

The Diffuse Limit between Militant and Manager: A Study on Institutional Activism in the Government of Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil¹

O Limite Difuso entre Militante e Gestor: Um Estudo sobre o Ativismo Institucional no Governo do Rio Grande do Norte, Brasil

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Abstract: The central objective of the article is to understand the process of entry of militants into the state bureaucratic field and how they acted within the state government of Rio Grande do Norte in 2019. We used the most recent discussion on the relationship between social movements and the state based on the concept of institutional activism (Banaszak, 2010; Cayres, 2015; Abers & Von Bulow, 2011). Through ten interviews with militants who have taken up positions in the Secretariat of State for Women, Youth, Racial Equality and Human Rights (SEMJIDH)⁵, we sought to trace their paths to understand the forms of recruitment undertaken by the Government. In addition, we seek to make an analysis of the speeches about the entry process, the challenges posed and the tensions between being a militant and being a manager. As other surveys have already pointed out, the petitioner governments choose people who have transit in various types of militancy (church, unions, student movement, among others). In our case, these institutional activists understand the role of militant, trying to separate it from the role of manager, but they believe that they contribute significantly with the entry of specific themes in the public agenda.

Keywords: Institutional Activism; Social Movements; Public Policies; State.

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⁵ The acronym refers to the name of the Secretariat in Portuguese, as well as the other acronyms during the text.

Resumo: O artigo tem como objetivo central compreender o processo de entrada de militantes no campo burocrático estatal e como atuaram dentro do governo do estado do Rio Grande do Norte, em 2019. Utilizamos a discussão mais recente sobre a relação entre movimentos sociais e Estado a partir do conceito de ativismo institucional (Banaszak, 2010; Cayres, 2015; Abers & Von Bulow, 2011). Através de dez entrevistas com militantes que passaram a ocupar cargos na Secretaria de Estado das Mulheres, Juventude, Igualdade Racial e Direitos Humanos (SEMJIDH), buscamos traçar suas trajetórias para entender as formas de recrutamento empreendidas pelo Governo. Além disso, procuramos fazer uma análise dos discursos sobre o processo de entrada, os desafios colocados e as tensões entre ser militante e ser gestor. Assim como outras pesquisas já apontaram, os governos petistas escolhem pessoas que têm trânsito em diversos tipos de militância (igreja, sindicatos, movimento estudantil, entre outros). No nosso caso, em especial, esses ativistas institucionais compreendem o papel de militante, tentando separá-lo do papel de gestor, mas acreditam que contribuem significativamente com a entrada de temáticas específicas na agenda pública.

Palavras-chave: Ativismo Institucional; Movimentos Sociais; Políticas Públicas; Estado.

1. Introdução

In Brazil, there has been a strong presence of militants within the bureaucratic apparatus of the state in recent years, regarded by literature as institutional activists (Cayres, 2015). The expansion of the entry of these actors into the institutional arena was due, especially, to the arrival of the Workers' Party (PT) in power in 2003, reaffirming the need for social participation. This context imposed a series of challenges to public management, both because of the way these activists guided public policies and because the bureaucracy limited their action. These factors were reasons for academic studies and re-evaluations in the literature of social movements, which began to seek to understand the new dynamics imposed from this social-state relationship.

In the state of Rio Grande do Norte, in the last elections for the state plea, the Workers' Party obtained for the first time the house of the executive, electing professor and former senator Fátima Bezerra to the state government. Previously, in the administration of Robinson Faria of the PSD (2015-2018), there was an attempt to insert militants within the government, through the participation of the PT and the PCdoB in the process of building the political campaign and participation during the beginning of the administration. Some activists linked to the PT held positions in the state secretariats, including at the top level, such as the State Secretariat for Youth and the State Secretariat for Women's Rights.

However, due to political differences at the time, highlighted by the support of Robinson's party for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, the PT breaks with the Robinson government and the militants who were part of the government leave their portfolios. With the PT leading the way in 2018 and winning the elections, there is a return of a picture, and at this moment, expressively greater, of militancy into government. Keeping a good part of the technical and effective positions, Governor Fátima Bezerra opted for the resignation of commissioned positions, giving room for part of the militancy to compose her management.

