

Waste pickers and their inclusion in Brazilian public environmental decisions: an analysis of 10 years of policy development

Catadores e sua inclusão nas decisões ambientais públicas brasileiras: uma
análise de 10 anos de desenvolvimento de políticas

*Los recicladores y su inclusión en las decisiones ambientales públicas brasileñas:
un análisis de 10 años de desarrollo de políticas*

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Abstract: In the waste management chain, the most fragile actors remain the waste pickers. Being present in poor and rich economies, they are the result of social stratification and lack of employment opportunities. With the emergence of the first waste picker cooperatives in Latin America, the government and Brazilian society turned their attention to a group previously considered criminal. Through the Advocacy Coalition Framework model, this study aims to understand the role of the main coalitions involved in the development of an environmental plan, how it affects society and for future projects, how to insert the social part in political decisions that sometimes opt for technocratic ideas. The research analysed a policy-making process over an entire decade. Interviews were conducted with those involved in the waste management in one of the world's leading capitals when it comes to associativism and cooperativism: Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The economic crises in Brazil in the first two decades of the 21st century and the impeachment process that changed the transfer of funds from federal programs to waste pickers had a great influence on the process under analysis.

Keywords: case study; narrative analyses; qualitative methods; Latin America.

Resumo: Na cadeia de gestão de resíduos, os integrantes mais frágeis continuam a ser os catadores. Estando presentes em diferentes economias, são o resultado da estratificação social e da falta de oportunidades de emprego. Com o surgimento das primeiras cooperativas de catadores da América Latina, o governo e a sociedade brasileira voltaram suas atenções para um grupo antes marginalizado. Por meio do modelo de Coalizão de Defesas, este estudo visa compreender o papel das principais coalizões envolvidas no desenvolvimento de processo decisório, como isso afeta a sociedade e para projetos futuros, como inserir a parte social nas decisões políticas que às vezes optam por ideias tecnocráticas. A pesquisa analisou um processo de formulação de políticas ao longo de uma década. Foram realizadas entrevistas com pessoas envolvidas na gestão de resíduos em uma das principais capitais mundiais quando se trata de associativismo e cooperativismo: Belo Horizonte, Brasil. As crises econômicas no Brasil nas duas primeiras décadas do século XXI e o processo de *impeachment* que alterou o repasse de recursos de programas federais para os catadores tiveram grande influência no processo em análise.

Palavras-chave: estudo de caso; análise de narrativa; métodos qualitativos; América Latina.

Resumen: En la cadena de gestión de residuos, los miembros más frágiles siguen siendo los recolectores. Al estar presentes en diferentes economías, son el resultado de la estratificación social y la falta de oportunidades de empleo. Con el surgimiento de las primeras cooperativas de recicladores en América Latina, el gobierno y la sociedad brasileños dirigieron su atención a un grupo previamente marginado. A través del modelo de Coalición de Defensa, este estudio pretende comprender el papel de las principales coaliciones involucradas en el desarrollo del proceso de toma de decisiones, cómo esto afecta a la sociedad y para los proyectos futuros, cómo insertar la parte social en las decisiones políticas que en ocasiones optan por ideas tecnocráticas. La investigación analizó un proceso de formulación de políticas a lo largo de una década. Se realizaron entrevistas a personas involucradas en la gestión de residuos en una de las principales capitales mundiales en materia de asociacionismo y cooperativismo: Belo Horizonte, Brasil. Las crisis económicas de Brasil en las dos primeras décadas del siglo XXI y el proceso de *impeachment* que cambió la transferencia de recursos de los programas federales a los recaudadores tuvieron gran influencia en el proceso bajo análisis.

Palabras clave: estudio de caso; análisis narrativo; métodos cualitativos; América Latina.



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1 INTRODUCTION

Waste management interferes in everyone's life and is one of the main promoters of public health. A group of workers present in society and who play a fundamental role in preserving the environment are the waste pickers. In Brazil, around 800,000 waste pickers working are female, acting on the streets and dumps. In 2020, there were about 1,700 cooperatives and associations organized throughout the country, sharing the resulting from the sale of recyclables among its members (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, 2020).

In developing countries, the importance of looking at these people is involved in the social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged groups, rejected by society, exposed by economic crises, who see in the waste the only way to survive. On the one hand, they are seen as environmental agents that give another meaning and destination to the garbage of the metropolises, on the other hand, they represent the weakest link in the recyclables chain, due to the unworthy working conditions and the insufficient economic gains obtained with the activity, since they are usually the middlemen who benefit most in the recycling production chain (Sousa *et al.*, 2020).

Belo Horizonte, capital of Minas Gerais, was the pioneer with the first waste pickers association – ASMARE. In 2017, the municipality completed its Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan, with a 20-year elaboration horizon, in which, through public hearings and events in the main regions of the city, it tried to include the population in its decisions.

The globalized study of public policy poses several challenges about the APPLICATION of frameworks and theories within and across different countries. One of the most important cases for exploring the application of frameworks or theories outside of its original context can be found with the Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF). The ACF was developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999), in the context of the U.S. democratic governing system marked by pluralistic struggles among interest groups and government entities to influence public policy. This back-drop offered a number of causal preconditions to support the ACF's theoretical foci on competing advocacy coalitions, policy-oriented learning, and policy change (Li; Weible, 2021).

With the use of the Advocacy Coalition Model, the present research tried to answer some the following research questions:

- 1) What is the importance of looking at minorities and how they articulate throughout history to have their claims heard?
- 2) How governments include society in their decisions, considering the situation of a country that has gone through a recent impeachment and that has laws aimed at social participation?
- 3) Which coalitions are involved in a public decision process, using a Brazilian capital as a case study?

To answer these questions, we have formulated hypotheses, which are grounded in the ACF frameworks. They are then empirically discussed using Belo Horizonte's study case. Thus, by using public waste management as an example, this article offers additional explanations in 10 years of history. Secondly, investigates the public insertion opinion in political decisions.

