

**THE PARTICIPATORY INSTITUTIONS IN THE CURRENT LULA
GOVERNMENT**

AS INSTITUIÇÕES PARTICIPATIVAS NO ATUAL GOVERNO LULA

INSTITUCIONES PARTICIPATIVAS EN EL ACTUAL GOBIERNO LULA



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How to reference this article:

BOGDAN, G. R. The Participatory Institutions in the current
Lula Government. **Rev. Sem Aspas**, Araraquara, v. 13, n. 00,
e024009, 2024. e-ISSN: 2358-4238. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.29373/sas.v13i00.19798>



| **Submitted:** 09/10/2024
| **Revisions required:** 03/11/2024
| **Approved:** 21/11/2024
| **Published:** 10/12/2024

Editor: Prof. Dr. Carlos Henrique Gileno
Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

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ABSTRACT: The article examines the resurgence of Participatory Institutions (PIs) under the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, considering the dismantling that occurred in previous administrations. The qualitative research uses process tracing, specifically causal process observations (CPOs), to investigate the current role of National Councils and Conferences. Data from ministry websites, legislative norms, and news show that 65.8% of ministries have PIs, with notable focus on Human Rights, Environment, and Health. The study highlights the growth of advisory councils, but points to their vulnerability to the Executive's agenda. In contrast, there is an effort to expand participation through conferences, with 23 events already held or scheduled until 2025. The analysis concludes that, although still in a phase of reconstruction, the government aims to strengthen participatory policy as a strategy for democratic legitimacy, utilizing digital tools and promoting greater interaction between the state and civil society.

KEYWORDS: Participatory Institutions. Lula Government. National Councils. National Conference.

RESUMO: O artigo analisa a retomada das Instituições Participativas (IPs) no governo de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, considerando o contexto de desmonte ocorrido nas gestões anteriores. A pesquisa qualitativa utiliza process tracing, especificamente, Causal Process Observations (ou CPOs) para investigar o papel atual dos Conselhos e Conferências Nacionais. Dados coletados em sites ministeriais, normas legislativas e notícias revelam que 65,8% dos ministérios possuem IPs, destacando-se Direitos Humanos, Meio Ambiente e Saúde. O estudo aponta o crescimento dos conselhos consultivos, mas ressalta sua vulnerabilidade à agenda do Executivo. Em contraste, há um esforço para ampliar a participação por meio de conferências, com 23 eventos já realizados ou programados até 2025. A análise conclui que, embora em fase de reconstrução, o governo busca fortalecer a política participativa como estratégia de legitimidade democrática, utilizando ferramentas digitais e promovendo maior interação entre Estado e sociedade civil.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Instituições Participativas. Governo Lula. Conselhos Nacionais. Conferências Nacionais.

RESUMEN: El artículo analiza el renacer de las Instituciones Participativas (IPs) en el gobierno de Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, considerando el desmantelamiento ocurrido en administraciones anteriores. La investigación cualitativa utiliza el proceso de trazado, específicamente las observaciones del proceso causal (CPO), para investigar el papel actual de los Consejos y Conferencias Nacionales. Los datos recolectados en sitios web ministeriales, normas legislativas y noticias muestran que el 65,8% de los ministerios cuentan con IPs, destacando los de Derechos Humanos, Medio Ambiente y Salud. El estudio señala el crecimiento de los consejos consultivos, pero destaca su vulnerabilidad a la agenda del Ejecutivo. En contraste, se observa un esfuerzo por ampliar la participación mediante conferencias, con 23 eventos ya realizados o programados hasta 2025. El análisis concluye que, aunque en fase de reconstrucción, el gobierno busca fortalecer la política participativa como estrategia de legitimidad democrática, utilizando herramientas digitales y promoviendo una mayor interacción entre el Estado y la sociedad civil.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Instituciones Participativas. Gobierno de Lula. Consejos Nacionales. Congresos Nacionales.

