Social Observatory as a new space for civil society and government relationships in Belém, Pará State, brazilian Amazon

Observatório Social como um novo espaço de relações entre a sociedade civil e governo em Belém, estado do Pará, Amazônia brasileira

Observatorio Social como un nuevo espacio de dialogo entre la sociedad civil y el gobierno en Belém, estado de Pará, Amazonia brasileña

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Abstract: The article analyses the Social Observatory (SO) as a new space for civil society and government dialogues and influence on public policy. Specifically, the article examines the extent to which SO is a space for a constructive dialogue to implement and to manage public policy for urban mobility at municipal level. It deals with the case of SO of Belém municipality, Pará State. Belém is the second largest municipality in the Brazilian Amazon region in terms of population. Methodologically, the research was based on case study using documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews with four members of the SO of Belém for data gathering. The paper shows that SO may constitute a significant participative arena which brings civil society and local government to take collective decision-making based on dialogue and transparency of information. However, since it is a new organizational pattern, SO still have many difficulties and challenges, whether of internal character, whether in its relation to other public, private and civil society actors.

Keywords: Social Observatory; urban mobility; social participation.

Resumo: O artigo analisa o Observatório Social (OS) como um novo espaço para o diálogo entre a sociedade civil e o governo e sua incidência na política pública. Especificamente, o artigo examina em que medida o OS é um espaço de diálogo construtivo para implementação e gestão de políticas públicas de mobilidade urbana em nível municipal. O trabalho é um estudo de caso do OS do município de Belém, estado do Pará. Belém é o segundo maior município da região amazônica brasileira em termos de população. Metodologicamente, a pesquisa foi baseada no estudo de caso utilizando análise documental e entrevistas semiestruturadas com quatro membros do OS de Belém no processo de coleta de dados. O artigo mostra que o OS pode se constituir em uma importante arena participativa para trazer a sociedade civil e o governo local para a tomada de decisão coletiva baseada no diálogo e transparência da informação. Entretanto, por ser um novo modelo organizacional, o OS ainda possui dificuldades e desafios, seja de caráter interno, seja em sua relação com outros atores públicos, privados e da sociedade civil.

Palavras-chave: Observatório Social; mobilidade urbana; participação social.

Resumen: El artículo analiza el Observatorio Social (OS) como un nuevo espacio de diálogo entre la sociedad civil y el gobierno y su incidencia en las políticas públicas. En concreto, el artículo examina en qué grado el OS es uno espacio de diálogo constructivo para la ejecución y gestión de las políticas públicas para la movilidad urbana a nivel municipal. El trabajo es un estudio de caso de la ciudad de Belém, estado de Pará. Belém es la ciudad segunda más grande en la región amazónica de Brasil en tamaño de población. Metodológicamente la investigación fue basada en el estudio de caso utilizando análisis documental y entrevistas semiestructuradas con cuatro miembros del OS de Belém en el proceso de recolección de datos. El artículo muestra que el OS puede ser un importante espacio participativo para que la sociedad civil y el gobierno local para la toma de decisiones colectiva basada en el diálogo y la transparencia de la información. Sin embargo, al ser un nuevo modelo de organización, el OS todavía tiene dificultades y retos, es de carácter interno, ya sea en su relación con otras organizaciones públicas, privadas y de la sociedad civil.

Palabras-clave: Observatorio Social; movilidad urbana; participación social.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to analyse Social Observatory (SO) as a new space for civil society and government relationships. Social Observatory means a non-profit organization which seeks to promote the quality in the application of resources by means of a process of supervision of the local governments and work on civil society awareness to assume this role. Particularly, this paper examines the extent to which the Social Observatory is also an arena for a constructive dialogue to implement and to manage public policy at local level.

The paper is an outcome of a larger research that looks at the SO efficiency to influence on public policy at municipal level. The research examines different SO in Brazil taking each one as a study case. This paper approaches the case of SO of Belém, Pará State. Belém is the second largest municipality in the Brazilian Amazon region in terms of population and the first one that implemented the SO in the region. For data gathering about the SO of Belém, the research used documentary analysis and semi-structured interviews with four members of the organization.

