



Turning the tide: elements for the participatory development of a marine bill

Mudando a maré: elementos para a construção participativa de um projeto de lei para o mar

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ABSTRACT: Despite its relevance, stakeholder participation in the drafting of laws, norms, and programs for the Brazilian maritime territory still needs to be improved, occurring episodically and at the local scale. To increase the engagement of different actors, thus consolidating more democratic governance practices, creating and expanding spaces and opportunities for listening, dialogue, and influence in decision-making is necessary. Since 2012, Bill 6.969/2013 - which will establish the National Policy for Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Brazilian Marine Biome (PNCMar) - has been formulated and discussed with different actors to expand the public debate on coastal and marine environment policies. The idea, which originated from organized civil society, took shape and content and became a bill articulated in the Legislative Power by the Environmentalist Parliamentary Front. At the same time, the civil society continued to be mobilized to support the proposal. Through the evaluation of the process of development of this bill, the article discusses the strategies and methods of participation adopted, pointing out its qualities (e.g., diversity of engagement methods, availability to dialogue with both favorable and contrary actors, social learning by the actors involved) and weaknesses (e.g., limited participation of the private sector and representatives of states and municipalities, as well as concentration of participants from the capital and the south and southeast regions of the country). Pointing out mechanisms to encourage social participation is essential, given the political circumstances of weakening democracy and reducing official spaces for participation. Therefore, the article also identifies and discusses six structuring elements to strengthen this and future participatory processes: leadership, diversity, engagement, learning, documentation, and negotiation.

Keywords: participatory approach; social learning; legislative power; democracy.

RESUMO: Apesar de relevante, a participação social na elaboração de leis, normas e programas para o território marítimo brasileiro ainda é incipiente, ocorrendo principalmente de forma pontual na escala local. Para ampliar o engajamento de diferentes atores de modo a consolidar práticas mais democráticas de governança, faz-se necessário criar e ampliar espaços e oportunidades de escuta, diálogo e influência na tomada de decisão. Em um esforço de ampliação do debate público sobre políticas para o ambiente costeiro e marinho, desde 2012, está em curso a formulação e discussão com diferentes atores sobre o projeto de lei 6.969/2013 que instituirá a Política Nacional para a Conservação e o Uso Sustentável do Bioma Marinho Brasileiro (PNCMar). A ideia, originada a partir da sociedade civil organizada, ganhou forma e conteúdo e tornou-se um projeto de lei articulado no Poder Legislativo pela Frente Parlamentar Ambientalista. Em paralelo, a sociedade civil continuou mobilizada para apoiar o trâmite da proposta. Por meio da avaliação do processo de construção desse projeto de lei, este artigo discute as estratégias e métodos de participação adotados, assinalando suas qualidades (ex.: diversidade de métodos de engajamento; disponibilidade de dialogar com atores favoráveis e contrários; aprendizagem por parte dos atores envolvidos) e fraquezas (ex.: limitada participação do setor privado e de representantes dos Estados e municípios, assim como concentração de participantes da capital e do eixo sul-sudeste do país). Apontar mecanismos para fomentar a participação social é essencial dadas as circunstâncias políticas de enfraquecimento da democracia e redução de espaços oficiais de participação. Sendo assim, o artigo também identifica e discute seis elementos estruturantes para fortalecer tanto este quanto futuros processos participativos: liderança, diversidade, engajamento, aprendizado, documentação e negociação.

Palavras-chave: abordagem participativa; aprendizagem social; poder legislativo; democracia.

1. Introduction

Scientists and government managers have widely discussed the need to broaden and improve social participation in public policy development and implementation processes in recent decades (Reed, 2008; UNESCO-IOC, 2021). The list of justifications for giving stakeholders a voice is extensive and includes, for example, legitimacy, transparency, and promoting social learning (Jacobi & Barbi, 2007; Quesada-Silva *et al.*, 2019; Grilli *et al.*, 2021). This is even more relevant in the coastal and marine zone context, a complex environment permeated by intense conflicts of interest between different users (Tafon *et al.*, 2021).

Initiatives seeking to include society in national and international environmental policies are

gradually emerging, revealing that decision-makers gradually recognize the need to understand who is affected by decisions and who can influence their outcomes (Reed *et al.*, 2009). However, in practice, this interaction is still incipient. This distancing is partly due to a lack of knowledge about the process of building laws and regulations (Baldauf, 2020), as well as distrust in institutions and leaders (Em-pinotti, 2011) and a lack of spaces for more participatory development (Trimble & Plummer, 2018; Gonçalves *et al.*, 2021).

Despite these weaknesses, there is a global trend towards greater democratization in environmental decision-making (Thew *et al.*, 2020). Participatory processes have been taking place on different scales (local, national, and international) and with different levels of participation (Baldauf, 2020); therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the

strategies employed, the methods, and the quality of this participation (Arnstein, 1969; Reed *et al.*, 2018; Quesada-Silva *et al.*, 2019; Grilli *et al.*, 2021). How stakeholders are consulted, and the degree of influence they have in the process of building norms, programs, and plans can positively or negatively affect the viability and effectiveness of these policies, as well as stakeholder support for them in the long term, giving the processes greater legitimacy (André *et al.*, 2006). Thus, identifying elements that can guarantee greater quality in participation through case studies and experiences can contribute to a better understanding of participatory processes.

In this sense, and in an attempt to critically evaluate participatory processes, Brazil is an interesting case study to explore. The 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil (Brazil, 1988), which established the formal transition to democracy after more than two decades of military dictatorship, sanctioned the decentralization of policy formulation and established mechanisms for citizen participation in the development, management, and monitoring of public policies. At the time, there was an understanding that by opening up spaces for citizens to participate, the policy-making process would become more transparent, and public policies would be more accountable. They would reflect citizens' needs (Faria & Ribeiro, 2011). This legal basis promoted the development of a broad institutional structure for citizen participation, including management councils, public hearings, conferences, participatory budgeting, and deliberative mechanisms within regulatory agencies (Coelho *et al.*, 2005).

The 1988 Constitution also laid the foundations for a new legal and institutional framework for the coastal and marine zones. For the first time, the coastal zone was specifically named as part of the

Brazilian National Heritage (Brazil, 1988), which allowed for the development of the institutional framework and legislation applicable to the marine and coastal environment. For example, the National Coastal Management Plan (PNGC, in Portuguese) was developed based on a decentralized structure, i.e., with state and municipal coastal management policies, plans, and programs, and with the indication of participatory planning mechanisms (Wever *et al.*, 2012).

However, after more than 30 years, the level of implementation of coastal and marine policies, plans, and programs in Brazil is still low (Nicolodi *et al.*, 2021; Scherer & Asmus, 2021), and there is a need to expand spaces for social participation (Santos *et al.*, 2018). Added to this scenario is the election of a federal government that since 2019 has employed a series of measures and reforms that are weakening the foundations of Brazil's democratic structures built since 1988, such as the extinction of most decision-making or public participation forums through Federal Decree No. 9,759/2019 (Brasil, 2019). This change has significantly impacted decision-making spaces for the coastal and marine zones (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2021).

In this context, recording social participation processes and the elements that shape and build them is even more important. As such, this article sought to describe and qualify social participation in the development of the National Policy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Brazilian Marine Biome (PNCMar), which has been underway since 2013 in the National Congress (Chamber of Deputies, 2021). By analyzing this process, which is still in progress, we can point to structuring elements for a participatory approach in developing public policies of interest to society.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Bill 6.969/2013 (PNCMar)

Bill (PL, in Portuguese) 6.969 of 2013, which provides for the establishment of the PNCMar, is officially authored by members of the Environmentalist Parliamentary Front (abbreviated in this article as FPAmbientalista)¹ (Chamber of Deputies, 2021). However, as described and evaluated in the following sections of this article, this Bill - popularly known as the "Law of the Sea" - was conceived through a participatory process involving different stakeholders.

The text of this Bill was originally structured in six parts. Although its first substitute was reduced to four parts, the current substitute awaiting deliberation in the plenary of the Chamber of Deputies

continues with a similar six-part structure, even after some changes to the content of its articles (Table 1).

