

# PARTICIPATIONISM AND IDENTITY DIFFERENTIALISM IN RELATIONS BETWEEN STATE AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS IN BRAZIL (2003-2010)

*PARTICIPACIONISMO E DIFERENCIALISMO IDENTITÁRIO NAS  
RELAÇÕES ENTRE ESTADO E MOVIMENTOS SOCIAIS NO  
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*PARTICIPACIONISMO Y DIFERENCIALISMO EN LA RELACIÓN  
ENTRE EL ESTADO Y LOS MOVIMIENTOS SOCIALES EN  
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**ABSTRACT:** This work discusses the relationship between State and social movements through the analysis of discourses on participation and the constitution of identity boundaries around themes that involve youth and LGBT movements (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals). Qualitative research with semi-structured interviews, document analysis and field observation. Were conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with activists who, between 2003 and 2010, held government positions. The results are organized through two discourses: (a) The discourse of participationism, which points out meanings and ambiguities about social participation; (b) The discourse of identity differentialism, which identifies treatments to identities and differences. These discourses offer a conceptual basis for the analysis of the effects of participationism and identity fragmentation in organizational processes and strategies of social movements, as well as for the relationship between actors.

**KEYWORDS:** State; Social movements; Public policies; Discourse analysis.

**RESUMO:** Este trabalho discute a relação entre Estado e movimentos sociais por meio da análise de discursos sobre a participação e a constituição de fronteiras identitárias em torno de temáticas que envolvem os movimentos de juventude e LGBT (Lésbicas, Gays, Bissexuais, Travestis e Transexuais). Pesquisa qualitativa com entrevistas semiestruturadas, análise de documentos e observação de campo. Realizamos 26 entrevistas semiestruturadas com ativistas que, no período entre 2003 e 2010, ocuparam cargos governamentais. Os resultados são organizados por meio de dois discursos: (a) O discurso do participacionismo, que aponta sentidos e ambiguidades sobre participação social; (b) O discurso do diferencialismo identitário, que identifica tratamentos às identidades e diferenças. Esses discursos oferecem uma base conceitual para a análise dos efeitos do participacionismo e da fragmentação identitária nos processos organizativos e estratégias dos movimentos sociais, bem como para a relação entre atores.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Estado; Movimentos sociais; Políticas públicas; Análise do discurso.

**RESUMEN:** Este trabajo discute la relación entre estado y movimientos sociales, a través del análisis de discursos sobre la participación y la constitución de fronteras identitarias en torno a temáticas que involucran los movimientos de juventud y LGBT (Lesbianas, Gays, Bisexuales, Travestis y Transexuales). Investigación cualitativa con entrevistas semiestructuradas, análisis de documentos y observación de campo. Realizamos 26 entrevistas semiestructuradas con activistas que, en el período entre 2003 y 2010, ocuparon cargos gubernamentales. Los resultados se organizan por medio de dos discursos: (a) El discurso del participacionismo, que apunta sentidos y ambigüedades sobre participación social; (b) El discurso del diferencialismo identitario, que mapea el campo de identificaciones y el posicionamiento de los actores en la arena política. Estos discursos ofrecen una base conceptual para el análisis de los efectos del participacionismo y de la fragmentación identitaria en los procesos organizativos y estrategias de los movimientos sociales, así como para la relación entre actores.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Estado; Movimientos sociales; Políticas públicas; Análisis del discurso.

## Introduction

This work discusses the relationship between State and social movements in Brazil, in the period between 2003 and 2010, analyzing discourses about the participation and constitution of identity boundaries around themes that involve youth and LGBT movements (Lesbians, Gays, Bisexuals, Transvestites and Transsexuals). Several authors point out that in Brazil, especially after the Constitution of 1988, social movements and State ceased to assume relations primarily of confrontation to develop partnerships and dialogues that culminated in a growing and continuous rapprochement between these two spheres of politics (Abers, Serafim, & Tatagiba, 2014; Cardoso, 1999; V. Silva, 2010; M. Silva, 2015). Lavalle, Carlos, Dowbor and Szwako (2019) argue that the institutionalization of forms of control and instances of participation is one of the most notable phenomena of this period.