In this research, the Advocacy Coalition Framework is used to explain the policy elaboration outcomes, their way to act, sometimes being conflicting and rivalrous. Believing on that, successes, or failures of policy processes, are not only the product of institutional factors, but also the consequence of conflictual relations within a policy subsystem between two or more advocacy coalitions whose policy preferences stem from different belief systems (Blake *et al.*, 2020).

To support this argument, the article is organized as follows: we present the dynamics of the insertion policy of waste picker cooperatives and associations in Belo Horizonte (success

and failure), which are our dependent variable (section 3). We then emphasize the relevant concepts (i.e., institutional dimensions) of the ACF model which are usually mobilized to explain the outcome of the political process analysed (in our case the public opinion insertion) and formulate a typical ACF paths for a political process (section 3), presenting the ACF to point out potential additional relevant explanatory factors, and formulate a typical ACF explanatory. In conclusions, we draw options for a better social insertion in urban contexts, and summarize the main empirical and theoretical results, answer both research questions and discuss some potential avenues for a future research agenda.

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was carried out using a qualitative approach, characterized as a descriptive and exploratory study, with an interpretive character, considering as the reason for choosing the type of study the collection and interpretation of data based on the analysis of documents and in-depth interviews. As for the method, the case study was chosen, used to understand phenomena and useful when the objective is to analyse the specifics of a phenomenon in a given context, highlighting its particularities. Two types of sources were used: primary – semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and secondary sources – official and academic documents. The analytical technique for the interviews and documents was proposed by Bardin (2011), with the research operationalized based on the model of analysis of political processes proposed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith.

2.1 Types of data sources

2.1.1 Use of primary sources – semi-structured interviews

An initial questionnaire was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee (COEP) of the university on December 28, 2017 and approved on March 23, 2018. This document underwent changes throughout the research, being transformed into a script with divided themes by topics, in interrogative format (with questions). The interviewee had access to the Free and Informed Consent Term (ICF), with a detail that allowed the research participant to express his/her opinion in an appropriate way and without constraints.

With the identification of the important actors in the process of preparing the final document, the interviews were carried out between April and December 2018. The informants used were those who were part of the Steering Committee, the Technical Group and the Executive Council formed for the elaboration of the plan. These are the ones considered fundamental to answer the research problems related to Belo Horizonte's specific policy in relation to the elaboration of the plan, that is, the public managers, the consultants who composed the team destined to the elaboration and implementation of the Plan, and the leaders of associations and cooperatives of collectors with recyclable materials in the capital. These interviews were essential in obtaining information directly constructed from the dialogue with the interviewee, which deal with the subject's own reflection on the reality experienced.

The understanding of the relationships between the actors involved in the process made it possible to know the context and scope in which the political games of the elaboration of the Plan were fought between the coalitions. This allowed the identification of the apprehension of collaborative actions related to the political process that converged in the content of the final

version of the plan. The formed networks are those interpreted in the present work as the groups that are under the influence of sets of rules, for example, the existing legal frameworks, being these the ones that governed the interactions between the State and the organized interests. These rules, based on shared practices and meanings, knowledge of the actors and structured as a result of repetitive interactions between the members of the coalitions.

The non-participant observation of the process took place in the events from December 2015 to March 2017, in order to understand the conference process. An association of waste pickers chose not to participate in the study. At the time of the interview, after reading the informed consent in the presence of the researcher, he decided not to collaborate. In addition, even with several attempts, it was not possible to interview the mayor of Belo Horizonte in office at the time of the Plan's elaboration process and the superintendent of the Urban Cleaning Department. The 14 interviewees had different levels of practical and formal knowledge, which was decisive in the choice of the applied questions, where one of the interviewees was not considered due to the fact that he had no knowledge about the execution of the waste management plan in Belo Horizonte, nor about the management of waste in the city. Different institutions of the public administration and civil society were appointed by the urban cleaning department as invited to participate in the conferences promoted during the elaboration process, but in the specific case of the members of the steering committee. When asked about their participation, some had no idea about the events. The Social Assistance Undersecretary (SUASS) was the only one to be ready to answer some questions.

2.1.2 Use of secondary sources – documents

As secondary data, the following were used in the study: the presentation of the proposals and alternatives of the Municipality of Belo Horizonte used in public dissemination meetings and publicity materials (e.g. booklets, inserts produced by government and negotiation documents), in addition to the reports: "Social mobilization, environmental education and social control", issued on May 6, 2016; "Operational and Infrastructure Aspects", issued on May 31, 2016. The use of the aforementioned tools (analysis of the presentation of PBH proposals, advertising materials and written media) had the objective of: identifying valid informants for the stage of interviews; identification of facts, discourses and strategies of actors and institutions.

2.1.3 Analytical technique

To conduct our analysis, a large qualitative data base was collected: primary (interviews, hearings, written documents) and secondary sources. Two main methods were used to analyse the cases. Firstly, a minimalist understanding of process tracing was used. Events, causes, mechanisms and main actors were identified. Secondly, qualitative content analysis was used to uncover the beliefs of the principal stakeholders with a semi-structured questionnaire. Additional statements (hearings, written documents, press articles) were also added.

The analysis construction is based on the variables established in the Advocacy Coalition Framework model: i) coalition conformation; ii) identification of connection between actors and their beliefs; iii) degree of coordination of actions; iv) action strategies; and v) limitations of alternatives for the inclusion of cooperatives and associations in waste management policies of Belo Horizonte. In the analysis of the interviews was used the Content Analysis (Bardin, 2011).

For the process studied in Belo Horizonte, three periods were used for the analysis. The first period (P1) is from January 5, 2007, to August 2, 2010. The second period (P2) is from August 2, 2010, to October 2014. The third period (P3) is October 2014 to March 2017. These periods were chosen due to the importance of the historical facts that occurred, since January 5, 2007, is the date of the launch of Law n. 11,445, which establishes national guidelines for basic sanitation, among other measures.

