DOSSIER

IMPLEMENTING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BRAZIL: Sociology of secondary actors[1]

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Participatory devices in Brazil have been analyzed in a dense literature examining the ambivalent projects pursued through citizen participation, the involvement of citizens in these projects and their varying effects on public policy or the political sphere. What is lacking is an in-depth analysis of the role of public participation professionals (PPPs) in Brazil, namely, the specific actors who are paid to design, implement or facilitate participatory forums. This article uses a qualitative methodology to develop a typology of organizers of some Brazilian participatory mechanisms, by studying their trajectory and conceptions of participation they support. Its aim is to show that these actors are central in defining how citizens should participate and who is part of the legitimate audience. Therefore, PPPs play a major role in reinforcing the transformative scope of a device or, on the contrary, in limiting it to a simple consultation of citizens, through the audience rallied, the tool(s) they choose or the meaning they give to participation.

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Who are the actors implementing public participation in Brazil and how do they influence the functioning of participatory mechanisms or institutions? The extensive literature is mainly based on local experiences and focuses on three factors to explain the differing impact of participatory institutions on politics and policy (Avritzer; Navarro, 2003; Borba; Lüchmann, 2007). First, studies show that "projects" carried out by parties and political actors go hand-in-hand with a specific notion of political and socio-economic relations that induce selected groups to participate. From this perspective, until the early 2000s the project of "including the excluded" promoted by the Workers' Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT) was perceived as a factor explaining the underrepresentation of traditionally excluded actors in some mechanisms. Second, authors found that the institutional design of participatory mechanisms, for carrying out political projects, frames the way citizens participate and influences how participation impacts on policy. Third, participatory mechanisms have varying effects depending on how civil society is configured, that is, its capacity to mobilize and the way organizations act collectively or not. For example, the success of Participatory Budgeting (PB) in Porto Alegre is explained by a combination of these three factors, with a voluntarist project of social change, a strong associative tradition and an institutional design that facilitates the presence of traditionally excluded actors and gives them a degree of decisional power (Avritzer, 2009).

These three explanatory factors fostered several comparative studies that deepen our understanding of public participation. However, they pay little attention to actors who are essential in the process of conceiving and implementing participatory mechanisms, that is, bureaucrats or external actors hired to design, implement or facilitate participatory forums, and who are called Public Participation Professionals (PPPs) (Bherer; Gauthier; Simard, 2017a). This study examines the profile and practices of these actors in participatory de-

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vices in Brazil. I argue that by organizing the functioning of participatory mechanisms, these PPPs play a key role in defining what participation means. Indeed, they can play a major role in reinforcing the transformative scope of a mechanism or, on the contrary, in limiting it to a simple consultation of citizens, through the audience they muster, the tools they choose or the meaning they give to participation.

The role played by PPPs has to be examined more deeply if we are to understand the varying effects of participatory mechanisms and the evolution of the participatory sphere in general. To understand how PPPs operate we must develop a double perspective. The first concentrates on their trajectory and allows us to understand which values and expertise they import in participatory mechanisms depending on their professional or activist experience. Yet, on its own, this sort of actor-centered perspective is insufficient if not accompanied by a study of the institutional logic that frames their action. In other words, to understand how PPPs behave, we need to study the actor's profile alongside the analysis of the institutional contexts of their practices.

Based on this double perspective, this study formulates a typology of organizers of participatory mechanisms in Brazil. This is based on the study of different types of PPP encountered in two research projects. The first one is my doctoral thesis on the mobilization of grassroots residents in the Women's Conference in Recife and Londrina – a participatory institution based on a cycle of assemblies – and for which I carried out two years of fieldwork (Sa Vilas Boas, 2012). The research includes a six-month internship in the local administration responsible for the mechanism, the Women's Secretariat in Recife in 2006. In Londrina, I carried out seven months of ethnographic observation in 2007. I also conducted thirty-two interviews with participants and local administrators in Recife and twenty-five with their counterparts in Londrina. The second research project was carried out in 2014 and 2015 and examined the diffusion of digital tools in the participatory sphere in Brazil, focusing on Belo Horizonte, where I carried out six interviews with the organizers of digital participatory budgeting and a month as an observer.

After presenting a review of the literature explaining the analytical challenges and choices made in this article, the study distinguishes between three types of PPP: the "militant public official"; the "professional mobilizer"; and the "professional expert". The trajectory and practices of each of these PPPs is linked to a specific experience, that is, the Recife Women's Conference for the first type, several municipal conferences in Londrina for the second and digital participatory budgeting in Belo Horizonte for the third. This study highlights the similarities and differences between these three types of PPP. We find each type of PPP in all three cities, although in different proportions and with different levels of influence. Thus, the profiles described here correspond to ideal types and are not the expression of rigid differences between the three cities.

BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL TRAJECTORIES AND INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXTS: studying public participation professionals

The study of the organizers of public participation has taken different paths in the European and North American experiences on the one hand, and Brazilian experiments on the other. The diverging perspectives rest on the different political-institutional contexts within which participatory mechanisms are created together with a distinct examination of participatory democracy.

Organizing Public Participation: a Profession?

