

ANÁLISE DE POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS NO BRASIL: UM PANORAMA DAS PERSPECTIVAS RACIONALISTAS E ARGUMENTATIVAS¹

Leonardo Secchi
Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina (UDESC)
leonardo.secchi@udesc.br

RESUMO

O objetivo deste ensaio é apresentar um panorama do campo teórico e da prática de análise de políticas públicas no Brasil. O artigo discute as perspectivas racionalista (positivista) e argumentativa (pós-positivista) de análise prescritiva para política pública. Ao longo do texto é retratado o desenvolvimento e uso prático da análise de política pública desde os anos 1930 até os dias atuais, nos âmbitos federal, estadual e municipal, nos poderes executivo e legislativo, e em think tanks, com exemplos de sua utilização em vários setores/áreas de política pública. A institucionalização do campo também é debatida no que toca o estabelecimento de associações acadêmicas, seus congressos, revistas científicas e educação de pós-graduação em análise de política pública. As conclusões do ensaio indicam que: a) o campo acadêmico é carente de institucionalização no Brasil e o próprio termo “análise de política pública” (policy analysis) é majoritariamente utilizado no sentido de pesquisa em política pública voltada à construção teórica; b) a análise racionalista de política pública é principalmente usada em alguns “bolsões de modernidade” no nível federal de governo; e c) o Brasil tem uma ampla e rica experimentação de ferramentas de análise de política pública de estilo argumentativo/participativo em todos os níveis do poder executivo. Por fim, algumas indicações para o avanço do campo teórico-metodológico de análise de política pública são apontadas.

Palavras-chave: análise de políticas públicas; análise racionalista; análise argumentativa; Brasil; análise prescritiva.

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POLICY ANALYSIS IN BRAZIL: AN OVERVIEW OF RATIONALIST AND ARGUMENTATIVE APPROACHES

ABSTRACT

The objective of this essay is to present an overview of policy analysis as practice and field of knowledge in Brazil. The paper compares the rationalist (positivist) and argumentative (postpositivist) approaches for prescriptive policy analysis. The paper portrays the development and practical use of policy analysis at federal, state and local levels of government, in the executive and legislative powers, at think tanks, and across different policy areas. The institutionalization of the field is also discussed in terms of the establishment of scholarly associations and conferences, scientific journals, and graduate education in policy analysis in Brazil. The paper claims that a) the academic field of policy analysis lacks consolidation in Brazil, and the very term “policy analysis” (análise de políticas públicas) is mostly used to describe theoretically-oriented policy research; b) rationalist policy analysis is mainly used in some “pockets of modernity” at the federal level of government; c) Brazil has a rich and wide-ranging experimentation in argumentative policy analysis through participatory mechanisms in all levels of government. The essay concludes with some directions to build policy analysis capacity in Brazil, in theory and practice.

Keywords: policy analysis; rationalist policy analysis; argumentative policy analysis; Brazil, prescriptive analysis.

1 INTRODUCTION

Policy analysis is conducted to attain two distinct goals: to build theory (descriptive analysis), and to provide recommendations to policy decision-making (prescriptive analysis). For the sake of delimitation, this essay focuses on policy analysis in the first sense, as multidisciplinary social science, normative and oriented to build solutions to real-world problems (Lasswell 1951, Howlett, Ramesh, Perl 2013)².

In this sense, policy analysis has developed with different timings, pace and scope around the globe. This paper aims to portray the status of policy analysis in Brazil, looking at the supply of training, theoretical and methodological literature, the institutionalization of its epistemic community, and at the demand for policy analysis by governmental and non-governmental actors.

² This article adopts the differentiation between policy analysis and policy research (Weimer and Vining 2011, Enserink, Koppenjan and Mayer 2012). We follow the understanding of policy analysis as a prescriptive activity guided to inform decision-making on real public issues, whereas policy research is a descriptive or explicative activity focused on theory building. Thus, the development of policy research in Brazil is just tangentially described, stressing its relationship with policy analysis.