2.2. Theoretical approach

In recent years, various typologies have been discussed and used to reveal a gradient of types of participation, such as those by Arnstein (1969), Pretty (1995), White (1996), Reed *et al.* (2018), and Morf *et al.* (2019). In reality, these typologies are a simplification, as various forms of participation can occur simultaneously and over time in a given project or process; however, they are useful for illustrating the gradations of participation and distribution of power.

In general terms, the process of social participation built democratically must consider the involvement of different actors, i.e., public and private entities and civil society (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Reed

TABLE 1 - Structure of Bill 6.969/2013 (PNCMar).

Original	1st Substitute (Jun/2017)	2nd Substitute (Mar/2021)
Objectives, principles, definitions, and guidelines	Objectives, Definitions, Principles and Guidelines	Objectives, Principles, Definitions and Guidelines
The PNCMar's Instruments, Powers and Governance	Instruments	Instruments, powers, and governance
Conservation and sustainable use of fisheries resources	-	Conservation and Sustainable Use of Fisheries Resources
Specially protected marine spaces	Specially Protected Marine Areas	Specially Protected Marine Areas
Economic Instruments	-	Economic Instruments
Final and Transitional Provisions	Final and Transitional Provisions	Final and Transitional Provisions

Source: Chamber of Deputies, 2021.

¹ For more information on the objectives and composition of the FPAmbientalista, visit: <https://www.frenteambientalista.com>.

et al., 2018). In addition to including stakeholders in decision-making arenas, their demands and contributions must be incorporated (Empinotti, 2011).

Legitimate social participation must consider the dimensions of representativeness, such as access to financial resources, knowledge, and power, as well as reducing language and geographical barriers (Peterson, 2011; Trimble *et al.*, 2014). Participatory processes can and should expand social learning and develop capacities, especially among the most vulnerable groups, who are generally excluded from decision-making processes involving power and access to political, economic, social, environmental, and cultural resources (Arnstein, 1969).

Thus, social participation can be understood as openness to public debate and engagement, allowing people to participate in various ways, give their opinions, and modify political decisions related to their own or collective interests (Arnstein,

1969). This definition was used to assess how the different groups of actors have participated in the process of developing Bill 6.969/2013 (PNCMar) and what elements are needed to strengthen participation.

2.3. Method for assessing stakeholder participation

The information collected on the process of drafting Bill 6.969/2013 (still in progress) refers to the period from June 2012 to March 2021, the date on which a second substitute to the Bill was presented by the then rapporteur of the Chamber of Deputies' Constitution, Justice and Citizenship Committee (CCJC). The *Stakeholder Participation Assessment Framework* (SPAF) method developed by Quesada-Silva *et al.* (2019) (Figure 1) guided

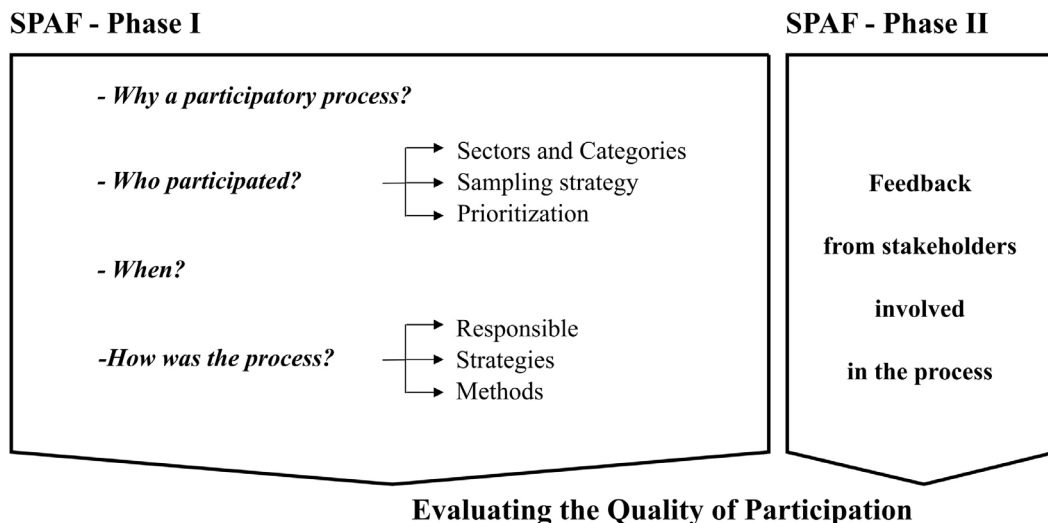


FIGURE 1 - Summary diagram of the SPAF (Stakeholder Participation Assessment Framework) criteria used in this study.

Source: prepared by the authors and adapted from Quesada-Silva *et al.*, 2019.

the analyses presented here, which were divided into two parts:

- i) Description and evaluation of engagement and mobilization activities through document analysis and interviews with key parliamentarians;
- ii) Feedback from the actors involved in the activities through a questionnaire.

2.3.1. Description of engagement and mobilization activities

One of the authors of this article actively participated in the process of building the Bill, leading and facilitating some of the engagement and mobilization activities, as well as technical analyses of the Bill's current text. Therefore, to document the process of developing the Bill, the author described it based on a semi-structured script drawn up by Phase I of the SPAF method and the study carried

out by Santos *et al.* (2018) (Material Supplementary 1). This description followed the criteria established in the SPAF method, which aims to objectively assess the quality of participation by answering the questions: Why, who, when, and how?

The sub-criteria for "Who?" was adapted to better reflect the specific characteristics of the Brazilian players (Table 2). The following sub-criteria were also added: the scale of activity, state of the federation, and gender. Regarding the scale of their work, in the case of federal deputies, researchers, and journalists, all were considered to have "national" work, regardless of whether they were elected by a state or worked in institutions in a specific state.

It is important to note that the engagement activities ("How?") were classified according to the strategy and method described in the SPAF according to the objective of the activity and the ability of stakeholders to influence the process, regardless of the original name of the activity (Table 3). For

TABLE 2 – Sub-criteria used to classify the actors who took part in building the PNCMar.

Sub-criteria	Coding
Sector	Submarine telecommunications cables; Science & Technology; National defense; Economic development; Law; Ocean education & culture; Offshore renewable energy; Multisectoral; Environment; Media; Mining & energy; Underwater cultural and maritime heritage; Fisheries & aquaculture; Planning; Politics; Health; Maritime transport & ports; Tourism & leisure; Other (which?)
Category	Academia; Funding agency; Government; NGOs & networks; Intergovernmental/international organization; Artisanal fishers; Private sector; Other (which?)
Power	Executive; Judiciary; Legislative; NA
Scale of performance	International; National; State; Municipal
State	Which of the 27 federal units
Sex	Female; Male; NA

Source: adapted from Quesada-Silva *et al.*, 2019.

TABLE 3 - Classification of engagement strategies and methods according to the ability of stakeholders to influence the process.

Strategy	Method	Objectives of the activity	Influence of the parties involved
Information	Seminar	Publicizing the Bill	Stakeholders (speakers) presented their opinions on the Bill to an open audience, but the activity was not directly connected to an action to draft/amend the Bill.
Consultation	Interview	Diagnosing public policies for the sea	Stakeholders gave their opinion on the draft/version of the Bill to actors with the ability to change it, but without the guarantee that the shared opinion would change the Bill.
	Public Hearing	Debate and submit suggestions for the Bill	
Concertation	Workshop	Draft the Bill	Stakeholders collectively built or altered a draft version of the Bill.
	Concertation meeting	Negotiate a version of Bill	

Source: prepared by the authors.

example, an activity called a meeting can be classified as a consultation or a concertation², depending on how it is conducted.

The process of developing Bill 6.969/2013 took place on two parallel fronts, which acted together at certain times: on the one hand, activities led by non-governmental actors (Social Mobilization); on the other, the processing and articulation within the National Congress (Legislative). To understand this second part, three Deputies of the FP Ambientalista involved in the process were interviewed separately based on a second semi-structured script³ (Supplementary Material 2).