In Europe and North America, a recent field of study focusses on actors referred to as

Public Participation Professionals or PPPs, in a comparative perspective of North American and European countries (Bherer; Gauthier; Simard, 2017a). From this perspective PPPs are viewed as "forming part of the new political profession that has been created in the last twenty years and that has assumed a growing importance in activities of political mobilization and influence" (Bherer; Gauthier; Simard, 2017a, p. 6). Scholars point out the difficulties involved in analyzing them because of their diverse profile, including militants, communication professionals or public servants, to mention just a few, acting in the public or private sphere (Mazeaud; Nonjon, 2018). Due to this diversity, these actors do not correspond to the precise concept of a profession, defined as a group which defends its "monopoly […] by controlling the content of their declared competences, their transmission of knowledge, and the socialization of its members, the ethical rules governing their implementation, the social and economic value of their activity"[2] (Demazière, 2009, p. 84). Yet as Didier Demazière and Charles Gadéa (2009) point out, this definition is very limiting, and only corresponds to very specific professions at the peak of the occupational hierarchy, characterized by a high level of expertise and a high degree of professional autonomy. The notion of "professional group" was developed by Chapoulie (1973) to study other types of worker, in particular the low-skilled or those carrying out activities with a low level of codification, such as artistic or volunteer work. Moreover, in several European countries the decentralization, contractualization and the emergence of transversal public action led to the rise of what Gilles Jeannot calls the "unclear professions" (*métiers flous*) created to meet objectives that are vague and general, based on precarious or unstable professional status, as in the case of PPPs. According to Jeannot (2005), the ambiguous nature of these professions rests directly on the complexity of some policy sectors, due to the multiple objectives pursued and the diversity of the actors involved.

This analytical shift made the notion of professionalization more important and it was used to understand the processes of the emergence, differentiation and empowerment of specific types of professional activities. From this perspective, professionalization is not a linear process since it often rests on the ambiguous and even contradictory dynamics of the delimitation and erosion of a group, and on the legitimation and negation of its existence and so forth (Demazière, 2009).

The concept of professionalization is discussed in the sociology of work (Becker 1962; Boussard et. al., 2010) and in political sociology (Michon; Ollion, 2018), and is a useful concept when analyzing the double process that characterizes "peripherical political activities" (Gaxie, 2001, p. 23). This double process involves : 1) the fact that some actors live off participatory democracy even though it is not always their sole activity or source of income;[3] 2) the consolidation of specific skills and expertise on participatory democracy, learnt in specific training or through a socialization process in particular social or professional spheres.

In North American and European contexts, studies reveal the heuristic function of studying who these professionals are, in order to understand how they shape the participatory sphere. This is done by choosing some procedures rather than others, by defining the legitimate norms of conduct within the specific device or by promoting some conceptions and practices. Depending on the country studied, PPPs do not necessarily involve the same type of actors. In the U.S. and Canada they are mainly private actors, NGOs or enterprises hired by public institutions (Lee, 2017; Bherer; Gauthier; Simard, 2017b), whereas in the U.K.,

[2] Translated by the author of this article.

[3] I refer to Weber's distinction between political professionals who "live for" politics and those who "live off" politics. Mazeaud and Nonjon (2018, p. 10) argue that it is difficult to apply this definition to PPP since for some of them, public participation is not their main source of income; others "live off" participation but maintain a certain distance from the ideals of participatory democracy so that they do not strictly "live for" public participation.

they act both within public institutions and private structures (Escobar, 2017). Moreover, depending on the way they shape and materialize participatory mechanisms, PPPs can give them meanings that do not necessarily respond to participatory ideals. In the United States, Caroline Lee and Zachary Romano (2013) show that PPPs sell participatory mechanisms to public institutions in order to make citizens accept "tough choices" such as austerity. In France, Alice Mazeaud and Magali Nonjon (2018) highlight the emergence of a "participatory market" effect which standardizes participatory institutions.

These studies reveal the heuristic nature of focusing on the practices of the actors who organize participatory mechanisms along two different axes: first, the professional knowledge and expertise imported within participatory mechanisms; and second, the rationale of their action, that depends on the institutional frame within which they act.

Inside Brazil's public administration

By contrast, the studies of Brazilian participatory mechanisms have followed a different path and research examining the profile and influence of PPPs on the internal functioning of these institutions is relatively underdeveloped. Yet, studies of bureaucrats' perception of participatory devices and their relations with civil society through participatory or other types of institution, highlight interesting elements which help us understand how PPPs function. First, Jessica Rich (2019a, 2019b) shows that bureaucrats play a pivotal role in participatory mechanisms because they are potential providers of resources, informational, financial or symbolic, to civil society organization and thus help reinforce or weaken collective action in the devices. In turn, the existence of a mobilized civil society can sustain an administration when its members negotiate a policy with administrative partners (Sa Vilas Boas, 2019). Second, Clóvis de Souza and Roberto Pires (2012) have shown the diversity of motivations and involvement in participatory mechanisms within bureaucracies. In addition to the objectives and projects promoted by political actors, bureaucrats give multiple meanings to participatory institutions, that depends partly on the institutional framework within which they act. As in Jeannot's work, this study points out the importance of understanding the configuration in which bureaucrats create or implement a participatory device. Third, these bureaucrats promote different values and conceptions of policy areas, such as the environment, health or urban issues, depending on the ties they have with civil society organizations, but also due to the specific norms of the administration they belong to (Abers, 2019; 2015). For this reason, some of them are referred to as "bureaucratic activists" due to the way they promote a cause from within the public administration (Abers, 2019).

These studies help us understand the role of PPPs in two ways. First, they point out the need to understand the behavior of bureaucrats in the light of the power relations operating within public administration, and not only of the political projects promoted by political parties and actors. Second, they help us understand which conceptions and values bureaucrats mobilize in their professional practices, depending on their trajectory and the culture of their administration. Yet they do not question directly the influence that bureaucrats have on the composition and internal dynamics of participatory mechanisms. It is this question that we will now address in the analysis of three types of PPP.

THE MILITANT PUBLIC OFFICIAL

The first type of PPP is the "militant public official" whose action is based on the importation of militant practices into a parti-

cipatory device that they design and organize. Militant public officials mainly rely on knowledge and know-how learnt in the partisan or militant sphere. They link participatory devices with the norms and practice of collective action: they value the empowerment of participants and continual engagement. They are the least professionalized in our typology since they rely on tools and practices which are not specifically developed for participatory institutions nor based on expert knowledge. These actors operate at the heart of new participatory venues in specific policy sectors, namely, those with a low level of institutionalization in which civil society organizations play a central role in agenda setting or policy implementation. Those responsible for the Recife Women's Conference are in this category of PPP.

