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Sociopartisan activism: the collective mandates in Brazil

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" I don't think the party can do without the movement; on the contrary, the party without a movement is empty. It does not exist. [...] and I also think that, without the party, the movement loses power" (Joana, collective mandate representative).

From the emergence of new movement-parties in Europe (Della Porta et al., 2017), to the internal changes in the Republican Party that led Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States (Tarrow, 2022), the relationship between social movements and political parties has gained increasing attention both in the literature and public opinion. This close linkage between parties and movements is, however, hardly novel, and the fluid boundaries between state and society, 'insiders' and 'outsiders', 'incumbents' and 'challengers' has not gone unnoticed by the literature on collective action (Banaszak 2010; Giugni and Passy 1998; Garretón 2002). Although the mutual influences between movements and parties were not ignored by the literature, they are far from achieving a much-needed centrality in the scholarship concerned with political regimes trajectories and political parties' systems and competition or even within the social movement scholarship (Anria, 2022). Moreover, political parties and social movements are typically treated as two separate, homogenous entities that interact with each other in particular political circumstances, instead of considering the long-lasting effects of the interaction (Anria, 2019). These perspectives restrict our view of how parties and movements interact and how they might transform each other. Considering these gaps, this article asks: how to analyze the relationship between movements and

parties? It proposes the concept of "sociopartisan activism" to capture the ongoing and sometimes lasting interaction between social movements and political parties, an issue on which there has been little research.

Party and movements interaction was at the center of analyses on processes of democratic transition in Latin America (Alvarez 1990; Avritzer 2002; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Keck 1992; Garretón 2002; Lucero 2008; Roberts 1995). Furthermore, our understanding of this phenomenon has advanced through studies on the dual and multiple militancies of actors linked to different social movements, organizations, and institutions of the political system (Della Porta et al. 2017; Mische 2009) and the movement of activists from extra-institutional to institutional spaces (Alvarez, 1990; Hochstetler & Keck, 2007; Silva & Oliveira, 2011). As stated by an activist interviewed for this article: *"We never participate in only one thing"* (Joana). The interactions between social movements and political parties have also been chiefly studied in the context of elections and when social movements turn into political parties (Kitschelt 2006; Blee and Currier 2006; Anria 2019; Della Porta et al. 2017; McAdam and Tarrow 2010). There is a growing understanding that institutional politics is part of social movements' daily activities and struggles, either indirectly, when they engage in contentious practices, or directly, when they interact with political parties and institutions: *"We have always participated in electoral processes, although we are part of a social movement, we always participate when there is institutional politics"* (Joana).

However, the two fields of study generally remain separate. Tarrow (2022) attributes this split to a disciplinary division: sociology as the realm of social movement scholars, focusing on actors and networks, and political science more prone to studying formal institutions and rooted in different methodological and theoretical approaches. In this article, I argue that the problem is less a disciplinary issue and more a conceptual one: the focus on types of performances – analysts usually define movements in terms of organizations and extra-institutional contentious performances, even when they engage in conventional behavior and participate in political parties (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001; Tarrow 2021).

Acknowledging these gaps, this article follows other authors who see social movements as networks of actors and action fields, and focuses on the relationships fostered between social actors and political parties (Diani 2015; Abers, Almeida, and von Bülow 2022; Heaney and Rojas 2007; Mische 2009). It proposes the concept of "sociopartisan activism" defined as activists' simultaneous relationship with parties and

movements in the defense of contentious causes, that can lead to a double constitution and transformation of movement and party agendas and structures. The concept of sociopartisan activism offers two valuable insights to the existing literature on social movements and political parties. Firstly, it highlights the various interrelationships between parties and movements, based on the assumption that both are internally heterogeneous. Secondly, by examining the internal networks that connect movements to parties, the article emphasizes the need to move beyond recognizing the fluid boundaries between the two entities and incorporate a network perspective into conflict analysis. Addressing the challenges of interaction between parties and movements requires focusing not only on conflicts that arise from specific movement X and party Y dynamics, but also taking into account the variations in strategies and identities within both movements and parties themselves.

To carry out such an analysis, it focuses on an emerging empirical phenomenon in Brazil: collective legislative mandatesⁱ. Collective candidacies and mandates are a democratic innovation in Brazil, in which social movement and civil society actors jointly run for office for a single legislative seat and, if successful, seek to run their mandate collectively. Such candidacies have appeared at the three levels of government (municipal, state, and federal levels).

The qualitative research covered all collectives elected in the municipal level in 2020 (29); the two first collective mandates, elected in 2016, and two collective mandates in the state level, Pernambuco and São Paulo, elected in 2018, totaling 33 mandates analyzed. Although this study focuses on a specific type of movement-party interaction in Brazil, it contributes to the literature on political parties and social movements as it explores new interpretations for understanding these relationships. In addition, this glimpse into activists' views on political parties and their limitations when it comes to interacting with the broad public and civil society opens up a research agenda for those interested in the democratization of political parties. Research on collective mandates can further contribute to analyses of experiences such as citizen mandates around the world; it could also help identify differences in how activists go about vying for political parties.

Collective mandates: methodology and overview

Methodology

This article is based on a case study involving multiple units: 31 municipal collective legislative mandates elected in 2020 (except for two, elected in 2016) and distributed in different Brazilian cities, and 2 state-levels collective mandates elected in 2018. Then, it presents an intensive study that covers the totality of legislative experiences that fit into the definition of collective mandates. This wide-ranging view aims to render a description of this little-known phenomenon, at the same time to apply a new analytical construct to understand movement and parties' interaction.

In total, 64 interviews were carried out, 8 of which had two or more co-councilors being interviewed together, totaling 74 individuals. Although I spoke to individuals, not the group, interviews were conducted with at least 2 participants from each group in order to cover the social/collective nature of how they operate, possible disagreements between them and distinct views on these mandates. Through a qualitative content analysis, we sought to capture the expressed meanings and latent themes and ideas found in interviews with actors who are directly involved with the innovative phenomenon of collective mandates in Brazil (Drisko and Maschi 2016).

