



ACTORS, IDEAS, AND CHANGES IN POLICY SUBSYSTEMS

An Analysis of the National Youth Policy in Brazil

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to discuss the role of policy subsystems in the public policy process, highlighting maintenance and change in their implementation. In particular, it analyzes the process of agenda-setting and policy formulation of the Política Nacional de Juventude [National Youth Policy] in Brazil during the Lula government, emphasizing the symbolic and political disputes around ideas and values conducted by the different actors that permeated the subsystems of this sectoral policy.

KEYWORDS: *Public Policy; Policy Subsystems; Youth; National Youth Policy; Agenda-Setting*

Atores, ideias e mudanças nos subsistemas de políticas públicas: uma análise da Política Nacional de Juventude no Brasil

RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objetivo debater o papel dos subsistemas de políticas no processo de políticas públicas, destacando manutenções e mudanças na sua condução. Em especial, analisa o processo de agendamento e de formulação da Política Nacional de Juventude no Brasil a partir do governo Lula, dando ênfase às disputas simbólicas e políticas em torno de ideias e valores conduzidas pelos diferentes atores que permearam os subsistemas da política.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *políticas públicas; subsistemas de políticas; juventude; Política Nacional de Juventude; agenda-setting*

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INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the most diverse actors who have an active role in the formulation of public policies and those who influence the decision-making process has been highlighted in studies on governmental agenda-setting and formulation of public policies in Brazil. The increasingly frequent and advanced dialogues held between the literature on public policies and that on social participation

in the country have given special emphasis to two aspects — the identification of visible and non-visible actors in the creation of policy subsystems; and how non-governmental actors work in raising new issues and producing solutions in order to break up the monopolies of existing policies and change the *status quo* of specific policies, either through their action in participation channels and movements for exerting pressure and imposing demands on the government, or through any direct actions, as a result of social movement actors' penetration into the state, or even the co-optation of the first by the latter, as an institutional apparatus of decision-making power (Tatagiba, 2003; Abers; Tatagiba, 2014; Lavalle; Szwako, 2015).

In an attempt to discuss this relationship, this article analyzes the pre-decision process of the Política Nacional de Juventude [National Youth Policy] (PNJ) in Brazil, emphasizing the complex arrangements and articulations of ideas, values, and interests — of political and social actors — that have been observed in the policy subsystems around the theme of youth. The choice of this case as the object of our study is justified by the fact that, in Brazil, this policy is seen by the specialized literature as a clear example of the direct action of civil society actors in the structures of state, innovating in many aspects the state-society relationship within the policy-making process.

As a result of these dynamic interactions, the changes in the ways the issues are presented and solutions are proposed, as well as the structuring design of this policy, have become the object of our analysis. Our study has been carried out through semi-structured interviews, conducted between 2002 and 2019, with actors involved in the formulation of the PNJ, and a review of the existing literature, based on key concepts of public policy as defined in the works of John Kingdon (2003), and Baumgartner and Jones (1993) and revisited and developed by the national literature on the topic (Capella, 2007; Capella; Brasil, 2015a; Brasil; Capella, 2016).

In addition to this introduction, this article is divided into four sections. In the first one, we present the theoretical framework on agenda-setting and public policy formulation, highlighting, as the main focus of the analysis, the policy subsystems, as they have an equally important role in the process of both breaking up policy monopolies, and establishing new ones. The second section is dedicated to a historical review of government and civil society actions with regard to the theme of youth in Brazil, presenting the transformations, demands, identification of issues, and definitions concerning youth. The third part applies the theoretical concepts presented in the previous sections to analyze the changes in the conception of problems and solutions related to the youth, highlighting the role of social actors and their penetration in formal decision-making structures after Lula's

election in 2002, with the creation of the National Youth Policy in 2005. Finally, we present the main conclusions drawn and potential research that can be derived from the findings and reflections discussed in this study.

