Images of Social Policy in Brazil
A Comparison between Government Frames

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What images do governments attribute to social policy in Brazil? The answer to this research question is a triad: *justice*, *modernization,* and *redistribution*. This article discusses and compares official images of social policy once captured from how to frame inequality. Social policy frames, as analyzed here, are related to the definition of inequality, although the rhetorical dimension of political discourse can mask personal assumptions. Governments are actors that create speeches which, even if present contrasts between them, express the official approaches on topics of their agenda. Finally, the utility of the concept of frames is highlighted to identify and analyze relationships between culture and politics.

The concept of frames is used as adopted in the perspective of cultural sociology to examine the discourses of the governments in the 30 years after the restoration of democracy (1985-2016) and the ones of Getúlio Vargas (1930-45/51-54), taken as a counterpoint due to the centrality of the social issue in the Vargas rhetoric and agenda, as noted by scholars and presidents[1]. In the official rhetoric, three meanings were attributed to social policy: *justice*, noticeable since the 1930s, which dates back to the moral condemnation of inequality and the notion of enforcing rights as a response to social issues; *modernization*, the sense more reiterated in recent decades and already captured in the 1950s, coming from the belief that a modern country should overcome great inequalities through

economic and educational policies; and *redistribution*, noted in the 1980s and of increasing use in the last decade and a half, which responds to inequalities with the redistribution of resources, whether by distributive reforms or direct income transfer programs. Interpretations of inequality influence social policy and seek to direct popular perceptions. Changes and continuities in official images of social policy are discussed based on 12 presidential inauguration addresses and 39 annual reports of the Executive. This study points out relevant variations in the relations between governmental priorities (e.g., inflation contention and improvement of public education) and the agenda of reducing inequality.

The systematization and analysis of the inequality and social policy frames – both seem to be the verse and reverse of the coins – allow to face the challenge of comparison. The image of social policy as justice, for example, is related to the point of view that rights are supposed to be enforced in response to inequalities classified as injustice. The comparison between images of social policy and inequality, captured from the similarities and differences in the discourse of the governments, contributes to reflecting on these issues in Brazil and the role of the state and citizens towards it. The governments' selection is related to the centrality of social issues in Vargas's rhetoric and his influence on the presidents of the 30 years after re-democratization (Temer's and Bolsonaro's governments, in 2016-22, were self-declared oppositional to Vargas's social assistance heritage). In terms of social policy, historiography in Brazil recognizes a longstanding influence of Vargas's policies from his three phasis – the semi-authoritarian 1930-37, the authoritarian 1937-45 *Estado Novo*, and his democratic years 1951-54[2] –, as well as a sensitive novelty of post-1985 policies in comparison with the ones along the military dictatorship (1964-85).

To identify the images of social policy in each government, this study explores their plans and accountability reports, especially presidential inaugural addresses (1930, 1937, and 1951 and nine since 1985) and the *Mensagens ao Congresso Nacional*; dozens of other speeches were used for testing hypotheses and inform about years without Messages (1930-34 and 1938-45, years of closed regimes in Brazil). First, it divides frames between diagnostic framing (forms and causes of inequality) and prognostic framing (effects of inequality and public strategies against it). Then the research focuses on government assessments of social policy (goals, audiences, results, and difficulties). The article reinforces the existence of the already-mentioned match between images of inequality and those of social policy.

The image of social policy as *justice* was the only one in Vargas Era (1930-45) and the most common

in the 1980s, the image of *modernization* prevailed in the 1990s and the one of *redistribution* has increased use over the past decade and a half (such images were not mutually excluding and coexisted in most governments). Official discourse is compared for reasons such as it portrays the political elites' images on social policy and inequality; is a rich material yet poorly researched; and allows comparing governmental views. The next section introduces the concept of frames and the way it helps to answer the research questions.

FRAMES AND COMPARATIVE SOCIOLOGY

The use of the concept of framing by sociologists dates to Goffman (1986), which analyzed small social interactions to understand how individuals organize everyday experiences. "I assume that definitions of a situation are built up following principles of organization which governs events – at least social ones – and our objective involvement in them" (Ibid.: pp. 10-1). In this case, frame analysis isolates the frames presented to extract meanings of events and analyze their special vulnerabilities.

The initial frame analysis offered four axioms, mainly sociological ones (Vliegenthart, Van Zoonen, 2011): frames are multiple and can be contradictory or oppositional; are part of a struggle for meaning between different actors that have unequal material and symbolic resources; news frames result from situated social and routinized processes in which the agency of the individual journalists is relative; and that frames used by audiences are the result of socially situated articulations between particular issues, individual and collective differences, experiential knowledge, popular wisdom, and media discourse.

Someone who frames something gives it meaning. Scholars have seen frames as thought organizers (Ferree et al., 2002), ideas, and principles that organize experiences and direct actions (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Benford & Snow, 2000). Chong and Druckman (2007) distinguished between "frames in thought" – affects an individual assessment – and "frames for communication", which are central considerations highlighted in a speech act. The meaning results from the act of framing, which is the "process by which people develop a particular conceptualization of an issue or reorient their thinking about an issue" (Ibid.: p. 104).

These analysts share the idea that frames guide visions and interpretations of the world, as they encode expectations concerning social relations and the effects of acts. "By understanding the frames that different individuals or groups bring to social interactions and decision-making, we can begin to understand

variation in their interpretations and understandings" (Small *et al*, 2010, p. 10). That is a way of linking culture and behavior: frames do not cause the behavior, since they indicate relations restriction-possibility, not cause and effect. Frames are one of the seven concepts highlighted by Small and co-authors in the studies that approach the relations between culture and poverty (values, repertoires, and symbolic borders are others), which have more precision than the usually vague notion of culture. Swidler (1986), for example, stressed that culture influences the action to shape a repertoire or "toolbox" of habits, skills, and styles from which people construct strategies of action. Her repertoire concept is partially coincident with frame one, as both allude to a set of options available to individuals or groups.