To complement the results of the interviews, documents related to the engagement activities were consulted (lists of participants and publicity mate-

rial), as well as the Bill's Proceedings File available on the Chamber of Deputies' website.

2.3.2. Feedback from the stakeholders involved in the activities

Quesada-Silva *et al.* (2019) argues that to evaluate participation in public policies, it is also necessary to analyze the perception of stakeholders (feedback) concerning the process. To this end, an online questionnaire was administered to the stakeholders identified in the "Who?" analysis based on Phase II of the SPAF method (Supplementary Material 3). The questionnaire was sent to the e-mail addresses of 117 participants in the Bill's engagement activities. As no representatives of artisanal fisheries answered the questionnaire in the first

² According to Bouamrane (2006), "consultation" refers to the collection of opinions from stakeholders, but without any guarantee that the opinions will be taken into account (passive role), while "concertation" implies joint development (active role).

³ The semi-structured interview focuses on partially pre-defined questions that are addressed through conversation, creating the opportunity for valuable information to emerge that was not anticipated by the researcher (Oxfam International, 2019).

mailing, two representatives (female = 1; male = 1) were identified and contacted individually to answer the questions in the questionnaire. In this way, the representation of artisanal fishers who answered the questionnaire was similar to their representation in the participatory process of developing the Bill (5 and 4%, respectively).

3. Results

3.1. The development process of Bill 6.969/2013

Inspired by the debates during the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) (UN, 2012), Brazilian organized civil society began to discuss a regulatory framework to integrate management instruments for coastal and marine ecosystems. The non-governmental organization (NGO) SOS Mata Atlântica Foundation (SOSMA) then commissioned three studies on the legislation and implementation of policies for the marine environment in Brazil and other countries, which were presented at the Congress during the seminar "25 years of the FC and the coastal zone". SOSMA then began the process of putting together a first draft of the Bill.

Seeking participation through concertation with stakeholders, SOSMA facilitated a process with the participation of different actors to discuss and propose a new regulatory framework for the Brazilian coastal zone and marine space. This mobilization resulted in the presentation of Bill 6.969/2013 in the Plenary of the Chamber of Deputies by an FPAmbientalista Federal Deputy. Another way could have been to submit a draft regulation directly

to the Executive branch, such as the Ministry of the Environment (MMA), for it to evaluate and publish as a Decree, Ordinance, or Resolution. However, SOSMA and the group following the discussion felt that submitting a Bill via Congress would bring opportunities for mobilization and debate, which would result in a more mature text. In addition, the legislative proceedings of a Bill could be a learning experience for various social actors, including the congressmen and congresswomen themselves.

3.1.1. When and how did the participatory process take place?

The development process from the time SOSMA commissioned the studies until March 2021 took place in two phases: Phase I - Pre-Congress, from June 2012 to December 2013) and Phase II - Congress, in progress since December 2013. Adding together the activities organized by civil society and those originating in the legislature (N = 34), six methods of engagement were identified: seminars, interviews, consultations, public hearings, workshops, and concertation meetings (Supplementary material 4). Considering the objectives of each method, it was possible to identify that they ranged from more passive information/dissemination activities about the Bill (such as seminars) to concertation activities, either to prepare a draft of the Bill through a workshop during the Social Mobilization phase or to negotiate the Bill during meetings with representatives of the Executive branch.

"Phase I - Pre-Congress" is related to the preparation of the first drafts of the Bill. For its preparation, 70 semi-structured interviews were conducted with different stakeholders (in person,

virtually, or by email) to understand whether a new regulatory framework for the ocean was necessary, what the main threats and opportunities were, and how a new law could contribute. SOSMA selected the first interviewees based on their expertise and positions in institutions relevant to the debate on a regulatory framework for the sea. However, their contributions did not necessarily represent their official positions, i.e., technical rather than political contributions were expected. Each interviewee then nominated other representatives they considered relevant (snowball method⁴).

The information from the studies and interviews helped SOSMA's legal team draw up an initial draft. To discuss the draft, the NGO organized a workshop in September 2013 (in the Botanical Garden of Rio de Janeiro), in which participants were divided into six working groups: governance, fisheries, ports, oil and gas, marine protected areas, and marine spatial planning. However, as some members of the ports and oil and gas groups did not show up, the other members were incorporated into the other four working groups. The participants were part of the interviewees, and the selection criteria was to have five people from each theme; while also representing the country's different regions. The NGO reimbursed the participants' travel costs. During the discussions, the legal team advised what was inappropriate to include in a Bill. The product of this event was the draft Bill, which was

sent to some experts who did not take part in the workshop to comment on the document. In the same month, SOSMA organized a meeting to coordinate the initiative with Deputies of the FP Ambientalista.

Phase II - Congress" began when the Bill was officially presented in the Chamber of Deputies. At this point, the process ceased to be led by SOSMA, which, in turn, continued to promote, together with other civil society actors, the Social Mobilization for the approval and improvement of the Bill, organizing debates and meetings on the subject. The Chamber's Board of Directors indicated that the Bill would have to go through three committees, in the following order: Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Supply and Rural Development (CAPADR); Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development (CMADS); and Committee on the Constitution and Justice and Citizenship (CCJC) (Figure 2)⁵. SOSMA expected that there would be ample debate on whichever committee the Bill passed through. However, in the first committee, the Bill was rejected without debate.

According to the parliamentarians interviewed, the Deputies (author, rapporteur, or member of the committee evaluating a Bill) are usually approached by interested parties via emails, phone calls, social networks, or in person. Until the vote on the issues, it is possible to participate in the debate through public hearings, sending technical notes, holding seminars, talking to parliamentarians, and

⁴ Snowball sampling is a chain method in which the group of interviewees is built up from a base of initial contacts, who are asked to refer other people. This method is suitable for situations where convenience sampling is inadequate and probability sampling is unrealistic (Wright & Stein, 2005).

⁵ The Bill was initially presented by Deputy Sarney Filho (PV-MA) in 2013. In 2015, the CAPADR rapporteur was Deputy Alexandre Baldy (PSDB-GO). In 2017, the rapporteur for CMADS and CCJC was Deputy Alessandro Molon (REDE-RJ), who presented the first substitute. In 2018, Deputy Alessandro Molon (PSB-RJ) became a co-author of the Bill. In 2021, Deputy Túlio Gadêlha (PDT-PE) became the Bill's rapporteur in the CCJC and presented a second substitute. Please note that the affiliation of the Members at the time they submitted the documents may not be the current one.

drawing society's attention to the importance of a given issue. Concerning the involvement of other Deputies, all members of the Committees evaluating the Bill can propose amendments (changes to part of the text) to the rapporteur.

In the CMADS, the approach was different from that of the CAPADR. The Deputies held sectoral

meetings with ministries, NGOs, and academia. In November 2015, CMADS held a public hearing on the Bill, officially available for public consultation for 12 days. It is worth noting that before this hearing, public hearings on five Federal States (BA, SP, CE, SC, and RJ) were organized to discuss the Bill, the results of which were officially filed and forwarded to Congress.

In 2017, a substitute for the Bill was presented and approved by the CMADS and CCJC. At the CCJC, the sectoral consultations went quickly, without any open debates being held, and in June 2018, the Bill was given urgent status. In March 2021, a second substitute was presented by the Bill's new rapporteur at the CCJC.

According to the Deputies, participation in the legislative sphere took place mainly through meetings with different sectors and consultations with experts in marine management and conservation, in this case, to seek or clarify scientific knowledge. However, except for activities open to the public and more recent sectoral meetings, it was impossible to map the other activities conducted by parliamentarians because there is no systematic record. Perhaps some of the material from the activities organized under the CMADS umbrella is still recorded in its internal archives and could be requested for more detail in future studies. According to Deputy 2, there is a documentation problem related to the lack of procedures and the high cost of storing information.

