

Preface

This book has been a long time in the making. Our object of study—origins, strategies, and the political “fit” of environmentalism and environmentalists in Brazil—was more elusive than either of us expected. Neither a single social movement, nor a policy area, nor even a clearly bounded corpus of ideas, environmentalism in a large developing country was a moving target, as it had to be to make sense in its home territory; nonetheless, by refusing to fit the theoretical pigeonholes into which we wanted to place it, it made our task harder. This research started out in 1989 as two separate projects, both of which long ago produced book manuscripts with which neither of us was fully satisfied. We became involved in other projects. The idea for this book resulted from a serendipitous meeting in June 2000 at the airport in São Paulo, where it occurred to us to put our books together. Several years and many conversations later, there is almost nothing left from the original manuscripts, but we hope the combined result is closer to what each of us wishes she had written in the first place.

Obviously this book does not reflect a classic research design with a well-formulated initial hypothesis, investigated in the field and analyzed and reported promptly. Instead it is the synthetic product of a whole series of research efforts, carried out independently by different scholars with somewhat different preoccupations over a number of years. In rethinking, re-situating, and rewriting the manuscript, we tried to give it conceptual and narrative unity, but there will inevitably be signs of its several origins. Each of us has built continuously on the fieldwork that she began fifteen years ago, but we now see that fieldwork in the light of continuing research on environmental politics and research in Brazil. We have seen the birth and death of organizations and institutions, witnessed life-cycle and other changes in the Brazilian activists we have known over the years, and been present

during key events and processes of the political and economic changes that Brazil has undergone since the military left power in the mid-1980s. In the meantime, we have both developed close friendships and rich collegial relations with Brazilians, and have learned enough to doubt certainties.

From this long-gestated research, we drew three major lessons that shape this book. First, we needed to pay more attention to relations between domestic and international actors, conscious that most international portrayals miss most of the story, and often get the dynamics wrong on the parts they do capture. That each of us collaborated on books about transnational relations in the meantime is obviously relevant as well. Second, a longer timeline highlights just how thoroughly embedded environmental politics is in a larger set of political, social, and economic relations, domestically as well as internationally. Without a broader understanding of Brazilian politics more generally—the impact of democratization, federalism, and the high levels of informality that challenge the implementation and institutionalization of policies—it is impossible to understand environmental politics. Finally, our early images of environmental activists in civil society pressuring state institutions for changes in policies and behavior have given way to a recognition that activists labor mightily inside the state as well as outside it, and that an accurate portrayal requires keeping both sites of struggles in view. The Introduction relates these lessons to some of the existing debates on international and comparative environmental politics, and on the relationships between the two.

This is a largely descriptive work—informed by and in constant dialogue with theory, but not intended as a test of any one in particular, in the tradition of grounded theory. The book's theoretical ambitions are modest, aiming to (1) produce a more nuanced view of the kinds of interactions that shape a multilevel governance of the environment in Brazil; (2) demonstrate the importance of studying particular policy areas like the environment within a broader political context that recognizes interactions between different levels of political institutions and among state and society actors, each of which has multiple commitments and connections; and (3) identify some of the patterns by which committed actors inside and outside the state attempt to make, maintain, or block policies against powerful but dispersed opponents, through blocking or enabling networks.

In the Introduction we promise to tell the “inside” story of Brazilian envi-

ronmental politics that the transnationalized version of the story leaves out. This is an audacious claim for a pair of foreigners, especially in a context where both the quality and quantity of national scholarship on environmental politics are high. The environmental sections of the National Association of Graduate Study and Research in the Social Sciences (ANPOCS), the contributors to journals like *Ambiente e Sociedade* (Environment and Society), the social science participants in the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (SBPC), and others have already provided important insights into Brazilian environmental politics, and we cite their work repeatedly in this book.

At the same time, we believe there are additional insights that we can bring as scholars who do not live in Brazil but return there repeatedly—in Margaret Keck’s case for the last twenty-five years and in Kathryn Hochstetler’s for fifteen. Leaving Brazil to experience environmental debates as citizens in the United States, do research in other South American countries, and observe transnational interactions gives us a comparative vantage point that clarifies Brazil’s unique qualities and commonalities with other cases. Absences also make some of the transition points more noticeable: when we were here a year ago, that organization still existed, this option still seemed possible while now it does not, these allies were enemies (or vice versa), and so on. Overall this is not a better vantage point, but it is a different one.

Returning regularly to Brazil also gives us a vantage point not shared by those whose view of Brazilian environmental politics comes from international settings and the international media. For reasons that we discuss directly in the Introduction and indirectly throughout the book, the positions taken by Brazilians in international settings are often themselves not fully reflective of domestic environmental developments. The *longue durée*, the regular monthly meetings, and much more are simply not visible even to many Brazilians. They are critical for the unfolding of Brazilian environmental politics, but will rarely make headlines.

We have studied the headlines and the monthly meetings, using a range of methods that combined hundreds of semi-structured and open-ended interviews, extensive participant observation, documentary and archival research, and analysis of some quantitative data. They have also involved revisits to many of our research sites, some repeatedly. Just for accompanying the Brazilian preparations for the Earth Summit, for example, Hochstetler

attended three national meetings of the Brazilian NGO Forum (including one of the first where foreign NGOs were present in a related meeting), three state-level preparatory meetings, and at least a dozen additional meetings of São Paulo's statewide association of environmental groups, APEDEMA. She also accompanied the month-long government negotiations in New York of the Fourth Preparatory Conference, a South American gathering sponsored by Friends of the Earth, and the national preparatory process in Venezuela (providing them with documents and information from Brazil, not otherwise available). Keck attended two of the Brazilian national meetings, and we in fact met for the first time at the third meeting of the Brazilian NGO Forum in October 1990. Along the way, we have traveled to sixteen (Hochstetler) and nineteen (Keck) of Brazil's twenty-seven subnational units. The long time horizon and broad geographic grounding has advantages and disadvantages. Along with the advantage of deeper and more nuanced appreciation of the processes at work goes the frustration when, at the end of the period, we know so many questions we should have asked at the beginning. Our research trajectories have been similar.