These were semi-structured interviews that lasted on average 1.5 hours. They were transcribed and analyzed using the Atlas.ti software to generate non-aprioristic codes. The first step was to inductively create subnodes that correspond to arguments around a specific question of the interview script (Elo et al. 2014). The same passage of an interview could express different meanings and therefore be coded in more than one subnode. The interviews were thoroughly categorized to cover a variety of themes, generating connotative and non-explicit codes to passages of interest. The second step was to aggregated codes that sometimes involved deductive analysis, when the data corresponded or exemplified identified existing theoretical categories, for example, the concepts of action repertoires and multiple affiliations. The aggregated codes used in this article are those that address the following four analytical dimensions: a) the trajectories of interaction and intersection between movement and party activists; b) interactions during election campaigns; c) movement-party interactions while in office, and d) conflicts emerging from this relationship.

At times, to show how interviewees vary in their opinions on certain topics, the article offers quantitative data and frequencies. However, the overall goal of this study is to interpret the actors' responses in light of the extant theoretical framework, the political context in which these innovations take place, and the meanings produced. Interviewees are identified with fictitious names (which follow the gender with which they identify) to

preserve anonymity and allow for conflicts within the mandates to be revealed. Quotations will be used to illustrate the actors' views and the author's interpretation from an analytical and theoretical perspective, also enabling readers to access the data and evaluate the trustworthiness of results (Elo et al. 2014).

What are collective mandates

The relationship between political parties and society played a central role in studies on party organization, to the point of contributing to the various classifications of parties over time. The links with civic organizations and social movements was important during process of contestation to liberal democracy in well-established democracies, giving rise to movement-parties (Kitschelt, 2006), to democratic transition in Latin America (Alvarez, 1990) and Africa (LeBas, 2011), although with distinct results and relationships.

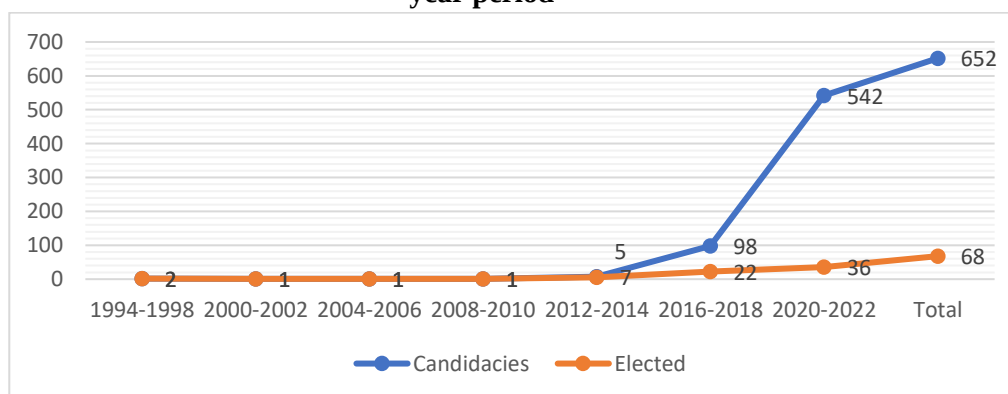
Recently, in response to the widespread crisis of political representation, different experiences around the world have offered solutions to democratize political and party systems. Such a crisis involves low voter turnout, weak party-society relations, distrust of politicians and institutions, among other factors. This context has led to protests and the rise of movement-parties, some of which are built on an antipartisan orientation (Della Porta et al. 2017; Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2018). Moreover, proposals for democratizing the political system have appeared, such as the “Global Municipalist Movement” based on citizen mandates, which aims to occupy institutional spaces of power and democratize politics and parties (Bookchin and Colau 2019), and informal institutions and organizations that support political parties organizations and act as intermediaries between candidates and the public (Wampler, 2012). Although collective candidacies in Brazil are related to these experiences and, to some degree, inspired by them, they have specific features.

It is paradoxical that at the same time as they question the party format, activists are fighting to create parties or dispute parties internally, affecting their organizational structure, given their centrality to democracy, as channels for political interests aggregation and for the translation of programs into policies.

There are other initiatives in Brazil – similar to citizen mandates found around the world – seeking to establish a model of post-election collective representation that adopts participation mechanisms, known as shared mandates (Secchi, Cavalheiro, and Baumgarten 2023), which are not covered in this study. Shared mandates emerge from

campaigns elections made by an individual who proposes, if be elected, bring together groups and citizens in the process of discussion and decision. Although shared candidacies and mandates have been adopted since 1994, the first collective candidacy was elected in Alto Paraíso (a small town in central Brazil), in 2016. In 2016 (municipal election), 70 candidacies were launched, and 15 elected (1 of them are collective candidacies, and 2 other councilwoman in Belo Horizonte shared collectively a mandate after election). During the state and federal election in 2018, 28 candidacies (6 elected), 2 collective mandates were elected (Bancada Ativista in São Paulo, and Juntas in Pernambuco). The collective format became widespread after the cycle of protests of June 2013, marked by diffuse indignation with the political system and the emergence of very different proposals to address the crisis of political mediation. In 2020, out of 320 collective and shared candidacies, 306 were collective and 29 were elected. In 2022, 218 candidacies for state and federal deputy were present, and only 2 were elected.

Graph 1. Distribution of candidacies and collective mandates by electoral four-year period



Source: Almeida, Andujas (2023)

This is a kind of movement-party interaction in which participants themselves propose changes to the electoral rules. It is not formally recognized in the Brazilian legal and electoral framework, although discussions about regulation are underway in the National Congressⁱⁱ. How do they work in practice? In collective candidacies, a group of people participates in the campaign together and run for the same seat (municipal councilor, state deputy, or federal deputy), and this group is presented to voters as the recipient of their vote. One of the candidates is legally connected to the office. The campaign is run by a set of people who may be affiliated with different political parties or no parties at all, if they are not spokespersons for the candidaciesⁱⁱⁱ. Instead of creating

a party, collective candidacies join forces with existing parties with which they share collective identities or ideological and programmatic affinities, or they establish pragmatic alliances for purely electoral purposes. In numerical terms, in 2020, the information collected indicates that 1,323 people presented themselves as co-councillors, which gives an average of 4 per collective.