The literature on public policy that is dedicated to understanding the processes of governmental agenda-setting and public policy formulation aims to infer how decision-makers prioritize certain issues, turning them into actions, programs, and regulations, to the detriment of so many other themes that end up not being part of the restricted and highly competitive list of matters that make up the governments' agenda (Kingdon, 2003; Capella, 2007). With his Multiple Streams Framework, Kingdon (2003) not only presented a general theory on how the governmental agenda is set — using the metaphor of the three streams and the opening of the window of opportunity, its processes, and actors — but also recovered and redefined a series of crucial concepts for the process of identifying and considering problems, selecting alternatives, and characterizing and analyzing the political context. Both the policy communities and the concept of policy monopoly, which is present in Baumgartner and Jones (1993) Punctuated Equilibrium Theory, are crucial to understanding how a limited number of actors — who share ideas, values, and interests — shapes a public policy and guides its implementation by creating the image of the issue and the best alternatives for addressing it. Thus, for both Kingdon and Baumgartner and Jones, policy communities or policy monopolies — comprising their actors, processes, penetration, and cohesion of ideas — become the main unit for understanding and analyzing the processes of creation, maintenance, and change in public policies (Capella; Brasil, 2015a).

However, the discussion about these spaces — understood by Kingdon as communities and by Baumgartner and Jones as monopolies — predates these authors and is defined in the specialized literature as policy subsystems. By reviewing the studies on subsystems in the literature on public policy, and evincing similarities and differences between several corresponding terms (such as monopoly communities, thematic networks, public policy networks), Capella and Brasil (2015a) define subsystems as the intermediary space between macro and micro policy systems.

Subsystems comprise a limited number of actors and institutions, usually gathered into cohesive groups that specialize in certain public policy sector, channeling their efforts and compromising their resources to promote the image of the policy they defend. In this context, it is important to remember that, according to the view of this literature on public policy analysis, issues are social constructions, and groups interested in these policies act to make their constructions of issues and

solutions be recognized by decision-makers as the image of the public problem to be tackled by the actions of the state (Cobb; Elder, 1971).

Subsystems are, therefore, the space in which a select group of actors specialized in a sectoral policy — by sharing the same constructions of problems and solutions, based on their interests, ideas and values — sets out how the state identifies and addresses public problems through the promotion of public policies. According to this conception, subsystems are marked by limited participation, by imposing restrictions on new actors, groups, and conceptions of problems and solutions that may interfere with the implementation of the policy at stake. For this reason, according to the Punctuated Equilibrium theory (Baumgartner; Jones, 1993) and using Lindblom's (1979) concept of incrementalism, public policies tend to remain stable for long periods, which are marked by small changes and slow and gradual adjustments, even though there may be moments punctuated by rupture and great changes. It is in this relationship between incrementalism and abrupt changes that subsystems emerge as privileged locus in the analysis of the formation and change of the governmental agenda.

Although there seems to be no doubt about the importance of subsystems for the analysis of public policies, as demonstrated by the literature presented, a methodological issue needs to be faced: how to identify the subsystems, actors, and ideas present in these spaces? Since not everyone involved is visible or institutionalized in some way in the government structure, this seems to be the first challenge of this analysis.

The action of groups, actors, and institutions outside the subsystems, but on and about them, represents not only a space for the exchange and dissemination of ideas in search for recognition of new images of policies and new conceptions of problems and solutions. Depending on the receptivity of the subsystems and the way such groups are organized, it is possible that their members and ideas are institutionally inserted in the state apparatus as members of the subsystem with decision-making power. Thus, the subsystems can be understood not only as an arena where groups and social movements press for the recognition of demands — as in the traditional representation model — but also as a gateway for demands, institutionalizing ideas, and interests that came from outside the state (Dowbor, 2012; Abers; Serafim; Tatagiba, 2014).

