

## **Policy analysis and institutionalism: some elements for analysis of decentralization and regionalization in the Brazilian health policy**

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### **Abstract**

The justification of the study is the relevance of the relationship between the fields of policy analysis and institutionalism, especially in their historical and sociological aspects, for the analysis of health policy in Brazil. The appreciation of the institutional variables to explain policy outcomes has been highlighted in the literature since the 1970s, marking a convergence between these fields. Assuming that the results of policies are contingent and dependent on the strategies outlined by the actors present in institutions and organizations of the government and society, has as research problem the need of construction of an analytical matrix that allows the study of health policy. The concept of institution is central to institutionalism and its interaction with the field of policy analysis, given that institutions have a key role in shaping the actions of the actors and support policies. The work aims to propose an analytical matrix for the study of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the formulation and implementation of health policy in Brazil. For elaboration of the matrix was used as method the literature review of theoretical and methodological references of the policy analysis and historical and sociological institutionalism. Thinking about the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the construction and conduct of health policy in Brazil, the objective matrix is to serve for understanding of the role of actors and institutions in shaping policy and its conduct (determinants and constraints of convergence and/or divergence from guidelines); images built on the decentralization and regionalization in health, in different historical moments by actors and institutions; historical process of decentralization and regionalization in health (elements of rupture and continuity of process).

**Key-words:** Institutionalism; Policy analysis; Brazilian health policy.

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## **1 Introduction**

This paper aims to contribute to the debate about the theoretical and methodological analysis of health policy. Part of a movement value of the institutional variables to explain the policies, highlighted in the literature since the 1970s, highlighting the convergence of two fields: public policy analysis and historical neo-institutionalism. It aims to develop an analytical matrix to support and structure the study of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the formulation and implementation of health policy in Brazil. This matrix is anchored in theoretical and methodological elements of the fields mentioned above, from aspects of the role of actors and institutions as well as their interests and historical path through the process of decentralization and regionalization in the Unified Health System (SUS).

The construction of the matrix is based on the assumption that public policy outcomes are contingent and dependent on the strategies outlined by the actors present in institutions and government organizations and society as well as the relationships woven between them. The concept of institution is central to neo-institutionalism and their interaction with the field of public policy analysis, given that institutions have a key role in shaping the actions of the actors and support policies. The rationale for conducting this study rests, therefore, the relevance of the relationship between these fields and their potential contributions to health policy analysis.

First, the article is an exploratory analysis of the issue of public policy analysis (policy analysis), presenting definitions, objectives and theoretical models recurring in the literature in question. Later, discusses some concepts and specifics of neo-institutionalism and their influence on public policy analysis. From this theoretical review, based on the historical framework of neo-institutionalism, we selected the elements that constituted the analytical matrix, object of this work.

## **2 Methodology**

### ***2.1 Objectives***

#### ***General Objective***

Develop an analytical matrix for support and structure the study of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the formulation and implementation of health policy in Brazil.

#### ***Specific Objectives***

1 To review a theoretical exploration on the field of public policy analysis;

- 2 Analyze interfaces and influences between the neo-institutionalism and analysis of public policies;
- 3 Identify elements of the theoretical and methodological fields public policy analysis and h neo-institutionalism to the development of analytical matrix;
- 4 Presents a matrix of analysis, discussing their contributions to the study of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the Brazilian health policy.

## ***2.2 Theoretical framework and methodological***

It is a paper inserted into the qualitative nature of paradigmatic referential Comprehensive Sociology. Its theoretical and methodological institutionalism in the social sciences, as analytical framework, the historical and sociological institutionalism. The technical reference consists of literature review.

The focus of research is directed towards the theoretical and methodological elements from the fields of public policy analysis and historical neo-institutionalism that can contribute to the analysis of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the SUS.

For the development of analytical matrix to support and structure the study of the interrelation between decentralization and regionalization in the formulation and implementation of SUS, some questions were constructed: What factors contributed to the convergence and/or divergence between decentralization and regionalization in the construction and deployment of Brazilian health system? What are the determinants of adoption of a decentralization model as we accomplished over the year 1990? What are the possible models of regionalization for SUS today, given the characteristics of the process of decentralization and federalism in Brazil?

It is expected that the matrix be developed to contribute to understanding the role of institutions, the links between them and the actors present their strategies, as well as historical, economic and social that guided the deployment and conduct of health policy over 1990s and today, conditioning the removal and/or convergence between the policies of decentralization and regionalization in the SUS.

The approach of neo-institutionalism associated with elements of historical methodology for analyzing public policy constitutes the framework for the analysis of the interrelation between decentralization and regionalization in the construction and conduct of the Brazilian health policy, since this study is based on the institutional aspects, historical, economic and social in that process.