Frame analyses were divided by Mendonça and Simões (2012) into three types: *microanalysis of interactions*: which emphasize communicative situation, as in Goffman, shedding light on positions between actors and the rules and conventions; *framing effects analysis*: frames are discursive angles used to get strategic effects; and *discourse content analysis*: explore frameworks and emphasis generated by the statements.

The concept of frames is especially useful to compare discourses. In news about abortion in Germany and US, the "fetal life" frame dominates the debate among Germans; in the US, there was a struggle between individual rights and pro-abortion frames and rights of the fetus and anti-abortion ones (Ferree et al 2002). Gitlin (1980) studied how the media framed a student movement when the US entered in Vietnam War[3]. In women's protests in Chile, feminism did not emerge in the 1950-60s, when frames focused on working-class issues but emerged when repression of the dictatorship and the emergence of the frame "back to democracy" propitiated typical frames of movements like a feminist (Noonan, 1995). When comparing poverty frames by US congresspeople in three decades, Guetzkow (2010) showed that the notion of merit does not explain the definition and changes in anti-poverty policies, which depend more on how are framed the causes of poverty and the abilities and desires of the poor. This concept has been applied to study media coverage of corruption scandals (Berti, 2019), media discourse on childhood vaccine rejection (Court *et al*, 2021), and public discourse about equity policies in the early childhood education and care sector (Molla & Nolan, 2019). Frame analysis, as it can be seen, may also be good to study the social policy agenda.

When discussing public policy frame analysis, Campbell (2002) shared criticisms such as the objection that they fail to demonstrate causal connections; ignore counterarguments and other possible frames; do not usually review the process of creation, testing, modification, and adaptation of frames; and do not indicate how policymakers use them to hide real reasons to those who they want to persuade. Criticisms like these are expected to be avoided by the used methods and data.

As frames are a fertile tool in microanalyses of interactions, framing effects analyses, and discourse content analyses (case illustrated by this article), they are adopted here for privileging how discourses frame the world, noting how the content appeals to the interlocutors to follow a certain interpretation. That is why it seems so suitable for capturing governmental images to answer "How Brazilian governments framed social policy?".

Government speeches are studied here, therefore, since they portray political elites' images on topics such as social policy, they are rich and little researched material, and they allow comparing images of different governments. This research considered such attributes of the discourse – how much it informs, how much it is underused, and how much it is comparable – while advancing in the methods exposed in the next section.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND TYPOLOGY OF IMAGES

The employed analytical perspective based on frames dialogues with Cefaï (2009), Entman (2006), and Lepianka (2015). According to Cefaï, frame analysis has proliferated in these studies since they converted Goffman's concept of the frame into one of a repertoire of cognitive resources used by leaders in strategies of communication to exercise power. Entman (2006) saw framing as a 'research paradigm' that could be applied to the study of mass communication. Frames (1) define problems, (2) diagnose causes, (3) make moral judgments about causal agents and their effects, and (4) suggest remedies. Entman's paradigm and the study of Lepianka on poverty discourse in Polish media offered useful proposals for this research, such as adding a search for framing devices as metaphors and catchphrases. The notion of frames is used to privilege the function of suggesting a tone to a certain image – in this case, the discourse on social policy[4].

A set of 12 inaugural presidential speeches (1930/37/51 and 1985-2015) and 39 Messages to the National Congress – see Appendix – was systematized by using coding techniques with Atlas.ti software. The goal was to capture differences referred to as inequalities – such as race and region – and strategies to deal with them. The codes resulted from using a dictionary created after an initial reading of the post-1985 discourses. Four key issues were more articulated to ine-

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quality by governments: containing inflation; job creation; enforcement of rights; and transfer of income (a link between the first two was immediately detected). Correspondences were identified between images of inequality and social policy, at the heart of the definition of the three frames.

One decision taken was to check the actions attributed to the fight against inequality as anti-inflation plans. With inspiration from variables currently focused on by the literature on inequality,[5] the first four families of codes were built, and later inductively improved and expanded:

> - *Forms of inequalities* – statements about forms of inequality perceived in Brazil, such as race, educational level, generation, and region;[6]
>
> – *Causes of inequality* – explanation of the agents responsible for inequalities;[7]
>
> – *Effects of inequality* – mentions of by-products of inequality (no positive effects were mentioned);[8] and
>
> – *Public strategies* – an indication of state actions to deal with inequalities.[9]

Those first three axes – forms, causes, and effects of inequality – may be seen as parts of diagnostics, while the latter was related to the official prognosis of inequality. Government assessments of social policy – its objectives, audiences, results, and difficulties – were focused, allowing to elaborate families of codes for such variables. Then it became evident correspondence between the images of inequality and social policy, which are at the heart of the definition of the three frameworks. Those images of social policy and inequality intertwined, and not in a cause-and-effect relation, but rather of restriction-possibilities, as is characteristic of frames according to Small *et al* (2011).

Despite the heterogeneity of government discourse, three images of social policy are highlighted: *Justice*: related to a moral look to inequality, to be fought by the creation and consolidation of rights; *Modernization*: related to the belief that one modern country must overcome its major inequalities, attacked with economic and education policies; and *Redistribution*: related to a moral look to inequality, to be addressed through the redistribution of resources, such as agrarian and fiscal reforms or income transfer programs.