This paper discusses the use of both positivist and post-positivist approaches to policy analysis. The positivist approach, also known as rationalist policy analysis (Weimer and Vining 2011) or the root method (Lindblom 1959), is the traditional methodology derived from economics that uses tools of cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness analysis, simulations, planning, statistics and other mostly quantitative methods to compare the potential outcomes of alternatives in order to make policy recommendations. The post-positivist approaches of policy analysis encompass participatory policy analysis (Durning 1993), critical policy analysis (Dryzek 2008), narrative policy analysis (Roe 1994), and interpretive policy analysis (Torgerson 1986, Yanow 1999). All these methods rely on the social construction of policy arguments, collective deliberation, and politically grounded policy recommendations.

2 THE BASES FOR CAPACITY BUILDING OF POLICY ANALYSIS IN BRAZIL

The building of policy analysis capacity in Brazil is a post-1930 phenomenon. Before President Getúlio Vargas seized power in 1930, Brazil was a competitive oligarchy, in which political and economic interests ruled policymaking.

Two landmarks for the capacity building of policy analysis in Brazil were the 1934 Constitution, that instituted merit based selection at the federal level, and the 1938 creation of DASP (*Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público*), which eventually became the Ministry of Planning (Vaitsman, Ribeiro and Andrade 2013). Although it is difficult to call these practices “policy analysis” according to current international literature, it was during the Vargas presidency that the foundations for technical expertise in policy-making were established, a process still taking place today to halt patronage and political interference on public matters.

The capacity building of policy analysis in Brazil has occurred on the supply side by the establishment of universities and the creation of a few think tanks, and on the demand side by the use of policy analysis by the federal, state and municipal governments.

The establishment of multidisciplinary teaching and research universities in Brazil happened during the 20th Century, with the creation of the University of Manaus (1909), Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (1920), Federal University of Minas Gerais (1927), University of São Paulo (1934) and others. These universities were mostly located in major Brazilian cities, giving training in economics, law, agriculture, medicine, and engineering to supply technical expertise to public and private organizations.

The proliferation of higher education in Brazil took on a larger scale from the 1940s until the 1970s, when the federal and state governments created several public universities. Several

community colleges and church-affiliated universities (Catholic, Methodist, and Lutheran) were also created by civil society in the same period. The most recent and relevant increase in the number of universities has been taking place since 2003, when a federal program (REUNI) enacted the expansion of public universities and the creation of new ones.

According to the Ministry of Education, Brazil currently has 2,500 universities (Brazil, 2013), and they offer an array of undergraduate and graduate courses on policy related areas like political sciences, public administration, economics, sociology, law, international relations, and urban planning. Universities are the main employers for the 200,000 Ph.D. holders in Brazil (CGEE 2012), and account for the lion's share of the 1.16% of GDP invested in research (Senado 2012).

Much less numerous is the number of think tanks in Brazil: 81 (McGann 2014). As policy knowledge producers and mobilizers, think tanks followed state building and the establishment of universities. In 1944, Fundação Getúlio Vargas (FGV) was established as a policy research institute and university by senior federal public officials. In the 1950s there followed the creation of DIEESE, a union related think tank; IBRI, an international relations think tank; and ISEB, a government related think tank focused on economic development. After the military coup of 1964, the left-wing ISEB became extinct, and IPEA was established to support the economic development policy of the federal government. Other important think tanks were created in the following decades, such as the CEBRAP, a research institute founded in 1969 by anti-regime professors affiliated to the University of São Paulo, and CBES, founded in 1976 by the public health movement that helped to establish the Unified Health System (SUS) as a national public health policy. Most recently, two legacy think tanks were also created: Instituto Fernando Henrique Cardoso (iFHC), to keep the library and advance the democratic ideas of former President Cardoso, and Instituto Lula, to advance social policy and Brazil-Africa relations driven by former President Lula.

Brazilian think tanks are still unknown by the larger public. They are few in number and less structured in comparison with universities. Moreover, they mainly focus on fostering public debate through books, papers, seminars rather than on delivering policy recommendation to governmental officials (Teixeira 2013, Secchi and Ito 2014).