Social Observatory has been debated as a new arena for relationships between social actors from civil society, market and government for transparency, public resources and social control (CACERES, 2014) and also for accountability and coproduction (OSBORNE, 2010; ANDRADE, 2018) for public goods. The literature has mainly concentrated on SO democratic aims and ends and has left outside analyses about social actors' relationships to influence on public policy building and management. To what extent has the SO incited new public policies? How has government allowed dialogue and incorporated the SO contributions for public policy and management? Which learning has emerged from the new arena and relationships? Current studies have shown that collective decisions making at non-public arenas (TENÓRIO, 2005; 2013; CANÇADO, 2011; ANDRADE, 2018) are significant to public policy efficiency.

The Social Observatory of Belém (SOB) was founded in 2010 in the context of population demands for greater local government actions transparency for combating corruption in Brazil. The SOB was encouraged by official departments of public resources control such as Public Prosecution [*Ministério Público*] at state and federal levels and also by Audit Office [*Tribunal de Contas*] at municipal and state levels. However, since it was established, SOB has tried to build up dialogues with municipal government to support public policies. Among these policies, there are two significant public policies that have concerned city's populations. Those are (a) the public policy for urban mobility and (b) the public policy for solid waste management. This paper particularly discusses the public policy for urban mobility (PPUM) since it contains an important social and economic function to urban and city's development.

The PPUM was originally planned and carried out under a top-down approach. This approach is characterised by political decision of the local government and by a technical standpoint with lack of dialogue with civil society, particularly the communities that are directly affected by the public policy. However, from 2013, the SOB started to make propositions to improve the public policy efficiency rather than only follow the PPUM implementation.

Among other projects carried out by the SOB there is a project called "Civil Society Incidence on Urban Sustainability (PISCSU[3])". This project has financial support from three international organizations: (1) *Fundación Avina*, (2) *Latin America Regional Climate Initiative* (LARCI) and (3) OAK Foundation. The project incentives civil society and market agents to participate in the

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[3] This article uses acronyms in Portuguese for the organizations names.

elaboration, execution and monitoring of the municipal public policies, specially the public policy for urban mobility. In this context, this paper debates how SO has been a constructive dialogue arena to carry out public policy.

2 THE STUDY CONTEXT

The past few decades of the twentieth century in Brazil have been characterized by profound changes and adjustments in the economic area, which affected social issues. The changes have resulted in increased unemployment, informal employment and social inequalities. The crisis that began in Brazil influenced the creation of social movements for re-democratization, social rights guarantees and adoption of public policies in order to minimize the problems of society.

The 1988 Brazilian Constitution has redefined the role for the State from political decentralization. The federal government assumed primarily the coordination and the funding of public social policies. The states and municipalities have been recognized as federated autonomous entities by organization, implementation and management of these policies (CUNHA; CUNHA, 2002).

The strengthening of public policy management was a good opportunity for the development of municipalities, which promoted multiple services to the population, such as health and education. However, since 1988 the decentralization has generated serious problems, especially for standardization of politics that disregarded the different realities presented by the states and municipalities. The intense process of urbanization of some municipalities also became a mismatch in the distribution of fund transfers, due to the incompatibility of the municipal needs (CUNHA; CUNHA, 2002).

Data from Latin American Network for Fair, Democratic and Sustainable Cities and Territories demonstrate that about 80% of Latin America population lives in cities. This fact means that the spaces are becoming increasingly complex and demand greater attention from the public administration to plan policies that allow the improvement of people´s quality of life.

Quality of life requires improvement of services offered in the cities and, among these, the urban mobility that has become part of the public policy agenda in Brazil. The National Urban Mobility Policy (PNMU) was established through the approval of Federal Law nr. 1.687/2007. Therewith, it obtained political and institutional conditions for the formulation and implementation of a national politics for urban mobility that serves as instrument of urban development policy (GOMIDE, 2008).

According to the new public policy construction paradigms and the very own PNMU guidelines, the issue of urban mobility should not be planned from top to bottom; on the contrary, it must involve local actors in the process. Hence, the importance of social participation in the construction and implementation of public policy for urban mobility in a manner that it can be executed to improve people's lives who inhabit the urban areas.

Spaces for social participation (HABERMAS, 1999; AVRITZER, 2003; SCHOMMER, 2003; FARIA, 2010; OXHORN, 2010; ANDRADE, 2018) and interaction between civil society and government in the public administration as the case of Social Observatory (SO) have emerged in Brazil and several Latin American countries (CACERES, 2014; QUINONES, 2010) as an way to mobilize and articulate social participation for the monitoring of the public policies.

