

# SANITATION AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN BRAZIL: THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

Maria Guadalupe M. RODRIGUES

Assistant Professor, Political Science. College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA, USA

Email: [mrodrigu@holycross.edu](mailto:mrodrigu@holycross.edu)

## ABSTRACT

*Since 1993, the Guanabara Bay Basin in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil has been the object of one of the largest sanitation initiatives of its kind, the Basic Sanitation Program for the Guanabara Bay Basin, a project that counts on multilateral funding. The goal of the Sanitation Program is to clean up the Guanabara Bay and adjacent basin area. Among its components are sewage collection and treatment, the provision of potable water, and solid waste collection and disposal. Ten years into the project's implementation, the Basin's rivers continue to launch into the Bay 400t of untreated sewerage daily. In the process, many such rivers – and parts of the Bay itself, have been considered effectively “dead.” In addition, underprivileged communities around the Bay continue to lack access to adequate sewerage and potable water facilities as well as reliable waste collection. The limited accomplishments of the Sanitation Program are often attributed to a centralized, top-down approach to project design and implementation. In this paper I argue that limitations of the Sanitation Program are as much a function of its conceptual framework as they are of the socio-political setting in which it has unfolded. In other words, to understand why the policies attempted by the Sanitation Program have had poor results one must look beyond the project itself, and at the pervasive weakness of both local governments and local civil society organizations concerned with social and environmental issues in the Basin.*

The Guanabara Bay is one of Brazil's best-known sceneries. Its calm, deep blue waters bathe white sandy beaches in its interior, while around it high mountains, many still covered with the luxurious Atlantic forest of coastal Brazil, seem to keep the Bay and its residents under permanent protection. The city of Rio de Janeiro grew out of the original village established by the Portuguese at the margins of the Bay. Over the centuries, the village grew, and today, the Bay is surrounded by seven municipalities of the Rio de Janeiro state. Combined, these municipalities' population amounts to eight million people. When one speaks of the Guanabara Bay basin, however, one must take into consideration a total of fifteen municipalities that depend, for several purposes, on thirty-five rivers whose waters run to the Bay. While the Bay is one of Rio's main tourist attractions and some of its upper-scale neighborhoods are at the top of the city's real estate ranking, along its margins one also encounters shocking levels of social, economic, and political deprivation.<sup>1</sup>

There are many historical, political, and sociological explanations for the level of deprivation of sectors of Rio de Janeiro's population. What concerns me in this paper is the extent to which Brazil's return to democracy in the late 1980s has affected the living conditions of

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<sup>1</sup> Pereira and Porto (1998) thus characterize the social conditions of the population residing in most of the municipalities around the Guanabara Bay, in the area known as the “*Baixada*” (low lands): “a young population (31.8% are younger than 14 years old), mostly of African origins (56.6%), with low levels of formal education (illiteracy reaches 10% and the average number of years of schooling is 5.2), and extremely reduced opportunities for upward social mobility...The combined population of the region represents 26% of the Greater Rio de Janeiro (*Regiao Metropolitana do Rio de Janeiro*), but holds 5.1% of the family income” (p. 116, author's translation).

underprivileged populations around the Guanabara Bay basin. To narrow the analysis, I investigate the evolution of policies for the provision of water, sanitation, and waste collection services to these communities in the last fifteen years.<sup>2</sup> Recently, such policies have been approached from the perspective of their impact on both the human and natural environments. They are sometimes referred to as policies of “environmental sanitation,” and many policy initiatives have been encompassed, since 1999, within integrated programs for cleaning-up and promoting the environmental revitalization of the Guanabara Bay basin.

Overall, environmental sanitation policies in the Guanabara Bay basin have had a very limited degree of success. There are many technical and economic explanations for such failures, but I am particularly interested in the political factors that have contributed to this negative outcome. Setting aside explanations for the failure of environmental sanitation policies in Rio de Janeiro during the years of authoritarian military rule (1964-1984),<sup>3</sup> I am puzzled by a similar result in the post-authoritarian years, particularly in light of literature on public policy that suggests that both a democratic environment and institutionalized opportunities for civil society participation tend to improve a state’s capacity for formulating and implementing policies (Putnam 1994, Shue 1994).