The dismemberment of the Secretariat of Justice and Citizenship of Rio Grande do Norte (SEJUC) to form the new Secretariat of Women, Youth, Racial Equality and Human Rights (SEMJIDH), in 2019, is a reflection of this strong performance of social movements in the campaign of the current governor Fátima Bezerra. This close relationship, also understood at the national level, gave the various movements bargaining power in the choice of positions in the state secretariats, but also in the creation of new secretariats that had as a priority the attention to groups that did not have significant visibility in other governments, such as: women, blacks, quilombolas, LGBTs, family farmers, etc. In this sense, on May 10, 2019, Fátima sanctions the law that creates two new secretariats: SEMJIDH and the Secretariat of Family Agriculture (SEDRAF), fruit of pressures from urban and rural social movements.

Analyzing the insertion of militants from social movements in RN - the institutional activists - and their trajectories allows us to understand how these movements are organizing themselves, what are their flags and strategies in the construction of actions through an institutional bias in the context of a state traditionally characterized by conservative governments. Thus, this study aims to understand how these militants are chosen to compose the secretariat and what strategies these movements/activists that are part of the bureaucracy have been using.

In this sense, the article aims to explore the patterns of relationship between social movements and the state, mediated by political parties, thinking of understanding the process of entry of militants into the state bureaucratic field and how they acted within the state government of Rio Grande do Norte in 2019. In order to explore the possibilities of this configuration, the main thread of the analysis comprises exploring the trajectory and profile of militants engaged in social movements, who were part of the current

administration of Governor Fátima Bezerra in the state of Rio Grande do Norte, through the Secretariat of Women, Youth, Racial Equality and Human Rights (SEMJIDH).

To answer the objective, we started from the contemporary reflection on the relations between social movements and the State, especially from the concept of institutional activism developed by Banaszak (2010) and more recently by other researchers (Cayres, 2015; Abers & Von Bulow, 2011; Zanoli, 2019), who sought to understand the dynamics of action of militants within the bureaucratic structure of the State.

The article is part of research that has been developed by one of the authors and of which the others are part and are related to the discussions about interactions between social movements and the State in petition governments from the narratives. Thus, the analysis is qualitative and we use as a data collection technique in-depth interviews in order to provide us with a satisfactory overview of the narratives of the militants who entered the government administration and their political trajectories before entering the government. The interviews were recorded and transcribed in a literal way for a better analysis process.

The insertion of the authors in the field took place through the previous knowledge that some militants from the UFRN student movement entered the government, more specifically the Undersecretary of Youth. From the first interviews with these new managers, we requested indications from the other components of the Secretariat, using the sampling technique known as "snowball". The interviews took place during the months of April, May, and June 2019. Ten people who were holding positions in government were interviewed: two representatives of the Undersecretariat of Women; two of the Undersecretariat of Youth; two of the Coordinator of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality; two of the Undersecretariat for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights; one of the Coordination of Sexual Diversity and Gender, and one of the Coordinator of People with Disabilities. The fact that we only hold one interview in the last two undersecretariats is due to the arrangement of the chairs in the respective portfolios, where in both there is only one coordination representation. For analysis, the interviews are listed from 01 to 10.

It is also worth mentioning that, rather than analyzing how social movements place their respective themes on the government agenda, the idea is to understand the insertion of the militants themselves in the state sphere, linked to political parties, and the

creation of multiple dialogues and actions for and with the social movements that support politics itself.

The text is structured in four essential parts, the first being this introduction. The second part discusses the relationship of social movements with the State, seeking to understand the exercises of militancy within public management understood by literature as institutional activism. In the third part, we reconstruct the process of creating SEMJIDH in the choice of its actors up to the political context in which it is inserted, presenting the trajectories of the militants and the ways of recruiting them to, in the fourth part, analyze the performance of these activists within the management in the Secretariat. And at the end, present the considerations of how the insertion of these institutional activists impacts on the public management of SEMJIDH in Rio Grande do Norte.

2. Institutional activism as an analytical category and the effects on management

The discussion on institutional activism has been present in the research agenda of social movements in Brazil very recently. But specifically, this literature has been worked on by some researchers (Abers & Von Büllow, 2011; Cayres, 2015, Carlos, 2017, among others) particularly seeking to understand the actions of militants who enter the state structure, either as commissioned or tendered positions. What the studies seek to show, in general, is how these actors deal with the state bureaucracy, changing the way public policies are designed and implemented, but also changing their perceptions of the functioning of the state itself. These discussions have been explored with more emphasis since 2003, as a way of understanding the dynamics of relations between the state and social movements, from the entry of the Workers' Party into power.

