



Article

The institutionalization of “youth” as subject of public policies in Brazil: CONJUVE in the scene¹

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify some traces of the institutionalization process of the "youth" as a subject of public policies in Brazil. The discussion is based on the analysis of the movements of some political actors belonging to the National Youth Council (CONJUVE) and their contradictions and tensions regarding the institutionalization of public policies for/of youth, as well as the constitution of a public fund that makes them viable. It introduces data from a research developed between 2012 and 2016, for which we had the contribution of collectives elected for CONJUVE for the 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 terms, in addition to having heard other political actors of the Council. Data were collected by means of semi-structured interviews, participation and observation of activities, as well as document examination. The results indicated that the advocacy of access to the public fund is found in the discursive plan of the political actors, and the existence of ambiguities regarding CONJUVE functions and even the lack of regimental competences that allow it to make effective propositions, including of budgetary matters. It was observed the coexistence of demands for income redistribution and recognition of their identities, as well as the strong presence of political parties and student movement in the leadership of political actions and debates, even though the discourse is aimed towards the participation of distinct youths.

Keywords: Youth public policies, Youth participation, National Youth Council, Youth.

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Introduction

After two decades of military regime in Brazil, progressive forces and movements from the so-called civil society celebrated the promulgation of the 1988 Federal Constitution, the “Citizen Constitution”, and the return of direct election for the presidency of the Republic, in 1989. One outcome of this process that was quite relevant was the conquest, within the scope of the law, of a social security system⁵ to be embodied in the country.

Childhood and youth as categories have acquired political relevance in this scenario, starting with the promulgation of the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA) in 1990. Nonetheless, the youth remained without having a clear and defined place in the new model of social protection⁶, which was intended to be more universalist:

In the social field, Brazil has the tradition of focusing its policies on basically two target groups – paying and non-paying –, segmented in large populations: children, pregnant women, handicapped people or those in need of special care and, in a much more recent period, elderly people. The youth, usually considered as carriers of the future, and an always promising future, do not fit in this picture. [...] they are placed in a transitory category – from childhood to maturity –, being them responsible for the guarantee of access to education and health to the necessary instruments for the qualification of their work force when in the “adult” age (COHN, 2004, p. 160-161).

According to ECA, teenagers are those between 12 and up to 18 years of age. The Youth Statute, in turn, was promulgated in 2013 only, defining youth as those subjects between 15 and 29 years of age. Despite the supposed universality of this definition, the attempts for its operationalization in actual public policies took into account that the age limits of youth always need to be socially contextualized. Just like it has been claimed for a long time in social sciences (PAIS, 1990), “Youth” is a cultural and social construction located in the time and spaces of each society, with heterogeneous forms and contents. The cultural, class, and legal transversalities, among others, are common issues for the youth, however addressed in distinct ways. In this sense, in unequal societies, the way how the youth is dealt with by public policies will be necessarily diverse, being legitimate having as a reference the category “Youths”.

Already in this view, still along the 1990s, several punctual governmental programs and actions aimed to specific youth populations, focusing on violence and social risk and vulnerability situations were developed. It can be said that the condition of subject of these actions was little (or was not) present for the youth. In the 2000s, more systematic initiatives of social and political institutionalization of the public actions aimed to the youth went ahead, with the creation of specific public instances like advising and coordinating bodies and youth departments (SPOSITO, 2007). This institutionalization process also implied the work of non-governmental

⁵ “An integrated set of initiative actions from the Public Powers and the society, aimed to warrant the rights concerning health, welfare and social work”, according to article 194 of the 1988 Federal Constitution.

⁶ Despite the variations of social protection systems between distinct countries, the three elements of social security – health-welfare-assistance – form its hard core (BOSCHETTI, 2012).

organizations in partnership policies with the State GOHN, 2003)⁷. It also implied a change in terms of youth participation, even though directing claims and actions to more local and focused scopes (MÜXEL, 1997; MISCHÉ, 1997; SOUSA, 1999; NOVAES, 2000; KEIL, 2004; CASTRO, 2008), intending to foster social change in a more micro social than structural scale. It was glimpsed, there, a turning point, in which the “young” could become less *subject to* public actions and more *subject of* public actions, searching to guarantee participation in their definition and accomplishment (FERREIRA, 2017).

The youth social and political participation in the public actions that assume them as subjects of rights was, however, a processual conquest (DEMO, 1996). It was developed as the State itself was recognizing the need to establish a dialogue between distinct knowledge, values, practices, behaviors, coexistence forms and projects, assuming that in a democratic regime these elements were presented by diverse people and groups, generating tensions, but also searching for consensuses. The distinct projects of society being disputed both in the civil society and in the State institutional apparatus are processed by means of interactions between the subjects and their political actions – among them, the vote and, equally, through the expression of opinions and forms of existence, of organization for claims, of participation in interface channels with the governments, etc. (DAGNINO, 2002; GOHN, 2005).

For this democratic dialogue, it is necessary to consider the participation of the most vulnerable youth sectors in the fruition of an extended set of citizenship public rights to a life of dignity, being rights related to the access to education, work, culture, leisure, among others (CARRANO, 2006).