Introduction

Among the initiatives to encourage interaction with civil society, an effort was made to devise means of institutionalized participation. Through this effort, ways were developed to allow civil society to permeate the state, deliberating or being consulted, which brought more legitimacy to decisions (Martelli, Almeida, Coelho, 2021), with its historic milestone in the 1988 Constitution. After about 30 years, some authors have begun to position these institutions in a "midlife crisis". In this context, Pires (2018) points to the need to reflect on the role of participation.

Since 2016, the collegiate bodies have faced demobilization, restrictions and emptying. When it became essential to rethink the role of these spheres, they were impacted by their restriction and dismantling. Decree No. 9.759/2019 represented a negative milestone in the history of socio-state mechanisms, by restricting and demobilizing Participatory Institutions (PI). The adverse context to IPs on the part of former presidents Michel Temer and Jair Bolsonaro can be attributed to two main factors: the supposed excess weight of the public machine, making it difficult to manage its expenses financially, and the allegation that the agents involved in the councils and conferences were closely connected to the Workers' Party (PT) (Rodrigues, 2020).

In this way, participatory aspects could, in theory, be seen as mere instruments to support the government, rather than broadening participation policies (Bezerra, 2020). Although this point of view cannot be denied, it should not be limited to this perspective. Institutions have played a fundamental role in the conquest of new rights by different minority groups, as well as in advances in the areas of health, the environment, human rights, education, culture, and social assistance. For example, the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) made a significant contribution to getting Brazil off the hunger map, so its achievements are inseparable from the fight against malnutrition, proving its effectiveness.

The civic space entered a process of democratic regression (Rodrigues, 2020), with setbacks in the mechanisms that sought to confer greater legitimacy on decisions, bringing them closer to the reality of Brazilian citizens. Former president Jair Bolsonaro limited the participatory model by associating it exclusively with the actions of a PT governability project, which led to a reduction in democratic processes and a weakening of state interaction procedures (Castro; Bezerra; Cassimiro, 2021).

The administration of Luís Inácio Lula da Silva, in turn, was marked, during his first two terms, by the encouragement of tools for engaging society, with the creation of 15 National

Councils and the holding of 54 National Conferences (Lopez, Pires, Cardoso, 2010). This history raises suspicions about the resumption of these instruments of contact with civil society in his current mandate.

The research sought to understand which areas are being mobilized again, which ministers are promoting the resumption of these institutions, how long it has been since conferences were held, whether the design of the IPs is aligned with the government's objectives and what role the Participatory Institutions play in the current context. It should be noted, however, that the data analyzed was captured until May 2024, limiting the analysis to a period of one year and five months.

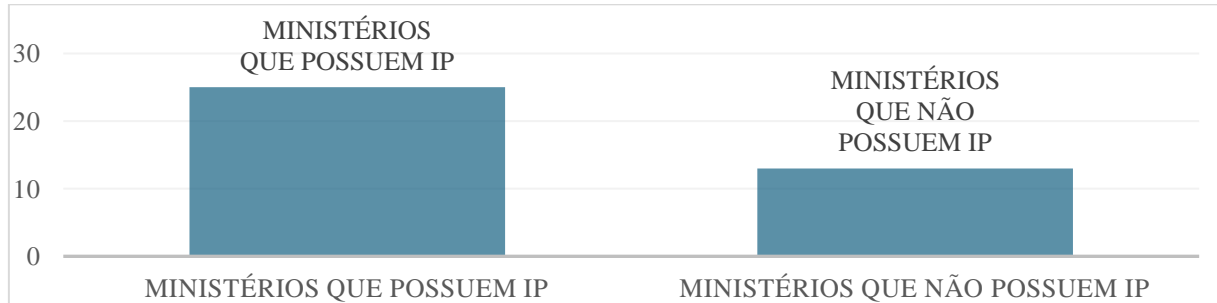
Development

From this, we sought to understand how the IPs are being qualified in the current government and which portfolios are excelling in the use of this participatory tool. In order to carry out the study, a comparative qualitative analysis was carried out between the different agendas, starting from a case study equipped with a *process tracing*, more specifically "*Causal Process Observations*" (CPOs). This method was applied to the information collected on the ministries' websites, under the "Social Participation" tab; in the composition decrees; and news articles containing the keywords "National Councils" and "National Conferences" (with the periods 2023, 2024 and 2025); and in legislative norms that called for National Conferences.