In Brazil, the first social observatory emerged in 2005 in the city of Maringá with the Commercial and Business Associations Convention of Paraná State. These have emerged as new

public spaces for mobilization of nonpartisan citizens who initially sought transparency in the public administration. Ever since, social observatories have been multiplied across the country.

In Pará State, several municipalities have established SO aiming to monitor local public administration, as example the municipalities of Belém, Abaetetuba, Capanema and Castanhal. The Social Observatory of Belém (SOB) integrates a social network and aims to discuss the city's quality of life, identify the demands and send them to the Legislative Power and executive.

The social observatories serve as public spaces to the extent to enable the interaction between the civil society and federal government, State and municipal institutions in public policy actions. Notwithstanding, the SOB has been established in December 2010, on the occasion of the International Anti-Corruption Day. Nowadays, the SOB is currently monitoring the municipal urban mobility policy.

3 A BRIEF HISTORICAL ELEMENTS ABOUT THE CHANGES OF THE BRAZILIAN URBAN MOBILITY POLICY

Until the mid-1960s, the Urban Development Policy and in particular the Urban Transport Policy in Brazil was characterized by a multiplicity and unarticulated initiatives and actions of various government sectors (VASCONCELLOS; CARVALHO; PEREIRA, 2011). Between 1960s and the mid-1980s, the literature (BOARETO, 2008; VASCONCELLOS; CARVALHO; PEREIRA, 2011) shows a more cohesive effort for the construction of a national urban development policy with creation of institutions with active federal participation on the public transportation policy in Brazilian cities. The first institution was established in 1965 called Brazilian Company of Transportation Planning (GEIPOT). The GEIPOT placed urban transportation on the agenda of the central government (BOARETO, 2008).

In 1970s, the Federal Government created three organizations that defined a new institutional design for the transportation sector (GOMIDE; GALINDO, 2013). They were the National System of Urban Transport (SMTU), the Brazilian Urban Transport Company (EBTU) and the Development Fund for Urban Transport (PDTU). These organizations, following the federal policy of urban transport, acted in funding programs and offering of technical advices to the municipalities.

Between 1980s and 1990s, the Federal urban development policy was affected by the Brazilian economic crisis. In that period, many changes happened in Brazil and some of the transport sectors were extinct such as the National Urban Development Council (CNDU) and the EBTU.

However, in spite of the difficulties faced between 1980s and 1990s, the 1988 Federal Constitution established the bases for an great urban reform in the country and also to the most appropriate legal framework to the treatment of national urban issues that promoted changes from the late 1990s and beginning of the 2000s (FERNANDES, 2008). Urban policy took a prominent space and brought to the fore some challenges to the issue of urban transport. For example, the municipalities had to comply with the new constitutional requirement to conduct bidding process for the concession of urban bus services; and to plan and define a joining management between neighboring municipalities for transport services in metropolitan areas (VASCONCELLOS; CARVALHO; PEREIRA, 2011).

From 2000s to the present day, the federal urban policy has been characterized by an institutional stability. It utilizes a new approach in the treatment of urban transport taking an urban development concept which proposes an integrated, sustainable and democratic pattern.

The establishment of the State Secretary for the Urban Development (SEDU) in 1999 demonstrated the resumption of urban sectorial policies. The formation of the Executive Group of Urban Transport (Gtrans) also was a significant decision-making. However, the most important action for Urban Transport Policy was the establishment of the City Statute in 2001. From the City Statute the municipalities with over 500,000 inhabitants started to be forced to have an integrated urban transport plan.

Later on, in 2003, it was established the Ministry of Cities which represented a new federal body for carrying out the urban policy. The Ministry of Cities incorporated the National Department of Transport and Urban Mobility and all different organs that were dealing with public transportation and transit within the federal government.

In 2007, the federal government developed the National Policy on Urban Mobility aiming to establish national guidelines for public transport policies. Subsequently, in 2012 it was institutionalized the concept of urban mobility which culminated in the enactment of Law of Guidelines for the National Urban Mobility Policy (BOARETO, 2008). From the law, the urban mobility represents a social and economic function for urban and city development. The planning process of urban mobility requires a new management model including regulation of the public services for urban public transport.