August 2010 was the launch of Law n. 12,305, which establishes the National Solid Waste Policy. In October 2014, activities related to MPISWM-BH started, and in March 2017, the final version of the Plan was launched. The identification of the policy design of the process under analysis was based on: i) the inclusion, or not, of the opinion of the recyclable waste pickers in Belo Horizonte; ii) the existence of pressure from regulators and iii) the political commitment to the ongoing management.

2.1.4 Using the ACF model: concepts, design, and method

Used in different countries in the study of political processes, it was not observed during the literature review the use of such a model in the analysis of a process that involves the insertion of associations and cooperatives of collectors in the elaboration of a Brazilian PMGIRS. The ACF was chosen to be used in this research because it has applicability in analyses of political conflicts that involve disputes, frameworks of public policy formation processes and also in analyses that involve multiple actors in different areas, levels of government, in addition to being associated with the top-down approach, characteristic of the development of the plan in Belo Horizonte.

Three factors helped in choosing the Advocacy Coalition Framework model for this study: (i) the interaction of rival defence coalitions within a policy subsystem; (ii) changes outside the subsystem; and (iii) the effects of stable system parameters (Heller; Castro 2007). The first factor (i. Interaction of rival defence coalitions within a policy subsystem) was analysed considering the constituent institutions of the Steering Committee, the Advisory Board, and the Executive Secretariat responsible for drafting the MPISWM-BH. Based on factor ii (changes outside the subsystem) was analysed, for example, the interference of the change of government in the elaboration of the MPISWM-BH. Factor iii (effects of stable system parameters) is related to environmental legislation that requires municipalities to have their MPISWM-BH.

The categories used to identify the actors are: coalition coordinator, employees and ex-employees of the SLU and leaders of waste pickers' associations and cooperatives. The temporal evolution of the process phase, which began in 2014 and ended in March 2017, is directly related to the entry and exit of coalition members. A good example of this is the change in the environmental consultancy responsible for the preparation of the PMGIRS in November 2015, with MYR Environmental Projects being finally contracted.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The subsystem for analysis (management of recyclable materials in Belo Horizonte) was chosen according to the issue. As a nature of this subsystem, there is the influence on changes in the policies of insertion of cooperatives and waste pickers associations in decisions made about waste management in the capital of Minas Gerais. The characteristics of the subsystem are: Dependence of waste pickers, since the 1990s, on the support provided by the city for the

maintenance of daily activities in the sheds, segregation of what is collected by the pickers, the municipality as responsible for legislating on matters involving local interests, management of the recyclable waste collection service made by the municipal administration company, being the executor until July 2018, local coverage system, and existence of two regulatory frameworks: i) National Law n. 12,305- even though it is important for the insertion of social aspects in Brazil's MPISWM-BH, it does not clearly show how to include recyclable waste pickers in waste preparation and public management processes. ii) Municipal Decree n. 15,745, of October 29, 2014, which specifically dealing with the process of preparing the Belo Horizonte PMGIRS, by the committee, the Advisory Council and the Executive Secretariat and other measures.

3.1 The dynamics of the insertion policy of waste picker cooperatives and associations in Belo Horizonte

3.1.1 Before 2007: years 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005

From 2000 onwards, new associations/cooperatives of pickers appear, many of them created with the encouragement of the regional administrations of the City Hall and the mediation of other institutions, or from residents' movements (Dias, 2009). In the 2000s, new instruments were developed by SLU for the collection of recyclables, e.g., hand-held fiberglass collectors used in Barro Preto and Silviano Brandão Avenue. At this time, mobilization campaigns were carried out, but due to the lack of a collector's mechanics standard and the cost of refuelling the cars, the use of these instruments became unviable. To prevent depredation, the equipment was adapted to paper, metal, and plastic. The lack of resources in the municipality for solid waste projects led to improvisation of instruments and structures for the selective collection program.

Nationally, in 2002, the Ministry of Labor and Employment began to recognize the performance of waste pickers as a professional activity according to the Brazilian Classification of Occupations (BCO). Through this strategy, the occupation gained visibility in official Brazilian databases, such as PNAD and RAIS (Dias, 2009). In 2003 the Municipal Garbage and Citizenship Forum was created, which became a space for debates on solid waste management and discussion of guidelines related to the improvement of the situation of waste pickers and ways of integrating them into the Belo Horizonte society. This year, the Normative Deliberation of the Environmental Policy Council of Minas Gerais demanded that municipalities over 50,000 inhabitants eradicate their dumps and create alternatives for the social inclusion of waste pickers. This determination altered the previous one of n. 52/2001, whose text "prohibited the permanence of people in the garbage dump for the purpose of collection" (Dias, 2009).

Begun in 2003, the government of the Partido dos Trabalhadores acted closely to the waste picker movement through the personal figure of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. Throughout his two administrations leading the executive branch, Lula participated annually in meetings with the movement of waste pickers and homeless people. In 2010, the last year of his tenure, he fulfilled the "Christmas Lunch" commitment to both categories and led his successor, then newly elected president Dilma Rousseff, who pledged to continue the tradition of the annual meeting. Furthermore, the support to the categories in its management, sequence broken with the impeachment and interruptions of the activities of the Third Accelerate Program for the Economy, that provided the structure of the sheds with machinery, for example (Lima, 2017).

In 2004, selective collection began in the Serra neighbourhood, a partnership with private companies that developed trucks for collection in vertical condominiums in the Centre-South region. The logistics of the collection led to the conclusion that this alternative was not efficient, as the trucks were waiting at the door of the buildings, making it slow. A reordering of LEVs was done, inducing the insertion of large generators in the collection to improve the quality and quantity of waste collected.

