Preface

On the evening of January 24, 2003, the leader of Brazil's Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), or Workers' Party, the former metalworker Luis Ignácio da Silva, known as Lula, walked onstage at the World Social Forum's single largest event as the country's newly elected president. Like its first two incarnations, the Third World Social Forum (WSF), a worldwide gathering of social justice activists, was held in Porto Alegre, having grown to an event of over 100,000 participants from more than 150 countries. When Lula came onstage, Porto Alegre's citizens mingled with *piqueteros* from Argentina, queer activists from India, living-wage activists from the United States, trade unionists from South Africa, and activists from literally thousands of different social movements. The electrified audience, already in a festive spirit, was mesmerized by his speech, which lent the event a sense of world-historical significance.

Flanked by well-known PT leaders like Benedita da Silva (the ex-governor of Rio de Janeiro) and Tarso Genro (Porto Alegre's ex-mayor), Lula called for international solidarity in support of his mandate in the face of the tough times ahead it would no doubt face.[1] Lula then publicly defended his decision to attend the World Economic Forum in Davos as one of a series of pragmatic decisions that would foster dialogue to solve common problems. He likened his term as president to the role of a soccer coach at a match; although there would no doubt be difficulties, his record ought to be examined at the end of the term rather than at its start. He closed by promising he would not deviate "one comma" from his socialist ideals. The crowd went wild and started to chant holding up two hands to signify the number eight, already calling for his reelection barely three weeks into his term.

The World Social Forum has catapulted Porto Alegre and its style of governance onto the world stage. Activists and scholars alike have recognized the WSF as a completely novel "movement of movements" that transcends traditional narratives of social movements:[2] it is a North-South transnational gathering without a hierarchy, unified ideology, or leadership that contains elements of previous nationally based movements without being easily definable as any of them.[3] The organizing committee chose Porto Alegre partially because of practical concerns; it had, after all, a sympathetic municipal government with the capacity to host such an event and the experience to carry it off, given its years of successful participatory meetings. But the choice was also symbolic on the part of organizers; the city's style of participatory democracy stood in for the alternatives that global social justice activists sought to craft. In Porto Alegre, progressive administrators based their decisions on real participatory input from the city's least privileged, and radical democracy and discussion from below had guided and transformed the Left's redistributive mission.

But Lula's victory in October 2002 also represents something quite novel as well. The story of the Workers' Party, a party of political outsiders, which barely made an impact in elections in the early 1980s, is one of a rupture with traditional Brazilian electoral politics and the traditional narratives of left-wing political parties. It is difficult to capture in terms of the distinctions between "social democratic and socialist" (or "reformist and revolutionary") usually used to describe leftist projects. In a sense, Lula and the PT officials who shared the podium with him faced their social movement mirror image in the multitude of global justice activists who stood before them. Lula had in the past been "one of them"; he was a social movement activist become president.

The history of the PT in the 1980s and 1990s is one of evolution of a vision and practice centered around citizenship, participatory democracy, and good governance. The party's spectacular electoral growth was marked by neither clientelist mobilization of the masses nor traditional cadre organizing, but by translating civil society's innovations and forging alliances with its various sectors through institutions of participatory democracy such as its participatory budget. The growing importance of the strategy of promoting citizenship through participatory institutions is apparent in documents from the PT's subsequent national congresses and resolutions.

At the center of the story of the PT's evolution is Porto Alegre's ex-

periment in participatory democracy, which has been emulated in many places throughout the world. A large body of literature describes that experiment, but this book takes a different approach from many other accounts of it. The story I tell here is neither directly about the PT nor about governance itself, but rather about civic life and civic practices in a city where participatory democracy has become a way of life. What is the quality of democracy in participatory meetings? What sort of political culture has evolved in civil society in Porto Alegre?