However, this discussion has not ceased to encompass reflections made at the international level. In the United States, some scholars of social movements sought to understand the insertion of militants within the government. Banaszak (2010) explored the relationship of feminist activists within the US federal government, showing that these militants, by entering the state bureaucracy, made it possible for new feminist organizations to be created and managed to develop and implement policies in several specific areas including education, women's health and foreign policies.

According to Backwith (2011, p.1064) Banaszak's book (2010) explores the processes that have taken these activists into the state, that is, "how they operate as actors in the social movement within and outside the bureaucracy, the variety of tactics they

manage to employ and the impact that these women have had (...) to promote feminist public policies". Pettinicchio (2012), also analyzing the American case, shares the understanding that leaders of social movements that are inserted in the dynamics "inside" of politics can be understood from the concept of institutional activism. Basically, for him, institutional activists are "individuals who affect change (from changes in organizational norms to political reform) from within organizations and institutions" (Pettinicchio, 2012, p. 501).

Thus, activists can be characterized by four specificities: 1) these civil servants do not only act in a reactive way, on the contrary, they are proactive and work for causes that overlap with the agendas of social movements; 2) these bureaucrats have access to institutional resources and have some influence in the process of formulating and/or implementing public policies; 3) they not only believe in the causes they promote but are also willing to work for such flags, even when the mobilization for them is in decline; 4) these professionals try to advocate for policies favorable to the causes they promote, even without having the external incentive of the government (Pettinicchio, 2012).

Therefore, the author understands that institutional activists are those militants who create their actions "within" the state, having access to resources and power that they would not have if they were not in this bureaucratic structure and maintain close relations with the movements of which they are sympathizers or a part. Furthermore, they act based on their experiences and trajectories prior to entering the state apparatus, often becoming an entrepreneur in politics.

Adjusting our analytical lens to these issues makes it possible to understand that these movements contribute to the formation of cadres in the state bureaucracy when ascending to power. The concept of institutional activism makes it possible to understand the militants of social movements within the state with links even to state actors. Therefore, this concept allows dialogue with the relational aspects between social and political actors. According to Santoro and McGuire (1997, p.504), the concept of institutional activism can be defined as "participants in the social movement who occupy formal status in government and the social movement through conventional bureaucratic channels".

Rebecca Abers (2015) advances in the reflection proposing to understand the activist as someone who has a direct relationship with militancy. For her, "I understand him as a type of action that aims to promote political or social projects perceived by the

actor as public or collective" (Abers, 2015, p. 148). We emphasize that this does not mean that the change of institutional position - from member of a movement to manager in the state bureaucracy - does not bring with it dilemmas and contradictions insofar as there are various reasons why it is not possible to transform all the demands of social movements into public policies.

In other words, as we will see, when representatives of the movements become managers, they face the limitations and constraints of various kinds, typical of state institutions, and the dilemma of what is feasible to propose. Contributing to the discussion of institutional activism, Rech and Silva (2016) broadens the studies on the political practices of social movements in Brazil from research that seeks to understand the relations of social movements with their various interests and demands and the state.

The authors pay attention to two relevant points: the challenge of thinking about the empirical processes marked by specificities in the movement-state relationship, and how the militant's impact through institutional activism on the decision-making processes within the state. Another issue that seems relevant to us when activists are within the state structure is to understand the effects of this activism on public policies.

According to Carlos, Dowbor and Albuquerque (2017), although studies on the political effects of the movements have grown considerably, the methodological challenges remain, and we know little about the unintended effects of these actions. The authors present four models that seek to explain the effects of social movements on politics and public policies.

The first model, focusing on the structure of resource mobilization, "analyses the intentional effects of protests and disruptive actions and the role of organizational and action variables as causes of the success of movements (Gamson, 1990, 1995; apud Carlos, Dowbor & Albuquerque, 2017, p. 366). The second model introduces the external political environment, emphasizing the role of public opinion and the structure of political opportunities. For the latter, the following are highlighted: i) the system of alliances and opponents, and ii) the institutions of the State. The third model combines the mobilization structure of the movement and its interaction with the political context. The model advances when it emphasizes that the result of the movement only becomes concrete when public opinion and/or political allies combine with the mobilizations of the movement (Gamson, 1990, 1995; apud Carlos, Dowbor & Albuquerque, 2017, p. 367). Finally, the latter model emphasizes the interaction of the mobilization structure

combined with the political context, "given that the movement's maximum organizational and mobilizing capacity will not generate effects if it is not combined with favorable political opportunities".