On the demand side, there were two waves of policy analysis for public decision-making in Brazil:

- 1964 onward: when the military regime took control of the federal government and pushed for technically grounded policy recommendation delivered by experts working for the government in the design of development projects;

- 1988 onward: when the current Brazilian Constitution was enacted, restoring democracy at all levels of government, and mandating the creation of Policy Councils, Policy Conferences and other types of participatory and deliberative mechanisms to engage civil society in recommending public policies to public officials in several policy areas.

The first wave was much closer to what today is named “rationalist policy analysis,” or even though the term has never been used to depict its application. In that period, policy analysis was translated by terms as “economic evaluation of programs,” “cost-benefit analysis,” and “budget planning”, that are still used by some agencies in the executive power at the federal government, and then imitated by state governments.

The second wave disseminated the experimentation of participatory mechanisms for public decision-making, what is called by the international literature as “argumentative policy analysis.” This term has also never been used in Brazil, and keywords such as “participation” and “deliberation” are mostly used to denominate this approach of policy analysis.

As waves, both rationalist and argumentative policy analysis are still rippling down from the federal government to state and municipal levels, and sideways, from the core executive power to other executive agencies, and the legislative power.

3 THE ACADEMICS OF POLICY ANALYSIS IN BRAZIL

The development of theoretically driven policy studies in Brazil got underway just after the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, especially in areas like political sciences, sociology, urban planning, education, and public administration. Brazilian production of policy research is considered fragmented, with little theoretical accumulation, and is focused on area studies (Melo 1999, Souza 2003).

The consolidation of a Brazilian literature on public policy is a recent phenomenon started in the years 2000s. The books *Políticas Públicas no Brasil* (Hochman, Arrectche and Marques 2007), *Implementação de Políticas Públicas: teoria e prática* (Faria 2012), and “*A política pública como campo interdisciplinar*” (Faria and Marques 2013) are compilations of area studies using public policy theory, preceded by introductory articles overviewing the field and the agenda of policy research in Brazil. The first textbooks on public policy theory were published in 2010 (Secchi 2010), and the only international textbook translated into Brazilian

Portuguese is “*Política Pública*,” a translation of the English version of “*Studying Public Policy*” by Howlett, Ramesh and Perl (2013).

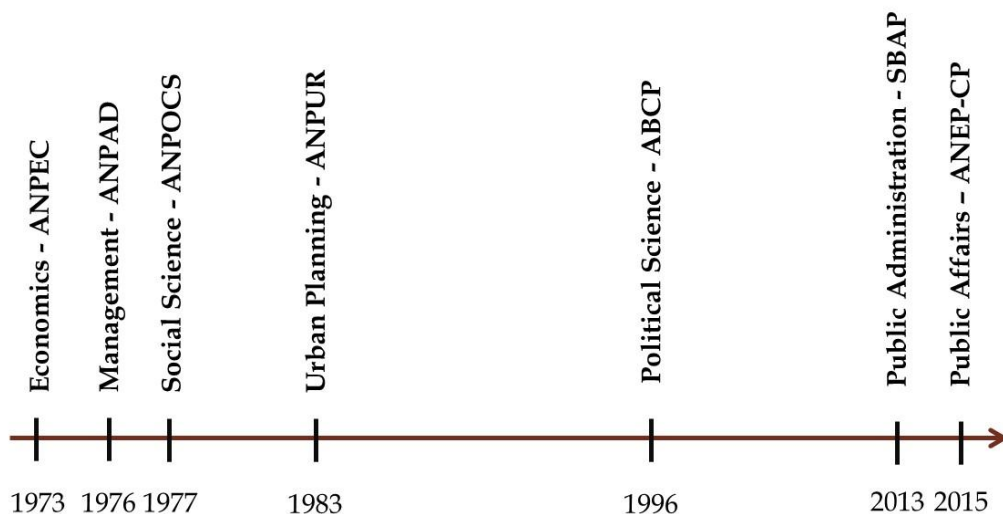
There are no published books in Brazil on methods for policy analysis, using either argumentative or rationalist approaches. A book entitled “*Análise de Políticas Públicas*,” published in 2012 by Garcia and Xavier is a compilation of policy research papers on social area studies like women’s protection policy, drugs and domestic violence, and mental health policies. There are still no international textbooks on policy analysis translated into Brazilian Portuguese.