He also said that, unlike in other countries, Brazil's participatory process in the legislative sphere is not regulated. Officially, what exists is a Participatory Legislation Commission (CLP) that receives suggestions from society on new issues but not on the bills that are under discussion. For what is in the pipeline, the Chamber of Deputies

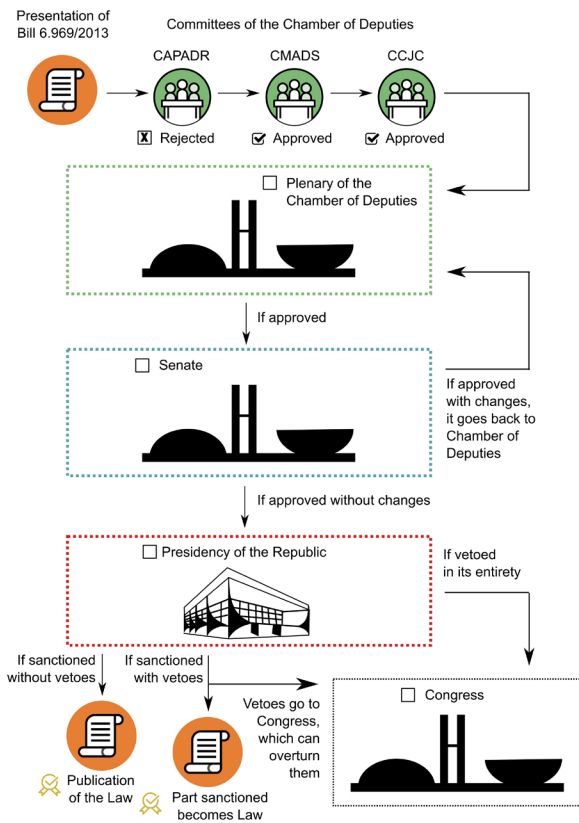


FIGURE 2 - Proceedings of Bill 6.969/2013 in the National Congress. Caption: CAPADR (Committee on Agriculture, Livestock, Supply and Development. Rural); the Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development (CMADS); and the Committee on Constitution and Justice and Citizenship Committee (CCJC).

Source: prepared by the authors and adapted from Chamber of Deputies, 2022a.

and Senate websites offer simple polls for the public to give their opinion on whether they agree or disagree with the proposal. In the case of the Bill in question, this happened in 2018, and only seven people gave their opinion.

In 2019, in parallel with the governmental process, a new mobilization phase began on the part of civil society in favor of the Bill. This resumption of discussions was relevant given the changes that have taken place in the national political scene. In 2014, for example, the artisanal fishing sector suggested removing the issue from the Bill since the government was addressing the sector's demands through other initiatives; however, since 2019, representatives of the sector have favored reinserting this issue in the Bill 6.969/2013. In 2020, in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the document was presented at virtual events organized by different institutions. The aim was to publicize the initiative and encourage contributions to Congress. Since communicating the results obtained in each activity, SOSMA has published notes reporting on the progress made with the Bill since the beginning of the process. It is also possible to find opinion articles in major newspapers and notes published by the organizers of the different activities mapped.

According to the author who facilitated some of the Social Mobilization activities, civil society's participation strategy can be classified as an adaptive mobilization, i.e., one that has been adjusted to mobilize more actors. As the discussions continued, new activities were organized, and more people got involved. In the last few months of 2020, different initiatives were highlighted that compiled new technical contributions to the text, which were submitted to the current rapporteur of the Bill. In addition, the rapporteur organized meetings with

experts in coastal and marine management and representatives of the environmental, fisheries, and defense sectors to support drafting a new substitute for the Bill presented to the CCJC.

According to the interviewed Deputies, the suggestions that converged with the Bill's initial proposal and represented progress were included. Concessions were also made as long as they did not compromise the scope of the Bill and met its objectives. The negotiations were about the text of the Bill and did not involve negotiations on other issues. The suggestions the rapporteur accepts and their respective justifications are part of his opinion (CCJC, 2021) and are, therefore, public.

3.1.2. Who took part?

The six methods of engagement described for the process of participation in the development of the Bill totaled 364 participants, the majority of whom were men (Figure 3A). Excluding repetitions, since some stakeholders could participate more than once, the number was reduced to 194 different actors.

Most of the participation (25%) was related to the role of speakers in seminars, which reflects the series of online activities implemented in 2020 amid the pandemic. The "workshop" method was only used once (Figure 3B).

The categories most involved were the government (38%), organized civil society (22%) and academia (20%) (Figure 3C). Government representatives were the majority in the interviews and concertation meetings organized by SOSMA and parliamentarians, respectively. Representatives of the Executive branch include officers from the

Brazilian Navy, as well as officials from the ministries of the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture, and Science, Technology and Innovation, as well as the environmental regulatory agencies Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade

(ICMBio) and Instituto Brasileiro do Meio Ambiente e dos Recursos Naturais Renováveis (Ibama). However, their participation took place mainly at the beginning of the mobilization led by civil society.

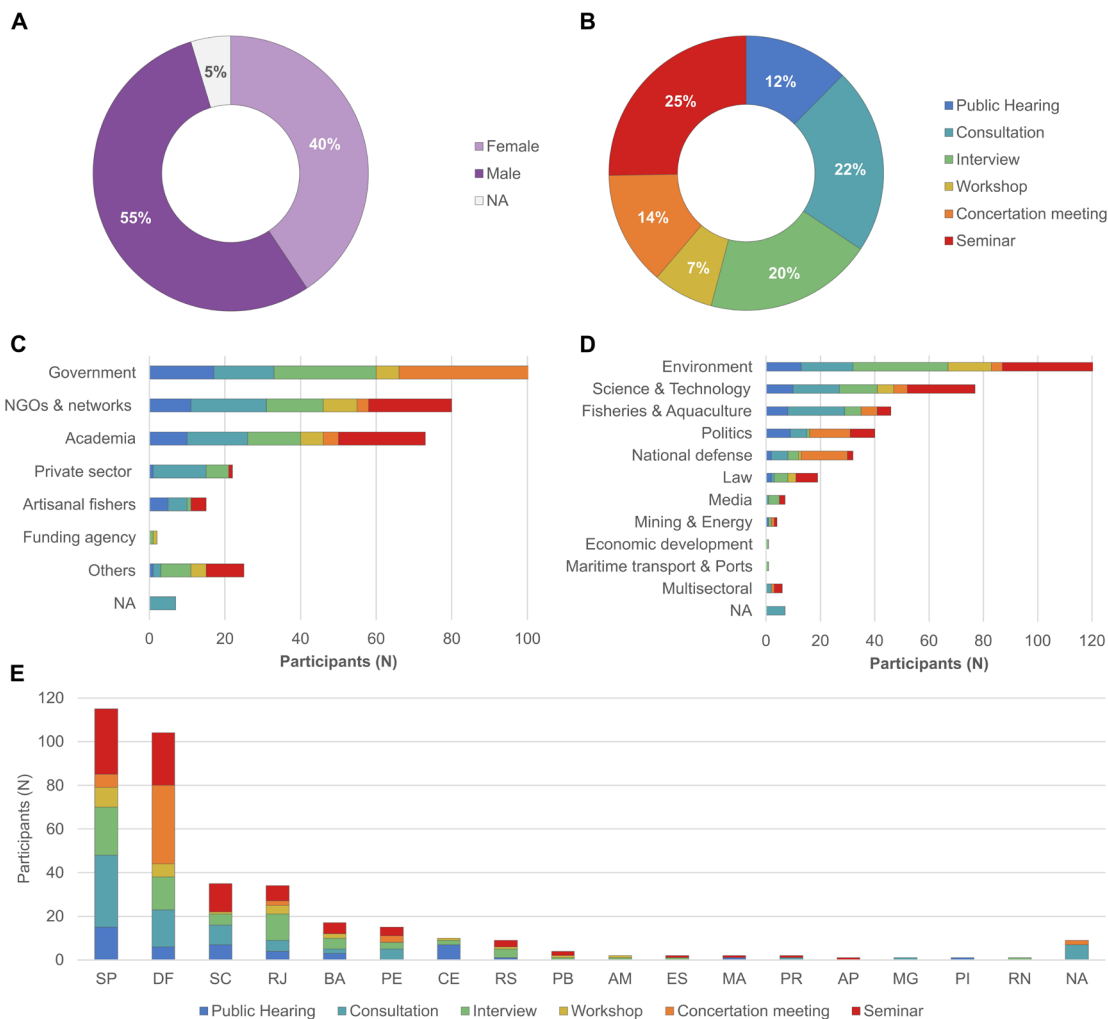


FIGURE 3 - Profile of the participants in the process of drafting Bill 6.969/2013: (A) gender; (B) activities in which they participated; (C) category; (D) sector; and (E) states (N = 364).