Participatory Democracy as a Political Project

"Militant public officials" design, facilitate and/or evaluate participatory devices as part of their political-administrative activity. They were not previously specialized in public participation before being recruited by local government, and do not work exclusively with public participation. Yet they do value public participation due to their militant trajectory. For this type of actor, public participation is a way to put into practice ideas championed in the militant sphere and to keep strong links with some civil society organizations. Therefore, their public participation objective is not necessarily to rally all citizens, but to give a voice to some of them, either because the local government targets them, or because they are perceived as "allies" of their administration. For this type of actor, public participation is a way to perform a specific political project rather than to reach a consensus among very different points of view, as is the case for PPP around the BAPE (*Bureau d'audiences publiques sur l'environnement*) in Québec (Bherer, Gauthier and Simard, 2017b) or the *Commission nationale du débat public* (CNDP) in France (Revel *& al*., 2007). They defend a transformative project designed to change social relations by including minority groups and politicizing them.

This type of actor is predominant in the Recife Women's Conference, which was designed by an administrative organ, the Women's Secretariat, created in 2001 after the election of the Workers' Party mayor, João Paulo. In early 2000s, very few Brazilian cities implemented a Women's Conference, which made its creation in Recife something of an innovation. Indeed, it is a hybrid of three types of procedures used in different participatory venues: those of participatory budgeting, especially the principle of a first round of assemblies in working-class areas; the rules of traditional conferences, especially the representation of civil society organizations; and the creation of a policy council, whose members are elected during assemblies.

This design cannot be understood without analyzing the profile of the staff of the Women's Secretariat. This was initially part of the mayor's office and its members are nominated by the coalition government.[4] Due to this specific mode of appointment, the profile of Women's Secretariat appointees is more partisan and less bureaucratic. Indeed, their profile is quite homogeneous. Five of the six appointees were activists in a party of the government coalition, in particular the Workers' Party (three out of six). They were also activists in a feminist organization and attended the meetings of the main women's organization network, the *Federação das Mulheres do Pernambuco* (FMPE).

[4] In the Recife administration, the spoils system is rife compared to other cities. To give the reader an idea, during fieldwork, around 2,000 officials occupied a "position of trust" in Recife whereas in Londrina, only 100 officials occupied such a position whereas the capital of Pernambouc only has three times more inhabitants. For Londrina: Jornal oficial do município de Londrina, *Jornal do executivo. Atos legislativos*, n. 622, 30 décembre 2004, p. 1. For Recife: "Camâra aprova criação de novos cargos commissionados", le 13 décembre 2010, consultable at http://www.camara.recife.pe.gov.br/noticias/camara-aprova-criacao-de-novos-cargos comissionados.

This activist profile has a direct influence on the procedures favored for the Women's Conference. Indeed, the latter reflects two influences: first, it reproduces what was then perceived as the Workers' Party "way of governing"; and second, it gives an important role to feminist organizations.

It is by drawing on the experience of other Workers' Party governments that members of the Women's Secretariat set the rules of the Women's Conference. Those in charge of public participation in the Women's Secretariat explain:

> "J: Before being elected, we didn't have a clear idea of what we'd do. Everything was defined after the election. But it was clear that we were from a party where democracy is a matter that concerns everyone. This is why gender policy should include everybody, including the women's movement. […] We [women in the Workers' Party] took part in drafting the electoral program, but everything was very general. It was only after having been elected that we started to think of what we could do. Of course, we wanted to create a participatory institution, but we had no idea how and what we could do. After the first ballot, when we realized that we could win, we asked Regina, who was then head of the Women's Secretariat of the Rio Grande do Sul, to come here. We held a seminar where she explained what they were doing in the South. They did not have a Women's Conference, but they were organizing meetings with women in different territories and on different topics. Then we took this model for the conference. She told us: 'if you could consult women to find out what they want, it will be easier for you to define your priorities'. So that's what we did". (Interview with J., Member of the Women's Secretariat, 26 March 2006)

The importation of tools developed by the Workers' Party in other territories takes place alongside the reproduction of a certain perception of the audience called on to participate. This device is intended to rally all women of the city, but it favors some more than others, in particular lower-class women, in order to fit better with the class-based party discourse. According to the first general secretary of the Women's Secretariat:

> "A: When the Women Secretariat was created, there was a lot of debate about the need to create this sort of structure. Some believed that an administration responsible for all types of discrimination would have been better. In fact, these debates showed that gender issues had no legitimacy […]. When we talked about creating a Women's Conference, everybody said: 'take it easy, take your time, everything's new'. But for us that wasn't an argument. We wanted support. We met the general secretary responsible for participatory budgeting and told him about our plans. He said that we had convinced him when we told him that we wanted to introduce feminism to the working class. Because feminism can't just be a middle-class issue". (Interview with A., former general Secretary of the Women's Secretariat, 31 January 2007)

The focus on social class partially determines the way in which the conference is designed, especially in the first round of assemblies in poor neighborhoods. These procedures should foster the inclusion of "unheard" actors, because of class and gender domination, but also by socializing poor women into feminism. This second objective justifies the specific position conferred to feminist organizations in the mechanism, particularly those considered "allies" of the Women's Secretariat due to their project of challenging the gender order. Therefore, the rules governing the Conference guarantee the presence of a specific type of feminist organization, which corresponds to the FMPE and its collective membership. In parallel, some actors and organizations are "forgotten" or discretely set aside, especially those considered conservative on gender issues, such as religious movements or the women's sections of right-wing parties.

