THE BRAZILIAN POLICY AGENDAS: AN ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC POLICY CAPACITY AND DIVERSITY DURING THE 2003-2014 PERIOD

AGENDA GOVERNAMENTAL BRASILEIRA: UMA ANÁLISE DA CAPACIDADE E DIVERSIDADE NAS PRIORIDADES EM POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS NO PERÍODO DE 2003 A 2014

AGENDA GUBERNAMENTAL BRASILEÑA: UN ANÁLISIS DE LA CAPACIDAD Y DIVERSIDAD EN LAS PRIORIDADES EN POLÍTICAS PÚBLICAS EN EL PERÍODO DE 2003 A 2014

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present the first results of a study conducted by the Policy Agendas Project in Brazil. The results presented and discussed here focus on analyses about presidential attention capacity and diversity concerning public policies in three administrations, namely ex-president Lula da Silva's first and second administrations, and ex-president Dilma Rousseff's first administration. These analyses and conclusions corroborate the theoretical precepts of agenda-setting studies which show maintenance or change in public policy priorities, i.e., agenda increment or change periods. The analyses also point to decisive movements in policy agenda capacity, diversity and elasticity, mainly caused by distinct periods of institutional and cognitive friction in the domestic and external enviroments. Finally, they show that the variations occurring in presidential priorities extend far beyond macrosystemic changes arising from partisan and/or partisan-ideological change. Government priority change may, and indeed does, occur within administrations and in same-party administrations.

KEYWORDS: Public policies, policy dynamics, government attention, agenda-setting, messages to the Nacional Congress.

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RESUMO
O presente trabalho tem como objetivo apresentar os primeiros resultados da pesquisa conduzida pelo Laboratório de Agenda Governamental no Brasil. Os resultados a serem apresentados e discutidos no trabalho focalizam análises sobre a capacidade e a diversidade da atenção presidencial sobre políticas públicas em três períodos de governo: primeiro e segundo governos Lula e o primeiro governo Dilma. As análises e conclusões corroboram os preceitos teóricos dos estudos de agenda-setting que evidenciam manutenções e mudanças em prioridades de políticas públicas, ou seja, momentos incrementais e momentos de mudança na agenda. Apontam, ainda, para movimentações decisivas na capacidade, diversidade e elasticidade da agenda governamental, causadas, sobretudo, por distintos momentos de fricção institucional e cognitiva nos ambientes doméstico e externo. Demonstram, por fim, que as variações ocorridas nas prioridades da presidência vão muito além de mudanças macrossistêmicas consequentes de alterações partidárias e/ou de caráter partidário-ideológico. Mudanças em prioridades governamentais podem acontecer e, de fato, ocorrem, dentro dos próprios governos e em governos do mesmo partido.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Políticas públicas, dinâmica de políticas, atenção governamental, agenda-setting, mensagens ao Congresso Nacional.*

RESUMEN
El presente documento tiene como objetivo presentar los primeros resultados de la investigación conducida por el Laboratorio de Agenda Gubernamental en Brasil. Los resultados que se van a presentar y discutir en el trabajo enfocan el análisis sobre la capacidad y la diversidad de la atención presidencial sobre políticas públicas en tres períodos de gobierno: primero y segundo gobierno de Lula y el gobierno de Dilma. Los análisis y conclusiones corroboran con preceptos teóricos importantes de los estudios de agenda-setting que evidencian mantenimientos y cambios de prioridades de políticas públicas, o sea, momentos incrementales y momentos de cambio en la agenda. Señalan también importantes cambios en la capacidad, la diversidad y la elasticidad de la agenda del gobierno causados principalmente por la existencia de distintos momentos de fricción institucional y cognitiva en los ambientes internos y externos. Demuestran, por fin, que las variaciones ocurridas en las prioridades de la presidencia van mucho más allá de cambios macrosistémicos consecuentes de alteraciones partidistas y de carácter partidista-ideológicos. Los cambios en las prioridades gubernamentales pueden ocurrir y, de hecho, ocurren, incluso dentro de los mismos gobiernos y de gobiernos del mismo partido.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Políticas públicas, dinámica de políticas, atención gubernamental, agenda-setting, mensaje al Congreso Nacional*

