

**IDS Working Paper 249**

**In whose name? Political representation and civil  
organisations in Brazil**

**Adrián Gurza Lavallo, Peter P. Houtzager and Graziela Castello**

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[www.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs/research/Collective%20Actors.html](http://www.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs/research/Collective%20Actors.html)

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## Summary

There is now considerable evidence that civil organisations have become *de facto* and *de jure* representatives of particular segments of the population and interests in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policy. This paper explores two questions that are becoming increasingly important in the debate on the role of “civil society” in contemporary democracy: Who do civil organisations represent when they act as representatives in the polity; and, in what terms is this representation constructed? The role of civil organisations in political representation has received little or no attention in the research agendas on the reconfiguration of representation or on the democratising of democracy. Furthermore, there are no well-established theoretical models beyond the classic electoral or membership ones which set out how civil organisations could establish their representativeness. The vast majority of civil organisations in middle- and low-income countries, however, are not membership based and few make use of electoral procedures to authorise a mandate or establish accountability.

This paper examines which organisations define themselves as political representatives and the forms of representation they are constructing. It also explores some of the possible consequences of different forms of representation for democracy. The paper draws on findings of a survey of civil organisations – that is, neighbourhood or community associations, membership organisations, NGOs, and coordinators of networks of these organisations – in the city of São Paulo, Brazil. We find that organisations that publicly claim to be representatives of particular publics in fact do engage in extensive representation activities; and, that the dynamics of representation among civil organisations are closely related to those of traditional political channels of representation. Furthermore, we find that the congruency arguments civil organisations make publicly to support their representativeness are crystallising around a small number of notions of representation. The most common are mediation, proximity, and services. The least common are identity, electoral, and membership.



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## 1 Introduction

Understanding the dynamics of political representation by civil organisations is at the cutting edge of debate on contemporary democracies. Two questions in particular are becoming increasingly important to this debate: who do civil organisations represent when they act as representatives in the polity; and, in what terms is this representation constructed?<sup>1</sup> This paper explores these two questions using the findings of a survey of civil organisations – that is, neighbourhood or community associations, membership organisations, NGOs, and coordinators of networks of these organisations – in the city of São Paulo (population 10 million, within municipal boundaries).

There is now considerable evidence that civil organisations have become *de facto* and *de jure* representatives of particular segments of the population and interests in the design, implementation, and monitoring of public policy. Governments are, for a variety of reasons, drawing this new set of collective actors into their policy processes. Conversely, many civil organisations are themselves knocking on government policy doors with increasing insistency. Over the past 20 years different institutional arrangements have emerged to bring these actors directly in to executive-branch decision making, for example through arrangements such as the tripartite policy councils in Brazil, which bring together public officials, private sector service providers, and civil organisations. Often these institutions are part of larger democratic decentralisation reforms that, at least formally, seek to redistribute power within the state and between state and society (Heller 2001; Grindle 1999).<sup>2</sup>

We believe that, as civil organisations acquire a new and active role in political representation, processes of the reconfiguration of representation around the executive may converge to produce a new expansion of democracy, just as the emergence of mass political parties contributed to the expansion of institutions of political representation and of democracy itself in the early decades of the twentieth century. The current shifts in the form of political representation involve changes in and rearrangements of the workings of the traditional institutions of representative government and an expansion of the locus and the functions of political representation. The contribution of this expansion to democratisation, however, hinges in part on how the dilemmas regarding the representativeness of civil organisations are resolved. On the one hand, the large majority of organisations engaged in representational activities do not have electoral mechanisms through which to establish their representativeness, and most are not membership-based. On the other hand, there are no well-established theoretical models which set out how civil organisations could establish representativeness beyond such classic mechanisms.

Paradoxically, the role of civil organisations in political representation has received little or no attention in the research agendas on the reconfiguration of representation or democratising democracy.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the term “civil organisation” rather than “civil society” because the latter is commonly defined in normative terms and is anchored in a series of highly contested analytic assumptions. Our use of the concept “civil society” is limited to references to a general perspective found in the literature and never to the empirical actors.

<sup>2</sup> Among other cases are the Local Government Code in the Philippines; the Law of Popular Participation in Bolivia; Constitutional Amendments 73 and 74 in India – and especially the well-known People’s Planning Campaign in the southern state of Kerala; as well as the New Localism in England (Gaventa 2004).

The lack of attention to this central problem suggests either the difficulty involved in empirical research into the representativeness of civil organisations, or an *a priori* decision to define this issue as falling outside of their respective agendas.

Studies that explore the *reconfiguration of political representation* offer interpretations of a transformation in progress at the level of the party system, where the relationship between elected representative and represented citizen is believed to be in flux.<sup>3</sup> In these studies, representation fundamentally resides in the electoral process, and for this reason there is no need to even explore whether civil organisations are acquiring any role in political representation in contemporary democracies. Asserting that civil organisations lack representativeness, either because they have no identifiable mechanism to establish a mandate or authorise their representation – i.e. elections – or because they do not have any accountability mechanisms, voids rather than illuminates the problematique that is explored in this paper. The possible role of civil organisations in a reconfiguration of representation is defined *a priori* as irrelevant (see Przeworski 2002; Chandhoke 2003). Studies of the *democratisation of democracy* have, in turn, focused their attention on institutional innovations that embrace various forms of participation in institutional structures for the design and implementation of public policies.<sup>4</sup> Yet they have not identified the issue of political representation by civil organisation as an important one, because it is (in these studies) masked by the emphasis put on “citizen participation” and “civil society,” which are seen as the foundations of the contemporary democratisation. Hence institutions such as the councils in Brazil are often referred to as spaces for “citizen participation”, even though more often than not they bring collective actors (rather than individual citizens) and public officials into contact (Gurza Lavalle *et al.* 2005). In this way, however, the dilemmas of the representativeness of civil organisation’s are avoided rather than confronted.<sup>5</sup>

Sceptics of representation offered by civil organisations have good reasons for some of their scepticism. In addition to the absence of clear and obligatory accountability mechanisms between the actors and the social sectors they represent (Przeworski 2002), the line drawn between the public and private roles of these organisations is ambiguously defined. As a result, various authors point to the functional role these organisations play in the logic of privatisation and of redistribution of responsibilities between society, the state and the market (Houtzager *et al.* 2002; Cunill 1997; Dagnino 2002). There are

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<sup>3</sup> Manin (1997); Novaro (2000); Miguel (2003a and 2003b); Roberts (2002), and Hagopian (1998) among others. The relationship between representatives and those represented has been intensely studied in the United States, with the attention focused on the eventual connections between decision making in the legislature by elected politicians and the interests or preferences of the electorate. A far smaller and more recent collection of work addresses the debate about the reconfiguration of political representation.

<sup>4</sup> The literatures that focus within the democratisation of democratic research agenda include those on deepening democracy, social accountability, empowered participation, deliberative democracy, and on the contribution of civil society to democracy. See authors in fn. 20.

<sup>5</sup> Paradoxically, these agendas implicitly presuppose both the existence of satisfactory responses regarding the connection between actors of the so-called civil society and the population in general and the fact that this connection is qualitatively superior to the distant and increasingly rare relations between representatives and those represented in political representation. Those who have made an explicit connection between processes of reconfiguration of political representation and the changes that have occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century amongst societal actors, on the one hand, and the redefinition of their profile during the course of State reform, also carried out in this same period on the other, are a rare exception. See the chapters in Chalmers *et al.* (1997), particularly Chalmers with Martin and Piester. See also Roberts (2002), Friedman and Hochstetler (2002) and Houtzager *et al.* (2002).

other relevant reservations as well, including the possible proliferation of claims based on substantive representation, such as race and gender, which are alien to the formal and universal logic of modern political representation,<sup>6</sup> or the weakening of civil organisations' capacity to act as agents of social protest and to dispute the political agenda as their involvement in state programmes or participatory institutions increases, or even the public's lack of recognition and expectations of civil organisations (Chandhoke 2003 and 2004).

We believe, however, that it is wise to defer any conclusion based on such reservations, because most take a traditional configuration of political representation or representative mandate as their point of departure. Civil organisations do not, and cannot, hold a representative mandate on these terms – that is, as public officials elected through universal franchise. Judging them according to this standard may not be a productive exercise. In fact, the boundaries, achievements, and constraints of existing notions of representation within the universe of civil organisations are the subject of great political dispute today. Setting aside the reservations mentioned above allows us to continue to reflect on the analytical challenge that exists.

The actors themselves are not waiting for the theorists to discover or come to terms with their new political role. Amongst civil organisations today one finds a diversity of partially constructed notions of representation that are used to publicly defend their representativeness. The content of some of these notions is compatible with the expansion of democracy, while that of others is clearly not.

This paper therefore explores the forms of political representation civil organisations are constructing, and some of the possible consequences of these for democracy. The data on civil organisations in São Paulo was produced using sampling criteria, explained in detail below, that favoured organisations that were more active working with (or on the behalf of) disadvantaged sectors of the population. In total leaders of 229 organisations were interviewed in 2002. Because this universe of organisations works with or for social groups who are said to be marginalised in classic representative institutions and from centres of political power, their role as representatives is especially relevant to the debates on the direction of contemporary democracy.

São Paulo is a “forerunner case” that may reflect what lies on democracy's horizon. The city is the largest and politically most diverse in Brazil, a country that has since its democratic transition in 1985 become a democratic laboratory of enormous dimensions.<sup>7</sup> It has a tradition of councils linked to left wing actors, has experimented with the participatory budget and other participatory institutions, and has a long-standing presence of societal actors linked to popular sectors, such as the housing and health

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<sup>6</sup> For a critical analysis of this view see Young (2002: 81–120).

<sup>7</sup> Brazil has produced not only the Participatory Budget, the best known participatory democracy experiment today, but also the constitutional reforms that have made the implementation of public policy in the areas of health, education, and social services subject to the deliberations of tripartite policy councils. Cities such as São Paulo have further created an array of municipal councils, such as those on housing and gender, and other participatory or representative institutions. Discussion of these experiences within the democratisation of democracy agenda, see Avritzer (2003), Fung and Wright (2003), Heller (forthcoming), Santos (2002a; 1998).

movements. Civil organisations in São Paulo and elsewhere in Brazil have, furthermore, achieved notable influence in various areas of public policy since the end of the military dictatorship in 1985, and particularly since the 1988 Constitution.

There is no intention here to generalise empirical accounts as if they were valid propositions for every context. The data come from a single city and from a sample of organisations that is representative of a particular segment of a larger universe, but not of the universe of civil organisations as a whole.<sup>8</sup> The findings do suggest important empirical trends and the paper analyses these trends to identify important holes in the debates on contemporary democracy. Democracy in Latin America has always been imagined and constructed in relation to the historical processes and institutional developments in Europe and the United States. As the research agenda on the democratisation of democracy suggest with its empirical focus on Brazil and other middle- and low-income countries, perhaps for the first time democracy and the cutting edge of democratising reforms are being imagined and constructed in the southern hemisphere.

There are not established theoretical or historical models to guide our analysis of the role of civil organisations in the reconfiguration of political representation. We therefore take an approach that is different from that in most studies on representation, which allows us to make empirical progress *without* assuming a normative model of representation. Because there are no satisfactory criteria with which to classify civil organisations as effectively being representatives or not, we rely on their self-definition as representatives as our starting point – that is, organisations’ explicit and public commitment to representing the communities, beneficiaries, members, or target populations with which or for whom they work. From here on we will use the term “publics” as a shorthand to connote these different relations. Throughout this paper we are therefore concerned with what we tentatively call “assumed representation”, leaving open the unanswerable question of whether “actual” representation is taking place.

The analysis has two empirical components. The first explores which types of civil organisations assume the representation of their publics, and whether there is a clear relation between claiming to be a representative and engaging in what can reasonably be assumed are representational activities (such as participating in policy councils). That is, we test for coherence between discursive claims and concrete practices. Next the paper uses statistical analysis, in the form of a principal model (a logistic regression), to identify the combination of factors with the greatest capacity to predict this propensity to assumed representation.

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<sup>8</sup> The full universe of civil organisations is not knowable. One of the principle difficulties for the quantitative analysis of civil organisations is the absence of reasonably comprehensive lists or registries of organisations. Such lists would provide the bases for drawing random samples.

The second component of the paper analyses the different justifications (or *congruency arguments*)<sup>9</sup> civil organisations make publicly to establish the legitimacy or the representativeness of their assumed representation. This section develops a typology of the seven most common arguments of representation that actors make publicly, and examines the extent to which the different arguments are internally coherent and consistent with actual representational practices. It then examines which of the arguments are compatible with core democratic principles.

The findings from São Paulo suggest a surprisingly consistency between notions and actions of representation and they interrogate in authoritative and multiple ways some of the assumptions central to the research agendas on reconfiguration of representation and on the democratisation of democracy. For example, 73 per cent of organisations assumed representation, and for these organisations the relationship with political institutions is of central importance to their claiming the status of representatives. By far the best predictor of their propensity to assume the representation of the publics for which or with whom they work is whether the organisation has supported political candidates in elections. Furthermore, those who assume representation are far more likely to engage in actual representational activities than those who state they are not representatives. Contrary to the assumptions of the two research agendas, this suggests not only that a majority of civil organisations working with or for lower income groups purposefully engage in political representation, but also that the dynamics of this political representation are closely related to those of traditional political channels of representation. They are *not* parallel to or separate from traditional channels.

The findings also reveal that the congruency arguments civil organisations make to support their representativeness appear to be crystallising around a small number of notions of representation. And, there is an elective affinity between particular notions and specific types of organisations. We identify six arguments: identity, proximity, mediation, services, and the two traditional arguments, electoral and membership. Although they receive the most attention in scholarly works, the identity, electoral, and membership arguments are surprisingly rare among civil organisations and account for only 16 per cent of the actors who assume representation of their publics. In contrast, mediation, proximity, and services are by far the most common arguments (ranging from 31 to 23 per cent of actors).

Among the congruency arguments reconcilable with democratic principals, the *mediation* argument appears the most promising. The argument, made by roughly a third of the actors, is that the representation exercised by civil organisations is not an alternative to that of traditional institutions of political representation, but rather an additional form of mediation that connects segments of the

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<sup>9</sup> The Congruence Model is the most influential approach in empirical analysis of political representation carried out in the second half of the twentieth century, particularly in the field of political science (Campilongo 1988). As implied by its title, the model posits that evaluating representation can be set out in terms of greater or lesser congruence – representativeness – between the behaviour of the elected representatives and their electorate, where the behaviour of the former is verifiable by means of the production of legislated political policies, whilst the preferences of the latter are condensed into electoral results or in opinion surveys. Despite the criticisms against the model over the years, the essence of the concept of congruence seems indisputable without threatening the basis of political representation itself. The congruence model also has been used to analyse the representativeness of governments in relation to their parties. To this end, see the comparative study of 10 countries carried out by Klingemann *et al.* (1994).

population otherwise poorly or under-represented in the State and in electoral politics. Actors who make the mediation argument overwhelmingly engage in political activities in which actual representation is likely to occur. The organisations who most often invoke the mediation argument are NGOs, Community Associations, and Coordinators.

The final section of the paper argues that this notion of representation has been shaped over the past decade by the institutional innovation at the regime and state levels in Brazil, and illustrates that civil organisations' own dynamics of representation have shifted considerably since the 1980s. In particular, they have taken on explicitly political features. The arguments that appear least reconcilable with democratic representation are those of identity and of services.

The next section discusses in greater depth the literatures within the reconfiguration of representation and democratisation of democracy research agendas, and highlights the absence of accepted models in political theory against which political representation by civil organisations can be analysed. The subsequent two sections present the methodological and analytic strategies adopted in this paper, in light of this absence and the challenges posed by researching a diverse and elusive universe of actors. The empirical findings follow, including the typology of congruence arguments. The paper closes with an interpretation of the seven notions of representation and a brief final comment.

## **2 Political representation by civil organisations**

The Municipal Council for the Rights of Children and Adolescents (CDCA) in São Paulo is one example of many in Brazil's institutional rainbow of policy councils. As part of a federal system of policy councils, it is legally allocated a Municipal Fund (FUNCAD), over which councillors have spending authority. Thus, when the city council met in plenary session to approve the budget for 2002, representatives of civil organisations in the CDCA organised a public event in which children and teenagers dressed as clowns and dancers came together with a broad array of civil organisations that are either financed by the Fund or that mobilise to protect the rights of children and adolescents. The pressure exerted on the city council aimed to prevent its councillors from blocking amendments to cutting the CDCA's budget. It was undoubtedly a logical response from this group of civil organisations following the discouraging experience of the previous year, when the \$R73 million (*reais*) approved by the CDCA to finance its projects was reduced to the modest sum of \$R5 million in the budget approved by the City Council.<sup>10</sup>

The mobilisation organised by the CDCA councillors has unusual characteristics when analysed against the backdrop of the debate on the reconfiguration of representation. The pressure exerted by the "people" (councillors) on the "representatives of the people" (legislators) to influence their own vote demonstrates competition between conflicting principles of political representation. The legislators' representative mandate has its own legitimacy, acquired through the ballot box and universal franchise. The councillors from civil organisations, chosen according to rules laid out in legislation that creates the

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<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the different CDCA administrations which looks precisely at budget issues and specifically the relationship between the CDCA and its Fund (FUNCAD), see Gomes da Silva (2003, and for example used above: 90–8).