At SLU BH, in 2005, the coordination of selective collection was assumed by the Department of Special Programs – DP-PRE (created in 2005 in the City Hall's second Administrative Reform). The operation of the selective collection service was decentralized, overseeing Regional Special Services and Recycling Managers – GERSERs, subordinate to the Regional Urban Cleaning Managers – Gerlus' (Das, 2009). In 2006, ASMARE is banned.

3.1.2 Between 2007 and 2010

Between January 2005 and December 2008, the mayor of Belo Horizonte was Fernando Pimentel, a member of the Workers' Party (PT), a party that, even though considered as a strong left and with a speech to support the neediest was appointed responsible for favouring private companies in their management and for the privatization of public agencies. During the first Growth Acceleration Program (PAC 1), investments were made in cooperatives and associations of recyclable waste pickers, facilitating access to federal funding for machinery purchases and improvement of deficit structures in some of the warehouses.

In the year of launch of PAC 1 (2007), there was the publication of Law n. 11,445, considered one of the main legislative frameworks for Brazilian sanitation, which established the national guidelines for basic sanitation (Brasil, 2007). Launched after Law n. 11,107, of April 6, 2005, which provides for general rules for the procurement of public consortia and other measures, the National Sanitation Policy (NSP) contains provisions that provide legal support for the conclusion of contracts with associations and waste pickers cooperatives. The Presidential Decree 5,460 / 2006, which established the obligation of separation of recyclable waste disposed of by the direct and indirect Federal Public Administration bodies and entities, at the generating source, and its destination to associations and cooperatives of waste pickers (Dias, 2009).

The NSP configured an enabling environment for the construction of a political agenda more focused on the promotion of social justice, but the hegemonic action of economic and political groups in the definition of state action revealed the difficulties of moving towards a more democratic project, universalistic and inclusive of cooperatives and collectors' associations. Social control, adoption of methods, techniques and processes that consider local and regional peculiarities, which can be expressed in participatory educational actions of health and environment education are considered fundamental principles addressed by the NSP (Moisés *et al.*, 2010).

The outsourcing of urban cleaning services in Belo Horizonte was done in 2007 and specifically dealing with the relationship between the public authorities and the pickers, this has become more formal, and the development of the ability to organize in groups, they deal with the cooperative process itself. In 2008, the government of the time was poorly accessible to cooperatives and associations of waste pickers.

The elected mayor was a member of the democratic left party, and his government encouraged the collection sheds, but with little dialogue between associations and cooperatives.

Márcio Lacerda, although seen as conservative ideas, maintained financial support to the sheds, where the expansion of the number of organizations involved in the collection caused the value transferred to cooperatives to be diluted, something previously centred on ASMARE. The construction of the Coopersoli Barreiro shed was the result of a federally funded project designed to house 30 pickers per shift and was a first shed experience using the technology named silo. At that same time, the Coopesol Leste warehouse was inaugurated with a forecast of 50 collectors per shift and another warehouse was acquired.

In 2008, Law n. 18,031 / 2009, which provides for the State Policy on Solid Waste, was approved, recognizing the right of waste pickers as selective collection agents and instituting policy instruments requested by the State Garbage and Citizenship Forum. In 2008, the State Forum began to discuss the issue of a special retirement scheme for waste pickers (such as retirement for rural workers) and presented this demand directly to President Lula, during his participation in the 2008 Garbage and Citizenship Festival (Dias, 2009). In 2009, R\$ 270,000.00 were invested in the training of cooperatives and associations existing at the time, with training given to 268 waste pickers to improve understanding of cooperativism, associativism and increased productivity, which would subsidize an expansion of selective collection in Belo Horizonte. The Municipal Sanitation Fund and the State Environmental Foundation (FEAM) provided resources for calls for tenders to be opened to better equip associations and cooperatives, projects that were partially interrupted by changes in government.

That year, the working group responsible for drafting Law n. 18,031 / 2008 completed the work and the proposal began its political journey from its presentation, initially to Federal Deputy Luíza Erundina, in a meeting in Brasília (25/08/2009) that it counted with several members of the State Garbage and Citizenship Forum (Dias, 2009). The city of Belo Horizonte was recognized by the National Movement of Waste Pickers as a friend of the waste picker. The launch of the Interministerial Committee for Social and Economic Inclusion of Waste Pickers (ICSEIWP), established by Decree n. 7,405, of December 23, 2010, renaming and restructuring the then ICSEIWP that had been created by the Decree of September 11, 2003.

3.1.3 Years between 2010 and 2014

In March 2010, PAC 2 was launched, whose actions were aimed at universalizing access to water, with continuity by the Dilma government, providing for investments of R\$ 45.8 billion in basic sanitation, of which R\$ 41, 8 billion made available through the Ministry of Cities and another R\$ 4 billion via the National Health Foundation. PAC 2 included the Precarious Settlement Urbanization Program, which includes the implementation of basic sanitation systems for water and sewage, but with few actions for solid waste (Britto; Rezende 2017).

In December 2010 there was the launch of the Pro-Waste Program, instituted by Decree n. 7,405, of December 23, which also established the ICSEIWP. The Program aimed at the promotion and integration of actions taken by the federal government. Supporting the productive organization of the collectors, improving working conditions, expanding opportunities for social and economic insertion, expanding selective collection of solid waste, reuse, and recycling through the segment's performance (Brazil, 2023). Coopesol-Leste was one of those assisted by the Pro-Catador, through INSEA (Martins, 2013).

In Belo Horizonte, in 2013, the Steering Committee, the Advisory Council and the Executive Secretariat were created to prepare the Waste Management Plan of Belo Horizonte, where civil

society bodies were invited to advice on the products launched. During this study, all members of the Waste Management Plan of Belo Horizonte Steering Committee were consulted via e-mail and telephone, reporting their non-participation in the plan. In April 2019, the East Regional Service Coordinator and the office assistant to the Undersecretary of Social Assistance were available to answer about the participation of waste pickers in Belo Horizonte, but only the second returned.