## ***2.3 Methodological Strategies***

The construction of the matrix for the analytical study of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization of the Brazilian health policy used as a methodological

strategy, review and literature review on the fields of public policy analysis and historical neo-institutionalism. From the same, we identified the elements that formed such a matrix, discussing its contributions to the analysis of health policies.

### **3 Policy analysis**

#### ***3.1 Policy analysis: between concepts and objects***

In ontological terms, the area of knowledge known as policy analysis has a different origin in the United States and Europe<sup>2</sup>. In the United States, is born in the academic world from studies on the production of government, without concern for establishing relations with the theoretical underpinnings of the role of the state. In Europe, emerged as an offshoot of the work based on explanatory theories about the role of the state and one of its most important institutions - the government. The literature points to the United States as the birthplace of the first area due to the nature of their studies, focusing on direct government action in the mid-twentieth century (Parsons, 1997; Frey, 2000). In Brazil, the area of policy analysis stands out, mainly through sectoral studies, from the years 1980 and 1990.

Souza (2006) refers to Laswell, Simon, Lindblom and Easton as the great founding fathers of the area of policy analysis. Some of his major contributions, according to the author, were: the introduction of the term policy analysis by Laswell in 1936; the elaboration of the concept of bounded rationality of policy makers<sup>3</sup> in 1957 by Simon; Lindblom, in his studies of 1959 and 1979, questioned the emphasis on rationalism of Simon and Laswell, suggesting the inclusion of other variables (power relations and integration between the different stages of decision making); and Easton, in 1965, brought the concept of policy analysis as a system, in other words, a relationship between design, results and the environment<sup>4</sup>.

The literature presents several definitions for policies, the most classic attributed to Lowi (1972 apud Rao, 2004, p. 13), for which policy is "a rule defined by any governmental authority that expresses an intention to influence, alter, regulate the behavior of individual or collective sanctions through the use of positive or negative". The settings have varied emphases according to the fields that surround them, is sociology, political science or economics.

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2 According to Frey (2000), the United States, this line of research in political science began to be instituted early in the year 1950, under the label of science policy, whereas in Europe, concerns about certain policy fields only takes strength from the early 1970s, when with the rise of social planning and sectoral policies have been extended significantly.

3 According to Souza (2006), to Simon, the limitation is related to incomplete or imperfect information, time and self-interests. Rationality can be maximized by the creation of structures (set of rules and incentives) to model the behavior of actors toward the desired results.

4 According to Souza (2006), the propositions of Easton, is the appreciation of the demands and interests of different groups on public policy, ie, the inputs of public policy.

According to Frey (2000), the literature on policy analysis distinguishes three dimensions of politics. To illustrate these dimensions has been adopted, political science, the use of concepts: polity to name the political institutions, politics, to the political processes, and policy for the contents of the policy. The author also highlights the concepts of policy arena and policy cycle, which constitute models of analysis are discussed in the next section.

The policy analysis divides the opinion of scholars on the subject. Some critics even challenge the scientific analysis of the policy citing a lack of theorizing. However, Frey (2000) argues that this absence is explicable on the object of policy analysis, which is, namely the empirical and political practice.

In a recent study, Jones (2007, p. 69) presents a broad definition, in which policy is understood as the "field of knowledge that aims at the same time, the government put in action and/or analyze this action (the independent variable) and, where necessary, propose changes in direction or course of these actions (dependent variable)". Thus, the policy analysis must integrate four elements: the very public policy (policy), politics, political society (polity), and institutions that govern the decisions, drafting and implementation of public policies focusing on processes or results.

Thus, it can be said that the main objectives of policy analysis currently involves identifying the type of problem that public policy seeks to correct, the arrival of this issue to the political system and political society, the process covered in these two arenas, and institutions/rules that will shape the decision and implementation of policies (Souza, 2007).

### ***3.2 Model formulation in policy analysis***

Several models of the design and policy analysis have been built in order to understand the action of governments, as well as expand and consolidate the area<sup>5</sup>. Here are some of the main models are briefly presented, based on recent studies of Frey (2000), Souza (2006, 2007) and Capella (2007).

The "Policies Types" constitute one of the oldest analytical models has been proposed by Theodore Lowi in 1964 and 1972 studies. Coining the phrase "politics makes public policy", Lowi defined four types of public policies, which are: distributive, redistributive, regulatory, and constitutive (Frey, 2000; Souza, 2006). This typology is based on the content of policies, as well as the specifics that show the effects of the implementation process and the method of resolving conflicts. According to Frey (2000), to refer to the processes of conflict and consensus within the

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<sup>5</sup> According to Souza (2006), studies of Klingermann and Goodin (1998), Parsons (1997), Sabatier (1999) and Theodoulou and Cahn (1995) are representative of the discussion of analytical models in public policy.

different areas of policy, Lowi introduced the concept of policy arenas. Frey (2000) summarizes clearly the relationship between these types, as shown in the excerpt below.