By analyzing the case of the recognition of youth as a target for public policies and highlighting the construction of ideas concerning problems and solutions that permeate this broad field, this article seeks to map the actors and ideas that have permeated this policy over time, pointing out and analyzing changes in their subsystems. Based on semi-structured interviews and with the great support of

the existing literature on the subject, gathering official documents related to social movements, events, and the actors involved in the process, the next sections will present, according to the historical or critical approach, the history of youth policies in Brazil, from the decentralization of actions in different ministries to the creation of the PNJ. It is important to warn the reader that the very concept of youth is a social construction and that the definition of youth becomes crucial for us in order to understand those who are included and those who will be excluded of the scope of the proposed public policies. Moreover, the definition of youth delimits not only the public, but also the actions that can be taken to the detriment of so many others that will be ruled out.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF YOUTH POLICIES IN BRAZIL

The re-democratization in Brazil and the promulgation of the Federal Constitution of 1988 allowed for the emergence of a series of civil society's demands after a long period of military dictatorship in the country. Among these demands, it is possible to note that themes related to rights claiming (to housing, access to transportation, reduction of cost of living, health, sanitation, education, and day-care centers) emerged throughout the country with initiatives undertaken in the different levels of government — federal, state, and municipal (Rocha, 2012; Avritzer, 2010). In this scenario, youth policies were not central to the agenda of most social movements in the 1980s. It was throughout the 1990s that we noticed a great experimentation in innovating programs and public policies in Brazilian cities.

According to Sposito and Carrano (2003), the Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) administration (1995-2002) was a turning point in youth policies within the federal government, when more than thirty programs were created in this area. The demands, which were still poorly organized and the result of local and regional experiences, led to decentralized government programs allocated to different ministries. It is noteworthy that such programs were generally linked to the actions of larger ministries, such as the Ministries of Labor, Health, and Education, as they had larger budgets and institutional capacity to implement better-designed policies with greater territorial coverage. In the second term of the FHC administration, the Ministry of Labor already coordinated programs which were largely focused on the young people, such as the *Jovem Empreendedor* [Young Entrepreneur], aimed at the professional training and subsequent financing of technical levels for those aged 18 to 29 who were interested in starting their own businesses. The Ministry of Social Assistance and Development implemented

the program *Agente Jovem de Desenvolvimento Social e Humano* [Young Agent for Social and Human Development], whose goal was to prepare young people for the labor market. The aforementioned authors consider that most of the proposed programs

assumed the fetish of training young people for a job market that offered few opportunities, without questioning the economic and social reality of a historical period that experienced a recession caused by high interest rates and the acute effects of the crisis in the world of work. (Sposito; Carrano, 2003, p. 31)

If, on the one hand, the FHC administration marked the beginning of the recognition of youth as a target for public policies, characterized by a policy image focused on unemployment and economic issues — whose solutions would lay on professional training programs, insertion in the labor market, and the fight against deviant behavior, such as drug use, criminalization, and school dropout —, on the other this period also gave rise to a more integrated articulation of actors and the establishment of networks based on discussions around themes that affect youth. Activists, university researchers, and a group of NGOs stand out in this scenario as unifying actors in the debate on the situation of youth in the country between the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s.

The subsystem that was being formed, still with low visibility and cohesion among its members, found in the expansion of the conflict and visibility of its demands an alternative for greater recognition of its proposals. From 1995 to 2002, several meetings, seminars, and activities brought together multiple actors whose main objective was to promote the theme of youth. These meetings, held by different actors, demonstrate that the theme of youth was latent in Brazilian civil society and was beginning to catch the attention of decision-makers and to influence their priorities (Castro; Abramovay, 2006; Rodrigues, 2008).

By reviewing reports and analyzes of specialized literature, it is possible to observe the creation of a policy image for the youth policy, until the beginning of the 2000s, based on four main elements: (1) youth unemployment; (2) lack of professional qualification; (3) juvenile delinquency and urban violence; (4) and issues related to the reproductive health of young people (teenage pregnancy) (Sposito; Carrano, 2003; Castro; Abramovay, 2006; Rodrigues, 2008; Rocha, 2020). A government sector was mobilized for each of these problem areas, such as the Ministries of Labor, Education, Health, and Justice. As the programs were fragmented, there wasn't a unique articulation to coordinate government actions.