The other members of the Steering Committee delegated SLU as responsible for this. Confirming the perception in some of the interviews, which was the citation of institutions in the final document, but in fact, these, sometimes, were not even aware of the hearings and events promoted by the city. At the beginning of the process of preparing the PMGIRS of Belo Horizonte, the bidding process for hiring a private company was made with the participation of two consultants. Myr Sustainable Projects (from Belo Horizonte) and Tramitty – Business to Government (from the Federal District).

3.2. Between 2014 and 2017

3.2.1 Year 2014 and 2015

In 2014, when presenting the inventory of pickers made by the consultancy in public hearing, the associations and cooperatives identified some problems. The questions asked for the diagnosis of waste pickers led to a wrong estimate in the Venda Nova region, resulting in a low concentration of workers. In Brasília, on December 2, 2015, the President of the Chamber of Deputies accepted the impeachment process of the President of the Republic. The impeachment process ended on August 31, 2016, resulting in the termination of Dilma's term, with the Vice-President being sworn in. This change was a major external shock, an element that according to the Advocacy Coalition Model had as an actor in the process of formulating public policy.

The second Growth Acceleration Program calls for investment focused on solid waste were paralyzed, leading to the non-financing of projects related to collector sheds. An example of this is the Cataforte Program – Sustainable Business in Solidarity Networks, which aimed to enable the insertion of cooperatives in the recycling market and the addition of value in the solid waste chain. In addition, contributing to the structuring of cooperative networks and associations, making solidarity networks able to provide selective collection services to municipalities, participate in the reverse logistics market and jointly market and process recyclable products.

The Program was a partnership between the Federal Government, Banco do Brasil Foundation, Ministry of Labor and Employment, Ministry of Environment, National Health Foundation (Funasa), National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDES), Petrobras and Banco do Brasil (Regarding the collectors' networks/cooperatives in Minas Gerais, Lima (2011, p. 140) state:

Initiated in 2015, the public hearings for the dissemination of the elaboration of the MPISWM-BH had low participation of the population, considering that the disclosure was made in restricted access means, using only the official page of the Belo Horizonte City Hall. The population was not involved with solid waste issues, noting, for example, that the few citizens who participated were interested in solving personal and punctual issues. Something reported by the associations, cooperatives and waste pickers' networks was that the way the process was conducted led to discouragement in participating in the preparation of the plan.

3.2.2 Years 2016 and 2017

Between February and October 2016, the city of Belo Horizonte promoted some events on the process of elaborating the MPISWM-BH. The elections for the mayor also took place in 2016. Of the candidates João Leite (Party of the Social Democracy Brazilian [PSDB]) and Alexandre Kalil (of the Humanist Party of Solidarity [HPS]), the elected was Kalil, appointed by some cooperatives and associations of waste pickers. Recyclable materials as more affordable compared to the previous mayor, but still flawed. At the time of the second round of municipal elections, the Cleaning Department of Belo Horizonte held a discussion about the special waste included in the Plan, which was held in October 2016, with open conferences for public participation concentrated between 2015 and 2016. The last document resulting from the activities of MPISWM-BH was released in 2017, remaining errors, for example, the under sizing of collectors of Venda Nova Regional, pointing out one of the interviewees the difficulties in communicating with SLU as a hindrance in the process of preparing the MPISWM-BH.

Although there is the action to improve the sheds and everything related to it, the resources have always been stimulated by the pressure of the pickers of recyclable materials exerted on the area managers and that was rarely effective. Even with the plans for the management of recyclable materials, the economic and political crises that the country faced and changes in municipal government resulted in discontinuity and scattering of programs, for example the Cataforte Program. Following the requirement of Law n. 12.305 of conclusion of the MPISWM-BH and the effort made to insert the opinion of waste pickers in the preparation of the archive presented to the population of Belo Horizonte, the process was not satisfactory in terms of disclosure of the conferences created to give voice to the population.

Audiences, work groups, and other events did not reach the desire and goals of cooperatives and associations, because it is superficial, and could not satisfactorily, enable the visualization of how and when to make changes that promote the improvement of waste management in the capital of Minas Gerais. Regarding the participation of cooperatives and associations in the elaboration of the Plan (object of study of the present work), the results indicated as inefficient the form of insertion of the pickers designed by the city and the conduct of the elaboration activities.

According to the Belo Horizonte administration on its official web page: the MPISWM-BH implementation process was very democratic, allowing the citizen, invited to participate in the hearings and public consultation, to even suggest changes to the draft document. At the time, the call notice for the public consultation was published in the Belo Horizonte's web page and in the Official Gazette of the Municipality (OGM). The MPISWM-BH was prepared with resources from the Federal Government, through transfer agreement n. 768827/2011 (Belo Horizonte, 2017).

It was clear that, during the drafting process, the need to conclude the final document and the existence of other bottlenecks to be resolved in Belo Horizonte (e.g. the failures with reverse logistics) made public participation not so significant at all. The society was a bit inserted in the city's waste management problems, something that should not be done on time, but continuously. Although disclosure through TV and print newspapers has a cost, continued awareness of actions involving selective collection would reduce the amount of waste sent to the sheds. Preparing the MPISWM-BH, would have had a better impact on the volume and quality of ideas presented by the society at the conferences promoted by SLU, a society that is linked to the environmental issue that involves urban waste, as it contributes to the management through taxes and is responsible for the generation of volumes sent daily to landfills.

Although a better design for the conferences promoted with the focus of inserting the opinion of civil society could change the “face” of the final document presented, the lack of information about the subjects addressed could lead to a result like the one presented in March 2017, as waste pickers' associations and cooperatives would not be able to follow product presentations that were generally technical. In this case, the problem would not be the lack of openness to society, but the lack of training and environmental education, which could empower people about what was being discussed.