Source: prepared by the authors.

The small participation of the private sector (6%) was mainly in the form of consultation during a sector meeting for industrial fishing entrepreneurs. On the other hand, the few representatives of artisanal fishers (4%), mostly from the National Commission for Strengthening Extractive Reserves and Traditional Coastal and Marine Extractive Peoples (CONFREM), were invited to different activities.

The different sectors involved include the environment (34%), represented by both government institutions and NGOs; Science & Technology (21%), mainly represented by researchers from sixteen Brazilian universities; and Fisheries & Aquaculture (13%) (Figure 3D).

Most of the participants work at national scale (86%), remembering that all the researchers and Deputies were generically classified as working at this scale, regardless of the location of their institution or the Federal State that elected them. On the other hand, considering the Federal State of the researchers and Deputies, the most represented were São Paulo (SP) (32%), home to SOSMA's headquarters and the University of São Paulo, whose representatives conducted a large part of the activities; Dis-

trito Federal (DF) (29%), the country's capital and therefore where the activities of the Legislative and Executive branches are concentrated and where the headquarters of many government organizations are located; and Santa Catarina (SC) (10%), one of the states where there is a concentration of researchers in the area of coastal management (Figure 3E).

3.2. Feedback from the stakeholders involved in the participatory process

3.2.1. Profile of respondents

A third of the questionnaires sent to participants in the different activities promoted to discuss the Bill were answered (N=39; 49% female; 49% male). However, all categories were represented, with the majority representing academia (41%), NGOs & networks (26%), and government (15%) (Figure 4A), although the latter was the category most involved in the process. This pattern influenced the representativeness of the Federal States because although most of the participants in the activities

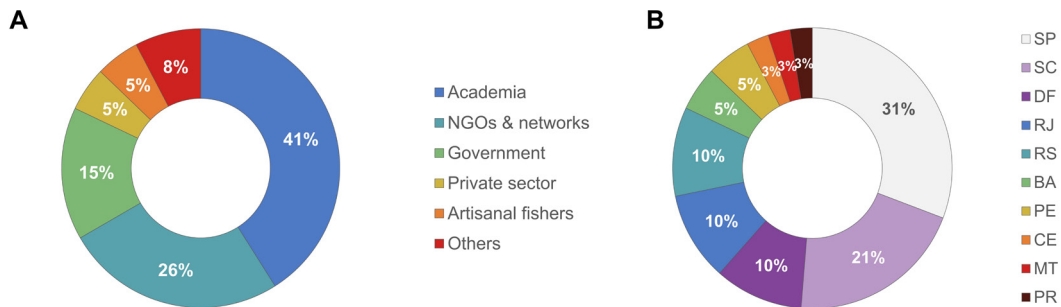


FIGURE 4 - Profile of respondents to the feedback questionnaire sent to participants in the process of drafting Bill 6.969/2013: (A) category; (B) states (N = 39).

Source: prepared by the authors.

were from São Paulo and the Federal District, the representatives from the Federal District were less willing to answer the questionnaires (Figure 4B).

3.2.2. Respondent engagement

The respondents represent people involved in all the activities described in the process documentation, with 26 of the 39 participating in more than one. Although individual consultations were not the predominant method of engagement, 46% of respondents reported being consulted individually, while 32% reported having sent comments to Congress (Figure 5).

During the development process, the interviews and the workshop were among the activities in which the actors were able to contribute the most since they defined the first draft of the Bill. Almost half of the 26 people who took part in the workshop answered the questionnaire. On the other hand, 35% of respondents took part in seminars, which were the most implemented type of activity but less participatory because they were more about dissemination than active development of the Bill.

Although the questionnaire was only sent to participants in the activities, two respondents reported not participating.

The Bill proposal and its advances were publicized in different media and events, and, according to the responses obtained, people had more access to information through social networks, websites, and events. At the same time, only 14% were informed through printed media, which reflects the digital age.

3.2.3. Respondents' perception of the participatory process

The respondents' perceptions of the participatory process varied within and between the different categories of stakeholders. While representatives of academia and the private sector were divided, representatives of NGOs & Networks and artisanal fishers assessed the process positively as participatory (Figure 6A). As for representativeness, 54% characterized the process as "very representative" or "representative" (Figure 6B).

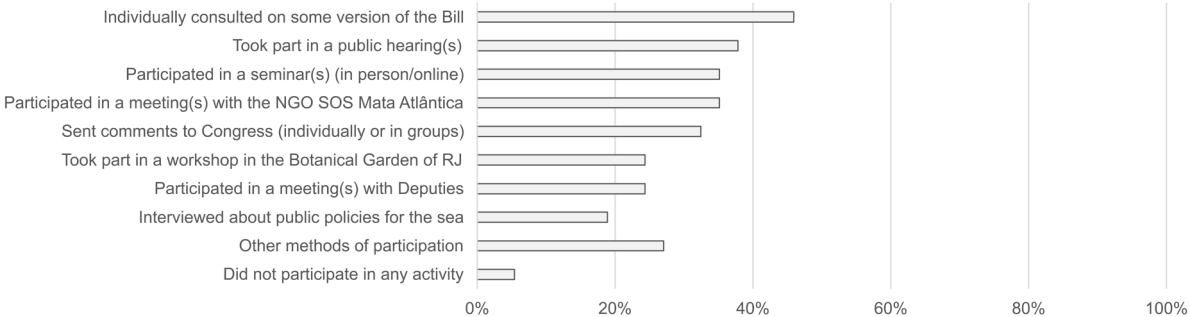


FIGURE 5 - Activities in which the respondents to the feedback questionnaire were involved or had been involved (N = 39). Source: prepared by the authors.

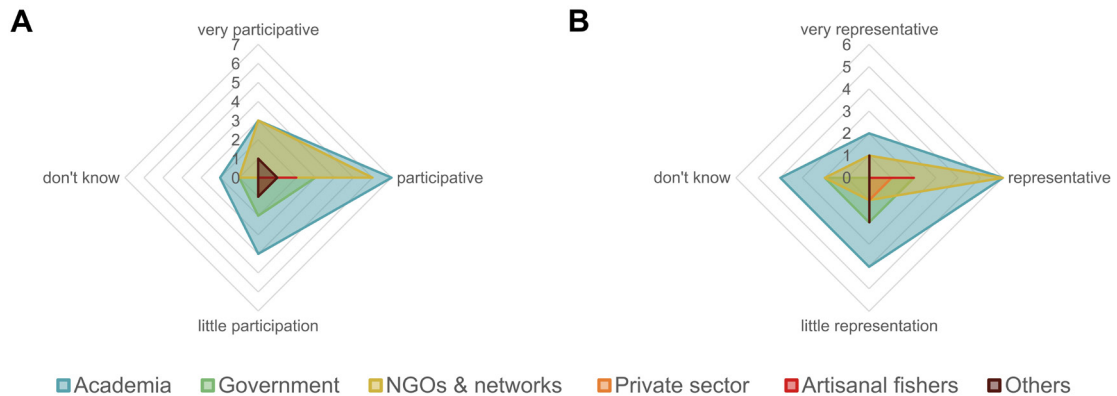


FIGURE 6 - Perception of each category of respondent on the process and result of the participatory development of Bill 6.969/2013: (A) degree of participation; (B) degree of representativeness (N = 39).

Source: prepared by the authors.