Properly answered, these questions tell us something about the PT, I think, and shed some light both on Lula and his government and on the evolution of the Latin American left more broadly. For many, the fact that the national PT appears for the moment to have abandoned a redistributive platform has been a disappointing turn of events, but this has at least something to do with its strategies. In contrast to the Porto Alegre administration, the national government has not yet opened significantly empowered participatory avenues for popular decision making. Rather, it has sought parliamentary legitimacy in ever-broader coalitions and more conservative economic policies. It has had difficulty with organized sectors of society, some of which have played a limited consultative role in the new government. Prominent Porto Alegrenses in the administration have proposed broad participatory reforms in the manner of the city's Participatory Budget, or Orçamento Participativo, but to little avail.

But the book was written in the belief that there is something else to be learned far beyond Brazil from the story of Porto Alegre's neighborhood associations and movements. Taking this case seriously forces us to pay attention to facets of civic life and citizenship that are often obscured from view, exposing their "artifactuality."[4] It also suggests that trying to understand the ways in which social movements' claims and counterclaims can force the state into democratic innovations that in some cases shape the polity itself, in ways that blur distinctions between movement and state, may be more useful than the image of social movements as contenders "rattling at the gates of the state."[5] Movements, we are reminded, may change, but do not necessarily come to an end, when they engage the state. The implicit definition that often drives social movement studies, that movements are equal to protest activity, finds a limit case here—movements have declined protest activity, but have not demobilized; quite the contrary. But perhaps the most important innovation has to do with the explicit connection of

civic participation to redistribution and to social justice, which calls for a kind of democratic theory that does not seek to "bracket" the effects of power at the door of the deliberative meeting; rather, it sees power, conflict, and, ultimately, the political as constitutive of the public sphere itself. This book is an attempt to add to that theory in light of the significant renewal that this experience represents.

This book was also written in the belief that the best testament to the experience of Porto Alegrenses is neither to romanticize them nor exaggerate their accomplishments, but to be fair, as well as true to my own interpretation. This was not easy, especially as I have, in some instances, come to disagree with people I really came to like and respect. Their insights nonetheless came to be important. I have, for instance, highlighted the civic consequences of participatory budgeting rather than its "good governance" or human development outcomes or its instrumental role in PT electoral successes. It is my belief that while these other aspects are important, the OP's significance lies with its contribution to the quality of democracy in a way that is more immediately visible than its impact on development indicators and that will probably outlast the PT in power. This book was also written on the assumption that its audience would not be made up only of Brazilianists or Porto Alegre experts, and I have therefore tried to avoid drowning readers in the alphabet soup of municipal agencies, the Brazilian tax structure, or Brazilian political parties. I have also attempted to resist the temptation of writing a "Porto Alegre compendium" and have spared readers some of the fine-grained institutional and historical detail that comes from seven years of research. As much as possible, I have relegated that to the endnotes, pointing readers to other sources, including the many policy reports and works that extensively document various features of participatory budgeting. The companion website to this book, www.participatorybudgeting.org, contains links to those reports, as well as to updated information on Porto Alegre.

In retrospect, authoring a book may be the best example of individual appropriation of collective production. This particular one would not have been possible without a number of people and organizations. The list is too long to give in full, but it includes scholars, friends, and co-survivors at the University of Wisconsin, as well as my family on both the Baiocchi and Chakravartty sides. Sociological co-conspirators Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Amanda Lewis, Tyrone Forman, Black Hawk Hancock, and Brian Finch have helped me navigate the professional

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Anyone who knows the exigencies of two academic careers understands that at times the logic of exchange and the metaphors of reciprocity break down and movement forward is only possible with great acts of generosity and selflessness by one of the parties. I've been fortunate to have a *companheira* who has lovingly endured more talk of participatory governance than anyone ought to have to, while taking time from her own work to help me find coherence among jumbled thoughts and odd sentences. Paula more than anyone else made sure this book happened. To our delight, one of our daughter Aisha's first long words was "politics." She reminds us every day why we have to believe that a better world must be possible, and we hope her upbringing does not turn her away from politics.