Participatory Democracy as an Extension of Collective Action

For militant public officials, participatory democracy is a way to reconcile their activist trajectory, which deeply influences their self-perception, with their new position as lo-

cal government appointees. When they have a trajectory of activism in a party and a feminist organization, entering "the State" generates ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, their nomination is perceived as a specific reward and recognition of their activism. Unlike civil servants who join a local administration after taking a public examination, they partly owe their position to their elected "comrades" and they feel they have a collective mission, defending the project constructed collectively. On the other hand, they are now on the "other side of the fence" and this alters their relations with activists who were formerly friends. For example, an appointee describes the difficulties she had in taking up a position as a "local government representative":

> "J: During the first conference, we had different views from the feminist organizations on how to create a Women's Council. They started to say that 'They don't want a Women's Council'. I really cried a lot at the time. I've always been part of the feminist movement and then I was 'on the other side', with the "State" that the feminists were criticizing. I really cried a lot" (Interview with J., Member of the Women'Secretariat, 26 March 2006).

In participatory devices, PPP activists reinvest conceptions and knowledge acquired during their militant trajectory. This allows them to maintain a link with social networks and with militant action.

In Recife, the importation of practices and notions of collective action have two effects on the way the participatory institution is used. First, the single-sex principle in force in some feminist organizations is applied to the Women's Conference, although this is controversial within local government. The implicit rule is that only women should define the programs designed to challenging gender relations because they are the ones who experience domination and who need to be empowered.

Second, together with feminist participants, militant public officials shape the implicit standards of behavior expected in the device, in particular in the Women's Council, where they regularly meet the delegates elected during the first round of assemblies. The latter are called to reproduce "the gift of self" that structures activism in some parties or civil society organizations (Lazar, 1998). Indeed, in addition to participating in monthly meetings, the "councillors" are called by Women's Secretariat appointees to organize or take part in a series of collective actions. Councillors are expected to help organize roundtables or protest marches on violence against women; they are invited to mobilize their neighbors for health conferences or participatory budgeting; and they are called on to participate in bureaucratic meetings. When councillors do not follow these implicit rules and only participate intermittently, they are subject to symbolic disapproval, such as sarcasm or cynical criticism for their lower level of investment or even a public call to "endorse" their role.

The incentive for a councillor's permanent mobilization is linked to the way the Womens' Secretariat appointees try to exert influence within local government. They deal with a new policy, poorly financed and with a low level of institutionalization. They believe the only way to obtain their objective is to rely on concerted collective action, so that they can be compared to the bureaucrats dealing with the environment (Abers, 2019) or AIDS (Rich, 2019). Indeed, according to one member of the Women's Secretariat, the permanent mobilization of participants should highlight gender inequalities and force local government to implement gender policies:

> "J: When you're part of municipal government, you speak out […], but the others think that what you're saying is nonsense. But when you have the support of the organized society, that is mobilized and says 'it has to be like this', it's different, because you aren't talking on your own, like a crazy person. Society is putting pressure on local government. It makes a big difference because in this case, nobody can ignore women's issues" (Interview with J., Member of the Women's Secretariat, 15 September 2007).

The example of the Recife Women's Conference shows how militant public officials shape public participation by connecting it to the practices and norms of collective action. In this perspective, participation is not only a tool to construct public policy programs by giving voice to ordinary citizens, but it should target specific citizens, the excluded, politicize them and get them permanently involved in collective action to change the social order. In line with Benjamin Barber's "strong democracy" (Barber, 1984), public participation is seen as an everyday issue. The devices are meaningful not only for policy definition but also for the militant sphere, as one appointee explains:

> "K: When we set up the Women's Conference, we thought that it would be important to include working-class women. In order to press the feminist movement to discuss things with women who are generally outside the feminist debate. We thought that it could influence other women and that it would be useful, not only for public policy, but also for the movement, because it could be reinforced by working-class women. For us, it was important to create a bond with grassroots movements, to reinforce the feminist agenda and movement" (Interview with K., former general Secretary of Women's Secretariat, 8 June 2006).

This reading of participation anchors participatory democracy in the logic of militant politics. It differs from the objectives pursued by a second type of PPP, the professional mobilizer.

THE PROFESSIONAL MOBILIZER

The second type of PPP is the "professional mobilizers" because their activity consists of mobilizing audiences for heterogeneous participatory devices. Just as militant public officials, professional mobilizers have an activist trajectory that justifies and explains their involvement in participatory democracy. But unlike militant public officials, they use their militant knowledge to muster groups or organizations and play a secondary role during the assemblies and as regards the definition of the legitimate norms in operation within them. The professional mobilizer generally acts in a specialized service on participatory democracy. This figure demonstrates a higher degree of professionalization in public participation, in their respective municipalities or policy sector, than when militant public officials are predominant. This professionalization has a paradoxical effect: it ensures the presence of different types of social groups, especially minorities, but at the same time it restricts public participation to a stable range of actors and organizations summoned to participate in every institution. In Londrina the members of an administration specialized on public participation belong to this second type of professional group.

Public Participation as a Permanent Activity

For professional mobilizers, public participation is a permanent job. They are contracted and paid to organize public participation. Their work mainly consists of rallying audiences and facilitating the debates of different participatory mechanisms. These professionals are selected and hired because of their activist or/and participatory trajectory during which they acquired specific knowledge, in particular a capacity to identify and organize civil society networks. If these PPPs also have links with a political party, this is generally a secondary role compared to militant public officials. Their legitimacy depends more on their activism in participatory devices or civil society organization than in a party.

