



Elements for discussion on social participation in closing of dumpsites: the case of Controlled Landfill of Jockey in the Federal District

Elementos para a discussão sobre participação social em fechamento de lixões: o caso do aterro controlado do Jôquei no Distrito Federal

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ABSTRACT: Social participation is seen as one of the solutions to democratize decision-making and improve the projects, programs, plans, and policies proposed by governments. It is no different in the environmental field. In Brazilian waste management, social participation is one of the topics established in the Brazilian National Solid Waste Policy. In this sense, this article aims to analyze the quality of the participation of the actors involved, as well as the level, forms, and conditions of their participation, as well as the representation of the private sector, and the ability of the actors to influence decision-making in the process of closing the activities of the Controlled Landfill of Jockey (CLJ). This article is a case study conducted through semi-structured interviews with eight participants, representatives of different sectors, who participated directly or indirectly in the closing activities of the CLJ. Bibliographic and documentary research was also used. Results show that there was a significant role among the government but also among waste pickers, and the forms of participation reported are differentiated. However, there is low participation of the private sector and residents of the Cidade Estrutural. It is also evident the discredit to the closure of the CLJ. A highlight regards participation: it has controversies, such as low power of influence, manipulation, exclusion of crucial actors, and discredit in the participatory process. There is also a worrying lack of participation because dumpsite closures focus mainly on poorer layers of society, and the participation employed was not able to break with social exclusion and unequal relations of power. However, there are important advances because participation was weakened on other occasions.

Keywords: participatory processes; closing dumpsite; public policies; sustainable development.

RESUMO: A participação social tem sido vista como uma das soluções para democratizar as tomadas de decisões e melhorar os projetos, programas, planos e políticas propostos pelos governos. Dentro da temática ambiental, não tem sido diferente; inclusive, dentro da gestão de resíduos sólidos, a Política Nacional de Resíduos Sólidos estabelece a participação social como um dos seus pontos. Nesse sentido, este artigo visa analisar a qualidade da participação dos atores envolvidos, bem como o nível, formas e condições de participação, assim como a representação do setor privado e a capacidade dos atores de influenciar na tomada de decisão no processo de encerramento das atividades do Aterro Controlado do Jóquei. O presente trabalho é um estudo de caso, realizado por meio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com oito participantes, representantes de diferentes setores, que participaram diretamente ou indiretamente das atividades de encerramento do ACJ. Utilizou-se, outrossim, pesquisa bibliográfica e documental. Como conclusão, observou-se um protagonismo muito grande entre o governo, mas também, e principalmente, entre os catadores, sendo que as formas de participação relatadas são bastante diferenciadas. Porém, quando se fala de participação do setor privado, nota-se uma baixa participação, além dos moradores da Cidade Estrutural. Como um dos pontos-chave, observa-se que a participação aplicada possui controvérsias, tais como baixo poder de influência, manipulação, exclusão de atores importantes, descrédito no processo participativo. No entanto há avanços importantes, pois, em outros momentos, a participação era mais enfraquecida.

Palavras-chave: processos participativos; fechamento de lixões; políticas públicas; desenvolvimento sustentável.

1. Introduction

Brazil has broad legislation on solid waste but stumbles on many topics. For Silva *et al.* (2020, p. 2), “the Brazilian National Solid Waste Policy (PN-RS) establishes goals for solid waste management in Brazil. However, the Brazilian scenario has remained stagnant in some aspects for a few years.” One of the issues the country needs to resolve concerns the various dumpsites spread across the Brazilian territory, which not all municipalities have been able to advance. According to Teodósio *et al.* (2016, p. 30), “the extinction of dumpsites was not achieved in 2014, nor were several other actions to improve urban solid waste management.”

In Brazil, 2,868 municipalities deposit their waste in controlled landfills or dumps. Furthermore, in 2020, more than 30 million tons of waste were sent, corresponding to 39.8% to controlled

dumpsites or landfills in the country (ABRELPE, 2021). However, there are examples of municipalities that managed to close their landfills, such as the Controlled Landfill of Jardim Gramacho (Rio de Janeiro) in 2012 and the Controlled Landfill of Jockey (CLJ) in the Federal District in 2018, some of the largest open dumpsites in the world while they were in operation.

Within the Brazilian scenario of landfill closures, it is important to understand the public policies applied, as these may contain flaws (Bastos, 2015; Bastos & Magalhães, 2016; Lima & Oliveira, 2020) or be successful (Angelo, 2015; Gatto, 2020). In this context, the analysis of social participation can help to understand some problems during the implementation of actions, as there are several problems in the social participation processes conducted within the scope of Public Policies, especially those linked to more marginalized actors, such as waste pickers and

vulnerable populations. Such problems are linked to unequal power relations, limits on the expression of interests, demotivation, and limits on traditional spaces for participation and are capable of causing manipulative effects and generating negative results, such as political co-optation (Toth *et al.*, 2012, p. 114).