INTRODUCTION

The international literature on agenda setting can be classified into four main periods (Capella & Brasil, 2015). The first period (1970's) is marked by the study of Cobb and Elder (1971), who sought to explain how demands originated in society (or within the state itself) are filtered by decision makers who end up prioritizing some issues to the detriment of others. The second period (1980-1990) is marked by the emergence of theoretical models that shifted the focus towards the investigation of the intricate relationships between different explanatory variables in the formation of policy agendas. John Kingdon's Multiple Streams model (1984, 2003), as well as the punctuated equilibrium model of Baumgartner and Jones (1993), thus emerge as the main theoretical and methodological innovations in agenda-setting studies. The third period (2000's) is marked by the dissemination of these theoretical models and their application in several case studies in different national contexts. The fourth and most recent literature movement has focused on the study of agendas from comparative perspectives. Research on agenda setting has dedicated to identifying shifts in governmental attention – i.e., agenda shifts – around different public policies over long periods and in different political systems. This effort faces a number of challenges and it has produced a rich debate in the international literature, involving the definition of governmental attention indicators valid for the various political-institutional contexts, the development of categories that are comparatively valid, test

results, among other theoretical and methodological issues.

As a result of the first efforts to apply this literature to explaining and understanding the formation of presidential agendas in Brazil, this paper aims to analyze the capacity and diversity of Brazilian policy agenda from 2003 to 2014. To that end, we intend to analyze the composition of priorities of ex-presidents Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff, and also understand how internal and external factors operate in the change or maintenance of these priorities. We therefore ask: What priority topics did these presidents address? How broad and diverse was the agenda of the Worker's Party (PT) presidential administrations? How can periods of succession, international economic crises and times of political and economic instability be identified as important factors for changing presidents' priorities? These are some of the questions this article poses to the debate on the Brazilian policy agenda.

The article is structured in five sections besides this introduction and the final considerations. In the first part, we resume the main theoretical framework that guides agenda-setting studies and highlight the most recent developments. The second section presents some questions related to the methodological scope of agenda studies, emphasizing aspects faced by scholars in the international literature and the procedures adopted in research conducted in Brazil. In the third section, we focus on the attention indicator selected for this study – i.e, the document Message to the National Congress – and develop some considerations about this document and the form of analysis employed. Next, in the fourth section, we present the concepts of agenda capacity, diversity, and resilience and their importance for understanding presidency priority change and maintenance, which is the main focus of this article. Finally, the fifth and final section presents the analysis' main findings and indicates instances of change and continuity in the capacity and diversity of policy attention over the period.

THE THEORETICAL PATH: WHY AND TO WHAT END SHOULD WE STUDY AGENDA SETTING?

The setting of policy agenda – understood as the set of issues on which government and people related to it focus their attention at a given time (Kingdon, 2003, p. 3) – is one of the central aspects of the process of producing public policies. Considering that attention is a scarce resource (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005) and that both people and organizations set priorities for action, studying the agenda means identifying how government distributes attention over the various existing issues and decides what is a problem to prioritize. (Baumgartner & Jones, 2015). Understanding how some problems are perceived as more important than others at a given time, thereby mobilizing government action, is precisely the central object of agenda studies (Zahariadis, 2016).

Agenda studies have been consolidating in international literature since the 1970's. The pioneering study by Roger Cobb and Charles Elder (1971, 1972) introduces concerns about the theme, differentiating distinct agenda dimensions. Based on a similar view to that of Cobb and Elder, Kingdon (2003) expands the set of actors related to agenda setting by considering not only decision makers within the state but also individuals and

groups linked to them. The Multiple Streams model that he proposed seeks to analyze the making of public policies through three streams (problems, solutions and political context) which can be connected by a public policy entrepreneur who acts at times when windows of opportunity make change viable in the policy agenda and in the decision-making agenda (Capella, 2007; Kingdon, 2003; Zahariadis, 2014).