This type of professional values another conception of public participation: they insist on the need to rally all types of actors, to organize the highest number of citizens and to guarantee the representation of diverse types of social groups and organizations. Their notion of participation is pluralist and consists of the expression of the different voices that compose the social sphere. Their goal is to

make the expression of theses voices possible by assuring a broad representation of actors and encouraging discussions, especially when the audience is not familiar with public speaking. This type of professional views public participation as a way to challenge the elitist or technocratic bias of policy making and to enrich it by integrating various points of view. This conception sometimes neglects the existence of conflicting interests depending on the actors and the topic discussed.

This type of PPP is illustrated by the members of the Centre for Popular Participation (*Núcleo de participação popular,* NPP) in Londrina. This specialized body dealing with public participation was set up in 2005 as part of the mayor's office.

The NPP has twelve members in 2007, including four appointees nominated by the mayor, in charge of civil society's mobilization for participatory audiences. The others carry out logistic or clerical tasks. In Londrina, however, "positions of trust" are rarer than in Recife.[5] Therefore, the nomination of these PPP, as well as the position of the NPP at the top of the governmental hierarchy, prove the strategic importance of public participation.

The creation of the NPP was concomitant with the increase in the number of local conferences organized for marginalized groups, such as the conference on racial equality, the conference for the disabled and the conference for young people. It is in charge of organizing these three conferences, which are not implemented by an administration in charge of a specific policy. It also mobilizes the audience and facilitates the debates of conferences linked to other administrations, such as for the Women's Conference. To understand the profile of NPP actors, we focus on the person in charge. J. is a forty-three-year-old woman who set up a parent-teacher association in a rural zone of Londrina ten years before we met. After being recruited in the school where she worked on behalf of her association, she became involved in Londrina's Municipal Health Council and became its president. She then got involved in the State Health Council of Paraná and once again she became its president. When the Workers' Party returned to power in Londrina in 2001, she was recommended to head the NPP.

She had previously been a supporter of the Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB) and only joined the Workers' Party when she started working in the NPP. For her, working with public participation is: "something that [she] was already doing voluntarily, something [she] was used to doing and that [she] likes doing". Indeed, to become president of a Health Council, one of the main local participatory devices, the participant needs to know how to mobilize the support of civil society organizations and of the delegates who take part in it (Sa Vilas Boas, 2012). It is because she proved her ability to mobilize and convene groups and citizens around her that she has been hired as a PPP.

Although activism leads these PPP to be selected, they do not perceive participation as a tool to achieve a general change in the social order. Instead they see their role as limited to some stages of the participatory process, in particular the mobilization of audiences. To this end, these PPP focus on traditionally "unheard" actors (Boullier, 2009) who are generally absent from the political arena. As public participation professionals, they claim to "know" how to reach out to these groups. Yet because they value pluralism, they also encourage the presence of groups or organizations that are not socially or politically excluded, as J. explains:

> "J: When we discussed the Women's Conference, I said that we couldn't have just one assembly because people need to participate. And we have to approach them because if we don't, they won't come. We have to go to the "*roça*" [the rural part of Londrina]. I said, it's impossible not to include people from the *roça*! We thought of making assemblies by regions and by movements: the black movement,

[5] Cf. n. 3.

> trade unions, disabled people, etc. sometimes it's hard to make people understand that things have to be done democratically. Sometimes it's like we were still living under the dictatorship. People tell us what to do [she laughs]. […] I think it's great that M. [the head of the Women's Secretariat] suggested inviting the ACIL [a women's employer organization]. The more you bring people in to participate, even educated people with a diploma, the better it is". (Interview with J., Head of the NPP, 18 July 2007)

These PPPs focus more on the preparation than on the final objectives of public participation, because they believe that the result should be defined by the participants and by working through different points of view. When they facilitate a discussion during the participatory phase in Londrina their interventions are limited to explaining the objectives of the mechanism, initiating and developing the discussion and recording the participants' proposals as illustrated with an extract taken from the Women's Conference:

> The scene takes place in a rural region of Londrina, called "Guanavera", in the premises of the community centre. There are nine women and two men present. The assembly is part of the first round, during which participants are asked to come up with proposals for local gender policies. When two members of the NPP arrive, everyone is seated, waiting for the meeting to start. They first distribute a document with several proposals and then they ask each participant to introduce himself or herself. After the presentation, the leader of the communitarian centre, a woman named Andrea, asks the group if anybody wants to make a proposal. A forty-year-old woman says:
>
> I would like to say that we have to wait months to see a medical specialist. For example, I had to wait six months just to see a gynaecologist. The clinic is very bad on that point.
>
> NPP member: I would like to remind you that this is not a health conference.
>
> Andréa: Yes, but it's a general problem here. We have the right to have a medical examination every year, but we only have access to a gynaecologist during the day. Which is impossible if you work.
>
> NPP member: Have you talked with the clinic?
>
> Andréa: It doesn't change anything.
>
> The NPP member writes something down and then reads it aloud: what about "to guarantee access to gynaecologists in rural areas", is that OK? Several women say 'Yes'. (Field observation, 23 March 2007)

In fact, the professional mobilizer intervenes less than during the discussion or deliberation than when organizing audiences upstream. To this end, they apply routinized practices and instruments to stimulate citizen participation irrespective of the topic or device. The consequence is a relative and paradoxical closure of participative audiences.