The public policies that search to stimulate the participation of youth cannot be indifferent to the barriers that young people, especially the poorest young males and females, face to survive and to construct their life projects. Thus, it is necessary to consider the picture of scarcity of education, participation and social integration opportunities faced by them. Democratic public policies need to start from realistic diagnosis on the objective conditions on which the youth can be raised to constitute themselves as participant social actors of public life. [...] Emancipatory policies of encouragement to participation should contribute to remove those obstacles that hinder the development of personal and collective projects and block channels of participation, spaces and times of relationships that are made by cooperation or conflict in public life (CARRANO, 2006, p. 4).

⁷ In this work, we understand as youth participation not only the process of proposition and follow-up of public actions and policies, but also the search and the access to public rights for the development of youth citizenship (CARRANO, 2006). According to Carrano (2012), the emphasis of the national and international debate on the youth participation is, mainly, on two perceptions: young people do not participate, and the youth participates by means of new configurations. The author calls our attention to not incurring into an epistemological rupture that would disregard the classic forms of participation – such as student and partisan militancy – highlighting only the new forms. It is pointed that the youth participation in Brazil, within the public policies scope, can be understood, also in a combined form, by means of at least three perspectives: the youth participation as a target public of these policies (under the risk of also suffering actions of governmental control), the youth participation as their builders, and the youth participation as their implementers (including volunteer actions). National studies approach these dimensions, among which we highlight contributions from Sposito (2006; 2007).

On one hand, there are programs and actions aimed to certain youth profiles, and intended to widen them in a more comprehensive form with resource to public funds. On the other, there is a picture also marked by budgetary restrictions that have been imposed to the Brazilian society, making it even more difficult to enforce social rights. Thus, the following research question was posed by us: how did the youth movements and organizations articulate and operate, and which strategies of political education and work have they used in the search for access to the public fund for the development of youth public policies in Brazil?

In this sense, the research from which this text results was aimed at understanding the ways that were assumed by youth organizations and movements in Brazil, amongst those that became institutionally recognized, in the construction of the access to the public fund in favor of the implementation of youth public policies, as well as the movements of political actors from the National Youth Council (CONJUVE) regarding this fund, their contradictions and tensions.

The public policies operated by the State in the capitalist society, supported by the institutional apparatus and the norms of a democratic-representative government, are constituted and actualized in an arena of conflicting interests in the dispute for the public fund coming from the contributions from capital and work. This way, the State needs to manage the social issue that is intrinsic to it also with the management of the dispute for public resources, as the social rights are not necessarily guaranteed by it (OFFE, 1984). The pressure exerted by the distinct sectors and groups of the society on this management might favor or not some balance – always in tension – of destination of resources to the social policies and for reorganization of the capital.

Considering the question posed and the picture that contextualizes it, next we present the methodological procedures used in the study and its main results.

Methodological procedures

The starting point for the research development was the National Youth Council (CONJUVE), being the studied cases three collectives elected for its composition in the 2012-2013 term – Center of Youth Studies and Memory (CEMJ), National Forum of Black Youth (FONAJUNE), Brazilian Union of High School Students (UBES) – and two in the 2014-2015 term – National Organization of Blind People of Brazil (ONCB) and Marist Union of Brazil (UMBrasil) –, besides having been heard other political actors of the Council.

In the selection of the research subjects, i.e., these youth organizations and movements, we resorted to the contributions from Ilse Scherer-Warren (2009) on social movements and the organizational levels often present in the civil society: 1) grassroots organizations or localized association, such as NGOs and civil/community associations; 2) political articulation and mediation organizations, such as “forums of representatives from grassroots organizations and engaged citizens, national associations of NGOs and third sector, public interest interorganizational networks, and the networks of networks” (SCHERER-WARREN, 2009, p. 17); 3) mobilizations in the public sphere related “to the marches or demonstrations in the local, regional or national public space [...] advocating for citizenship or in favor of human rights being threatened or to be conquered” (SCHERER-WARREN, 2009, p. 18).

Besides respecting the categories of civil society representatives adopted by CONJUVE, as well as the criteria that grounded this research on most frequent

organizational levels present in the civil society, as well as on the composition and direction of the collectives for young subjects, it was adopted, initially, the search of diversity of groups with seats in the Council as an inclusion criterion for invitation to participate in this study. It was invited to contribute a studies and research NGO (academic field), a forum of ethnic-racial marker (identity affirmation field), and the student movement, an entity inserted in a wider social movement whose age range also comprises younger youth, from 15 to 17 years of age.

With the collectives from the 2012-2013 term, we interviewed leaders, observed activities and events organized by them and to which we were invited to participate, and gathered documents regarding their organizations. Based on initial research findings and the approach to the subjects, new hypotheses and inquiry questions were raised. This led us to make the decision to also turn our look to the process of construction of CONJUVE's agenda, to the set of fights, conflicts and movements of its political actors regarding the public fund and the construction of youth public policies in national scope, providing a bigger centrality to it in the study. This decision resulted in the expansion of the research participant subjects and the data set collected.