CDCA, carry out representative functions sanctioned by the 1988 Constitution – although there is considerable political dispute over the boundaries and real interpretation of these functions. In both cases, determining budgetary priorities is one of the legal powers that mark the boundaries of their legally established representation, although with their respective and very different scope and dimensions. The protest by actors that defend the rights of children and adolescents, therefore, is part of a contest between forms of representation and hence much more than just a simple exercise in pressure group tactics.

At the heart of this episode is the legitimate claim for the respect of their respective representative nature. This legally established conflict between principles of representation shows, as Dagnino has said (2002: 290–93), how much traditional understandings of political representation systematically appear to be out of place in contemporary Brazil. The processes of the reconfiguration of political representation have begun to spill over the borders of the electoral arena, into areas of control and representation in executive parts of government, and specifically in processes of public policies making. With this shift, civil organisations *de facto* carry out legally sanctioned roles as political representatives, even though an unknown remains regarding the possible criteria that will legitimise these roles.

The crucial dilemma of the representativeness of civil organisation representation – who they represent and what mechanism establishes a relationship with the represented – has not been taken up in the *reconfiguration of representation* and the *democratising democracy* literatures. Neither has explored this novel form of representation empirically in any kind of systematic manner, nor in terms of its implications for democracy or democratic theory. The former works with the legitimate model of political representation that exists – i.e. representative mandate through elections – which was historically inspired by a set of actors, and for carrying out particular roles, that do not fit in any way with the profile of civil organisations or the political roles they play. The latter literatures do not address the issue of representation, in any form.

In the absence of historical or theoretical models for examining the political representation by civil organisations, we argue for an analytic strategy which is inductive but guided by the essential duality of the concept of representation – between the autonomy of the representative and mandate given by the represented (Pitkin 1967) – and the importance of representatives' genuine (subjective) commitment to the interests of the represented (Burke 1942). This strategy consists of shifting the question of representativeness from the actual to the symbolic level, centring attention on the representative's commitment to representation, on their identification with those represented and, in sociological terms, on their (self)perception of their representativeness.<sup>11</sup> It entails taking seriously civil organisations' self-definition as a representative. Actors' public acceptance or rejection of the idea of being representatives, together with the justifications or congruency arguments used by them to publicly defend the genuineness of their commitment to represent – or their representativeness – is taken seriously and carefully analysed.

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<sup>11</sup> The absence of historical and theoretical models does not hinder – and undoubtedly is capable of stimulating – progress in the field of political philosophy and in the elaboration of normative models that can set out the importance of representativeness and consequently the due relationship between representatives and the represented. Such is the case for example in the work of Young (2002), which centres on creating a normative model that can combine the representation of minorities with democratic values.

Of the authors that are concerned with the reconfiguration or crisis of representation, Manin (1997) is the most notable and analytically refined example in the literature. He suggests that there is notable similarity between the contemporary period and that of the transition from the liberal parliamentary model of representation to that of a party democracy, where parties emerged as a new means of mediation between the represented electorate and elected representatives. That period in history was marked by a profound sense that democracy was in crisis. Alarmist interpretations about the fatally corrosive effects of mass political parties on the classical parliamentary system were common. Over time it became clear that political parties would not ruin democracy. On the contrary, they became part of democracies' institutional infrastructure and contributed to its strength in a new historical era. The parallel Manin draws with current political changes in the organisation of representative government helps support the argument that contemporary allegations of a "crises" of democracy, or of representation and political parties, are in fact part of a process of reconfiguring representation which (as in the past), not only does not threaten the institutions of representative government but may expand or reinvigorate them. The volatility of the electorate, the fall in the levels of voter turnout, the general discredit of political institutions, together with the wearing away of mass or socially rooted political parties are used to confirm this interpretation.<sup>12</sup>

However, in a controversially framed prognosis, Manin argues that the current reconfiguration of representation has features that are much closer to those of the original liberal parliamentary model, fully respecting all of the principles or basic institutional characteristics of representative government. This occurs because the individual candidate and the real or symbolic links between him and the electorate regain the importance lost with the emergence of mass political parties, and the large programmatic and ideological cleavages they embodied, without threatening either elections themselves or basic political rights of citizenship, or even the representative mandate or autonomy of the representative in relation to the desires of the represented. In the final analysis, the media emerges as the preponderant factor in the "emancipation" of candidates from party structures, because of its capacity to symbolically link candidates directly to the electorate and thereby eliminating the need to maintain expensive grass-roots structures and to mobilise a mass base. For this reason the type of political representation that marks party democracies will give way to forms of representation characterised as *audience democracy* (Manin 1997: 218–34).

Other, undoubtedly more polemical, authors interpret the return of charismatic national leaders as a key feature of the reconfiguration of representation. In this perspective, the growing social pluralism and diversification of socio-economic groups makes it extremely difficult to process binding decisions and construct collective perceptions of political priorities and appropriate means to achieve them. The heterogeneity and fragmentation of society has in fact become so visible in many national contexts that some authors make the extreme diagnoses that we are entering a post-representative political era (Abal

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<sup>12</sup> For an analysis of the different indicators of the loss of centrality of parties, see Miguel (2003a) and Roberts (2002), as well Manin (1997: 193-234). For a review of different perspectives on the causes of this loss of centrality, focusing alternatively on socio-structural, institutional politics or economic performance factors.

1996).<sup>13</sup> Faced with such difficulties, and positively exploring what Bourdieu (1987) called the ‘political fetishism of representation’, this perspective suggests that plebiscitary leadership today performs the role of personifying the unity of the social will.<sup>14</sup> A unity that can certainly not be achieved through corporatist institutions or through policies that mirror and contribute to crystallising the major social cleavages rooted in a Fordist world of work. Parties and unions in this view have lost the capacity to forge broad identities and, in their place, national leaders tend to expand their authority and take on the task of creating new identities.<sup>15</sup> The role of plebiscitary leadership in the reconfiguration of representation, it is argued, has acquired particular relevance during the implementation of the structural reforms of recent decades, reforms preceded by the need to construct broad social consensus (Novaro 2000).<sup>16</sup> Given that the personalisation of politics on a massive scale requires the technical support provided by the media, and in particular, by a series of phenomena studied in the area of political communication, the media emerges again as the foundation of the process of reconfiguration of political representation (Miguel 2003a, 2003b; Thompson 1998).<sup>17</sup>

To show that this leads to an *a priori* exclusion of civil organisations from the analysis of the reconfiguration of representation, we return to the work of Manin (1997). The institutions of representative democracy, he argues, survive in the current reconfiguration, but he does not report any positive signs or even minimal potential improvements in the representativeness of democracy itself. To a significant extent, the author’s understanding of representative government as a means of aristocratic government helps to explain the disproportion between his conviction about the reconfiguration of political representation and his silence regarding its consequences for democracy.

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<sup>13</sup> In the language of this post-modern stance, the relation between representation and representativeness was always a metaphor, a credible meta-narrative that was notably effective at generating political legitimacy (Abal 1996). The metaphor today is said to have lost any effectiveness as a legitimation device, because the equivalence between the political institutions and the major interest groups of Fordist societies was irreversibly fractured by the unceasing pluralisation and differentiation of the social world; a differentiation that produced individuals who are slippery, unclassifiable and difficult to administer with the old structures of the political monopoly (Lipovetsky 1986). Thus, society became unrepresentable, except in terms of differences (Derrida 1982), inaugurating the era of post-representative democracy.

<sup>14</sup> Bourdieu points to a kind of delegation, according to which broad collectives do not exist prior to representation but rather, faced with the alternative of “be quiet or be spoken for”, are only constituted from the moment when they obtain a representative (Bourdieu 1987: 158–72).

<sup>15</sup> For a discussion on the importance of identity interpreted as a normative component of representation, see Mokre (2002).

<sup>16</sup> This profile would clearly include Latin American presidents such as Fujimori or Menem, but the “return of the leader” (Zermeño 1990) is a more widespread phenomenon and would contemplate figures such as Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas in Mexico, or presidents Collor in Brazil and Chávez in Venezuela.

<sup>17</sup> Political communication studies focus on the importance of a mediatic public sphere that can construct the difficult symbolical representation of society and its relation to the world of political institutions. Political representation (reconfigured) would still be possible insofar as the construction of common perceptions about social priorities and the symbolic connection between society and government rely on the media as a first line of mediation. Thus, contrary to apocalyptic assessments of the effects of the media on politics (see Debord 1998; Sartori 1997) authors involved in this debate choose to consider the media not as replacement of politics, but rather as one of the conditions that make it possible in the contemporary world. For some initial reflections on the role of political communication in making politics viable in the contemporary world, see the work of Ferry (1992), Wolton (1992), and Touraine (1992); also, Miège (1998). For some assessments of this field of study see the work of Gosselin (1998) and Wolton (1998).

The focus on electoral political institutions has a similar consequence. Manin, Przeworski and Stokes (1999b) examine the actual representativeness of democracy, focusing on the efficacy with which the electoral mechanism achieve a population's concerns and expectations, and show that elections themselves provide a weak bond of accountability on representatives. The authors, aware of the costs of their narrow focus on elections for constructing mandates or accountability, accept that 'elections are not the only mechanism that can induce governments to act in a representative manner' (Manin *et al.* 1999a: 19). They therefore introduce the separation of power in government structures into their analysis. The findings on the contribution of the separation of powers to representation are inconsistent and inconclusive, but this does not prevent the authors from proposing that independent and publicly controlled government accountability agencies be increased as a means of strengthening representation.<sup>18</sup> From this standpoint the authors take two analytically relevant steps; first, political representation also relates to the control of the executive functions of government and of the bureaucracy; second, the structure of government and therefore, the way decision-making is divided up and organised, can be designed so as to improve or construct political representation. It is precisely this type of role and presence that civil organisations have been acquiring in recent years – for example, externally supervising specific areas of public policies, or intervening as representatives in participative institutional innovations – and yet they are not even mentioned by the authors.<sup>19</sup>

The research agenda on the democratisation of democracy focuses on societal dynamics and does not appear to consider the political representation role of civil organisations' to any greater degree than the analyses of the reconfiguration of representation. A common feature of the literatures that share this agenda – deepening democracy, social accountability, empowered participation, deliberative democracy and civil society<sup>20</sup> – is to highlight both the role of so-called civil society in the qualitative enrichment of democracy and the inadequacy of traditional political institutions to respond to the new calls for democracy within the political system. Perhaps because the issue of political representation is irrevocably

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<sup>18</sup> Cunill (2002) correctly points out that these authors inappropriately assume that the civil service can only be held accountable by means of political elections, i.e. indirectly so.

<sup>19</sup> Przeworski is explicit in this regard: there are reasons 'why we shouldn't blind ourselves with this recent fashion (of non-governmental organizations)', they represent private interests, they are not subject to control and tend to reproduce the inequality of access to the political system, as they organise people who have resources (Przeworski 2002: 81). The proposal of the author, in this case, is not very imaginative: 'In the end, elections are the most egalitarian mechanism of access to politics. Perhaps they are not effective, but they are egalitarian' (Przeworski 2002: 81). If elections are a mechanism that is acknowledged to have limited ability to counter the growth of a gap between representatives and the represented, as the author himself maintains, to close the debate on the role of civil organisations in the reconfiguration of representation by arguing that these very mechanisms are the most egalitarian and all-embracing in nature is an option that leaves little room for institutional innovation and experimentation to expand democracy.

<sup>20</sup> For literature on deepening democracy see the work by Fung (2004), Fung and Wright (2003), Santos Boaventura (2002b); for social accountability approaches see Arato (2002), Peruzzotti and Smulovitz (2002); for a focus on empowered participation see Fung and Wright (2003); for a perspective on deliberative democracy see Habermas (1993, 1995, 1998) and the work of Bohman and Rehg (2002) and in Elster (1998); there is a greater amount of literature on civil society which is sometimes also associated with radical criticisms of democracy (see Keane 1988), but this paper fundamentally refers to Cohen and Arato (1992) and to some Latin American academics linked to this literature such as Avritzer (1994, 1997), Panfichi (2003). Also within the literature on civil society, but from a habermassian perspective, we find Costa (2002) and Avritzer (2003), which uses the idea of participatory publics.

tied to electoral political institutions, this group of authors have been cautious about, and have avoided plunging openly into, theoretical or empirical debates about the emerging forms of political representation. Different research agendas linked to a common focal point, called here the democratisation of democracy research agenda, identify mechanisms which could mould the institutions of democracy so as to make them closer to the interests and needs of the population. To a degree, debates about improving the quality of democracy coincide in two broad and implicit consensuses: on the one hand there is the abandonment of revolutionary utopias and the normative conviction of the value of democracy as an institutional frame for pursuing social change, on the other hand, there is the criticism of the prevalence of merely institutional understandings of democracy and a commitment to reintroducing substantive questions into the field of democracy theory.

The issue of representation poses substantive questions for democracy, that is to say, the representativeness of the political decisions that it produces, or the question of how representatives act on behalf on those represented. To this effect, the debate about the democratisation of democracy is incompatible with radical criticisms of democracy that denounce the inevitable distorting dividing effects between those represented and representatives and that in different ways advocate direct democracy over modes of representative democracy. In fact, as long as direct democracy operates by means of self-presentation, the problem of representation is entirely dissolved (for instance see Tenzer 1992; Keane 1992).<sup>21</sup>

Obviously in this literature on the democratisation of democracy there are different emphases, focuses, and analytical categories. Nonetheless, most share two traits that have the effect of blocking the ability to conceive of a role civil organisations might play in political representation. First, to a greater or lesser extent they rely on stylised conceptions of civil organisations, often grouped under the heading of civil society and assumed to have a particular unifying logic. This conceptual, and normative, step eliminates relevant internal differences between societal actors as well as the interactions present at the

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<sup>21</sup> For a criticism of conceiving political representation as an inevitable phenomenon or an illusion of mass society, while defending it as a desirable democratic political institution, see Urbinati (1999). Other approaches do not consider representation to have any substantive dimension but they will not be addressed in this paper. Such is the case of the legal positivist approaches and minimalist conceptions that resolve the issue of political representation as being something that is established by norms or by an institutional form. The question of representativeness is thereby placed on a psychology terrain – that is, it is made a question of the subjective motives that leads each individual to feel (s)he is represented. In these approaches, representation exists because it is hinged on a positive norm – or a process of formal authorisation, or an institutional framework – but the fact of being more or less representative is a subjective and moral judgement distinct from the norm itself. For a minimalist analysis of political representation see Rehfeld (2000); for critical analyses of formalist and legal positivist approaches see Pitkin (1967: 38–58), Campilongo (1988); Sartori (1962), Galvão (1971).

interface of political institutions and civil organisations.<sup>22</sup> Civil society is said to rationalise public action and democratise political decisions because “it” is guided by dialogue and has capacities and convictions that are previously defined because they have emanated from genuine and “pre-political” roots in the life world.<sup>23</sup> Thus there is an assumed continuity or natural connection between a group of societal actors and society, or some segments of it – i.e. between civil society and society – undermining the investigations into the processes of representation that link the two together. It is worth remembering Pitkin’s (1967: 60–91) observation that representation by definition presumes difference and not identity between the representative and those that are represented.

Second, the research and policy interventions agendas concerned with the democratising of democracy are strongly attached to the idea of participation, be that the direct presence of those eventually affected or benefited by public decisions or face-to-face deliberation. Participation by groups and sectors of the population considered under or badly represented in the locus of political representation, is thus a key means to spur on and improve the functioning of political institutions. If at times the very idea of participation appears hampered by expectation of the ultimately positive effects in improving the quality of democracy,<sup>24</sup> it also appears cognitively impoverished when it is considered that in places like Brazil, experiences of institutional innovation for participation in the design and management of public policies – independently of whether or not they have stimulated the direct involvement of the population – have produced intense participation of civil organisations. For example, in Brazilian cities like Porto Alegre, Belo Horizonte, Recife, Santo André and São Paulo, more than half of the elected delegates to the Participatory Budget (PB) are leaders of civil organisations and a much greater percentage are members of

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<sup>22</sup> The over-simplification of the relationship between civil organisations and political institutions has its origins in a constellation of factors, but one of its most notable influences has been Habermas’ theory of a two-tiered society (1987) – the systemic level and the life-world. Cohen and Arato (1992) adapt this notion in their theory of civil society, to conceive civil society’s political origin and opposition to the state (see also Costa 1997). In Latin America, such over-simplification was accompanied by an effort to conceptually redefine the category of civil society that characterised the debate in the 1990s. For a critical appraisal of this effort see Gurza Lavalle (2003a). In Brazil analyses based on other theoretical references have suggested more interesting interpretations of the relationship between the State and societal actors, whether these references come from the viewpoint of new social movements (Sader 1988); de Tocquevillian (Boschi, 1987), Gramscian (Dagnino 1998–1999) or other analytical trends (Landim 1998a; Fernandes 2002). For an analysis of civil society arguments, focused on State-society relations, see Gurza Lavalle (1999).