It is noteworthy that the processes of closure and deactivation of dumpsters in Brazil (one of the crucial topics of the PNRS) that have occurred in several municipalities have brought new problems, mainly to waste pickers who lose their income, in addition to other social impacts (Bastos, 2015; Bastos & Figueiredo, 2018; Bastos & Magalhães, 2016; Lima & Oliveira, 2020; Lima, 2018; Ribeiro & Carmo, 2013; Rodrigues, 2014), including on communities around dumpsters. Regarding participation in dumpster closures, some authors indicate the little participation of society in the processes (Angelo, 2015; Guedes *et al.*, 2017) but also of waste pickers, where most of the impacts are concentrated (Capelari *et al.*, 2020).

Social participation has been constructed as one of the central pillars of deliberative processes at the local level since the 1990s (Milani, 2008). However, the origin of this theme dates back to Ancient Greece. In the 18th century, there were in-depth scientific studies by liberal theorists, utopian socialists, and libertarian socialists, in addition to the contributions of Marx and Engels on political participation. In the 20th century, the debate was expanded with discussions on the masses' participation with Rosa Luxemburg and factory councils in Italy with Antonio Gramsci. However, the first interested in the actions of individuals were the English pluralists of the 20th century (Gohn, 2019).

Furthermore, the origins of the discourse on social participation are multiple: references to the

need for the use of participatory tools can be found in the manuals of international development cooperation agencies, in State reform programs and decentralization policies, in the practice of some local governments that claim to promote, thanks to citizen participation, innovation strategies and, in some cases, the radicalization of local democracy (Milani, 2008, p. 554). Furthermore, people's participation in social participation schemes provides the opportunity for them to express their opinions and feel part of the planning process (Braun, 2010, p. 781).

Participation can be individual, collective, passive, active, voluntary, and instrumental (Sayago, 2008). The forms of participation are also different and vary in each location (Avritzer, 2008; Gohn, 2019). Participatory practices and their social bases involve social, historical, and geographic contexts (Milani, 2008, p. 573). Therefore, participatory institutions have different forms of incorporating citizens and civil society associations in deliberation on policies and can be differentiated in three ways, which are bottom-up design (for example, participatory budget and elections of delegates and advisors by the population), power-sharing (for example, health councils) and public ratification (for example, municipal master plans). The models themselves differ by being more democratic and distributive than others, as in the case of bottom-up designs and participatory budgeting (Avritzer, 2008).

The theme of participation has been useful in explaining the processes of social inclusion, against injustice, and recognition of the rights of sectors of civil society in the operationalization of public policies by the State (Gohn, 2019).

The interaction between actors to face public problems can be democratic. Thus, this democra-

cy is consolidated through the direct influence of citizens on public decisions. Therefore, decision-making results from a deliberative process with social participation (Andrade *et al.*, 2018; Milani, 2008).

However, participation develops in spheres always marked by conflict relations and may involve manipulation (Milani, 2008, p. 560). It is worth highlighting the recommendation that controversial actors who could cause many conflicts should be excluded from the participatory process, giving space to actors who can contribute positively to the process of social participation (Braun, 2010).

Social participation depends on the profile of the population. However, the adaptation of the project to the local reality, the regularity in the functioning of the implemented logistics, and the marketing and motivation strategy are fundamental (Bringhenti & Günther, 2011).

Social participation alone is an insufficient condition for resource planning to be democratic or efficient (Abramovay *et al.*, 2010). Thus, one of the most recent debates on participation deals with its effectiveness due to the association with public policies in Brazil, but also due to more theoretical concerns surrounding deliberation (Avritzer, 2011). Effective social participation is about empowering interested parties and leaders in the community (Braun, 2010). To think about the issue of effectiveness means being capable of establishing some way of comparability between results produced by government institutions in their different spheres that use some participatory practice (Avritzer, 2011).

Within the scope of Sustainable Development, social participation in the government decision-making process was one of the main proposals of the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 (Braun,

2010). Social participation, that is, the cooperation of local decision-makers with all relevant actors and groups in the community, is seen as a basic precondition for obtaining the much-desired sustainable local development, as emphasized in the Rio 92 and Johannesburg 2002 Conferences (Benites-Lazaro *et al.*, 2018; Braun, 2010; Rocha & Bursztyn, 2005). Furthermore, other events highlighted the importance of participation in sustainable development and witnessed governments and commitments to the participation of civil society (Coletti, 2012).

Making development compatible with sustainability requires the implementation of innovative interventions that encourage participatory spaces and the possibility of expressing the interests of different segments of society (Toth *et al.*, 2012, p. 113).

The social participation to be achieved through education is considered fundamental by international conferences for the effectiveness of environmental management, as it would enable the manifestation and consideration of public and private interests (Souza & Novicki, 2011).

This management modality emerges as a response to the search for a democratic regime that confronts environmental problems and conflicts with high complexity and requires a multidisciplinary approach to resolution (Coletti, 2012).