Strongly influenced by the events and social movements of previous years, the youth policies adopted from 2003 — with the election of President Lula — shifted towards a new understanding of the concept of youth and, as a consequence, towards a new construction of images for the issues and viable solutions regarding this theme.

Federal programs for young people were then understood from a perspective of recognition of rights, closer to social policies than to employment and income policies — as was the case of the examples from the previous decade —, thus expanding the scope once limited to professional qualification and access to the labor market. One of the highlights of this period is the ProJovem, also established in 2005, whose purpose was to serve young people aged 18 to 24 who had not completed elementary school. Its actions were coordinated by the National Youth Secretariat of the General Secretariat of the Presidency, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labor and Employment, and the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger.

The establishment of a National Youth Secretariat (*Secretaria Nacional de Juventude*) in the executive branch, along with a social and political dynamic present in society, triggered an intense process of drafting bills and regulations on the theme of youth that contributed to strengthening the public policy sector in Brazil. Three actions and legal frameworks symbolize the advancement of this agenda in the executive branch: (1) the Constitutional amendment proposal, (2) the Youth Statute Law, and (3) the promotion of Youth Conferences. The *Proposta de Emenda Constitucional* [Constitutional Amendment Proposal] (PEC) no. 138/2003, which was turned into Constitutional Amendment no. 65/2010, provides for the protection of economic, social, and cultural rights of youth, aiming to guarantee constitutional rights that were already assured for other age groups, such as children, adolescents, and the elderly.

Based on this brief history, the main objective of the following section is to analyze the reasons for the change in the implementation of youth policies in Brazil, taking into account the formation of a policy subsystem around this theme. We present — through interviews, literature review, and an analysis of official documents — the structuring and greater cohesion of actors, ideas, and values based on previous experiences, exchanges, evaluations, and new proposals arising from analyzes carried out on events that occurred throughout the 1990s and 2000s; the election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (*Partido dos Trabalhadores* [Workers' Party]) and the consolidation of an arena with greater exchanges between state and non-state actors, understood as the three of the most relevant indicators in the analysis that will use concepts from the literature on public policy and participation to understand the changes in youth policies in Brazil.

ACTORS AND IDEAS: THE CONSTRUCTION OF PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN SUBSYSTEMS

When analyzing the different views and concepts related to children and adolescents that prevailed among the social actors who participated in the 1987-88 Constituent Assembly, Pinheiro (2004) pointed to a scenario in which part of the construction of the image of youth was focused on the idea of social repression. The view that “street children” were a threat to public safety was constant among parliamentarians who defended the expansion of criminal responsibility of minors as a way to induce the policy of removing “problematic” adolescents from the streets of urban centers. On the other hand, Pinheiro says that the *Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente* [Child and Adolescent Statute], which was enacted on July 13, 1990, replaced the 1979 *Código de Menores* [Minors Code], and introduced new political, legal, and social references.

The new legal framework banned the “minor” category from the conceptual and legal framework, incorporating the notion of adolescents as right-holders, in accordance with the 1989 International Convention on the Rights of the Child. Amidst this symbolic dispute for the definition of the concept of youth and the problems and possible public policies aimed at them, a mixed idea of youth prevailed, comprising notions as to economic problems, low insertion in the labor market, and combating drugs and delinquency. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, especially during the administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the inclusion of youth as a public policy target was characterized by the attempt to centralize federal actions that took place in states and municipalities, especially those distributed throughout several ministries, with a focus on work and income, but without coordination (Sposito; Carrano, 2003; Perez; Passone, 2010).

The 2000s saw the creation of a subsystem that began to guide and centralize proposals, facing a weak existing policy monopoly on this theme. Based on the interviews and documents from the 1990s we analyzed, one may notice the low cohesion and articulation of the youth sector, which built a weak and poorly structured subsystem whose actors maintained a low level of interaction and values (Kingdon, 2003; Baumgartner; Jones, 1993).