The perception of the existence of a partisan focus – the Union of Socialist Youth (UJS) of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB) – for two of the three contributors invited was a major factor for the widening of the range of collectives, aiming to reach a greater plurality from CONJUVE. Thus, in 2015, we decided to invite other contributors.

Despite the efforts made toward the expansion of youth collectives, only two, indeed, made themselves available, having entered the list of interviewees another two collectives from the 2014-2015 term, CONJUVE's executive-secretary and president. It was also gathered and analyzed documents (minutes of meetings, publications and others) from the collegiate, besides having followed-up events and activities.

The youth as subjects of public policies in Brazil: the institutionalization of the National Youth Policy and CONJUVE's creation

We start by describing the institutionalization process of the National Youth Policy and the CONJUVE's creation of evidencing, on one hand, the institutional progress of the treatment given to youth public policies in Brazil and, on the other, the almost inexistent concern with the constitution of a National Youth Fund or actual forms of access to the public fund that could make these policies actual. It is highlighted the efforts from national and international bodies, political groups and movements to bring forward the youth public policies in the formal and discursive plan. The fight for the insertion of the topic in governmental agendas was not, however, followed by the intransigent search for access to the public fund.

In the 1980s, the aiming of action to childhood and youth acquires space in the scope of social demands, in the context of fights for civil and political freedom in the beginning of Brazil's re-democratization. However, these will come to be, indeed, parameterized by a neoliberal standard, due to the economic guidelines placed by

the Washington Consensus⁸ to Latin American countries. In 1990, Law 8069, the Child and Adolescent Statute (ECA) is promulgated, advancing in the understanding of children and teenagers as subjects of rights, and replacing the doctrine of irregular situation of the Code of Minors by the doctrine of comprehensive protection⁹ – formed by three elements, namely children and adolescents as subjects of rights, in peculiar circumstances of development, and absolute priority (CLEMENTINO, 2011).

From 1995 to 1998, in the first term of president Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC), the issues of youth resulted from the great contingent of young people in situation of social vulnerability, unemployment, violence, health conditions linked to the exercise of sexuality, etc. (FURIATI, 2010). Also, in this period, there was progress in the expansion of primary education, increasing the schooling of the 7- to 14-year-old population from 80% in 1980 to 97% in 2000 (CARVALHO, 2014).

In 2002, the Fluminense Federal University (UFF) created the first Youth Observatory, followed by another one in University Federal of Minas Gerais (UFMG), in 2003. Also in 2002, the *Public Policies Seminary: youth on the agenda*, organized by the NGO *Ação Educativa* [Educational Action], in partnership with Foundation Friedrich Ebert, gathered researchers, managers, NGOs and youth groups for the debate concerning youth policies (CLEMENTINO, 2011), searching to articulate subjects, knowledge, demands and proposals on the topic, which indeed happened, becoming a landmark for scholars and professionals in the field.

In 2003, in the beginning of president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's term, the Special Commission Aimed to Follow-up and Study Public Politics Proposals for the Youth (CEJUVENT) of the House of Representatives started to discuss policies aimed at addressing youth needs. In 2004, CEJUVENT conducted a series of public hearings of state conferences, culminating in a National Youth Conference. Also in 2004, it was accomplished a survey of the programs aimed to the young by the Interministerial Work Group (GTI) of the Youth, coordinated by the General Secretariat of the Republic, 19 Ministries and Secretariats, with the contribution of the Applied Economic Research Institute (IPEA). Having developed analyses and studies, the GTI recommended the implementation of a National Youth Plan (SPOSITO, 2007). Over 150 federal actions developed in 45 programs in Lula's first term were identified, being 19 specific for the public between 15 and 24 years of age (CLEMENTINO, 2011).

In this context, an important landmark in the orientation of the discursive matrix of the youth policy in Brazil was the publication of *Public Policies of/to/with Youths* in 2004 by UNESCO. It emphasizes the youth image as strategical actors of development, despite not disregarding the vision that they are also a group of risk and subjects of rights (FURIATI, 2010).

In 2005, the federal government presented its first actions for the construction of a National Youth Policy: the National Youth Plan was established through the Temporary Provision 238 of February 1, 2005, and, later, with Law n. 11129 of June

⁸ According to Montañó (2002), in 1989 it was held a meeting in Washington between international bodies such as the MIF, the IDB and the World Bank, staff from the USA government, and Latin American economists to guide the process of adhesion of Latin American countries to neoliberalism and follow all its adjustment politics to the scratch.

⁹ The landmark of comprehensive protection is article 227 of the 1988 Federal Constitution: "It is the duty of the family, the society and the State to ensure children and adolescents, with absolute priority, the right to life, health, nourishment, education, leisure, professional training, culture, dignity, respect, freedom and family and community life, as well as to guard them from all forms of negligence, discrimination, exploitation, violence, cruelty and oppression."