These models can be used in a hybrid way to understand different processes of institutional activism in different contexts. We borrow the idea of Abers, Silva and Tatagiba (2018) in understanding that the political context is not something objective and external to the actions of social movements, but that "social movements are inserted in relationships of interdependence with the various actors and institutions with which they interact routinely, constituting what we call relational structures" (p.16). Therefore, in order to understand the challenges posed in public management by the insertion of social movement activists in the state government of Rio Grande do Norte in a more systematic way in 2019, we sought to understand the political dynamics of the configuration of the State Secretariat for Women, Youth, Human Rights and Racial Equality (SEMJIDH).

3. The political context of the creation of SEMJIDH and the recruitment of activists

The process of creating the State Secretariat for Women, Youth, Human Rights and Racial Equality took place in an atypical political context in Rio Grande do Norte. With the election of Professor Fátima Bezerra (PT) as governor in 2018, the expectation of social movements and leftist parties was an advance of progressive initiatives and guidelines at the state level. A militant of the Workers' Party, Fátima Bezerra, who was already a state congresswoman (1995-2002), federal congresswoman (2003-2015) and senator (2015-2018), has an expressive history of union action, especially through unions and teachers' associations.

The only female governor elected in Brazil in 2018 brings, from the political and social context in which the country passes amid conservative progress, challenges for the state Executive Branch. In this scenario, in the first half of 2019, the government proposed to change its organizational fabric through an administrative reform proposed by the current administration in the Legislative Assembly on February 11, 2019. On May 10, state deputies approved the administrative reform. As a result, the former Secretariat of Justice and Citizenship (SEJUC) ceased to exist and gave way to two new portfolios: SEAP (Secretariat of Penitentiary Administration) and SEMJIDH (State Secretariat of Women, Youth, Racial Equality and Human Rights).

Before the approval in the Assembly, the state management initiated the articulations for the creation of SEMJIDH. Still without a name and acronym defined at the time, the government began negotiations with actors, social movements and political parties for the construction of what would be a secretariat that would agglutinate guidelines of Human Rights, specifically guidelines of feminist social movements, youth and racial equality.

Thus, previously treated by the government, officials and militants as "the future secretariat", the SEMJIDH officialized in the first half of 2019, began to act more incisively within the state government. On March 31 of the same year, Governor Fátima Bezerra performed an act in the former Student's House, a building used as a residence by students from the interior of the state, changing the old name of the building to "Emanuel Bezerra", a student murdered and tortured in 1973 by the military regime. The change of name of the building added to the designation of the place as the future physical space of the new secretariat, represented an important symbolism for the militancy that makes up SEMJIDH:

(...) we do not have a physical place of work yet, it is already been approved, the secretariat will work in the old Student House in Cidade Alta, there the secretariat will be set up, the construction will start with the resource we are trying to get there to be a physical space (I10).

According to I10, the space may also house collegiate bodies, committees, and social programs whose line of action is related to the demands of the Secretariat. In addition, the titular coordination of the Sexual Diversity and Gender states that "we intend to occupy the House with cultural mobilizations, memorial, art and other manifestations that are focused on minorities. However, the building destined for the Secretariat needs to undergo reforms and until the completion of this research, the SEMJIDH did not have its own physical location, operating in spaces provided by other secretariats and government agencies.

Faced with the decree of the financial calamity existing in the state of Rio Grande do Norte in the 2019 government, the new secretariat was approved on the condition of not creating new posts, but rather using the existing chairs in other secretariats, relocating them to SEMJIDH. Thus, the SEMJIDH arises from the reallocation of positions already existing in two different secretariats - the State Secretariat of Sports and Leisure and the State Secretariat of Justice and Citizenship.

To structure SEMJIDH, three Sub-Secretariats were created: Subsecretariat of Women; Subsecretariat of Youth, and Subsecretariat of Human Rights. Within the latter, there are four coordinators: 1) Sexual Diversity and Gender; 2) People with Disabilities; 3) Policy Coordination for the Promotion of Racial Equality (COEPPIR), and 4) Promotion and Defense of Human Rights.

For the composition of the new secretariat, the government's transition team was made up of people from the governor's party and allied parties, along with social movements and groups supporting the electoral campaign. After dialogue meetings and negotiations, the government, parties, and social movements then began recruiting the cadres that would make up SEMJIDH. According to the interviewees, the invitations made by the transition team prioritized their trajectories as militants of the portfolios together with the proximity of the fundamental agendas of the secretariat, in addition to the strong performance of these actors in political parties.