Recently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) addressed participation in goal 11.3, which proposes increasing inclusive and sustainable urbanization and the capacity for participatory, integrated, and sustainable planning and management of human settlements. Oliveira (2018) points out that the SDGs also dialogue on the local scale, which leads to the conclusion about the importance of the participation of the people in municipal actions and the participation of actors in public management.

Silva *et al.* (2021) emphasize the relationship between democracy and the increase in sustainable actions, in addition to the fact that more democratic societies tend to be more sustainable in actions. However, participatory processes within the scope of Sustainable Development present challenges, given conflicts on socio-environmental issues and unequal relations of power and interests (Toth *et al.*, 2012).

The concept of integrated solid waste management can be highlighted when it comes to solid waste management and social participation. It is defined as:

Set of actions aimed at finding solutions for solid waste¹, to consider the political, economic, environmental, cultural, and social dimensions, with social control and under the premise of sustainable development. [...] Social control is the set of mechanisms and procedures that guarantee society information and participation in the processes of formulating, implementing, and evaluating public policies related to solid waste (Brasil, 2010).

As a result, participation is one of the factors that must be assessed when building sustainable waste management solutions, in addition to technology and academic research (Ferreira *et al.*, 2017).

Waste pickers are central actors in waste management in Brazil and need more significant participation and appreciation in the solid waste management process (Flores, 2012; Inoue *et al.*, 2016; Pereira & Curi, 2013). However, from an economic perspective, waste pickers go from being

excluded to being barely included (Almeida & Zaneti, 2015, p. 289). The socioeconomic attributes of waste pickers demonstrate vulnerability in urban governance and suggest that social innovations can counter social trends, increasing their social inclusion (Nzeadibe & Anyadike, 2012). Public authorities are required to promote the recognition of waste pickers as economic, political, and social agents, with adequate remuneration and actual conditions for participation (Severi, 2014).

It is necessary for there to be articulation between the political-institutional, technical-ecological, socioeconomic-environmental, and cultural-educational dimensions so that there is sustainability in the urban solid waste management system (Zaneti, 2006). However, when limited to technical-scientific and economic requirements, waste management cannot ensure effectiveness and efficiency and must incorporate public policies that seek participation mechanisms (Piterman *et al.*, 2013).

For policy management to be conducted at the municipal level, it is essential to articulate governance arrangements and mobilize the issue of solid waste within society, forming a public sphere that influences decision-making (Silva *et al.*, 2016, p. 137). Therefore, it is emphasized that the PNRS must be implemented and developed with the participation of the different spheres of public power, the business sector, and other segments of society (Souza, 2016).

Therefore, participation occurs through three procedures: “formulation, implementation, and

¹ Refers to solid waste as a discarded material, substance, object, or good resulting from human activities in society, whose final destination is conducted, or proposed to be conducted, or obliged to be conducted in solid or semi-solid states, as well as gases contained in containers and liquids whose particularities make their release into the public sewage network or bodies of water unfeasible or require solutions that are technically or economically unfeasible in the face of the best available technology (Brasil, 2010).

evaluation of public policies,” in this case, related to solid waste (Machado, 2012, p. 33).

In this article, we intend to answer the following question: What was the quality of participation, as well as the level, forms, and conditions of participation of the actors involved in closing the activities of the Controlled Landfill of Jockey? Interviews were conducted with several key actors involved in the CLJ closure process to answer this question.

2. Research method

The article uses the case study methodology, characterized by the in-depth and exhaustive study of one or a few objects, to allow broad and detailed knowledge and employ bibliographic and documentary research (Gil, 2008). Also, a qualitative approach was used, in addition to conducting semi-structured interviews with actors related to the CLJ, covering the public sector, private sector, and civil society. These interviews aimed to obtain relevant information about the participatory process.

A representative from SINDUSCON-DF (**E2**) was chosen to represent the private sector since 60% of waste in the Federal District comes from civil construction. Concerning civil society, two interviews were conducted: one with a community leader from Cidade Estrutural (**E4**), who was present at the CLJ closing meetings, and an interview with leaders of recyclable materials cooperatives (**E3**), who manages one of the warehouses built to conduct activities related to waste sorting. The public sector representatives were chosen based on the number of meetings the agencies participated in, and it was possible to distinguish them through

an analysis of the minutes of the meetings. That is why the Department of Environment (**E8**), Urban Cleaning System (**E5**), and Department of Social Development (**E6**) were chosen. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with a member of the Public Ministry of the Federal District and Territories (**E7**), as this person followed the activities, and a former regional administrator at the time (**E1**).

Regarding the demands of the different actors (representatives of the public sector, private sector, and civil society), we can consider that the waste pickers aimed to obtain compensation and guaranteed work and income. Residents demanded compliance with the guidelines of the Vila Estrutural Integrated Project (PIVE), in addition to initiatives that would reduce commercial losses and mitigate security problems in Cidade Estrutural after the closure of the Landfill. The private sector, represented by the civil construction sector, aimed to have a suitable place for their final waste disposal. Finally, the public sector, in general, aimed to close the CLJ's activities.