30, 2005. It was created the National Youth Secretariat (SNJ), aiming to articulate the policies developed by the ministries, and CONJUVE, an interface channel between government and civil society.

CONJUVE became a State's consulting body with the attribution of preparation and proposition of guidelines aimed to public youth policies, among which:

(...) to develop studies and research on the social-economic reality of the youth and to promote the interchange between national and international youth organizations. CONJUVE is composed by 1/3 of representatives from the public power and 2/3 from the civil society, in a total of 60 members, being 20 from the federal government and 40 from the civil society. [...] the group from the civil society [...] reflects the diversity of the social actors who contribute for the enrichment of this dialogue. The Council has representatives from the youth movements, non-governmental organizations, specialists and people with public acknowledgement for the work they develop in this field. The Council's members range from members of the student movement to the network of young environmentalists; from young agriculture and urban workers to blacks, aboriginals and *quilombolas*; from young women to young entrepreneurs; from hip hop representatives to members of religious organizations, among others. The Council members are chosen for a two-year term by direct election, and the position of president and vice-president are alternated, each year, between government and civil society¹⁰.

Along 2005, it was created, also, the National Program of Youth Inclusion – ProJovem, intended to develop the following three elements: conclusion of primary education, professional qualification, and community work of 18- to 24-year-old youth. With the promulgation of Law n. 11692 of June 10, 2008, ProJovem was restructured, extending the age group for 15- to 29-year-old people, being organized in four modalities¹¹.

The Proposal of Constitutional Amendment 42/2008, called Youth PEC, was promulgated in 2010, inserting the term *youth* in the chapter of basic rights and guarantees. It was also prepared the Project of Law 98/2011 (4.529/2004 in the House of origin) for the Youth Statute (BRASIL, 2010). Approved and sanctioned in 2013, already in president Dilma Rouseff's term, Law n. 12852, the Youth Statute “rules the youth rights, the principles and guidelines of youth public policies, and the National Youth System – SINAJUVE” (BRASIL, 2013).

Also in this term, in 2012, it was launched the first phase of Live Youth Plan (DONATO, 2014) for prevention of violence against black youth and the experimental version of Youth Station (BRASIL, 2014a) to inform the youth on programs and actions in their localities. In 2013, it was implemented the Participatory Youth Observatory, the *Participatório*, as an initiative for the government-society relation by means of the Internet (SECRETARIA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUDE, 2014).

¹⁰ According to information from CONJUVE's official website. Available at: <http://www.juventude.gov.br/CONJUVE/sobre>. Accessed: 20 September 2013.

¹¹ Available at: <http://www.brasil.gov.br/sobre/educacao/mercado-de-trabalho/projovem>; <http://www.juventude.gov.br/guia/principais-programas-de-juventude/programa-nacional-de-inclusao-de-jovens-projovem>. Accessed: 12 August 2013.

In that same year, it was established, within the scope of the General-Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, the Interministerial Committee of the Youth Policies (COIJUV), by means of Decree n. 8074, as a permanent agency for management and monitoring of the federal level public policies for the youth. COIJUV prepared and sent to the Civil House, in January 2014, a Decree Draft (BRASIL, 2014b) for regulation of the National Youth System (SINAJUVE) and the mechanisms and criteria to be adopted for the granting of half-price ticket for low-income youth and students. Although the document deals with SINAJUVE financing, the constitution of the National Youth Fund did not make up the text of the Draft, as no funds can be established by means of a decree (COMITÊ INTERMINISTERIAL DA POLÍTICA DA JUVENTUDE, 2013). The Draft was returned to COIJUV with alterations and significant reduction (SECRETARIA NACIONAL DE JUVENTUDE, 2014). In the same year, it was published the *Brazil Youth Agenda: national research on profile and opinion of young Brazilians*, whose data would subsidize the preparation of public youth policies integrated to the view of the youth.

On October 5, 2015, by means of Decree n. 8537, Dilma Rousseff's government regulated the laws on half-price tickets for access to artistic-cultural and sports events, and on the procedures and criteria for the reservation of seats to low-income youth in inter-state public transportation system vehicles¹².

As part of the institutionalization of “youth” as subject of specific public policies in Brazil, public bodies – such as advising and coordinating bodies, secretariats, councils, besides forums and youth centers – emerged, aimed to articulate actions in the executive government scope in partnership with the civil society, searching to assure certain sectorial transversality and interlocution with the youth segments. Such proposals resulted mainly from electoral commitments of center-left and left-wing parties that, by means of the militancy of its youth or pressure from the student movement, were able to insert the topic in their political platform (SPOSITO, 2003).

In general, following Abramo (2007), it is possible to identify some trends that contributed for the youth to be assumed as a topic of State policy, in the mid-2000s, with repercussion in CONJUVE's constitution process. One of them is formed by youth actors linked to the student movements as well as progressive and left-wing political parties, whose claim signaled the creation of participatory managing bodies for preparation and development of youth policies. A second trend consists of cultural and community youth groups that brought proposals of multisectoral policies to the interlocution spaces with the public power. Finally, a trend formed by NGOs and entities of distinct types that received support from international cooperation bodies and enterprise foundations with the declared goal of quitting the social debt with the youth that are poor and vulnerable to violence situations, early pregnancy, health conditions resulting from the exercise of sexuality, so that they could have the possibility of living their own youth.