As Cayres (2105), in his doctoral thesis on institutional activism at the General Secretariat of the Republic in the Dilma Government, we identified that there is a certain pattern of recruitment of activists that included "qualified people, recognized, with good transit and dialogue with social movements" (Cayres, 2015, p. 117). In our case in particular, all those interviewed who took on the coordination and sub-coordination have relationships with social movements (feminist, trade union, student, black, disabled or LGBT people) and most are linked to political parties. Thus, the form of recruitment has to do with this trajectory, as shown in table 01.

Table 01: Trajectories of the interviewees, party links and recruitment

Interview	Undersecretariat/ function	Trajectory in the movements	Party affiliation	Recruitment
I01	Youth/ Subcoordinator of Social Articulation of SEJUV	Student movement	PCdoB	Name placed by the PCdoB (Governor's coalition party). Former president of the state UJS.
I02	Women / Undersecretary	Church group, student movement, union (CUT), teacher's association and feminist movement	PT	Former Fatima employee and former PT women's secretary
I03	Youth / Undersecretary	Student/Youth party movement	PT	Name placed by the Party. He was a municipal, state, and national party leader
I04	Women / Subsecretary	Student movement; union movement; feminist movement	PCdoB	Invitation made by the transition team, given its trajectory in feminist militancy
I05	Human Rights / Coordination of People with Disabilities	Movement of people with disabilities	Avante	Invitation made by the governor herself for recognition for being at the head of the disability movement in RN
I06	Human Rights / Policy Coordinator for the Promotion of Racial Equality (COEPPIR)	Black movement; black women's movement	No party	The indication was built by the black movement near Fatima at the moment of transition
I07	Human Rights / Policy Coordination for the Promotion of Racial Equality (COEPPIR)	LGBT movement; black party movement	PT	Indication of the party itself, since it was LGBT coordination
I08	Human Rights / Coordinator of Promotion and Defense of Human Rights	Church Movement; Student Movement; Solidarity Economy Movement	PT	Indication of the party itself because it was part of the Solidarity Economy, Women and Street Population front
I09	Follows the Human Rights agenda at SEMJIDH through the Civil Office	Student movement; LGBT movement	PT	Indication of the party itself as it was part of the student, youth, and LGBT front
E10	Human Rights / Coordination Sexual Diversity and Gender	Popular Youth Lift, student movement (DCE); LGBT movement, Popular Brazil Front	Consulta Popular	Indicated by its work in the student movement and the LGBT cause

Source: Own elaboration from the interviews (2019).

In table 01, nine of the ten people interviewed belonged to political parties, five of them from the governor's party (PT), three from allied leftist parties and one from a right-wing party, which has had conservative positions at the national level. The latter is the one that escapes the rule of the others. With this, we can see in the case of I05 that its trajectory, leadership and organicity with the social movement of people with disabilities made possible an invitation made by the governor herself to enter the government of the PT. The interviewee affirms that besides having been a candidate for a state congressman on another plate, he did not expect that the new elected government would embrace the movement's demands.

I had the experience of trying to be a state representative but only for party politics (...) I took all the proposals from the thirty movements, what I really wanted was to publicize the agendas. We had a meeting, we collected 68 signatures from entities, and I had the idea of delivering the document to Fatima. I was going to hand it over, I never imagined anything of it (I05).

I06, the only activist not linked to any party, states that its proximity to the governor began during the campaign period, as a militant of the black movement.

The process of articulation with the current governor's management took place before she was elected. It took place when she was a candidate. It was the moment when we, the black movement, and black women, presented the demands for the policy of promoting racial equality. (...) So this process of dialogue precedes the election. At the time she was considered elected to the state government, we had the understanding that it was necessary especially in the administration of Governor Fátima Bezerra that the coordination of the promotion of racial equality be occupied by someone who came from the black movement (I06).

The rapprochement of the black movement of the state with the Fátima Bezerra campaign made possible the entry of organic militancy to occupy the Coordination for the Promotion of Racial Equality, created in 2007. In this sense, the interviewee sees the election of Fatima as a window of opportunity for the coordination - a space that comes from the struggle of the movement - and thus, she makes herself available to the new management and continues the dialogue initiated previously, now as an elected government.

Then our process of articulation took place from that, of pleading this space [of coordination]. We put forward this proposal to occupy the

space as management, but that had this cut-off, from someone who came from the black movement (I06).