Frank Baumgartner and Bryan Jones (1993) later developed a theoretical model dedicated to explaining how agendas undergo long periods of stability as well as processes of rapid and abrupt change. The punctuated equilibrium model they proposed founds its explanation for agenda change on the functioning dynamics of policy monopolies – institutional structures capable of maintaining balance and inhibiting change over long periods (negative feedback). On the other hand, when these monopolies break down, thus making way for new understandings and actors, rapid agenda changes (positive feedback) can be seen (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; True, Jones, & Baumgartner, 1999). Information processing is defined as "collecting, assembling, interpreting and prioritizing signals from the environment" (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005, p. 7) and it is related to an increase (or decrease) in policymakers' attention to a policy and, consequently, with change in the agenda. The way this selective attention is handled to focus attention on some issues is the key to explaining punctiations in the political system. Thus, the authors moved from a punctuated equilibrium model, which provided explanations for change in policy monopolies linked to studied cases (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993), to a general punctuation thesis (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), a more general approach that highlights the role of information processing in the political system as a whole.

The analysis extends from studies originally concentrated in the United States to various national contexts, thus allowing not only research on agenda change in those countries, but also comparative studies, thereby broadening the understanding of the limits and possibilities of theories on agenda and policy change in several countries (Baumgartner, Green-Pedersen, & Jones, 2006; Baumgartner, Jones, & Mortensen, 2014; Baumgartner, Jones, & Wilkerson, 2011). These studies have pointed to the feasibility of explanations for stability and change in public policy based on the formulations of Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 2002, 2015; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005) in different political systems. Despite institutional differences, dynamics of change in public policy have been found with the characteristic punctuation in several countries (Baumgartner et al., 2014; Brasil, 2017). This new time in agenda-setting studies in the field of public policy, involving the comparative analysis of agendas in different countries, is still developing and faces a series of challenges involving methodological issues (linked to the definition of variables common to the various political contexts, the development of comparatively valid categories, results testing, among other issues) (Brasil, 2017; Capella, Brasil, & Sudano, 2015). Despite these challenges, research has shown that the theoretical and methodological framework built on the formulations of Baumgartner and Jones is applicable to any political system and allows for comparison between agendas of different countries (John, 2006).

THE METHODOLOGICAL PATH: HOW TO STUDY AGENDA SETTING?

From a methodological point of view, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) propose a research design capable of combining two types of studies: longitudinal studies, which investigate a single issue in its various development stages over time and are suitable for analyzing how themes enter and leave agendas, but are difficult to generalize or compare; and the second type, i.e., cross-sectional studies which seek to analyze several issues at a single time, thus allowing for explanations as to why some issues reach a high level of attention in the agenda, while others remain unattended. For the authors, both perspectives are important and it is possible to combine them (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993, p. 47). In order to develop an approach that combines the two types of study, the authors sought to identify a set of indicators that could allow observing and comparing different cases over a long period. The initial version of the Punctuated Equilibrium model considered the following data sources for agenda research: public hearings to analyze congressional attention around each issue; media coverage for understanding the context around an issue that makes it into the agenda; and, in some cases, public opinion data on different issues. To analyze these data, the authors applied a methodology based on content analysis techniques that allowed examining large portions of text material (Baumgartner, Jones, & Macleod, 1998, p. 2). In addition to organizing data into tables, the authors relied on regression analysis to observe the dynamics of change in the agenda. Thus, they were able to analyze stability and change in the agenda for particular issues such as nuclear power, smoking and tobacco, pesticides, among others, considering relatively long periods.

In order to structure the study in Brazil, we initially defined three data sets related to the Executive and Legislative branches and the media, and the analysis was restricted to the period from 2003 to 2014 (Capella et al., 2015). Focusing on the executive branch, the Messages to Congress indicate policy priorities, as will be seen in detail in the next section. This paper looks particularly into the 12 annual documents related to the Messages to the National Congress which total 1,686 data.

MESSAGES TO CONGRESS AS AN INDICATOR OF PRESIDENTIAL ATENTION

Considering that the president is a central actor in the agenda-setting process (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 2003), content analysis of his messages is one of the most widely used indicators in the literature of agenda studies. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) use as presidential attention indicators the Presidential State of the Union Speeches annually delivered to the American Congress. As for the set of elements that could indicate levels of presidential attention in Brazil, we sought to identify a document that meets the following criteria: a) it translates the president's priorities for a given period; b) it is periodically, systematically and frequently issued, thus allowing comparisons over time. The document Message to the National Congress results from the constitutional requirement that the President of the Republic send, at the opening of the National Congress' legislative sessions, a document containing a message and a plan of government "presenting the situation

of the country and requesting the measures deemed necessary" (CF88, article 84, XI).