Since 2003, this rapprochement and the institutionalization of participation mechanisms have expanded. Silva (2010) argues that the Lula government inaugurated a new period in the history of social participation in the country, and sought to build a new pact with civil society through the creation and institutionalization of new participatory spaces. Between 2003 and 2010, 74 national conferences were held on 40 different themes that directly mobilized more than five million people, in about five thousand Brazilian municipalities (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011). In addition, at the federal level, during the Lula government, 18 new national public policy councils were created and 15 were reformulated (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2010).

Besides social participation arrangements, the relationship between social movements and State intensifies with the appointment of activists to positions of trust, with the election of these to the Executive and the Legislative, as well as acting in the construction or even in the execution of public policies (Abers & Bülow, 2011; Silva, 2015). Abers et al. (2014) highlight that participation in the Lula government opened space for the more creative combination of different practices and routines, increasing the chances of access and influence of movements on the State. The diversification and articulation between repertoires and formal and informal spaces gained prominence in this period. According to Silva (2015), these repertoires question two assumptions of some theories about social movements:

the assumption of externality, according to which there is (or should be) a clear separation between social movements and State or, in other words, between contestatory policy and institutional policy; and the assumption of confrontation, according to which confrontational action is (or should be) the quintessential form of action of social movements. (Silva, 2015, p 134)

On the other hand, the perception that these boundaries have become undefined or opaque (Prado, Machado, & Carmona, 2009) does not reach the complexity of the interactions that are developed in these spaces. A neutral notion of State makes it difficult to analyze the system of relations that condition political interactions and impact the identity of individual and collective actors.

Although there are transits of actors between state and non-state spaces, it is important to identify how political boundaries are constituted in order not to lose sight of the moments when, apart from dialogues, the boundaries between social movements and State become insuperable, not only limiting the power of impact of activism and verticalizing political deliberations from the State bureaucracy, but also making it difficult for public policies to reach population sectors averse to hegemonic institutional logic, or even criminalizing actors and collective actions.

This scenario highlights the importance of reflections on the relations established between political actors on the boundaries between State and organized civil society. Most of the literature on this subject is in the political sciences and sociology, with few contributions from social psychology (Paiva, Stralen, & Costa, 2014). Thus, our study seeks to contribute to the understanding of interactions between actors through the analysis of identity processes and discursive construction on these interactions.

## Methodological aspects

The research was guided by a qualitative approach and the empirical data were constructed with the use of document analysis, field observation and semi-structured interviews. The documents analyzed were materials published by the governments on social participation, such as dissemination of councils and conferences, booklets, reports, edicts, public speeches, etc. The field observations, recorded in a diary, were made in events that had the participation of activists and public managers and in informal interactions in the spaces that we accessed during the research. We seek to record the conflicts that established political boundaries and the identity enunciations that situated state and movementalist interactions.

We conducted 26 semi-structured interviews with activists who, between 2003 and 2010, held positions: in the federal government, in Brasilia, in the state and municipal governments of the cities of Belo Horizonte/MG and Rio de Janeiro/RJ. These two cities were chosen as a counterpoint to the influence of party membership. In the state of Minas Gerais, the governing party base was opposed to the federal government, unlike Rio de Janeiro. Eleven interviewees were affiliated with political parties, three of them in parties opposed to the federal government, six specifically to the Workers' Party (PT). Two had paraded and one was never affiliated to any party, but was in the process of affiliation to the Communist Party of Brazil (PC do B). Regarding gender, there were thirteen men, one of them transsexual, and thirteen women interviewees, three of them transvestites or transsexuals. Regarding sexual orientation, twelve interviewees declared themselves homosexuals, being three lesbians. Three of them were never active in the LGBT movement, but in the Youth movement. Regarding the link to social movements, eleven declared activism only with the LGBT movement, seven only with the youth movement and the others declared belonging to two or more movements. With regard to age, we interviewed six militants under the age of thirty (i.e., they were officially "young" at the time of the interview), ten between thirty and forty and ten over forty at the time of the interview.