In 1990 Margaret Keck set out to investigate the developing linkages between environmentalists and social movements struggling for material improvements in their living conditions. She resisted the categories of "new" and "old" social movements prevalent in the North, finding instead different combinations of demands for a better life and for a different life in a wide range of movements. Fascinated by the hybrid discourse of "social environmentalism" emerging from groups like the Acre rubber tappers, she set out to look for its urban equivalent. But although many urban environmentalists used the term "social environmentalism," their practice—and their histories—told different stories. Her detailed study of environmental struggles over São Paulo's water quality, involving developments around the Billings and Guarapiranga dams, led her to focus on networks of activists in state and society as they enabled or obstructed particular state policies (Keck 2001). Her study of the transnational relations surrounding efforts to enforce the environmental provisions of the World Bank's Planaflores loan in Rondônia (Keck 1998) stimulated her collaboration with Kathryn Sikkink on transnational advocacy networks (Keck and Sikkink 1998a).

Kathryn Hochstetler also began with a focus on environmental movements, comparing the ways that such movements in Brazil and Venezuela

balanced strategic and identity-based considerations as they sought to bring environmental concerns into political systems preoccupied with both development and democratization. Her later work continued to place Brazilian environmental actors—in state and society—in a comparative and international context, looking at a series of mobilizations around the La Plata River basin and the Mercosul (Mercosur) free trade area as well as in United Nations conferences. This international and comparative work oriented her toward seeing Brazil as an environmental innovator in its regional context, even as its ongoing environmental gaps and failures were also evident. Both sides, to her, justify a closer, deeper look at this environmental puzzle. This book is that.

A project like this one inevitably garners more debts than can be listed, much less repaid. Our largest debt is to the many Brazilians who have given generously of their time and papers to explain Brazilian environmental politics to us, in formal interviews and by simply letting us observe their activities. Above all, we appreciate how interesting and articulate they have been, and how hard they have worked to find creative solutions to often daunting problems.

We also owe more specific thanks. Maria Helena Antuniassi at CERU of the University of São Paulo shared with Kathryn Hochstetler an important set of early documents and interviews from the environmental movement. Hochstetler held research affiliations at CEBRAP in São Paulo, IUPERJ in Rio de Janeiro, and the University of Brasília during different parts of this research. An important portion of her writing time was hosted by the Centre for Brazilian Studies of Oxford University, which sponsored a conference, “Forests, Cities, Climate Change and Poverty: New Perspectives on Environmental Politics in Brazil,” that allowed us to get helpful comments on an early set of chapter drafts. Hochstetler’s research was funded by grants from the Institute for the Study of World Politics, the Midwest Universities Consortium for International Affairs, a Fulbright faculty research grant, and the Career Enhancement and College of Liberal Arts Professional Development funds of Colorado State University. While Hochstetler is grateful for all of this support, she would especially like to thank her colleagues and students at Colorado State University, who were interested supporters of this project for its entire duration.

Margaret Keck thanks the Yale Center for International and Area Studies for support in the very early stages of this project, as well as the Yale and Johns Hopkins students who have participated in her seminar on environment and development over the last fifteen years, the Yale Agrarian Studies Seminar, and her colleagues in the Yale and Johns Hopkins political science departments. During portions of the research she was affiliated with CEDEC in São Paulo and was generously welcomed by IPHAE in Porto Velho. She was lucky to have as research assistants at different moments Biorn Maybury-Lewis, Denise Campelo, and Cristina Saliba. Beyond assistance with the research itself, Cristina Saliba provided a home away from home, steadfast friendship, and boundless generosity during much of the time this research was being done. Keck's research was funded by grants from the Howard Heinz Endowment / Center for Latin American Studies, University of Pittsburgh; the Joint Committee on Latin American Studies and the Advanced Fellowship in Foreign Policy Studies of the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies, with funds provided by the Ford Foundation; the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation; and research funds provided by Johns Hopkins University.

Innumerable people have commented on our research projects or discussed ideas with us in ways that have been partially incorporated into this book. We resolve the impossibility of naming all of them by naming none, but appreciating each one more than we can say. In addition, we thank the following people for helpful comments on the chapters and arguments of the book itself (Brazilian style, they are alphabetized by first name): Alberto Lourenço, Andy Hurrell, Charles Wood, Jonathan Fox, José Augusto Pádua, Lesley McAllister, Lupe Rodrigues, Mary Allegretti, Rebecca Abers, Sylvia Tesh, Timmons Roberts, and several anonymous reviewers. We are, of course, responsible for all remaining errors of fact and interpretation. At Duke, Valerie Millholland has been a prompt and encouraging editor.

In a project of this length, it is remarkable that our partners—Roger Hoover and Larry Wright—have been present and supportive through the entire process. Melissa Wright, born not long after the research began, and Laura Wright, born two years later, tolerated Keck's absences and grew up along with the book. We thank all for their patience. Now, other things can get done.