Social Policy as Justice

When governments frame social policy as justice (or as an enforcement of rights), they have reflected the idea introduced by Rawls (1999) of justice as fairness – even though such a reference is not explicit or conscious – and have replied to the two key issues on Sen (1992): "why equality?" and "equality of what?". In this second question, the speeches point out changes and continuities in forms of inequality explained by the presidents.

In the Vargas years (1930-45/51-54), the focal variables classified as injustices were *class* and – from 1930 to 1945 – *professional category*. It is curious, but of immediate understanding, that a president whose anti-communism is considered a truism by scholars emphasized the inequality of class (in the roots of communism) while addressing social issues. Inequalities by class and category assigned by Vargas to disorganization of work (less frequently to individualism, industrialization, and overpopulation). The excerpt below illustrates the image of justice five months before the institution of the authoritarian regime of the New State:

> Much of the effort applied to the work by the Brazilians was lost unproductively for lack of method, educational deficiencies, precariousness in technical training, and lack of incentives to continue in job and occupation.
>
> (...) we could not carry out such a task without the deliberate and decisive intervention of the government, more than anyone interested in avoiding sterile clashes and struggles, to better ensure the balance of social life and the indispensable conditions for collective progress and well-being. (Brasil, 1937, p. 174-5)

The most recent governments treated three forms of inequality as injustices: regional, quoted from geographic clippings increasingly accurate; income, attributed to minority interests; and racial, said after the Cardoso administration (1995-2002). Since 1985, the speeches of presidents saw as unjust such inequalities, which interpret that echoes the slightest justification for unequal opportunities for rich people than for the poor.

Causes of inequality were rarely attributed in most recent inaugural addresses and annual Messages. In indirect terms or other speeches, the unequal distribution of goods and opportunities was explained by the action of the elites (Itamar administration), defocusing on social spending (Cardoso), history (Cardoso and Lula), and lack of social protection (Rousseff), mentioned without details. Interests of minorities, selfishness, greed, or privilege were blamed for the income inequalities less often than inflation, which appeared and still appears in the official discourse as a reason for the social question.

Table 1

Justice frame: main statements in each government

Secondary frames in each government	Vargas1	Vargas2	Vargas3	Sarney	Collor	Itamar	Cardoso	Lula	Rousseff
Labor rights equality as a goal	X	X							
Organization of work as a duty of the state	X	X							
The social issue originates in the industrialization	X	X							
Combating rural depopulation as a duty of the state	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Inequality between categories is injustice	X	X							
Class inequality as injustice	X	X	X						
Income inequality as injustice				X	X	X	X	X	X
Regional inequalities and injustices				X	X	X	X	X	X
Criticism of governmental and elites' paternalism					X				
Contrasts economic progress and social injustice					X		X	X	
Inequality affects the democratic character of the state						X			
The national breakdown as the effect of injustice						X			
Social spending focalization via HDI differences							X		
Racial inequalities as injustices							X	X	X
Brazilian social policy is an example to the world								X	X

OBS.: Vargas 1: 1930-37; Vargas 2: 1937-45; Vargas 3: 1951-54.

Regional inequalities are the most mentioned by the presidents in the last three decades – taken more as injustices than as regional delays or debts at an inter-regional level. In this case, the diagnostics no longer stuck to the concentrated poverty in the Northeast and began to capture variables such as the influence of geography on inequalities. The first Message from José Sarney's government illustrates this view of regional inequality as an injustice (then of social policies as forms of justice):

There is a paradoxical situation in Brazil: on one hand, has built up an economy in many aspects of the next industrial maturity; on the other, it remains an unjust social structure, which undergoes considerable part of the population to pitiable living conditions, only comparable to those of the poorest nations in the world. (...) It is not possible to eliminate poverty and injustice if it remains unsolved the problem of the Northeast, where almost half of the country's poverty and two-thirds of rural poverty are placed. (Brasil, 1986, pp. 47-49)

Numbers have been more associated in recent decades with the forms of inequality considered injustices. Income inequality began to be illustrated with data from official domiciliary surveys, for example. Also, the Gini coefficient has been quoted in official discourse in the two most recent decades. In the Message of 1998, a curve of the Gini index between 1993 and 1996 was accompanied by the consideration that 1995 (1st year of the Cardoso government) was the "milestone in the resumption of deconcentration". Instead of absolute numbers of poverty and inequality, different governments preferred relative values, as in "the number of poor in the total population decreased from 33.9% in 1997 to 32.7% in 1998, a percentage much lower than the 47.9% in the period immediately preceding the Plano Real" (Brasil, 2000, p. 42) and "IPEA [Institute for Applied Economic Research] showed that poverty in the six main metropolitan regions of the country fell to 35% of the population in 2003 to 24, 1% in 2008" (Brasil, 2009, p. 10). Numbers like these are used in a more political than technical way, as a self-laudatory proof of results, and less as a measure of a problem to be faced.

Racial inequalities, which more lately got into the governmental agenda, have never been commented on based on numbers, relative or absolute ones. This fact exposes a weakness of the diagnosis of the matter, indirectly referred to in other approaches, such as on violence, "the lethal victimization is distributed unevenly: variations are mostly poor and black youth, male, between 15 and 24 who have paid with their lives the price of the rise of violence in Brazil" (Brasil, 2003, p. 111). Even the government has estimated the extent of that injustice, which of course makes it even harder to overcome it, so it is unlikely a poorly diagnosed problem turns out to be well treated.

At this section and the following two, the main argumentative lines of the governments that expressed their images of social policy are summarized. Statements introduced or taken up in each term were collected, as well as singled out here as secondary frames – sublevels of a general description ("rights against inequality" in the case of interpretative frames focused for now). These tables present, in a synthetic way, some results of this research. The possibilities for variations of interpretations are not exhausted, since the focus stands on the main statements of successive governments, which can express other frames more secondarily.