<sup>23</sup> For an influential characterisation of the new emergence of civil society in different regional contexts see Cohen and Arato (1992). In Brazil there is a practically uncontested consensus in the literature about the transformations that occurred in the country during the last quarter of the twentieth century in the field of civil organisations; namely an accelerated increase in the number of associations and diversification in the areas of work and of interests protected by these associations. This consensus, its empirical backup and some of the problems that this obscures have been analysed elsewhere (Gurza Lavalle 2001: Part III). The empirical support for this consensus is based with notable frequency on the research carried out by Santos (1994) in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

<sup>24</sup> As Cunill meticulously argues (1997: 71-195), participation on its own does not guarantee the positive virtues that are frequently attributed to it in the literature. Furthermore, it runs the risk of introducing and deepening that which it attempts to resolve – depoliticisation, inequality and lack of legitimacy. For a sample of how participation has become a not very reflective belief system, see Kliksberg (2000).

these organisations (Wampler 2004: 17). In São Paulo, no less than 59 per cent of associations from the sample used for this study have participated in at least one of the participatory institutional innovations implemented in recent years, principally the PB and the councils (Houtzager *et al.* 2003: 25).

### 3 Assumed representation

Political representation has a constitutive duality at its centre. The simple existence of representation does not guarantee representativeness or necessarily its correspondence to the will of those being represented. The strength of representativeness, in turn, cannot be accomplished by removing the autonomy of the representative. This essential duality – between representativeness and autonomy – can be seen in the different developments which have dominated the political and intellectual history of political representation in the modern world, as a rule in the form of oppositions. Thus the autonomy of the representative versus the mandate of those represented, the legal institutional component versus the substantive component or that of will-formation, the fiduciary component versus the authorisation component, national versus popular sovereignty, without forgetting of course, the more general conflict of legality versus legitimacy.<sup>25</sup> As Sartori (1962) and Pitkin (1967) have meticulously demonstrated, however, maintaining analytically only one of the two poles in this duality is the quickest way to empty out political representation of its meaning – it either loses its substantive meaning of acting in the interests or on behalf of those represented, or it loses its political nature as institutional crystallisation for governing society.

The contrast between political and private or legal representation could not be greater and illustrates well the tension at the centre of the notion of political representation. Representation in juridical terms is limited by the norms and contract that authorise the power of attorney in clearly outlined areas. The legal representative is a deputy without decision-making autonomy; he has an *imperative mandate*.<sup>26</sup> Thus the

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<sup>25</sup> Pitkin (1967) considers this series of binomials as a tension between the original proposals for political representation and its institutionalisation, where a unilateral adoption of only one of these poles of tension generates partial concepts of representation. Curiously, some years later Pitkin (1989: 149–50) appears to have opted one of these poles, i.e. direct democracy, as having the capacity to both maintain the intrinsic value of politics and to avoid that it becomes the privilege of a few. Sartori (1962) also conceives the relationship between these dualities in terms of an essential tension of political representation in the modern world, derived from the fact that it has developed with a double nature – as representation in power (government function) and as representation *vis-à-vis* power (legitimacy function). In turn, for Manin (1997) it would be absurd to think of these dualities as tensions or conflicts, because representative government was from the beginning constructed to preserve the distance between representatives and the represented. Although historically correct, the Manin's position does not give sufficient importance to the fact that elections were not only to be a stable institutional component of representative government but also to ensure the normative principle that representatives should act for the benefit of the represented and thus should be regularly subjected to elections.

<sup>26</sup> Representation first emerged in private law. It remained in this sphere, even as a means of political representation during the medieval period. Strictly speaking, the representatives at the court were public defenders of private interests, acting in the name of their clients (Galvão 1971; Pitkin 1989). To a certain extent, a similar logic was preserved in the different figures of representation in modern civil law – in the *powers of attorney* as an instrument of mandate, in the law of representation in the area of *successions*, in the different representations *ex officio*, like for example in the case of incapacity (Galvão 1971: 2–11; 45–7).

coincidence between the will of those represented and the representative by imperative mandate cancels out the question of representativeness or empties it of meaning, it ensures some degree of coherence between the decisions of the representative and the will of the represented.

Publicly assumed representation is not equivalent to effective representation, even if empirically supported by activities that strongly suggest the exercise of some form of political representation. However, commitment to the interests of the represented is a vital component of representation. Ultimately, Edmund Burke (1774, 1942) argues, the best measure to guarantee authentic representation – that is, its representativeness – is the existence of a genuine representative commitment. Given the contingent nature of this subjective factor, formal institutional mechanisms are both necessary and desirable to ensure this representative commitment is not displaced or lost. Although the subjective dimension of representation has become systematically devalued amongst theories of democracy, institutional rules and designs are powerless when representatives are not stimulated or moved by a “feeling of representation” – *idem sentire, animus* as pointed out by Sartori (1962) in recognition of Burke’s perceptive intuitiveness of the importance of this dimension. More precisely, if representation cannot be reduced to merely assumed representation, representativeness cannot do away with the commitment of representing, and this is found in abundance in civil organisations.

It must be emphasised that being able to concretely define who or what is to be effectively represented, or whether political representation can be said to be truly representative, is a thorny matter even within classic democratic institutions with widely accepted representative mandates. In this case clear definitions are established regarding who is doing the representing (politician), by what means they are authorised to represent and to what kind of sanctions they will be subjected (elections), who is represented (electorate) and to some degree, although much more vaguely, what is the content or mandate to be represented (programme, campaign promises). Political representation configured in such a way facilitates the use of congruency criteria for evaluating the behaviour and decision of the elected representative in relation to the needs, preferences and desires of the electorate. However, despite the relative precision of these definitions, there is no consensus as to their capacity to make governments truly representative, at least with regard to the substantive and not merely strategic value of some of these components – most notably the programmes and campaign promises (Figueiredo 2000; Cervellini 2000).

The challenge of the inductive strategy adopted in this paper lies in exploring the representation assumed by civil organisations and identifying the different notions that these actors have of the tension between representative and those represented. The choice of actors’ self-definition as an analytic point of departure is defensible as long as this self-definition is not conflated with *actual* representation. As civil organisations on a daily basis engage in activities in which political representation is likely to occur, and are faced with the problems of assuming these representational tasks without any models to assert themselves as legitimate representatives, the assumption of representation tends to be formulated and verbalised based on evolving justifications that are not only credible and reasonable but also publicly defensible. In short, what is being analysed is what Burke (1792) describes as *virtual representation* in his epistolary

dissertations.<sup>27</sup> “Virtual” in the precise sense of the English language of ‘having the essence or effect of although not formally recognised or accepted’.<sup>28</sup> The assumed representation by the actors studied here is far from being mere rhetoric – the findings that are examined are sufficiently consistent to put to rest any doubts in this respect.

The approach outlined here certainly lays out the reach of the research findings and their limits, notably the inability to explore all problems related to the effective representation of interests. Such restrictions, however, are compensated for by important knowledge gains.

#### **4 The survey and analytical stages and tools**

Assumed representation is examined as a dependent variable in the field of inferential statistics, specifically by means of probability estimations – relative risk ratios (RRR) in the first stage and logistic regressions (LR) in the second. Descriptive statistics and simple frequencies were used in a third stage. A description of the procedures carried out using these techniques can be found in Annex 1, together with the elements to be considered for interpreting the research findings. In this section we explain, albeit briefly, the logic behind using these statistical tools.

The RRR enables us to identify which factors affect the perception of a civil organisation by way of increasing or diminishing their likelihood to assume representation of their publics. The factors are considered as independent variables, or risk factors, that alter the probability of an event happening – in this case the occurrence or not of assumed representation by a particular civil organisation.<sup>29</sup> Using this statistical technique it is possible to verify which of the variables alter the relative propensity of the organisations studied to consider themselves representatives of their publics.

The LR allows a more refined analysis of the findings obtained from the RRR. Although the findings point towards various factors that influence assumed representation, in the RRR each factor is evaluated only as a specific characteristic without taking into account its possible correlation with other variables that also emerge as being relevant for analysis. In other words, the findings of the first stage do not enable differentiation between whether a variable responds because of its own effects on assumed representation or if it in some way translates the effects of another variable with which it partially overlaps. It is also a matter in this case of estimating the probability of a determined variable to influence an actors’ perception of whether they consider themselves to be a representative or not. Indeed the findings from the LR can be interpreted exactly like those from the RRR. Nonetheless there is a fundamental difference. Using the LR enables us to understand how assumed representation is related to groups of independent variables and

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<sup>27</sup> The meaning of the word “virtual” has changed in the recent wave of the expansion of digital technology as well as frequently being intuitively understood as something that is limited to potential but not real effects. The term coined by Burke, although validated in the field of political representation, runs the risk of evoking the more intuitive senses of the “virtual” and therefore will be avoided here.

<sup>28</sup> According to definition in Webster’s Dictionary.

<sup>29</sup> For instigative results of the use of RRR in the historical analysis of the determining factors of the associative boom following the North-American civil war, see Crowley and Skocpol (2001).

not only to a specific characteristic. In this stage of the analysis it is possible to construct empirical models of combinations of variables and to define which of them has greater capacity to predict the presence or not of assumed representation amongst civil organisations.

The final stage of the analysis explores the congruency arguments used by civil organisations. The dependent variable in this case is no longer a simply dichotomy – the denial or self-affirmation of assumed representation – but a categorical variable because the analysis shifts to the different arguments organisations use to justify their assumed representation. The ideal way to proceed in this stage would be to use *multinomial logistic regressions*, but the number of cases in the sample, when divided across the different arguments, makes this option unviable. In this stage, we developed a typology based on the arguments that were provided by respondents to justify their organisation’s representation. The relationship between the categories in the typology and different types of organisation, and particularly types of activities, could then be explored. This kind of analysis facilitates the comparison of each argument with the real representational activities of the organisations and highlights which arguments are in fact consistent with organisations’ behaviour.

#### **4.1 Researching diverse and elusive actors**

The collection of variables the paper explores have been generated by a survey of 229 civil organisations in the municipality of São Paulo, undertaken in 2002. During one-hour interviews organisations responded to a questionnaire that was designed to elicit information about their foundation, mission, degree of formalisation, areas of work, publics, linkages with other societal actors and with other government institutions. The questions that explored relations of the organisation to their respective publics (a community, members, target population, etc.) included both closed and open questions. In the latter interviewees were asked to specify for or with which group of people their organisation worked and whether the organisation considered itself to be a representative of this group of people. Only afterwards, if the answer was positive, did the interviewer inquire about why the organisation considered that it represented the interests of its public. By carefully examining and coding the final question it was possible to lay out the different congruency arguments.

The survey produced a dataset that contained a broad range of characteristics of the interviewed organisations. The sample of 229 organisations was selected using a snowball technique. This technique is recommended for “drawing out” hidden populations and/or those in the general population with unusual (hence rare) characteristics. That is to say, it is particularly useful when the subjects of the research are invisible to traditional survey instruments or when they have characteristics that make them easier to identify using chains or network referrals such as in the cases of street people, drug users, AIDS carriers, specialised groups of people, etc. (Goodman 1961; Atkinson and Flint 2003).

The snowball methodology used for the research was extremely efficient compared to the most common other alternatives used to study civil organisations such as case studies or drawing samples from available lists of organisations. As a general rule, qualitative case studies facilitate nuanced reconstructions of complex processes, but they pose problems when one wishes to make generalisations about a

phenomenon, especially when there is a strong case to question the appropriateness of condensing such a phenomenon into a few representative cases. The extraordinary diversity of actors in society, even within the different types of associations – neighbourhood, NGOs, service non-profit etc – limits the analytical outputs of that kind of approach.<sup>30</sup> The most common alternative is to use available lists or directories as a starting point for defining the group of actors to be studied. It is well established that there are no reasonably censuses of civil organisations and, as a result, the most common methodology in quantitative analyses of civil organisations has been the use of lists or directories drawn up by governmental or civil organisations.<sup>31</sup> This is undoubtedly an efficient alternative in terms of money and effort. It has been the source of the majority of incipient empirical knowledge about the characteristics and dynamics of change within the myriad of societal actors encompassed by civil society literature. However, every list is constructed on the basis of criteria of exclusion/inclusion, which introduces insurmountable biases into the analysis. Thus anchoring the analysis to (a) particular list(s) would be equivalent to accepting an *a priori* definition of the universe of civil organisations in São Paulo.

There are important methodological advantages to this sampling strategy followed. It is innovative in the sense of broadening the horizon of the most common empirical approaches in the literature that focuses on the study of so-called civil society. The universe of civil organisations researched was not defined *a priori*, but empirically using the networks of references provided by actors interviewed as a starting point. These references were obtained by means of the contacts that the organisations interviewed claimed to have. These in turn became new interviewees and themselves also generated contacts and new rounds of interviews, setting the snowball in motion. There are purposive biases in samples that are produced using such a non-random procedure, contrary to what happens in the case of lists, and these biases are designed and controlled to serve the purpose of the research. This is possible because the course that the references set in motion and that lead to new interviews depends to a great extent both on the first interviewees or entry points – as they play the role of initial “motors” of information flow – and the criteria defined to control the “snowball” which is generated by the exponential multiplication of new organisations who will eventually be researched. Therefore, the choice of entry points and the drawing up of criteria that define the boundaries of the sample are extremely important.

In São Paulo we relied on interviews with 16 local civil organisations, distributed across four quite different districts, to start the snowball sample. The four local organisations interviewed in each district to start the sample were selected according to distinct criteria, to ensure that the networks of referrals each

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<sup>30</sup> One of the most ambitious recent case-study projects was the Ford Foundation ‘Civil Society and Governance Project’. Its findings for Latin America can be consulted in the works edited by Dagnino (2002), Olvera (2003) and Panfichi (2003).

<sup>31</sup> For Latin America see Fernandes (2002); Landim (1996).

would produce would differ, or if these networks converge it was not a result of sampling bias. At the same time, the control criteria were designed so as to favour identifying and interviewing the most active civil organisations.<sup>32</sup>

### 5 Determining factors of assumed representation (findings I)

A total of 166 organisations (72.8 per cent) defined themselves as representatives of the publics with (or for) which they work. Taking care not to project assumed representation onto the plane of actual representation, it is possible to show that a clear relationship exists between defining oneself as a representative and exercising activities of political representation. We examined four types of activities where political representation tends to occur. The four types refer to different dimensions of exercising political representation: (i) new forms of representation within the executive, measured by participation in public policy councils and/or the participatory budget; (ii) direct mediation of demands *vis-à-vis* specific public agencies, captured here by representation of community or group interests to government institutions; (iii) political advocacy by means of aggregation of interests through traditional electoral channels, empirically identified as support to political candidates; and (iv) political advocacy by means of the legislature, measured as claim-making on the Municipal Council. Using simple addition and starting with the definition of activities as dichotomous variables, a value for eventual exercise of political representation was first used to make a comparison between civil organisations that claim and those that deny representation of their publics and secondly to compare the arguments for assumed representation against each other.

Table 5.1 shows that assumed representation is clearly associated with the exercise of activities of political representation. While 66 per cent of civil organisations that do not claim to be representatives carry out one or none of the four activities described above, 52 per cent of those that define themselves as representatives carry out three or four of those activities.

**Table 5.1 Assumed representation and representation activities**

Assumed representation	Representation activities					
	0	1	2	3	4	Total
Yes	9.0	14.5	24.7	41.0	10.8	100
No	37.1	29.0	19.4	14.5		100
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>33.8</b>	<b>7.9</b>	<b>100</b>

More than 90 independent variables were examined for both organisations that considered themselves representatives and those that did not, covering different dimensions of their activities, characteristics and

<sup>32</sup> A detailed description of the research design, both in terms of the entry points and the criteria for determining the boundaries of the sample, can be consulted in Houtzager *et al.* (2003), also available to download on the project webpage: [www.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs/research/Collective%20Actors-pubs.html](http://www.ids.ac.uk/gdr/cfs/research/Collective%20Actors-pubs.html).

institutional linkages. These included the organisation's publics, involvement of these in the activities of the organisation, the projection of demands to different levels of the public authority, legal institutionalisation and involvement in new participatory spaces in the management of public policies, amongst other dimensions contemplated in the analysis. (Annex 2 shows the complete list of the tested variables, the description of which can be found in Annex 3.) The first stage of the analysis (RRR) enabled the authors to differentiate, from a wide range of occasionally determining factors of assumed representation, between variables that had the least or no effect (no correlation) or had no statistical significance,<sup>33</sup> those with negative effects i.e. that were associated with civil organisations who did not define themselves as representatives of their publics and variables with positive effects on assumed representation. Only the second two groups were included in the second stage of analysis (LR) in order to ascertain the real effects of these variables when they are considered together. However the discarded variables or those that show no effect, themselves point to some findings that are worth attention. The presentation of these findings, as well as that of those with positive or negative correlations and those that are statistically significant, will remain eminently descriptive for now, except in the case of comments about particular implications that will not be taken up again in the general interpretation in the penultimate section of this paper.

### **5.1 Variables without effects as findings**

Table 5.2 shows a summary of the tested variables in the first stage of the analysis (RRR), grouped in analytic sets. Some of the variables that show no significance (second column) are unexpected and reported here as findings. First, organisations' ties with traditional political actors do not affect assumed representation – that is, the formation and maintenance of relations with political parties, churches, trade unions or professional associations do not influence the probability that a civil organisation consider itself a representative of its public. In principle, it might seem obvious that these organisations – often characterised in the literature by an emphatic recognition of their autonomy – might centre their possible roles as representatives outside traditional political circles. However, as will be seen presently, providing support to political candidates is the variable with the greatest predictive capacity. This question shall be taken up again further on.