In this way, we systematized our database with different sources to consolidate more solid inferences and analyze the object from its historicity (Günther, 2006). To do this, an Excel spreadsheet was created that divided the national collegiate bodies according to the ministerial agenda, i.e. linked to the structure of a particular ministry. Furthermore, even though some National Conferences did not take place, the aim of the work was to understand how the current government was viewing participation. That said, Conferences that have not yet taken place, but which should be held during the period of the current administration, have been included.

Results and Discussions

Graph 1 - Relationship between Ministries and IPs²



Source: Own elaboration, 2024, with data from Ministry websites and legislative norms published in the Official Gazette.

The purpose of this graph is to highlight the relationship between the current Participatory Institutions and the ministries. The result was as follows: among the 13 portfolios that do not have Participatory Institutions are the Ministry of Sport³, Ministry of Planning and Budget⁴, Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁵, Ministry of Management and Innovation of Public Services⁶, Secretary of Social Communication⁷ Secretariat for Institutional Relations⁸, Ministry of Entrepreneurship for Micro and Small Businesses⁹, Ministry of Transport¹⁰, Ministry of Defense¹¹, Institutional Security Office¹², Federal Attorney General's Office¹³, Ministry of the

² Translation from left to right: Ministries that have IP; Ministries that don't have IP.

³ Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11725.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

⁴ Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11558.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

⁵ Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11353.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

⁶ Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11353.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

⁷ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11360.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

⁸ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11360.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

⁹ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11725.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

¹⁰ Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11360.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

¹¹ Available at: https://legislacao.presidencia.gov.br/ficha?legisla/legislacao.nsf/Viw_Identificacao/DEC%2011.329-2023&OpenDocument. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

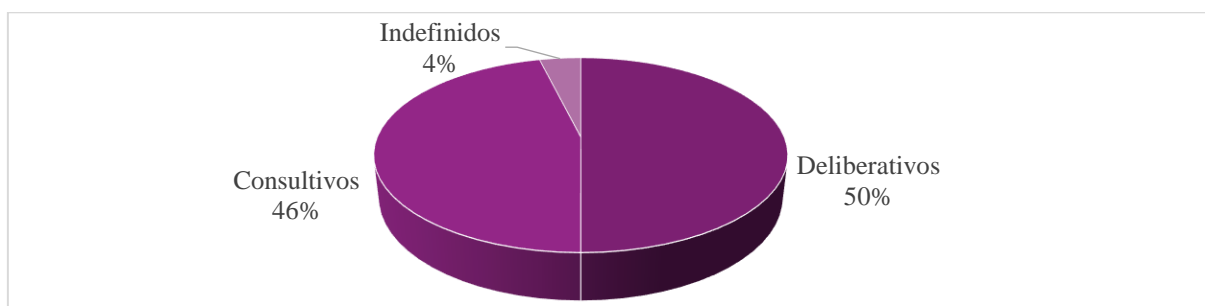
¹² Available at: http://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11360.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

¹³ Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/d11328.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

Civil House¹⁴ and the Ministry of Finance¹⁵. All the others have Participatory Institutions. However, the Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic¹⁶, despite being a government body with ministry status, does not have Participatory Institutions, although it has or has had a great performance in institutional participatory policies.

Based on this data, it is possible to start working quantitatively on the figures presented. As a percentage, the 13 ministries that do not follow a participatory policy represent 34.2%, while 65.8% (25 ministries) adhere to participatory management. It is important to note that the Ministry of Planning and Budget, although it does not have councils or conferences, has tried to stimulate popular participation through the Participatory Multi-Year Plan (PPA Participativo). For its part, the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Republic has no councils in its structure.

Graph 2 - Character of National Councils¹⁷



Fonte: Own elaboration, 2024, with data from the ministries' websites and legislative norms published in the Official Gazette.