It is also important to highlight the relationship between the "Trajectory in the movements" column and the "Undersecretariat/function" column, where it is noted that most of the trajectory of the interviewees is linked to the position of coordination or folder in which they are inserted in the current secretariat. For example, the activists who work in the sub-secretariat for youth acts in the student movement, those who work in the sub-secretariat for women have trajectories linked to the feminist movement, and those for human rights are related to the agenda and so respectively.

The PT, as a party of Governor Fátima, appointed half of the cadres to compose the Secretariat, as presented above. Thus, even from different groups within the Party, those interviewed have strong relationships with PT leaders in the state, such as I07 and I08 who were advisors to state deputies and I03 who held party leadership positions at the municipal and state levels. The influence of the governor's choice for some positions is demonstrated in the speech of one of I02:

I have been an advisor to Fatima since I was a state representative. I started in the first mandate of Fatima, (...) she was elected in 92, from 96 I started working with Fatima. We worked in the union, then I went to work on her mandate, I advised her, (...) I also worked on the women's issue (I02).

However, since it is a Secretariat that encompasses a series of demands from social movements, it could not be different that the choices of names had to do with the trajectories of these people as militants of the theme. Thus, two names were nominated to be part of the governing summit of SEMJIDH. These two people also come from similar paths to the others since they are part of a traditional left-wing party in the country. One of them (I04) says that she was part of the PT's militancy when she was young, but later, when she started working, she began to participate in the union movement, a branch linked to the PCdoB, which brought her closer to the party. In her speeches:

In the Post Office trade union movement, there was a strong chain called CSC, it was a classist trade union chain. The currents in the union movement are not partisan, but they have a hegemony of a certain group. So, the hegemony of the CSC was communist and so they invested a lot in me, I had many opportunities (...) I was director of women of the state PCdoB for two terms, right? So, these relationships are being built (I04).

In the field on the left, I04 says that its nomination has been recognized for its performance, and in the period of transition to the Government of Fatima. Also, according to the representative, "during the transition we received the invitation from the secretary, she was invited by Fatima to be secretary and she invited Larissa and me to compose the secretary" (I04).

It is noted that such recruitments are not always consensual, especially in coalition governments. The I10, coordinator of sexual diversity and gender affirms: "I was the only name agreed by the government, every LGBT name someone had something against, debated, disputed, when my name arrived nobody, from the coalition, had anything against". Her recruitment process, in this sense, occurred in a different way from the others. Although her name appears in the dialogues of the transition team, E10 states that the government did not dialogue with the LGBT movement, as it did with other movements:

I did not wait because it is very common to have a pre-articulation for some position, this did not happen to me, I did not have a link with the mandate of Fatima to wait for this position, nor did I know that this position would exist (...) I was not indicated by the movement, it recognizes me, I was always following the guidelines of the Levante, but I was a choice of government and not of movement. The government sat with the movement of people with disabilities so that the movement would indicate who the person is, they did not sit with the LGBT movement, I am not indicated by the LGBT movement of RN (...) My name came from my background and from being a person of political trust (I10).

Corroborating with literature, we realize that upon entering government, the now institutional activists are not impersonal beings, but carry very strongly for the management the values, practices and conducts of their movements or parties. I10 also states that the decision to enter the government was not made individually, but before accepting the proposal, it took the agenda to his party and dialogue with them:

I took the debate to my party, I did not accept it at first, I took the debate to the party, I had to leave the newspaper, I had to give it up, I took it to the party, it was a collective decision, it was not just a job, I am not going to take a job, I am going to build a political government project, I left it very clear for management, I am not coming here to take a position to receive a sum of money, I am coming here to build a project (E10).

In this context, SEMJIDH appears as a possibility for the insertion of social demands by actors of the respective causes. Before as militants of social movements external to the State and now as public managers occupying chairs of under-secretariats and coordination that demand political and technical capacity to achieve relevant agendas. Even if incipiently, the next item seeks to highlight the challenges imposed on these activists when they need to deal with the state bureaucracy.

4. The activists in the management of the Secretariat: potentialities and limits in the management of public policies

As we have already highlighted, the literature on institutional activism seeks to understand the conjunction between institutional office and militant contestation "the term institutional addresses the positioning of agents within certain organizational structures" (Rech & Silva, 2016, p. 381). For two of the ten people interviewed, the militant is the one who inserted in the state bureaucracy manages to guide the movement's demands and modify the way public policies are elaborated and implemented. The I01 and I08 emphasize this aspect: "having managers committed to social reality, has the ability to build a very nice and very concrete work in this sense of civil society, social movement, together with management" (I01). For these activists "when you manage to unite social movement and executive, you manage to manage good public policies (...) now when you break away it gets very complicated, they become dead public policies, they don't work" (I08).