Recently, there has been a surge of books published using the catchword “*política pública*,” focused on case studies in “health public policy,” “public policy and local development,” “education policy,” and “environmental public policy.” However, their contents are mostly a mix of area studies with varied degrees of adherence to the established literature of the field.

There are no national scholarly associations on policy analysis, such as the Association for Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM), nor on public policy, such as the International Public Policy Association (IPPA). In Brazil, the public policy and policy analysis epistemic community is still divided into disciplinary/area fields of social sciences, political sciences, administration, urban planning, and others. The academic associations in these “policy related” areas were formed only in the 1970s and onward.

The following figure shows the timeline of inauguration of scholarly associations in Brazil:

Figure 1: Landmarks of social sciences scholarly associations in Brazil



Each academic association sets up panels on public policy and policy research. ANPOCS (social sciences), for example, organizes annual conferences, with one session on public policy research. Even though created in 1986, ABCP (political science) started to organize regular bi-annual conferences only in 1996, and organizes one session on public policy theory and one session on “participation,” closer to what is considered argumentative policy analysis. ANPAD (administration) annually organizes public policy sessions, one focused on area studies and another on policy analysis (actually meaning policy research) (Fadul et. al. 2014). ANPUR (urban planning) organizes one session on “planning,” but no specific session on policy analysis. Surprisingly, ANPEC (economics) has no specific session on methods for policy analysis. SBAP (public administration) and ANEP-CP (public affairs) were recently created, and have not yet organized national conferences.

These associations, some universities and think tanks are also the basis for the publication of scholarly journals. IPEA, the governmental think tank linked to the presidency, publishes *Planejamento e Políticas Públicas* (Planning and Public Policy) and *Pesquisa e Planejamento Econômico* (Research and Economic Planning); two journals publishing articles closer to what is internationally considered “rationalist policy analysis.” *Revista de Políticas Públicas* (Public Policy Review) is published by the Federal University of Maranhão, and focuses mainly on social policy. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais* (Brazilian Review of Social Sciences) is edited by ANPOCS, and publishes articles on public policy, along with articles on anthropology, political sciences and political theory. *Revista de Saúde Pública* (University of São Paulo), and *Cadernos de Saúde Pública* (Fiocruz) usually include policy research papers on public health, and some of them make comprehensive policy recommendations based on policy analysis. *Revista de Administração Pública* (FGV-RJ), *Cadernos de Gestão Pública e Cidadania* (FGV-SP), *Administração Pública e Gestão Social* (UFV) and *Revista do Serviço Público*, published by the National School of Public Administration (ENAP), also publish scholarly policy research articles, with public governance and public administration issues. The only publication by the ABCP is the “*Brazilian Political Science Review*”, published in English to strengthen international dialogue, ranging from topics of traditional political sciences, political theory, international relations, and public policy.

As for university training, courses on policy analysis are generally integrated in graduate training in the areas of Public Policy, Political Sciences, Public Administration, and Economics. There is a growing number of undergraduate and graduate courses centrally focused on public policy (Farah 2014).

The term “policy analysis” (*análise de políticas públicas*) receives a variety of meanings, and it is mostly used to describe theoretically oriented policy research, instead of methodology for intervention oriented policy analysis. To support this assertion we examined the syllabuses of some Policy Analysis courses in the Ph.D. and Master’s degree programs in Political Sciences, Public Policy and Administration of well-established Brazilian universities. Although not resulting in an exhaustive survey, this brief search gives a notion of what policy analysis means in some of the top Brazilian universities. Table 1 shows the results:

Table 1: Presence and meaning of “policy analysis” in graduate education in Brazil