The bodies in which we accessed these interviewees are linked to education policies, health and various social issues, such as human rights, citizenship rights, social development and social assistance. We sought to access individuals who occupy positions of greater prominence, such as undersecretaries, heads of offices and coordinators, to advisors and administrative technicians, but all with a significant trajectory as activists of social movements. The interviews were mostly conducted in the workplace, but also in specific events and schedules for the interview, in public places. The choice of the interviewees was initially made by personal indications and search on social movements websites, but then we applied the “snowball” technique for a greater diversity of discursive positions.

We did not use a rigid interview script in the semi-structured interviews (Klandermans, Staggenborg, & Tarrow, 2003), and the questions were asked in the context of the established dialogue between the researcher and the interviewees (Mendes, 2003). The interviews addressed: (a) path of militancy and transition to government office; (b) relations between the various social movements and these with the State; (c) notions of social change, forms of interaction, political conflicts and the role of social movements.

For data processing we used the Sociological Analysis of the Discourse System, which integrates different analytical levels. Discourses are understood as theoretical constructions that help to reconfigure the phenomenon being investigated and locate it in a new comprehensive landmark (Alamo, 2010). The categories that emerged from the exhaustive reading of the data were organized into two complementary discourses: (a) The discourse of participationism, which points out meanings and ambiguities crossed in governmental discourses on social participation; (b) The discourse of identity differentialism, which maps the field of identifications and the positioning of actors in the political arena, identifying negotiations, articulations and discursive strategies on the processes of (in)differentiation (Prado & Souza, 2002).

The articulation of these discourses is an instrument for the analysis of social interactions in institutional spaces of participation and of the ways that the politician has been printing in the collective making of the actors. We seek a theoretical and methodological tool for the study of psychopolitical processes that occur at the interface between actors and state and non-state spaces.

## The discourse of participationism

Participationism in Brazil is part of the institutionalized political culture with the Constitution of 1988 and, as D’Incao (2001) argues, the PT was the party that most bet on institutionalization of participation mechanisms, first in municipal and state management and then in the federal government. The performance of the party historically valued the participation of civil society, without compromising political stability and governability. In the federal government, the government discourse of historical rupture (“never before in the history of this country”) contrasts with the conciliation of antagonisms and contradictory interests for the production of consensus (Ricci, 2010). As one of our interviewees ridiculed “Capillarity and consensus. For PT everything is consensus” (Interview 04). The discourse on social participation tries to overcome this contrast by associating the social participation advocated by the Constitution of 1988 with something new: “from 2003, the country adopted a new way of governing”, “innovative experience

that established a new relationship between State and society”; “the Lula government has shown that a new form of politics is possible” (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011, pp. 6-7).

The purpose of this article is not to criticize or evaluate, but to analyze the place of participation in the constitution of a discourse about democracy in which social participation becomes, at the same time, a governing technique and a political utopia. The government discourse could be apprehended when the government expressed its conception of participation and in the examples and testimonials chosen to illustrate the benefits of participation in government disclosure materials. Here we work specifically with the analysis of the documents cited as General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic (2010, 2011). We summarize this perspective of participation in five elements that make up the discourse of participationism:

1. Qualified participation: relativizes the traditional role of the specialist: “Before, decisions were made exclusively by technicians and ministries leaders. Now, they are built in partnership with civil society” (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011, p. 9); However, this new way of governing must be “based on permanent and qualified dialogue”, that is, the collective actors who participate need to “qualify” to establish a “dialogue” with the State. The idea of qualification may be understood in the sense that social movements need to comprehend how the State works (which contributes to adapting political strategies to the institutional conformations) and also in the sense that the government needs to qualify to dialogue with social movements (which contributed to the adequacy of the governmental discourse to the desires of each social movement with its specific themes and demands, being able to avoid even the most controversial points, usage of their jargon and emulation of particular political cultures in delimited spaces).