Second, assumed representation is not affected by the diverse issue areas in which civil organisations work, not even when organisations work in particular issue areas.<sup>34</sup> Issue areas' lack of significance coincides with similar findings in another study, which found that the issue areas in which civil

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<sup>33</sup> It is possible to have findings with no probability effect albeit with high statistical significance and vice-versa, or rather findings without statistical significance despite the presence of interesting probability effects. The second case can occur either because the proportion of the number of cases is insufficient to statistically validate the findings or because there are no measurable statistical effects amongst the variables under consideration. Precautions were taken to safeguard against problems of statistical significance arising from the use of variables with a reduced number of cases.

<sup>34</sup> In this regard, only one of the seven variables was significant, namely education, although negatively (see Table 5.2).

organisations work have almost no effect on their propensity to participate in institutions for the co-management of public policies, such as in the constitutionally mandated policy councils, participatory budgets and other such representative institutions (Houtzager *et al.* 2004).

**Table 5.2 Summary of findings for risk ratios**

Set of variables	Not significant	Are significant	
		Nº of variables	Relation
Support to Political Candidates		3/3	Positive
Public Registry of Organisation		2/4	Positive
Organisational Linkages (civil society)		3/7	Positive & negative
Other Linkages (traditional institutions)	X	0/5	
Participation in spaces for policy deliberation		2/4	Positive
Areas of Work	X	0/6	
Principal Area of Work		1/7	Negative
Year of Foundation of Organisation	X	0/2	
Activities of Organisation 1: Demand making		4/4	Positive
Activities of Organisation 2: Services		1/4	Negative
Activities of Organisation 3: Popular Organisation <sup>a</sup>	X	1/4	NC <sup>b</sup>
Activities of Organisation 4: Access to Government		4/4	Positive & NC <sup>b</sup>
Typology of Organisations		4/5	Positive & negative
Public of the organisation		3/5	Positive & negative
Participating Actors in Foundation		1/5	Positive
Involvement of its public		2/3	Positive
Demand Making on Public Institutions		12/12	Positive
Demand Making on Private Institutions		1/3	Positive
Budget of Organisation		2/6	Positive & negative

<sup>a</sup> The only variable with statistical significance does not show any correlation

<sup>b</sup> No correlation

Third, the age of civil organisations does not show any effects. This makes it difficult to speculate about any hypothetical relationships between waves or “generations” of new societal actors, which are historically different from traditional actors such as those that are service-driven or philanthropic, and the eventual phenomenon of the emergence of new notions of representation.

The fourth group of variables which are not statistically significant explore the types of activities civil organisations undertake. A more complex scenario emerges from these findings. Although

counterintuitive, organisations that focus on popular organising (set 3) have no greater propensity towards assumed representation. In this set, the only variable with statistical significance does not show any correlation. On the other hand, and in accordance with what would be expected, provision of services (set 2) is negatively associated with assumed representation when the variable considered is the “sale of services”.<sup>35</sup>

Even so the type of activities carried out by the organisations becomes positively significant when mediation of relations with different government institutions and mobilisation and demand making before public authorities are considered (sets 1 and 4). The positive effects of these activities however belong to the second stage of the analysis.

## **5.2 The Principal Model**

The propensity for civil organisations to define themselves as representatives was sensitive to the effects of 35 variables.<sup>36</sup> The following step was the completion of numerous logistic regressions (LR) to eliminate covariation and identify the factors with the greatest predictive capacity. The final result of these series of tests was the creation of a Principal Model comprised of three variables. The principal model made it possible to assess not only the real significance of the most influential factors on assumed representation – controlling for the effects of other relevant variables – but also to explore the marginal effects of the different analytical dimensions captured by the different blocks of variables.

The three variables of the principal model are (i) organisations’ support for political candidates, (ii) their registration as a public utility, and (iii) engaging in mobilisation activities and demand making on government programmes or institutions. Table 5.3 shows that the model can predict 77 per cent of the values in the sample. It performs even better when determining the factors with positive effects on assumed representation, predicting 85 per cent of cases.<sup>37</sup>

The fourth column of the table shows the results of the LR.<sup>38</sup> These can be interpreted as propensities, i.e. as the probability of a variable (dependent) to be associated with another (independent), or as the changes in the likelihood of a phenomenon occurring when a determined factor is introduced

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<sup>35</sup> The specific findings for “sale of services” as for all the variables summarised in Table 5.2 can be consulted in Annex 2.

<sup>36</sup> The summary variables and the indexes created to intensify the eventual effects of the individual variables (See Annex 2) are excluded from this figure.

<sup>37</sup> The performance of the model is the relationship between the predictions carried out by the model and the correctly classified cases in the values observed. Although the models created from the LR are more consistent when they manage to correctly classify the factors that positively or negatively alter the probability of a determined phenomenon occurring – illness usually being the common example – not all phenomena are equally sensitive to the absence of factors that increase their likelihood of occurring (and vice-versa). So for example, low education levels increase the probability of an individual being unemployed, but higher levels of education do not improve in equal proportions their likelihood of employment. There are plausible reasons for thinking that assumed representation behaves in a way more similar to “education levels” than to “illness”.

<sup>38</sup> The findings obtained using the LR analysis are shown in the SPSS as Exp<sup>b</sup>, described here as LR. This coefficient should be interpreted as an estimation of the effect of a particular variable, controlled by the other variables that make up the model.

into the equation. The probability of a phenomenon in question increases when the result is greater than 1. Conversely figures less than 1 indicate that the independent variable being considered has negative effects thus diminishing the likelihood of the phenomenon occurring.

**Table 5.3 – Principal Model (PM)**

Variables	General frequency	Classify themselves as representatives		
		%	LR	Significance coefficient
Organisation supports political candidate	34	0,97	12,8	**
Registered with public utility title	64	0,81	2,86	**
Demand making/mobilisation index (high)	130	0,86	5,53	**
Performance of Model (% correct predictions)		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
		85,00	58,06	77,48

In the case of assumed representation, the support for political candidates by a civil organisation is by far the best predictor of assumed representation. This increases by more than 10 times the likelihood of an organisation to assume the role of representative of their public. Furthermore, civil organisations that use mobilisations to make claims and demands on different government institutions have a five times greater propensity to do so. The variable “being registered with a public utility title” doubles the likelihood of assumed representation. Though it has a markedly lesser effect it was consistent in all the tests carried out. The fifth column in Table 5.3 indicates the reliability or significance of the LR findings for the three PM variables. In accordance with conventional statistics, the two asterisks denote highly reliable findings at a 5 per cent confidence level.

By combining the three variables mentioned above (PM) it is possible to assess both marginal increases in the predictive capacity of the model when other variables are introduced and the behaviour of these variables as a set, i.e. when the variables are considered as relevant analytical dimensions of civil organisations. The complete description of the successive models into which these increases were organised can be found in Annex 4 (Table A4: Logistic Regressions).

Before examining the most interesting findings it is necessary to make three brief observations regarding the stability of the PM. Firstly, as already pointed out, all the variables that show correlation and statistical significance in the RRR analysis were tested, and all of these – obviously albeit with the exception of those included in the PM – either lost their effect or their significance in the presence of other variables. Secondly, when the other variables which had shown greater effect and statistical significance in the first stage (RRR) were incorporated into the PM, modest gains in the predictive capacity

of the model occurred (7 per cent) increasing the correct classification of civil organisations that considered themselves representatives of their public from 85 per cent to 92 per cent (Model II of Table A4 – Annex 4). Finally if all the variables that affect assumed representation in the second stage (LR) are considered, there is not any great improvement in relation to the modest gains mentioned above. In fact the performance of the model goes from 92 per cent to 93 per cent (model III of Table A4 – Annex 4).

### **5.3 Types of civil organisations as independent variables**

The findings from the variable “Type of Organisation” deserve special attention. In theory it would not seem unreasonable to attribute some effects on assumed representation to different types of civil organisations. All things considered, a significant part of these actors’ attributes – the nature of the activities they carry out, of their relation to their respective publics, of their relationship with other institutions, amongst other possible attributes – are consistent to a great extent with the type of organisation being examined. Therefore, it could be expected that the self-perception of the representation tasks carried out by civil organisations would differ between advocacy NGOs, neighbourhood associations, service non-profit associations and other types of organisations.

As a matter of fact, the first stage of analysis (RRR) revealed that assumed representation is sensitive to the type of organisation being considered. While being a “local association” increases by five times the likelihood that an organisation will consider itself a representative, being an advocacy NGOs has the inverse effects – these organisations have a negative propensity greater than 60 per cent (see Annex 2). However, due to their only moderate effects on assumed representation, the variables for the typology of civil organisation were not incorporated into the principal model. More precisely, it was up to the following stage of analysis (LR) to determine the real weight of each variable when controlled by other factors which in principle also appeared to affect assumed representation. In the case of the typology of civil organisations, the simple dichotomous variables of being or not being a certain type, gave way to a single categorical variable for all the types of organisations gathered in the sample. When this single variable was added, the principle model experienced a modest improvement in its performance, increasing its capacity to make correct predictions from 85 per cent to 90 per cent (model IV of Table A4).

Despite the fact that the contribution to the LR is marginal, the findings allow us to specify with notable precision the relationship between the types of civil organisations and assumed representation. Some clarifications about the criteria used to create the typology as an independent variable are needed in order for these results to be fully appreciated.

The labels civil organisations use to identify themselves publicly are the object of symbolic disputes, as these labels seek to assign meaning to the organisation’s activities. The use of a certain denomination by an organisation therefore arises from a series of calculations about their public self-representation as they seek to position themselves in relation to specific interlocutors. This self-presentation poses an interesting challenge to the researcher, because actors’ self-presentation does not necessarily bare any resemblance to the kind of organisation they are in reality. For this reason civil organisations are not classified based on their own definitions but according to two sets of analytical criteria: the relationship with their public and

the profile of their activities normally carried out. First, does the organisation conceive its public as consisting of members (individuals or organisations), as a target population, or as “the community”. Second, each type of organisation has a corresponding distinct strategy for action and combination of activities, which are exclusionary to a greater or lesser degree, orientated towards mobilisation and demand making, service delivery, community organising, or mediation between the government and its public.<sup>39</sup> Using these criteria it is possible to develop a typology of civil organisations, summarised in Table 5.4, consisting of Local Associations, Advocacy NGOs, Service Non-profit Organisations, Coordinating bodies and Others.<sup>40</sup>

**Table 5.4 Typology of civil organisations**

Category	Freq	%	Publics	Activities	Examples
<b>Local Associations</b>	51	22,3	Community or Members	(i) Projection of local demands and self-help (ii) Community organising; demand-making/ mobilisation; provision of services	Neighbourhood Associations; Community Associations
<b>Advocacy NGOs</b>	62	27,1	Segments of Population that are a "Target group"	(i) Define public issues (ii) Demand making; mediation	Instituto Polis; Ação Educativa; Grupo Corsa
<b>Service Non-Profits</b>	35	15,3	Individuals who are a Target group	(i) Provide assistance for vulnerability (ii) Provision of services	AACD; Serviço Social Perseverança; Lar Altair Martins
<b>Coordinating Bodies</b>	56	24,5	Organisations	(i) Coordinate actors and social initiatives (ii) Demand making/ Mobilisation; popular organisation; mediation	Forums; Brazilian Association of NGOs; Union of Housing Movement; Abrinq Foundation
<b>Others</b>	25	10,9	n.a.	In this category organisations with very specific profiles were grouped. Because of their low frequency it was not possible to create new categories	Cooperatives, 3rd Sector and Pastorates are examples of organisations classified in this category

This typology was used as a single categorical variable (rather than a set of dichotomous variables). It is therefore important to establish a reference or base group in order to estimate the effects of other categories of the same variable on assumed representation, always in relation to that reference group. Due to their negative and highly reliable results, NGOs were set as the reference group. However it is worth pointing out that the organisations classified in the category “others” were not taken into account because it is made of a diverse set of organisations and no plausible interpretations of statistically significant findings would be possible.

<sup>39</sup> For a detailed description of the variables that make up these activities see Annex 3.

<sup>40</sup> For an explanation of Chart 1 in an expanded typology see Annex 5.

As can be observed in Table 5.5, all types of civil organisations show greater propensity than NGOs to consider themselves representatives, when controlled by the variables in the principle model. The local associations show an exponentially high propensity to the extent that an organisation of this type is 24 times more likely to assume itself to be the representative of its public than NGOs. The service non-profits and coordinators have similar propensities to assume representation, and are five times more likely to do so than the advocacy NGOs. One could argue that local associations are more likely to support political candidates, engage in mobilisation activities, make demands on public authorities, and be registered as public interest organisations, all attributed that contribute to increasing their propensity to assumed representation. In turn advocacy NGOs, service non-profit associations and coordinating organisations would clearly combine these attributes less frequently. However, the findings indicate that even if all the types of organisations had the same relation to the variables in the principal model, they would not define themselves as representatives of their public in the same proportions – in fact, very much on the contrary.

**Table 5.5 Principal Model (PM) and civil organisations**

<b>Principal Model</b>	
Support to political candidates	11,63**
Registered with public utility title	4,35**
Level of demand making/mobilisation activities	5,34**
<b>Typology of Actors</b>	
NGOs	**
Grassroots Organisation	22,47**
Service Non-profit	5,01**
Coordinating Bodies	6,34**

**5.4 Activities, budget and other independent variables**

The activities carried out by civil organisations were explored in four different dimensions: demand making and mobilisation, service provision, popular organisation and activities for gaining access to government.<sup>41</sup> In turn, each dimension had three variables, which were added together to create a simple index of activities carried out by different organisations – from zero to three points or activities per dimension examined.<sup>42</sup> As mentioned above, only the mobilisation and demand making activities, as well as those for gaining access to government, showed consistently positive effects on assumed representation. At the other extreme, the assumption of representation by civil organisations only shows significant negative effects when it is related to service provision activities, and in particular to the sale of services.

<sup>41</sup> For a detailed description of this category, see Annex 3.

<sup>42</sup> The findings variable by variable for each dimension can be found in Annex 2.

The second stage of analysis (LR) focused on the activities that increased the probability that organisations assumed representation (model V of Table A4). Again assumed representation showed itself to be highly sensitive to activities of demand making and mobilisation, to such a degree that this set of variables, with its own summarised index, was made part of the principle model. In turn, the changes brought about by the set of activities that facilitate government access – “opening doors” for people to be attended by public servants, helping them to make demands on the government and providing information or documentation to facilitate access – do not show any effect when tested with other variables. It was confirmed that the sale of services or products had a strong negative correlation; organisations that carry out such transactions are 60 per cent less likely to declare themselves representatives of their public.

Despite the fact that budget size or financial capacity does not have an important effect, the relationship between budget and assumed representation merits an observation. In almost all cases the organisations’ annual budgets makes little or no difference in terms of stimulating or hindering the propensity for assumed representation. However, the same does not occur with the “richest” and “poorest” organisations, those with annual budgets greater than R\$ 750,000 (US\$255,929) and less than R\$ 4,000 (US\$1,365) respectively.<sup>43</sup> Whilst the actors with least resources show positive correlation, tending to assert their nature as representatives to a greater degree than the other actors (3.47 times more), those with large budgets are characterised by a inverse correlation, proving themselves to be 65 per cent less inclined to assume themselves as representatives of their public (model VI of Table A4). The result coincides with similar findings from São Paulo regarding the greater propensity of “poorer” organisations to participate in institutional innovations such as the management policy councils and the participatory budget (Houtzager *et al.* 2004).

Finally, the type of relation organisations have to their public has only marginal effects on their propensity to assume representation. Organisations that have members who are individual persons, or define their public as members of the organisation, have a slightly higher propensity. But organisations that have other organisations as members, such as coordinators, have an inverse relation to assume representation, reducing the propensity. Other forms of relationship with their public characterised by “target public” and the “community” do not produce any changes. Participation of their public in the activities of the organisations also has a marginally positive result, although not always. This only happens when the participation is related to the planning of activities, not to programme implementation or the carrying out of public action.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> The exchange rate used is that of 2002.

<sup>44</sup> Civil organisations whose main area of work is education, as well as those that have links with organisations, show slightly lower propensity towards assumed representation. The findings from both variables and of others with marginal effects examined in the text can be consulted in Annex 4, Table A4, Models VII and subsequent models.

## 6 New (and some old) notions of representation (findings II)

The idea of “assumed representation” allows us to avoid the question whether actual representation is taking place, and thus of an actor’s representativeness. It introduces distinctions that help explore the problematique of civil organisations’ representativeness in a different form – as justification attached to assumed representation. Justifications are an inherent part of assumed representation. That is, the commitment of representing someone, even if that commitment is conceived without being based on the consent of those represented, develops in such a way that reasons are then called upon to support the assumed representation. The range of arguments an actor can invoke to defend its claim to represent a public brings out into the open the criteria that form the basis of the authenticity of that self-definition, from the perspective of that actor of course. The question of representativeness is therefore addressed here at the symbolic level of self-perception.