A Paradoxical Closure of Participative Audiences

In Londrina, if they insist on the need to bring together different profiles of actors and organizations, the professional mobilizers use standardized ways to mobilize audiences for different types of participatory mechanisms. For every municipal conference, whether it be on health, racial equality or women's issues, they call on associative leaders or directors of NGOs, they leaflet associations and public institutions, such as schools or hospital and send individual letters to well-known figures, such as secretaries or local politicians. The consequence of this routinized process is that it ends up favored organizations over individuals. Moreover, they call on the same organizations for different participatory processes. Paradoxically, although professional mobilizers remind us of how strongly committed they are to pluralism, the way they centralize the mobilization process actually narrows the audience. Indeed, in order to ensure that no participatory mechanism is without an audience, Londrina's professional mobilizers list the leaders they can rely on. But while they guarantee that the participatory device will have an audience, they also strongly delineate its composition. Such a process was observed during the organization of the Women's Conference in 2007. The design of the latter was entrusted to the NPP and it rested on two types of assembly:

territorial meetings, organized in the outskirts and the rural zone of Londrina; and "sectoral" meetings, with assemblies organized for "segments" of civic society, including university representatives, NGOs, and professional organizations. But whether regional or sectoral, assemblies often mobilize the members of only one or two associations and almost no "ordinary women", that is to say, women not already involved in collective action. Moreover, the "segment" called on to participate was the same, regardless of the topic discussed. The presentation that H., an NPP member, makes of her work is significant in this respect:

> "H: For the Women's Conference, we do the same as what we are doing now for others, such as the elderly [an elderly conference was taking place at the time]. We contact neighborhood associations or NGOs. We also send a written invitation to members of [local] government.
> MH: Who's in charge of that?
> H.: Me, J. [the head office], well...all the members of the centre. We go and meet associations; we go to local schools to explain what a conference is. We try to involve the whole city. In general, we give people a document so that they've got all the information.
> MH: During the last assembly [of Women's Conference], I had the impression that you knew practically everybody...
> H: Yes. because I know Laura, who is in charge of children's daycare. I called her and asked her to bring all her friends, neighbors and all the women she is in touch with. I also got in touch with members of the [Workers'] Party. That's the way we do it. For the disabled, we call Martine, because she is a great representative. For black people, we call Eugenia and she brings everybody" (Interview with H., Member of the NPP, 17 July 2007).

The process of closure of the participatory sphere can be understood as a result of the personalization of the civil society "segment". Because NPP members rely on already identified organizational leaders who ensure the mobilization of the group targeted, they empower some leaders more than others in the participatory field by calling on them to participate in every conference. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask whether the multi-positioning of some community or associative leaders in participatory devices (Romão, 2010; Sa Vilas Boas, 2012) is not just the result of participant's practices but also the outcome of NPP strategies to "construct" audiences.

Therefore, the professional mobilizer can have an ambivalent effect on public participation. Their existence demonstrates a deeper level of professionalization within participatory democracy. But this process does not necessarily lead to broader citizen participation. As the case of Londrina illustrates, the routinization of their activities goes along with a relative stabilization of the partners they invite to join their audiences.

This PPP can be seen as an intermediary profile between the militant public official, whose action is inspired by the activist sphere, and the public participation expert dealt with below.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION EXPERTS

Public participation experts differ from the other two types of PPP because their legitimacy and their will to organize and facilitate participatory mechanisms do not depend on an activist or a participatory trajectory. It is instead based on specialized knowledge that can be technical, bureaucratic or academic. This type of PPP provides the technological input for devices. They do not necessarily operate within local government and can work in private structures. They are hired by public institutions to develop a specific tool for a device or to take part in its operation. This third type is particularly heterogeneous, because it includes specialists in digital services or communication which influence grows in the participatory field in Brazil and elsewhere (Bherer; Gauthier; Simard, 2017). Some of the actors in charge of digital participatory budgeting (e-BP) in Belo Horizonte fall into this third category.

The Growth of Expertise in the Participatory Field

We have seen that militant public officials import notions and norms of collective action into the participatory field, whereas professional mobilizers use routine means to rally actors and groups. In both cases, they justify their actions by knowledge and expertise that are neither technical nor highly specialized, but which rely on skills learnt within civil society organizations or through participatory devices. The third type of PPP analyzed here has a different profile. Their integration into the participatory field depends on the mastery of expertise, defined as a specific competence, scientifically or technically based (Delmas 2011, 9).

The weight of expertise in the participatory field is significant in Belo Horizonte, a city that has experienced several types of participatory institution, such as the well-known participatory budgeting (PB) created in 1994, a participatory housing budget (PHB) drawn up in 1995, and a digital participatory budgeting (e-BP) starting in 2006. Due to the institutionalization of different well-known devices, Belo Horizonte is, characterized by the coexistence of different types of PPP. Nevertheless, this article mainly focusses on the third type, namely, public participation experts.

The emergence of this third type of PPP in Belo Horizonte needs to be linked to the evolution of power relations within local government and thus in the public participation sphere. Antonia Montenegro (2011) analyzes the evolution of the conceptions of participation due to the evolution of power relations between two groups in the public administration of Belo Horizonte, from 1994 to 2000. The first one was organized around the Workers' Party mayor, Patrus Ananias, after his election in 1994. Ananias defines participation as the Workers' Party "way of governing" and combined it with Catholic social thought. Participation is seen as the inclusion of working-class and poor residents in the definition and control of public action. It has inspired the design of face-to-face PB and PHB. A second group, represented by the head of the planning administration, Mauricio Borges, consists of scholars from CEDEPLAR (*Centro de Desenvolvimento e Planejamento Regional*), a centre specialized in regional planning with technical skills to support urban policies. This group promotes a more "technical-political" notion of public policy formulation (Montenegro 2011, p.156-57).

The second group has become increasingly central within local government, especially after the election of Fernando Pimentel as mayor in 2000. Pimentel is an economist and held the position of head of the planning administration in the 1990s. He helped promote the group of experts in economics and urban planning by giving them key positions in the local government. Under his mandate digital tools were used to enhance citizen participation, leading to the creation of the e-PB. A new profile of PPPs progressively emerged around this device and chosen for their academic or technical expertise.