2. Gradual ripening: naturalizes the existence of conflicts [One of the main roles of councils is to give visibility to conflicts (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011)], directing them in search of a consensus, that will be solved with the qualified participation of those interested, that is, if something is not sufficiently democratized yet, it is due to the low mobilization or lack of accumulation and production of consensus in a given field of participation. Avoiding polemics and opting for uncontroversial themes may be seen in the interviews, especially among those affiliated to the government base parties, under the justification that these guidelines were still “not mature”, “did not have necessary accumulation”, “were recent”, “did not mobilize enough” (phrases like these were recurrent in the field data). This reasoning reflects that what is still lacking is not due to dialogue absence (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2010).

3. Participation as an end in itself: refers to the moments in which, emptied of practical sense, participationism is directed to the symbolic and emotional dimension of participation, offering elements for the construction of meaning within the collective identities recognized by this discourse. Even if participation does not revert to concrete, substantial gains, it still appears as important. Besides, the contact of “minority” groups with spaces (physical, non-deliberative) of power and with the figure of the president, without institutional mediation, was repeatedly pointed out as something democratizing by itself, reproducing the idea of participation as utopia.



By stating that the president's agenda follows criteria that favor direct interaction between the head of State and civil society and social movements (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011), it is noticed that one of the strategies of justification of participationism occurs through emotional elements and identity recognition that, by themselves, would imply social democratization. Interesting to observe that the highlight was the "direct interaction" with the "head of State", and not with the institutions and the government. The emotional elements can also be seen in the speech of a paper picker: "In fact, the experience for us is of raising self-esteem, because for the first time in the history of Brazil, paper pickers were able to meet with the President of the Republic" (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011, p. 21); or in the passage of the speech of the then president Lula during the first LGBT conference:

When I received, at the Planalto Palace, our dear companions paper pickers, our dear companion from São Paulo made a speech, and said: "President, if we do not conquer anything else in life, only the fact that we are putting our foot inside the Planalto Palace, will have been worth it, because we never imagined passing even near the Planalto Palace. (Silva, 2008, p. 8)

4. Co-responsibility: expands the idea that both the government and social movements are "responsible" for the political results in the fields open to participation, because public policies are derived from consensus among actors. In other words, the government starts to count on the support of sectors interested in expanding citizenship (2010). According to the participationist discourse, a link of co-responsibility that stimulates the transparency of public administration and activates citizenship is created. (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2010). This device supports governmental actions and implies and/or returns to society the responsibility for the "non-transformation" of something, similar to the first two devices of this discourse.

5. Proportionality: equates actors with unequal political capacities and that were probably unequally benefited. The idea of proportionality can be visualized in the following excerpt: "from the entities of construction entrepreneurs to workers' unions, all non-governmental organizations in the sector were able to contribute, they were heard" (General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic, 2011, p. 17).

These five devices treat conflict as a fleeting moment until the reach of consensus, in which power relations are relativized, as if all present the same social and political conditions of participation. Identity borders are fundamental in this system. Fostered by the recognition of the "diverse social segments", differences will be an important part of the discourse on participation.

## The discourse of identity differentialism

The discourse of differentialism tries to comprehend the processes of identification and the formation of political-identity boundaries between the actors that interact in the institutional spaces of participation. The spaces of participation established by the government occurred, mostly, through sectoral and/or thematic policies, which form what Tommasi (2012) calls intervention fields, with the financing of projects, creation of

councils and holding conferences aimed at “minorities”, which express their specificities and formalize demands related, above all, to recognition, to the right to difference and to identity reparation. In this context, identity negotiations and their differentiation processes occupied an important place in the analyzed discourses.