Social Policy as Modernization

The most unique aspect of the modernization frame is that inequality is seen as an economic issue to be solved through policies such as controlling inflation, promoting domestic production, and qualification of professionals for the labor market. The concentration of income was the main form of inequality seen as a delay, but this image was also mobilized by certain governments about inequalities in education and health (I emphasize considerations related to income inequality).

The discourse that maximizes economic growth would minimize the concentration of income is official since at least the last government Vargas. Such convergence, present in the rhetoric and practice of the former leader of the New State was inconsistent with two major goals in his last years in power, "a significant increase of national autonomy, notably in its economic dimension, and a serious effort to reduce social inequalities and incorporating the masses to the Brazilian civilizing process" (Jaguaribe, 2008, pp. 362-363). Significantly, this reference is to a civilizing process to which the masses must be integrated, which well expresses the orientation of the government's actions, as seen in various executive documents signed by Vargas elected by ballot. The high rates of development of-

fered by the economic model have occurred with the consolidation of advantages for some groups and the exclusion of others, making Brazil an internationally known case for its concentration of income, poverty, and social inequalities.

Awareness of the delay in the economy was explained in official discourse and studies influenced by the structuralism of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL in its local acronym), as the classic study by Furtado (2001), which noted that the industrial expansion, based on undiversified production base, necessarily tend to an external imbalance and strong inflationary pressures. Furtado argued that the lag of three-quarters of a century between the coffee boom and the decline of mining inhibited the diversification of the productive structure and the diffusion of a high technological standard, as happened in the US, for example. Cardoso and Faletto (2004) argued in their thesis on dependence that different arrangements between oligarchic elites, incipient bourgeoisie, and middle and urban working classes were key to the Latin American path toward development. In their argument, the peripheral position of the sub-continent in the world economy dictated first their class structure, while the patrimonialism of the elites with the state has been the cause of the reproduction of underdevelopment.

The priority given to growth in the late 1960s and part of the 1970s brought implicit the idea that rapid growth would lead to structural changes that gradually mitigate the long-term inequalities in access to goods and services. Bonelli and Sedlacek (1988) found that income was more concentrated between 1960 and 1986, especially until the mid-70s when it began to be devolution until the early 1980s after the oil post-crisis recession, the concentration increased up to 1985 and suffered little significant reversal in 1986, with high average income gains. They stressed that, contrary to what one might expect, income was more concentrated despite the economy's growth.

It has lasted on the agenda of post-democratic transition governments the equality of opportunities referred to by Vargas solely in his government of the middle of that century. Official discourse on the issue varied greatly according to the president, but the emphasis on education was permanent – given its mission to equalize the capabilities of citizens – despite the imbalances between discourse and action.

The contrast between the relative strength of the economy and the absolute vulnerability of the social question was one of the statements in public discourse from the passage of 1980 to 1990. This contrast, which makes us think of what can be considered modernization or delay, was vocalized by politicians and intel-

Table 2

Modernization frame: main statements in each government

Secondary frames in each government	Vargas 3	Sarney	Collor	Itamar	Cardoso	Lula	Rousseff
Equal opportunities as a goal of the government	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Economic development as a goal of the government	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Economic policy as social policy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
The current educational system is an obstacle to equality	X	X			X	X	
Combating inflation as a social policy	X	X			X	X	
State modernization/reduction as a goal of the government		X	X				
External debt as a social problem		X					
Economic policy needs to sacrifice			X		X		
Economic globalization as a destiny			X				
The social policy ensures economic development			X				
Intervention in the markets as a solution				X			
Criticism of the idea of leaving the cake to grow before dividing				X			
Inflation is a more political problem				X			
Social policy as a public-private partnership					X		
Complementarity between social and infrastructure programs					X		
Emphasis on focalization of social spending					X		
The alliance between economic growth and equity						X	X
Intrarregional non-balance as a delay						X	
Fiscal policy as social policy						X	
Emphasis on the rise of class C/goal of "country of the middle class"						X	X
Emphasis on the new development model							X
Foreign policy aligned with social policy							X

lectuals. The social question was viewed by Fernando Collor, for example, as a delay concerning developed countries:

> My generation does not admit more to living with an economic giant but social pygmy Brazil: the tenth economy in the globe with social indicators registering such penury, disease and so much inequality. We do not conceive of modernity without its component of justice, nor progress without everybody being beneficiated from its fruits. (Fernando Collor, inaugural address, 3/15/1990)

State intervention in the economy was, in fact, a focal point of the link between social and economic pol-

icies. According to some authors, a new form of Brazilian state emerged in the 1990s, with the end of the Vargas model. Sallum (2003), for example, highlighted political democratization and economic liberalization as central aspects of that transition. A liberal hegemony started with Collor and reaffirmed by Cardoso and Lula's election would have given conditions to a developmental model.

Regardless of the scope of changes in state and social policy, it is certain that in the official discourse, the links between social policy and the economy have changed a lot with Collor and his emphasis on the need to reconcile the reduction of state presence in productive sectors with a vague notion of social policy as a defense of citizenship. The unprecedented dele-

gation of implementation and/or implementation of public policies to civil society actors from Cardoso has been linked by some (e.g., Dagnino, 2004) to neoliberal ideas then in vogue. Such delegation is associated with one statement that can be correlated to the delay frame: "social policy as a public-private partnership".

> The basic principles of the strategy of this program [Comunidade Solidária] are decentralization – with the various Ministries executing actions in their area of competence – and the practice of partnership between the three levels of government [federal, state, and municipal] and between them and society. (Brasil, 1996, p. 23)

The next section discusses the third official image of social policy – redistribution – which intertwines the perception of inequality as a matter of debt (or "social debt"). As noticed before, this frame shows increasing use in recent governments. This is not, however, a new frame. As the delay image transpired in the official rhetoric of the 1950s, the debt one had a strong presence in the Brazilian government for the last three decades.