For 73% of respondents, NGOs & networks had the greatest influence on building the Bill, followed by academia (49%) and government (41%). Despite the initiatives described in publicizing the proposal and participation activities, 59% of respondents found it difficult to follow the engagement process, which was considered long by the majority (56%) and transparent by the minority (28%).

When asked through an open question about a general assessment of the participatory development process of the Bill, positive comments were justified with adjectives related to integration, articulation, and learning. On the other hand, negative evaluations pointed to the need to improve communication and access to information on the progress of the proposal, as well as the diversity and representativeness of the following actors: maritime sectors, state and municipal governments, regional federal institutions (for example, the National Water Transport Agency (ANTAQ), Ibama, ICMBio and the Directorate of Hydrography and Navigation (DHN)); artisanal

fishers and the most vulnerable coastal communities; academia (including students); and NGOs and Civil Society Organizations of Public Interest (OSCIPs, in Portuguese).

3.2.4. Respondents' perception of the Bill

All respondents at least believe that the Bill could advance the management and governance of the marine and coastal environment (yes = 67%; maybe = 33%). Among the convinced, the arguments can be separated into three groups:

- i) The need for a legal framework for the marine environment;
- ii) The need for a standard focused on the integrated and sustainable management of the marine environment; and
- iii) Inclusion of innovative concepts and instruments.

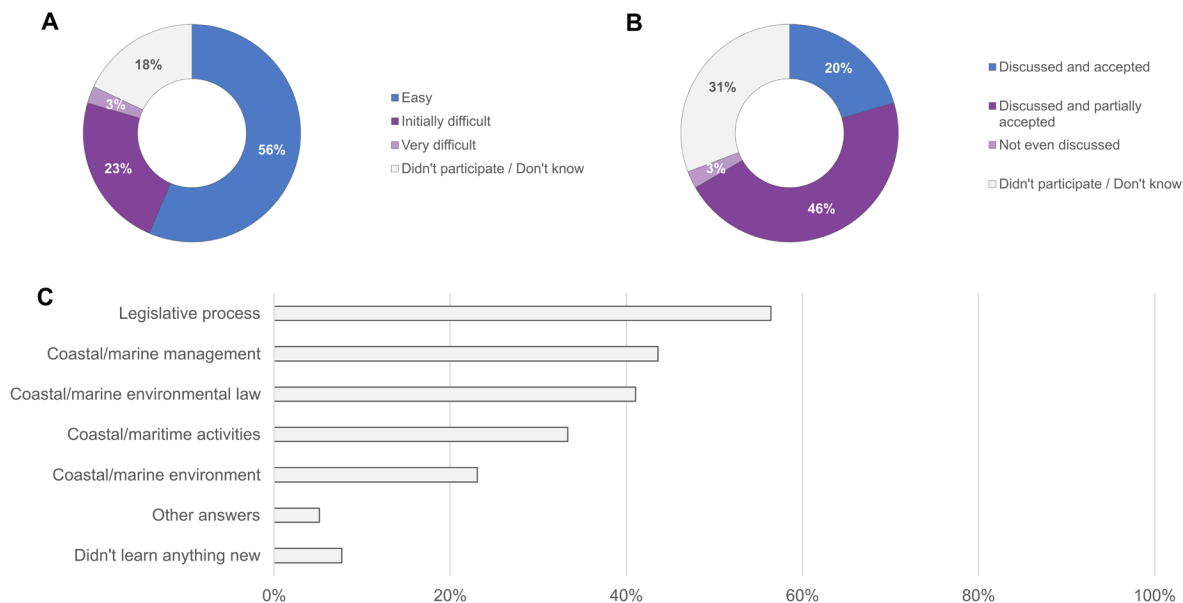


FIGURE 7 - Respondents' assessment of their contributions and learning during the participatory process of drafting Bill 6.969/2013: (A) degree of difficulty in making contributions; (B) adoption of contributions; (C) type of knowledge acquired during the process (N = 39).

Source: prepared by the authors.

The uncertain concerns revolve around three other axes:

- i) Lack of clarity about governance;
- ii) Effectiveness will depend on subsequent regulation; and
- iii) Effectiveness will depend on political will.

Despite the different opinions on the quality of participation in the process of building the Bill, its latest version was considered better than the original 2013 version by 67% of respondents, while only one actor (a liberal professional engaged in three different methods of participation) thought it was worse than the original version.

3.2.5. Contributions and learning from respondents

Approximately half of the respondents found it easy to contribute to the drafting of the Bill, while only one person (a government representative of a Federal State) found it difficult. It is worth noting that a quarter found it difficult at first, although they gradually understood the type of content and format of a law (Figure 7A). Most consider their contributions fully or partially covered (Figure 7B). When asked about their willingness to continue building public policies for Brazil's Coastal Marine System, 90% said they were interested. Respondents learned new knowledge throughout the process, especially of aspects related to the legislative process and

coastal and marine management and legislation (Figure 7C).

3.2.6. Respondents' suggestions for future participatory development processes

In addition to suggestions on who to involve, the respondents also proposed "how" to organize future participatory policy-making processes for Brazil's Coastal-Marine System, which could be grouped into methods of engagement, content, methods of communication, and methods of decentralization and organization into networks (Table 4).

3.3. Perception of parliamentarians involved in the process

The Deputies also revealed their perceptions of the process. All three recognize the importance and difficulties of conducting a dialogue with stakeholders with different views and believe that a broad debate facilitates the approval of a bill. According to Deputy 2, *the participatory process is enriching because normally, the deputy or the experts who have been heard don't have a holistic view of the problem. [...] You can have several views on a given subject, put everything on the table, and seek a consensus*, although he acknowledged that consensus can exclude important points.

According to Deputy 2, *The sea has many owners [...] everyone has their vision and will try to bring their perspective to it*. Deputy 1 said he *tried to make the most of the contributions [...] because*

TABLE 4 - Examples that summarize the respondents' suggestions for future participatory policy-making processes for Brazil's Coastal-Marine System.

Topic	Suggestion
Engagement methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Promote specific workshops and seminars with different segments" - "Systematized workshops by federated sphere" - "working groups with equal participation from the various sectors"
Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Formal consultation processes, especially for people whose lives depend on direct access to marine spaces and resources." - "broadening the debate to society as a whole" - "Events explaining article by article so that people with less knowledge can participate" - "Taking advantage of the momentum brought about by the Ocean Decade and providing training processes that value the sea and promote knowledge of the different relationships involved" - "Start with a territorial approach, allowing knowledge and belonging to be aggregated" - "Debate on the cogency of the instruments, competences for preparation and application, relationship between the instruments"
Communication methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "A channel, a platform or a kind of observatory that allows you to follow the history of the progress of the process in a more didactic and clear way"
Methods of decentralization and organization in networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Creation of inter-institutional coalitions in the different coastal regions of Brazil" - "Building solid and more widespread networks along the coastal zone (...) and allowing leadership to emerge" - "Organized civil society needs to be better organized, something like a cluster of initiatives, a collective of leadership and reference"

Source: prepared by the authors.

it strengthens the project and makes it more representative. For Deputy 3, the final text incorporates these various actors' suggestions, making it the fruit of a genuine democratic listening effort. [...] we had to establish a dialog with opposing positions that were ideologically distant from us.

However, the Deputies recognize that some stakeholders have been more influential and justify that this is for different reasons, such as the expertise they bring, their weight in the current government, and their degree of organization and insertion in Congress. According to Deputy 2, *those who shout the loudest and want to be heard end up participating more in the process. [...]. But everyone had the opportunity to take part. All the groups [...] dealing with the sea [...] knew the process was happening.*

As for the willingness to collaborate, the Deputies said there had been difficulties and resistance from existing government bodies and industrial production sectors, but they had nevertheless made contributions. Deputy 3 suggests this may have been due to the *false dichotomy between development and environmental protection.*

The Deputies consider that the Social Mobilization has contributed positively to the Bill's progress. According to Deputy 1, *mobilization always influences Congress, [...] more than you might think, whether to advance or stop a proposal.* For Deputy 2, despite slowing down the process, the mobilization has contributed to the maturing of the text. For his part, Deputy 3 argues that *Congress is a decision-making space that needs to be occupied more systematically by organized society [...]. They play their part in applying pressure [...]. For this Bill to be tabled and voted on [...] there is no other way.*

4. Discussion

Although many studies have pointed to the importance of the process of social participation in initiatives aimed at coastal and marine socio-ecological systems, most of them deal with projects on a local or very specific scale (Grilli *et al.*, 2021), and there are no records of this discussion on a federal scale or in the legislative arena. In this sense, this article presents relevant elements for thinking about and discussing social engagement in the development of laws and norms.