Indeed, the selection of the PPP in charge of the e-PB depends on personal and academic proximity with the expert network that has governed the city of Belo Horizonte since 2000. The legitimacy of this third type of PPP does not rest on a militant or participatory trajectory, but on academic knowledge and the fact that they belong to a specific expert network. Two examples illustrate the specific profile of public participation experts. The first is the vice-secretary for planning who played a central role in monitoring of e-BP from 2006 to 2010. She explains her nomination as planning sub-secretary as follows:

> "A: I've never been a Workers' Party activist. I was a left-wing voter, I've always voted for left parties. And the people in power at that time had been my university teachers. I had a normal university trajectory. But I worked with them and I think they appreciated my work. I was also a municipal civil servant. So, when I was nominated by planning se-

> cretary, the director had been my teacher and dissertation director. Because at that time, there were a lot of teachers and we knew each other from the academic world" (Interview with A., former planning sub-secretary, 10 October 2014).

The second example is the project manager for the e-PB in 2014. This 38-year-old woman writing a PhD on participatory democracy, also stresses her academic trajectory and the personal relations with some experts when explaining how she was appointed:

> "D: There was this man from the planning administration. He knew me, and they needed someone. Why me? Because I did my master's thesis on eucalyptus monoculture and for this work, I got involved in several debates and NGO networks […]. I studied with this man who mentioned my name and I imagine that he thought I had the right profile to organize this work, to create content for digital participatory budgeting given my experience". (Interview with D., project manager for the e-PB, 16 October 2014)

The two examples given here are appointees working in local administration, such as the PPPs studied in Recife and Londrina. But the creation of a new tool, the e-PB, also goes hand-in-hand with hiring external actors, and more precisely a firm specialized in communication responsible for creating the architecture and design of the website. Selected through a call for offers, this enterprise also illustrates the progressive improvement in skills in public participation that influence the audience called on to participate. Indeed, hiring a firm that acts jointly with the municipality IT service is justified by its specialized knowledge of web design which should attract new audiences not familiar with participatory democracy. As the former sub-secretary of planning explains:

> "A: For the first edition of digital PB, the [municipality's] IT service did the website. But in 2008, we hired a firm because we wanted to get more online discussion tools, a more interactive site. […]. It wasn't really a break, as if it had been first developed internally and after externally. The municipality IT service was still involved in the process in 2008, but we wanted another type of developer, who would bring the expertise that the municipality IT service didn't have…to create tools for stimulating online debate, for the site to be more interactive, easier to manage". (Interview with A., former sub-secretary of planning, 10 October 2014)

As public professional experts emerge, the understanding of public participation evolves. Indeed, these PPP favor a shift in the audiences expected and the role given to them.

Including all Individuals to Express One Voice

In Belo Horizonte, the creation of digital participatory budgeting helps us understand how the process of skill improvement in PPP changes the aims of public participation. More precisely, in Belo Horizonte as in Londrina, the professionalization goes along with a resolve to enlarge the audiences called on to participate. In Belo Horizonte, however, this enlargement is based on a more individual conception of participation. This is no longer focused on groups defined as "excluded", "minoritarian" or "representative of a special issue", but is instead "citizen"-based.

First, it is worth remembering that different conceptions of participatory democracy coexist in the city and that we will only focus on one of them, developed by some public participation experts. Indeed, in Belo Horizonte as in many other cities with face-to-face participatory budgeting, the initial ambition was to "include the excluded", that is, actors generally under-represented in politics because of social inequalities. Public participation, and more specifically, participatory budgeting, was used as a tool that could change the social and political order by giving a voice to groups that usually have little influence in the political sphere. In Belo Horizonte, this conception still guides the action of some PPPs, especially in regional PB and PHB.

At first sight, e-PB appears to operate along the same lines. Its starting point is a critical analysis of face-to-face devices because it attracts citizens who are already engaged and not "ordinary" citizens. According to mayor Pimentel:

> "Traditional PB […] mainly reaches people who are already engaged, that's the truth. It reaches people active in community associations, NGOs, political parties or sports clubs, even though there are only a few of them. BP reaches people who have some time. We can't say that it only mobilizes activists, but it doesn't reach the part of the population that we could define as "ordinary citizens", those who can't be involved, because they don't have the time or the impetus, to attend three or four meetings" (quoted by Lana, 201, p. 229).

The use of digital tools should therefore follow the initial promise of participatory democracy and help "open up" the participatory arena which captures those who are already interested in politics. However, beyond this general objective, the ambition is also to attract new audiences. Whereas most PB targets low-income groups, e-PB should attract groups not normally embraced by traditional participatory devices, because they do not necessarily lack political resources. Two groups are expected to participate online: the middle class and young people. As the head of the administration called *Secretaria municipal adjunta da gestão compartilhada*, in charge of local participatory devices explains:

> "When digital PB was created…I wasn't there […], but I know that the idea was that participatory democracy comes at a cost and that not everyone is willing or interested in participating. Regional PB generally involves the poor because they need to improve their standard of living. And the middle class… even though confronted to public safety… it has much more infrastructure. When you put poor people and the middle class together, the gap may be huge. The latter may feel embarrassed because they come from rich neighborhoods. When they take part in a debate about sanitation, they think "Am I here to discuss that?" It can be difficult to mix projects and people" (Collective meeting, 13 October 2014).