University	Program	Course	Content
USP – FFLCH	Ph.D. in Political Sciences	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
USP – EACH	Master in Public Policy Management	Public Policy Analysis I	Constitutional law
		Public Policy Analysis II	Public budgeting
FGV – SP	Ph.D. in Public Administration and Government	Introduction to Quantitative methods for Policy Analysis	Statistics
		Qualitative methods for State and Public Policy Analysis	Qualitative methods for social science research
FGV – RJ	Master in Public Administration	Analysis of organizations and public policy	Methods for organizational analysis, policy analysis, and policy evaluation
UFMG	Ph.D. in Political Sciences	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UFPE	Ph.D. in Political Sciences	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UFABC	Master in Public Policy Management	Public Policy Analysis	Public policy theory
IESP-UERJ	Ph.D. in Public Policy and Human Development	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UFRJ	Ph.D. in Public Policy and Development	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UFPR	PhD. in Public Policy	Public Policy Analysis	Public policy theory and politics
UFMA	Ph.D. in Public Policy	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UFSC	Ph.D. in Political Sociology	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UDESC	Master in Administration	Rationalist policy analysis	Rationalist methods for policy analysis
UNICAMP	Ph.D. in Political Sciences	No specific course of Policy Analysis	
UFV	Master in Administration	No specific course of Policy Analysis	

UFRGS	Master in Public Policy	Public policy and models for analysis	Public policy theory
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Out of the 16 programs analyzed, nine of them offer no regular course of Policy Analysis. Only two (FGV-RJ and UDESC) embrace the meaning of Policy Analysis as a methodological discipline to analyze, design, and recommend policy solutions to real-world public problems. Generally, graduate training in “policy analysis” focuses on public policy theory and on other related themes such constitutional law, budgeting, and methods for social research. This flexible meaning of the term diverts from the prescriptive policy oriented meaning of “policy analysis” already consolidated in the international literature and teaching.

4 THE PRACTICE OF POLICY ANALYSIS IN BRAZIL

In order to describe the practice and use of policy analysis in Brazil it is important to define conceptual boundaries. For this overview we have ruled out the production of generic advice (ie. expert interviews on TV, generic reports or scientific papers issuing vague directions), and also the production or mobilization of data, statistics, and qualitative background on public issues that can be used to inform decision-making. For the sake of delimitation, policy analysis is here understood as intellectual and relational activity to design a specific policy recommendation to tackle an identified public problem. This activity is undertaken either through rationalist methods or through an argumentative process.

That said, current production and use of policy analysis varies according to the policy domain and level of government. To organize the following description, rationalist policy analysis and argumentative policy analysis are presented separately.

4.1 Rationalist policy analysis in Brazil

Rationalist policy analysis is a methodology for recommending policy alternatives to public issues using techniques such as cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness, risk analysis, and other quantitative methods. The tools for research include document research, field research (interviews, observation), deductive use of generic policies, construction of goals/alternatives matrices, and projection of results based on evidence. Rationalist policy analysis is a straightforward methodology with the following steps: problem analysis, solution analysis, selection of goals and criteria, projection of results for each alternative, and recommendation of the most suitable alternative, using a policy report (Bardach 2009, Weimer and Vining 2011).

At the federal level of government, some Ministries and agencies produce rationalist policy analysis to inform decision-makers. A highly trained bureaucracy at the Ministry of Finances produces regular recommendations on fiscal and monetary policies. The Central Bank has an advisory committee on monetary policy (*Comitê de Política Monetária*) that periodically issues the recommendation for the official interest rates and guidelines for banking regulation.

The most developed human resource capacity for rationalist policy analysis belongs to the Ministry of Planning, and to the *Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada* (IPEA), the government think tank attached to the President's office. In 1989, the federal government created an elite career of bureaucratic experts on public policies management (EPPGG) and budget planning (APO). Formally affiliated to the Ministry of Planning, these experts have functional appointment in other Ministries and government agencies to engage in planning and analysis. Since its foundation in 1964, the IPEA has been a home for economic experts and today is a multidisciplinary team of 435 policy analysts, who use quantitative and qualitative methods of social research to evaluate current policies, and deliver policy recommendations to the President and the cabinet (Secchi and Ito 2014). IPEA has already issued more than 2,000 discussion papers (*Textos para Discussão*) on different policy matters, and publishes two important policy journals in Brazil: *Planejamento e Política Pública* (PPP) and *Pesquisa e Planejamento Econômico* (PPE).