Social Policy as Redistribution

Besides the enforcement of rights (new and old ones) and actions guided to economic expansion or professional qualification, egalitarians speeches of Brazilian governments advocate policies to redistribute public and private assets and resources, such as agrarian, social security, and tax reforms (in this agenda, there is a clear absence of taxation on large fortunes) as well as the income transfer programs adopted since the beginning of the XXI century. This frame of social policy as redistribution is connected to the image of inequality as a debt – from the perspective that some groups owe something to others, it is seen as the need to provide benefits that improve the living conditions of other Brazilians. The "social debt", even without its origin being explicit, was considered a problem compounded by the neglect of previous governments and as a cause for certain social ills.

The redistributive policy was, by its objectives and mechanisms, classified by Ruggeri, Van Wart, and Howard (1996) into two approaches: preventive redistribution, with policies to reduce inequalities of opportunity by providing social services or using non-fiscal instruments (e.g., human rights law); and corrective redistribution, to reduce socially unacceptable income inequalities, especially with disbursements for income transfers to people – in this case, an insufficient income of some groups is seen as a problem. From this classification, presented in an analysis of fiscal redistribution in Canada for three decades, the frame for social policy as redistribution (and inequality as debt) by the Brazilian government does share the approach of corrective redistribution, and not of preventive redistribution – the images of modernization and delay are closer to this one.

In Brazil, the discourse of the Executive was a rich material to capture what governments understood about the idea of a "government as Robin Hood" (as in Ruggeri and coauthors' book), concerning the mythical character known to give to the poor what they stole from the rich. In the discourses that used the redistribution image, it can be noticed two phases with marked differences among themselves: in the Sarney and Cardoso governments, it prevailed the emphasis on that reformist agenda with egalitarians effects – agrarian, tax, and social security (and administrative one, in Sarney's rhetoric) –; Lula and Rousseff's governments stressed more the redistributive effects of income transfer programs. This discursive turn on social policy is exposed in Table 3.

Under the presidencies of Lula and Rousseff, it is remarkable a shift in official discourse on redistributive policies, with the emphasis not falling back on the reformist agenda, but on the income transfer policies such as Bolsa Família, launched in 2003 (one year earlier, the precursor Bolsa Escola Federal was more referred as an educational policy and the rural social security was seen as the largest income transfer program in the country). Cardoso's and Lula's governments have expressed the ideas of income transfer as a breakthrough of focalization (Brasil, 2002, XIII) and the current tax system as a limit to equality (Brasil, 2005, p.XX).

While Lula's government emphasized the intersectoral view of Bolsa Família – in evident opposition to the fragmentation of its predecessor income transfer programs –, Rousseff's government distinguished by correlating that program with the redistribution of wealth, besides of income, as in a passage of the 2013 and 2014 Messages (pg. 35 and 32, respectively): "the Brazilian inclusive growth model not only favors the reduction of income inequalities but also aims to reduce the wealth gap".

> Indeed, Brazil is showing the world that is possible and necessary stability compatible, environmentally sustainable economic growth, income distribution, social inclusion, and justice. For the first time since 1975, when the UN calculated the quality of life of many countries, Brazil joins the group considered high human development countries, which expresses the success of a set of policies adopted, in particular, those related to the poorest ones. (Brasil, 2008, p. 97)

Table 3

Redistribution frame: main statements in each government

Secondary frames in each government	Sarney	Cardoso	Lula	Rousseff
Redistribution as a duty of the state	X	X	X	X
Tax reform as social policy	X	X		
Pension reform as social policy	X	X		
Agrarian reform as social policy	X	X		
Administrative reform as social policy	X			
A social pact needed to redistribute rewards	X			
The current tax system is an obstacle to equality		X	X	
Transfer income as an advancement of focalization in a social area		X	X	
Income transfer programs emphasized as an educational policy		X		
The focalization of social spending to improve income distribution		X		
Land credit as part of agrarian reform		X		
Land redistribution as social and economic policy			X	
Defense of an intersectoral view of income transfer			X	
Cadastro Único (Single Registry) needed to redistribute income			X	X
Social program success linked to its focus			X	X
Social programs as the inclusion of the poor in the economy			X	X

In a country with such complexity as ours, we need to always want more, discover more, innovate in ways, and always seek new solutions.

Only then can we ensure to the ones that have improved life that they can achieve more; and prove to those who are still struggling to get out of poverty that they can, with the help of the government and the whole society, change of life and level.

We can be, in fact, one of the most developed and less unequal nations of the world – a country with a solid and entrepreneurial middle class." (Dilma Rousseff, 1st inaugural address, 01/01/2011)

Mentions of the eradication of extreme poverty can be read as a government priority or conquest: "the end of poverty is only a beginning" (2014 and 2015 Messages). And, continuing with this motto, the president projected an image of a new Brazil more just and much stronger.

For three decades, the discourse of social policy as redistribution (and inequality as a kind of debt) included statements recurring when there was a correspondence between the social and distributional issues. Only the rhetoric of future governments will clarify whether the increasing use of this image is an official trend, or an event linked to other factors such as the personal characteristics of the presidents. Is not excluded the possibility that the images of justice and modernization may regain the dominance they once had in official discourse in Brazil in previous decades. It is unlikely, however, that the more recent frame of redistribution gets off the government imaginary as in early 1990. This impression is because politicians of various hues insist on emphasizing, in public discourse, the stability of redistributive policies introduced in the past 20 years.