Considering salience as the ability to draw attention and affect society at large and complexity as the number of people included/affected by a policymaking process the preparation of MPISWM-BH is considered room policies. It consists consisting of a policy with small salience, e.g., did not attract the attention of the public and at the same time presents itself as overly complex. This classification helps to understand the small participation of the population in the hearings and activities promoted by the city during the elaboration process. The process of elaborating the MPISWM-BH was something of a technical nature, but, due to the need to insert recyclable waste pickers, it can also be interpreted as social, which in Bozeman and Pandey typology means that the technical content of the policy favours the prevalence. Actor who dominates the technical area (in the case of Belo Horizonte: the consultancy responsible for the Plan and Belo Horizonte’s administration), driving away the interest of people with less formal knowledge (Secchi, 2010).

3.2.3 Brazilian government between 2019 and 2022 and its Environmental Policy

This study was conducted during the Brazilian elections that elected President Jair Bolsonaro, a far-right politician responsible for dismantling Brazilian environmental policies. In 2019, Bolsonaro had promised, for instance, to pull Brazil out of the Paris climate accord, dismantle the environment ministry and reduce the extent of protected areas if he won. Although he didn’t fulfil some of those promises, the president has repeatedly clashed with Brazil’s scientific community and caused lasting damage, according to critics (Rodrigues, 2022).

Brazilian scholars and other scholars who study Brazil have been attempting to understand and analyze the turn to the extreme right that took place when the Bolsonaro government took office at the beginning of 2019. They have covered the presence of the military, the role of religion, the authoritarian tendencies, the social media impact, the cultural wars, and the resilience of democratic institutions in diverse attempts to grapple with this turning point in the history of this young democracy. In this special issue, we contribute to this growing literature, focusing on the country's foreign policy (Pineiro; Herz, 2022).

Jair Messias Bolsonaro’s election as president of Brazil in late 2018 would be incomprehensible without analysing the disintegration of the neo developmentalist order that made it possible. Examining the fascist threat that seems to be brewing in this new phase and the possibilities for resisting its advance makes sense only if we assess the depth of the reconfiguration of the forces on the ground that was produced in the previous phase. Bolsonaro’s emergence is a result of the crisis of this state phase and hegemonic system in their multiple dimensions, which amounts to a crisis of hegemony or “crisis of the state as a whole” and of the attempt by the dominant classes to resolve it through an authoritarian solution (Clemente, 2021).

Any process of political polarization (e.g., between people who identify as left-wing and right-wing) has, at its core, individuals who have found differing ideological viewpoints appealing.

Consequently, understanding the psychological processes that lead individuals to coalesce around radically different viewpoints can help shed light on how particular ideologies and movements can gain traction within a population. Running as a candidate for the far-right Partido Social Liberal (PSL), Bolsonaro won the presidency with 55.1% of the votes cast in the second round. His defeated rival, Fernando Haddad of the left-wing Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), won 44.9% (Franco; Pound, 2022).

The winner of the elections had his votes won through the use of social networks. Likewise, it proved that a month before the first round of elections, which took place on 7 October 2018, there was an increase in the percentage of interactions motivated by robots in the discussions about presidential candidates, reaching an absolute value of 3.258 automated accounts or social bots. Fake news, widely used in 2018, extrapolates the virtual reality of a computer screen or a mobile device to an exercise in face-to-face conversation, placing it within the framework of the tension logic of the Ego-Alter-Object triad as a fundamental analysis of interactional epistemology (Vásquez; Wolter, 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, the Bolsonaro administration offers perhaps the most striking contemporary example of what may be understood as mal governance, a concept still loosely utilised, seldom defined, and whose analytical usefulness might benefit from a more elaborate conceptualisation. Assessing Brazil's case is also valuable for reflecting on the role(s) of global sustainability agendas, notably the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (Lima; Costa, 2022).

The attention to and urgency of the deforestation situation in the Amazon led to the prioritizing of the environment during Brazil's Lula administration, with Marina Silva, who had strong connections with environmental NGOs, as minister of the environment. Under Lula and Silva's leadership, INPE developed DETER, allowing for near real time visibility of forest change. Before the implementation of DETER, deforestation data took up to two years to be released, making it difficult to track, catch, and prosecute deforestation offenders (Deutsch; Fletcher, 2022).

Most of the drastic changes in electoral landscapes were not anticipated by polls and pundits, taken them by surprise. The underlying mechanisms driving the opinion dynamics towards populism and its connection to extreme political views on both the right and the left are still not well understood. In particular the various amplitudes from one country to another are distributed over quite a large spectrum of values (Crokidakis; Galam 2022).

In April 2022 Bolsonaro launched a program to encourage private investment in recycling. The decree was signed creating the Recycling Credit Certificate, called the Recicla+ Program. The objective is to encourage private investments in the recycling of products and packaging discarded by the consumer, which could reach R\$ 14 billion. With the program, created by the Ministries of the Environment and Economy, recycling agents, which can be cooperatives of collectors, municipalities, public consortia, companies, and even individual microentrepreneurs (MEI), will have an extra income (Brazil, 2022).

For example, if these agents collect a ton of material, they will be able to sell it at market price, as is done today. What changes is that from now on, the invoices issued with the sale of these products will be able to be exchanged for a Recycling Credit Certificate. This will be done by the certificate management entities after proof of the authenticity of the tax document. Afterwards, recycling agents will be able to sell this credit to companies that produce waste, such as beverage manufacturers, and who need to prove the collection of this material after use, it's called reverse logistics. Each ton of recyclable material sold is equivalent to a Recycling Credit Certificate (Brazil, 2022).

3.3 The coalitions of the process studied

Over the years, the associations and cooperatives have turned to the professionalization of their workforce, requiring them to be hired as professionals by the City Hall, seeking to influence the government of Belo Horizonte through the Municipal Forum Garbage and Citizenship, for example, for the government to act in line with this belief system.