In the more than 30 years since Brazil's re-democratization process, diverse policies and tools have enabled social participation in environmental management at all administrative levels (Seixas *et al.*, 2019). However, a paradigm shift is still needed to improve coastal and marine management, transforming the traditional, reductionist form of management into a broader, more holistic, and integrated approach. This is contemporary coastal and marine management, based on the principles of ecosystem-based management and involving stakeholder participation, producing decisions that reflect the wishes of society and consider both scientific and traditional knowledge (Long *et al.*, 2015).

This new form of management considers the dynamics of ecosystems and the interdependence of the natural and social environment. Ecosystems are dynamic; they are constantly changing, just like society, which requires recognizing the continuous changes and uncertainties (Bauldauf, 2020). Expanding social participation processes is also part of strengthening the democratic process. Participatory environmental governance can improve decision-making when processes and structures involve civil

society actors alongside policymakers in decision-making and management (Newig *et al.*, 2018).

In this sense, the discussion of a bill in the Legislative is a concrete possibility to broaden the involvement of actors and adjust the text, as has happened in the process of Bill 6.969/2013, for which two substitutes have already been presented. However, the level of influence and power varies significantly between the actors. According to Arnstein (1969, p. 216), "There is a critical difference between an empty ritual of participation and the real power to alter the outcome of the process." The argument is that in the Bill's progress, there was participation and influence on the text and the process. Still, it was important to understand how and who could participate and influence.

Through the analysis of this case, it was possible to identify six essential elements for broadening participation during the development of bills: leadership, diversity, engagement, learning, documentation, and negotiation (Figure 8).

4.1. Leadership, coordination and facilitation

The legislative process has its rules and procedures, but through coordination and facilitation, social leaders play an important role in making the process more participatory. Articulation took place throughout the development process, which was first facilitated by SOSMA and which engaged other leaders and won over more supporters to debate and influence the Bill.



FIGURE 8 - Elements for the participatory development of bills.

Source: prepared by the authors.

⁶The current 56th Legislature has 352 Parliamentary Fronts officially registered with the Chamber of Deputies (Chamber of Deputies, 2022b).

Because an environmental NGO initiated it, the Bill was coined by some actors and Members of Chamber of Deputies as an environmentalist initiative (see CAPADR opinion, 2015), even though the text, as it is officially drafted, has no restrictions on any activity nor does it seek to promote only conservation actions. Given the process's genesis, most respondents believe that NGOs and networks had the greatest influence on the Bill's development process, followed by academia and the government. This perception is in line with what happened.

Still on the subject of articulation, one of the Deputies spoke of the lack of national lobbying regulations that clearly define the official channels for the Legislative and Executive branches to receive suggestions for rules under discussion, resulting in public agents acting discretionary. According to Santos & Cunha (2015), since 1984, more than 15 proposals have been presented by the Legislative branch to regulate lobbying in the country, as well as other initiatives to discuss the issue by the Executive and Judicial branches. The authors argue that lobbying is an important mechanism for different social groups to access public agents while regulating it would increase transparency, deliberation (a process of dialog and argumentation), and accountability (public decisions taken under the scrutiny of society about the interests served, as well as within the framework of legality and constitutionality) of the democratic system. It is worth mentioning here that the Thematic Parliamentary Fronts⁶ can help build bridges of dialogue between parliamentarians and civil society and were formally incorporated into the legislature in 2005, but have no supervision or monitoring of their activities, with a small number of active parliamentarians about the number of members, as well as having no permanent space

and being unable to hire staff (Cascione & Araújo, 2019). According to these authors, the Environmental and Agriculture Parliamentary Fronts have the highest degree of institutionalization in Congress.

In turn, facilitation refers to mediating and structuring discussions, balancing contributions, and creating opportunities for equal participation (Palm & Thoresson, 2014; Ernst *et al.*, 2017). To manage the dominance of some participants, which can limit opportunities for broader participation and thus create biased outcomes, skilled facilitation is seen as an important driver of successful participation (Leach & Pelkey, 2001; Reed, 2008; Reed *et al.*, 2018).

In this sense, it seems appropriate to mention that, in the Pre-Congress Phase, SOSMA promoted initiatives and debates to listen to different sectors and categories of stakeholders. The debates were public, in different arenas, and also in different regions. There was also a concern to always include a representative from academia, extractive communities, and the government, whether Executive or Legislative branch. In the Congress Phase, this leadership was taken on by members of the FPAmbientalista, who held a wide-ranging debate, including those opposed to the Bill. It is recommended that facilitators of engagement activities, in addition to creating conditions for inclusive participation, are independent and moderate as neutrally as possible (Quesada-Silva *et al.*, 2019). The independence criterion does not apply to the process analyzed because the leaders favored the Bill and were involved with the environmental agenda. However, they made an effort to involve and consider dissenting opinions.

More recently, the initiative has been boosted by the increased involvement of networks dedicated

to marine causes (for example, the PanelMar and the Women's League for the Ocean) and virtual debates due to the pandemic. Through networking, it was possible to expand access to a wider variety of sources of information and knowledge that influenced the text (which resulted in the presentation of the second substitute), assuming that the integration of various interests enhances social learning and the quality of the discussion of law of common interest (Benson *et al.*, 2016).

4.2. Diversity of participation

The diversity of participants, i.e., the representation of interests, values, and knowledge, influences the results of participatory processes. Although the participants should represent a sample of the population of the affected public, a relative distribution of points of view and interests should be sought (Rowe & Frewer, 2000). In addition, Koontz & Johnson (2004) found that the number and balance of representatives from different groups influence the content of the speech and the outcome.

Since this Bill is still being processed, it is important to adjust the mobilization strategies to allow for greater heterogeneity of actors. This would guarantee considering different points of view and more complete ideas (van de Kerkhof & Wieczorek, 2005).

Various stakeholders should be included in the participatory process to integrate different knowledge types (Brown *et al.*, 2002). The articulation and participation of academic actors - as occurred in the Bill case study - are relevant, but it is necessary to balance perspectives with the inclusion of traditional knowledge (Baldauf, 2020). In this sense, incor-

porating and expanding indigenous and traditional knowledge space is necessary (Stori *et al.*, 2019). Including these actors in decision-making arenas facilitates local processes of implementing standards and biocultural approaches and brings more attention to the well-being and livelihood needs of the local population. Contemporary management and conservation are no longer just focused on species and wild places; human communities are now often central to conservation and sustainable use projects (Baldauf, 2020).

Despite the attempt to include at least one representative of artisanal fishers in the activities, this strategy was limited in ensuring that the diversity of traditional peoples and communities inhabiting the country's coastal environments was represented. Bill discussions usually occur in Congress, in a formal setting, and with normative language. SOSMA tried to produce a booklet with more accessible language and take this debate to the State Chambers, but this was still insufficient to balance participation with other actors.

Some studies indicate that the characteristics of the participants also influence participatory processes. The characteristics are multiple and include, for example, gender, age, behavioral patterns such as civic attitude, or the political engagement of the participants (Parés *et al.*, 2015). In addition, the creativity, willingness to cooperate, commitment (Leach & Pelkey, 2001), and competence (skills, knowledge) of individuals (Beierle & Cayford, 2002) are important characteristics that shape the processes.

In this sense, it can be seen that the categories most involved in the Bill's progress were the government, organized civil society, and academia. The private sector and extractive communities were

involved, but not in all stages of the process, more in consultation, information, and dialogue processes, and less in concertation phases. Although the artisanal fishers rated their participation positively, we conclude that building an environment and strategies that favor more constructive participation by these actors through greater facilitation of language, availability of information, and access to debate is necessary.