Activists decide to run in elections based on this history of involvement in activism and against a backdrop of unmet needs and even violence suffered over the course of their life, including racism, sexism, and the violence associated with living in the peripheries. Activists participate in different organizations and movements simultaneously since they defend contentious causes that bring together different themes and organizations, especially in the context where social rights and public services are lacking. The interviews made with representatives elected since 2016 highlight that some activists knew each other before decision to run election; other were invited by one of the members due their history of activism and defense of causes. After deciding to run together they create a collective or a name to identify the group. The affinity and prior knowledge between the members, as we will see in the data in the article, will be fundamental to explain the greater success in terms of collective functioning of the mandates.

During the campaign, the collective presents itself to the public and works collectively asking for votes. The collective campaign has the potential to combine efforts, in relation to the division of labor in the territory, as well as the knowledge and political capital of each candidate. However, there is a big challenge in explaining this new format to the public and how the collective will legislate, considering that only one person will be legally entitled to assume power if the group is elected.

The table below summarizes the functioning of the mandates interviewed, showing the different possibilities of internal organization of these experiences after being elected.

Table 1. Organizational formats of collective mandates

	Items	Variables
Cabinet organization	Division of functions in the mandate	Division by themes Division by tasks Division by working groups Division by territory

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	Items	Variables
Participation in the legislature	Plenary sessions	Participation in the plenary session allowed for a limited number of councilors Participation in the plenary as a listener Participation in the plenary, via videos Participation in the plenary session prohibited
	Commissions	Co-councillors participate with the right to voice, not vote Co-councillors cannot participate
	Public hearings	Co-councilwomen participate and lead Co-councilwomen participate
Decision-making process	Decision making	By consensus Majority consensus, vote when necessary Without consensus, listen to other people or political advice until a decision is reached By vote
	Who participates in the decision	Only co-councillors Co-councillors and part of the cabinet team The co-councillors and the political council, or the collective
	Political council	With political council No political council, but consultation with a group of political supporters No political council
	Role of the Council	Council for mobilization of agendas and consultation Council with decision-making power Council with decision-making power, in case of disagreement between co-councillors
	Council participants	Supporters during the campaign Social movements, activists, individuals, with and without party ties
Interaction mechanisms	Interaction with Society/public	Demand and/or voting applications Social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and WhatsApp) Virtual plenaries Assemblies and meetings in the territories Itinerant offices in the territories Cultural activities Thematic committees for discussing agendas
	Interaction with social movements and collective actors	Organization and participation in protests Dual militancy: movement and party Project discussion Public Hearings Parliamentary Fronts Directly in the offices, plenary

Items	Variables
	In the territories
	Working groups
	Coordination with community leaders
	Online interaction

Source: adapted from Almeida, 2023

All members of the group commit to running the mandate collectively if elected. From the point of view of daily legislative functioning, co-councilors (at the municipal level) and co-deputies (at the state or federal levels) are continuously involved in and engaged with the mandates' daily dynamics and decision-making, distributing political responsibilities and duties and sometimes assuming office positions as legislative aides (*assessores*). They usually establish a division of work based on their knowledge and social militancy, including their location in the territory. Regarding official activities in the legislative, only the spokesperson can participate in public meetings in the plenary, but co-councilors often participate in other informal dynamics such as committees and public hearings.

The majority said they made decisions by consensus and resorted to voting only in case of disagreements that were not resolved after the debate. The main decisions of the mandates are made collectively, a point that differentiates them from the simple intermediary advisor. The greatest participation would take place within the office. The mandates involve some type of expanded group or political council, whose main function is to mobilize, advise and propose agendas, and in which campaign supporters participate, especially expanding dialogue with social movements and party activists.

Finally, collective mandates adopt interaction mechanisms both with society and with social movements and civil society, which helps to build simultaneously their relationship with social movements and political parties. This interaction between movements and parties during mandate will be discussed in the following sections. First, it is necessary to present the analytical framework.

Parties and movements, movement-parties, and beyond: sociopartisan activism

The intertwined relationship between social movements and the political system was the main focus of analyses on processes of democratic transition in Latin America (Alvarez 1990; Avritzer 2002; Jenkins and Klandermans 1995; Keck 1992; Garretón 2002; Lucero 2008; Roberts 1995). In the context of the struggles against a weak state for

the fulfillment of rights, when social organizations and movements – and the political system itself – were being built amid democratic disputes, studies were already pointing out the difficulties of assuming fixed borders between the inside and outside (Keck 2015). In different countries in the region, political parties have derived from social movement organizations, such as the Workers' Party (PT) in Brazil, Pachakutik in Ecuador, and the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSNL) in Nicaragua (Almeida 2006). This is not to say that movements' proximity to political parties and the political system has not been critically analyzed (Kriesi 1995), as attested by the debate on autonomy versus co-optation that marked the region, which was in line with the literature on social movements (Meza and Tatagiba 2016; Vergara-Camus 2009).

This debate, however, has become more sophisticated with the growing efforts to understand movements' interactions with the political system, efforts that have focused especially on the executive branch and its agencies. The literature on the feminist movement has prolifically revealed the movement of activists into government agencies (Banaszak 2010; Eisenstein 1996); moreover, the activism of different social movements within the state has been widely studied (Abers and Keck 2013; Goldstone 2003; Bereni 2021; Giugni 2019; Penna 2017). Efforts to understand movements' interaction with parties and elections, on the other hand, are less prominent in the literature (McAdam and Tarrow 2010). However, this is a growing field of studies, which I divide into two axes: one focused on short-term relationships established at specific moments, and the other dedicated to long-term relationships that can lead to lasting changes. I argue at the end of this section that there is a third layer of relationships, which remains little explored by studies in this field.

The most specific or goal-driven, short-term relationships involve the mobilization and joint organization of protests and contentious repertoires to influence electoral results (Heaney and Rojas 2007; Bringel 2015), the formation of electoral coalitions in support of candidates or parties, or the mobilization in reaction to election results (McAdam and Tarrow 2010; Tarrow 2021), and the mobilization to increase voter registration and candidacies from underrepresented groups (Andrews 1997). Social movements also seek to influence parties by introducing new issues and new social cleavages, exerting pressure through protests, or establishing alliances and different forms of interaction with positive and negative potential outcomes for both organizations (Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2018; Kriesi 1995; Schwartz 2010).