RESULTS: COMPARING GOVERNMENT AND DISCOURSES

Justice, modernization, and redistribution. Pointing out that the most enduring Brazilian governments

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and some of the most recent have framed social policies in these three ways is an important finding. A study like this one matters by methodological and empirical advances, after all, it highlights the utility of frame analysis and discourse studies in general to answer certain questions. This study brings new subsidies for reflections on social policy and inequality, both persistent issues on the global agenda, and the role of states and citizens towards them.

Governmental images of social policy were identified by four aspects: diagnostics (forms and causes of inequality); prognostics (effects of inequality and strategies against it); goals (role of social policy); and what authors like Gamson and Modigliani (1989) called "framing devices", such as metaphors or slogans.

Justice

– *Diagnostics*: were classified as unjust inequalities of five types: *class* until 1945, *professional category* (both only in Vargas governments), and, since 1985, those by *region*, *income*, and – after Cardoso – by *race*. Inequalities diagnosed by Vargas were attributed to the disorganization of work (to a lesser extent to individualism, industrialization, and overpopulation). Other causes of inequality were recently referred to as the action of the elites (Itamar), defocusing of social spending (Cardoso), history (Cardoso and Lula), and lack of social protection (Rousseff); such causes were mentioned only superficially outside the inaugural addresses and the annual Messages.

– *Prognostics*: speeches indicated social problems (all governments), political problems, reportedly democracy (especially Itamar and Cardoso), and economic ones (mainly Cardoso and Rousseff). Under Vargas, especially social problems included rural depopulation and marginalization. The Sarney and Itamar governments stressed the insecurity; discrimination was pointed out by the Lula government. The enforcement of rights is the typical prognosis of this image, evident in the defense of more labor laws (Vargas), new benefits (Sarney), food security (Itamar), benefits for workers, the focalization of social spending and affirmative action (Cardoso) and enhancement of minimum wages, food distribution, benefits for the poor and racial equality legislation (Lula and Rousseff).

– *Goals*: enforcing rights has had, in the Vargas years, the goal of organizing labor relations and, since 1985, getting more democracy or citizenship (all governments), mitigating problems such as hunger and misery; and from Lula on, strengthening internal market.

– *Framing devices*: common reference to "social justice", moral condemnation of inequality, and references to rights to combat it. In allusion to the interests of minorities at the root of regional and income inequalities, there was mention of terms like selfishness (Sarney), greed (Collor), ostentation (Itamar), and privilege (Cardoso). With its call for "Workers from Brazil", Vargas reinforced the notion of egalitarianism in the job market.

Modernization

– *Diagnostics*: starting on the 3rd Vargas government (1951-54), attributes the inequalities of income, opportunity, and region to a modernization missed by all. Given its concentrated effect on income, inflation is commonly seen as the main responsible for inequality (an idea less highlighted in the injustice frame). Then there is a constant correlation between economic and social policies. Also, inequality was attributed to the educational system, especially in four terms: Vargas, Sarney – which saw foreign debt as an aggravating factor –, and Cardoso and Lula.

– *Prognostics*: it reiterated the need for the government to intervene in the economy, reduce inflation and create jobs; in education, it indicated the qualification of the population. The impact of economic growth on poverty and inequality was particularly marked by Vargas, Sarney, and Lula, while Collor and Cardoso stressed the adoption of economic policies that sacrifice, and Itamar criticized the wait for the growth of wealth and only then distribute it. Rousseff defended what she defined as a new development model.

– *Goals*: modernization to be achieved through economic and educational policies. Economic development and democracy were considered requirements to end inequalities classified as delays. There was a current articulation between the fight against poverty and the defense of economic stability in the discourse of different governments.

– *Framing devices*: an allusion to "underdeveloped" and – less frequently – "delay" or "social delay", the contrast between inequality and modernization, and repeated links between economic and social policies. The reference to the goal of a "country of the middle class"

was introduced by Lula and Rousseff (1st term). "Brazil without misery", the name of a program in the Rousseff government, suggested the passage from one country to another without misery. The reduction of the state was the beaded goal of Sarney and Collor in discourses on social issues (this idea was expressed by others in different contexts).

Redistribution

– *Diagnostics*: absent in Vargas's years, this image was almost always related to income inequality (it was rare to look at gender inequality as debt with women; other inequalities were framed using previous images). In addition to the causes exposed before, it is added here the neglect of previous governments and regressivity of the tax system (in this case, by the Cardoso and Lula governments, which also indicated income transfer as an advance of focalization of social policy).

– *Prognostics*: egalitarians speeches of Sarney, Cardoso, Lula, and Rousseff governments were in favor of two forms of redistributive actions: agrarian, tax, and social security reforms (agendas more highlighted by the first two) and conditional income transfer programs (most notably between those two most recent governments). Although it was a matter introduced by Cardoso, the focalization of social spending has only been more related to the success of social programs in the following two governments.

– *Goals*: redistribution was more emphasized by its curative effect of reducing present inequalities (as opposed to preventive redistribution, seeking equity through social services and non-fiscal instruments). The goal is to transfer resources such as land and financial aid so that certain groups have living conditions equivalent to those of others.

– *Framing devices*: the idea of "social debt" to be rescued by the redistribution of resources; and the view that the rich owe something to the poor. The so-called "New Republic" government (Sarney term) began considering the "social debt" as "our greatest debt". "The end of the misery is only a beginning" was an idea expressed in the Rousseff government with enough ambiguity to suggest both a priority as a result already achieved.

From the types of framing processes of collective action defined by Benford and Snow (2000) – discursive, strategic, and contested – this study seems to suggest that the three would apply to inequality and social policy frames (the closest to "contention" perhaps is the rhetoric of governments that succeed opponents). The final section highlights the implications of this study for two fields: frame research and inequality.