Graph 2 shows the number of consultative and deliberative National Councils. The deliberative National Councils total 26 units, while the consultative ones total 24, resulting in a total of 52 National Councils.

There are two significant additions to consider. One of these collegiate bodies, the National Council on Climate Change¹⁸, is not in operation, but has been counted because it is formally established within the structure of the Ministry of the Environment, although its

14 Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/d11329.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

15 Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2023-2026/2023/decreto/D11344.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

16 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/secretariageral/pt-br/aceso-a-informacao/institucional/estrutura-organizacional>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

¹⁷ Translation: Indefinite 4%; Deliberative 50%; Consultative 46%.

18 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/composicao/orgaos-colegiados/conselho-nacional-de-mudanca-do-clima-cnmc>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

functions are currently being carried out by the Interministerial Committee on Climate Change. As for the Social Participation Council, it has a website¹⁹, but it does not have its bylaws defining its functions by legislative rule, nor does it present meeting minutes or other information a year after its creation.

For this reason, these two National Councils were not counted as consultative or deliberative in Graph 2, and were characterized as "undefined". Despite this, they were taken into account in the overall count, as they appear in the composition decrees.

The increase in participatory institutions, by opening up space for different individuals from civil society, has meant greater representation, either through real dialog with society or by electing a more significant number of representatives (Avritzer, 2007). In this context, the National Councils have two main functions: to offer demands for government collection or to deliberate directly on public issues.

Until 2010, the parity between the types of councils was 13 advisory and 18 deliberative (Pires; Lopes, 2010). Comparing this scenario with the current one, we see a much greater proportional growth in advisory councils, which increased by 84.6%, while deliberative councils grew by 38.8%. As a result, advisory bodies grew more than twice as fast as deliberative ones.

Advisory councils are important for participatory institutions as a whole, but they are not the best alternative for the resilience of national councils in times of democratic restriction, as they do not have enough autonomy to continue functioning. It is, therefore, worrying that advisory councils are advancing unchecked, as they are more vulnerable to the executive branch's agenda being paired with its politics.

National conferences in Brazil have a tradition dating back to the 1940s, but they only began to gain momentum in the 2000s (Avritzer, 2017). This tradition was broken in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, as shown in Chart 1. However, to the same extent that they were broken, they were also resumed, with the data indicating a strong incentive to hold Conferences. It can be seen that, while Conferences are usually attended by civil society actors from the lower classes, Councils are generally occupied by individuals with higher salaries and higher levels of education (Borba, 2011).

19 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/secretariageral/pt-br/conselho-de-participacao-social>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

Chart 1- National Conferences in the Lula government 3

Thematic area	Current/last conference	Total
Health	4th National Conference on Health Work and Education Management; 5th National Mental Health Conference; 17th National Health Conference; 5th National Conference on Workers' Health.	4
Minorities	5th National Conference on the Rights of People with Disabilities; 12th National Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents; 4th National Conference on LGBTQIA+ Public Policies and Human Rights (2016); 6th National Conference on the Rights of the Elderly; 5th National Conferences for the Promotion of Racial Equality; 2nd National Conference on Migration, Refugees and Stateless Persons; 4th National Youth Conference); 5th National Women's Conference.	8
Environment	5th National Conference on the Environment and Climate Change (2013); 6th National Children and Youth Conference on the Environment.	2
State, economy, and development	4th National Conference on Solidarity Economy; 6th National Cities Conference; 3rd National Conference on Sustainable Rural Development and Solidarity; 6th National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security.	4
Education, culture, social assistance and sport	National Conference on Education 2024; 5th National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation; 4th National Conference on Culture.	3
Human rights	13th National Human Rights Conference; 13th National Social Assistance Conference.	2
TOTAL		23

Source: Own elaboration, 2024, with data from *websites* of the Ministries and legislative norms published in the Official Gazette²⁰.

Chart 1 shows the National Conferences that are scheduled to take place under the current Lula government²¹. In this sense, we will show all the Conferences currently convened, indicating the last time they were held, divided into six categories. Other authors have already used this division in thematic areas, and in order to standardize the categorization of IPs, Pires and Lopez (2010) adopted the criteria. Next, the National Conferences will be broken down into three types, according to the time interval in which they were held.