Relationships can also be established in the medium and long term. Social movements interact with parties through coordinated, invasive, or hostile strategies (Schwartz 2010); they interact via double loyalty, by affiliating with parties and movements to access decision-makers (Heaney and Rojas 2007), and by entering political parties to affect democratization or polarization of the political regime (Tarrow 2021) or to influence party programs and structures (Piccio, 2016). Social movements can directly engage in party politics through the creation of movement-parties (Anria 2019; Della Porta et al. 2017; Kitschelt 2006; Oliveira 2022; van Cott 2005), by transitioning into political parties (Kriesi 2014) or hybrid political parties – a political organization that mobilizes against the established party system (Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2018, 329). The interaction could lead to “social movement partyism”, defined as opposition parties that align with social movement organizations or NGOs – with which they overlap – and use their organizational resources to strongly engage in street protests (Almeida 2006).

In some of these typologies, movements and parties remain separate entities, with the former being seen as an ally or enemy who operates via contentious politics, such as protests, campaigns, and marches, in extraordinary political moments (see Tarrow, 2021, but also many others). They are also analyzed from an organizational perspective, which admits the possibility of temporary or permanent mergers, collaborations, or alliances that could potentially mischaracterize both movements and parties (Schwartz 2010; Schlozman 2016; Tarrow 2021). Social movements can also become something else – political parties – and vice versa. In typologies in which boundaries are perceived as more fluid, social movements are seen as actors who move across different fields, have multiple affiliations, and are part of informal structures and party networks simultaneously (Heaney and Rojas 2007; Mische 2009; Oliveira 2022). In examining social movements as networks (Della Porta and Diani 2006; Diani 1992), scholars contribute to a relational approach to the phenomenon. According to Diani, social movements are “dense networks of informal interorganizational exchanges and processes of boundary definition [collective identities that bind members of various organizations] that operate at the level of broad collectivities rather than specific groups/organizations, through dense interpersonal networks and multiple affiliations.” (2015, 18). This definition allows social movements to be analyzed based not on their performances (what they do) but rather on the types of relationships established between their members (Abers et al., 2022). However, Diani’s definition of networks demands a shared and strong common identity, which fails to account for the different links established between activists and

movements, the ones that are more fluid and constantly reshaped (Zaremborg & Almeida, 2022).

A second key concept for understanding social movements as networks is that of multiple militancy or overlapping membership (Mische 2009; Della Porta et al. 2017). The multiple militancy is defined as the insertion of activists in several social organizations and also in political parties, which helps them create connections and overlaps between these spheres of action, leading, in some cases, to a relative blurring of their boundaries (Mische 2009). During movement and party interaction, activists temporarily negotiate their identities depending on the set of relationships present in a given scenario, but these identities do not disappear, and are potential source of conflict and ambiguities. It is also important to understand the challenges posed by activists' multiple involvements in social worlds that sometimes compete with each other and operate on the basis of distinct strategies (Oliveira 2022). Here, it is more important to know what are the mechanisms that explain why social actors join parties, and less about how the interaction takes place and what happens when they interact.

Drawing on these more fluid conceptions of boundaries, I explore other kinds of relationships between social movements and political parties, those that are more constant, less spectacular, and perhaps more common (Abers et al., 2022). In Latin America, social movements often have activists with multiple affiliations who interact with parties in the legislative and executive branches to block proposals contrary to their agendas or approve public policies of interest (Abers, 2021; Oliveira, 2022; Rodrigues & Pereira, 2022; Zaremborg & Almeida, 2022); they create organizational structures or forms of institutional fit within parties to defend their agendas (Pereira 2022; Feitosa 2022) and embrace interaction as a constant in their strategy, despite articulating a public discourse of autonomy understood as separation (Vergara-Camus 2009). Additionally, it is worth noting that some of the most structured, left-center parties in Brazil are organized into party factions or "tendencies" composed of social movements – these internal structures are also considered the "movement" element of parties.

Exploring the everyday activities involved in movement-party relations (Oliveira 2022) and the co-constitution of these two entities (Clemens 2022) – is a promising path forward. To contribute to the efforts to analyze both the inter-relations and the conflicts that arise from these relationships, this article offers the concept of sociopartisan activism. Party activism is a category used by the literature on political parties to understand the electorate's level of involvement with parties: It ranges on a continuum from less to more

involved and includes activities such as party affiliation, sympathy for the party or strong party identification, participating in electoral campaigns, and running for office (Whiteley, Seyd, and Billingham 2006). However, the focus here is on the individuals' engagement with parties, without taking into account their links with other organizations and movements.

The definition of activism is also far from consensus, and it is generally linked to its adjectives, such as student activism. Joyce (2014) defines activism in terms of the types of participants, cause, or tactics and tools used, rather than as a type of action. Among social movement scholars, activism involves collective action in the defense of contentious causes, namely, collections of ideas in favor or against changes in the institutional organization of current power relations (Abers 2021; Diani 1992). Beyond defending a cause, activism word evokes a particularly “active” or “proactive” type of action (Abers. 2021). The concept of activism allows the inclusion of a variety of actors and types of action in addition to contentious practices, and it is less rigid in relation to the concept of social movement as an entity with specific kinds of performances and collective identities. Socio-partisan activism, however, is concerned with the actions of actors with specific links to social movements and civic organizations when interacting with political parties, excluding activism related to market actors and their associations. It also may result in changes in both parties and movements.

I define sociopartisan activism as activists' simultaneous relationship with parties and movements in the defense of contentious causes, that can lead to a double constitution and transformation of movement and party agendas and structures. These interactions can be short-term or longer. Therefore, not only are social movements launching candidacies or influencing political parties based on repertoires of collective action or issue framing, but movements and parties are also experiencing a type of interaction that, in some cases, leads to coevolution (Feitosa 2022). This dual relationship does not mean that tensions and hierarchy are absent. The focus is on activists and their continuous – in some cases everyday – interactions with parties, with varying degrees of proximity.