The arguments different civil organisations make have a broad range of meanings which, according to how they are used, justify the representativeness of their representation. The typology of congruency arguments condenses this broad range and categorises their key elements. It should be highlighted that what is being considered are the congruency arguments of representativeness present amongst the societal actors being studied, i.e. the motives and reasons actually furnished by civil organisations to address the thorny question of their representativeness, once they have assumed the position as representatives of their public. Therefore the typology is a result of the research. It disregards normative conceptual elements and does not say anything about the way in which civil organisations *should* construe their roles of political representation, or about the appropriate mechanisms of accountability or responsiveness that would connect these organisations to those they ultimately represent. Meanwhile, it facilitates progress across uncharted territory, inquiring into existing notions of representation amongst civil organisations and their eventual consequences for the current process of reconfiguration of political representation and for the democratisation of democracy. In the next section, where the findings presented here will be interpreted, there will be an opportunity to reflect on these consequences. For the time being, we will stick to the presentation and description of the main findings.

Six congruency arguments are identified in the reasons furnished by the civil organisations: classical-electoral, proximity, services, mediation, membership and identity. Each argument is made up of the same components, although these are related to each other in different ways. Broadly speaking, as Diagram 6.1 illustrates, representation combines three components:

- *those represented*, always people whose will is bound together in a way that is to a greater or lesser degree direct and concrete (vote, demand, petition) or in a way necessarily indirect and abstract (nation, tradition, common good);
- *the representative*, mediator and guardian of interests of those represented, whose role lies in diverse levels of institutionalisation, authority and duty to those represented; and
- *the locus*, which is simultaneously the jurisdiction where representation is exercised and the interlocutors to whom it is exercised.

The latter is most notably the public authority, although it is not exclusively so, as it can also be other societal actors and even the polity. In this case, where the figures of traditional political representation prove to be inadequate, those represented tend to coincide with the publics of the organisations, usually outlined in quite broad terms such as “the excluded”, “the poor”, the community”, and “citizens”. The representative corresponds to the civil organisation which is authorised as such by self-definition, and the locus, only implicitly specified in the majority of cases, as a rule centres on the public authority and less frequently on other social institutions and before other societal interlocutors.

Although the three components appear in all of the congruency arguments, in each argument the components relate to each other in a particular manner, the distinguishing mark of which lies in the emphasis placed by the actor on the part and content of those relationships which are used by them as proof of the authenticity of their assumed representation. Diagram 6.1 shows which relationship is emphasised in each argument. The arrows indicate the internal dynamics of representation for each argument, whilst the arrow in bold indicates the emphasis.

## **6.1 Six congruency arguments**

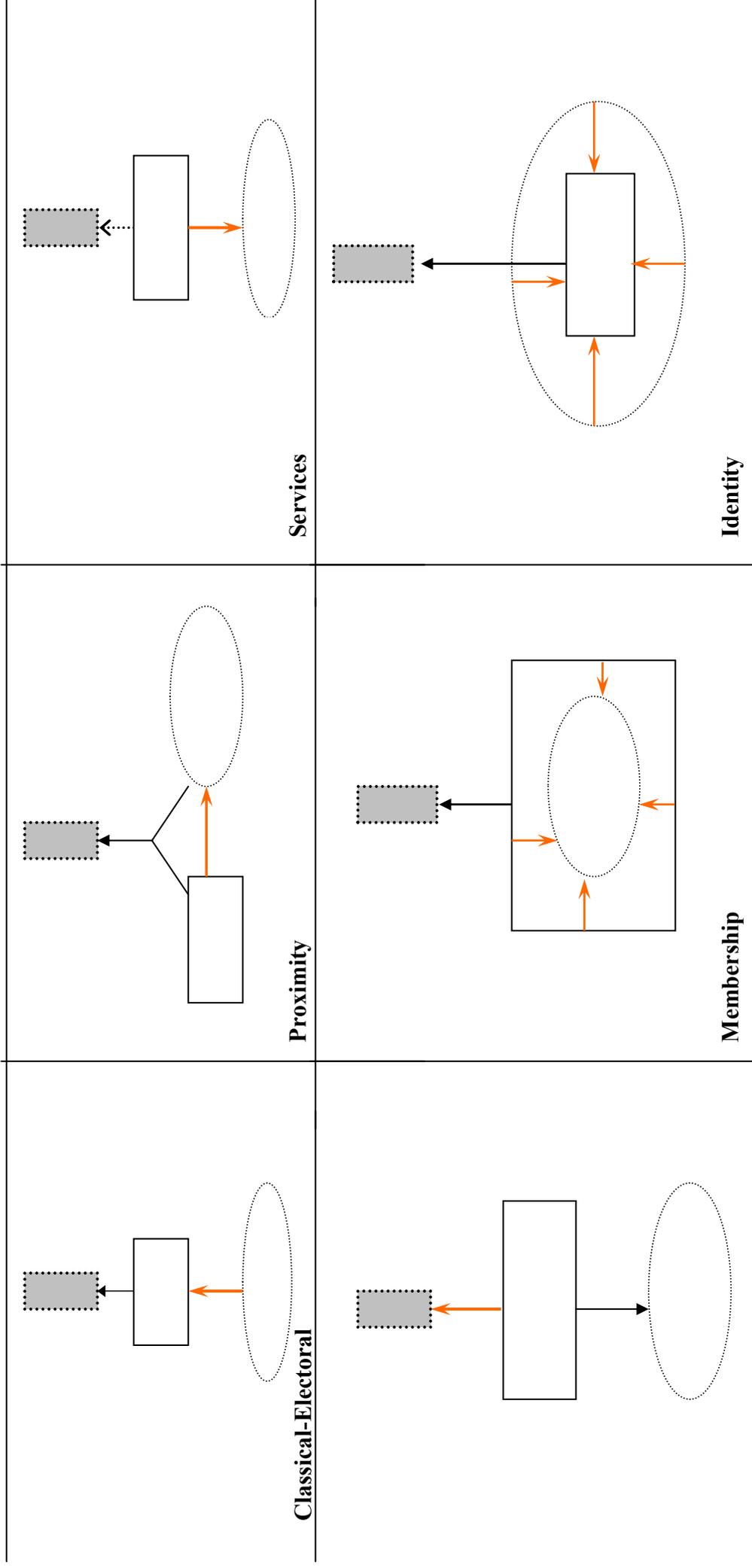
### **6.1.1 Classical-electoral argument**

Civil organisations cite the existence of electoral mechanisms for selecting leaders or management as evidence of their representativeness. Leaving aside the specific designs of these mechanisms within different organisational contexts, we are largely talking about a *de facto* justification. This is because selection processes used are accepted by and synonymous with democracy and representative government. In this case, because they are using a widely accepted mechanism, it is possible for the actors to “ensure” the legitimacy of their representation by means of a formal-procedural argument, i.e. the carrying out of elections, avoiding specificities about their content. (Table 6.1 has examples of answers encompassed in the classical-electoral argument as well as in other arguments.) Even so, in a number of cases voting is cited together with other factors that are associated with elections, in an effort to show the commitment of the organisations to the participation of their public – campaigns, assemblies, minimal restrictions on voting, rendering of accounts, etc. The argument has an implicit locus, where the elected will carry out their representation.

### **6.1.2 Proximity argument**

Civil organisations emphasise the intimacy of the relationship to their public, citing linkages characterised by closeness and horizontality as a demonstration of their genuine interest and role as representatives. In contrast to the classical-electoral argument, which is centred on the single electoral element, proximity between representative and those represented is constructed from diverse elements and from their multiple possible combinations: emancipation, or the commitment to enhancing the ability of members of its public ability to organise themselves, hence encouraging their agency; empathy, or a profound commitment to the beneficiary by affinity, solidarity and real identification with their problems and needs;

**Diagram 6.1 Congruency arguments invoked by civil organisations**



openness, or the disposition to garner and stimulate direct participation and the opinions of their public in the planning and direction of the work of the organisation. Finally, the last component is recognition, which makes the organisation say it acts as a representative, not because it believes it is a representative *per se* but because it deduces this status from the fact that their public frequently seeks them out and praised their work. Although it does not necessarily coincide with the public authority, and there is not a locus specified or suggested, clearly there is an implicit locus in the logic of this argument, since favouring the protagonism, demand making and problem-solving capacity of the beneficiary points to an assumed interlocutor.

### **6.1.3 Service argument**

The emphasis in this argument also falls on the relationship between the civil organisation that assumes the role of representative and those it represents although in a very different sense to that of the proximity argument. In this case, the organisation's representativeness is based on its actions in the improvement of the lives of others, by providing services to its public, from diverse medical treatments to distribution of staple foods and including skills training, scholarships, moral support and other various forms of assistance. In other words, the reasons cited point to the direct action of the civil organisation. If in the majority of the arguments the locus is somewhat hazy, here it is omitted entirely and is not even hinted at.

### **6.1.4 Mediation argument**

Of the six arguments, this one is exceptional in that the civil organisation bases its representativeness not on the relationship with the beneficiary but with the locus of representation. Indeed, representation assumes using means of mediation, albeit this is not the same as making mediation itself the fundamental basis for authenticating the role carried out by the representative. Nonetheless this is precisely where the emphasis of the argument lies. The mediation roles played by the organisation opens up access to public decision-making institutions (locus) that otherwise would remain inaccessible. Two components come together in the development of the argument. First, the *de facto* carrying out of the mediation activity, that is to say, the actor normally plays a mediating role with the public authority and for some reason these roles are not legitimated at a discursive level by elections – in this sense, they probably are not derived from a vote. Second, the mediating capacity of the actor with different public institutions is used in a legitimate manner – from the point of view of the actors' argument – to make claims in the interest of its public and not for bargaining for gifts or favours. In contrast to the previous arguments, the actor's relationship to its public, the represented, is left unclear or unspecified.

### **6.1.5 Membership argument**

Unlike local associations, which are an expression of “natural” groupings, situated in “real” or pre-existing communities, civil organisations, which use membership as evidence of their representativeness, emphasise the simultaneous genesis of the actor and of the matter that is to be represented. That is, we are not only talking about organisations being specifically created to represent the individuals or actors

involved in their creation but in particular civil organisations that represent interests that were institutionalised and laid down only by means of the respective organisation being founded. In this way the represented and the representative are produced by the same process. Here again, the appeal is to reasons of *fact* and, in this respect, the similarity to the classical-electoral argument is not coincidental. It has a close relation to the model of corporatist representation that emerged in the twentieth century and which formed the basis for interest representation rooted in the world of work. This use of a *de facto* representation is viable because it is based on socially accepted and legitimised principles and it can be supported without having to make its contents explicit. The locus is an indispensable component of the argument as the creation of an actor with representative intentions only makes sense in the presence of predefined interlocutors and institutions which in the majority of cases, although not exclusively, is the public authorities.

#### **6.1.6 Identity argument**

Civil organisations appeal to substantive like-mindedness between representative and those represented as the hinge of representativeness. Such like-mindedness follows a logic that is radically opposite to that presented in the membership argument. The representative mirrors the will of those represented by virtue of existential qualities that are usually impossible to renounce such as gender, race and ethnic origin. These are qualities that in theory are imbued with a more or less clear definition of the interests of those to be represented. In other words, representativeness is identity based and supposes by means of that identity the elimination of difference between those represented and the representative, women represent women, blacks represent blacks and so forth. Again in this case the locus is vaguely implicit.

#### **6.2 Arguments, civil organisations and exercise of political representation**

Who uses these congruency arguments and what is the relationship of these arguments to the potential exercise of representation by the actors that appeal to them? The fact that actors overwhelmingly use a single argument suggests that they are self-consciously and purposefully constructing justifications of their assumed representation. Only 1 per cent make use of three arguments to justify their representativeness, 13 per cent use two arguments and 86 per cent use only one. Of the six arguments, those most used are mediation (31 per cent) and proximity (27 per cent), followed by the service argument (Table 6.1). At the other end of the spectrum, membership, identity and classical-electoral mechanisms appear in clearly secondary positions as arguments used to justify the genuineness of representation as assumed by the organisations.

**Table 6.1 Typology of congruency arguments**

<b>Congruency arguments</b>	<b>Frequency</b>		<b>Emphasis of relationship</b>	<b>Dimensions of the argument</b>	<b>Examples</b>
	<b>No.</b>	<b>%</b>			
<b>Classical electoral</b>	8	4,2	<i>Vertical:</i> From represented to representative	Electoral process	"Because we are elected to respond politically for this population "
<b>Membership</b>	13	6,8	<i>Internal:</i> From the representative to the represented	Membership	"Because we are part of the movement as affiliated members"
<b>Identity</b>	9	4,7	<i>Internal:</i> From represented to the representative	Identity/ substantive	"We are an integral part, we talk because we are ".
<b>Mediation</b>	60	31,1	<i>Vertical:</i> From the representative to the locus	(a) Advocacy; (b) Mediation	(a) "Because we fight for children's rights..."; (b) "Because we have been their voice before the public authorities "
<b>Proximity</b>	52	27,1	<i>Horizontal:</i> From the representative to the represented	(a) Emancipation; (b) Participation; (c) commitment	(a) "...because we provide the conditions for this group to develop a political conscience..."; (b) "Because we work in partnership with these people..."; (c) "Because the aims of the organisation are centred on this group, supporting their development"
<b>Services</b>	45	23,4	<i>Vertical:</i> From the representative to the represented	(a) Service non-profit	" Because we try to provide some structure to the families, distribution of milk, basic supplies"
<b>Others</b>	5	2,6			
<b>TOTAL</b>	192	100			

The congruency arguments are in no way appealed to in similar proportions by the different types of civil organisations. Instead there are distinctive patterns that reflect the logic of the arguments themselves (Table 6.2). Service non-profit organisations do not cite the classical-electoral, membership or identity arguments even once, while they used the service argument with notable frequency. Local associations use the proximity argument the most, and they do not use the membership argument. Together with the coordinating bodies, local associations are the only actors to use the classical-electoral argument. The coordinating bodies in turn, account for almost all the membership cases cited and centre the reasons for their representativeness on the mediation argument. The advocacy NGOs also make the mediation argument more frequently, followed closely by the proximity argument, although differently from the coordinating bodies, they totally dismiss the classical-electoral argument.

It is not only the propensity of a civil organisation to assume itself to be the representative of its public that is closely related to the more general profile of an organisation in question, as shown by the regression results for the typology of actors developed. In addition the reasons liable to be used as the basis for representativeness are clearly connected to the type of actor. In other words the arguments of

assumed representation do not make up a list that is equally accessible to all the organisations. Instead organisations seem restricted to using justifications that fall within the sphere of activities and roles that define them in the field of civil organisations.

**Table 6.2 Arguments for assumed representation by civil organisations (%)**

<b>Congruency arguments</b>	<b>Advocacy NGOs</b>	<b>Local Associations</b>	<b>Service non-profit Organisations</b>	<b>Coordinating Bodies</b>	<b>Others</b>
<b>Classical electoral</b>	0.0	8.3	0.0	8.5	0.0
<b>Membership</b>	6.7	0.0	0.0	23.4	0.0
<b>Identity</b>	6.7	6.3	0.0	4.3	0.0
<b>Mediation</b>	33.3	27.1	25.9	36.2	42.9
<b>Proximity</b>	30.0	29.2	14.8	19.1	21.4
<b>Services</b>	16.7	27.1	55.6	6.4	35.7
<b>Others</b>	6.7	2.1	3.7	2.1	0.0
<b>Total</b>	100	100	100	100	100

Even if the coincidence between the arguments of assumed representation and the type of organisation is taken into account, with the characteristic group of activities that the latter tend to carry out, it is wise not to deduce practices of representation from the kind of representation cited – even if the supporting reasons are coherent with the profile of the organisations that use them. Indeed it is worth proceeding cautiously as to the possibility of verifying the connection between arguments and practices of representation. Ultimately, assumed representation does not authorise us to say anything about the matters or interests that are actually represented. Or rather, in the best case scenario, it only indirectly illustrates the problem of actual processes of political representation and of their ultimate representativeness.

It is nonetheless possible to see whether the arguments differ according to the breadth of practices of political representation in which civil organisations engage. Is there a relationship between the four practices of political representation and the different congruency arguments?<sup>45</sup> Table 6.3 shows that the classical-electoral and membership arguments, which conform to representation structures accepted in mass democracies, are used by organisations that in fact score more highly in their number activities ultimately linked to political representation. The identity argument in turn performs similarly albeit scoring slightly lower. The large majority of organisations that cite these arguments carry out at least three of the activities considered in the analysis. On the other hand, the mediation and proximity arguments are cited by only a small group of organisations which do not carry out at least one of the activities linked to

<sup>45</sup> The four practices used on Table 5.4: (i) new forms of representation within the executive; (ii) direct mediation of demands *vis-à-vis* specific public agencies; (iii) political advocacy by means of aggregation of interests through traditional electoral channels; and (iv) political advocacy.

political representation The congruency argument based on service delivery has the weakest relationship to activities of representation – it is used by actors that in their majority (70 per cent) only carry out up to two activities.