Final Remarks: Correlating Culture and Inequality

To overcome the ambiguity and imprecision of the theoretical and methodological use of the concept of frames, several frame analyzes were reviewed. This study confirms the multiplicity and the coexistence of frames. Every actor creates meanings on issues such as social policy using their material and symbolic resources. By focusing on the range of governmental meanings, it could be noticed the restriction-possible relationship between culture and behavior reported by cultural sociologists, who have rejected a cause-effect relation in this case. The allusion to the forms of social policy as justice, modernization, or redistribution does not condition the policies to deal with inequality but influences their formulation and execution.

The typology of social policy frames was proposed by focusing on the attributes of the concept, reviewed in Johnston (2002): each one has a content; is a cognitive structure; individual as well as social; it has a fixed and dynamic nature; is based on texts. It could also be closely verified such attributes and checked frame variables such as influence and resonance, as seen by authors such as Benford and Snow (2000). The appropriateness of the concept of frames seems to have been well demonstrated, as the pros of this perspective were highlighted, such as the approach to processes of framing changes, as well as some of its difficulties, such as minimizing the relational aspect of discourses and reducing frames to more traceable and measurable themes.

Emphasized by cultural sociology, the concept of culture as an independent variable proved fruitful here, as I focused on the interactions between framing and governing, although the emphasis falls on meaning-making, and not on the elaboration of policies; future studies on the relations between the images of the governments and their actions can follow this track. It was possible, anyway, to address some political effects of the frames on the trajectory of social policy and inequality in Brazil – notably the relations between references to inequalities in the plans of governments (inaugural addresses, especially) and their respective balance sheets, as the annual Messages. Such correlations were deliberately exposed more tacitly than explicitly, to avoid exhaustive descriptions.

Certain choices of my frame analysis – articulations of diagnostics and prognostics, the emphasis on secondary frames, and attention to framing devices without displaced conclusions and stressing textual minutia – provided an effective use of this concept. A contribution to the research agenda on social policy and inequality has been making use of an analytical perspective based on frames and of a methodological choice – extract interpretations of official discourse – both still little explored by scholars dedicated to both issues. Current culturalist analyses of inequality have focused on popular and elite perceptions of this issue and poverty. This study may be read also as an invitation for more analysis of meaning-making regarding themes such as social policy.

NOTES

1. A comparison with military governments (1964-85), for example, would be inaccurate due to variables such as the lack of electoral calculation in speeches and the authoritarian nature of the regime.

2. After an armed coup in 1930, landowner Getúlio Vargas, a defeated presidential candidate, rose to power under a presidency prolonged by his election in 1934. Three years later, he executed a self-coup, and Brazil became a dictatorship (*Estado Novo* or New State) led by him until 1945, when the military forced his resignation and deposed him after a growing wave of internal discontent. After a victorious presidential campaign, Vargas took office for a democratic presidency in 1951 and governed Brazil until his suicide which put an end to a political crisis in 1954.

3. The news, which at first marginalized protesters, focused on their image and stressed their dissent, began to focus on the presence of communists, violence in protests, etc. Unspoken or not accepted, frames would enable journalists to process large amounts of information quickly, assign it to cognitive categories and package it for efficient relay to the audience.

4. Besides the function of giving a tone to the image display, Tankard (2001) suggests other two views of the frame metaphor: the function of isolating determined material and drawing attention to it (as in Goffman) and how what is known in architecture as a frame, what stands for organizing structure (organizing idea here) on which a narrative is built.

5. The creation of families of codes was initially inspired by some questions from a survey of the Núcleo Interdisciplinar de Estudos sobre Desigualdade (NIED) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ) to capture perceptions of the elites about inequality in Brazil and Uruguay, in 2013.

6. The expected categories referred to as forms of inequalities included 'income'; 'region'; 'educational level'; 'health'; 'opportunities'; 'race'; 'gender'; 'generation'; and 'others'.

7. The expected categories referred to as causes of inequality included 'state'; 'market'; 'civil society'; 'elites'; 'history'; and 'others'.

8. The expected categories referred to as effects of inequality included 'economic ills'; 'social ills'; 'political ills'; and 'others'.

9. The expected categories referred to as public strategies against inequality included 'agrarian reform'; 'employees' participation in profits'; 'more spending in social programs'; 'more deregulation in the economy'; 'more progressive income tax'; 'wealth tax'; 'more efficient social services'; birth control; and 'others'.

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Appendix : *Corpus sources*

Government	Inaugural Address (12 speeches)	Annual Messages (39 documents)
Vargas 1	1930	1935, 1936
Vargas 2	1937	1937
Vargas 3	1951	1951, 1952, 1953, 1954
Sarney	1985	1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990
Collor	1990	1991, 1992
Itamar	1992 (1992-10-05)	1993, 1994 (2 editions that year)
Cardoso	1995, 1999	1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002
Lula	2003, 2007	2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010
Dilma	2011, 2015	2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016

Abstract | Resumo | Résumé

Images of Social Policy in Brazil : A Comparison between Government Frames

Imagens da política social no Brasil: uma comparação entre enquadramentos governamentais

Les images des politiques sociales au Brésil : une comparaison des cadrages gouvernementaux

