part of the process in an expanded audience. These ideal communities develop through socialization processes, and also through an accurate analysis of the arguments presented during the deliberation process, based on truth (Habermas, 1996). Such an ideal type is naturally a “methodological fiction” that helps us highlight the complexities of deliberative democracy, as reality is inevitably more complex than the model itself. The socialization process requires cultural and personal learning by participants since “dogmatic worldviews and rigid patterns of socialization can block a discursive mode of association” (Habermas, 1996, p. 325). Considering GIFE and ABONG, we observed that ideological differences may be an impediment to the deliberation processes and consequently undercut the principles underpinning deliberative democracy, where the discussion of public matters among different actors is necessary.

The analysis of IS and how it deliberates within the public sphere provides evidence that the US has institutional mechanisms in place for state and civil society interaction largely due to its historical features and the development of a regulatory framework of the state and civil society relationship. On the other hand, Brazilian democracy is at a learning stage, showing signs that it is beginning to address this issue, but it still has far to go before institutionalized and effective deliberation practices are established. In incipient democratic countries of “Claro!” cultures such as Brazil, special institutions (such as a regulatory framework and deliberative spaces) are required to reduce the vulnerabilities of democratic processes (e.g., stronger voices and cooptation of weaker groups). “Democracy and justice are seen as successful in a certain country, and it is inferred that by adopting the same institutional arrangements, success will follow suit. This is not so.” (Gambetta, 1998, p. 37). In this case, ideological differences among participants, the lack of a regulatory framework, and the fragilities inherent to recent democracies suggests that sometimes Western models do not work exactly the same way in other contexts. Deliberative practices should be created and members of different CSOs should be encouraged to consider different points of view. However, these organizations should open themselves to communicate and accept other political views in order to deepen deliberative democracy.

Applied Implications

There are several challenges facing the establishment of CSOs as participative agents in policy advocacy in Brazil. First, the sustainability of advocacy activities is threatened by the difficulty of obtaining financial support for activities that have long-term results. Second, the lack of knowledge and the absence of a tradition of advocacy, specifically with regard to legislative and executive processes, limit participation to those organizations that have knowledge of the system and resources. This problem is amplified by the

absence of a regulatory framework for exerting influence on public policy, such as the LDA in the US, which adds legitimacy and transparency to the advocacy process. Moreover, this research points to the risks of some members’ interests being placed ahead of the public interest and the challenges surrounding CSOs acting in coalition due to ideological differences. We see that it falls to CSOs and the Brazilian state to not only find original paths leading to deliberation, emulating some US institutional and organizational features, such as the legal framework and the strategy of focusing on the broad defense of CSOs, but also to expand and replicate these paths and to mobilize in an attempt to identify and address inequities relating to who is heard as well as to resources and information.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Studies analyzing political spaces, such as public policy councils, conclude that these spaces are not always democratic and effective (Gohn, 2001). There are distortions related to the possibilities of access for those who participate, making the process nondemocratic. It is essential to understand who these advocacy organizations represent, what interests are involved, and how they are held accountable. The challenge is to understand the nature of representative claims and how they contribute to democracy (Urbinati & Warren, 2008).

Research about CSOs’ participation in policy advocacy is scarce. This study aimed to contribute to the field, but no generalizations can be drawn from its conclusions. Other advocacy organizations and deliberative spaces should be analyzed in future research to better understand these advocacy activities. The influence and implications of CSOs’ advocacy must attract researchers’ attention as CSOs are becoming an important part of the contemporary political process in many countries. Indeed, these institutionalized spaces are believed to be conducive to the participation in and deliberation about public policies for groups that have been traditionally marginalized. Yet, Lavalle, Houtzager, and Acharya (2004) confirmed that we know little about the institutionalized spaces of participation, about the social forces that influence deliberation and decision making, and about the efficacy of these forces in producing public policies.

Future comparative research should also analyze differences and similarities between CSOs’ advocacy in Latin America where the historical weakness of civil society is important in explaining the fragility of political democracy and the institutionalization of authoritarian structures. According to Oxhorn (1995), it is possible to observe different levels and forms of citizens’ participation in Latin American countries where military coups and bureaucratic authoritarian regimes ruled.

For years in this region, the civil society political influence was neutralized and political party activity banned or curtailed. For Oxhorn (1995), there is the development of

“societal” or “state” corporatism in the region. Societal corporatism is characterized by deep roots in social movements in civil society, while state corporatism, as in the case of authoritarian regimes of Brazil and Mexico, lacks strong roots in civil society and was used to control popular demands and mobilization. On the other hand, countries such as Bolivia and Ecuador, with indigenous and other popular movements struggling for land, democracy, and social justice, have not only used mass mobilization, but are also succeeding in entering the state through the electoral process (Petras & Veltemeyer, 2005). Analyzing the differences in the development of advocacy activities within Latin America is an interesting and important task to be accomplished.

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