The monopoly of narratives and the symbolic elements that articulate the feelings of collective belonging in our field data can be observed in native expressions such as “me, black and lesbian”, “me, as a young, gay and hardworking”, “me, young feminist, from hip hop and from the periphery”, “me, young, black and physically disabled”, among others. Such statements list several possibilities of affirmation of identities guided by their experiential authenticity in a web of interweaving between categorical pairs. Elements such as social class, party affiliation, participation in thematic projects (“I am from education”, “public security”, “we from health” etc.) can also be triggered. In addition, other belongings amplify the complexity of identities: “I, as a state”, “I, as a social movement”, “being NGO”, “being university” etc. These expressions that we put in quotation marks were recurrent in interviews and field observations and help us realizing the emphasis given to difference and specificity in the speeches that we analyzed.

The definition of a collective identity (we) is, thus, determinant for the monopoly of narratives and, consequently, for the monopoly of opportunities<sup>2</sup>, which makes differentialism a complementary discursive construction to participationist discourse. Differentialism helps to understand how the constitution of identities relates to the ways in which social movements address their demands to the State and how the State deals with their differences. In summary, to the extent that a circumscribed group categorically accesses a network of monopolies (through the monopoly of narratives), will be articulated symbolic-material resources (e.g. financing, representations, political influence) that connect them with the mobilization of identities promoted by the State.<sup>3</sup>

Castro (2008) discusses the centrality of identity repair in the youth agenda and points to the place occupied by identity experience arguing that it is not enough to “be young” to constitute oneself as a political subject. In addition to being young, other identity markers need to be aggregated so that participation acquires substance in negotiation spaces, such as being “young, black, from the periphery”, being “young, lesbian and cultural activist”, among other combinations producing (in)differentiation. This emphasis on specificity can result in the search for an “experiential authenticity” that reifies identities, assigning an essence to the subjects and secundarizing the dynamics and contextual and relational aspects of identification processes, in other words, a non-discursive approach to experience is operated (Scott, 1999). The identity and the right to speak politically on some subject of politics will rest, in this perspective, on the legitimacy of the experience that will be taken as evidence of difference (Scott, 1999). And the State plays a decisive role in the recognition of identities and experiences associated with them (monopoly of narratives) (Eder, 2003).

The tense point of the differentialist discourse lies in the interactions it establishes, because it limits the construction of equivalences between democratic struggles fragmenting collective actors. It will be the affirmation of a difference that will guarantee the monopoly of a given narrative through the institutional recognition of collective identities. For example, a young black lesbian who has developed a path of militancy along with education movements does not fully occupy her place as a citizen or political subject, because she would be less “authorized” to talk about places she has not experienced, such

as the place of lesbians, or blacks in general, and even less about other inequalities. Thus, the monopoly of an identity narrative also implies circumscribing a field of recognition and action, outside which this experiential “we” would not be allowed to act. Expanding the scope of political discourses will involve additional efforts and complex calculations in the relations of losses and gains in the search for political impacts, which supports an interactional closure in their categories and between categories, focusing on difference, to the detriment of equivalence (Laclau, 2005).

By demarcating the identity dimension and the primacy of experience in the constitution of collective identities, the resulting discursive mechanism demands the transformation of unequal individuals and groups (unevenly inserted in categorical relations) into *experts* of their own “exclusion”. This can be seen as an element that increases the qualified participation of the discourse of participationism. Political actors, by circumscribing their horizon of social transformation in this discursive field and directing their actions to the technical aspects of public policies and governmental actions, are assimilated to the institutional order in processes of “inclusion” even more segmented than the state sectorialization. We argue that this is not a direct effect of difference or its recognition, but of processes that, in the present context, we try to synthesize as the discourse of identity differentialism. It will be differentialism, not difference, that will establish an experiential boundary and an interactional closure that hinders the formation of equivalence chains. The dynamics of this discourse can be better understood from three interrelated and complementary devices: (a) The reification or essentialization of identities; (b) The reticular boundaries; (c) The overlap between technique and identity;