Other hotspots of rationalist policy analysis at the federal level of government are the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Strategic Affairs and the Ministry of Industry and Development. The Ministry of Education also has the *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira* (INEP) that among other duties issues policy recommendations to the Ministry of Education and to secretaries of education at state and municipal levels. These Ministries and other agencies like the BNDES (development bank), and Petrobras (public energy company) are considered “pockets of modernity” (Draibe 2014) in the federal government. The Brazilian government has a large number of agencies and a record number of 39 ministries, many of them without a permanent bureaucracy. Their human resources are composed mainly by political appointees, with little experience or training in prescriptive policy analysis.

Some isolated initiatives have been created to bring the mindset of rationalist policy analysis to inform decision-making. One of them was the enactment of the federal resolution Conama 001/86 that requires a report on environmental impacts (*Relatório de Impacto Ambiental - RIA*) as a condition for licensing major infrastructure projects by the Environment Protection Agency (IBAMA). The responsible organization for the development project has to prove to IBAMA that the environmental costs do not outweigh the potential benefits of the project. More recently, a

federal decree (6.062/2007) has recommended that federal regulatory agencies deliver Regulatory Impact Analyses before issuing further regulations (Alves and Peci 2011). Borrowing methodology from the OECD, this initiative aims at reducing red tape and improving the quality of regulation by inducing the regulatory agencies on health plans, electricity, telecommunications, water, and other public regulated services provided by the private sector, to demonstrate costs and benefits of prospective policies before they are enacted and implemented.

At the state level, the governments of 18 states have created research institutes to support decision-making, imitating the role that the governmental think tank IPEA fulfills at the federal level. Since the overthrow of the military regime in 1985, however, several of these research institutes were captured by political appointees, and their roles changed toward the production of basic research and statistics, shifting away from technical influence through policy recommendations to the executive (Filgueiras and Rocha 2013). As compensation, 11 states have created the merit-based post of “public policy analysts,” imitating the EPPGG and APO careers of the federal level of government. The remaining 16 Brazilian states have no careers of policy analysts in their bureaucratic structure (Bozza 2011).

At the municipal level, the picture is even more diversified. Brazil has 5,570 municipalities with huge diversification in size and development, but formally equal federal entities. For instance, the city of São Paulo is the largest with a population of 11 million and has the third largest public budget in Brazil (just after the federal budget, and the São Paulo state budget). The policy analysis capacity in cities like São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro are exceptions, as they have built rationalist policy analysis in areas like urban planning, public finance, and health policy, through policy institutes, permanent policy analysts and university professor consultants (Farah 2013). With this exception made for the larger cities, the remaining 5,550 or so Brazilian municipalities mostly rely on political interest, mimetism of policies enacted elsewhere, and civic participation to design, decide, and evaluate public policy. In fact, civic participation is the leading source of policy analysis in Brazilian municipalities.

The general picture for the Legislative power is that it has less policy analysis capacity if compared to the Executive. At the municipal level of government, and in the majority of the 26 Brazilian states, the Legislative power has no technical body to deliver policy analysis to support lawmakers’ decisions. It is a common practice among representatives to appoint legislative advisors through patronage, relying on personal acquaintance and political trust, rather than on merit.

The situation is less dramatic at the federal level, as both the Camera of Deputies and the Senate have policy advisory bodies, mostly working for legislative commissions, and party leaderships. These legislative advisors bring hard data, write legislative proposals, and organize public hearings with stakeholders (Santos 2013). One of the reasons for the imbalance between Executive and Legislative power in policy analysis capacity is that the Executive is the main producer of legislation. Out of 4,486 proposed pieces of legislation in the 1989-2014 period, 1,324 (29.5%) were initiated by the Legislative power, while the Executive power proposed 2,802 legislative projects (62.5%) (IPEA 2015).