En. The analysis of official representations of social policy in Brazil illustrates the relevance of the concept of framing, as used by cultural sociologists, in comparative studies. The article focuses on the discourse of federal governments subsequent to the restoration of democracy (1985-2016) and the mandates of Getúlio Vargas, once called "father of the poor" in the 1930's-1950's. Two challenges in framing research are discussed: the nature of the concept (what is framing) and its operationalization (where is it). Having clarified the theoretical and methodological use of the concept, we move on to recognize and compare framings in 12 inaugural speeches and 39 annual accountability reports of the Executive Branch. Government understandings of four aspects of social policy are more closely analyzed: diagnoses, prognoses, goals, and framing devices. Significance attributed to social policy (such as justice, modernization, and redistribution) undergoes major changes, however continuities also appear, such as the correlation between social development and economic development. Additionally, the paper highlights the advantages of this lens, such as addressing processes in the change of framing, and some of its difficulties, such as minimizing the relational aspect of discourses and reducing framings to more traceable and measurable themes. Intersecting culture and politics enable the identification of the political effects of framings on the evolution of social policy and inequality in Brazil – as demonstrates the representations given of inequality in governmental plans and annual reports. Relevant variables are highlighted in the relations between government priorities (e.g., containing inflation and improving public education) and the agenda of reducing inequality. Some choices of this framing analysis - such as linking diagnoses and prognoses, highlighting secondary framing, and paying attention to framing devices rather than textual details - have added to the effectiveness of the concept. This analytical perspective, still little used by scholars working on these topics, contributes to the research agenda on social policy and inequality.

Keywords: framing; social policies; political effects; Getúlio Vargas; restoration of democracy.

Pt. A análise de imagens oficiais da política social no Brasil ilustra a utilidade do conceito de enquadramento, conforme usado por sociólogos culturais, em estudos comparativos. O artigo focaliza o discurso de governos federais posteriores à restauração da democracia (1985-2016) e dos mandatos de Getúlio Vargas, outrora chamado "pai dos pobres", nos anos 1930-1950. Dois desafios na pesquisa de enquadramento são discutidos: natureza do conceito (o que é enquadramento) e sua operacionalização (onde está). Esclarecido o uso teórico e metodológico do conceito, passa-se a reconhecer e comparar enquadramentos em 12 discursos de posse e 39 relatórios anuais de prestação de contas do Executivo. Os entendimentos governamentais de quatro aspectos da política social são analisados mais de perto: diagnósticos, prognósticos, metas e dispositivos de enquadramento. Houve mudanças importantes nos significados atribuídos à política social (como justiça, modernização e redistribuição) e continuidades, como a correlação entre desenvolvimento social e desenvolvimento econômico. O texto também destaca prós dessa perspectiva, como a abordagem dos processos de mudança de enquadramento, e algumas de suas dificuldades, como minimizar o aspecto relacional dos discursos e reduzir os enquadramentos a temas mais rastreáveis e mensuráveis. Ao interrelacionar cultura e política, abordaram-se efeitos políticos dos enquadramentos em trajetos da política social e desigualdade no Brasil – vide as menções à desigualdade nos planos de governos e nos respectivos balanços anuais. São apontadas variáveis relevantes nas relações entre prioridades governamentais (p. ex., contenção da inflação e melhoria da educação pública) e a agenda de redução da desigualdade. Certas opções desta análise

de enquadramento – tais como ligar diagnósticos e prognósticos, realçar enquadramentos secundários e atentar a dispositivos de enquadramento sem frisar minúcias textuais – deram eficácia ao uso do conceito. Uma contribuição à agenda de pesquisa da política social e desigualdade foi recorrer a essa perspectiva analítica ainda pouco usada por estudiosos desses temas.

Palavras-chave: enquadramento; políticas sociais; efeitos políticos; Getúlio Vargas; restauração da democracia

Fr. L'analyse des images officielles des politiques sociales au Brésil illustre la pertinence, pour les études comparatives, du concept de cadrage tel qu'il est utilisé en sociologie de la culture. Cet article se penche sur les discours des gouvernements fédéraux après la restauration de la démocratie (1985-2016) et dans les années 1930-1950, sous les présidences de Getúlio Vargas, alors surnommé « père des pauvres ». Nous nous intéressons ici à deux enjeux des études sur le cadrage : la nature du concept (qu›est-ce que le cadrage) et son opérationnalisation (où se trouve-t-il). Après quelques précisions sur l›utilisation théorique et méthodologique de ce concept, nous identifions et comparons les cadrages utilisés au sein de 12 discours d'investiture et de 39 rapports annuels du pouvoir exécutif. Nous examinons les visions gouvernementales concernant quatre aspects des politiques sociales : les diagnostics, les prévisions, les objectifs et les dispositifs de cadrage. Nous constatons des changements notables dans les significations attribuées aux politiques sociales (sur des sujets comme la justice, la modernisation et la redistribution), mais également des continuités, telles que le lien entre développement social et développement économique. Nous soulignons aussi les avantages de cette approche, comme de pouvoir aborder les processus de changement de cadrage, et certaines de ses difficultés, dont le fait de minimiser l'aspect relationnel des discours et de limiter les cadrages à des thèmes facilement traçables et mesurables. Établir un lien entre culture et politique permet d'appréhender les effets politiques des cadrages au fil de l'évolution des politiques sociales et des inégalités au Brésil – comme en témoignent les références aux inégalités dans les plans gouvernementaux et les bilans annuels. Nous identifions plusieurs variables pertinentes concernant les rapports entre les priorités gouvernementales (maîtriser l'inflation ou améliorer l'enseignement public, par exemple) et l'agenda de réduction des inégalités. Certains choix opérés pour cette analyse de cadrage – tels que relier les diagnostics aux prévisions, faire ressortir les cadrages secondaires et être attentif aux mécanismes de cadrage plutôt qu'aux détails textuels – ont permis au concept de gagner en efficacité. Le recours à cette approche analytique, encore peu fréquent chez les spécialistes du domaine, contribue ainsi à l'agenda de recherche sur les politiques sociales et les inégalités.

Mots-clés : cadrage ; politiques sociales ; effets politiques ; Getúlio Vargas ; restauration de la démocratie