In this process of institutionalization of the “youth” as subject of public policies, it is worthy, though, to indicate the tensions and disputes that happened between these different agents, namely around the creation of CONJUVE and the access to public resources for the implementation of the aforementioned policies, that is, to the public fund.

¹² Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2015-2018/2015/Decreto/D8537.htm. Accessed: 10 October 2015.

Discourses for diversity, practices of representativeness: movements of CONJUVE's political actors regarding the public fund

The public policies are prepared and implemented amidst a conflictive arena of interests in the dispute for contributions coming both from the capital and the work, that is, in the dispute for the public fund. It is up to the State to manage this dispute, and the pressure exerted by distinct social sectors and groups on this management will be able to favor or not some balance, always in tension, in the destination of resources for social public policies and those referring to the restructuring of the capital (OFFE, 1984). It is in this sense that Francisco de Oliveira (1998, p. 53) claims that the public fund is not an

[...] expression only of state resources aimed to support or finance the accumulation of capital; it is a mix that is formed dialectically and represents in the same unit, contains in the same movement, the reason of the State, which is social-political, or public, if we wish, and the reason of the capitals, which is private. [...] The production process of this movement, that I try to conceptualize in the public fund, is the process of class struggle.

The research findings indicated much more strongly the movements and tensions of CONJUVE's political actors regarding the fight for the actual recognition to the right of access to the public fund and, therefore, for the constitution of the National Youth Fund, than the strategies of political creation and work used to try to access and apply it. The scarce concern given to the actual attainment of access to the public fund, both in historical shift of institutionalization of public youth policies, as signaled in our literature review, and by the youth collectives participating in the research, is one of the factors that explain such findings.

What the research has shown was that the advocacy of the composition of a National Youth Fund, that is, a specific fund for financing the development of public youth policies, was present in the discursive plan of the collectives participating in the research and the political actors of CONJUVE. However, there was not, indeed, a consistent debate nor a structured proposal of how this Fund would be formed and work. Likewise, currently there is no specific financing for the National Youth Policy. The council members of CONJUVE's Board who were interviewed, and even the Decree Draft prepared by the Interministerial Committee of Youth Policies and sent to the Civil House in January 2014, that proposed the regulation of the National Youth System and Fund, had shown diffuse ideas to this respect. The interviews conducted with them made evident, on the one hand, the discourse advocating for resources for the development of public youth policies and a national proper fund; on the other, the impasse between the recognition that there was no governmental initiative towards the creation of a fund and the necessary advocacy of this government, of whose base it was part. The dilemma was having to charge that government and, at the same time, to advocate for it, as shown in interviews excerpts:

We are not closed to any position, we are open to the dialogue, the civil society thinks that the creation of a fund is quite important. I don't think that the State, that the National Youth Secretariat or that Dilma's government nowadays really prioritize the creation of a fund. Actually, the fund does not serve to the manager. The manager does not want any fund at all. [...] The problem is that we need, and nowadays we

advocate for this government that we have (CEMJ's President, CONJUVE's elected counselor; emphasis added).

Financing still is an issue for us. We are defining better how to make the Plan to function, if there are other types of places, other types of financing, of cities, states, initiatives that already happen with programs that already belong to the youth government, others from non-governmental organizations, entities (UBES's President, CONJUVE's elected counselor; emphasis added).

If I'm not mistaken, one of these proposals indicated that it was necessary that this resource came from these taxes that we receive for [Social] Security. [A discussion concerning] taxing the great fortunes, having part of this money subsidizing this policy. But also, more recently, this issue of the oil emerged. Subsalt, actually. That a percentage from the Subsalt, of this collection, should be used to subsidize this issue of the Youth Fund, of the public youth policy (National and Pará state coordinator of FONAJUNE, CONJUVE's deputy-counselor).

CONJUVE's president stated that the constitution of the National Youth Fund was not a priority at that moment, and said that the national congress had placed conservative and even reactionary legislative agendas from the point of view of the rights conquered by the "minorities" of blacks, women, LGBTIQ+ community, among others, affecting directly the youth population. In face of this threat, CONJUVE started to fight much more against possible retrocessions than in favor of advances. She added that other tasks related to the Youth Statute approved in 2013 had not been concluded.

In an environment that does not favor the creation of a new tax, in an environment in which we have not yet been able to conclude the regulation tasks of the Statute, in an environment where the Chamber brought to us this agenda of reduction (of the criminal age of majority) and in an environment of fiscal adjustment, I would say that *the Fund is not a topic that will be approached that soon. [...] We do not feel convinced by the federal government on this topic of the Fund, I'm telling you frankly.* The Statute is approved, but we have not yet been able to regulate the rights to half-price ticket and the interstate half-fare, not even the National Youth System. Then, *it is not that we address the issue as stepism; actually, quite often, reality is dialectic and contradictory. [...]* Thus, it would be one of the next tasks. It's not that we don't want it to be this way, but it's because *the context also is not pointing towards an extensive agenda of rights. On the contrary, we are having to make a barricade so that we don't go backwards* (emphasis added).