The document consists of an introduction and a set of chapters in which actions related to major topics of national interest are dealt with. The introduction is usually read at each year's opening of the National Congress' works; it contains mentions of specific public policies and reflections on the country, thus summarizing the document and highlighting the challenges and priorities for the year. The Message to Congress has been understood as a document that corresponds to the annual presidential speech (state of the union) delivered in several countries, according to the study of Arnold, Doyle and Wiesehomeier (2017) on the role of presidents in legislative activity in Latin American countries (2017). Therefore we believe that, in a context marked by scarce attention, those were the topics considered most important by the president at that time, as they were selected to be part of his speech before the Legislative branch.

To prepare the document analysis, the text was divided into sentences. These were subdivided into fragments, considering the mention of a specific public policy as a parameter. For example, the sentence "Our priorities in 2004 are job creation and investments in social projects and infrastructure" was broken down into three fragments: the first one is "Our priorities in 2004 are job creation" as it mentions employment policy; the second is "and investments in social projects", since social policies stand out; and finally, "and infrastructure", as this section highlights infrastructure policy.

The coding process was based on a codebook structure with 19 codes or variables. In this structure, each code represents a particular sector policy, as shown in Table 1. Therefore, our analysis will be concentrated on the codes according to the table below, which we used to encode the 1686 sentences extracted from the National Congress Messages' introduction texts.

Table 1. Sector Policy Macrocodes

CODES AND SECTOR POLICIES	
1 – MACROECONOMY	12 – JUSTICE AND INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION
2 - CIVIL RIGHTS, MINORITIES' RIGHTS AND FREEDOM	13 – SOCIAL POLICIES
3 – HEALTH	14 – LOCAL DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING
4 – AGRICULTURE, STOCKBREEDING AND FISHING	15 – FINANCIAL SECTOR, INDUSTRY AND TRADE
5 - LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT	16 – DEFENSE
6 – EDUCATION AND CULTURE	17 – SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION
7 – ENVIRONMENT	18 –FOREIGN TRADE
8 – ENERGY	19 – FOREIGN POLICY
10 – TRANSPORTATION	20 – GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
	21 – NATURAL RESOURCES

Source: Bevan (2014).

The coding process was conducted manually. To ensure the validity of the procedure, the documents were coded twice by different individuals. In cases where the two coders differed on the categorization, the research group analyzed each situation to define the most appropriate classification.

A relevant methodological issue posed by the document corpus we analyzed concerns the need for standardization of the analyzed documents, particularly regarding the documents' length variation. In a comparative analysis where indicator frequency over time is used, the use of raw data may skew or even invalidate the analysis. One way of balancing these distortions so as to make longitudinal analysis possible is by treating data in the form of percentages, thus considering each annual document as the universe of analysis, which represents 100% of data. Based on this concept, each coded policy will represent a percentage of attention on that document.

AGENDA CAPACITY, DIVERSITY AND ELASTICITY

Agenda capacity is one of the main factors affecting governments' concrete action to turn their preferences into results, into actual public policies. As the agenda setting approach illustrates, there is a permanent imbalance between the wide range of issues requiring attention and the agenda's finite size, meaning that most issues often receive little or no attention. In a context of economic recession, for example, characterized by rising public and fiscal deficits and unemployment, there is little room on government's agenda for other issues, despite the urgency in so many other fields such as education, health or the environment. The most important issue at this particular time is to overcome economic recession, which means that other major political reforms, such as expanding the welfare state or dealing with growing social inequalities and in-

creasing urban violence, will move to the background compared to these most pressing issues (Chaques, Palau, & Baumgartner, 2015; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005).

As for the concept of agenda diversity, it does not address the number of topics in the agenda, but describes how attention is distributed over possible issues, thus providing a measure of the variation in the attention that forms the agenda. When we examine agenda capacity and diversity, the scarcity of space in policy priorities means that administrations sometimes fail to implement even their top priorities. This is because they are dealing with environments of great political, institutional and cognitive friction over the interpretation and solution of problems. Examples of such environments call for building political bases, time and resources dealing with information and decision costs.