The National Conferences convened in the last five years comprise the smallest number among the categories. These include: the 2024 National Education Conference (last held in

20 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/secretariageral/pt-br/noticias/2023/novembro/conferencias-nacionais>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

21 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/secretariageral/pt-br/noticias/2023/novembro/conferencias-nacionais>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

2022²²), the 6th National Conference on the Rights of the Elderly (5th in 2021²³), and the 13th National Social Assistance Conference (12th in 2022²⁴).

The next category refers to those that have not been held in a period of 5 to 9 years, including: 17th National Health Conference (16th in 2019²⁵), 5th National Conference on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (4th in 2016²⁶), 12th National Conference on the Rights of Children and Adolescents (11th in 2019²⁷), 4th National Conference on LGBTQIA+ Public Policies and Human Rights (3rd in 2016²⁸), 13th National Conference on Human Rights (12th in 2016²⁹), 5th National Conference on the Promotion of Racial Equality (4th in 2018³⁰), 4th National Youth Conference (3rd in 2015³¹), 6th National Conference on Children and Youth for the Environment (5th in 2018³²) National Conference on Food and Nutrition Security (5th in 2016³³). Here, it is already possible to find some Conferences that were excluded from the planning of previous administrations, as Conferences are not usually held more than five years apart.

Finally, the criterion of National Conferences that have not been held for 10 years or more: 4th National Conference on Solidarity Economy (3rd in 2014³⁴), 5th National Conference

22 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mec/pt-br/acao-a-informacao/participacao-social/conferencias>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

23 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/pt-br/noticias/financas-impostos-e-gestao-publica/2021/09/5a-conferencia-nacional-dos-direito-da-pessoa-idosa-comeca-nesta-quarta-feira-29>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

24 Available at: https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/acao-a-informacao/participacao-social/conselho-nacional-de-direitos-humanos-cndh/copy_of_resolucoes/2015/aprova-o-regulamento-nacional-da-12a-conferencia-nacional-dos-direitos-humanos. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

25 Available at: <https://conselho.saude.gov.br/16cns/>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

26 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/sdh/noticias/2016/abril/4a-conferencia-nacional-dos-direitos-da-pessoa-com-deficiencia-comeca-com-palestra-sobre-os-avancos-do-pais-em-acessibilidade>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

27 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/acao-a-informacao/participacao-social/conselho-nacional-dos-direitos-da-crianca-e-do-adolescente-conanda/11a-conferencia-nacional-dos-direitos-da-crianca-e-do-adolescente>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

28 Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_ato2015-2018/2015/dsn/Dsn14278.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

29 Available at: https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/acao-a-informacao/participacao-social/conselho-nacional-de-direitos-humanos-cndh/copy_of_resolucoes/2015/aprova-o-regulamento-nacional-da-12a-conferencia-nacional-dos-direitos-humanos. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

30 Available at: https://www.planalto.gov.br/ccivil_03/_Ato2015-2018/2016/Dsn/Dsn14419.htm. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

31 Available at: https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/noticias_seppir/noticias/dezembro/comeca-nesta-quarta-feira-16-a-3a-conferencia-nacional-de-juventude. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

32 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/noticias/noticia-acom-2018-06-3056>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

33 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/sri/pt-br/backup-secretaria-de-governo/assuntos/noticias/noticias-em-acervo/2015/marco/06-03-2015-publicado-decreto-de-convocacao-da-5a-conferencia-nacional-de-san>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

34 Available at: <https://www.jusbrasil.com.br/noticias/convocada-a-iii-conferencia-nacional-de-economia-solidaria/100599953>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

on Women (4th in 2015³⁵), 4th National Conference on Management of Work and Education in Health (3rd in 2006³⁶), 5th National Conference on Mental Health (4th in 2010³⁷), 6th National Conference on Cities (5th in 2014³⁸), 5th National Conference on the Environment and Climate Change (4th in 2013³⁹), 5th National Conference on Science, Technology and Innovation (4th in 2010⁴⁰), 4th National Conference on Culture (3rd in 2013⁴¹), 2nd National Conference on Migration, Refugees and Stateless Persons (1st in 2014⁴²), 5th National Conference on Workers' Health (4th in 2014⁴³).