*"Distributive policies are characterized by a low degree of conflict in political processes, since distributive policies that are only advantages seem to be distributed and not involve a cost. These policy arenas are characterized by consensus and friendly indifference. [...]*  
*Redistributive policies, in contrast, are oriented to the conflict. The goal is the diversion and conscious shift of financial resources, rights and other values between social classes and groups in society. The political process aimed at a redistribution tends to be biased and full of conflict. [...]*  
*Regulatory policies work with orders and prohibitions, decrees and ordinances. [...] Costs and benefits can be distributed equally balanced between groups and sectors of society, just as the policies may also attend and restricted interests. The processes of conflict, consensus and coalition may change depending on the specific configuration of policies.*  
*[...] Policies determine the constitutive rules of the game and with it the structure of political processes and conflicts, that is, the general conditions under which policies are being negotiated distributive, redistributive and regulatory" (Frey, 2000, p. 223-224).*

Another model commonly referred to in the literature is the "incremental", developed in 1979 by Lindblom, Wildavsky and Caiden and Wildavsky in 1980 in 1992. According to Souza (2006), this model rests on the premise that public policy does not start from scratch, but marginal, incremental decisions that ignore or substantive policy changes in government programs. The author argues that this view has lost some of its power with the profound reforms promoted by the fiscal adjustment, however, one must recognize the strength of the model, which maintains the structures and resources to policies that are no longer on the agenda of governments.

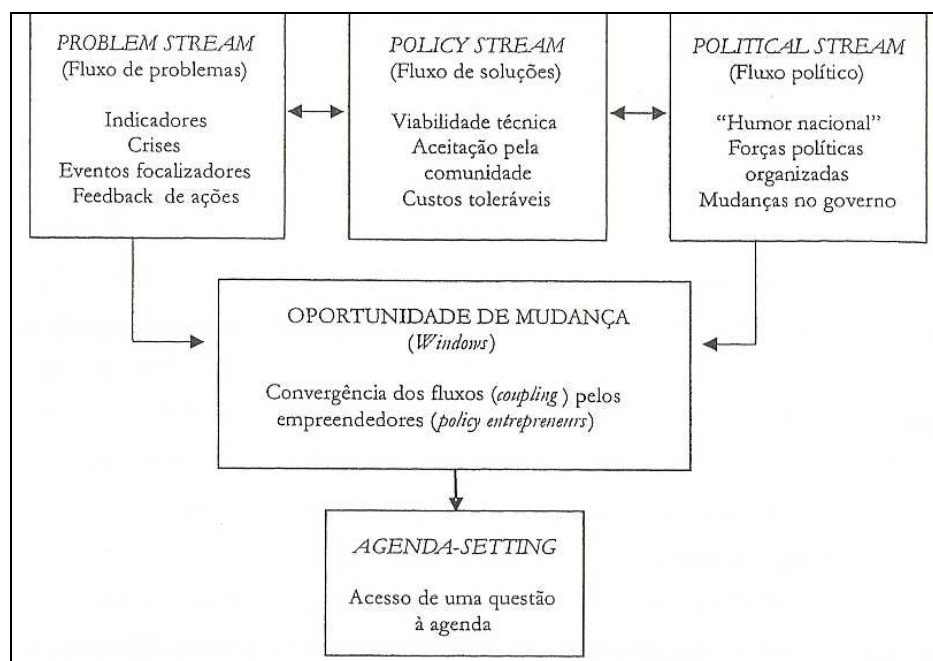
The model "Garbage Can" developed by Cohen, March and Olsen in 1972, is also noteworthy. According to Souza (2007), he argues that public policy choices are made as if the alternatives were in a trash can, or depend on the range of solutions available to policymakers during the decision making process. For the author, one of the most important applications of this model was made by John Kingdon in 1984. Kingdon models combined elements of "Garbage Can" and "policy cycle" leading to another type, called "Multiple Streams". These models will be addressed soon.

The "Policy Cycle" can be considered one of the most important models in policy analysis. The literature shows small differences in the constituent stages of the cycle, but in general the following phases are supported: agenda setting, identification of alternatives, evaluation and selection of options, implementation, and evaluation. This model understands politics as a dynamic process of learning (Souza, 2007), so that each phase is home to other models that seek to explore the issues relevant to each of these moments.