**Table 6.3 Representational activities according to congruency arguments (%)**

Arguments of representation	Activities of representation					
	0	1	2	3	4	Total
Classical electoral	0,0	0,0	12,5	62,5	25,0	100,0
Membership	0,0	7,7	30,8	61,5	0,0	100,0
Identity	0,0	0,0	44,4	44,4	11,1	100,0
Mediation	5,0	15,0	25,0	41,7	13,3	100,0
Proximity	9,6	7,7	25,0	44,2	13,5	100,0
Services	13,3	26,7	20,0	33,3	6,7	100,0
Others	40,0	20,0	40,0	0,0	0,0	100,0

## 7 Civil organisations, representation and democracy: an interpretation

The processes of state reform that have unfolded in recent years, and in particular the wave of institutional innovations that have created new opportunities for citizen participation in policy processes, have intensified the political protagonism of civil organisations. In the case of São Paulo, almost two-thirds of civil organisations in the sample of associations working with or for the popular sectors participate in at least one of the new participatory institutional arrangements, namely the participatory budget or the policy councils (Houtzager *et al.* 2004).<sup>46</sup> Were this not sufficient to encourage a careful study of these organisations, the case of São Paulo further highlights the broad representative commitment of these actors. The majority of the actors interviewed assume the representation of their publics. Almost three quarters of civil organisations explicitly assert that they represent the social groups who take part in or benefit from their activities. And, when we take into account the different forms of political representation that lie within reach of civil organisations, we find that these assertions of assumed representation are clearly associated with actual political practices during which representation is likely to occur. The inverse relationship is as consistent: civil organisations that carry out few or no practices of representation tend *not* to define themselves as representatives of their publics.

This ability of particular types of civil organisations to enter and potentially represent interests of poorer sectors in different policy arenas and in the polity more generally, where these interests are often absent, is also an important reason to pay careful attention to the nexus of societal and political spheres, and their institutional sedimentation, when exploring the reconfiguration of political representation.

<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere we analyse the factors that increase the representation of these groups in the new participatory institutional arrangements. See Gurza Lavallo *et al.* (2005).

### **7.1 Connections between civil organisations and traditional politics**

Whether a civil organisation claims that it is a representative of its public is, in São Paulo, closely linked to its relationship with traditional political structures. More precisely, whether an actor supports political candidates is by far the best predictor of assumed representation, followed at some distance by two characteristics – registration as a public interest organisation (*utilidade pública*) or mobilisation and demand making on public authorities. Supporting political candidates is defined as the engagement of civil organisations over the last five years in supporting particular politicians in their electoral campaigns, possibly in exchange for a commitment from the candidate to work on behalf of the organisation's interests or causes. Mobilisation and demand making on public authorities – that is, government bodies or programmes – speak for themselves and do not require clarification. This characteristic refers to the well-known strategy of putting external pressure on the public authority responsible for decision making. Public registration of an organisation as functioning in the public interest, in Brazil, indicates the intention of that organisation to engage in a sustained relation with the state in order to help achieve their objectives. The public interest registration provides access to public benefits such as fiscal exemptions, subsidies and budgetary support, as well as contracts for provision of local decentralised public services, and licenses for lotteries (Szazi 2001: 89–110; Landim 1998a 79–83). It can also be a requirement for participation in the design and implementation or management of public policies

The strong relation between assumed representation and the dynamics of traditional political structures calls to mind at least two sorts of considerations that directly question the contemporary debates about the reconfiguration of representation and the reform of democracy. First, as shown early in the paper, the debate about the reform of democracy and its emphasis on the potential of “civil society”, has curiously not been accompanied by systematic studies that examine the issue of representation underlying a large part of the analytical assumptions that form the basis of this potential. Foremost among these assumptions is the existence of a “natural” continuity or connection between society and civil society. The inattention to an issue so crucial to the democratisation of democracy agenda may reflect at least in part the fact that representation has been part of the historical and intellectual field of democratic political institutions. The approach developed here shows not only the relevance of exploring the problematique of political representation by civil organisations, but also possibility of advancing in this challenge without prematurely arriving at a peremptory conclusion that these organisations lack representativeness. The approach also shows that the “sense of representation” the organisations in São Paulo have, emerges fundamentally out of the interface with electoral campaigns and their candidates. This reveals both a wealth of interactions to be examined and the analytical costs of maintaining a rigid distinction between societal actors and political institutions common to this debate.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> As shown elsewhere (Houtzager *et al.* 2003) the propensity of civil organisations to participate in new institutional spaces is related to a similar variable, that of maintaining contacts with political parties. That analysis regarding what types of organisation participate in such spaces tests and questions emphatic interpretations of the autonomy of civil society.

Second, if civil organisations can effectively translate assumed representation into actual political representation, this would occur not at the margins of or in opposition to traditional forms of political representation – namely elections – but above all as a result of and in close connection to these traditional forms, and with common political repertoires in society – that is, mass mobilisation. Contrary to alarmist warnings about the risks that historically crystallised institutions of political representation will be usurped, the evidence from São Paulo suggests that the reconfiguration of representation runs through the emergence of new societal mediators that interact in a complementary, although not necessarily harmonious manner, with the accepted institutions of representative government. The significance of these mediators will be explored further on, but for now it is necessary to highlight that this evidence points to a peculiar disconnect between parties and political candidates in the dynamics of political representation that filter through civil organisations. Whilst maintaining linkages with the former makes no difference to organisation’s propensity to assume representation, providing support to the latter is the most influential positive factor. In other words, the complementary interaction with electoral processes occurs through the political candidates and not the parties, which not only coincides with the consensus in the reconfiguration of representation literature about the personalisation of politics but also suggests important amendments need to be made to the verdict of a growing disconnect between political actors in electoral processes and their base or social niche.<sup>48</sup> Civil organisations appear to function as channels through which citizens are reconnected to politicians.

There is no *a priori* guarantee that the potential political representation provided by civil organisations will in fact be representative, simply because this form of representation is constructed within a “societal”, rather than political, sphere. If they function as effective new channels of mediation between the population and electoral processes or, as occurs in Brazil, between the population and public administration in the design and implementation of policies, civil organisations can *only* contribute to the democratisation of democracy if they themselves are representative, or if they are able to maintain the core tension in the relationship between representatives and the represented. Clientelism and patrimonialism of various kinds, for example, also tend to occur at this level of organisational activity.

## **7.2 Self-recognition of the political roles of societal mediation**

The congruency arguments articulate the justifications used by the different civil organisations to publicly defend their role as representatives. The fact that the overwhelming majority of organisations (86 per cent)

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<sup>48</sup> It is worth remembering that the absence of effects from linkages of civil organisations with traditional political actors is not restricted to parties. It also contemplates churches, trade unions and professional associations. This clarification is relevant in the São Paulo case because the Church and the so-called new trade unionism played starring roles in the historical period culminating in the transition (see Sader 1988; Singer and Brant 1980).

used only one congruency argument, together with the coincidence between certain types of arguments and types of civil organisations, supports an interpretation that particular congruence arguments are acquiring relatively consistency and are beginning to crystallise.<sup>49</sup>

There is no evidence, in São Paulo at least, of the development of a single model of representation among civil organisations. Although authors such as Chalmers *et al.* (1997) have suggested the presence of a single model, characterised by networked organisations and a deliberative dynamic, the unitary analytic treatment that is often given to the diverse world of civil organisations, under the rubric of civil society, hides simple facts: societal actors obey diverse logics, which are not necessarily compatible with any analytical or practical effort to democratise democracy.

The empirical research on which this paper is based brought to light diverse congruency arguments. Some of the arguments are “old” and have coexisted with the electoral model of constructing political representation, and others have more recent origins. Some of the arguments are irreconcilable with the inherent requisites of democratic political representation but others come with provisions that are capable of reinforcing the responsiveness of organisations to their publics. Specifically, the research found a number of arguments that are clearly compatible with democratic political representation, but that are only made by a small share of actors; it found an argument that is made by a substantial share of organisations but is entirely incompatible with the normative requirements of democracy; and it found two other common arguments that point to a more promising role of civil organisations in the democratisation of democracy and reconfiguration of representation.

Strictly speaking not all the arguments function within the logic of assumed representation, as some of them, albeit a minority, reproduce the mechanisms for authorisation and the dynamics of legitimisation belonging to the political representation of twentieth century democracies. The classical-electoral and membership arguments correspond to this minority group and in different ways each of them makes use of schemes of representation that are essential to or widely present in the history of democracy.

Similar to the historically consolidated model of political representation, the *electoral argument* is founded on elections as the authorisation mechanism of representation. Elections and representativeness are of course far from synonymous. Not only are there numerous criticisms of the inability of parties to eliminate the representation deficit of contemporary democracies (Chalmers *et al.* 1997; Friedman and Hochstetler 2002; Roberts 2002), but there are convincing arguments about the structural weaknesses of political representation in representative government, resulting from the fusion of roles of representation and government in the same individuals and in the same institutions (Sartori 1962; Manin *et al.* 1999b). Elections, however, do provide an accountability mechanism and tend to stimulate awareness amongst representatives of the demands and needs of the electorate (responsiveness). Despite elections within civil organisations lacking public scrutiny and formal procedures akin to those in political electoral processes,

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<sup>49</sup> The development of a public identity and the acceptance of a certain shared organisational profile is not always easy for civil organisations and at times follows tortuous routes, as attested to by the history of NGOs in Brazil (Landim 1998b) or by the conflicts and constant complaints of the so called civil society’s councillors about their representative nature (Tatagiba 2002).

they follow the same formula and basis of legitimacy. In addition, the data show that there is no ambiguity in relationship between the classical-electoral argument and exercise of representation – organisations that used this argument undertake a broader array of activities clearly linked to representative practices than any other. Judging from the results in São Paulo, civil organisations that subject themselves to electoral mechanisms in their relationship with their publics could revitalise political representation if they were included as mediators in the design and implementation processes of public policies, or simply in channelling demands and claims through the course of electoral politics.

The *membership argument* is also relatively rare. Its claim of representativeness is based on the argument that the creation of organisation, by its members, simultaneously establishes the interests to be represented. This model has coexisted with the dominant model of political representation in the twentieth century mass democracies, as a key component of working class structures of interest representation. Its origins date back to the medieval relationship between rights and specific social categories established in guilds, corporations and the territorial areas subject to the crown (Marshall 1967; Bendix 1996; Pitkin 1989). As a contemporary form of representation best employed by membership organisations such as trade unions, the low frequency of this argument among civil organisations is not surprising. It was only used by coordinating bodies, which exist for the purpose of representing other civil organisations. This argument uses different mechanisms for establishing and maintaining the relationship between the organisation and its public, be they membership quotas, participation in the selection of management, or other accountability mechanisms often associated with the idea of membership in the restrictive sense. These incidentally are well known mechanisms that have been widely and legitimately used over the last century. Although they are a minority, civil organisations whose role as political representatives is derived from the membership of members can contribute to the reinvigoration of political representation when connected to traditional political actors or when involved in processes of design and monitoring of public policies.

The *identity argument* is also invoked by a small minority of civil organisations in São Paulo. As it is used by those actors, it rests on the resemblance of existential or substantive attributes of the representative and represented. The small share of organisations that make the identity argument is surprising in light of the considerable attention the so-called “politics of difference” has acquired in political theory, either for its adverse or favourable consequences for citizenship.<sup>50</sup> Identity issues seem hardly or not at all to influence the dynamics of representation among civil organisations in São Paulo. This is likely the situation in other Brazilian cities as well, which are generally less affluent and politically diverse than São Paulo, and for the same reasons in most other the urban centres in Latin America. It may be a more common feature of civil organisations in the northern hemisphere. Be that as it may, it is worth remembering that the claims of identity, have not been the monopoly of societal perspectives or actors – that is, models of descriptive representation have historically also marked the debates about the due composition of legislatures, being characteristic of the arguments made by those committed to

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<sup>50</sup> Assessments and critiques of this debate are available in Kymlicka (1997) and Gurza Lavalle (2003b).

proportional representation (Pitkin 1967; Urbinati 1999). The identity argument in principle does away with accountability mechanisms – the existential resemblance encompasses all that the representative should be in order to act in accordance to the wishes of the represented. Even so, when the assumption of the correspondence between existential characteristics of the representative and her action is sufficiently relaxed, it is plausible to attribute to her a way of seeing or a perspective, such as that of gender or of race for example, that in broad terms corresponds to some substantive quality or attribute seen as undesirably underrepresented (Young 2002: 121–53). In this sense, although its presence is miniscule, civil organisations driven by an identity logic could contribute to correcting systematic exclusions in political representation or in the design and management of public policies.

The *proximity argument* has an underlying implicit criticism of traditional forms of political representation, thus explaining the emphasis on the proximity or horizontalness of the relationship between the corresponding civil organisations and their beneficiaries, as well as the recognition of the work of the former by the latter. At the centre of the argument is a criticism of the distortions institutional structures that mediate between representative and represented create, and their inability to accurately transmit the voice and concerns of the population. It juxtaposes this institutional failure to a genuine commitment and a set of practices that aim to enable people to act and speak for themselves or to represent their authentic interests. In this way, the proximity argument comes close to the radical-democratic visions of representation analysed by Pitkin (1967: 84–91) as forms of the descriptive representation model (*standing for*).

The high frequency of proximity argument is not entirely surprising – the second most common – because we are dealing with societal actors that are not strictly political and because of the particular historical origin of a considerable number of these actors in Brazil. The argument reveals the lasting impact of the extraordinarily influential role the Catholic Church has had in the symbolic and material construction of social actors, as well as the intense participation of activists of the left who sought refuge in grassroots community activism from the circumscribed political arena under the military regime (Sader 1988; Doimo 1995; Landim 1998b; Houtzager 2004). In the case of the first, the canons of what the liberation theology-inspired Church saw as the correct form of social intervention are clearly visible – renouncing one’s own protagonism, empathy (compassion), and silent work alongside the oppressed. In the second case, the focus is on emancipation; it is guided by a strong belief in the ability and need to identify the real interests of the vulnerable social sectors. In both cases the value placed on direct participation and, consequently, on experiences of direct democracy, are readily visible.

Beyond assumed representation, and the components of the proximity argument, participation and physical proximity constitute, in principle, conditions that are favourable to reinforcing the relationship between representative and represented, making possible some forms of control or sanction. These forms, however, have very different content and reach in the case of local associations and Advocacy NGOs, to mention only two of the civil organisations that use the proximity argument most often. Civil organisations which are close to their public, and open to that public’s participation in the organisation, are without a doubt preferable over those which are distant or hermetically sealed when it comes to

reinvigorating political representation in either public decision making centres or in the political-electoral arena, notwithstanding the ambiguity of the forms and effects that flow from being close and participatory. Independent of the merit of this argument, it revives old dilemmas of direct democracy: first, the extreme emphasis on direct participation voids the idea of representation itself (Pitkin 1967: 209–40; Sartori 1962); second, when participatory processes grow large in scale, problems of aggregation and coordination arise, and there are likely to become processes of representation.

The *mediation argument* refers to acting in someone's name, but it does not refer to a substantive concept of representation associated with any particular activity or specific benefits. Rather, the argument is focused on the importance of the political representation of poorly represented sectors of the population on its own terms. That is, the mediation argument explicitly recognises the importance of mediating interests with the State, in opening up channels through which claims can be made which normally do not have a channel through which they can be expressed to public authorities. The argument's point of departure is the need to remedy an inequality which is not directly related to income, but of access to the state. It presupposes that organisations that make the argument, one, occupy a privileged position in this unequal distribution of access to the state *and*, two, have a normative commitment to use their privileged position to help those who lack such access acquire it. The criticism implicit in the argument is not directed at traditional representation institutions *per se*, for any distortions they produce in the concerns of the represented. However, the argument points to a deficit in their ability to hear interests and respond to the right claims of diverse "politically excluded" segments of the population, and defines for itself the role of connecting these segments to the state and the political-electoral arena. There is no evidence in the argument of any mechanisms that could strengthen the relation between representative and represented – the organisations and their publics – and this brings to the fore the dilemmas of representation of interests by civil organisations.

On the other hand, if we remember that during Brazil's dictatorship and transition the discourse of a significant number of civil organisations was strongly opposed to the state, along with a strong commitment to working at the grass-roots evident in the proximity argument, the mediation argument appears fresh and novel. A decade and a half after the military left power, the *most used* justification by civil organisations in São Paulo for assumed representation focuses on the capacity to mediate relations with the state. Thus it seems reasonable to argue that while the proximity argument was relevant to the dominant logic of societal actors in that authoritarian climate, the mediation argument mirrors both the institutional innovation of recent years and the medium term dynamics of the reconfiguration of representation. Although used more often by NGOs and coordinators, precisely the two most historically recent types of civil organisation, it is an argument used by *all* the actors in the sample. The mediation argument is in fact the only argument that all types of organisations make relatively frequently, and they do so despite the existence of a general relation between particular types of arguments and activities. This lends credence to the idea that the argument's importance comes from a wider institutional reordering of the state and of the politics of political representation. The mediation argument embodies within it the processes that are reconfiguring political representation – that is, enlarging the function and locus of

representation, to include the executive for the purpose of designing and supervising public policies – and those that are producing a redefinition of the profile of civil organisations in the context of State reform implemented in recent years.<sup>51</sup>

In the *services argument* for assumed representation capacity to produce or distribute benefits is given as evidence of a commitment to their public's interests. The legitimacy of the organisation's representation does not reside in some form of authorisation as in the classical electoral argument, nor from empathy or intimate knowledge of those to be represented as in the proximity argument, but from actions that are said to demonstrate the authenticity of its representative commitment. The argument is an expression of those notions of representation Pitkin (1967) analyses under the heading "acting for," in which representation is defined in substantive terms or by achieving something concrete that benefits those represented. There is also an underlying criticism here of the inability of political representation to guarantee an effective relationship between the action of the representative and the solution of problems and necessities or in fulfilling the expectations of those represented. In the services argument effectiveness is therefore a key component.