The interviews conducted within this research, as well as the existing literature on the matter, indicate that the elements responsible for the creation of a specific subsystem on the theme of youth, coordinating and formulating actions that resulted in the PNJ, were: (1) the series of events organized and carried out throughout the early 2000s, redefining the structures and institutionalities of the sector; (2) the

government turnover, with the election of President Lula (Workers' Party); (3) the search, creation, and organization of indicators that represented the situation of youth in Brazil, interpreting and describing problems based on information and real dimensions of their conditions; and, finally, (4) the insertion of actors from civil society movements in the institutional apparatus of the state.

The interviews and documents analyzed point to three dynamics that were important for the creation of the PNJ in 2005, namely: the Projeto Juventude [Youth Project¹ of Instituto Cidadania; the Federal Government's Inter-ministerial Youth Group; and the Youth Committee of the Chamber of Deputies. The Projeto Juventude seminars, which took place in 2002 and were coordinated by Instituto Cidadania, were the central space to bring together civil society actors who debated the situation of young people, as well as contributing agent to debates on the need to create government programs aimed at young people. The inter-ministerial group of the federal government, coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Presidency, organized the official data and systematized the federal programs, articulating a network of technical servers that carried out this survey (Castro; Aquino; Andrade, 2009). The Federal Chamber of Deputies created the Youth Commission, whose purpose was to prepare legal frameworks on youth, and thus articulate a network of parliamentarians from the governing base to promote the agenda in the legislative branch (Rocha, 2012).

According to the interview conducted with Regina Novaes, the Projeto Juventude seminars were an important moment to strengthen the network of actors and consolidate the public policy subsystem around the theme:

*Different groups, networks, and youth movements, young trade unionists, young people linked to pastorals and political parties, as well as people from the third sector and scholars on this field at national and international levels were invited. These "stakeholders" took turns in the audience and in round tables to try to "guide" civil society and the government through the new period that would begin in 2003.*²

Along the same lines, Fernanda Papa states that the Projeto Juventude fulfilled the role of bringing together various actors who worked in different sectors and fields of society for the creation and defense of youth policy proposals, establishing as its main agenda the definition of an image of youth from the perspective of subjects of rights, identifying as the problem both the situation of unemployed young people and low education. The subject of rights perspective has been discussed in the literature on public policy since the late 1990s and early 2000s (Freitas; Papa, 2003; Castro;

[1] Between August 2003 and May 2004, the Instituto Cidadania promoted a broad program of studies, research, discussions, and seminars in several states under the name of Projeto Juventude. The document created by the Projeto Juventude was one of the sources used to support the formulation of Brazil's national youth policy (PNJ), enacted in 2005. See the full report at: <<https://registrojuventude.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/dicas-projeto-juventude-final-1.pdf>>. Accessed on: Oct. 11, 2021.

[2] Respondent: Regina Novaes, a researcher on youth since the 1990s and a Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ). She was a special consultant for the Projeto Juventude and the president of the first tenure (2005-07) of the Conselho Nacional da Juventude [National Youth Council].

Aquino; Andrade, 2009; Rocha, 2012) as a counterpoint to the traditional views that framed young people as synonyms of low-income students or a risk to public safety. This perspective already influenced part of civil society actors, especially those linked to education and to the debate on human rights. According to the Projeto Juventude, the term “subject of rights” involves the “understanding of youth as a unique condition in relation to other population segments; the notion that young people are subjects of rights, with multiple dimensions to be considered” (Instituto Cidadania, 2004, p. 17).

This interpretation and the defense of a public problem went against the previous debate that associated young people with violence and crime and linked them to the public safety agenda, to re-signify the issue according to a social logic based on work and education. The Projeto Juventude meetings are then considered the locus of the creation of a policy subsystem that placed youth as its main object, involving actors strongly linked to the epistemic community (such as researchers and experts in the area), political parties, government managers, parliamentarians, NGOs, consultants, and youth advocates.³

When portraying the actors involved in the events, it is important to highlight the moment when these moves and arrangements took place. The period is marked by the 2002 presidential race that resulted in major changes in the executive branch with the election of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva for president and the first term of the Partido dos Trabalhadores [Workers’ Party] (PT). The historical relationship and articulation of this party with civil society actors — especially those associated with the youth theme, notably academic researchers, activists, social movements and NGOs — presented itself as a unique opportunity for change in public policies. The turnover in the executive branch and, consequently, in a large part of the ministerial and decision-making structure, together with changes in the political context and in the actors involved in the interpretation of problems and in proposing solutions, emerged as a trigger for changing the agenda (Kingdon, 2003).