Silva and Macedo (2016) point the difficulty the consulting boards have to transform their proposals into administrative acts and, more specifically, CONJUVE's hardships in making budgetary and financial proposals due to this lack of competences assigned to the collegiate in its internal regulation.

It is possible that this regimental weakness contributes for the advocacy of the access to the public fund in favor of the development of public youth policies being

kept in the merely discursive plan, as well as for the maintenance of diffuse proposals regarding the sources from which the resources would originate.

The contributors heard in this research recognized the basic importance of the existence of resources for the development of public youth policies, and at the same time they reaffirmed the understanding that they are transversal and that they need to be included in all ministries and secretariats of the executive power. One dimension of this discursive trap lies exactly in claiming a more central position to the public youth policies, and at the same time diluting them in various sectors. The representativeness form of a supposed youth diversity in CONJUVE that, after all, goes little beyond the traditional political specter, is certainly among the political conditions that, previously, had hindered the later creation of this fund.

The participation of organizations, movements and political actors in CONJUVE

In the social and political participation of the organizations that make CONJUVE, with prominence to the research contributors, it was verified that the beginning of the trajectories of the interviewed political actors was marked by the involvement with the student movement, political parties and churches.

Although CONJUVE's discourse and intention were aimed to the diversity of youths in its composition and work, actually it was the politically organized youth that participated of it. Perhaps other youths were not interested in participating in institutional channels of the Brazilian democratic structure. Others, possibly, did not know its way of functioning and did not have the "necessary" education for the political game of this structure. Maybe others produced political cultures¹³ whose goals are to acknowledge the existence, not to resist or subvert the social order, as Ferreira (2010) clarifies. It is relevant to consider that "the existing representations in the councils not always allow the inclusion of all the sectors of the society and that [these] reduce the participation of the less organized sectors" (SILVA; MACEDO, 2016, p. 25).

It is possible that the political actors interviewed also have as a goal the occupation of seats in councils and positions in bodies of the executive power, that is, the development of a political career (even when not openly declared). This corroborates the interpretation of the creation of public bodies in the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s as a "form of response to the partisan youths" (SPOSITO, 2007, p. 31); a pressure exerted mainly by youth actors "linked with progressive and left-wing parties" (ABRAMO, 2007, p. 9).

The testimony of one of the participants, working at UJS, helps us to understand the issue:

[On the action of the UJS in coordinating bodies and/or secretariats]: sometimes, as a director, for instance, in the National Youth Secretariat, the associate national secretary came from UJS. And she has a prominent work there. But, for instance, in the city of Olinda in Pernambuco, Jundiaí in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, the coordinating bodies are directed by UJS, members of UJS participate. {Same in} in Contagem, Minas Gerais. And there is also the work in other state coordinating bodies, for instance, in the states of Bahia

¹³ We start from Maria da Glória Gohn's understanding, for whom the political culture is "a set of values, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors on politics, understood as something beyond the one that unfolds in the parliaments, in the government or in the act of voting" (2005, p. 34).

and Amazonas. *Anyway, quite often, when not in coordinating bodies, in the youth councils, which also is one of our guidelines of work, the participation in youth councils* (UJS's coordinator of youth public policies and CONJUVE's former-council by UBES; emphasis added).

CONJUVE's Board, formed by the president, vice-president and executive-secretary and, in its extended version, by the coordinators of its four internal commissions, was responsible for gathering and preparing the agenda for ordinary and extraordinary meetings, as well for the Board itself. These members were the ones who spoke the most in the meetings. We understand that there is, in this sense, a type of "representation of the representation". By the way, according to Silva and Macedo (2016, p. 55), "other studies had already shown that most of the national councils gather a participatory elite, aggregating people from higher social-economic classes and with higher technical and political qualification".

The interviewed subjects expressed the discourse of the plurality and diversity of youths, but the practice was vertical (from State to society), what ended up leading to a search for these diverse youths and their placing in a traditional, pre-set institutional format. José Murilo de Carvalho (2014), when developing a study on the creation of the Brazilian citizenship, observes an excessive appreciation of the Executive Power; a "statenship" (p. 221), not citizenship; a statist or governmentalist political culture. This implies a vision on the State as a being with absolute power, either as "repressor and taxes collector" or as "paternalist deliverer of jobs and favors" (p. 221). In turn, Sposito (2007), when examining actions of the public power from Brazilian cities and metropolitan regions aimed to the youth population, also mentions the "participation induced by public power" (p. 32), a participation as "antechamber of government" (p. 31).

Traditional and "new" youth movements: tensions and dialogues

A tension between more traditional youth movements and the new ones is located within this impasse between incorporating new expressions and forms of youth work and the persistence of a governist orientation in the youth participation.

