

Interrelationships between policies and action knowledge regarding food and nutrition issues

Educational and research institutions, and representatives from governments and Brazilian civil society organizations have been sharing the construction of “Knowledge” and the formulation and implementation of “Policies” and “Action” strategies for food and nutrition issues. Brazil has instituted national policies through socially participative processes, such as the Food and Nutrition and Food and Nutrition Security Policies. The now formal legislation expresses the possible pacts in a given historical context and reflects, only partially, the richness of the political process in course.

The organizations that experience this trajectory have many profiles, institutional vocations and political action strategies. We stand before a world of knowledge, motivated by distinct contexts, purposes and interests. When they interact, the frontiers that separate the “academic,” “popular,” or “technical” knowledge become flexible and we cannot think that, in the flow of this movement, this knowledge will be seized linearly by governments to formulate policies and mobilize solid actions. However, we can consider that the production processes of different types of knowledge may have distinct logic and purposes made legitimate by peers, as seen in science. Nevertheless, there are many ways for actors involved in the political game to seize this knowledge, and the number of interactions among different types of knowledge in a specific context abounds. In this dynamic, possibilities of dialog, conflicts and also convergences among values, purposes and interests live together. These are permanently being reconstructed as they are affected by the standpoints of other actors and their reflections. This interaction among universities, governments and social organizations has been possible in Brazil mainly through political networks consisting of different institutions that act on food and nutrition issues and on institutional spaces, such as public policy councils.

In these landscapes, academic knowledge and its logic are one of many possibilities. They interact with other types of knowledge and interests and affect political decisions in ways that are not always evident or expected. The legitimacy of these connections is always disputed, as well as the values and criteria that define what is legitimate or unacceptable, desirable or undesirable in relation to certain ends. Therefore, interrelations between knowledge, politics and action are constructed around these disputes, established over the possible ends. What do we want in terms of food and nutrition for Brazil? Do our policies and governments express these purposes? Who are “we,” that is, what set of actors share common values, principles and purposes in this field? How many “we” or set of actors with different answers for this same question exist today in Brazil? Which projects are being disputed in this field and in the relationships among knowledge, politics and action in this field? How are foods and diet being treated by the prevalent social and institutional practices? As merchandise? As rights? Whose rights? These are only some questions that need to be faced for us to better understand the solid connections that are being established among knowledge, politics and action in the field of

food and nutrition in Brazil. In order to contribute to this reflection, the Journal of Nutrition is not only an important vehicle for the disclosure of scientific information, but has also assumed a strategic role in the construction process of World Nutrition Rio 2012: knowledge policy action (WNRio2012).

This congress, which will be held in *Rio de Janeiro*, Brazil, from April 27 to 30, 2012, intends to strengthen the connections among knowledge, politics and action by promoting a global dialog among diverse experiences in the field of food, nutrition and public health. The publication of the ongoing debate during the activities that prepare for the congress may favor the involvement of a greater number of academic institutions, activists, public managers, professionals and individuals who have interest in this process. Additionally, it shows that the Journal of nutrition is compromised with a politically engaged perspective of building scientific knowledge.

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