The sociopartisan approach focused on the internal networks that connect movements to parties, both of which are heterogeneous, also presupposes a distinct perspective to address conflicts. The tensions between parties and movements are chiefly studied from the organizational and unitary perspective that presumes both types of organizations to be unitary. This perspective fails to account for differences in strategies and identities among actors within movements and parties. Collective mandates challenge

this notion: It is not about the relationship of a movement X with a party Y dynamic, nor is it about party strategy (focused on electoral results) versus social movement strategy (focused on collective identity) (Oliveira, 2022). Conflicts emerge within social movements and political parties since these experiences allow for different organizations, activists, and movements to be connected in networks, and these networks interact with various party factions or tendencies. The variety behind these inter-relations can offer valuable insights for both party and movement scholars.

Party-movement interactions in collective mandates

It is worth highlighting some general characteristics of the spokespersons of the 33 collective mandates interviewed: 78.8% are women (26) and 21.2% are men (7); whites are the majority (19), but, considering the profile of Brazilian elected representatives, there is a high number of black (11) and brown (3) people. These mandates are mostly linked to center-left parties such as the Workers' Party (PT-12) and the Socialism and Freedom Party (PSOL-11).

Regarding their link with social movements and civil society, Almeida and Lüchmann's survey (2022) on all 320 collective candidacies in the 2020 elections showed that at least 85% of them had links to civil society organizations. Among collective elected and interviewed for this article (30 out of the 33) have emerged from social movements and civil society organizations. The other 3 are composed by individuals with no previous link with organizations or any kind of political activism in the cities. One of these three mandates disbanded early on, in its first year. The student movement (high school and university) is the main gateway to activism (23 interviewees), followed by social movements linked to the issues of feminism, LGBT, environment, and housing, among others (14), and culture-related activism, including theater and hip hop (10). Many interviewees, including young people between the ages of 20 and 30, reported involvement with religious associationism, especially Christian base communities and various church-based groups dedicated to issues such as women and youth, all linked to the Catholic church (12). Some actors began their activism directly in political parties (4). Interviewees mentioned a variety of movements and collectives in which they participate or had participated throughout their lives. The number of organizations mentioned is more than double the number of interviewees, confirming that there are multiple affiliations,

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involving mostly student activism, feminist, LGBT+, black, and cultural movements, participation in policy councils and forums, and activism in political parties.

Dual affiliation involving political parties is also very frequent, which suggests that party affiliation is taken not only as a pragmatic strategy used by activists to run in elections but also as part of their activism: Half of the interviewees had already been affiliated with their current party before running for a legislative seat (36) or had been affiliated with another party beforehand (8). Even co-councilors who are not required by law to be affiliated with a party did so after being elected (6). The phenomenon of multiple affiliations is perceived by activists as a constant and more natural experience than often assumed by the theory:

[There is] no [conflict] because I establish a division in this space. So, I come from (Movement X), and today I still work together with the movement, but [as a legislator] I am no longer a person representing the movement. (Liana)

The party without a movement, just as I think the movement without a party, loses power. It will be less able to have a program, to have a more general idea for changing society, which is the case with left-wing parties that want to bring changes. Conservative parties that don't want to change anything, they don't need movements much because they don't want to bring about change. But the parties that want to bring about change, they need a movement, don't they? (Solange).

Not only they assume that frequently they engage simultaneously in both organizations, as well as they contradict the usual idea that interaction with political parties leads to cooptation:

If we are not inside a party, we become a manipulated mass. (Joaquim)

Of those who joined a party to run for office (31)^{iv}, 12 were their mandate's spokesperson. In these cases, resorting to parties was a means to run in elections. This, however, does not mean that activists used parties only pragmatically, without committing to them: In 6 of these cases, the representatives started to participate actively in party activities. Nearly all mandates participated in party nuclei dedicated to issues such as women, race, and LGBT+, as well as in party directorates and factions/tendencies to vie for and transform these parties.

Interactions during electoral campaigns

Movement-party relations go beyond party affiliation, as movements and parties have interacted previously, in the short-term, for example during meetings and discussions to present their agendas, and long-term ways, by being part of the political party. When deciding to form a collective and run together, party-movement relationship is deepened and built in a more stable way during the campaign and continues in office. The maintenance of its links with the movements is seen by the interviewees as essential for electoral success, especially in 2020, the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected campaign strategies. Consequently, movement networks were key for mobilizing supporters and running campaigns in the streets and on social media. They also contributed with resources, and with discussions about the political programs and projects of the group. Although these were newcomers in the electoral field with few financial resources for their campaigns (Almeida, 2024) – most interviewees (54) had never run for office –, their candidacies benefited from their associative resources and collective format.

Their relationship with political parties during the campaigns was conflictual, mostly because of the collective format they adopted, which is not regulated in Brazilian legislation. Driven by the pursuit of maximum electoral success, parties must launch a specific number of candidacies. Moreover, parties must meet the 30% gender quota threshold. Several interviewees highlighted that parties either tried to convince members of collectives to run individually, especially women, so parties could meet the gender quota, or did not provide support for collectives at first. Resistance is greatest among party members who see the participation of collectives as "unfair" competition, since would be easier for collective candidacies to reach more votes: there would be several people asking to vote for a single legislative vacancy. In many cases, they managed to be elected while older party members failed to do so. There are even accounts that collective candidacies were threatened with losing their registration by party members who would take legal action to cancel the election due to its collective format.

Therefore, it is possible to state that in cases of collectives with little history of involvement in parties, socio-partisan activism at the time of the campaign is still very fragile, with no clarity on what the mutual contributions of this relationship will be.