Despite the discourses pointing to the plurality of youths in the Council's composition, its structural and institutional form was tied to a traditional model of political organization. Despite the collective not being the most traditional one, when it entered CONJUVE it needed, at some moment, to deal with this structure and the rules of a game already established by a previous political and institutional culture. The relations with the student movement and the political parties are inevitable and coordinated by more classic perspectives with a strong political-ideological marker (BRENNER, 2011), with prominence to social class.

The student movement and the political parties kept exerting leadership in the political debates and in the organization of demonstrations and pressures on the public power. Other youths were also involved, but it was the youths traditionally organized that were in the front of the initiatives.

This inequality of power of influence and articulation became even more evident during the panel on the evaluation of 3rd National Youth Conference, held during the seminary *Public Youth Policies in Brazil: advances and perspectives*, in March 2016 in Brasília/DF.

The highlight of the divergence happened when council members from the LGBTIQ+, blacks, communities/traditional peoples, and handicapped youth movements reported discriminatory situations during the Conference.

Reports on the carelessness when not addressing transsexuals by their social names in the registration lists, name badges, and flight boarding passes, besides transphobic attitudes and comments even from members of the organizing commission. Council members from the black and traditional communities and peoples movements criticized the lack of flight tickets for delegates elected by their collectives that had already been confirmed, but that ended up not being issued. Lack of lodging and feeding for young people who, in their own words, “already suffer daily with racial and social-economic inequalities and had to, once again – and now in a space of fight for rights – to face indifference, lack of information and welcoming”. Other youngsters left from their remote communities and made efforts to arrive at the Conference, paying all the fuel expenses, but were not reimbursed as it was promised by the organizing commission. Youths with hearing and visual handicaps who did not have Conference adapted materials and had to, just like in daily social spaces, to resort to the solidarity of people who were next to them for help. Some artistic and cultural groups had been invited to perform, but there was no physical structure to allow it. Besides not receiving the payment promised, they were not even able to perform.

Initially, CONJUVE’s president – in that occasion, the collegiate presidency had already changed – and the SNJ’s representative, who were conducting the panel on this evaluation, listened more than dialogued with the criticisms. The replies came, mostly, from the council members linked to political parties and student movement.

Despite some who recognized the mistakes and the legitimacy of the criticisms, all those, without exception, who asked to speak and used the microphone made a speech on behalf of “bigger issues”, on behalf of the “national political context, hostile to the achievement and conquest of rights”, on behalf of the “unit” because the “adversaries” are external and not internal. It is interesting to observe that there was even a certain standardization in the way of articulating the discourse and in the corporal language itself, as if they were making a speech in podiums, with all the mannerisms of the career politicians. On the other hand, the representatives from other youth movements presented an orality that evoked more emotional aspects.

The speech of the council member from the National Association of Graduate Students (ANPG), affiliated to UJS, evidences the attempt to reduce the criticism made:

I don't even know if I'm disappointed because we came here to make an evaluation process of the Conference and *I'm feeling that we are going to make an evaluation process of the Conference's politics, of the proposals. And the National Youth Council, in its majority, presents a list of claims on the structure. Thus, my friends, I'm sorry, but I know that you can present better criticisms.* Thus, very friendly, I want to say that a lot of you here presented a lot of small claims on structure and very few issues on politics. A lot of you! A lot! A lot! [...] You know, people who participate for the first time of big events and come across with these hardships that exist in all and any great events. I don't mean to naturalize the problems. Now, coming here,

grabbing the microphone and saying only this, com'on, *I expect more from a national youth council member*. And now I'm challenging you here in a really friendly way, you know? This is not the best CONJUVE collective that we have ever had! If the best CONJUVE collective that we had is one that comes here and presents as evaluation *a lot of structural problems, even decontextualized from the national moment lived by us*, we are in trouble (saying transcribed from the audio record of the panel on evaluation of the 3rd National Youth Conference – 03/11/2016; emphasis added).

In our view, it was unveiled that, while the former were feeling disrespected in the acknowledgement of their differences and specificities, having denounced the contradictions present in a space of claim for youth rights, of debate and fight for public policies that actualize these rights, the latter strongly disrespected such contradictions and appealed to a unit in the “fight”. Although, certainly, they knew that it was a matter of clash between agendas from historical movements and new social movements. Not by chance, several people made reference to the “balance between the new and the classic”, to the “synthesis of the new with the old”, to the “fraternal union instead of a fratricide internal relation”.

Based on the analysis of demonstrations in Barcelona in 2001 and 2002, and in Lisbon in 2007, Feixa, Pereira and Juris (2009) point out the differences between the “old”, the “new” and the “new, brand new” social movements and the participation of young people in these configurations. For the authors, besides the emergence of other movement forms combining characteristics of “old” and “new” contexts, not fixing static models, there is the participation of traditional militants in new ways of organization next to activists from more recent generations of social movements, as well as “new, brand new” movements that use “classic” strategies (such as marching and boycotting, for instance) and the “old” movements that modernize their techniques and discourses.