Brazil’s return to democratic rule has contributed to increase, in relative terms, popular activism vis-à-vis environmental sanitation policies among the communities around the Guanabara Bay basin. Since the mid-1980s, for instance, neighborhood organizations have carved a space for public monitoring of sanitation projects in the Bay area,<sup>4</sup> residents’ associations have challenged private companies located around the Bay to increase accountability to human and environmental health,<sup>5</sup> and labor unions have publicly accused private companies and governmental agencies of ignoring legislation on the environment and on the provision of social services.<sup>6</sup> In addition, since the transition to democracy began, Rio de Janeiro has elected three governors affiliated to a political party that advocates socialist or social-democratic policies.<sup>7</sup> At least in ideological terms, all three committed their administrations to underprivileged sectors of the electorate. These administrations have obtained significant technical and financial resources from international financing institutions for environmental sanitation policies. The largest part of such resources has been earmarked for infrastructure works, but there have been smaller components directed to environmental education and popular mobilization. The numbers and level of activism of civil society organizations have greatly increased in Brazil -- and in Rio de Janeiro -- in the last twenty years,<sup>8</sup> and many of these groups have been involved in monitoring environmental sanitation in the Guanabara Bay region. Why then, to this day, the Guanabara Bay still receives approximately 400t of untreated domestic sewage per day,<sup>9</sup> and its eight million population still depends upon a single landfill (and twelve illegal waste sites that are breeding grounds for environmental, social, and health related problems)?

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<sup>2</sup>Reliable water and sanitation services (sewage infrastructure) as well as waste collection are the primary demands of low-income communities in the municipalities of the Guanabara Bay basin (Britto 1998, and Tania Maciel: “*PDBG Subprojeto de Mobilização Social – Participação Comunitária, Relatório Trimestral Março-Maio*,” 1998).

<sup>3</sup>Bureaucratic centralization and patron-client relations between the state governor and municipalities are the most common explanations (Britto 1998).

<sup>4</sup>Porto (1998) and Pereira and Porto, *idem*.

<sup>5</sup>Acsehrad and Mello, 2000.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup>Governor Brizola, from the Workers’ Democratic Party (PDT) was elected for two terms (1982-1986 and 1990-1994), Governor Marcello Alencar (1994-98) was originally elected as a member of the same party, but eventually changed his affiliation. Rio’s current governor, Anthony Garotinho (1998-2002) also belongs to the PDT.

<sup>8</sup>Landim (1991).

<sup>9</sup>“*A Licao da Bahia de Todos os Males*” in *Epoca*, n. 89, January 31, 2000.

The answer to this question challenges assumptions of a direct causal relationship between democracy, increased civil society activism and participation in public policymaking, and good governance. In fact, Brazil's return to democratic rule has had little impact on the improvement of environmental and sanitation conditions of significant sectors of Rio de Janeiro's population, partially because conditions for civil society participation in policymaking remain unfulfilled.<sup>10</sup>

I contend that despite the advantages of a democratic climate, good governance as a result of the establishment of a virtuous cycle of interactions between state and civil society depends, primarily, on two interrelated factors. The first factor refers to the capacity of the state, particularly of the local state. The absence of strong executive agencies in the municipalities surrounding the Guanabara Bay has deprived civil society from at least one arena in which to negotiate social grievances. The second factor refers to the capacity of local civil society organizations. In the case of activist groups in the Guanabara Bay basin, technical and political constraints have reduced the scope of their action to isolated protests and non-systematic monitoring of public works. Civil society groups have been incapable of addressing other elements of the participatory process, such as participation in the design and implementation of policies.<sup>11</sup>

The history of activism of civil society groups in the Guanabara Bay region suggests that political freedom and democratic practice alone do not foster civil society participation in policymaking. In contexts characterized by low levels of social solidarity, processes of social organization and empowerment may need to be encouraged from "above." Strengthening the local state may be an avenue to enhance civil society participation.<sup>12</sup> A stronger and proactive local state generates conditions for the consolidation of civil society activism by creating new opportunities and channels for social mobilization and voicing of demands. The local state may also become an arena in which the interests of different social sectors may be negotiated. As a result of these processes, a virtuous cycle of interaction between state and civil society may emerge, with positive results for democratic governance.