Documentary research was conducted on the minutes of the meetings, made available via e-sic from the Government of the Federal District. In addition, SLU reports, available on the website, and SEDES reports, made available by the team, were used. Furthermore, documents provided by interview participants were used. Bibliographical research was also used in theses, dissertations, books, and scientific articles, in addition to reports from the principal communication vehicles of the Federal District government and media in the Federal District.

Contact was made with interviewees via messaging applications, email, or landline telephone to facilitate the research, and online interviews or

telephone calls were scheduled during May and June 2021, given the circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, which started in 2020. The interviews aimed to check the intricacies of the participatory process that culminated in the CLJ closure process, in addition to obtaining additional information.

Given the different sources and data, triangulation of the data obtained was conducted (Yin, 2003). Data analysis used a qualitative research technique called Content Analysis, based on Bardin (2016), aiming to identify the interviewees' perspectives about the topic of participation, focusing on the verbalized content. The organization of the analysis had three stages: pre-analysis, exploration of the material, and interpretation of the results.

Regarding ethical aspects, free and informed consent forms were available to all interviewees.

2.1. Controlled Landfill of Jockey and Cidade Estrutural: a description

The CLJ has been the final disposal area for solid waste in the Federal District since the 1960s. In 2017, its last year of operation, it received 1,800 of the 2,650 tons per day from conventional collection and part from selective collection (SLU, 2017).

In the 1960s, the area known as the “Landfill of Estrutural” was occupied by waste pickers' housing. However, the opening of DF-095 – EPCL (Structural Road) favored their occupation (Distrito Federal, 2018). In 1989, the Complementary Industry and Supply Sector – SCIA was created in front of the village when the invasion was expected to be removed. Attempts were made in this direction but without success (Distrito Federal, 2016). In the early 1990s, the group of shacks near the Landfill

became the “Invasion of Estrutural.” At first, there were just under a hundred homes in the area, but it expanded and was transformed into Vila Estrutural (Distrito Federal, 2016).

The Administrative Region XXV was created in 2004, and Vila Estrutural was its urban headquarters. Complementary Law No. 715 of January 24, 2006, declared Vila Estrutural a Special Zone of Social Interest, allowing its regularization (Distrito Federal, 2019). Currently, the region has 37,527 residents (Distrito Federal, 2021).

The CLJ occupied around 200 hectares and became a focus of environmental degradation and social conflict motivated by the occupation of precarious housing in its surroundings, partly inhabited by waste pickers (SLU, 2017). After the closure of CLJ activities, the place was closed for nine days to remove structures and cover the waste mass. In 2018, the Waste Reception Unit (URE) was opened on-site (SLU, 2017).

The most important points about the CLJ were:

- (i) the location of the dumpsite was close to the Brasília National Park,
- (ii) environmental impacts triggered by percolated waters,
- (iii) the presence of waste pickers (Neves *et al.*, 2017).

3. Analysis and discussion of results

Despite previous attempts, the closure of the CLJ began with the regularization process of Cidade Estrutural in 2002, under the administration of former Governor Joaquim Roriz, within the scope of the Sustainable Brasília Program I (in Portuguese,

“Programa Brasília Sustentável I”). This program sought to promote projects aimed at investments in the recovery, sanitation, and preservation of water resources, and the closure of the Landfill was parallel to the regularization process of the then Vila Estrutural, which became recognized as an Administrative Region, one of the 33 administrative regions of the Federal District. In this sense, in addition to the environmental licenses, one of the documents guiding the regularization process was the PIVE, which had as its central objective the land regularization of the then Vila Estrutural.

During the administration of former Governor Rollemberg (between 2015 and 2018), work on closing the Landfill began in conversations with possible interested parties, which covered varied sectors, from members of the private sector to specific sectors among collectors. Methodologies were developed for these conversations to enable the participation and understanding of the actors in question, such as illustrative tables, due to the high illiteracy.

In the beginning, there was an effort by SLU to try to reach the main interested parties to participate in the process. However, this initial structure was not followed, as many participants had very controversial demands, and it would not be convenient to continue with some groups. One of the most obvious examples concerns the intermediaries, who threatened the progress of negotiations to end the CLJ’s activities.

After the conversation processes, the need for intersectoral coordination between different groups that compose the government became evident. In this way, the coordination and participation of 17 agencies that were related to the closure of the Landfill were prioritized, as the closure had several

transversal demands, and it would be necessary to involve them in the process — with emphasis on the Urban Cleaning System (SLU), Secretariat of the Environment (SEMA), Secretariat of Social Development (SEDES) and Civil House.