Outside government, the think tank community is small and still unknown. There are only 81 think tanks in Brazil (McGann 2014). The term “think tank” is still ignored by the public. Think tanks are mostly dependent on resources gathered through projects. Links with government are weak and intermittent (Teixeira 2013). Philanthropy and the donation culture to the production of policy relevant knowledge is practically non-existent. Except IPEA, the governmental think tank, and FGV, a private institution that engages in consultancy and policy analysis, think tanks in Brazil operate as space for policy debate, seminars, and publication of books, rather than for delivering specific policy recommendations to government authorities (Teixeira 2013).

4.2 Argumentative policy analysis in Brazil

Deliberative or argumentative policy analysis is a set of methods for recommending policy alternatives to tackle public problems relying on the social construction of arguments through civic participation (Fischer 2007, Fischer and Gottweis 2012). Even though there is still no single straightforward method, argumentative policy analysis borrows qualitative methods from social sciences, ethnography and linguistics to build and convey conflicting narratives, argument maps, and use deliberation among political actors. Instead of evidence and expert knowledge, argumentative policy analysis uses collective wisdom to make policy recommendations.

Since the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, Brazil has built a competence in participatory mechanisms at all levels of government (Pogrebinschi 2010, Gomes and Secchi 2015). Although not referred to as “argumentative policy analysis,” Brazil has an original set of official tools to engage citizens in recommending policy solutions to public officials. The most important tools are the Policy Councils, the National Public Policy Conferences (NPPC) and participatory budgeting.

Policy Councils are advisory and deliberative bodies linked to the executive power of municipal, state and federal levels of government (Carvalho and Teixeira 2000). They involve public officials and civil society representatives in deliberative processes, evaluating and recommending changes in implemented public policies, assessing emerging problems, and designing new policy proposals (Tatagiba 2005). Each Policy Council is related to a Ministry, at the federal level, or Secretary, at the state or the municipal levels, in areas like health, education, social assistance, economic development, etc. In general, their policy recommendations have no legal force. Nonetheless, cabinet members (Minister, Secretary) tend to follow the Policy Councils' recommendations in order to avoid political backlash in their policy communities.

The NPPC is a nation-wide participatory mechanism to deliver thematic policy recommendations to the Executive and the Legislative power. More than 100 NPPC have been organized involving millions of citizens in the last 15 years, in policy areas such as health, education, and public safety, or about policy issues like racial equality, aquaculture, and LGBT rights (Avritzer 2012). An *ad hoc* organizing committee at the federal level establishes the participatory procedures and deadlines, and initiates the meetings in the municipalities. The deliberative meetings take place at the municipal level, and scale up to the state level in the second round, and finally reach the national level in the third round. At every stage a "discussion report" is extracted from the meetings, delegates are chosen as representatives to the next tier, bringing along the policy recommendations. The final report is the main output of the National Conference, and it is delivered as policy recommendation to the Ministry, to the legislative committees in the Senate and in the Chamber and Deputies, and made available to all participants and the public.

Participatory budgeting is arguably the best-known Brazilian experiment of popular participation in public decision-making. Even though not as widespread and multi-thematic as the Policy Councils and the NPPC, participatory budgeting was implemented to inform budget expenditures in more than 250 Brazilian cities since 1989 (Cortes and Gugliano 2010, Wampler 2009). In Brazil, the Municipal Budget proposal is a prerogative of the executive power, and participatory budgeting was implemented by municipalities governed by the Workers' Party as a tool to gain a better understanding of what are the people's priorities for municipal investments. A Participatory Budgeting committee organizes the popular meetings in neighborhoods and city districts, in order to let the people choose what the city government should do to benefit them, whether building a childcare center, paving the district's roads or any other budget investment. After several meetings and a citywide conference, their recommendations are listed as expenditure project priorities and delivered to the executive

power. With these recommendations, the City government designs the annual budget proposal and sends it to the legislature for revision, approval, or rejection.

There are other initiatives to involve citizens in the policy-making process. For urban planning and zoning, governments of Brazilian cities with a population of 20,000 or more are obliged to approach and hold meetings with citizens and stakeholders in order to elaborate or change the main urban policy instrument: the Urban Master Plan (Gomes and Secchi 2015). Public hearings are also held by legislative and executive powers at all levels of government.