After taking over, President Lula brought the government structures closer to the network that was consolidated around the theme of youth, calling upon the executive coordination of Instituto Cidadania to diagnose the situation of Brazilian youth, establishing broader and more direct relations between the State and organizations and non-state actors. Thus, a process of preparing a diagnosis and building indicators was started with the objective of providing a solid, methodology-based mapping of the situation of young people in Brazil. The project involved different social and political actors who worked with the theme of youth, thus offering proposals for public policies for the Brazilian state.

[3] For more information on the actors involved, see the Projeto Juventude’s report and Rocha (2020).

In 2004, the federal government created the inter-ministerial youth group with the purpose of mapping out the youth policies and programs or actions existing in all ministries, in order to have a general diagnosis of the living conditions of the young population in Brazil. In addition to the specific activity proposed to the group, it is important to highlight the approximation of these actors in a single institutional space as well as the very creation of such space, which favored and supported the cohesion of a previously fragmented subsystem that had poor discussions on ideas, images of problems, and alternatives for solutions.

Between 2002 and 2004, the theme advanced rapidly in the priorities of the federal government, reaching the National Congress, which played an important role in the institutionalization of the demand as formulated, expanding the debate and recognition of the theme to different party groups through the creation of the Comissão Especial de Políticas de Juventude [Special Committee on Youth Policies] (Cejunvet). According to Federal Deputy Reginaldo Lopes (PT, Minas Gerais), who actively participated in the entire Commission process, it was created to understand why young Brazilians were pessimistic, as pointed out in the 2003 Unesco report. Along with this, there was the fact that Brazil did not have a regulatory framework for youth.⁴

[4] Respondent: Reginaldo Lopes, Federal Deputy for Minas Gerais (PT) between 2003 and 2010. He established the Comissão Especial de Políticas de Juventude [Special Committee on Youth Policies].

The Youth Commission played an important political role in raising the youth agenda. In addition to discussing the proposals, federal deputies and top managers of the federal government gave public visibility to youth policies. In the diagnosis carried out in these spaces, three major themes drew attention: (1) youth unemployment; (2) the low education level of young people; (3) the federal programs disarticulation — a theme that was highlighted, above all, after the approximation of actors who performed in an uncoordinated manner in different ministries. The commission's work was also marked by the plurality of actors, through public hearings on different topics related to young people, such as education, culture, work and income, sport and leisure, health and sexuality, and citizenship. These public hearings served as a subsidy to the coordinators and rapporteurs of the thematic groups in the preparation of their reports.

In the field of youth, the proximity of non-state social actors was increasingly intensified, demonstrating the path traced by the state in the construction of public problems and, subsequently, showing the government's porosity in its process of recognizing demands and in the transit of actors of social movements into the state apparatus. In the case studied, it is clear that the transformations in the Brazilian youth policy were based, from the construction of problems, on the proposition of alternatives, as well as on strategies for expanding the debate and restructuring its institutions. These

transformations point to the construction of a new policy subsystem and the role of new actors “in the” subsystem, not anymore and only “about” it, which redefined the relations of power and forms of action and the relationship between society and the state. An example of this relationship can be noted on the articulation and the government actors who acted in a disjointed manner in different ministries, but who were able to pool together with a common goal in the inter-ministerial group that was created, or even by the inclusion of the Projeto Juventude participants in the composition of the management board of the Conselho Nacional da Juventude, and in other institutional arenas that permeated the structuring of the youth area.

