Recent Civil Society Networks in Brazil: Strengthening Democracy Through Social Control and Public Engagement

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Civil Society Organizations in Brazil have historically taken on different roles. Andion (2007) configures the different groups of the Society Organizations in Brazil in 5 main categories, ranked by similar characteristics: a) Historical organizations, b) Organizations connected to social movements, c) Organizations formed by technicians, d) Institutions related to private social investment and e) Charities/Welfare organizations. According to previous research (KRIEGER, 2011), historical institutions and those connected to social movements have the speech related to the Economies of Worth' Civic World, of Boltanski and Thévenot (2005), fostering democracy and values of social participation and prominence of the collective. However, due to the Brazilian democracy strengthening, CSOs have been approaching the public sector in recent years. The approximation of organizations with operations focused on charity has happened mainly by the willingness to impact on public policies related to the welfare and rights of children and adolescents, women, elderly and youth (IBGE, 2008).

At the end of the first decade of the 2000s, however, a specific group of organizations formed by technicians (also referred to as professional CSOs) started to create a greater engagement to public policies and changes in the Brazilian political scenery, mainly through national mobilization for relevant political reforms and encouragement of the use of sustainability indicators for planning and accountability of mayors. These CSOs also act exerting social control in areas such as bidding processes, public finances and law making, as well as influencing public policies for sustainable development, structured strategic planning, greater transparency and accountability, and fostering civic engagement Academically there are few exploratory works on these institutions and the impact they have on Brazilian reality.

The formation of networks has been a channel widely used to strengthen these institutions at the national level. These networks, in general, emerged from the work of a unique organization that has been strengthened and replicated in other cities. The networks with greater prominence, acting both locally and nationally, are:

- Brazilian Social Network for Fair and Sustainable Cities, working with sustainability indicators in municipal planning and compulsory plan targets;
- Movement to Combat Electoral Corruption, primarily responsible for approving the "Clean Record" law and mobilizing for the political reform "Clean Elections";
- Brazilian Articulation Against Corruption and Impunity, consisting of approximately 50 institutions, operates with national campaigns and was a major contributor for the realization of the Social Control Conferences throughout Brazil in 2012;
- AMARRIBO Brazil and Institute of Inspection and Control Network, formed by more than 200 institutions, being the national representative of Transparency
International, held the International Anticorruption Conference in 2012;
- Social Observatory of Brazil, a network of local institutions that accompany
bidding processes and saved more than 200 million for the public treasury in
2012.

Through interviews with the leaders of these networks as well as with leaders of
institutions that form the network, along to the analysis of their constitutional
documents, this article aims at broaden the knowledge about the action
motivation of these institutions as well as understanding the relations of these
networks with the Civil and Industrial Worlds of the Economies of Worth.

What are the causes that drive these organizations and networks? What are the
main goals achieved and the difficulties faced? What are the strategies and tools
that these CSOs use and value? What are their major criticisms to the field
today? The answers for these questions are necessary to deepen our knowledge
of these institutions as well as to relate the performance of the networks with the
framework designed by Boltanski and Thévenot to verify the logics of action of
these institutions.

By analyzing the interviews with these network leaders and categorizing them
into the logical framework of the Economies of Worth, it is expected to confirm
the hypothesis that these institutions strengthen the Civic World through their
performance in the Industrial World. Boltanski and Thévenot have sustained that
the bridge between these two worlds is necessary for the existence of the
Modern State. Still, it is expected to verify that the performance of these
institutions promotes the breakdown of bridges previously established by the
Brazilian State, as the bridge between the Domestic and Civic Worlds, which
foster paternalism, patronage and corruption. With this, it will be concluded that
these institutions are part of the improvement of democracy in Brazil, pursuing
public institutions that act on the principles of the Rule of Law and towards the
public good.