4 THE SOCIAL OBSERVATORY AS SPACE FOR CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC POLICIES FOR URBAN MOBILITY

Historically, the Social Observatory as space for citizen participation in public affairs emerged in 2006 in the city of Maringá, Paraná State. As already said, it was created by the Convention Commercial and Business Associations of Paraná State. It is a non-profit association aiming to supervise the use and application of municipal resources in favor of local society as a meaning of public transparency. It is called Social Observatory of Maringá. The example of Maringá contributed to emerge social observatories in other cities of Brazil and also for the creation of a national body called Social Observatory of Brazil. The latter assumes the role to guide and control all the Observatories in Brazil by means of Social Network Control. Currently, there are 96 Brazilian cities with social observatories.

Citizen participation refers to appropriation by individuals the right of democratic construction of their own destiny as a result of collective organization and the existence of open spaces for discussion between social actors (TENÓRIO; ROZENBERG, 1997). However, there are not many public spaces to establish of the common dialogue between local social actors as a meaning to supervise the use and application of municipal resources and public transparency. According to Milani (2008), local public policy networks may contribute to promote citizen participation and understanding between civil society and managers of public policies.

Cançado (2011), Tenório (2013) and Schommer, Dahmer y Spaniol (2013) have contributed to debate on the process of collective decision-making in nonstate public space that search for society emancipation (CANÇADO; PEREIRA; TENÓRIO, 2015). However, the authors highlight social actors' participation in local development by means of creating common spaces that enable to bring together representatives of public and private sectors.

The common spaces must be permeable by direct participation of social actors in a dynamic close to a social management. Here, social management is understood as collective

decision-making with no coercion and based on transparency, intersubjectivity and dialogicity. They are spaces for building social emancipation (CANÇADO; PEREIRA; TENÓRIO, 2015). This approach brings the idea of society exercising social control in public policy as is the case the urban mobility.

The social observatories emerged with initial aims to supervise local government use of public funds by means of engagement of some sectors of the society to evaluate the quality of public administration and transparency. Later, the social observatories assumed roles beyond the analysis of the public transparency. For example, they incorporated perspectives of accountability and analysis of society needs and demands. Thereby, social observatories opened their scopes and nowadays they try to contribute to the public administration for human development and quality of life in the cities as whole.

In Brazil, before de 1988 Federal Constitution the process of building public policy was dominated by a top-down pattern. Since then, it has been slowly changing. In fact, since 1990s the top-down process of decision-making for public policies has been questioned and there are increasing demands for bottom-up planning method. It has been argued the importance of the organized civil society in the planning process. Actually, the model bottom-up is more democratic and participative once it involves interested parties in the decisions-making process which affect their own life. However, as Oliveira (2006) identifies, the ideal planning process is the convergence of the two models presented by Sabatier (1986). Apart from contributing in order to minimize evaluation or errors in diagnosis, the participation of users in planning, management and super-vision of public transport services is an example for the full exercise of citizenship.

Many alternatives exist to be explored to promote citizen participation (SOUZA, 2002). These range from simple communities consultation and information on scheduled actions to formation of specific councils for participatory budget. However, there are new arrangements for nonstate social participation. The SO is an instance that involves local public authorities, service providing companies and social movements. SO has been presented as a representation of the convergence of models top-down and bottom-up (ANDRADE, 2018).

In the municipality of Belém, the social observatory of Belém (SOB) has sought to bring together social actors interested on public transparency agenda, corruption combat and for the exercise of social control in the municipal management and budget.

The SOB was established in December 2010, on the occasion of the international day against corruption. This was stimulated by the control agencies such as the State Public Prosecutor, Federal Public Ministry, Federal police, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and Audit Courts.

Among the projects developed by SOB is the "Incidence Project of Civil Society in Sustainable Urban (PISCSU)". As already said in the introduction, this is supported by three international orga-nizations: *Fundación Avina; Latin America Regional Climate Initiative*- LARCI and OAK *Foundation*. The PISCSU features guidelines includes social actors participation in the elaboration, implemen-tation and monitoring of public policies in the municipality.

The SOB has sought to follow and focus on public policies for urban mobility and solid waste. For that, the SOB developed in 2015 a research aiming to know the populations' opinion about some issues of solid residues, urban mobility, climate changes and the citizen participation in public policies. As outcomes of the research, the SOB develops several actions that have shown positive outcomes. Among these actions is the urban mobility policy monitoring.