Party-movement interactions while in office

Party-movement relations in office are also affected by how candidates had previously interacted with political parties and how close they are to social movements and more established organizations. The interviewees point out to internal variation in the parties depending on the locality, underscoring an often-overlooked element of party heterogeneity. Most mandates operating in smaller municipalities – where there is no local party structure – report a lack of dialogue (7 out of 9 mandates). However, there is a much more dynamic and less exclusivist relationship than that assumed by the theory on movement-parties or movements contesting political representation, which contends that the anti-party framework is predominant in these parties (Della Porta et al. 2017; Gerbaudo 2019; Hutter, Kriesi, and Lorenzini 2018) . Critiques about the limitations of the party and political systems are present in collective mandates:

Political parties need to get new oxygen, so, the way political parties work no longer responds to the ideal society. [...] We are, let's say, already in 5G, in the 21st century, [but] Brazilian legislatures are in the carrier pigeon [era]. (Roberto)

But criticism coexists with the perception that activists must vie for parties and that they have a role in renewing political parties:

Today, after the collective mandate, women and young people joined the party, this is a win, and I say, an intangible material, because you don't know what that person, that novelty, that renewal, will bring. [...] So, we also use this argument with our own party: do you want renewal? Renewal starts from the same principle, that you accept novelty, work with it, and if it goes wrong, we make it right and continue. (Anna)

We did not propose to create a party, we introduced a political project, a political project that aims to vie for active popular participation. (Leila)

And when people linked to the movement come into politics, for us it is encouraging, because people need to believe in politics again, they have to. (Aline)

We didn't want a party just for the label, and so we have also sought to engage our militants, our people, our communities with the party. (João)

The statements show that, at least among these groups, there is an intention to democratize the parties through the transfer of political agendas and projects from the

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movements to the parties. Conversely, mandates' advocacy efforts drive collective building and movement building in the city and provide movements with infrastructure and resources, what can help to simultaneously build and strength parties and movements:

So, as soon as we were elected, we created 3 cultural collectives in the city, one LGBTQIA+ collective. The collective focused on black issues, and we created a street collective linked to the hip-hop movement. (Rodrigo)

The head office belongs to the collective, right, a political office of the collective and of the mandate, so everyone bears the costs, because there is rent, water, internet, coffee, there are all these expenses (Amália).

An anti-party framing was explicit only in two mandates that had no continuous links to parties. *“The party [...] is a political space to be occupied. As is an internet provider. The best analogy is: Bovespa securities, a brokerage firm charging a brokerage fee. An intermediary who, unfortunately, is still necessary, but we work so that it is no longer necessary”* (Joseph). And *“for me, they are hierarchical companies, parties and churches. It's what blocks the power of life, it's what stops the energy from flowing, it's like big dams getting in the way of energy”* (Sérgio).

Criticism of political institutions is frequent, especially when actors are invited to reflect on the distinct logics of action in the legislatures and in social movements, a distinction that leads to conflicts between parties and movements (Oliveira 2022). Among the limitations mentioned are work overload (14) and conflicts within the legislature because members of collective mandates belong to a movement or opposition party (8). There are also limitations associated with the challenging dynamics of legislatures' everyday operation, such as difficulties to push and approve their agendas (19), and mayoral control over legislatures' agendas and the absence of debate (8). All these issues are made worse by the fact that nearly all elected mandates are in the minority – except for one that identifies as part of the mayoral coalition.

With respect to the challenges faced by collective mandates in their interactions with parties, initial difficulties experienced during the campaigns are sometimes overcome after collective candidacies win a seat. The post-election challenges resemble those they reported to have experienced during the campaigns, especially competition with fellow party members and parties' difficulties in accepting the collective modality.

Although the tension between party and movement identities and strategies cannot be eliminated, the phenomenon of multiple affiliations – when accompanied by sociopartisan activism in the sense of a double objective of defending the causes of the movement, but also of democratizing the parties – may contribute to promoting less exclusionary party-society relations.

Democratization of parties may occur through the inclusion of groups historically excluded from these institutions. In line with discussions in the literature (Campos & Matos, 2021; Silva, 2021), the diversity of representatives is widely mentioned by members of collective mandates – it appeared in more than half of the interviews: “So, besides the very idea of political renewal, we brought the idea of representativeness, of women occupying this space, black women, trans women” (Jussara).

Another key element is the expansion of popular participation in the legislative and the potential democratization of the political system it entails. Popular participation in this case takes place in various ways, especially through representatives’ direct contact with society and social movements in the territories (55 references), through working groups, public assemblies, itinerant offices and committees, among other forms, some of which meet weekly or monthly. Interactions range from the most informal practices, such as receiving demands, to the most formal ones, in which mandate projects and agendas are built. These interactions may also take place via social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter for accountability and WhatsApp for receiving demands.

Interactions with social movements and civil organizations by representatives while in office have also been addressed in the literature, especially their use of protest repertoires (Della Porta et al., 2017). Out of the 63 interviews, 43 confirm that their mandates take part in protests – half of which do so as organizers, even helping with infrastructure. However, coupling the definition of social movements to performance in protests, as done by the literature on movement-parties, restricts our view of how parties and movements might transform each other. The notion of sociopartisan activism based on different types of repertoires allows us to examine those transformations.

Collective mandates have indicated that, first, knowledge acquired in social movements is adopted by the mandates, changing the way representation operates. They bring scientific and expert knowledge (Christel & Gutiérrez, 2017), as well as expertise derived from participation history as means to influence bills and agendas. Secondly, repertoires are adapted, and movement practices applied within the mandates. In the case of collective mandates, contentious action is not only extra- but also intra-institutional; it

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is repurposed within the institutions, taking social movements into legislatures to push or block bills (Zaremborg and Almeida 2022). Movements make pressure by occupying plenary sessions where proposals are being discussed or voted, by occupying public spaces outside legislative houses, and by engaging in digital activism. Movements also pressure state deputies and municipal councilors individually. They participate directly in the routines of municipal councils and state assemblies, for example, discussing projects together, occupying positions in advisory bodies, or participating in parliamentary fronts and public hearings:

We demonstrate in the way of the street, this bring-the-banner-inside-the-council thing. [...] We usually set up a stand [outside the municipal council]. (Naneth)

We hold a public hearing, we called the movement, and block [the bill] (Joaquim).

There were many occupations in the municipal council, the movement carried out an occupation in front of the council, we interfered with the process of meetings, the evangelical bloc was totally against [the bill] (Luíza)

They also send letters to the municipal council requesting support for a certain bill the mandate will eventually submit. We make movement from the bottom up because otherwise it won't go forward. (Andreia)

Movement-party interactions also take place in managing councils created by the mandates (Table 1) that allows the continuous interaction with society. These are broad discussion groups that bring together campaign supporters, partisans, and activists from different movements – usually around 50 persons – to help resolve conflicting issues, introduce demands, and discuss projects collectively. Given the difficulties in keeping so many people mobilized for a long period, these councils meet at irregular intervals. Only 3 mandates had no managing council or other forms of repeated interaction with movements.