National studies suggest various methods to improve participation, such as permanent multisectoral working groups; joint definition with stakeholders of participation methods; specific activities to improve understanding of the interests, questions, and proposals of the different stakeholders; wide dissemination of activities among key stakeholders; evaluations and wide dissemination of the results of engagement activities; etc. (Santos *et al.*, 2018 and Grilli *et al.*, 2021). Specifically, about the most vulnerable groups, these studies suggest support for the inclusion of representatives in permanent working groups and the creation of welcoming spaces, such as food for participants and reception for children who may be accompanying them.

It should also be noted that the private sector was mostly represented by industrial fishing. The energy sector, meanwhile, had only two representatives. In this way, one of the central questions about the Bill's participation process is the low participation of non-governmental sector representatives. Once again, efforts were identified, but they were limited.

Even at the government level, participation from a few ministries was predominance. If approved, the Bill will be a federal normative instrument, so the actors at this administrative level are expected to be more involved. The involvement of Federal

States and municipal representatives could also have been more comprehensive. There is a need to involve the north and northeast regions more and promote capillarity at the different levels of the federation. There was an attempt to do this on the part of the Social Mobilization front, facilitated by SOSMA. However, the NGO's work focuses on the states where the Atlantic Forest biome is found, which has resulted in a lack of coordination with stakeholder from Amapá and Pará to get them involved with the Bill and support the organization of at least one public hearing in the northern region.

4.3. *Engagement strategies*

Coastal and marine management needs to be carried out in a participatory manner, and because it involves different stakeholders, it is necessary to use different engagement strategies. After all, each sector has a different perception and interests and needs to be engaged through different channels. Participation strategies are considered the method and organizational structure that characterize a process and describe the intensity of communication or dialogue (Ernst, 2019).

Information, consultation, and concertation strategies were considered for the Bill's processing. Different methods offer different opportunities for participation (Beierle & Konisky, 2000). They can be separated by the public's influence on collective decision-making, the structure of dialogue, and the length of time of participation (Fiorino, 1990). Although there is no best strategy, it is known that different strategies generate different results and different levels of engagement (Coenen *et al.*, 1998).

In any case, concerning participation in the Bill, the majority of respondents considered that their contributions had been taken into account and that they would be interested in continuing to be involved, signaling a positive perception of the process. It is therefore necessary to discuss the most appropriate methods for maintaining involvement in and learning about institutional processes, increasing society's knowledge of the process, and, in particular, increasing trust in public institutions.

To encourage effective participation in the next stages related to the Bill - whether it is still being processed or in the subsequent stages of drafting regulations for the Bill and its instruments (for example, marine spatial planning) - it will be necessary to propose different mechanisms and practices based on discussions about the best strategies for engagement and participation according to the specificities of each group of actors. The six elements identified in this article and the methods for improving participation mentioned in sections 3.2.6 and 4.2 are options to be considered, discussed, and improved.

4.4. *Social Learning*

Participatory processes can promote social learning and bring about the necessary change towards sustainable development (Ernst, 2019). Social learning is an area of great interest in the field of participatory environmental governance (Reed *et al.*, 2010; Grilli *et al.*, 2021) and is understood here as an analytical concept that can be used to investigate normative, substantive, and instrumental participatory mechanisms (Carvalho *et al.*, 2019),

helping to explore how much the process contributed to the outcome.

Given the complexity of how a PL is processed in Congress, simply understanding how it is processed and the spaces in which it is involved is already evidence of social learning. The results indicate that most respondents learned something and found it easy to contribute to the Bill, which could have a multiplier effect in contributing to future processes expanding democracy in the country. With this, it is also argued that the science-policy-society interface is improved. That is, relationships between different stakeholders are created and strengthened through participation mechanisms.

In addition to the diversity of engagement strategies that ensure the involvement of different actors and produce different results, Leach *et al.* (2014) suggest that the opportunity for participants to engage several times in a process promotes social learning. In other words, it is the number of meetings and activities that complement the discussions and hearings that can broaden social learning. The Bill 6.969/2013 has been under discussion since 2012 and will probably still have a long process ahead. Although some actors and sectors have had their leadership replaced, many stakeholders who follow the process remain the same, guaranteeing the transfer of social learning and maintaining the process's memory.

4.5. *Process documentation and access to information*

It should also be borne in mind that if, on the one hand, the length of time it takes to process the matter allows for project improvement and

social learning, on the other hand, it brings with it the challenge of maintaining the memory of the process, sharing information and following up on the matter, as many of the respondents pointed out. Compiling the data and information for this article was not easy since there is no organized repository of information on this Bill, especially on the Social Mobilization stage.

Access to information enables actors from different sectors to empower themselves in the process and maintain their engagement (van de Kerkhof & Wieczorek, 2005). The Chamber of Deputies' website provides information on the official legislative process but with few details on the discussions and adjustments to a bill's content. Information about meetings and events, especially those organized by civil society organizations, is not recorded. Here, it should be mentioned that NGOs and networks - given their experience and the nature of their advocacy work - have a greater interest and facility in following the process and consequently influencing it.

In this sense, public reports, as well as the organization of dissemination events on the status of the process, are necessary to facilitate the monitoring of the process and thus increase the learning curve, ensuring that access to information is more comprehensive and transparent rather than concentrated on specific stakeholders - which is a major challenge considering the limited human and financial resources dedicated to this. Through network orchestration work, this transaction cost can be organized and distributed (Gerhardinger *et al.*, 2018) to facilitate the documentation of the Social Mobilization of the analyzed Bill and future initiatives. Such systematization by CMADS and the FPAmbientalista would also be positive for

civil society and new parliamentarians who want to accompany and contribute to a bill.

4.6. Negotiation and consensus

As it is done in Congress, participation in the process is also a long negotiation process. As the process progresses slowly, the people in the respective positions (ministries, for example) change, as do the political and social leaders. Consequently, the text of a bill can also change, even if it has already been negotiated. Brandt & Svendsen (2013) state that as the number of participants in the process increases, the group is more likely to include individuals with extreme positions and are unwilling to make concessions. It is also possible that, given the long timescale over which a bill is processed, changes in government and interests could lead to further deadlocks.

As one of the Deputies mentioned, the search for consensus during negotiations can exclude important parts, although in this case, the rapporteurs of the substitutes sought to maintain the Bill's essence. The majority of those consulted believe that the current text is better than the initial text and that it could bring advances, i.e., it still preserves the characteristics and principles of the original proposal.

5. Conclusion

This article evaluates the process of social participation in the development of the National Policy for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of the Brazilian Marine Biome (PNCMar, in Portuguese), which has been pending in the National Congress since 2013 (Bill 6.969/2013), as a case study to

provide reflections on participatory processes in bills at the federal level. Through the analysis of this process, which is still ongoing, six structuring elements have been identified for a participatory approach in the development of public policies of interest to society: leadership, diversity, engagement, learning, documentation, and negotiation.

In short, for public policy-making processes to become increasingly participatory, it is important to have active and engaged leaders committed to building a transparent, collaborative process involving many players. It is necessary to guarantee the diversity of actors and promote permanent and continuous engagement through different strategies and forms of consultation and involvement. There also needs to be space and time to promote collective social learning about public policy development and greater dedication to documenting the process so that both those involved and new stakeholders can follow it up.

The description of the Bill's participatory process made it possible to identify and elaborate the structuring elements for improving participation and open up a horizon of questions for future studies that want to focus on specific points of the Bill's Legislative and/or Social Mobilization process. Using the information available here as a basis, new research can be carried out that discusses, among other aspects, the power dynamics and interests of the actors involved in the Bill and how to create practices to incorporate and make feasible the suggestions for participation identified in the article.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that social participation is society's right and duty and that in times of weakening democracy and a reduction in official spaces for participation, it is collective learning and engagement that keep the memory alive

and the articulation of processes that seek to improve sustainability and promote society's well-being.

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