5 SOB ACTIONS AND INFLUENCE ON LOCAL URBAN MOBILITY POLICY

The SOB work on the municipal urban mobility policy involves among other things the monitoring of the BRT (Bus Rapid Transport) systems projects, including cycle paths, sidewalks and gardening as part of its infrastructure. Indeed, the SOB tries to develop diverse activities within the context of the Belém's urban mobility policy.

> *[...] frequently we ask about the realization of the mobility planning. We also discuss issues of gardening which should make the required suppression of trees from the motorway Augusto Montenegro. We managed to get information access from the city hall and from both SEMOB[4] and SEURB[5]. Because we gained confidence from them, we always want to have a positive dialogue, but it does not inhibit us from making criticisms.* (The SOB's President B).

Public actions of organizations arising from civil society impacting on the public bodies are still a new process once at municipal level exists an history of public policies under the top-down model. In fact, only between 1997 and 2005 the city of Belém started a process of information sharing and collective decision-making in public policy for the city management In that time Belém experienced a participative and shared management pattern using the tools of participatory budget and Congress of the City as a means to approach the municipal administration and the city's collectivities, although the information passed on to civil society was limited to certain projects and actions and not to the entire public policy itself.

The changes of public managers from 2006 onwards interrupted the bottom-up model and the strictly top-down pattern for public policies planning and implementation returned. In spite of the changes, the new projects funded by multilateral agencies demanded popular participation in its management process. Precisely, the agencies link the funds release to people involvement in the implementation of projects that affect their lives, as the case of city macro-drainage projects.

In the case of the SOB actions, the mobility plan demands linked to BRT project implementation was fundamental for bringing the discussion of the municipal plan for urban mobility in the city assembly. Taking the urban mobility as a public policy that directly affects the daily life of every people in the city, this public policy assumes a multidimensional perspective that necessarily requires interaction between multiple actors in order to achieve better results (SOUZA, 2002).

Generation of information and information access to follow public policy actions adds other purposes to observatories, precisely to request government transparency. The Observatories' roles range from suggestions and changes in public policy proposals to observation of the funds and resources used by municipal government aiming transparency and accountability. As an example of generation of information to analyze and follow the urban mobility plan, the SOB performed a survey on the means of transport used in the city. It shows that 58,0% of the population use buses and/or a van[6], 9,7% use motorcycles and 8,9% use bicycles as means of transport. This means that 76,6% of the population demands a structure more suitable and efficient for urban mobility.

The SOB research also sought to know population receptiveness for using public fluvial transport in the city once Belém is surrounded by rivers and basins. The research data shows that 85,8% of those interviewed want a public fluvial transportation model to connect the city center to the diverse neighborhoods areas of the Belém metropolitan region taking as an example the

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[4] SEMOB (Executive Superintendence for Urban Mobility).

[5] SEURB (Municipal Urban Planning Bureau).

[6] Van is a kind of microbus.

island of Mosqueiro. Poorest people prefer to use bicycles for their mobility in the city and thus they suggest special attention for creation of cycle paths and cycle-tracks.

The use of bicycles as a means of transport already is part of the municipal urban mobility plan; however, the data from SOB research shows there are great differences between people demands and the municipal plan what indicates a number of failures in the project planning, mainly in the process of implementation.

In this sense of supervision of the urban mobility plan, the SOB has created two commissions to analyze all the plan documents and to follow the implementation of the works with participation of architects, engineers and bicycle users. The commission aims to evaluate the planning and its implementation and contribute to identify possibilities of improvements in the planning. The first result of this job was creation of new routes, roads signaling and construction of intersecting structures with other transportation modes once people use bicycle for both leisure and to their mobility in the city, particularly to go to their job.

The experience above show that Belém's urban mobility planning implementation needs to improve the dialogue between government and civil society in order to achieve the demands of the last and to this end municipal government cannot be then only important body. The city planning should overcome the technician view and take into account local population participation in order to meet peoples' demands and needs. In this context, the SOB as a nonpartisan organization and whose objective is to have a positive impact on city planning, serves as a channel of communication that brings civil society demands to municipal management.

The SOB opens its space to put together civil society and government and presents itself as a new arena for coproduction. SOB takes as a principle that urban mobility policy must feel the demands of diverse collectives of the city in order to reach best outcome. As the SOB research has shown, Belém is a city surrounded by islands and basins and then the population demands public fluvial transport. This demand came out in the SOB survey and only started to be considered when the SOB had access to the municipal plan.