The Coalition of Moderate Change, formed by Urban Cleaning Company and members of MPISWM-BH's Steering Committee, adopting as strategies for finalizing and managing the policy design: divulgation of events in centralized media, little articulation between public agencies and civil society to accelerate the process of completion of the products presented; and insertion of technocratic alternatives for waste management in Belo Horizonte.

The Radical Change Coalition, formed by representatives of ASMARE, ASSOCIRECICLE, COOMARP PAMPULHA, COOPEMAR OESTE, COOPESOL LESTE, COOPERSOLI BARREIRO, INSEA e MOVIMENTO NOSSA BH, adopted as strategies for the insertion of their opinion in the elaboration process and in the final document presented by the city of Belo Horizonte: charging for answers to the demands presented, and demobilization for the presence in some of the events.

Although cited as important by Sabatier, the scientific community did not have outstanding performance within the studied process. In preparing the MPISWM-BH, Federal University of Minas Gerais was invited to be present, but during the interviews, both the city hall and the consulting company responsible for the completion of the products presented do not mention it as a member of the Advisory Board. The two coalitions present different alternatives for solid waste management in Belo Horizonte, agreeing on only one alternative, which is the need of hiring waste pickers to collect recyclables, otherwise the ideas become immiscible, realizing four reasons for the non-prioritization of the public power in relation to the performance of waste pickers in Belo Horizonte.

Analysing the convictions (or also strategies according to Sabatier) interpreted by observation at the conferences, interviews and reading the final version of the MPISWM-BH, it was concluded that the associations and cooperatives were defeated in the process since the design of the elaboration brought a discouragement in their participation. By opening the "black box" of information provided through the interviews, this was proven, supporting the public opinion that the process took place in accordance with the law, but not truly, contrary to the wishes of the belief system of the Radical Change Coalition (collectors associations and cooperatives).

The initiative to create the conferences was only a strategy of the Coalition of Moderate Change (municipal government), which used the argument of having sent to the sheds communicated the date, place, and time of the conferences. The beliefs (or strategies) have been carefully verified and confirmed in this thesis. The information gathered in the interview with the coordinator of the plan, the major political influencer, was consistent, attesting to the veracity of the lack of conviction in the municipal government to implement public management with greater participation of civil society.

3.4 The belief system and the resources

The main features pointed out by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1999) are: i) The participation of actors with formal institutionalized authority; ii) Public opinion, in support of the coalition; iii) Information; iv) Mobilization of troops; v) financial resources; and vi) Experienced leadership.

In the political process studied in this thesis, the first resource cited above (i. The participation of actors with formal institutionalized authority) was the most used by the dominant coalition, with greatest influence on municipal waste management.

Public opinion (second appeal) was not well used as a motivation of society to participate in the drafting process. Regarding the third resource (information), in the whole process this was present by the Coalition of Moderate Change, knowing and having experience with the theme (already informing here about the use of the last resource: experienced leadership). Considering the mobilization of troops as public engagement in political fundraising activities, for example, the use of this resource was not observed, in which the public coffers funded the whole process, and the presence of lobbyists was not noticeable.

The financial resources used came from the Finance Department, and it was not necessary to use them to convince or manipulate society, since it was not a priority to convince about what was being done, mainly because nobody is controlling, or regulating, the results presented. Regarding the belief system (e.g. the hiring of waste associations/cooperatives as service providers is somewhat necessary) of the innovation coalition, it was found that deep-core beliefs were supported by national waste management policies, mainly from National Sanitation Policy (2007) and Law n. 12.305 (Brazil, 2010). This system also evolved according to the guidelines of the National Policy of Waste Management and the new demands of the recyclable material collectors. The initial focus was on the social issue, especially in the 1990s, and later assuming as its main objective the promotion of professionalization, starting in 2016, when the first cooperative was hired by the Belo Horizonte City Hall to collect recyclable materials in the Floresta neighbourhood.

In the elaboration of the MPISWM-BH, no substantive variation in the deep core belief system (importance of recyclable waste pickers) was identified over time, as this belief system was dominant in the analysed period and followed the natural evolution of pressures and demands from associations and cooperatives that began in the 1990s. The deep-core belief system spread by the coalition formed by associations and cooperatives aimed at reducing the power of large generators (e.g. shopping malls), while focus on accomplishing what was required under federal law: finalize the preparation of the MPISWM-BH. The identification of secondary aspects in a political process encompasses instrumental considerations on how to implement the policy, which are the most susceptible to change over time (Weible; Sabatier, 2009; Sabatier; Weible, 2007). A secondary issue discussed by both coalitions is how, after sheds become high-tech, recyclers will remain central to waste management.