The process of formulating public policy involves the first three phases of the cycle. For the analysis of this process, particularly the formation of the government agenda, Capella (2007) highlights two main models, the "Multiple Streams" and "Punctuated Equilibrium" models. For the author, such approaches are complementary and are useful in the analysis in question, as shown below.

As seen above, the "Multiple Streams" model was developed by John Kingdon in 1984. His concern is in setting the agenda, namely the process by which some issues entering the agenda while ignoring others. Kingdon (1984) defines a main agenda (the government agenda)<sup>6</sup>, which are the issues in the government's attention at any given time, and a secondary calendar (decision-making agenda)<sup>7</sup>, which includes questions ready to become political in a timely manner (policy windows). The model is based on the dynamics of three independent decision-making flows that permeate the entire organization, whose meeting (coupling) in a timely manner (policy windows) promotes a change in schedule. Such flows are streams of problems (problems streams) flow of solutions or alternatives (policy stream) and flow policy (politics stream).

**Figure 1: Multiple Streams Model of Kingdon.**



Source: Capella, 2007.

6 In the words of Kingdon (1984): "The agenda, I conceive of it, is the list of subjects or problems to Which governmental Officials, and people outside of government Closely Associated with Those Officials, are paying some serious attention at Any Given Time".

7 In the words of Kingdon (1984): "We Should Also Distinguish Between the governmental agenda, the list of subjects That are getting attention, and the decision-schedule, the subjects list of That Are Within governmental agenda is up in active decision".

Each of these flows is influenced by a set of variables that determine them, as shown in Figure 1. Thus, the rise of a problem, a solution or even a policy depends on the relationship between these variables within each stream (because the flows are independent). However, even this process of ascent occurs in each of the flows, a question will only have access to the government agenda if there is convergence between the flows. This convergence (coupling) occurs in a window of opportunity (policy windows), influenced by the flow of issues and policy, as well as the actions of policy entrepreneurs. For Capella (2007), entrepreneurs are skilled negotiators, mindful of the opening of windows and able to tie flows.

According to Capella (2007), the most common criticisms of the Kingdon's model are related to fluid structure (or lack of structure), which for some, would make the prediction of changes in the agenda. However, the author warns that the fluidity of the model derives from the characteristics of "Garbage Can", proposing a different analysis of the determinism of closed systems. He says that there are variables that determine the internal dynamics of each stream, generating a certain pattern, not totally random.

Another consideration made to the model of "Multiple Streams" is the absence of institutional dimension. Several authors emphasize the importance of institutional conditions that support the previous one access point to the agenda. In this sense, Capella (2007) points out the model of "Punctuated Equilibrium" which in his opinion, has important propositions on the development agenda and the institutional dynamics, complementing the Kingdon model.

The "Punctuated Equilibrium" Model was written by Frank Baumgartner and Brian Jones in 1993, based on notions of biology and computing<sup>8</sup>. It seeks to explain the mechanisms that determine periods of change and policy stability, based on two axes: institutional structures and process of agenda setting (Capella, 2007). For this model, public policy is characterized by long periods of stability interrupted by periods of instability can generate changes in past policies<sup>9</sup>.

For the model of "Punctuated Equilibrium", it is crucial to build a image about a particular decision or policy (policy image), it is she who determines your calendar entry. As Capella (2007, p.112): "The images are policy ideas that sustain the institutional arrangements, allowing the understanding of the policy is communicated simply and directly between members of a community, and contributing to the spread of issues , a fundamental process for the fast change and access to a macro issue".

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8 Os autores desse modelo se inspiraram na Teoria da Evolução, da qual tomaram o termo "equilíbrio pontuado" emprestado.

9 Nas palavras de Baumgartner e Jones (1999 apud Capella, 2007): "*Punctuated-equilibrium theory seeks to explain a simple observation: political processes are often driven by a logic of stability and incrementalism, but occasionally they also produce large-scale departures from the past*".



Similar to Kingdon, Baumgartner and Jones believe that political and social issues do not have access to the macro (in other words, the government agenda) automatically, by contrast, require a consensus that a picture or make the connection between the problem and its probable solution (Capella, 2007). Therefore, construction of image policy is considered a strategic element for both the problem definition, as for the selection of solutions.

Table 1, extracted from the discussion of Capella (2007), presents the main characteristics of the models of "Multiple Streams" and "Punctuated Equilibrium", clarifying the similarities, differences and areas of complementarity between them.

It is noteworthy that as the work of Faria (2003)<sup>10</sup> and Capella (2007) value the size of ideas and knowledge in policy analysis, categories are not always valued in the study area. In this sense, the models of Jones and Kingdon and Baumgartner.