However, there were differences between some government agencies, which disputed influence over decision-making — on one side, there was SLU and, on the other, SEMA, both with considerably different positions on waste management; such divergences are exposed in meeting minutes, interviews, and newspaper reports. In this sense, it is worth observing the profile of the agencies’ managers, who were politicians with quite different opinions regarding the waste management model that should be implemented in Brasília. Thus, the prevalence of the management model proposed by the SLU is highlighted.

3.1. Participation of recyclable waste pickers

As for the waste pickers, it is necessary to highlight that their participation is somewhat recent, as, before 2004, they were not even received at public offices, nor had their requests filed. Even after the sanction of the PNRS (2010), the waste management model in Brasília did not include pickers of recyclable materials. One of the examples was the attempt to approve the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) for waste, which was outside the local reality and went against the PNRS guidelines, which deal with the socio-productive inclusion of waste pickers. However, the example of the PPP for garbage showed the mobilization power that waste pickers in Brasília had, as E8 highlights: *The waste pickers managed to overthrow a PPP, a public-private*

partnership, in 2012 here in Brasília. It was during the Agnelo government, and Brasília was the only city in Brazil in which the waste pickers achieved this through their mobilization.

Bond et al. (2004) cite five successful participation factors: acceptance by authorities and developers, integration of participation activities, broad participation, transparency, and sufficient information.

Throughout the entire process of closing the CLJ, it is clear that the group that participated most was the waste pickers, and, in theory, it would be the group that could most influence decision-making and try to review possible losses to them. However, it is noted that, despite the presence at several meetings, several of their demands were not fully heard, in addition to economic losses. In this sense, E3's statement stands out: *We even participated in meetings, but like the ***, he participated and spoke, but when it came to the act, to act, it was always in the way the government had already planned.*

The sociocultural profile of the waste pickers did not contribute to an agenda for change, and the government did not seek to build bridges in which the waste pickers were agents of change but passive actors to be supported by the State (Capelari *et al.*, 2020).

Before the definitive departure of the waste pickers from the CLJ, the partial closure of the Landfill, conducted by the waste pickers, was one of the mechanisms used by them to negotiate with the government; such a mechanism no longer exists, as any demonstration made by waste pickers could result in loss of government contracts.

In this sense, Rocha & Bursztyn (2005, p. 46) warn that participation is often used as a political strategy to maintain control, at times encouraged,

and at others vetoed, maintaining places of domination and dominated. For Coletti (2012), the improvement of tools for environmental decision-making processes is crucial, as they can only serve the interests of capital, in addition to concentrating on executive power, generating immobility and influence peddling.

Added to this is the idea that waste pickers are poorly included in the recycling economy, in addition to being perverse, precarious, and marginal (Almeida & Zaneti, 2015; Severi, 2014).

A point contested by the waste pickers refers to compensation and recognition from the government since, in their view, they were protecting the environment by sorting and ensuring the survival of the dumpsite. However, the state did not recognize their importance. As for compensation, the amounts transferred were lower than previous earnings, but it also served to divide the leaders and cause intrigues among the waste pickers, leading to the collapse of several cooperatives, in addition to holding up negotiations between the waste pickers and the government.

Reflecting on a fairer recycling chain depends on a more attentive view of the role of each social actor, valuing waste pickers, expanding the recycling market, and mitigating socio-environmental impacts (Almeida & Zaneti, 2015).

There were also demands on waste pickers regarding cooperatives, as it was required that all of them organize themselves into cooperatives but the waste pickers in Cidade Estrutural themselves have a history of resistance to cooperative work, highlighted in the speech of E4: *Because of this situation, they say there are 'copergatos,' which are cooperatives that have owners, it becomes a*

micro-company [...]. You don't have that idea of cooperative work where everyone owns it.

Due to this resistance, half of the waste pickers did not join the cooperatives, as they did not feel represented by any of them, thus creating the figure of the independent waste picker and the figure of the waste picker linked to a cooperative but who does not participate in cooperative work and that, despite having its name linked to a cooperative, bought and sold its materials independently, even in 2015, with seven cooperatives already formed. However, despite the resistance towards cooperative work, the waste pickers were aware of the need to join a cooperative established with a Brazilian National Register of Legal Entities to access public policies.

However, in addition to the issues mentioned in the interview, there were irregularities in the cooperatives, such as the relationship of domination between the president of the cooperatives and others, registration of relatives to obtain future advantages and registration of intermediaries (SLU, 2016a). However, cooperativism and associations still represent valid organizational alternatives for waste pickers, contributing to the improvement of the management process (Almeida & Zaneti, 2015).

Regarding influence on decision-making, in the opinion of the waste pickers' representatives, the segment influenced some decisions. However, some decisions had already been taken, and previously planned government decisions prevailed. One example of their influence deals with the amounts transferred in assistance, which was established in a middle ground between the will of the waste pickers and the government, as highlighted in E5's speech: *In those assistances... it didn't achieve what we wanted but also didn't achieve what the government*

wanted. For example, it was in the middle ground there. Neither one nor the other, but very low, too.