Data for this research were obtained during field-research in Rio de Janeiro in 2001 and 2002, and derive from internal reports and assessment studies produced by research institutes and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supporting community mobilization in the Guanabara Bay basin, transcriptions of meetings, workshops, and conferences among interested parties, articles

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<sup>10</sup> In arguing that the lack of civil society participation has limited the effectiveness of environmental sanitation policies in the Guanabara Bay region I do not intend to suggest that it has been either the single or most important factor in this process. A complete explanation for policy failure would have to address arguments of technical and economic natures, as well as issues related to the nature of Rio's politics, none of which are discussed here.

<sup>11</sup> In this paper I use the World Bank's (1994) definition of participation as "a process through which stakeholders *influence* and *share control* over development initiatives, decision, and resources that affect them" (p. 1). According to this definition, and taking into consideration the stages of policy formulation and implementation, participation by stakeholders should occur at the *design* phase, though information sharing, consultation, and shared decision-making mechanisms, at the *implementation* phase, when stakeholders would have control of resources and share implementation and monitoring responsibilities, and at the *evaluation* phase, when stakeholders' input would affect the overall assessment of performance.

<sup>12</sup> Data originating from policy initiatives in the Guanabara Bay basin support the conclusions of recent studies on local governance in Brazil, such as the one by Farah and Barboza (2000). The authors identify the emergence of a "double movement" that originates from innovative initiatives in public management. While local government's initiatives have attempted to respond to the needs and demands of local communities, often regardless of their levels of organization, such initiatives have eventually worked as elements of community mobilization, reinforcing communities' organizational potential in the public space and their assertiveness vis-à-vis the government (p. 17).

in local newspapers, and open-ended interviews with governmental officials in charge of environmental sanitation programs and activists who have monitored such programs.

## **SOCIAL ACTIVISM AGAINST POLICY CENTRALIZATION**

Brazil's democratic constitution of 1988 did not have an immediate effect in democratizing policymaking in Rio de Janeiro, despite its very concrete provisions for decentralization of power and responsibilities. Authoritarian and centralizing practices inherited from the years of military rule have been slow to disappear from several levels of Rio's administration. Patron-client relations, historically encouraged by a tradition of policy centralization, still prevail. These factors constrained the few efforts made by civil society groups in the Guanabara Bay basin to affect environmental sanitation and related policies in the region from the mid-1980s to the early 1990s.

During the 1980s, two factors characterized civil society attempts to participate in sanitation initiatives for the Guanabara Bay's "*Baixada*" (low lands). First, participation was framed by, and somewhat limited to, protests and emergency demands, and to a lesser extent, to monitoring public works. There were few attempts from civil society groups to contribute to the *formulation* of sanitation policies, and even fewer institutional channels through which such input could reach state planners.

Second, the primary interlocutor of civil society was the state government. Local governments were completely removed from the process. The Political Committee for the Sanitation of Rio de Janeiro's "*Baixada*" (*Comitê Político pelo Saneamento da Baixada Fluminense*) was the primary actor articulating the demands and expectations of civil society vis-à-vis the provision of sanitation services. These demands were expressed mostly in the form of protest rallies and specific requests to governmental agencies, which would be answered (or not) according to the state administration's political priorities. In 1984, the state government, then headed by Governor Brizola, responded to the Committee's pressures by formulating a Global Sanitation Plan.<sup>13</sup> The Plan provided the framework for other subsequent initiatives for the provision of water and sanitation services and, in the 1990s, for environmental sanitation programs in the Guanabara Bay basin.

The Plan targeted works for canalization of sewage and expansion of water provision networks. By the late 1980s, political and technical difficulties had delayed sewage canalization. Progress had occurred only in the provision of water services. This should come as no surprise to the attentive analyst. The 1988 Constitution assigned to municipal authorities the competence for most of the works related to sewage infrastructure (construction and maintenance of residential networks and waste collection and drainage initiatives to prevent obstruction of canals). Yet, local governments in the Guanabara Bay region ignored such a responsibility and simply maintained their concession contracts for the provision of these services with the CEDAE, the state's water and sewage agency. CEDAE traditionally privileged large infrastructure works related to water canalization, and neglected smaller local neighborhood networks. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, when many policy initiatives formulated within the Global Sanitation Plan were unfolding, local governments neglected to monitor the actions of CEDAE. The reasons for such neglect ranged from lack of technical and financial capability, to lack of political will. In any case, the absence of local governments from initiatives related to sanitation left civil society, through the coordination of the Political Committee, with a single interlocutor for their demands -- the state government. Despite the Committee's efforts, however, it never developed sufficient political and technical capacity to exert efficient pressure on either the Governor or state agencies.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Britto, *idem*.