Because it does not presume a direct confrontation, the web should allow dialogue between actors with different resources. This should help define projects for "the whole city" and not just for specific groups within the city. E-PB is seen as a new stage of participatory democracy that breaks with the NIMBY syndrome and helps raise the scale of deliberation. From then on deliberation is stimulated at the city level. Therefore, the definition of legitimate projects for the whole city should include all social groups and not just the poorest. According to the former planning official:

> "A: One objective was to stimulate discussion on the city as a whole. Because the regional PB…and I want to make it clear that it is perfectly legitimate…concentrates on the place where I live: my street, my neighborhood, my child's school. But we thought that it was important to combine this local look with a look at the whole city […] The place where I socialize, the impact that it has on the city. We thought that a broader project could be combined with this local look". (Interview with A., former sub-secretary of planning, 10 October 2014)

Like the professional mobilizer, the public participation expert wants to guarantee the expression of as many groups as possible. While the first concentrates on organized groups, the second wants to hear everybody's voice in a more individualized way.

Indeed, digital participation is seen as a tool that resolves the dilemmas of collective action by lowering the cost of participation: because citizens can make their point of view from home, in "two clicks", they expect a redefinition of the usual participant profile. Clearly, PPPs are aware of the digital inequalities in the social space and the risks of excluding poor people when using a digital tool. That is why the municipality provides computers with Internet access in low-income neighborhoods during each edition of PB, using a travelling bus. But if the digital device is organized to include rich and poor citizens, it is based on a specific notion of participation. Indeed, digital participation is seen as the expression of the

voice of all citizens but does not imply their consequent engagement. It is mainly considered as a "voting act" where individuals choose between different alternatives (Sa Vilas Boas; Sampaio, 2018). Therefore, participation does not necessarily entail a "gift of self". On the contrary, citizens should be free to choose either intermittent or long-term investment. In contrast to the militant public officials, this PPP does not necessarily perceive public participation as a prelude or an educative tool for collective action.

In e-PB, the legitimate participant is not an individual who has to be politicized in order to reinforce collective action, but an individual who is ready and willing to express an opinion in public debate.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the actors who organize, implement and facilitate participatory devices in order to understand how their actions shape public participation. Based on the analysis of the trajectory of PPPs and the institutional logic that frames their action, the article distinguishes between three types of PPP with differing notions of what constitutes participation and who exactly is the legitimate audience.

Militant public officials understand public participation from the standpoint of collective action. It has been chosen for its militant trajectory and activism orientates the way it defines public participation. The militant public official values an audience that represents or defends the cause promoted in their administration, from the perspective of social change. Public participation is therefore seen as a resource to reinforce their own administration and the civil society organizations on which their actions are based.

The professional mobilizers understand public participation from the standpoint of democratic pluralism. It has been chosen for its ability to mobilize people and it sees public participation as the confrontation of diverse points of view. For this objective, it uses the same know-how to guarantee an heterogenous audience in several participatory devices. In Londrina, these practices lead to a paradoxical closure of the participatory space around a group of civil society leaders. Indeed, the routinization of professional mobilizers' activities goes along with a relative stabilization of the partners they invite to participate.

The public participation experts define public participation from the standpoint of expertise. It has been chosen for its specialized knowledges and it wants to renew public participation with new technics. Particularly heterogeneous, this third type of PPP can or not see public participation as a tool for social change. When it does, it believes change will not arise from the mobilization of organized civil society but from individuals and/or technics.

The study of Brazilian PPPs gives rise to new questions to understand the evolution of public participation in the country. First, what is the weight of each type of PPP in the Brazilian participatory sphere? Has the proportion of each type changed if we compare the diffusion period of participatory mechanisms in the beginning of 2000 and the period of their decline in recent years? Second, what are the material and financial aspects of public participation in Brazil? Can we speak of a public participation "market" in this country? Which organization or actors live off and for public participation? These questions could guide new research projects on public participation in Brazil.

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IMPLEMENTANDO A PARTICIPAÇÃO PÚBLICA NO BRASIL: Sociologia de atores secundários

Marie-Hélène Sa Vilas Boas

As instituições participativas brasileiras foram analisadas por uma densa literatura que estudou os projetos subjacentes a essas mesmas instituições, o engajamento dos cidadãos e os efeitos variáveis da participação sobre o campo político. Porém, a literatura pouco questionou o papel dos profissionais da participação, ou seja a atuação dos atores específicos que são pagos para conceber, organizar e facilitar as instituições participativas. Este artigo, baseado numa metodologia qualitativa, propõe uma tipologia dos organizadores das instituições participativas no Brasil. A hipótese desenvolvida é que esses atores têm um papel fundamental na delimitação do que significa participar e dos públicos legítimos nas instituições participativas. Ao privilegiar certos perfis de cidadãos, algumas ferramentas ou alguns comportamentos sobre outros, estes atores podem dar às instituições participativas um escopo transformador ou pelo contrário, defini-los como uma simples consulta dos cidadãos.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Participação pública, Brasil, burocratas, profissionalização, tipologia.

METTRE EN ŒUVRE LA PARTICIPATION PUBLIQUE AU BRESIL: Sociologie d'acteurs secondaires

Marie-Hélène Sa Vilas Boas

Les dispositifs participatifs brésiliens ont été analysés par une vaste littérature qui a mis en évidence la diversité des projets poursuivis, les motifs de l'engagement des citoyens et les effets de la participation sur le champ politique. Toutefois, peu de travaux interrogent le rôle joué par les professionnels de la participation, c'est-à-dire les d'acteurs qui définissent, mettent en œuvre et facilitent les assemblées participatives. Cet article présente une typologie des organisateurs de la démocratie participative au Brésil, en se fondant sur une méthodologie qualitative. Il montre que ces acteurs secondaires qui traduisent et mettent en œuvre les projets définis par les élus jouent un rôle de premier plan dans la délimitation de ce que participer veut dire et des publics légitimes. En privilégiant certains comportements, certains outils ou certains acteurs, ces professionnels peuvent renforcer la portée transformatrice des dispositifs participatifs ou au contraire, les restreindre à de simples outils de communication institutionnels.

MOTS-CLÉS: Démocratie participative. Professionnalisation. Brésil. Analyse comparative.

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