**Table 1: Agenda setting. The models of Kingdon and Baumgartner and Jones.**

	<b>KINGDON</b> <i>MULTIPLE STREAM MODEL</i>	<b>BAUMGARTNER E JONES</b> <i>PUNCTUATED EQUILIBRIUM MODEL</i>
<b>PROBLEMS</b>	<p>No causal link between problems and solutions.</p> <p>Questions do not become problems automatically: problems are constructions involving interpretation of social dynamics.</p> <p>Problem definition is essential to attract the attention of policymakers.</p> <p>Problems are represented by indicators, events, crises, and symbols that relate issues to problems.</p>	<p>No causal link between problems and solutions.</p> <p>Questions do not become problems automatically: problems are constructed (policy images) and broadcast.</p> <p>Problem definition is essential to mobilize attention around an issue.</p> <p>Problems are represented by means of empirical and evaluative components (tone): numbers, statistics, reasoning, causal histories.</p>
<b>SOLUTIONS</b>	<p>Are not necessarily developed to solve a problem.</p> <p>Generated in communities (policy communities), diffuse and spread (bandwagon) in the process of softening (soften up).</p> <p>Technically feasible solutions, which represent shared values, rely on public consent, and responsiveness of policy makers most likely to reach the agenda.</p>	<p>Are not necessarily developed to solve a problem.</p> <p>Generated in the subsystems, diffuse and spread rapidly (bandwagon).</p> <p>Solutions that have images strongly linked to represent an institution and political values (policy images) are more likely to reach the agenda.</p>
<b>POLITICAL- INSTITUTIONAL DYNAMICS</b>	<p>The political context creates the "fertile ground" for problems and solutions.</p> <p>"National Climate", organized political forces and changes in government are factors that affect the schedule.</p> <p>Ideas, and only power, influence, pressure and strategy are fundamental in politics.</p>	<p>The political and institutional context influences the definition of problems and solutions.</p> <p>Images sustain institutional arrangements (policy venues), encouraging or restricting the change in schedule.</p> <p>Dispute over the image policy is crucial in the political struggle.</p>

10 Nas palavras de Faria (2003, p. 23): "Quando se trata de destacar o impacto das idéias e do conhecimento, vale reiterar que as abordagens mais tradicionais da subárea de análise de políticas públicas, centradas no interesse, reconhecem a esses elementos, quando muito, apenas um papel secundário e/ou justificatório".

<b>ACTORS</b>	The president exerts a decisive influence on the agenda. High bureaucracy and also affect the legislative agenda.	The president exerts a decisive influence on the agenda.
	Interest groups act to block more questions than to take them to the agenda.	Interest groups play an important role in defining the questions.
<b>CHANGES IN SCHEDULE</b>	The media portrays these issues already on the agenda, not influencing its formation.	The media focuses attention on individuals and is fundamental to the formation of the agenda.
	Opportunities for change (windows) allow the entrepreneur (policy entrepreneur) make the convergence of problems, solutions and political dynamics (coupling), changing the agenda.	Critical moments, when a question comes to macro, favor rapid changes (punctuations) in previously stable subsystems. Policy entrepreneurs, shared images (image policy) and institutional issue is fundamental in this process.

Source: Capella, 2007.

Continuing the discussion of the "Policy Cycle", two other phases are foci of analysis: implementation and evaluation. To Thoenig and Meny (1992), the implementation is the stage where public policy actions and effects are generated from a normative framework of intentions, texts or speeches. On the implementation of policies, Frey (2000, p. 228) states that the "interests of policy analysis at this stage refers particularly to the fact that often the actual results and impacts of some policies do not match the projected impacts during of its formulation". For the author, two approaches can be highlighted in the analysis of implementation processes, one "whose main objective is to examine the material and technical quality of projects or programs", other "whose analysis is directed to the political-administrative structures and the actors' performances involved" (Frey, 2000, p. 228). In the first case would be the analysis of the contents of the programs and plans, in which the intended goals are compared to the results, identifying the causes of any problems of implementation. In the second case, there are studies on the implementation process itself, ie the description of "how" and explaining "why".

The literature on implementation, generally, discusses the advantages and disadvantages of top-down and bottom-up approaches. The main distinction between these approaches is the locus of political decision in the first case, the decision takes place in the center, away from where the policy should be, in the second, the decision is made at the level of policy implementation. Although classical studies (Hogwood, Gunn, 1984) indicate the top-down approach as a more structured analysis of public policies, contemporary studies (Souza, 2003) have stressed the importance of exploring bottom-up analysis<sup>11</sup>.