<sup>14</sup> Porto, *idem*

The centralized, “top-down” pattern of formulating environmental sanitation policies for the Guanabara Bay region prevailed throughout the 1990s, and is most strikingly exemplified by the Basic Sanitation Program for the Guanabara Bay Basin (*Programa de Despoluição da Baía de Guanabara*, PDBG). The Program was formulated by the state government in conjunction with officials from its main international funding agencies, the Interamerican Development Bank (IDB) and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund, of Japan (OECF). It is interesting to notice that the Program included initiatives to involve civil society actors, such as the training of community leaders and the environmental education of teachers from public schools of the state and municipal networks. These “participatory” components were included in the Program by pressure from the IDB.<sup>15</sup> Needless to say, the training of community leaders was an abysmal failure, not only due to its cumbersome, top-down methodology, but also because it eventually fell prey to the electoral interests of the state administration.<sup>16</sup>

A more meaningful, though short-termed, form of grassroots participation in the PDBG was the role played by the Political Committee in monitoring project works from the mid- to the late 1990s. Some observers credited the political space that the Committee obtained within the PDBG to pressures from the Interamerican Development Bank, which required the state government to hold regular meetings with civil society representatives.<sup>17</sup> Others attributed that space to the Committee’s own capacity to demand services and monitor the pace and quality of infrastructure works.<sup>18</sup> Be that as it may, in 1995, the Political Committee called for a public meeting with both the Lieutenant Governor and the state secretary of public works to discuss the PDBG.<sup>19</sup> The Committee’s main demand was for increased transparency on the program’s evolution. While the state government never met the Committee’s demands, the March 1995 meeting illustrates the beginning of a transition in the approach to participation of civil society actors in the Guanabara Bay basin.

Old habits of demanding the solution of local problems from authorities at the state level (rather than from local governments) still continued to be perceived as the only available channel for civil society input on policy (hence the meeting with the Lieutenant Governor and the state secretary). Yet, it was evident that members of the Political Committee had begun to realize that they stood to gain politically from an increased proactive role by municipalities in environmental sanitation policymaking. The Committee demanded that information about the schedule of works be made available through municipal agencies and invited mayors and municipal officials to attend the meeting.<sup>20</sup>

The demands of civil society for the decentralization of the PDBG management and implementation emerged too late to have a meaningful effect on project performance. They did represent, however, a (still feeble) commitment from the part of the Political Committee to affect policy design. This was an important conceptual change and a step toward a more integral approach to participation among members of the Committee and other civil society organizations in the Guanabara Bay area. The possibility of their becoming involved in co-implementation of environmental sanitation policies, however, continued to be absent from the

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<sup>15</sup> Porto, *idem*

<sup>16</sup> Interviews with Maria Helena Lacorte, Manager for International Programs, Rio de Janeiro Federal University (UFRJ), Márcio Melão, staff at the *Centro Internacional de Desenvolvimento Sustentável* (CIDS), and Frederico Loureiro, staff at the *Instituto Brasileiro de Análises Sociais e Econômicas*, IBASE, Rio de Janeiro, July 2001.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Tatiana Dahmer, staff at the NGO *Federação de Órgãos para Assistência Social e Educacional*, FASE; Rio de Janeiro, July 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Britto, *idem*; Porto, *idem*.

<sup>19</sup> “*Governo adia construção das usinas de lixo para Baixada*,” *Jornal de Hoje* (newspaper), March 28, 1995.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

participatory expectations and capabilities of civil society organizations in the Guanabara Bay area.