As Banaszack (2010) points out, instead of analyzing the militant-state relationship from the concept of co-optation, we can observe this relationship through networks of collaboration and interaction between social movements, their militants, and the State. For the author, activists acquire sufficient aptitude to articulate with actors who are external to the state, and this includes the social movements themselves, thus taking advantage of the political opportunities created within the logic of the state. Corroborating the author's idea, I01 states:

I think that from this process of being inserted now within the context of management, we need to change the vision. It has been challenging, but at the same time we have to be there, taking advantage of this space to transform the space (...) I see militancy as a just thing, allied to public management, which has how to work in harmony, of course, without leaving the interests of militancy, which often correspond to the

interests of the people, more broadly than the interests of those who are there in management (I01).

It is fundamental to consider the dynamics that take place within the State as results of institutional activism (Cayres, 2015) by militants now within management. In addition, understand how these activists try to combine their actions based on the militancy of social movements, with the procedures of the bureaucracy.

It is a paradox every day (...) we are government and today we have to deal with what we were days ago [social movement], I think it is a paradox of the implementation of politics even (...) although we struggle a lot to make it effective, but budget, bureaucracy, everything else, this is challenging, but at the same time it is a disheartening (...) it is seeing things that we defended so much, [and that today] we feel bumped into this difficulty of budget and everything else (I09).

It is a great challenge, I have never held a position as an institution in that sense. I am learning every day, I am learning there at the limits, what I can do what I cannot, but I am learning every day what public management is. The positive point is that I have always had in building the agendas of the LGBT movement. So, when they ask: "what does the LGBT want for education, for health?" I can say. "What do you want for public safety?" I can tell (I10).

As a movement we believe that everything can, and it is fast, and it is all in the time that we want and believe. And within the management structure we begin to understand that things are not quite like that. That the processes of articulation work in a network and that it does not depend only on coordination so that things can happen. Even when we enter management we are able to see better what the limit of action that a coordination has, different from when we are in militancy, which believes that a coordination is able to solve everything and is not (I06).

Some social movements, however, show a certain discomfort in the entry of militants into the state bureaucracy. Whether for reasons of representativeness, or of how these activists come to be seen by militants who are outside the government, many decide to leave their movements when they enter the state. Perhaps such a decision has as its central objective to "legitimize" some actions of the activists as a government, as well as to abstain the social movement from responsibility for actions taken by the government itself.

I am not even in the movement anymore because whoever is of government in my conception has to leave the space of the movement, as much as it is a left-wing space we cannot confuse being movement or government, when I speak outside I no longer speak as movement, I speak as government (I10).

The decision not to "be more movement" is not the same, however, for political parties. On the contrary, there is a concern on the part of the party activists, to build this new form of action together with the collectivity of the party of which they are part. Although I10 chooses to distance itself from the movement, this does not necessarily mean a departure from the agendas advocated, the distancing takes place in this case, mainly through the conception of the existence of a dichotomy between the place of speech as movement and the place of speech as government.

The impact that the entry of militants into SEMJIDH on public policies is still not substantially noticeable, given that this study began in the first months of management. However, it is possible to see that even in a short time, the design of the policy is already taking shape in the Secretariat.

(...) because you do not have to invent the wheel, I know what the demands are, we just have to create instruments so that the demand actually becomes public policy, stops being demand and becomes reality. I think that in the long run I will be able to have a better reflection of what it is to be a manager, what it is to manage, what it is to govern, in the long run we will be able to have a better perception of this process (I10).

As the main task of beginning management, the new state managers started to create collaborative networks with the northeastern managers to get to know the experiences of the states that have operations in the areas of SEMJIDH. The so-called Northeast Consortium, a group that brings together the progressive governments of the region, aims to establish partnerships between the states. This network is not restricted only to governors, secretariats and other managers also meet to discuss public policies at the regional level.

This northeast articulation has been happening a lot, not only of the governors, it has been happening of the coordination managers. This talk of strengthening the northeast has happened, of strengthening public policies (I09).