1. The reification or essentialization of identities: Social movements and State work with fixed social categories, which reifies and essentializes identities when dealing with the production of differences in political processes. The reification implies an interactional conditioning marked by the primacy of the experience lived in the personal sphere, but now, increased by identity belonging also linked to the institutional origin, technical skills, fields of action and others. Obviously, there is no political mobilization without experience, because, as Brah (2006) argues, “experience” is a process of meaning that is the very condition for the constitution of what we call “reality”. However, by circumscribing and homogenizing the experience to the isolated social effects of categorical pairs (woman – man etc.), the differentialist discourse hinders the articulation of inequalities in chains of equivalence. For Scott (1999), a non-discursive approach to experience reifies identity as an empirical fact, making it inseparable from the difference that constitutes it, which makes it difficult to reveal the historical contingencies that imprint a position of subject to a certain difference. An essentialist perspective, when guiding the formation of collective identities, results in an interactional closure that limits the experience of politics to its instrumental aspects, based on specific demands or the recognition of watertight differences.

As Scott (1999) argues, making experience visible as a transparent event prevents the analysis of the functioning of the system and its historicity; instead, it reproduces its terms. By limiting reflection and political practice to a particularity of the subject’s living experience, the differentialist discourse hinders the perception that social categorizations not only hierarchize social life, but are also markers that cross social relations as a whole, making a given social struggle a question that concerns only a certain minority victimized by the relations that it denounces.



2. Reticular boundaries: analyzes the interaction of actors on the boundaries between State and society assigning specificities, but pointing to discursive permeability. Although we agree that the State should not be seen as an “actor” (Silva, 2015), we tried to identify contingencies posed by this space for the repertoires and identities of the actors. Several interviewees complained about the vagueness of roles that are assigned to the State and social movements. Previously, this aspect led us to treat these boundaries as “opaque” (Prado, Machado, & Carmona, 2009). However, this term does not help us to understand the difference between “spaces” and how actors transit between them. The reticular boundaries analyze the identity aspects of this boundary, recognizing that the internalization of activists or collectives does not mean “proportionality” of actors in the political relations that shape government projects.

The idea of reticule was taken from an artistic finishing technique of printing textures on paper. A reticule is a flexible sheet that contains through dots the shapes of a texture to be printed and that rubbed with ink on a paper transfers to it these shapes. A flexible border that contains a discursive pattern to be printed and the greater the number of dots the greater the definition of the image, until at a certain time the excessive number of dots blurs the image, especially when the surface on which that shape is printed is very porous. This idea of a reticule can be associated with the modes of interaction between institutions and government actors and organized movements. To account for the complexity expressed by the increasing number of specificities and differences of social actors, the State begins to produce segmentations that respond to social dynamics, to mobilize identities. Social movements, more dynamic and less institutionalized, adapt to this mobilization of identities to mobilize narratives and monopolize resources. This movement, during the Lula government, caused segmentation and differences, which we understand here as “number of dots of the reticule”, to increase in such a way that at some point it would result in blurs, that is, in the lack of assertiveness of interactions and repertoires.

On one side of this reticular border, the government adapted its system of categories to the processes of mobilization and constitution of collective identities of civil society that better monopolized narratives. Participationism helps us to understand this process that, by fostering the internalization of representatives of the identity “minorities” in the State, creates a grammar of participation that results in the adequacy of the forms of interaction between actors who must qualify, mature their demands, become co-responsible, etc. The reticular boundaries allow the government to respond to social movements by formulating discourses that recognize and affirm their identity categories and demands, with adequate concepts, jargon and values – even if the possibilities of responding to these demands are conditioned by disputes between actors with disproportionate capacities of incidence. Social movements, in turn, adapted their forms of interaction and organization to the categories drawn in this reticule as a way of accessing resources, representation spaces, positions, etc. The reticular boundary allows some symbolic, discursive and organizational homogeneity between the “surfaces” separated by it, even if this does not necessarily imply a greater capacity of interpellation of social movements. Thus, although the government capitalizes on the “power” of social movements, through the mobilization of identities, such power is largely dissipated by the forms drawn in these reticular boundaries, which segment and reify identities.