As the PDBG came close to conclusion in 2002, its overall contribution to environmental sanitation conditions in the Guanabara Bay basin remained limited. While the program encountered implementation problems of different natures, its centralized approach must take a significant part of the blame for such an outcome. It is true that the PDBG enlarged the capacity of sewage treatment plants serving major municipalities around the Guanabara Bay. But since the larger infrastructure works were never integrated to works on smaller residential networks, one observer has asked: "What are the sewage treatment stations actually treating?"<sup>21</sup> Even localities reached by pre-existing sewage networks complained that the service has been compromised by lack of drainage of canals and regular waste collection services, both activities being the responsibility of municipal agencies. Finally, one full component of the program (solid waste collection and disposal and related activities), which was to be accomplished, among other things, by promoting the institutional strengthening of municipalities, remained incomplete. As a result, residents continue to dispose of their residential waste either in illegal landfills, which contributes to the contamination of underground waters, or directly in the rivers that feed the Guanabara Bay.

Without leverage to force the state government to address communities' specific grievances and expectations vis-à-vis the PDBG, without access to information about the project, which despite the promises of the Lieutenant Governor in the 1995 public meeting, was never made available to municipal agencies, and without strategic resources to affect the structural incapacity of municipal governments to meet their responsibilities within the PDBG, the Political Committee's mobilization efforts vis-à-vis the program have slowed down since 1998. This coincided in time with the attempt by a new set of actors, environmental NGOs, to fill the void of civil society participation in the PDBG. Both the activism of environmental groups and the growing awareness on environmental problems among state officials have affected environmental sanitation policies for the Guanabara Bay basin. Yet, environmental groups' effectiveness continues to be greatly compromised by growing divisions among organizations on strategic issues such as participation in and monitoring of policymaking, and cooperation with governmental sectors.

Between 1995 and 1998, small environmental organizations in Rio de Janeiro began monitoring the PDBG. Once again this effort was made possible through the encouragement and funding of an international agency, the United Nations Development Program (PNUD).<sup>22</sup> One consequence of this initiative was the formulation of a critique to the PDBG that further corroborated the Political Committee's charge about the program's narrow approach to sanitation policies. This time, the emphasis of the critique was not only on the lack of coordination about state and municipal agencies, but also on the fact that the PDBG ignored the environmental consequences of inappropriate or inexistent sanitation infrastructure and services.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting to notice that, as civil society organizations increased their capacity to formulate a critique to sanitation policies that affected the *conception or design* of such policies, they began to have a relative impact on policymaking. In the specific case of the PDBG, the state government eventually had to concede that the program was strictly geared towards sanitation infrastructure works, and not toward an integrated program to improve the environmental sanitation and reduce pollution levels plaguing the communities of the Guanabara Bay basin.

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<sup>21</sup> Interview with Dahmer.

<sup>22</sup> The effort was known as *Programa Bahia Cidadã*, led by the ONG "Os Verdes." During the 1990s, and in the wake of the United Nations Conference for the Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, global public pressures for action on environmental problems increased, affecting the availability of grants and international credit lines for such initiatives.

<sup>23</sup> The full critique is formulated in Amador and Lima (1998).

Increased awareness on the flaws of the PDBG, combined with continuing pressures from the Interamerican Development Bank, led the state government to re-open dialogue with civil society organizations regarding the formulation of a new policy to replace the PDBG (a PDBG II, as it is informally known, is currently being negotiated between the IDB, Japanese funding agencies, and the state of Rio de Janeiro). While it is not clear what will be the impact of civil society participation in the final design and implementation of a PDBG II, criticisms of the centralized approach used in the first project have already had an impact on municipal authorities. It has contributed to increasing the interest of local administrations in initiatives that integrate sanitation and environmental policies in the Bay region. Between 1997 and 1998, for instance, municipal governments, through the mediation of the Brazilian Ministry of the Environment, formed the Inter-municipal Consortium for the Environment (*Consórcio Intermunicipal de Meio Ambiente, CONIMA*) that defined an environmental agenda for action. The agenda includes initiatives for drainage of sewage and water canals networks and waste treatment.