In addition to the turnover put forward with Lula’s election, the greater cohesion of actors and ideas provided by the events and organized groups and by the inclusion of actors from these movements in the state apparatus — which were crucial aspects for changing the image of problems and solutions in the field of youth —, another action with a strong impact was taken during the first years of Lula’s administration. In March 2004, the work of the inter-ministerial group for youth began, which aimed to map existing youth policies, programs or actions in all ministries, preparing a general diagnosis of the living conditions of the young population in Brazil.

Emphasis should be given to the challenge named “Expanding access and permanence in quality schools”, whose diagnosis showed that 17 million (51%) young people were not included in the formal education system, and, out of this total, 11 million (66%) had not completed high school. About 4.5 million (20%) of young people between 24 and 28 years old still attended basic education (elementary and high school). According to the then Minister of the General Secretariat of the Presidency Luiz Dulci, diagnoses carried out by the inter-ministerial group drew the government’s attention and was a fundamental element for understanding the problems involving youth and for proposing alternatives and solutions in the preparation of the PNJ:

In the diagnosis we saw that there were 4.5 million young people who fell into this category. These young people were not served by the regular educational system. We had to combine education with professional qualification. Experience showed that schooling alone was not enough to take poor young people back to school; it was necessary to have something that attracted them to school, such as professional qualification, which would be a strong motivation for them.⁵

Beto Cury reaffirms this stand, stating that young people who were out of school, unemployed and without elementary education were a problem to be faced:

[5] Respondent: Luiz Dulci, the Minister of the General Secretariat of the Presidency during Lula’s administration.

[6] Respondent: Beto Cury, the Subsecretary of Articulation with Civil Society of the General Secretariat of the Presidency between 2003 and June 2005 and National Secretary for Youth from 2005 to 2010.

At the time, we identified that in Brazil there were millions of young people who were out of school, unemployed and without elementary education, hence the need for a specific program, such as ProJovem, which combined education, work and citizenship in one integrated curriculum. It was presented in October.⁶

The creation of an extensive and relevant database that portrayed the situation of the Brazilian youth, which broadened the vision of the problem and modified the previous image, from a security issue to a social issue, was an instrument that, in addition to bringing together state and non-state actors in a process of collective construction of problems and solutions, came to be used as a condition for advocating for the image of youth policy.

In 2005, the Secretaria Nacional de Juventude [National Youth Secretariat] (SNJ) was created along with the Política Nacional da Juventude (PNJ). This agency was created through a federal law that also established two other mechanisms: the Conselho Nacional de Juventude (CNJ) and the Programa Federal de Inclusão de Jovens de Baixa Renda [National Program for the Inclusion of Low-Income Youth] (ProJovem). The creation of these spaces was a response to the demand of the Projeto Juventude that mobilized the political community around the agenda. The National Youth Secretariat (SNJ), an agency within the state apparatus, was an old demand of youth actors, for whom it was necessary to have an agency to articulate the creation and coordination of federal programs for youth. ProJovem addressed the main problem that had been mapped by Lula's administration: unemployment and low education among low-income youth. The program followed the logic of a social policy, serving low-income youth and providing professional qualification and higher levels of education. This "flagship" program met the paradigm of "youth as a subject of rights", which saw in the service to low-income young people a way to guarantee and promote citizenship through courses to improve education, thus guaranteeing their autonomy.

ProJovem emphasized professional qualification and higher education, points which were also present in the policy image of the 1990s. However, this program made progress by placing these two objectives within a political narrative to promote the rights and autonomy of young people. The form and the alternatives of actions to achieve these goals have changed. This program was articulated with new institutions and actors such as the National Council and the Secretariat, whose objective was to foster institutionality in Brazilian municipalities through educational and cultural actions and the promotion of the conditions for change in the employment and income of this group.

FINAL REMARKS

This article sought to provide an analysis of the main aspects that have generated important changes in the agenda-setting and formulation processes of public policies for youth in Brazil. By observing the object from the perspective of the literature on public policy—especially that dedicated to analyzing the composition of policy subsystems, their actors, ideas, and values—, we highlighted important contributions from the current literature on social participation to review and analyze the path that has culminated in the preparation of the *Política Nacional da Juventude*. Based mainly on the concepts defined by John Kingdon (2003) and by Baumgartner and Jones (1993), we were able to see how changes in the definition of the youth concept modified the image of the sector and, consequently, the public policies that were produced.