Although SOB still to be a very recent organization and does not cover all the representative bodies and the set of collectives who are living in the city, it already shows some positive outcomes in this process of coproduction.

At the moment, the SOB focuses in an only public policy. However, this organization brings a set of different professionals and collectives and thus it can contribute to analyze other public policies. For example, in the case of the public policy for urban mobility there was a need to involve experts in urban planning, architects, engineers, economists and accountants to supervise the use of public funds, lawyers and administrators to understand the bidding process, among others. Therefore, voluntary monitoring of public policy is a complex task and involves different expertise.

Amongst the difficulties of action to increase the SOB effectiveness is the lack of more voluntary people to help in the supervision of the municipal public administration activities. The following speech shows this difficulty.

> [...] the biggest difficulty is internal. We do not have enough people with expertise and availably time to supervise in a better way what the city hall does or not does. We have no difficulty in taking information because we have direct access to the managers; something we take by means of our strategy to ask information based on the Law of Public Information Access. (President of SOB).

In fact, the interviewees said there are no difficulties in taking information from the City Hall or other municipal bodies that deal with urban mobility policy. The Brazilian Public Transparency Act facilitates public information access for social control and the SOB uses it as a negotiation strategy. If on the one hand access to information contributes to supervise the urban mobility policy; on the other hand, there is a difficulty in monitoring on time the services related to the policy implementation what constitutes a challenge for the SOB.

> *[...] unfortunately, civil society participation in public policy monitoring, albeit an important activity and SOB aim, it is still very weak. It happens because people involved in the supervision take their time and dedication to always act strategically and continuously and have no time for monitoring the activities. Without other voluntary people, there is no way to bring efficient monitoring of the policy.* (President of SOB).

Tenório (2013) argues about the importance of voluntary people committed in social control to improve the outcomes of public policies in order to it to be effectively performed. According to the author, local or regional development should be an outcome of collective participation in the elaboration, implementation and monitoring of the public policies as a mean to improve the population's quality of life.

The SOB is an example of nonstate public space that brings social interaction and civil society and government coproduction. The SOB can be considered as a space that promotes an environment for citizenship and democracy exercising, although much more social participation and engagement should be encouraged. PISCSU research shows that 59,3% of those interviewed believe that popular participation is significant to municipal management improvements, however only 34,3% of these feel able and available for working voluntarily with these objectives. This is a kind of contradiction once on the one hand, people demand greater social participation in policies that affect their lives; nevertheless, on the other hand there is no voluntary people offering their time to cover this demand.

The above paradox shows some limits of the SO as a new space for coproduction between civil society and government and thus for social management itself once this last enunciates that individual interest perceives its interdependence with the collective interest (well understood interest) (CANÇADO; PEREIRA; TENÓRIO, 2015). The importance of the SOB role is taken into account by the population; however, people still does not assume its manager role of this space and on its demands. At this point, it may be inferred that there is still a long way for the SO implementation of Social Management (CANÇADO; PEREIRA; TENÓRIO, 2015).

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The article aimed to analyze relationship between civil society and municipal government in monitoring public policy, specifically public policy for urban mobility in Belém. Particularly, it discusses the SO as a new space for dialogue and coproduction between civil society and local governments. The SO may be understood as a new tool and participative space that brings civil society and local government for taking collective decision based on dialogue and transparency.

For being a nonpartisan organization, the SO critically analyses public policies and adopts an independent position from political party and governments. However, to make this happen, the SO demands to municipal public administration behave itself for dialogues and for providing the necessary information about the public policy elaboration and implementation.

Taking the SOB as an example, this article shows existence of real possibility of communication and coproduction between civil society and government. The SOB incidence on some changes in the plan and actions of municipal policy for urban mobility in Belém shows the potentiality of the SO as a positive e coproductive space. Although there is limited participation of voluntary people in the SOB job, this does not preclude its capacity to influence on the urban mobility policy and plan. Nevertheless, it is necessary more engagement of civil society in the SOB aims for monitoring the problems in the policy implementation and plan actions.

Since the SO is a new organizational pattern, it still facing many difficulties and challenges at internal level and in its relation with some social actors, particularly some public managers, private sector and other civil society organizations.

It can be concluded that Social Observatory constitutes a new space for positive relationships between civil society and government contributing to improvements of local public policies. It presents itself as a different management model that aims to involve people participation with knowledge and interest in public policy elaboration, implementation and actions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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