The “entry” into the State reorganizes the feelings of belonging and the attribution of meanings to these belongings, which forces the militants to separate different positions of subject that present themselves as conflicting in their discourses (“I as State” *vs* “I as social movements”). This separation appeared in several moments of the research, in which the subjects reported that their militant trajectory was pointed out as disqualifying criticism of certain government positions. In other words, the fact that they came from social movements was associated with a lack of understanding about what should be done and how. At the same time, participation in state spaces redefines the belonging and interaction of these activists in the field of social movements.

The monopoly of opportunities reinforces the identity boundaries and the possibilities of action of the movements, but it can engender conflicts, disputes and hierarchies between activist groups. For example, a movement that accesses resources (such as funding, scholarships, or government positions for its activists) tends to face conflicts with movements that have not accessed the same resources. This increases the number of personal conflicts and internal contradictions in the field of social movements, which leads to the weakening of the collective network around some theme, compromising the collective identity of the network and assertiveness in the interactions of movements with government actors. Internalization of activists and access to valuable resources can increase the ability of a social movement to focus on the forms of reticular boundaries. However, as the “identity” represented by this subject is circumscribed by the discourse of differentialism, its inclusion will be segmented and conflicting with technical issues of public policies.

3. Overlap between technique and identity: The overlap between technique and identity is a tension that is established between a discourse on the effectiveness in the management of public policies (a know-how in the State) and the presence of an identity. We can find, on the one hand, an association between technique and politics and, on the other, an association between politics and identity. This tension resembles the dilemma presented by Phillips (2001): a policy of ideas or a policy of presence. These poles appear to be complementary and without contradictions in the discourse of participationism, but the interviewees describe interactions between government and social movements in which conflicts between technique and identity become visible.

The government will have to justify its actions through technical-scientific knowledge that would guarantee the legitimacy of a given government project in a highly technicist context, and, at the same time, through knowledge based on the diversity of identity experiences, which would guarantee the legitimacy of the representation of a populist discourse (Laclau, 2005). Reporting a situation in which the technique strains the identity, one of our interviewees argues that the “commissioned positions [that can be indicated by their identity, more than by their competence] command the career positions and do not sufficiently understand the state machine” (Interview 13), which impairs the proper functioning of public policies and the efficient spending of the state budget. The following excerpt is very illustrative of how politics is strained between technical and identity elements, in which the identity presence overlaps and may weaken politics:

The problem is not the affirmation of the specific struggle, the problem is a complete disarticulation of any general movement, any understanding of integrated law. If there is not that the guy will not understand that there were

men in the women's movement, there were whites in the black movement, there were adults in the youth movement. So, it's natural for you to put on a young, 20-year-old public servant without any preparation, just because they're young. Without any preparation. [*Have you seen this?*] Many times. This is characteristic. The PT has a lot of it. **You don't need to be qualified for social debate.** (Interview 01, emphasis added)

This leads us to another effect of differentialism: to disqualify or subalternize a specific theme, while reaffirming an identity and/or guaranteeing access to resources by groups that monopolize narratives. We identified conflicts that derive from these tensions in various interactional dynamics, from the hiring of subjects for their identity to positions associated with the themes of this same "identity", to the composition of councils and the organization of conferences, which often associate identities with chairs and the legitimacy of delegates. These subjects are chosen without often being technically or politically qualified for the development of administrative tasks. The "qualification" implied in differentialism is more related to experience, as the foundation of a truth about the difference that reifies and essentializes an identity.