The solution offered to the shortcomings of political representation, however, is particularly vulnerable if its consequences are evaluated from the point of view of the role of civil organisations in the reconfiguration of representation. In the arguments examined above the locus of representation is still poorly understood, but it has not been omitted; means for bringing the representative and represented closer together are present, normally accompanied by some form of accountability (although with different levels of formalisation and with uncertain efficacy); and, there is a presumption that the represented can influence how their representative acts in the locus of representation. The justification of the service argument lies in the direct provision of benefits, thus the mediating function is cancelled out and therefore the locus too. There is no implicit consideration of any accountability mechanisms. The absence of mediation and of the locus eliminates the essence of representation itself.

Perhaps not surprisingly then, organisations that made this argument scored the worst on activities in which representation is likely to occur – 40 per cent did not carry out any or only one activity in which representation is likely to occur. It is nonetheless the third most frequently made argument, primarily by service non-profit organisations, though not exclusively so. It was also used by grass-roots organisations in smaller though considerable proportions. Leaving aside for now the merits of organisations that provide services in a society divided by gross inequality such as in Brazil, there are no elements in the argument compatible with the minimum normative democratic principles. The argument's projection into the political arena is, from the vantage point of democratising democracy, clearly not desirable. It has to be said that the recurrence of this argument and the fact that it was as much used by grass-roots associations as the proximity argument, again proves the inappropriateness of viewing the myriad civil organisations as

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<sup>51</sup> Dobrowolsky and Jenson (2002) analysed a similar connection, although with a negative tendency, in the case of political representation carried out by gender organisations in Canada. This connection was also the motive for analysis in the work published in Chalmers *et al.* (1997) and in Houtzager (2003) as well as in other work referred to in footnote 3.

a single analytic (civil society) unit. The survey's results show that there are fundamental differences between the different types of civil organisation as well as within each specific type.

No criteria for legitimating the political representation offered by the new actors have emerged to reinforce their historical importance, notwithstanding the growing participation of societal actors in the design and monitoring of public policies, participation that in Brazil is inscribed in the Constitution, and of the actors' own awareness that they are not an alternative to traditional representative institutions but rather a complementary layer of institutional mediation that links particular social groups to public decision making centres. This situation is contingent and it should not be accepted as an unproblematic starting point, as occurs in some of the literature analysed in this paper. It seems wiser to assume that the construction of these legitimacy criteria, independently of whether it is successful or not, is and will be the object of political dispute in the medium term.

## **8 Final comments**

The analytic strategy taken in this paper has enabled us to take steps forward in understanding the problem of political representation by civil organisations empirically and in terms of democratic theory. The findings pose challenges to the research agendas on the democratisation of democracy and the reconfiguration of political representation, by identifying the high levels of self-conscious representation undertaken by civil organisations, the factors that alter the propensity of civil organisations in São Paulo to assume the representation of their publics, and the types of congruency arguments used by these organisations to justify their representation. If the literature on the reconfiguration of political representation is correct, parties are losing their central role in organising the preferences of the electorate and in the construction of representable identities, as well as there being a corresponding pre-eminence of candidates whose intimate links with the population are made possible by the mass media. However, the preceding analysis shows that the reconfiguration of representation has moved the edges of political representation further away from its original locus and functions, towards the executive for the purpose of designing and supervising public policies.

The evidence examined here allows us to claim that in São Paulo, and conceivably in Brazil, civil organisations play an active role – although not inherently a positive one – in the reconfiguration of representation both in traditional politics and in the arenas opened up by innovative participative institutions. It also raises the possibility that the political role of civil organisations may counter the gap between political parties and the general population identified in the literature, playing a role in reconnecting the general population to political parties by acting as mediating institutions between candidates and different sectors of the population. The interrelationship between societal and political actors would not be surprising were it not for the rigid divisionary lines drawn between them by academic disciplines and the directions of the debate in recent years. Parties and candidates invest in the social field as part of their political strategy and civil organisations cultivate preferred political support and alliances in order to carry out their objectives. It is precisely the civil organisations involved in this reconnection that

take on the assumed representation of their public. On the other hand, the ordinary citizen is not the principal protagonist in the new participatory spaces for the design and monitoring of public policies, but civil organisations legally invested as representatives of the social sectors envisaged by these policies.

Confirmation that civil organisations are playing a substantial role in the reconfiguration of representation in São Paulo does not say anything about the positive or negative consequences for the quality of democracy. This, clearly, brings into play the difficult question of the representativeness of civil organisations and the challenges of evaluating this representativeness with a notion of political representation based on democratic requirements. The evidence examined here indicates that one should avoid constructing single stylised theoretical models of representation for civil organisations, as diverse models of representativeness are used by civil organisations as public justifications for the authenticity of their assumed representation. Undoubtedly, a substantial number of organisations conceive the legitimacy of their representation in terms that have perverse consequences if they are projected into the political arena. Nevertheless, congruency arguments reconcilable with democratic requirements do exist and these are made by a majority of actors. Amongst these the *mediation* notion of representation is explicitly political and in harmony with the processes of the reconfiguration of representation.

Recent innovative experiments in institutional participation and state reform in Brazil are reflected within this mediation argument for assumed representation. These political-institutional changes have altered the dynamics of representation amongst civil organisations over the past two decades, and in particular they have led this representation to acquire explicit political dimensions. Faced with traditional institutions, the civil organisations who make the mediation argument do not claim just any form of authenticity or genuine representation as frequently occurs in the discourse of societal actors, but declares its commitment to a mediating role aimed at connecting representatives with those represented, that is, poorly or under-represented segments of the population on the one hand and the State and electoral politics on the other. What is being discussed therefore is an argument that situates civil organisations as a new form of mediation between representatives and those represented.

Political representation by civil organisations is a fact, but its potential to broaden representation and its consequences for democratic reform are in play and uncertain. Brazil today reflects some of the possibilities that lie on the horizon of democracy. Whether or not some of the innovations survive beyond this moment of experimentation in political representation and improve the quality of democracy cannot be known at this stage and depends on diverse factors. Whatever the answer is, to be discovered over the twenty-first century, it partly depends on our capacity to develop relevant analytical perspectives and empirical knowledge in order to shed light on the practices of the actors who consciously or not are involved in the contest for the boundaries of political representation in today's democracies.

## **Annex 1 Methodology and interpretation of findings**

The results obtained with the RRR analysis are inherently simple – if when a variable is tested an RRR greater than 1 is found, it is possible to assert that the actors with some characteristic of the tested variable have a greater propensity to consider themselves representatives than those that do not. In Table A2 of Annex 2 for example it can be seen that the RRR for the actors that have links with neighbourhood associations is 1.409 which allows us to assert that the actors linked to neighbourhood associations are 40 per cent more likely to consider themselves representative than those that do not have links with this type of association. The two asterisks (\*\*) that appear in the last column of Table A2 refer to extremely important data in the RRR analysis. They indicate the reliability of the result presented for analysis. In other words, in the table a \*\* or \* was only used to signal variables that are statistically significant and trustworthy, enabling the results to be used for the analysis. According to the result of significance of the coefficient, variables with a trustworthy coefficient of up to 10 per cent were considered significant. Variables that are significant at the 5 per cent level are identified by a \*\* and are considered highly trustworthy and those significant at 10 per cent are marked with a \* and are trustworthy. Similarly variables without asterisks are not statistically significant.

In the same table, the attributes that influence or not whether a civil society actor considers itself to be a representative are presented. The tested variables are described in the first column; in the second column (General Frequency) is the number of cases from the sample for each variable. In the column Presumed Representation the sub-column indicated by a per cent symbol expresses the percentage of those with the characteristic of the variable described in the first column and that consider themselves representatives. In the sub-column RRR is the tested correlating value and the following column called sig, are the variables identified that respect the criteria of the given statistical significance. In the final column are the variables used in the Logistics Regressions (that will be presented subsequently).

Thus it can be seen for example that under the variable ‘participation in the Participatory Budget (PB)’, there are 76 actors that show participation in the PB and of these 85 per cent consider themselves to be representatives. Looking at the RRR it can be seen that the organisations that participate in the PB are twice as likely (200 per cent or more) to consider themselves representatives than those that do not participate in the PB. This result can be asserted because of the highly trustworthy significant coefficient, marked by a \*\*. This indicates with great certainty the correlation between participation in the PB and perception of representation, as the result does not exceed the correlating coefficient at the 5 per cent level. The Participatory Budget example illustrates the importance of the second step of our analysis – the Logistics Regressions. Despite the extremely positive result of the Participatory Budget in the RRR, this information loses any significance if we look at the analysis with Logistic Regression (Annex 4), which indicates that participation is more related to factors that explain perception of representation than to that perception itself. Here we can clearly see the benefits of the logistical analysis as it eliminates the likelihood of one factor being highlighted if it has a stronger correlation to other factors than to the object of analysis.

Therefore starting with the results obtained through the RRR, we proceed to the second stage of analysis using the Logistic Regression. The results obtained using this analysis, in the same way as the RRR, illustrate the probability of a determined variable to influence the perception of a given actor as a representative, and the results obtained in the Logistic Regression can be interpreted similarly to those of the RRR. Nevertheless this additional angle enables us to understand how the question of representation is related to groups of independent variables and not only to one specific characteristic. The use of the Logistic Regression facilitated the creation of explanatory models by combining diverse variables that have some correlation with the perception of representation, without

running the risk of encountering findings that might be explained by the correlation between variables that do not have any such correlation. In other words this choice of analysis enabled us to avoid errors of interpretation, as it eliminated the weight of possible correlation between other variables, not related to our focus (in our case whether the organisation considers itself to be a representative or not).

The Logistics Regressions table only describes the tested variables (variables indicated in Table A2). These variables were selected according to the results and the findings from the RRR analysis. Following several tests, we arrived at the first model described in the table, namely the Principal Model (PM) where the variables with high statistical significance and high correlation can be found. The variables from this model do not lose significance even when tested against any other variable and they constitute variables that in themselves explain assumed representation or self-perception of representation.

The principal model in Table A4 of Annex 4, appears in the second column, and the values presented correspond to the result obtained for the variable within the model tested in the Logistic. The results with two asterisks indicate that the result obtained has very high statistical correlation (5 per cent trustworthiness), the results marked with only one asterisk indicate a high statistical correlation (10 per cent trustworthiness). Results without asterisks indicate no statistical correlation was found. For example, in the Principal Model, we find that the support of political candidates increases by 12 times the likelihood of an organisation to consider itself a representative. Or rather, even when the other descriptive variables are controlled (in this case 'having public utility title' and 'carry out mobilising activities'), supporting political candidates makes the organisation 1,280 per cent more likely to consider itself a representative to those that do not support political candidates. This result can be stated with confidence, as we can see from the significance coefficient of 5 per cent.

A description of the performance of the model can be found in the same table. In the case of the Principal Model we find 85.00 per cent yes, 58.06 per cent no and 77.48 per cent for the Total. This indicates that the principal model works for 85 per cent of the actors that consider themselves to be representatives, for 58 per cent of the actors that do not consider themselves representatives and for 77 per cent of the total of the sample. In other words, this data indicates the predictive capacity of the models applied, as the aim of the work is to understand the elements that promote perception of being a representative, we can see that our Principal Model is sufficiently significant, as it satisfies 85 per cent of the cases in this situation.

Having examined the Principal Model on its own, we move on to look out how the other variables with some explanatory capacity behave within the Principal Model. Thus we aggregated all the variables with the best results and with high significance from the RRR to the Principal Model, resulting in Model II in Table A4, Annex 4. In addition to the variables that make up our Principal Model, this Model includes the following variables: *participation in the Participatory Budget, practice of activities to access the government, whether the organisation is a grassroots association, whether the organisation has 'members or associates' and making demands or claims on public state institutions.*

In the following model (Model III, Table A4), we consider all the variables that are statistically significant, in order to see how they perform when tested against other variables of potential explanatory capacity, as well as the variables from the Principal Model that are included in all of the models.

The fourth model developed for analysis using the Logistics Regression attempts to identify the correlation between the types of organisation and the perception of representation with the explanatory model (PM). As we used one variable with five categories, we took one category as a "reference" category for this model. In other words

from the five categories for types of organisation we used one as a reference for the rest. In our model we used 'Grassroots Association' as the reference category, as this one was the kind of organisation that showed greatest correlation with the perception of representation with high statistical significance in the RRR analysis.

The final step of this approach aimed to identify means of explaining the sets tested in the RRR. In order to do this, we only selected from the sets of variables that showed some statistical correlation with the perception of representation in the RRR. With each set composed only of the significant variables, a new model was constructed and added to the Principal Model. These models correspond to the models V, VI, VII, VIII, IX, X, XI and XII from Table A4. They refer to the following sets: *Political support*, *Principal area of work*, *Organisational linkages*, *Activities of Organisation*, *Public of Organisation*, *Activities of members of their Public*, *Demand-making activities* and *Organisation Budget*.

## Annex 2 Findings from Relative Risk Ratios

**Table A2 Relative Risk Ratios (RRR)**

Variables	General Freq.	Assumed Representation			Variables tested using Logistics Model <sup>a</sup>
		%	RRR		
<b>I – Political Support</b>					
Candidate requested support	110	0,66	1,389	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation refused to give political support when asked <sup>b</sup>	76	0,74	0,793	**	
Organisation supported a political candidate	34	0,97	12,325	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>II – Being publicly registered in some form</b>					
Juridical Persons Registry	156	0,75	1,177		
CNPJ- Tax Authority	156	0,74	1,138		
Registered with Government Secretariat	101	0,80	1,513	**	
Public Utility Title	64	0,81	1,679	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>III.a – Organisation Activities 1 – Demand making and mobilisation</b>					
Make complaints or demands on government agencies or programmes	172	0,83	1,829	**	
Represent the interests of a community or group to government institutions	155	0,87	2,502	**	
Organise or help to organise public acts (i.e. demonstrations, protests)	143	0,78	1,349	**	
SV – Value for Set: Demand making/mobilisation activities (high) <sup>c</sup>	130	0,86	2,483	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>III.b – Organisation Activities 2 – Service non-profit</b>					
Provide free services	198	0,74	1,098		
Sell services or products	55	0,57	0,503	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Run any social programme for the government (on contract)	103	0,76	1,229		
SV – Value for Set: Service non-profit (high) <sup>c</sup>	64	0,68	0,803		
<b>III.c – Organisation Activities 3 – Popular Organisation</b>					
Train community leaders or activists	183	0,73	1,043		
Organise, advise or participate in grassroots self-help groups or other collective work	188	0,75	1,153	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinate actions or activities of different associations or NGOs	134	0,72	0,969		
SV – Value for Set: Popular Organisation (high) <sup>c</sup>	148	0,75	1,152		
<b>III.d – Organisation Activities 4 – Access to Government</b>					
Help individuals make demands on the government	182	0,78	1,368	**	
Provide information or documentation to facilitate access to the government	185	0,76	1,197	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
"Open doors" so that individuals are seen by government officials/ civil servants	135	0,79	1,456	**	
SV - Value for Set: Access to Government Institutions (high) <sup>c</sup>	150	0,79	1,434	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>IV – Typology of Association</b>					
Grassroots association	51	0,94	5,976	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
NGOs	61	0,49	0,361	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Service non-profit organisations	35	0,77	1,261		<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordinating Bodies	56	0,83	1,950	**	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>a</sup> All the variables with statistical significance were tested using the logistics model. In the column only the variables that showed statistical significance after numerous tests and that were incorporated into the logistics models developed are shown (see Annex 4)

<sup>b</sup> This variable does not apply to the cases where political support from the organisation was never requested. Therefore it cannot be tested in the logistics model due to the high number of missing/void cases.