Another important aspect to consider is the model of representation adopted, as those who participated in the meetings between the government and waste pickers were the leaders of the cooperatives, elected through voting. The concern with the representation strategy draws attention to a principle that is in line with democratic values. However, there were some complaints from waste pickers who felt unrepresented and afraid to report possible irregularities, as stated by E6: *I heard reports of waste pickers complaining about conflicts with their presidents. [...] They felt cornered, that if I reported it, they would know it was me. [...] I think they should be more empowered. And these presidencies had to be rotating.*

However, the representation adopted in the process was important and followed democratic values despite not always being able to meet everyone's wishes, as in any democracy. Furthermore, the strategy adopted was important, as it enabled government dialogue and contracting, as cooperatives and associations are legal entities. Also, during the meetings, members could accompany the cooperative leader.

3.2. Participation (or lack thereof) beyond the waste pickers

Although the presence of waste picker leaders was increased, there was not as much concern about other groups that are also part of the solid waste chain after the initial period of conversation held by SLU. Among the actors interviewed, the case of the residents of Cidade Estrutural stands out in

addition to the private sector, which did not have much collaboration in the process, even the Civil Construction sector, which deposited an average of 6 thousand tons/day (Campos, 2018) of waste in the CLJ, representing 60% of all waste in the Federal District.

There is some controversy regarding participation among the residents, as the regional administration of the city was dissociated from the process. The regional administration has among its responsibilities to supervise, inspect, and execute popular participation actions in the territory of the Administrative Region (Decree No. 38,094/2017), respecting the duties of the Secretariat of State for Cities. Their dissociation was evident in the deliberative meetings, in which the former administrator was only present in one meeting throughout the entire process. The interviews reinforced this understanding as it indicated that GDF led the process. The following excerpt by E7 reinforces this fact: *So, there was a gap in my perception of this regional administration with the group of waste pickers. Perhaps it would have been more efficient to include management in the group regarding deliberations.* In addition to this perception, the interviewee cites an example of a hearing on child labor in the region, in which the distance between the administration and the group of collectors was clear.

Despite the City administration being on the sidelines of the process, residents were represented by their leaders, who were present on several occasions and supported the waste pickers' struggle in protests. The leaders demanded compliance with the PIVE guidelines. However, although not all of them were respected, there is some satisfaction with the end of the CLJ's activities.

The population uses little or no channels to participate, and their participation needs encouragement. Barriers to participation are associated with little information about participation instruments (Jacobi & Francalanza, 2005, p. 48). Regarding the population's participation in environmental issues, Barros (2021) points out three main motivations for participating in public hearings on the environment, which are professional performance in the environmental area, connections with ecological entities, and connections to ecological political parties.

Despite the support of community leaders, it is necessary to highlight some internal tensions. According to statements from E4, the community of waste pickers was very closed and did not allow interaction with the rest of the resident community. Such tensions were due to the resentment of the waste pickers in sharing the work with more people, as they believed that the entry of more people into the dumpsite could harm them, which kept those who were not waste pickers away from discussions about closing the CLJ. In addition to the tensions between residents and waste pickers, there was some dispute between waste pickers who worked on the streets and waste pickers from the dumpsite, who were prohibited from entering the Landfill. However, despite the tensions, there were complaints from the waste pickers towards the residents when the government was pressing more truculently, and they needed support.

Concerning residents, one of the local entities in Cidade Estrutural that was most active during the process was the City's Community Council, an NGO created to debate issues inherent to the city's residents. In addition to the Community Council, some specific groups got a little more involvement in the discussion, such as the residents of the avenue

where the trucks passed to take the waste to the dumpsite, as those who lived on that avenue were directly affected by the truck traffic, in addition to many waste pickers who lived there. Except for these residents, there was a certain lack of interest from the rest of the community, as highlighted in E4's statement: *So those who lived outside of it didn't want to get involved, but they also thought that the landfill should be deactivated, if you ask if they say that — no, it's not my business, I have nothing to do with it, I want it to go away.*

For Pita et al. (2010), some factors can influence the lack of participation, such as lack of clarity regarding the influence on results, uncertainty regarding whether the instruments are only advisory, and the number of actors involved.

There are, however, suggestions for the co-optation of leaders by the GDF in exchange for jobs for family members in the government so that they would not fight for improvements in the city that, perhaps, the closure of the CLJ could bring. Not everything planned in PIVE has happened so far, such as the high school construction. The following statement from E8 reinforces the critical tone:

[Cidade] Estrutural suffered a huge impact, and there was no return for that population, they took advantage of the incapacity and low training of the people from the Estrutural so that there was no mobilization, and they fought for what they could have obtained with the closure, with the pseudo-closure of the Landfill.