The policy image regarding youth that prevailed in the federal government until the early 2000s laid on problems related to public safety and juvenile delinquency, unemployment, lack of professional qualification, and reproductive health issues. This is what the literature on youth calls problem construction based on seeing young people as “a synonym for problem”. This policy image, with its definitions of public problems, has guided the creation of policies aimed at young people, as argued in the literature on public policy.

From the understanding of youth as a public directly related to the problems of public security and marginality to the transformation of its target audience into subjects of rights, which involved complex arrangements and structural situations, such as access to income and education, we point out four major aspects that allowed and drove changes in youth policies in Brazil: (1) redefining the structures and institutions of the youth sector, with the promotion of events, creation of secretariats, commissions, and participatory institutions; (2) government turnover, with the President Lula’s election (PT); (3) the search, creation, and organization of indicators that represent the situation of youth in Brazil, interpreting and describing problems based on information and real dimensions of their conditions; and, finally, (4) the insertion of actors active on this theme in the institutional apparatus of the state, representing civil society movements, the academia, and interest groups.

The first aspect is linked to building a more cohesive and organized subsystem, based on the exchange of information and previous experiences promoted at state and local levels throughout the late 1990s and early 2000s. In this scenario, national events that intended to debate the problems of youth, the participation and action of various actors from civil society, social movements, NGOs, international organizations, epistemic communities, and actors from the government itself gain prominence in the construction of this locus of transforma-

tion of the meaning and problems of Brazilian youth. Not only non-state actors joined these subsystems, but actors already active in state structures were also able to get together and debate the directions of youth policy, as seen with the creation of the inter-ministerial group.

The second point concerns the change in the executive branch, in 2003, with Lula's election (PT). This turnover not only replaced the President of the Republic but also the entire ministry structure, which is part of the bureaucracies and groups linked to the government. The history of the Partido dos Trabalhadores and its relationship with members of civil society and social movements allowed it to break a fragile monopoly that had been created in previous administrations and which, although fragmented into several ministries with a supporting role, defined the implementation of youth policies in the country. Directly linked to the previous point, we highlight aspects related to the porosity of Lula's administration, which not only brought society and state close together, but also absorbed actors and demands from social movements and organized groups into the institutional structure of the state.

Finally, the fourth and last element presented is linked to the use of data, indicators, and analyzes as "conditions" to justify and defend a certain image of youth and its priority problems. Based on methodologically collected, treated, and analyzed information, indicating an interpretive path and presenting viable solutions to the findings, the image of youth was enhanced by the diagnoses produced collaboratively by various actors and institutions from within and outside the government.

With the increase in the number of participants, resulting from the strategies of promoting meetings and creating commissions, secretariats, and councils, we seek to highlight that the result of the Política Nacional da Juventude, as it was structured, reflects the interaction of the values and ideas of multiple actors and institutions that, together, worked on building a new "policy image" for the youth sector. The result of this process that created a cohesive, organized group with common ideas at a time of change in policy-markers, whose party had a history of working with civil society organizations, equipped with data and indicators, led to the creation of the PNJ, its institutional and organizational apparatus, and a series of actions and programs such as ProJovem.

More than the adoption of a single explanatory concept proposed by the specialized literature, we identified, in the analysis of this sectoral policy, that it was the combination of these four elements, together and articulated, that enabled what Kingdon calls the "opening of a window of opportunity" for changes in public policy. Changes in the structure of this sector with the expansion of debates, creation of institutional apparatus and participatory institutions; government turnovers, including the presidency and the ministries; construction of indicators and specialized

studies to map the conditions of the sector and its target audience, and the permeability and institutionalization of actors and proposals arising from the interaction between state and non-state actors are, according to the proposed analysis, the explanatory key to the changes that occurred in the youth policy subsystem in Brazil in the early 2000s.⁷

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