This effect is also observed in the composition of the councils. We recorded examples of representatives of ministries and other government bodies, sent to these councils, chosen by their age or sexual orientation, reinforcing the idea that experience is evidence of difference. According to these testimonies, such representatives were unaware of the debates developed by social movements and, sometimes, had conservative and depoliticized positions, because the experience of a difference does not imply the politicization of an identity. Moreover, most of the time, these advisors did not occupy prominent positions in their ministries and bodies of origin and, even if they understand the debates of the council, they will not be able to reproduce the deliberations in their work environments, which limits the capacity of intersectoral incidence. This also happens when it is an indication of civil society to compose the council. In the case of the Youth Council, the Organizations that count on representation were founded and are run mostly by adults, but usually some "young" official is sent to join the council on the basis of their identity. According to one interviewee this is problematic, because:

How am I going to agree on a topic with a guy who doesn't rule the Entity? A guy who is an employee, is not a manager... If you take the Youth Council, they're basically employees of those Entities, they're not managers. This is serious because this person does not have the ability to reproduce this agenda organically in his own institution. (Interview 02)

Interactions like these value the presence of an identity, but disqualify and subalternize the agenda and political ideas, keeping them segmented and institutionally isolated. After all, it is something substantially different, for example, a transvestite promoting actions that focus on the Ministry of Finance, from a transvestite developing a project for the "trans segment", in a specific undersecretary for the LGBT "segment", within an isolated, underfunded and undervalued secretariat of human rights.

## Final considerations

Studies on social participation in the period of the Lula government point to significant changes in the patterns of interaction between State and Society (Abers et al., 2014). After the PT governments we witnessed the hardening of conservative and authoritarian speeches that led to electoral victory several right-wing candidacies for legislative and executive positions, including at the federal level. Participationism in Brazil, which valorization has grown since the Constitution of 1988, is today seen in a very unfavorable context, where democracy is called into question. To understand the current political processes, especially in the field of social movements, it seems essential to be able to identify the effects of participationism of the period analyzed in the mobilization, organization and establishment of political boundaries.

Our research sought to provide a contribution oriented by a psychosocial perspective to the debate on participationism. Through discourse analysis, we seek to shed light on the identity processes that occur in the interactions between the actors studied to broaden our understanding of political participation in institutional spaces. Differentialism and participationism were constructed as complementary discourses to understand how the constitution of identities relates to the ways through which social movements address demands to the State, and how the State deals with identity differences in the framework of social participation. Since the choice of political strategies and the establishment of specific forms of social interaction are not independent of how the actors conceive each other and define roles, the discourses analyzed give clues for the understanding of the inadequacies of institutionalized participation for the necessary process of mobilization of identities by the State.

Among the limits of the research, it is important to highlight that our methodology was not able to map the differences between the municipal, state and federal areas of public administration. Another limitation concerns the isolated focus on executive power. Including the relations of social movements with the legislative and the judiciary powers would greatly broaden our understanding of participationism. It was not in the scope of this research, but we also consider relevant an analysis that takes into account countermovements and their effects on sectoral agendas and identity formation. In our research, already at that time, we could notice that the LGBT movement and the forms that imprinted on what we call here the reticular border, with its jargon, values and demands, guided the formation of antagonisms and the modes of action of conservative and fundamentalist movements. These are points that we address for further research.

## Notes

1 Eder (2003) associates to collective identity the notion of monopoly of narratives, which would be a response of organized civil society to the processes of mobilization of identities carried out by the State. According to the author, this theory helps us explain why collective identities are so important to the State: they provide an integrative narrative.

2 The monopoly of opportunities is a concept coined by Tilly (2000) that we use to understand the hierarchy between organized groups. It acts when population sectors that do not belong to the political and economic elites form a categorically circumscribed network and, with this, can achieve access to a resource that is valuable, renewable, subject to monopoly, supports the activities of the network and strengthens with its modus operandi (Tilly, 2000).

3 The argument of this paragraph was worked out in detail in Machado (2014).

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