Over time, however, the list of urgent problems changes, and the agenda opens for some policy reforms that could not have been done in other periods. New issues arise, more space is made for new topics and new policies. Actors step in and present their demands, problems and alternatives. Not that these issues were not important before, or that these actors did not exist, but simply because other crises were more urgent, and there was no room for more issues and actors in the agenda. Some factors, such as domestic and international economic stability or high transaction costs in times of transition, are enough to increase or reduce agenda capacity and policy diversity at a given time (Baumertner & Jones, 2002; Jones & Baumgartner, 2012; Chaques, Palau, & Baumgartner, 2015; Green-Perdersen, 2007).

This means that agenda capacity and diversity are reduced when there are severe crises, very important issues and low political cohesion on alternatives and solutions. At the same time that capacity and diversity increase as democracy consolidates, the foundations of governability become more solid, and crises give room for a milder, changeable environment that is open for new actors and demands. That is when new actors come into play and the relationships of, and possibilities of action by, administrations become more promising and plural (diverse).

ANALYSES OF MESSAGES TO CONGRESS (FROM 2003 TO 2014): MAIN RESULTS

After processing data mapped in the Messages to the National Congress and converting them into percentage values, some types of analyzes were performed. The first is characterized by the capacity of the agenda in which we mapped the number of topics that appear in each document and also examined the frequency of each topic (code) over time. In this type of study, we evidenced maintenance and changes in the attention expressed in the analyzed documents in relation to each of the codes that represent different sector policies. The second analysis is performed through diversity and elasticity studies in which we use Shannon's H entropy to measure the level of subject diversity for each document. We adapted Shannon's H entropy measurement from information theory to estimate attention diversity in the agenda (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Shannon's H is a probabilistic measure of attention dissemination that measures the distribution of attention over the studied codes, i.e., the

relative concentration or dispersion of data. In this study, we use Shannon's H entropy index based on the natural logarithm (Euler number: e)

$$H(X) = -\sum_{i=1}^{n} p(x_i) \times \ln\left(p(x_i)\right),$$

where xi represents the dimension (each code or subcode), p(xi) refers to the proportion of attention received by x, ln(p(x)) is the natural logarithm of the proportion of attention received, and n is the total of codes or subcodes under analysis.

Table 2. Distribution of attention to codes over the years and by administration

	Lula da Silva's 1st Administration				Lula da Silva's 2nd Administration				Dilma Rousseff's 1st Administration			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
1_Macroeconomy	13%	15%	13%	11%	33%	13%	31%	35%	11%	18%	12%	8%
2_ Civil Rights, Minorities' Rights and Freedom	9%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	5%
3_Health	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	8%	8%	6%	2%
4_ Agriculture, Stockbreeding and fishing	0%	0%	9%	6%	0%	1%	3%	0%	1%	2%	4%	5%
5_ Labor and Employment	0%	9%	4%	4%	4%	3%	1%	1%	3%	6%	2%	2%
6_ Education and Culture	0%	3%	4%	11%	5%	12%	0%	6%	12%	9%	8%	10%
7_The Environment	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	6%	1%	2%	1%
8_Energy	0%	0%	1%	7%	4%	5%	1%	3%	6%	0%	6%	4%
10_Transportation	0%	0%	0%	3%	6%	4%	3%	1%	3%	5%	10%	7%
12_ Justice and Public Administration	4%	6%	3%	0%	1%	5%	1%	3%	8%	7%	5%	6%
13_ Social Policies	9%	18%	13%	18%	20%	11%	19%	13%	13%	10%	8%	6%
14_ Local Development and Housing	0%	0%	3%	11%	4%	2%	0%	4%	4%	4%	2%	1%
15_ Financial Sector, Industry and Trade	0%	0%	9%	8%	1%	0%	13%	6%	2%	4%	4%	3%
16_Defense	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3%	1%	4%	2%	1%
17_ Science, Technology and Communications	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	4%	3%
18_ Foreign Trade	0%	3%	6%	4%	6%	4%	6%	3%	1%	2%	1%	3%
19_ Foreign Policy	9%	6%	20%	6%	5%	20%	13%	10%	5%	8%	9%	16%
20_ Government and Public Administration	57%	40%	14%	10%	10%	12%	8%	9%	16%	9%	10%	15%
21_ Natural Resources	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	0%	1%	3%	2%
Number of Raw Data/Capacity	23	33	70	72	82	94	72	69	192	218	410	351
Number of Introduction Pages	3	2	8	2	2	2	3	3	5	6	15	10
Topics Representing 50% of Total	1	2	4	4	2	4	2	3	4	5	6	5
Diversity	1,36	1,72	2,29	2,35	2,12	2,40	1,97	2,15	2,62	2,61	2,72	2,65