These figures show a long period in which most national conferences were not convened. Those that have maintained continuity with other governments essentially total seven. The interval of more than five years is justified by the fact that some are only scheduled for 2025, thus presenting a kind of "catch" in the data. Another relevant aspect is the 4th National Conference on Labor Management and Health Education, which has not taken place since 2006. This case reflects a possible demand from civil society actors, considering that it was last held during the first term of the Lula government, making it a particular situation among all the Conferences mentioned. By combining these two factors, National Councils and National Conferences, it is possible to identify some portfolios that stand out in the current government's participatory policy.

Firstly, the Ministry of Human Rights and Citizenship includes 10 Participatory Institutions (PI), 5 of which are National Conferences and 5 Councils. The Councils are: National Council for Children and Adolescents, National Council for the Rights of the Elderly, National Council for the Rights of People with Disabilities, National Council for Human Rights, and National Council for the Rights of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Cross-dresser, Transsexual, Queer, Intersex, Asexual and Other People.

35 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mdh/pt-br/navegue-por-temas/politicas-para-mulheres/arquivo/assuntos/4a-conferencia-nacional-de-politicas-para-as-mulheres/4a-conferencia-nacional-de-politicas-para-as-mulheres>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

36 Available at: <https://conselho.saude.gov.br/relatorios-cns/1519-3-conferencia-nacional-de-gestao-do-trabalho-e-da-educacao-na-saude>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

37 Available at: <https://conselho.saude.gov.br/conferencias-de-saude/2341-4-conferencia-nacional-de-saude-mental-cnsm>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

38 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/cidades/pt-br/composicao/orgaos-colegiados/conselho-das-cidades-concidades/5a-conferencia-das-cidades>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

39 Available at: <https://antigo.mma.gov.br/responsabilidade-socioambiental/conferencia-nacional-do-meio-ambiente/iv-conferencia.html>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

40 Available at: <https://www.abc.org.br/evento/4a-conferencia-nacional-de-ciencia-e-tecnologia/>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

41 Available at: <https://cnpq.cultura.gov.br/iii-conferencia-nacional-de-cultura/>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

42 Available at: <https://www.justica.gov.br/news/conferencia-nacional-sobre-migracoes-e-refugio-comeca-nesta-sexta-feira-30>. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

43 Available at: https://conselho.saude.gov.br/web_4cnst/index.html. Accessed in: 24 May 2024.

Secondly, the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has 8 IPs, including 2 National Conferences and 6 National Councils: The National Environment Council, the Genetic Heritage Management Council, the National Council for Traditional Peoples and Communities, the National Climate Change Council, the Deliberative Council of the National Environment Fund and the National Water Resources Council.

The Ministry of Health continues to have 6 IPs, 4 Conferences and 2 councils: National Health Council and the Supplementary Health Council. Finally, the Ministry of Labor and Employment has 5 Participatory Institutions, 1 Conference, and 4 Councils: the National Council for Solidarity Economy, the Board of Trustees of the Severance Indemnity Fund, the Deliberative Council of the Workers' Support Fund, and the National Labor Council.

The Ministry of Health continues to have 6 IPs, 4 Conferences and 2 councils: National Health Council and the Supplementary Health Council. Finally, the Ministry of Labor and Employment has 5 Participatory Institutions, 1 Conference and 4 Councils: National Council for Solidarity Economy, Board of Trustees of the Severance Indemnity Fund, Deliberative Council of the Workers' Support Fund and the National Labor Council.