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11 In the words of the author: "Without underestimating the use of top-down models of analysis, research began to use also bottom-up analysis, which start from three premises: a) analyze public policy from the actions of its implementers as opposed to the excessive concentration of studies about governments, policy makers and actors who are on the ball "central", b) focus the analysis on the nature of the problem that public policy seeks to answer, and c) describe and analyze the network implementation. Models of bottom-up analysis can be open to criticism as to its explanatory power, but by not ignoring the complexity of a policy, more need to be tested among us" (Souza, 2003, p. 17).

The last phase of the cycle corresponds to the evaluation of public policies, in which the analysis focuses on the impact of effective programs and projects already implemented. According to Frey (2000, p. 228), the objective evaluation also "investigate the impact of deficits and the unwanted side effects in order to deduce consequences for future actions and programs". Hogwood and Gunn (1984), in the classic study of public policy analysis, highlights the importance that the activities included in the implementation to be included and the results are identified (in a process of continued monitoring) as a precondition for assessment significant (and an essential element of a successful implementation).

At the end, two other noteworthy models, "Social Arenas" and "Public Management" Models. The "Social Arenas" Model sees politics as a policy initiative of entrepreneurs, so that your focus is on relationships, connections and exchanges that they establish in the process of policy formulation. As a fact becomes a problem when decision makers or policy makers are convinced (or are convinced) that, according to Souza (2006), this model relies on four mechanisms: dissemination of indicators are stripping the size of the problem, the occurrence of events such as disasters or recurrence of the problem, feedback, or outcomes (positive or negative) of policies, which influence its direction and, above all, the performance of entrepreneurs who are expert communities and form social networks capable of influence access to the agenda an issue<sup>12</sup>.

The model influenced by "Public Management" and the fiscal adjustment emphasizes efficiency, credibility and delegation of public policies for institutions with political independence (Souza, 2007). The consequences of this model can be seen in the processes of formulation and implementation of policies aimed at deregulation, privatization and reforms in the social system. Competing with this model are the initiatives to adopt a participatory public policies. For Souza (2007, p. 80), despite claims of new managerialism, "governments are still making decisions about problem situations and designing policies to address them, even if part of delegating responsibility to other bodies, including non-governmental".

In a final statement, it can be said that different types of analysis of public policies seek to understand the distinctions between what the government intends to do and what actually does. The public policy analysis involves the formulation, implementation, execution and evaluation of policies, covering various actors and levels of decision.

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<sup>12</sup> More detailed study on the role of social networks is found in Marques (2007).

#### 4 Institutionalism and policy analysis

Policies have been influenced by the field of neo-institutionalism, which emphasizes the fundamental importance of institutions/rules for decision making and policy implementation (Marques, 1997; Souza, 2007). The importance of institutional variables to explain policy outcomes has been highlighted in the literature since the 1970s, as shown by Thelen and Steinmo (1992), Marques (1997), Immergut (1998) and Hall and Taylor (2003). According to these authors, this movement is related to criticism of behavioral analysis, the hegemonic North American academia until the 1970s because of its limits to explain the diversity of historical situations of the central countries because of economic restructuring and institutional which have undergone in the years 1960 and 1970.

Assuming that the results of public policies are contingent and dependent on the struggle and the strategies outlined by several actors (present in government institutions and society), Marques<sup>13</sup> (1997) states that a deeper understanding of the formulation and implementation of such policies is only possible through the articulation of strategies of these actors and their relations, that is, from the analysis of the role of each of these processes. Establishing a parallel with the health sector in Brazil, it is possible to think of a complex network of relationships between state agencies (managers and technicians SUS), private providers and professional bodies, with influences on the implementation and results of sectoral policy.

The concept of institution is central to neo-institutionalism and their interaction with the field of public policy analysis, since it is believed that institutions have an important role in shaping the actions of actors and policies in support. Although this concept is very broad (critical reason for the neo-institutionalism), can be said to include the institutions' formal rules, procedures, standard operating practices and consenting that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the politics and economics" (Hall, 1990 cited in Thelen, Steinmo, 1992).

Since the influence Tocquevillean on the neo-institutionalist literature, Marques (1997) highlights an important relationship between institutions and policy analysis. In the author's words: "Under this analysis perspective [Tocquevillean], institutions are central to the study of politics not only the importance of the state as an actor and author of specific actions, but because he, like other political institutions directly influence political culture, the strategy of the actors and the production of their own agenda of issues to be the object of policies, setting the political struggle through its institutions "(Marques, 1997, p. 81).

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13 Marques (1997, p. 94) highlights three actors as the most important for the analysis of public policies under the neo-institutionalist approach, "capitalists, professional corporations and state actors".