Conflicts in the movement-party relationship

The negative effects and difficulties in maintaining both movement and party dynamics are well discussed in the literature (Kriesi 1995; Kitschelt 2006). Collective mandates grapple with several conflicts. Some of the limitations have to do with the

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opposition between activist behavior and legislative performance, on the one hand, and movements' unmet demands on the other:

We are beaten up from both sides. Because within the legislature they delegitimize me because I am part of the movements and come from social minorities. And within social minorities, they delegitimize me because I am in a space that has historically harmed [these minorities] (Tatiana)

In militancy you don't have much of that, in militancy you do what you like, and you do militant work in places you want to be. Now, in the municipal council, it's not like that, projects will come that you will not like to read and study, and you have to do it because you have this responsibility (Marisa)

Oh, it's very difficult because we as a movement have more of a kick-in-the-door form of action, while as a member of the legislature, we always have to be careful and walk on eggshells and still risk breaking them all (Flávia)

I can't go to the municipal council and behave as an activist, I have to go to the council and behave like a councilwoman with activist principles, but I can't forget my role inside (Helena)

In addition to replacing the activist “kick-in-the-door” strategy with negotiated action, members of collective mandates must nurture their links with social movements and protect movement autonomy in this relationship (Tatagiba 2010):

So, yesterday we went there to coordinate with the leaders about the master plan to discuss with the community. But at the meeting itself, we just observe. Because if we were militants, we would go there and say something. For me, there is this change, that now we need to be careful not to assume a relationship where you take advantage of the space. (Larissa)

So, it's very challenging, because the big challenge is: To not become a council rat, to [not] be entrenched in institutions, also because we cannot achieve victory without being connected to the real demands of the population, of the movement. (Alda)

Because of our bill, they found out, they mobilized and went to the municipal council, and then some meetings were scheduled, and I was always very careful not to be the

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person who took the lead of the movement so as not to mix up what the movement is with what the legislative mandate is (Moisés)

Although the different logics of action do pose a challenge to movement-party relations, gender and racial political violence within the legislature (31 interviews), as well as within political parties, is often even more constraining to these interactions. In four cases, death threats were reported, the details of which are omitted to protect the interviewees; in other cases, violence led to the breakup of collective mandates or removal of co-councilors:

So there comes this councilman behind me, he stops to this side and taps me here on my shoulder, hugs me like this, he thinks he has the right to hug my body, my body belongs to men right, he tapped me and said, do you want a cup of chamomile tea? (Raíssa)

I go, for example, to a meeting with the secretary at the city hall, if I have the white aide with me, people talk to the white aide as if she were the councilor. They don't address me. I have to show my identity card all the time to prove that I'm the councilwoman. (Amanda)

Politics is a place that is making me sick in these last two and a half years, more or less, because besides being a space which was not prepared for us, the political violence against women, against LGBTs, against PwD is huge, and it's not different where I am [in the legislative mandate], both the institutional space and the collective it's a sum of violences. (Paola)

This characteristic may influence the kind of interaction between movements and parties expected, such as the fusion presented among left-wing movements and the Democratic Party when compared to the movements in the Republican Party studied by Tarrow (2021). Anria (2022) argues that whereas absorption of movement currents seems to be more common on the right side of the spectrum, group-based structuring, occurring through the accretion of new groups, such as women, African Americans, and other minorities, are more common on the left, as the history of Latin America parties-movements has shown (Anria 2018).

Collective mandates also challenge the bilateral relation between parties and movements and reveal the heterogeneity of the networks that make up both. First, they show that political parties should be reexamined, and that parties' different groups and

internal disputes should be considered. Most legislative collective mandates are affiliated with the PT and PSOL, two left-wing parties organized into national or regional tendencies or factions with distinct degrees of formalization. Currently, there are 16 tendencies and 28 factions within the PT and PSOL, respectively, which make up the majority and minority political fields that bring together these different groups within these parties^v. This study's interviewees were part of at least 15 factions from both parties. In some cases, factions stem from alliances with social movements, such as the case of the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST), which today is part of PSOL's Solidarity Revolution faction. Moreover, the PT was historically built by social movements and is considered a movement-party, one that has even created internal structures to defend specific agendas, such as gender, race, and LGBT+. Given the plurality of views within parties, belonging to the same party faction or different factions in the same political field is critical for the success of collective mandates:

I believe that creating factions within the PT was possibly a strategy for the party not to split apart, although we have experiences where parties were created from splits in the PT, such as the PSOL. Much as we have factions in our party with completely divergent thoughts, completely divergent actions, and there is so much confusion that sometimes it seems that there are several parties. (João)

We see that, in my opinion, of course, collective mandates that have people from other parties, from different parties, they tend not to work out. When people are from the same party and the same faction, they have a better chance of working it out, because we are already part of the same faction and the same political party. (Hugo)

Although these mandates are linked to party factions or tendencies, some interviewees highlighted the difficulties involved in this dynamic and the decision to stay away from it for a while, or even to not join any faction or tendency, although still collaborating with the party:

We do not use the party as an umbrella, as something we rent, we get inside the party. If at first it sounds interesting to be outside a faction within the party, it is precisely because you want to provoke a debate. (Eloá)

I am not part of any tendency. And so, sometimes, this creates some conflicts, not serious conflicts, but I'm always the person who keeps questioning everything they sometimes

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bring from within the party, you know? Because I think that, literally, tendency tends to be biased, so there's something in there. (Pamela)

It is not always possible to reach this balance and “independence”. Out of the 33 collective mandates interviewed, in one the spokesperson resigned in the early months of their term, allegedly for personal reasons, and 7 others broke up. The conflicts with parties that led to the breakup of collective mandates or resulted in the exit of co-councilors – at the municipal and state levels – are associated with the fact that members of mandates belonged to different political groups and tendencies within parties. In addition, having members of more than one party makes collective mandates more fragile – as in the case of the *Bancada Ativista* in São Paulo, often mentioned by interviewees. Members of 5 mandates still in operation reported that their co-councilors participate in other parties, but their experience has shown that such a mix of parties in collective mandates should be reconsidered in the next election. The multi-partisan nature of some collective mandates leads to conflicts between parties and members of collective mandates over political positions in different moments, including when electoral support is being defined. Finally, when party members move from one faction to another or when party tendencies split apart, collective mandates risk breaking up.