<sup>c</sup> Summary variables created in order to illustrate the intensity of the variables of each set (see Annex 3)

**Table A2 (continued): Relative Risk Ratios (RRR)**

Variables	General Freq.	Presumed Representation			Variables tested using Logistics Model <sup>a</sup>
		%	RRR		
<b>V – Organisation Budget</b>					
More than R\$ 750.000,00	33	0,51	0,397	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Between R\$ 250.000,00 and R\$ 750.000,00	45	0,71	0,919		
Between R\$ 100.000,00 and R\$ 250.000,00	24	0,66	0,747		
Between R\$ 20.000,00 and R\$ 100.000,00	40	0,67	0,776		
Between R\$ 4.000,00 and R\$ 20.000,00	27	0,85	2,148		
Less than R\$ 4.000,00	34	0,88	2,801	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>VI.a – Organisational Linkages (Civil Society)</b>					
NGOs	150	0,69	0,836	*	
Popular Organisations	65	0,63	0,638	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighbourhood Associations	105	0,79	1,409	*	
Community Associations	48	0,74	1,089		
Service non-profit organisations	67	0,73	1,017		
Coordinating bodies (General)	187	0,73	1,044		
Forums	133	0,68	0,829		
<b>VI.b – Organisational Linkages (Others)</b>					
Political Parties	81	0,69	1,219		
PT	71	0,63	1,161		
Churches	99	0,77	1,307		
Trade Unions	91	0,75	1,171		
Professional Associations	51	0,66	0,747		
<b>VII – Participation in deliberative public policy institutions</b>					
Participatory spaces (General)	135	0,79	1,480	**	
Participatory Budget	76	0,85	2,207	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Councils	77	0,78	1,401		
Forums	95	0,69	0,850		
<b>VIII.a – Areas of Work</b>					
Education	100	0,69	0,831		
Health	50	0,76	1,183		
Children and Adolescents	26	0,84	2,054		
Housing	42	0,78	1,369		
Political Training	71	0,67	0,779		
Civil Society	37	0,75	1,162		
<b>VIII.b – Main area of work</b>					
Education	74	0,62	0,614	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health	25	0,76	1,183		
Children and Adolescents	18	0,88	2,988		
Housing	33	0,78	1,387		
Political Training	9	0,55	0,467		
Civil Society	12	0,83	1,867		
SV – Orientated by area of work <sup>d</sup>	109	0,71	0,951		

<sup>d</sup> Summary variable created to identify whether the organisation focuses on one particular area of work (Annex 3)

**Table A2 (continued): Relative Risk Ratios (RRR)**

Variables	General Freq.	Presumed Representation			Variables tested using Logistics Model <sup>a</sup>
		%	RRR		
<b>IX – Public</b>					
Members or associates	39	0,89	3,268	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Target Population	100	0,71	0,947		
Community	68	0,77	1,320		
Other organisations	14	0,28	0,149	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other type of relationship	8	0,37	0,224	**	
<b>X – Activities of Public</b>					
Participate in the planning of organisational activities	159	0,79	1,471	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in the implementation of organisational programmes	188	0,74	0,231		
Mobilized by the organisation to participate in public acts	139	0,82	1,703	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XI.a – Demand making on Public Institutions</b>					
Mayor's office/ City Council	178	0,52	1,376	**	
State Government (Executive)	164	0,54	1,483	**	
Federal Government (Executive)	141	0,64	1,325	**	
Municipal Council	150	0,53	1,792	**	
Legislative assembly	126	0,60	1,776	**	
National Congress	106	0,70	1,156		
SV – Value for demand making on Executive (high) <sup>e</sup>	157	0,80	1,518	**	
SV – Value for demand making on Legislative (high) <sup>e</sup>	124	0,82	1,742	**	
SV – Value for demand making on Municipality (high) <sup>e</sup>	142	0,82	1,759	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
SV – Value for demand making on State level (high) <sup>e</sup>	122	0,83	1,916	**	<input type="checkbox"/>
SV – Value for demand making on Federal level (high) <sup>e</sup>	100	0,77	1,258		
SV - Overall Value- Demand making on public institutions (high) <sup>e</sup>	135	0,81	1,653	**	
<b>XI.b – Demand making on Private Institutions</b>					
Small and Medium sized businesses	77	0,68	1,553	**	
Private sector representative institutions	79	0,72	0,834		
SV – Value for demand making on private sector (high) <sup>e</sup>	54	0,77	1,315		
<b>XII – Foundation of Organisation</b>					
Before 1990	110	0,77	1,270		
After 1990	118	0,68	0,818		
Age of Organisation (2002 – Year of Foundation) <sup>f</sup>					<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>XIII – Participation of Actor in Foundation</b>					
Union	33	0,69	0,859		
Political Party	2	0,67	0,769		
PT	41	0,65	0,720		
Religious organisation/ Church	103	0,78	1,375	*	
Civil Society	115	0,72	0,969		

<sup>e</sup> Summary variable created in order to visualise the extent of demand making at a broader level (see Annex 3)

<sup>f</sup> This variable was calculated using the logistics model, despite not being calculated as a RRR because of it being scaled. However it did not show any statistical correlation with assumed representation.

## **Annex 3 Description of variables used**

### ***I – Political Support***

In this set are variables that ascertain both the political candidates seeking support from organisations and whether organisations supported them. Three variables are described in this set. The first ascertains whether a political candidate requested the support of the organisation in the last five years, the second called ‘Organisation rejects political support’ points to the organisations that were asked to support a political candidate and which refused to do so and the third shows the organisations that supported political candidates in the last five years independently of whether they were asked to do so or not.

### ***II – Publicly Registered***

The variables of this set ascertain whether an organisation is publicly registered in any of the following: *Juridical Persons Registry, CNPJ – Tax Authority, Government Secretariat and Registry of Public Utility Title*. The organisation was questioned as to whether it was listed in any of the registers described above and each one was treated as an independent and dichotomous variable.

### ***III.a – Organisational Activities 1: Demand Making and Mobilisation***

This set looks at three demand-making and/or mobilisation activities on the government, carried out by the organisation. Make complaints or demands on government agencies or programmes; represent the interests of a community or group in government institutions; organise or help organise public acts. In order to ascertain the extent of this type of activity, a value was created that establishes the organisations that carry out at least two of the activities presented above. This is called Value for Set: Demand Making/Mobilisation activities (high). In order to establish the extent of this kind of activity a value was created that identifies the organisations that carry out at least two of the activities presented above, namely Value for Set: Demand-making/mobilisation activities (high). In the RRR analysis, the variables were tested both on their own and as composite values.

### ***III.b – Organisational Activities 2: Service Non-profit***

This set includes three variables that were created in order to ascertain the kinds of services provided by an organisation. Thus organisations selected (i) *provide free services*, (ii) *sell services or products* and (iii) *contracted to administer a government social programme*. These three types of different activities referring to the kind of service provided by the organisation were aggregated into a value in order to establish the extent on this type of activity. The value ascertains the organisations that carry out at least two of the activities mentioned above and it is called *Value for Set: Service non-profit (high)*. In the RRR analysis, the variables were tested both on their own and as composite values.

### ***III.c – Organisational Activities 3: Popular Organisation***

This set is made up of variables that try to identify whether the organisation carries out popular organisation activities. The variables that make up this set are (i) Train community leaders or activists, (ii) organise, advise or participate in grass-roots self-help groups or other collective work, (iii) coordinate actions or activities of different associations or NGOs. To illustrate the extent of this kind of activity, a value was created that identifies the organisations that carry out at least two of the activities mentioned above, which is called Value for Set: Popular Organisation (high). In the RRR analysis, the variables were tested both on their own and as composite values.

### **III.d – Organisational Activities 4: Access to Government**

This set is compiled of variables that attempt to ascertain whether an organisation carries out activities that enable or facilitate access of people to government institutions. The variables that make up this set are (i) *help people to make demands on government*, (ii) *provide information or documentation to people to facilitate access to government and* (iii) *open doors so that people can be attended to by public officials/ civil servants*. In order to establish the extent of this activity, a value was created that identifies the organisations that carry out at least two of the activities presented above. This is called *Value for Set: Access to Government (high)*. In the RRR analysis, the variables were tested both individually and as composite values.

### **IV – Typology of Organisations**

This refers to the type of organisation observed. The classification of organisations follows the criteria described in Section 5 of this paper, Chart I. The typology was aggregated as a result of the types of associations shown in the Table resulting in the classification found in Annex 5.

### **V – Organisation Budget**

Organisational budgets were grouped into categories and each category was translated into a dichotomous variable to make the RRR and logistics regressions analysis possible. Therefore the variables were created from the following categories which refer to the annual budget of the organisation:

- More than R\$ 750.000,00
- Between R\$ 250.000,00 and R\$ 750.000,00
- Between R\$ 100.000,00 and R\$ 250.000,00
- Between R\$ 20.000,00 and R\$ 100.000,00
- Between R\$ 4.000,00 and R\$ 20.000,00
- Less than R\$ 4.000,00

### **VI.a – Organisational Linkages (Civil Society)**

The variables from this set indicate whether an organisation maintains relations or not with the following institutions from civil society: NGOs, Popular Organisations, Neighbourhood Associations, Community Association, Service non-profit Organisation, Coordinating Bodies (general) and Forums. The linkages were classified using the quotes of the organisation interviewed and in accordance with the criteria presented in the Annex.

### **VI.b – Organisational Linkages (Others)**

In this case the variables indicate whether the organisation maintains relations with traditional societal institutions such as *Political Parties, Churches, Trade Unions and Professional Associations*.

### **VII – Participation in Deliberative Public Policy Institutions**

In this set we identify organisations that participate in different participatory spaces, both spaces for deliberation with public authorities or the Participatory Budget or Management Councils and in discussion spaces reserved exclusively for civil society actors such as the Forums. For each one of these spaces a specific variable was created that indicates the presence of absence of the organisations in these spaces.

### **VIII.a – Areas of Work**

Only the most frequent areas of work from the sample were used. The areas of work were classified using the responses given by the interviewees regarding the activities of the organisation. The interviewees indicated up to five different activities carried out by the organisation, each one of them was classified. The variables show whether or not the organisation carries out work in one of the following areas: *Education, Health, Children and Adolescence, Housing, Political Training, and Civil Society (activities related to institutional development, coordination and mediation with civil society organisations can be found in this category)*

### **VIII.b – Principal Area of Work**

This set of variables refers to two fields of analysis. The first refers to a principal area of work being identified. This was identified using the responses given regarding the organisation's activities; in this case the variable 'is thematically orientated' indicates whether or not the organisation has a central area of work. The other variables in this set indicate whether one of the areas of work presented in the previous set is the central area of work of the organisation.

### **IX – Relations to Publics**

The variables for this set were created using the information about how an organisation best described the type of relationship that the organisation has with the people for whom or with whom they work. Organisations classified their relations according to the following categories: Members or Associates, Target Population, The Community, Other Organisations or Other type of relationship.

### **X –Activities of Organisation's Public**

This set contains variables that try to identify the degree of involvement of an organisation's public in the activities carried out by the organisation. Three variables can be found. The first identifies whether members of its public participate in the planning of organisational activities, the second whether members of its public participate in the implementation of organisational programmes and the third whether the organisation mobilises these members to participate in public acts.

### **XI.a – Demand Making on Public Institutions**

This set specifies the public institutions on which organisations make demands. It includes the following variables: City Council, State Government (executive), Federal Government (Executive), Municipal Council, Legislative Assembly and National Congress. For each one, organisations were asked whether or not they made demands on them. In order to facilitate reading this information, further values were created from this information and were then converted into variables:

- Value for Demand Making on the Executive Power (high) – The corresponding variable for this value indicates if an organisation makes demands on two or more Executive Institutions
- Value for Demand Making on the Legislative Power (high) – The corresponding variable for this value indicates whether an organisation makes demands on two or more Legislative Institutions
- Value for Demand Making at Municipal Level (high) – The corresponding variable indicates whether an organisation makes demands on both the City Councils and the Legislative Councils
- Value for Demand Making at State Level (high) – The corresponding variables indicates whether the organisation makes demands both on the State Government (executive) and on the Legislative Assembly

- Value for Demand Making on the Federal Level (high) – The corresponding variable indicates whether an organisations makes claims both on the Federal Government (executive) and on the National Congress
- Value for encompassing demands on public authorities (alto) – The corresponding variable indicates whether an organisation makes demands on four or more public institutions (of the six mentioned above)

All the variables in this set – both collective values and individual variables – were tested using the RRR analysis.

### **XI.b – Demand Making on Private Institutions**

This set hosts the variables that identify whether or not an organisation makes demands on private sector institutions. Each organisation was asked whether it makes demands on (i) *small and medium sized businesses* and (ii) *institutions that represent the private sector*. Each one constitutes a separate variable which was incorporated into the RRR analysis. In order to identify the intensity of claim making a further value was created (*Value of demand making on private sector (high)*) that identifies those organisations that responded positively to the two questions above. This value was also tested in the RRR analysis.

### **XII – Foundation of Organisation**

This set refers to the age of the organisation. For the RRR analysis, as it is necessary to use dichotomous variables, two variables were used (the first two described in Table A2) that indicate whether the organisation was founded before or after 1990. Nevertheless for the Logistics Regression analysis it was possible to use a scaled variable for the age of the organisation. Therefore the variable called ‘Age of organisation’ in the table was used and it was calculated by subtracting the age of the foundation of the organisation from 2002 (year of interview).

### **XIII – Participating Actors in Foundation**

The variables from this set indicate whether or not one of the following institutions – Trade Unions, Political Parties, Churches/ Religious bodies and Civil Society Organisations – participated in the founding of the organisation.

## Annex 4 Results of logistic regressions

**Table A4 Logistic regressions**

	Principal Model (PM)		PM + variables with best RRR and significance	PM + all variables	PM + Types of Organisation	PM + Activities of Organisation	PM + Organisation Budget	Pm + Political Support	PM + Principal Area of Work	PM + Organisational Linkages	PM + Publics of Organisation	PM + Benefits/Members Activities	PM + Demand making
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII	
<b>Performance of Model</b> (% of correct predictions)	<b>Yes</b>	85,00	93,20	93,20	90,48	91,25	90,00	85,00	85,00	84,38	87,50	88,75	88,75
	<b>No</b>	58,06	58,82	72,55	49,02	43,55	56,45	58,06	58,06	59,68	59,68	48,39	46,77
	<b>total</b>	77,48	82,32	87,88	79,80	77,93	80,63	77,48	77,48	77,48	79,73	77,48	77,03
<b>I – Political Support</b>													
Candidate requested political support			1,31					1,28					
Organisation supported a political candidate	12,80**	8,18**	11,05**	11,63**	11,57**	14,11**	12,52**	12,13**	19,46**	10,94**	10,66**	10,04**	
<b>II – Being publicly registered</b>													
Public Utility Title	2,86**	6,34**	35,63**	4,35**	2,83	4,34**	2,85**	3,66**	2,58**	3,29**	2,90**	3,06**	
<b>III – Organisational Activities</b>													
SV – Value for Set: Demand making/Mobilising activities (high) <sup>a</sup>	5,53**	3,23**	5,22**	5,34**	4,91**	4,92**	5,33**	5,37**	7,71**	6,66**	5,03**	4,11**	
Sell services or products			0,44		0,39**								
Organise, advise or participate in grassroots self-help groups or other collective work			1,31		1,22								
Provide information or documentation to facilitate access to government			1,06		1,41								
SV – Value for Set: Access to Government Institutions (high) <sup>a</sup>		2,51*	3,37*		1,04								
<b>IV – Organisational Typology</b>													
NGOs		**	**	**									
Grassroots Associations		46,20**	40,62**	22,47**									
Service non-profit		6,80**	7,41**	5,01**									
Coordinating Bodies		2,45**	9,57**	6,34**									
<b>V – Organisation Budget (annual)</b>													
More than R\$ 750.000,00			0,24**			0,34**							
Less than R\$ 4.000,00			3,82			3,47**							

<sup>a</sup> Summary variables created in order to illustrate the intensity of the variables of each set (see Annex 3)

**Table A4 (continued) Logistic regressions**

Variables	Principal Model (PM)	PM + variables with best RRR and significance	PM + all variables	PM + Types of Organisation	PM + Activities of Organisation	PM + Organisation Budget	PM + Political Support	PM + Principal Area of Work	PM + Organisational Linkages	PM + Public of Organisation	PM + Benefits/Members Activities	PM + Demand making
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
<b>VI – Organisational Linkages (Civil Society)</b>												
Popular Organisations			0,19**						0,23**			
<b>VII – Participation in deliberative Public Policy Institutions</b>												
Participatory Budget		1,13	1,88**									
<b>VIII – Principal Area of Work</b>												
Education			0,11**					0,43**				
<b>IX – Publics</b>												
Members or Associates		2,45	2,15							3,94**		
Other organisations			0,02**							0,11**		
<b>X – Activities of Public</b>												
Participate in planning of organisational activities			0,48								2,31**	
Mobilised by Organisation to participate in public acts			0,81								1,09	
<b>XI – Demands Made on Public Institutions</b>												
SV – Level of demand making at municipal level (high) <sup>b</sup>			0,82									1,63
SV – Level of demand making at state level (high) <sup>b</sup>		3,62**	3,42*									1,71

<sup>b</sup> Summary variable created in order to visualise the extent of demand making at a broader level (see Annex 3)

## Annex 5 Expanded typology of civil organisations

Chart A5 Expanded typology of civil society organisations

Category	Freq	%	Public	General characteristics
<b>NGOs</b>	62	27,1	Target group of people	Transform collective problems into public issues More refined political discourse around issues such as democracy, inclusion, rights and citizenship
<b>Popular Organisations</b>	11	4,8	Group of people with shared social identity	Collective mobilisation as a constant form of demand making. They promote direct articulation between civil organisations and the affected community for particular demands together with wider proposals for social transformation
<b>Neighbourhood Associations</b>	33	14,4	Group of people within geographical area	Geographical focus for the shaping of demands and construction of organisational identity. They carry out activities that fundamentally aim to address urban or territorial/local needs
<b>Community Associations</b>	18	7,9	Community with affinity between organisation and the population	Created as a result of shared concerns amongst the members of an organisation which attends exclusively to its members Mother's Clubs are an example of this type of association
<b>Service Non-Profit</b>	35	15,3	Target population characterised by vulnerability	Service non-profit organisations providing direct benefits to individual "clients", responding to urgent needs and deprivation
<b>Pastorate</b>	7	3,1	The people are defined by the area of work of the Pastorate- normally people belonging to the community where the Pastorate is situated	Body founded by sectors of the Catholic Church to deal with specific areas of work Ex: Children's Pastorate, Housing Pastorate.
<b>Coordinating Bodies</b>	33	14,4	Other organisations	Institutionalised spaces of coordination and discussion between civil society actors
<b>Forums</b>	12	5,2	Organisations	Discussion forums for specific themes by civil society actors. They differ from coordinating bodies in that they are not institutionalised channels and in the majority of cases function sporadically.
<b>Others</b>	18	7,9		Additional organisations from our sample which could not be inserted into new categories because of their low frequency. Examples of those included in this group are Cooperatives and the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector

## References

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