A second initiative of local governments was the constitution of the G-15, an informal discussion group composed of municipal Secretaries of the Environment, who share information about problems, demands, and regional policies related to the environment and environmental sanitation. Finally, a specific factor has been determinant in forcing municipal governments to address environmental sanitation issues: the end of the twenty-five year concession contracts established between municipal governments and the state water and sewage agency, CEDAE. As these contracts expired in 2000, local governments have struggled to devise alternative ways for the provision of services. In turn, civil society organizations, perceiving a concrete opportunity to contribute to decisionmaking processes, have organized local workshops and published opinion pieces on the issue.<sup>24</sup>

Finally, municipal governments have recently benefited from financial resources originated from a fine paid to the federal government by an oil refinery. The refinery, Reduc, was responsible for a large oil spill in the Guanabara Bay in January 2000. A portion of the fine was redirected to municipalities affected by the spill, and it has been earmarked for the improvement of solid waste collection and treatment.<sup>25</sup> This influx of resources has allowed local governments to address what has been, for over a decade, the main demand of underprivileged populations around the Bay.<sup>26</sup> Improvement of solid waste collection is likely to diminish the pressures on the sewage and water canal infrastructure in the region.

While the trend toward an increased role of local governments in environmental sanitation policies seems to have consolidated itself in the turn of the century, expectations about the role of civil society organizations in the process have been somewhat frustrated. Space constraints limit further discussion on this topic. Suffice is to say that environmental and other civil society groups have been slow to fully benefit from the new spaces available at the local level to

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<sup>24</sup> See for instance, Santos Jr. et al. (1998), a compilation of studies presented in the 1997 National Seminar on Sanitation Policies, organized by nine grassroots organizations and support NGOs, and Britto and Porto (1998), also with proceeds from a meeting, financed by the national lending agency *Caixa Econômica Federal*, in preparation for the process of renewing concessions for the provision of sanitation services.

<sup>25</sup> According to Carlos Henrique de Abreu Mendes, Executive Manager, *Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e Recursos Naturais Renováveis*, (Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Renewable Resources), IBAMA, Rio de Janeiro, the request was made by members of the CONIMA. (Interview, Rio de Janeiro, July 2001).

<sup>26</sup> Reliable water and sanitation services (sewage infrastructure) as well as waste collection are the primary demands of low-income communities in the municipalities of the Guanabara Bay basin (Britto 1998, and Tania Maciel: “PDBG Subprojeto de Mobilização Social – Participação Comunitária, Relatório Trimestral Março-Maio,” 1998).

participate in environmental sanitation policymaking. This is partially explained by the growing divisions that were accentuated among civil society groups in the wake of the 2000 oil spill. As an attempt to repair its public image, Reduc made available funds and partnership opportunities to civil society organizations, mostly environmental groups. This generated fierce competition among groups of different natures and constituencies that were previously slowly coming together around common concerns with the environmental conditions of the Bay.

## CONCLUSIONS

This research has demonstrated that, in addition to the “usual suspects” for the failure of sanitation policies in the Guanabara Bay – the authoritarian and centralizing tendencies of the Brazilian policymaking system, and the pattern of patron-client relations that has predominated in Rio de Janeiro’s politics – two other interrelated factors must be added to the explanation. The first is the weakness of local governments in the Guanabara Bay region. As a result of such weakness, important components in a holistic approach to sanitation infrastructure and services (such as waste collection to prevent obstruction of sewage canals) have been missing. In addition, local governments have historically failed to constitute an arena in which civil society’s grievances on sanitation issues could be addressed. Until recently, communities in the Guanabara Bay basin had only one arena in which to present demands and pressure for change: the regional state. The structurally weak civil society organizations were never a match for the mighty Rio de Janeiro state. At best, society’s grievances were answered on the basis of their advantages for the perpetuation of patron-client links. The second factor that must be considered when analyzing the failure of sanitation policies in the Guanabara Bay region is the very weakness of civil society organizations. In their original attempt to influence policymaking, civil society groups were incapable of moving beyond protest and demands for emergency measures and toward policy proposals that could best respond to community needs in the area of sanitation.

In the late 1990s, however, several factors contributed to increase local governments’ political and technical capacity in formulating and implementing projects related to environmental sanitation policies. This process happened in parallel with a tendency among civil society groups, particularly environmental organizations, to expand their activism beyond protest, and toward demands for participation in policy formulation and implementation. The coincidence of these trends suggests that the local level may become an important arena where good governance, as a result of a reciprocal reinforcement between the roles of state and civil society, may occur. While the prospects for the establishment of virtuous cycle of policymaking and implementation are promising, they are not guaranteed. Political cleavages among civil society groups and the looming possibility of cooptation by state agencies continue to constrain the impact of these groups in the planning and provision of sanitation services in the Guanabara Bay region.

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