It is worth mentioning that the entire process of regularization of the Cidade Estrutural was capable of transforming the old village (“Vila”), considered one of the largest favelas in the Federal District in the 1990s and 2000s, into a city (“cidade”) that

today tends toward certain normality, which has asphalt, water plumbing, energy, health center, military police battalion, civil police station, Olympic village, Social Assistance Reference Center, Specialized Social Assistance Reference Center, Elderly Community Center and three elementary schools, but still insufficient for the local population. The absence of schools in the city means that students need to travel to schools in other Administrative Regions of the Federal District, such as Plano Piloto, Cruzeiro, and Guara. Another alarming fact concerns the education level of the local population. According to the Federal District (2018), 27.3% have only completed secondary education, 38.9% have incomplete primary education, 9.6% have completed primary education, 5.8% have no education, 4.5% have completed higher education, and 3.5% have incomplete higher education, reflecting on the income of their residents, one of the most lacking in the Federal District.

As for the participation of the population of the Federal District, two campaigns were designed to raise awareness about the closure of the ACJ, called “I helped to close the Landfill” (in Portuguese, “Eu ajudei a fechar o Lixao”) in 2017 and “Volunteers of Selective Collection” (in Portuguese, “Voluntarios da Coleta Seletiva”) in 2018 (Campos, 2018).

Although the closure of the CLJ's illegal activities did not result in more gains for the community of Cidade Estrutural, what can be seen is that there were important gains for the city as a whole, according to the statements of E1 and E4. Another important issue is support for the closure project. In the opinion of the two interviewees, there was a division between residents and waste pickers in the region, with some supporting it and others not, as they feared the impacts of unemployment, crime,

and commerce. This division was clearer in the group of waste pickers, as E4 says: *Deactivation would never serve 100% of those involved. So, it was removed, but at least 50% of those involved were unhappy with the removal. I was happy. [...] And those who engaged in the warehouses are also satisfied today.*

3.3. Participation strategies

In the process of closing the landfill activities, some strategies were adopted to listen to and deliberate the demands of the collectors, as well as representatives of the two main cooperative networks in Brasília (Rede Alternativa and CEN-TCOOP). However, it was necessary to adopt new strategies, as information was restricted to a group of 200 waste pickers connected to local cooperatives, while around 1,200 people worked in the dumpsite. Hence the need to hold elections among the so-called “separate” or “independent” waste pickers to choose their representatives. Elections were then held at a school in Cidade Estrutural to choose six representatives of independent waste pickers, seeking to establish accessible means of communication for voters and the inclusion of forms of gender parity among candidates. Those chosen began to represent the waste pickers within the scope of the Intersectoral Management Committee for the Social and Economic Inclusion of Waste Pickers in the Federal District (CIISC/DF).

It is worth noting that the representatives did not participate in decision-making, as decisions occurred elsewhere. There is some criticism of the adopted decision-making model, of which the government departments were part, because,

despite the structure being very robust, with the participation of several agencies and praised by several participants, not everyone was satisfied, as, according to E8, the meetings only served to approve the decisions made by the SLU. One of the most evident reflections of this fact is the amount of waste to be delivered to cooperatives. Such problems were already known, as evidenced in the following excerpts from E8:

Because of the sorting centers in our account (SEMA), the waste pickers had to collect 200 kg or more. In the SLU account, waste pickers could only collect up to 37 kg. [...] 200 was the minimum we were asking for. [...] That 37 kg per waste picker is unfeasible! [...] It wasn't anything technical! It was all completely political!

In addition to the issues, E8 disagrees with the mobilization carried out to the waste pickers and considered that they were deceived in the process, with the offer of scholarships and the capacity of the sorting centers to accommodate all waste pickers, promises that proved to be insufficient to alleviate their financial situation, who lost their family's source of support.

The PNRS had inclusion strategies that only alleviated poverty. It should change the role of the government by regulating the recycling market under the premise of a democratic project, guaranteeing rights and not just the demands of capital (Severi, 2014, p. 169). In this sense, Sawaia & Wanderley (1999) argue that exclusion is a complex and multifaceted process, a configuration of material, political, related, and subjective dimensions. It is a subtle and dialectical process, as it only exists in relation to inclusion as a constitutive part of it.

An important topic in the speeches is related to the discredit that the government had in the region

and that some of the waste pickers did not believe that the landfill would be effectively closed and stopped participating in the process, as there had been talk of closure for many years and it had never materialized. This is one of the main topics, as it generated the most friction between members of the government and the waste pickers; as E5 says: *It was so serious that when the call for waste pickers to register to receive financial compensation was opened, some cooperative waste pickers and even cooperative presidents did not register to receive financial compensation.*

The population's lack of interest in seeking their rights is related to the lack of credibility in the implementation of social and government policies. To reverse this situation, dialogue, transparency, and cooperation are essential (Rocha & Bursztyn, 2005, p. 47). There are more possibilities for participation, but due to the lack of credibility and administrative continuity, the population is unaware of the consistency of the policies and their scope (Jacobi & Francalanza, 2005). Furthermore, it is necessary to rethink the reduction of inequalities that permeate Brazil, an essential step for progress (OXFAM, 2022). These inequalities directly impact the construction of citizenship, social participation, and dignity (INESC, 2022).