For Marques (1997, p. 75), the neo-institutionalism can be understood as "the latest chain of Social Sciences has pointed out that, emphatically, the importance of institutions for the understanding of social processes". It is not considered a unified theoretical current, since it has a broad theoretical position, in which the hierarchy of the most important factors in the study of each case is listed after the event according to the situation (Marques, 1997; Hall, Taylor, 2003). Therefore, it is the place of analytical and methodological and theoretical scholars from different disciplines, thus becoming a mid-range theory, concerned about the reintroduction of institutional variables in the debates about politics and economics.

As this is not a unitary current of thought, the neo-institutionalism brings together different schools. Hall and Taylor (2003) consider three: historical neo-institutionalism, rational choice neo-institutionalism, and sociological neo-institutionalism. Marques (1997), in his work distinguishes only the first two chains, arguing that the third would escape the scope of analysis required at the time. Thelen and Steinmo (1992) also address only the historical neo-institutionalism and rational choice. About them, they argue that despite major differences, there is a "common concern with the question of how institutions shape political strategies and influence political outcomes" (Thelen, Steinmo, 1992, p. 7). The following are the main focuses of these currents will be briefly presented.

The neo-institutionalism of rational choice is rooted in rational choice theory and neoclassical economics. According to Hall and Taylor (2003), one of the main features of this approach is the belief that actors behave entirely utility to maximize the satisfaction of their preferences, using calculations and strategies. For this approach, institutions are central to the definition of actors' strategies, as constrain their preferences by changing self-interested behavior. According to Marques (1997, p. 77), for rational choice neo-institutionalists, "the institutions resolve deadlock situations in strategic interactions, reducing the occurrence of suboptimal solutions," why this approach is widely used in economics.

In turn, stems from the sociological neo-institutionalism in organization theory, challenging the separation between the social and cultural dimensions (practices related to culture) (Hall, Taylor, 2003). For sociological neo-institutionalists, it is important to understand why organizations adopt a particular set of forms, procedures or institutional symbols, especially the spread of these practices.

Finally, the historical neo-institutionalism is rooted in historical sociology, a Marxist and Weberian (Marques, 1997). In this approach, institutions are not designed as just another variable, shape the strategies of the actors (in a manner similar to the theory of rational choice), but above all, determine your preferences and goals. According to Marques (1997, p. 78), "while for the neo-institutionalists and neoclassical rational choice preferences are exogenous to the model, for historical neoinstitutionalists preferences are endogenous, being socially and politically constructed

in the midst of the processes under study". On the historical neo-institutionalism, Thelen and Steinmo (1992, p. 9) state that, "mediating relations of cooperation and conflict, institutions structure political situations and leave their mark on the political consequences".

For Marques (1997), the most important neo-institutionalism is to contextualize the historical actors, their interests and strategic actions. From that aspect, which reaffirms the role of institutions and state actors should also be considered in the analysis of state and society. He thus will be possible to change settings without simplifying the policy framework that involves focusing on the strategies of the actors<sup>14</sup>. The influence of institutions in society have been treated by neoinstitutionalists based on two central questions: 1) autonomy and power of state actors, and 2) The influence of institutions on public policy. It is from them that Marques (1997) develops his remarks on the relationship between state actors and, based on the political bodies of Douglas North, "the political institutions and state and public policies" (Marques, 1997, p. 80).

The state's role as an actor is important for the historical neo-institutionalism. However, it is noteworthy that the most recent reviews have focused not only the state's role as an actor, but rather the interplay between state and society. The state's role is related to the concept of state autonomy, although it is not contingent on it. This autonomy relates to the isolation of the state structure, which acts in order to influence policy (albeit through an intellectual role in the Gramscian sense).

On the influence of institutions on public policies, Marques (1997) highlights three main ways: 1) The formulation of policy depends on the representations of the historical formation of the state and its institutions, 2) Interest groups form and build their agendas within the state structures (the representation of their interests and reproduction of their values), and 3) political institutions work directly in mediating between the actors' strategies and policy implementation. Thus, in every state and situation-specific, historical neo-institutionalism proposes the articulation of these issues for a good public policy analysis.

Still on the historical neo-institutionalism, Immergut (1998) highlights the value in this approach, a macro-sociological vision and guided by the power (power-oriented) in the analysis of the relationship between policies, state and society in various countries and historical periods. From this perspective, two analytical categories can be identified: "Power and structural relationships within the institutions" and "historical trajectory of the institutions and policies" (path dependence).

The first category relates to how the balance of power between state bureaucracies, political parties, interest groups and other structures within the institutions can tighten a public and social policy, speeding it up or stopping. To study this category, three sub-categories that relate to the political construction of interests and the production of alternative rationalities are emphasized: 1)

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14 On the recovery strategies of the actors, Marques (1997) performs a comparison between the studies of Margaret Levy (author which is situated between the historical neo-institutionalism and rational choice) and Adam Przeworski (Marxist). Both authors, despite their differences, value strategies and covenants as important analytical variables.