In fact, the “two” movements presented reasonable arguments concerning the proposals and claims from the youth in a youth conference. It was observed the coexistence of agendas for redistribution and agendas for recognition (FRASER, 2006). This indicates the copresence of new social movements (GOHN, 2004; FEIXA; PEREIRA; JURIS, 2009), whose claims were not marked out by social class issues, but also by other markers as race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, regionality, among others, with the permanence of more traditional movements, like the student and the partisan ones, that continue to search for answers for the deep social-economic inequalities that devastate the country. For Sposito (2007, p. 28), “it is necessary to consider that the actions where the new happens in rhythms marked by mismatches and inequalities have a certain hybridism”.

There are authors who already signed this coexistence of demands for redistribution and demands for recognition in the Brazilian reality. Data from the research reaffirmed that there are non-resolved historical issues in the country and that they add to new problems from the contemporaneity (NOGUEIRA, 2004). This reality is quite distinct from central capitalist countries (POCHMANN, 2004), for instance, where the experimentations of the youth condition perhaps can go beyond the social class markers.

The publication regarding the Station Youth program developed by SNJ evidences this perspective, in which universalizing policies must walk side by side

with politics with specific topic directions. This was advocated regarding the establishment of a National Youth Policy:

Public youth policies should combine mechanisms of social protection; indispensable redistributive expedients in a context where situations of youth exclusion predominate; actions that generate opportunities of professional, societal, and cultural insertion and also stimulates the participation of the young. [...] To construct a National Youth Policy – in accordance with the characteristics of the current youth condition and the distinct youth demands –, the perspective of the “rights” should be present in the distinct programs and actions developed by various Special Secretariats and Ministries aimed to the redistribution and the promotion of access, recognition and participation of the youth [either with a universal character; thematic or specific character, exclusively thought for the youth segment] (BRASIL, 2014a, p. 122, emphasis added).

In general, it was observed an effort of the collective linked to political parties in not bonding the partisan affiliation with the financings and forms of attainment of resources. They were restricted to point out the support from municipal governments without declaring whether there were partisan alliances or, as in one of the cases, it was recognized the attainment of public resources by means of projects that had been approved.

This lack of clarity was not found in the other organizations that did not have partisan bonds: they signaled openly that they had received private financings.

The peculiarity lied on the National Black Youth Forum which, for not having a legal constitution, had difficulties to pool resources, even though it was recognized the advantages of not being institutionalized, such as the bigger horizontality of its internal organization and the non-linking of their agendas to the funders' interests.

There was confusion between the fight for the access to the public fund in favor of the development of public youth policies and the access to governmental financing by the collectives that occupied CONJUVE's seats, in order to accomplish their own works and activities as entities organized with social and political missions to be fulfilled. It was also related with the form by which the actions of the public power in the scope of the social policies were found in that national scene. This meant that, in the absence of public effective youth policies, what we had were governmental actions and programs aimed to some youth populations or that involved youth population segments. And who were, mostly, the implementers of these actions and programs? No one else than the NGOs, those that pled and received governmental financing to develop their activities, their works. This seemed to be the core of the confusion between struggling for the access to the public fund for the development of public youth policies and access to governmental financings to execute proper actions and programs, despite financed by the public power.

Final remarks

It does not seem to be the best way merely disqualifying and refusing the institutional apparatus, either on behalf of the various non-organized youths or in favor of tackling the corruption and patrimonialism enrooted in the Brazilian politics. The revitalization of a democratic political culture that transcends the discursive plan is a possible way. Thus, the role of institutions like the school, for instance, and of the

most diverse non-school, formal and informal spaces, becomes basic for the youth political socialization and education.

The intensity and quality of the participation of the young in and by a democratic political culture lie much more in their capacity to influence decisions than in which and how many political spaces and processes they can be part (CARRANO, 2012). The possibilities of the youth participation to influence the decisions also depend on a technical and political qualification, whose responsibility must be assumed by the adult subjects and the institutions they represent. On the other hand, this same qualification can restrict plural participations that are essential for the democratic coexistence and the construction of possible consensuses in public spaces of conflicts, reasoning and negotiation. It can also make it difficult those distinct and innovative proposals elaborated by the youth and, with this, undertake a fragile youth participation and with low impact in the decisions.

What is intended is not the refusal and the permanent disqualification of the institutional apparatus. The construction of this structure around the youth in recent Brazil – and the National Youth Council is part of it – has been an advance, but it is necessary to make it powerful for the dispute for the public fund, for the fight for the rights of citizenship that will be achieved with social policies. Within these, it is necessary to have an expansion beyond the three elements of the Brazilian social security – health, assistance and welfare –, including education, public transportation for the free circulation, leisure, culture. The political fights that we have been experiencing both nationally and internationally also pass through the class struggle – as the equality between all is foreseen in law, but it is necessary to enforce other rights so that it is accomplished –, by the civil society as an arena of dispute, but also, within the scope of the State, by the political society. What is intended is the radicalization of democracy, the expansion and qualification of the participation in the institutional structures, by tensioning and widening the path of the social policies and the citizenship.

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