With respect to conflicts between activists and movements, what stands out is the lack of acquaintance or personal affinity between participants, as well as the lack of programmatic alignment. *“It's a marriage that may last four years and go on for more time. So, it's a marriage that needs a lot of respect, a lot of commitment, really sharing some ideas”* (Claudia). Although collective mandates are formed by various types of movements and connected to networks that do not share the same collective identity, it seems that members must be politically aligned for mandates to achieve success: *“we are not a mandate that decided to be a political group to be a mandate, it is a group that has been acting politically since before, on most issues we agree politically”* (Bárbara). The lack of political alignment has led to the breakup of collectives. The issues included members' different degrees of involvement with mandates' tasks, interpersonal conflicts, the spokesperson's lack of horizontality in decision-making, serious political differences, and disagreements on how to organize the mandate.

The experiences of collective mandates show that sociopartisan activism occurs in different forms and with relationships that can be more or less stable depending on a series of factors. They may thrive, especially, if there is party identification and shared

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collective agendas. In cases where these two features are present, one sees that both parties and movements survive, although movements keep trying to maintain a critical stance. To do so, members of collective mandates must balance their militancies, after all parties do not offer indiscriminate support, and they tend to filter social movements' demands, which leads to distortions or changes to these demands (Piccio 2016):

Institutions cannot be the focus of our actions, so, we have a legislative mandate that has, maybe, 70% of its actions [aimed at] consolidating things that happen outside institutions (Iana).

I don't think parties have to domesticate social movements, it's not that, it's social movements that have to bring radicalism into institutions. [...] I don't think that it's just competing for such a space in the city either, but it's a dialectical relationship between movement and institution, between movement and party, movement and party are not antagonistic to one another. (Solange).

Conclusion

Collective mandates are a recent innovation, and we do not know for how long they will be part of the Brazilian electoral landscape. As one interviewee said: "It's all very new. We are in the eye of the storm" (Jeremias). In the last state and federal legislative elections, out of the 220 collective candidacies presented in the country, only two were elected to state legislative office, both in São Paulo. The higher number of votes and greater resources necessary to win state and federal elections is probably an obstacle to collective electoral formats, which are employed by peripheral actors and representatives of minority groups in Brazilian politics. This novelty, however, reveals the existence of a form of sociopartisan activism that is more constant and natural than assumed by the literature on political parties and movements.

Although activists interact with parties constantly, the interviews reveal that they felt a sense of urgency – given the critical political context in Brazil that followed Rousseff's impeachment and removal from office – that encouraged them up the ante in the electoral repertoire. In a context in which the political system is impervious to their demands, progressive movements have reconsidered the role of parties, beginning to see them as indispensable for defending their causes. So far, the opposite does not seem to be true. Parties are still reluctant to open up to renewal and continue to rely only on the

privileges derived from institutions (Katz and Mair 1995). Such reluctance is, at the very least, paradoxical, given the well-known crisis of representation associated with societies' low level of identification with political institutions. Although visibly hermetic, when considered as a whole, parties are heterogeneous, and, in some cases, social movements find or forge small openings through which they exert some influence from within, despite party resistance. Collective mandates invite us to look in detail within parties and examine the constant interactions taking place through candidacies, secretariats, party factions or tendencies, municipal executive boards, and multiple affiliations. There is more interaction to be analyzed than the formation of parties or even the relationship between protests and elections, usually highlighted by the literature.

Movement-party interactions occur through contentious politics, as shown by the literature, but they also involve the adaptation of contentious routines within the legislative branch. This adaptation brings a dynamic of conflict and diversity into legislatures that clashes with the institutional logic of these spaces but also challenges and provokes them. Moreover, as movement and parties interact, other routines are created and attempts at establishing constant dialogue and collective work during mandates are made, which in some cases helps enhance networks and other collectives in civil society.

Although my purpose is not to declare the end of the conceptual distinction between social movements and political parties —, this study suggests that these two arenas of political competition should be perceived as spaces between which actors not only move but also build themselves collectively. The co-constitution of movements and parties does not derive automatically from interaction, of course. There are various conflicts, and the number of disbanded mandates is a warning to those who intend to pursue this course. In addition to the challenges derived from distinct logics of action, the political system is violent towards women, blacks, and LGBT+ people; sociopartisan activism requires programmatic affinity if the focus is on defending causes beyond ephemeral moments, and it is not achievable in all parties. In Brazil, movement-party proximity has been built in center-left parties since redemocratization. But with the rise of right-wing organizations and movements, scholars should focus on understanding how sociopartisan activism looks on the right. Finally, collective mandates reveal that parties lack structure in some cities and that activists find it hard to compete within institutions and evade personalism. This finding shows that it is important to investigate party

organization at subnational levels and the ways in which it affects the relationship between parties and movements.

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ⁱ The paper uses the word "mandate" to translate the word "*mandato*" in Portuguese, as has appeared in different articles to characterize these experiences. It refers to elected offices in Legislative Branches, in different government levels.

ⁱⁱ Bill No. 4,475/2020 and No. 4,724/2020, Constitutional Amendment Proposal 379 (PEC 379), and Bill of Supplementary Law establishing new electoral legislation (PLP 112/2021).

ⁱⁱⁱ In Brazil, individual candidates must be affiliated with a party to be allowed to run in elections. Moreover, unlike other countries, the Brazilian electoral system does not accept local or regional parties, only national ones.

^{iv} The total number presented is higher than the 71 interviewees because, in some cases, people who joined a party to run had previously been affiliated with another party.

^v Information about party factions was taken from the Wikipedia website and is updated to April 2023. Unfortunately, the websites of Brazilian parties do not provide this type of information – there is not much information about the parties' internal organization. In order to double-check this information, I informally contacted members of both parties, who confirmed that it was correct.