There is the example that is northeastern consortium, but there has already been, for example, the meeting of the coordinators of racial policy of the northeast, several coordinators had already met, Pernambuco, Recife, Paraíba, Ceará, where it has a position of racial equality, they met to discuss how the northeast is in national politics. The idea is that this also happens [with the Coordination of Sexual Diversity and Gender] (I10).

In September 2019, the Undersecretary of Youth also held, in Natal, the Meeting of State Youth Managers of the Northeast with the purpose of discussing projects and regional partnerships in the field of public policies for youth. This network of cooperation between managers opens a series of possibilities to think about actions at state level based on already existing experiences of formulation, implementation, and management of public policies of other states.

There is a forum for the Youth Managers of the Northeast, so far it has been built, and who is there representing our Undersecretariat is our Undersecretary. He has already participated in some meetings outside the state, to articulate this issue at regional and national levels as well (I01).

The Coordination of Sexual Diversity and Gender through the exchange of experiences with northeastern managers and in partnership with SESAP (State Secretariat of Public Health) began the process of implementing the first State Outpatient Clinic for Transgender and Transvestite Health in Rio Grande do Norte, the fourth state in the Northeast to institute an outpatient clinic for the trans population.

I am working with SESAP to build a trans ambulatory, what have we done? A team of SESAP technicians went to meet *in loco*, went to the place to see the trans ambulatory in Paraíba, went to see there step by step how Paraíba made the trans ambulatory work there, this is an example of the LGBT policy articulation (I10).

After the creation of SEMJIDH, identity agendas no longer permeate only the discourses of social movements and begin to emerge within the state bureaucracy. Public policies at the state level focused on women, racial equality, youth, and human rights begin to take shape in Rio Grande do Norte through the partnerships signed by the Secretariat. The demands of social movements meet with the institutional activism present more strongly now in the state government and begin to produce practical results. In this way, combining the demands of the movements with institutional action, managers begin to modify the design of government public policies.

It did not have a specific folder [LGBT], it was a very palliative thing, it was a very fictitious thing. An example of this was historically the space of the women's policy coordinator that was a folder that always existed, but it did not make politics, it was to say that it had, to say that we have no more (I10).

Thus, institutional activists working in the State Secretariat for Women, Youth, Racial Equality and Human Rights have been trying to modify the forms of action within public management, with different strategies and articulations. In addition to being new managers, the new secretariat imposes challenges that have physical and budgetary limitations that only with the passage of time will it be possible to analyze the results of the initiatives taken, and what impacts this management will have to consolidate the influence of these managers in the state public policies implemented.

However, we note that although respondents have the perception that their activism may positively affect public policy, this will need to be better investigated in future surveys.

5. Final considerations

This article aimed to analyze the process of entry of militants into the state bureaucratic field and how they acted within the state government through SEMJIDH. Our analytical lens, which understands the trajectories of these institutional activists, has enabled us to understand the ways in which these actors were summoned to their respective portfolios. This approach was relevant because it made it easier to visualize how these activists light up to compose the Secretariat. Furthermore, it allows us to better understand the way in which the management of the PT distributed the chairs, according to different criteria. This picture reflects a partisan balance showing that the diversity of activists can collaborate to conceive more pluralized public actions.

We can highlight that the choice of militants to occupy the posts of the new Secretariat was made primarily because of their proximity to the coordinators and undersecretaries (youth, women, people with disabilities, sexual diversity and racial equality) through their history of militancy in political parties and other movements. The activists' actions in political parties, although significant, did not represent a determining factor for the choice.

Analysis of the interviews also showed that these institutional activists create their relations "within" the state, with access to mobilization of resources and power that they would not have if they were not within the bureaucratic structure, as the area literature initially pointed out. Most of these activists maintain relations with the movements from which they come and rectify the idea of still "being militant". The new managers reaffirm their trajectories and even though they intend to meet the demands of

the movements, they understand the need to focus on public policy no longer exclusively as militants, but also as managers.

As for the effects of this activism on public policies, although the analyses made do not allow for a substantial understanding due to the short time of management that this research has comprised, we can highlight that cooperation between the secretariats at state and regional levels is being fundamental for overcoming resource limitations and the short time of experience in the new management of SEMJIDH, bearing in mind that for most of these institutional activists this is the first action within public management.

In this sense, future researches can analyze the performance of these activists over a longer period that makes it possible to discuss the impact of this performance on internal management and public policies. Furthermore, we suggest carrying out comparative analyses between SEMJIDH's actions with other Government Secretariats that also had the significant insertion of social movement activists in its structure.

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