"The formation of interest representation", influenced by the collective interests and historical features of the institutions, 2) "The structure of the political process" as a result of the constitutions and political institutions, state structures, interest groups and public policy networks, as well as time and historical contingencies, and 3) "The role/actions of social actors, politicians and historical, "not as maximizing individual interests, but as those who construct their identities and interests in an uncertain context searching for better future prospects".

The second category is quite emphasized by Immergut (1998). The "historical trajectory" is treated by the author under the "contextual logic of causality" ("contextual logics of causality") and "historical contingency" ("contingencies of history"), once related to the organization of institutions and its structure may have consequences for public policy and social issues. Addressing the "contextual logic of causality," Immergut (1998, p. 22) states that: "The role of context in Explaining Historically generated actors' interests and Their power relations is typical of a second general characteristic to the historical genre." This paper highlights the historical context of an institution or a policy defining the interests of the actors and the construction of its power relations. From this it can be argued that the fact that policy analysis be sensitive to historical context is central to the historical neo-institutionalism.

Dealing with the "historical contingencies", Immergut (1998, p. 23) talks about the importance of recognizing that history is marked by accidents of opportunity and circumstance. In the words of the author: "Almost every one of the studies so far Mentioned leaves some scope for historical contingency. Following rather than a logical and efficient trajectory, history is marked by Accidents of timing and circumstance". Thus, the author highlights the relevance of studying the elements of rupture and continuity in the trajectory of these institutions and public and social policies, including the historical context as an environment marked by sequences and contingencies in order to identify institutional factors related to them.

Hall and Taylor (2003) also underscore the value of the approach of "path dependence" for the historic neo-institutionalists. According to these authors, the institutions are relatively permanent elements of historical context, able to keep this context in a set of paths, depending on how you structure the capabilities of state and political legacy. That is, from the perspective of path dependencies, and previous policy decisions affect later ones.

The neo-institutionalist approach proposes to conduct analysis at the meso level, which are located in institutions that influence and are influenced by social actors and politicians. For the historical neo-institutionalism, it is important that social actors are analyzed in the institutional context and state, which is why this approach was chosen as the theoretical and analytical framework of this research.

**5 Building the matrix of analysis: selected elements from the theoretical and methodological issue in**

Among the models of public policy analysis, we highlight the "Multiple Stream Model" formulated by Kingdon in 1984 and "Punctuated Equilibrium Model" formulated by Baumgartner and Jones in 1993. Based on the theoretical basis of the same can be said that:

- The political and institutional context influences the definition of problems and solutions;
- Images policy maintain institutional arrangements (policy venues), encouraging or restricting the change in the agenda;
- The dispute over the image policy is crucial in the political struggle;
- The role of the policy entrepreneurs, in a window of opportunity, promote convergence (coupling) of problems, solutions and political dynamics, changing the agenda.

From the historical neo-institutionalism, it can be stated that:

- Institutional arrangements, marked by the trajectory of the institutions and policies (path dependence), influence the formation of the representation of interests and create the image of politics.

Based on these assumptions, the following were elected to the array of analysis for the study of health policies.

**Table 2: Matrix analysis for the study of the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in health policy**

<i><b>Institutions</b></i>	Set of formal rules, procedures, standard operating practices and consenting that structure the relationship between individuals in various units of the politics and economics (Hall, 1990 cited in Thelen, Steinmo, 1992).
<i><b>Path dependence</b></i>	Concept that values the historical trajectory of the institutions and policies, saying that the previous policy decisions and the subsequent condition (Pierson, 2004). Immergut (1998) highlights the analysis of "contextual logic of causality" and "historical contingency".
<i><b>Policy entrepreneurs</b></i>	Actors (political, social and scientific community) to act decisively to an access point to the government agenda.
<i><b>Policy image</b></i>	"Ideas that support the institutional arrangements, allowing the understanding of the policy is communicated simply and directly between members of a community, and contributing to the spread of issues, a fundamental process for change and rapid access issue to a macro" (Capella, 2007, p. 112).



Source: Self elaboration.

Thinking about the relationship between decentralization and regionalization in the construction and conduct of health policy in Brazil is expected to serve as the matrix for understanding:

- Performance of actors and institutions in shaping policy and its conduct (determinants and constraints of convergence and / or departure from guidelines);
- Images built on the decentralization and regionalization in health, in different historical moments, for actors and their institutions;
- Historical trajectory of decentralization and regionalization in health (elements of rupture and continuity issues marked by sequential or contingent on the context).

At the end, it is expected that "looking at this story" to unveil ways to inter-relationship of decentralization and regionalization in the Brazilian health care today.

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