An explanation for the proliferation of participatory mechanisms is the trauma that Brazil still carries from its military regime. From 1964 to 1985 the military seized power, insulating government decision-making from political interference by adopting a centralized and “technical” style. Political parties, NGOs, church related philanthropies, and social movements were excluded from decision-making. After re-democratization in 1985, and especially following the 1988 Constitution, a strong democratic reaction took place, creating and strengthening mechanisms for social control of the policy-making process. Since then, Brazil has been an open laboratory of participatory and deliberative mechanisms for policy analysis. Still today, these mechanisms are being implemented, compared, and adjusted in a continuous trial and error learning process.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this essay was to present an overview of policy analysis as practice and field of knowledge in Brazil, by discussing the adoption and academic development of both rationalist (positivist) and argumentative (postpositivist) approaches for policy analysis.

The general conclusion is that policy analysis lacks institutionalization in Brazil. There are no scholarly associations, no books published on the subject, and no scientific journals entirely dedicated to publishing prescriptive policy analysis. Graduate and postgraduate training in policy analysis in universities use the term “policy analysis” to mean public policy theory, or, as seen above, to teach themes such as constitutional law, budgeting, and methods for descriptive policy research.

In Brazil, the term “policy analysis” generally connotes theoretically driven policy research, in contrast to the prescriptive, policy-oriented policy analysis. Efforts to clarify the concept made by Vaitsman, Ribeiro and Andrade (2013) and Draibe (2014), distinguishing “*análise para*

política pública” (analysis for policy) and “*análise de política pública*” (analysis of policy) are important to raise awareness of the prescriptive role of policy analysis in Brazil.

Rationalist policy analysis is mainly used in some “pockets of modernity” at the federal level of government, especially at technically robust agencies like the Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finances and IPEA, the federal government main think tank. The more distant from federal government, the more distant from the executive power, and the less technical the policy area, the less one will find the use of cost-benefit analysis, cost-effectiveness, risk analysis, and other quantitative methods of policy analysis.

Brazil has a rich, original and wide-ranging experimentation of argumentative policy analysis through participatory mechanisms in all levels of government. Since 1988, Brazil has structured Policy Councils and National Public Policy Conferences to connect public officials to civil society, and to build mutually agreed policy recommendations to decision-makers. Participatory budgeting is a well-known mechanism used in some municipalities to collect peoples’ priorities for city investments. Nonetheless the practical use of participatory-deliberative settings, the term “argumentative policy analysis” is rarely used to describe these participatory and deliberative experiments.

In order to advance expertise in policy analysis in Brazil further steps are necessary. The first is the acknowledgment of “policy analysis” as a theoretical, methodological and practical field of recommendation of policy solutions to real public problems. As policy research advances and the Brazilian public policy community specializes, the prescriptive role of policy analysis needs recognition in order to enhance cross-fertilization with the international policy analysis community.

Also needed is the integration among epistemic and practical communities in different policy areas in Brazil. Political scientists, economists, public administrators, sociologists, urbanists, and scholars and practitioners in the fields of education, health and environment need to build academic bridges for establishing a common theoretical and methodological community concerned with the improvement of policy design and public policy decision-making. The creation of specialized scientific journals, scholarly associations and the organization of policy analysis conferences are necessary to approximate and facilitate mutual learning among scholars and practitioners in various policy areas.

Brazil needs to strengthen its policy analysis capacity at all levels of government. There is room to expand the use of rationalist policy analysis at state and municipal levels of

government, as there is outside government. Policy analysis training at universities and in schools of government needs to advance to encompass research methods for designing policy alternatives, projecting results and making policy recommendations for “real world” public decision-making.

Finally, the Brazilian benchmark in participatory practices offers a great opportunity to expand conversation and cross-fertilization with the argumentative policy analysis literature. If on the one hand Brazil needs to import techniques of rationalist policy analysis, on the other hand Brazil has already accumulated knowledge in deliberative mechanisms that just need to connect with the well-established international literature on argumentative policy analysis.

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