Furthermore, the participation of actors from the private sector could and should have been increased, as most of the problems in solid waste management in the Federal District have some relationship with this sector. What stands out here is the small amount of waste delivered to recyclable cooperatives, which could be expanded with prior agreements between cooperatives and large solid waste generators in the region, as the Federal District's Large Generators Law allows the contracting

of cooperatives and associations for waste collection. E7 emphasizes: *In this process, if there was a combination with the business sector [...] it would favor socioeconomic inclusion and the appropriate disposal of waste because these large generators could already manage the logistics of delivering all this material to the collectors.*

Another factor that refers to the low participation of civil construction representatives in the Federal District is the generation of around 6 thousand tons of waste per day, which, after the closure of part of the activities of the former CLJ, continued to be deposited in it, today called the Debris Receiving Unit, as it only receives debris and pruning remains; as highlighted in E2's speech: *In fact, it was a process that happened very gradually, we were on the margins of this process, in fact we had little decisive influence.*

Although construction waste is inert and does not cause much damage to the environment, ideally, such waste should be sent to the Waste Treatment and Transshipment Areas (ATTRs), provided for in the District Plan for Integrated Solid Waste Management 2018, as some interviewees highlight.

Regardless, simple participation does not guarantee the improvement of public management. It must be present throughout the decision-making process (Rocha & Bursztyn, 2005, p. 50). Furthermore, the creation of instruments that aim to increase the participation of interested parties in the decision-making process will not, alone, result in the legitimacy and fulfillment of participation (Pita *et al.*, 2010).

4. *Final considerations*

The article sought to analyze the quality of participation of the actors involved, as well as the level, forms, and conditions of participation of the actors involved, and also, the representation of the private sector and the capacity of the actors to influence decision-making in the process of closing the CLJ. Thus, it demonstrates the consequences of the lack of participation of other actors in the context of dumpsite closures. Furthermore, the article has the characteristic of transcending the waste pickers' perspective and reaching actors in the solid waste chain.

This study highlights that the solid waste chain is broad and needs to be considered when regarding its management. When we talk about closing dumpsites, this waste chain becomes a little more restricted, as there is a heavier burden on government actors, waste pickers, residents around the Landfill, and the private sector, mainly. In the case of the CLJ, there is a leading role among the government but also among the waste pickers, who were consulted occasionally but without much ability to influence the final decision-making. The reported forms of participation are quite different, such as demonstrations, conversations, assemblies, elections of representatives, hearings with the governor, meetings between government departments, and meetings within the scope of the CIISC. However, there is low participation of the private sector, observed only in the initial rounds of conversations but not being developed throughout the process.

By deepening the literature on social participation and sustainable development, it was possible to establish connections between the promotion of sus-

tainable development and the need for participatory initiatives, especially in solid waste management, with emphasis on the closure of dumpsites. Furthermore, it was possible to understand the forms of participation and typologies associated with social participation. Thus, the relationship between social participation also served as a backdrop to understanding the nuances of the process for closing the CLJ, emphasizing the resulting social problems and the lost opportunities due to the lack of participation of other actors.

The conditions for participation were set by the government, but due to a certain distrust of the entire process, many actors, especially the waste pickers, did not join in. However, those who proposed to participate were part of the process in some way. The residents of Cidade Estrutural did not propose to participate, as they were neither empowered nor encouraged to participate. There is a limited capacity of the actors to influence the entire process since, in the opinion of some interviewees, decisions were made, and discussions only served to approve decisions, not always technical, taken previously — and which had a political and economic nature.

Based on the topics raised, it is necessary to make some reflections. Despite enshrining in its guidelines integrated waste management, social control, and participation, the PNRS does not verify if the guidelines are applied by governments, or even when they are applied, they have not been sufficient to improve solid waste management and the processes that unfold. The closure of dumpsites is an adequate example since, despite the government putting in place a mechanism for participation, other factors prevent more effective participation from happening.

However, it is necessary to recognize progress regarding participation in this process, as in the past, the use of participation was weaker or non-existent.

Furthermore, the lack of public participation in the closure of dumpsites is worrying, as such processes have a significant impact on the most vulnerable and marginalized population, more specifically waste pickers and residents around dumpsites, which are generally places of social vulnerability, as in the case of Jardim Gramacho (Rio de Janeiro) and Cidade Estrutural (Federal District), requiring greater empowerment regarding the decisions that will affect them for a certain period.

An opportunity was missed in the involvement of the private sector, especially the large solid waste generators in Brasília, since, if there were prior agreements between the waste pickers and the large generators, the quantity and quality of the waste sorted by the waste cooperatives would be far superior to what is currently.

Finally, it is worth noting that the participation employed was not able to break with unequal power relations and circumvent social exclusion, especially of waste pickers, who became even poorer as their sources of income were reduced, in addition to all the conflicts that emerged from the participatory process, going against the premises of Sustainable Development.

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