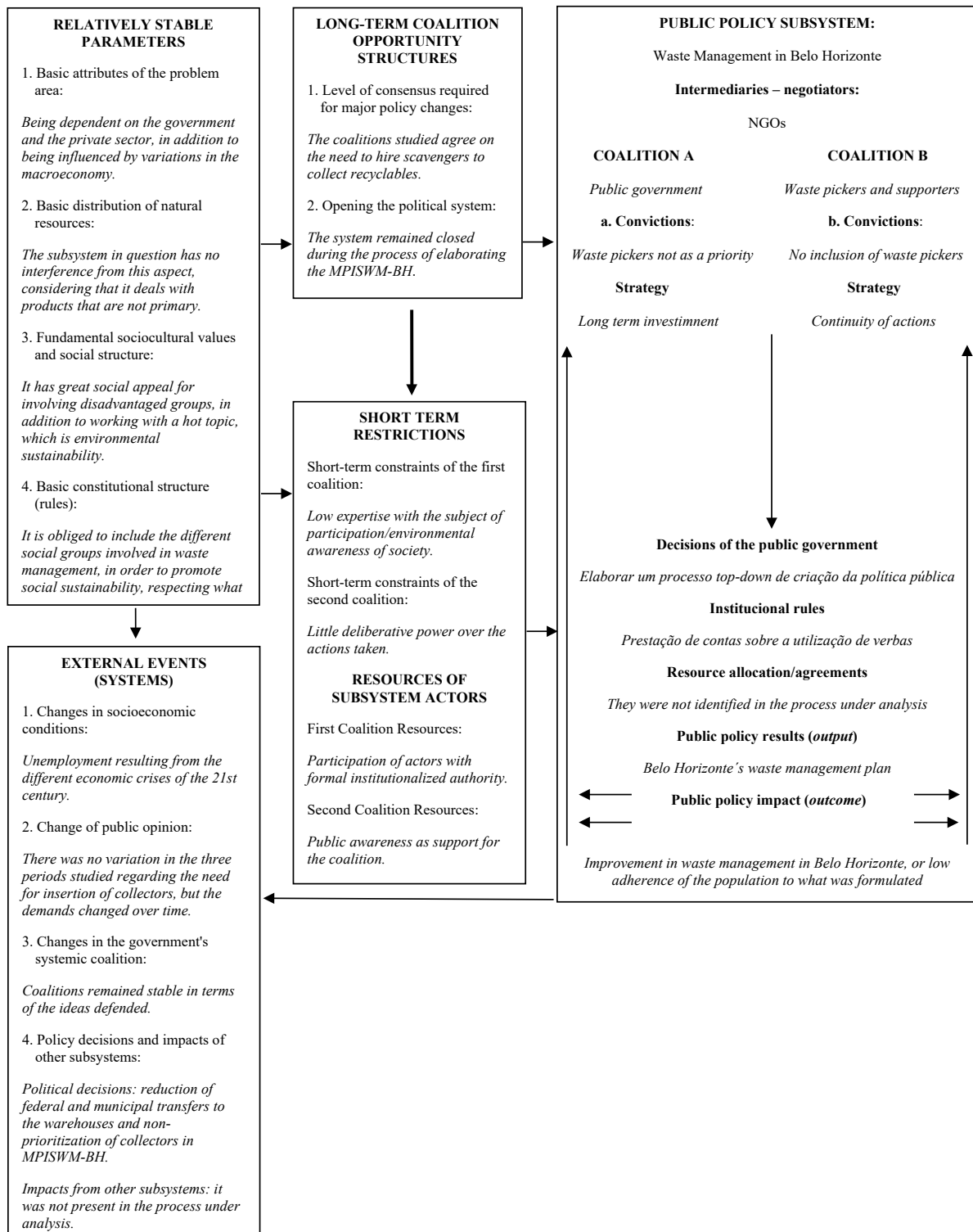
3.5 Main trajectories

There are four main trajectories pointed by Sabatier and Weible (2007) as present in a political process: i) policy-driven learning: launch of Law n. 12,305, which obliges municipalities to include social aspects in the Plans. ii) external shocks: change of mayor and change of environmental consultancy responsible for the elaboration of MPISWM-BH. iii) internal shocks: change of superintendent and change of employees, or even different ideologies and ways of seeing, among SLU departments and managements, the problem of inserting waste pickers. iv) policy impasse: communication issues that led to the breach of contract between Urban Cleaning Company of Belo Horizonte and Tramitty.

This study highlights the learning oriented through national/state policy and internal shocks within the Urban Cleaning Company itself in how to insert the associations and cooperatives.

Changes in government are one of the external shocks intervening in the waste recycling subsystem, as the way the elected official views them can increase or reduce incentives and support for activities in the sheds, which is ensured by Law n. 11,445, which reduces bureaucracy in hiring associations and cooperatives. Economic crises are another example of external shock as they increase the number of people in the collection (Figure 1), also changing the quality of the material collected in the door-to-door collection.

Figure 1 – ACF applied to the Belo Horizonte Plan



Source: Author (2023).

The non-adherence of most of the studied sample in the aspects of selective collection and recycling made the municipalities did not meet the minimum requirements of Art. 19 of the Brazilian Law n. 12,305/2010. Even in the diagnoses observed, there was the absence of essential data, such as information about the waste pickers and forms of marketing of recyclables practiced in the territory (Oliveira; Galvão Junior, 2016). In the case of Belo Horizonte, interpreting guidelines as guidelines, strategies as the method or plan to achieve the objective and goals as something measurable, MPISWM-BH presents in its text superficiality regarding the inclusion of associations and cooperatives of collectors of Belo Horizonte.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The reports obtained in the interviews were also consistent with the actions taken by the Coalition of Moderate Change and the decision-making that led to the current design of Belo Horizonte's recyclable waste management policy. It is noted that the policy, as formulated during the three periods studied, brought innovations, but remained inert in several components, resulting from changes of rulers, for example, which ends up naming each government people with different views on the insertion of the pickers to occupy the position of Superintendent.

The coalitions of change (radical and moderate), which maintained an interdependence in the process, managed to change the subsystem in recognition of waste pickers as service providers from 2016. On the other hand, incentives in environmental education did not occur over time and have no forecast to be made, bottleneck for reducing the volume of waste that reaches the sheds, but also pointed by the city as something strategic, because the municipality has no structure to receive a larger volume of materials recyclable. Evaluating the results, only regarding the goals of each coalition, was the greatest defeat attributed to the Coalition of Radical Change.

It is understood that the strategy used by the municipal government to manipulate change coalitions was consistent with its interpretation that it was facing a "giant", which was the need to meet the deadline, using something that the cleaning department had no experience. The explanatory relationship between coalition characteristics, resources and strategies and the outcome of the change process was clearly demonstrated by assessing the evolution of coalitions over time. Being events like the impeachment of 2015 and the party changes in the presidency of the republic agents that disarticulated the Coalition of Radical Change.

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