These five portfolios concentrate on the largest number of Participatory Institutions in the current government. What is most striking, however, is that the portfolios most affected by the dismantling carried out by previous presidents who did not support this model of institutionalized participation, Human Rights, and the Environment (Bezerra *et al.*, 2020), are currently the ones with the most mechanisms to encourage participation, occupying the first and second place, respectively. Previous diagnoses have analyzed this clash between support and opposition to participatory politics as periods of peak and decline (Fonseca, 2021). However, it will be necessary to establish a new milestone for this period, which can be characterized as the effective resumption of the IPs, demonstrated by the effort to combat the demobilization promoted by previous governments, as evidenced in this study.

However, the article was limited to analyzing a period of one year and five months, with the aim of offering an initial prognosis on institutional participation in the current Lula government. As the data collected may vary according to the progress of public participation policies, the analysis is of an initial and exploratory nature. Even so, the study is relevant to understanding the current state of Councils and Conferences and contributes to the debate by opening up space for more specific research. Examples include studies on the Social Participation Council and the National Council on Climate Change, which could not be

addressed directly in this work due to the lack of responses during the survey and the approach chosen for the analysis.

Final considerations

The attempt to include a formal opinion from all sectors of society is an effort by the current government, according to the data collected and presented. These samples also show forms of cooperation with civil society, again resulting in an image or perception of public policies, defined as *policy image* (Baumgartner; Jones, 1993). This perception reflects a favorable management, which is taking effective measures to resume participatory politics as a right, whether in terms of the quality or quantity of institutions that have been "revived". In a nutshell, the concept of image is reduced to the treatment of a given issue in an administration, indicating how the political actors approached it. This is why these initiatives project a positive image from the participation perspective.

First of all, the different ministries that are encouraging participatory policy indicate an incentive that allows political actors to enter. Not only that, but even those who don't have Participatory Institutions (PI) are being covered by the Secretariat for Social Participation, or, in the case of the Ministry of Planning and Budget, with the Participatory PPA, or by representatives who take part in Council meetings, i.e. they are involved in the project in some way.

Secondly, the number of National Conferences already programmed or held, halfway through the current administration, already includes 23 National Conferences, while in previous mandates 31 were held (Pires; Lopez, 2010). The different moments should be emphasized, since while today is a time of reconstruction, before it was one of development/ascension. Thirdly, the attempt to use digital platforms such as "*Participa+*", "*PPA-Participativo*", "*Plano Clima*⁴⁴", and the access to information pages in the social participation tab.

All of these factors together culminate in a policy of encouraging institutionalized participation, centralizing the participatory debate within the government, but in a different context: one of reconstruction. The aim of Lula's administration is once again for government actions to at least pass through the formal eye, through contact with formal actors. "That is, by the end of the 2000s, most government actions were subject, at least from a formal point of view, to some form of contact with social actors, including active participation mechanisms"

44 Available at: <https://www.gov.br/mma/pt-br/composicao/smc/plano-clima>. Accessed in: 24 Sept. 2024.

(Pires, 2014, p. 184 apud Pires; Vaz, 2012), pointing positively towards fostering the apparatuses that at least help to solve the problem of representative democracy and the definitive legitimization of democracy. In an attempt to revive this era of Participatory Institutions in 2023, Lula has issued decrees that revoke various decrees from the last 6 years of his administration, but he still needs to make efforts to try to achieve goals like those of his previous governments. On the other hand, the more intense increase in advisory councils is worrying when seen from the perspective of the resilience of National Councils.

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CRediT Author Statement

- Acknowledgements:** I would like to thank, first and foremost, Professor Dr. Carla Gandini Gianni Martelli, for expanding my scientific horizons and helping to prepare the project. I would like to thank my girlfriend, Julia Cristina Cunha, and my parents for their support and encouragement in my studies.
 - Funding:** CNPQ.
 - Conflicts of interest:** There is no conflict of interest.
 - Ethical approval:** Ethical approval is not required.
 - Availability of data and material:** All the content can be accessed on the ministries' websites or via the Access to Information Act (LAI). The bibliography can be found mostly on Google Scholar.
 - Author contributions:** Gabriel Bogdan was solely responsible for the research, under the guidance of Professor Carla Gandini Gianni Martelli.
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Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Proofreading, formatting, standardization and translation.