Note: Data cover the Introduction to Messages to the National Congress from 2003 to 2014. Percentages total 100% in the columns, indicating the relative share of attention for all subtopics. The last few lines show, respectively, the capacity, the number of pages in each annual document, the number of topics that make up half the total, and the diversity calculated through Shannon's H entropy. Moreover, considering that the number of variables is 19, the maximum possible diversity is ln(19) = 2.95

In a longitudinal analysis that considers how attention to indicators is distributed over the years, the scenario presented in Table 2 allows some considerations: the first one is related to the concentration of topics making up 50% of total values and the diversity of annual attention. Regarding the first analysis of concentration, it is important to note how indices change and capacity and diversity increase over the years. In 2003, the first year of Lula da Silva's administration, a single indicator (government and public administration) accounts for 57% of the introduction to the Message to Congress that year (read by Lula at the opening of the legislative session), which shows a high concentration of the presidency's attention on issues related to the federation pact, the relationship between branches, public administration, and the role of government.

Results for Lula's first year in office strongly dialogue with agenda setting theory as the period is characterized by a great change in the country's partisan politics scenario, with the first victory of the Workers' Party for the leadership of the Federal Executive Branch. The period, marked by great apprehension and fear on the part of some segments of society both in the domestic environment and in foreign affairs, is characterized by a small, low-capacity, highly concentrated and extremely targeted agenda. As data show, priorities are related to the construction of political foundations within the institutional environment, the dialogue on inter-institution relations and the relationship between the Executive and Legislative Branches as evidenced by the massive emergence of topics linked to the government itself and to internal administration in a broad sense, with scarce sector-specific mentions or thematic propositions. These findings are explained by the high costs of decisions, information and transactions typical of moments of rutpure and major changes, such as occurred in Lula's election in 2003.

Over the years, still during the first Lula administration, this indicator grows less and less concentrated, thereby showing greater stability in the internal and external environments and growing economic and political conditions for opening the agenda, such as reducing institutional and cognitive frictions, lower decision and information costs, as well as government action in proposing new priority topics. In 2004, two indicators account for more than 50% of the attention in the document analyzed. The same indicator, government and public administration, represents 40% of the action on that year's messages and, combined with macroeconomics (15%), represents a slight reduction in concentration. In 2005 and 2006, the concentration is even more diluted, and new indicators appear in government's priorities, totaling four indicatores which together make up 50% of the attention in that period. In 2005, foreign policy and social policies figure among the indicators with highest levels of attention. In 2006, education policies and local development and housing policies are highlighted.

The evolution of Lula's first administration is a great example of expansion of agenda capacity, with an increase in thematic diversity. Capacity rises from 23 to 72 data from 2003 to 2006, the number of topics that concentrate 50% of the president's attention rises from one in 2003 to four in 2006, and the diversity index, which ranges from 0 to 2.95, rises from 1.36 to 2.35 in the same period. Institutional crises and times of concentrated

attention give way, over time, to a more plural and diverse agenda, with new sectoral proposals and new actors with great relevance in the president's priorities, thus characterizing a period of high elasticity of government agenda.

As for 2007, the first year of Lula's second administration, there is a new increase in concentration, with increased attention on macroeconomics and social policies. That year, these two indicators together account for over 50% of the attention in the Messages to Congress. In 2008, the attention pattern is quite different from the other years of Lula's second administration. Foreign policy becomes the indicator with greatest attention, and although macroeconomics remains among the presidential priorities, its percentage of attention falls sharply. Two other topics make up 50% of the attention in 2008: education and government and public administration policies. In 2010, the growth of attention on macroeconomic policies increases the concentration of attention in that year's Message to the National Congress. Social policies and foreign policy add to the three indicators representing half of the document's attention. These findings are directly related to the strength of the external agenda – especially the international economic crisis that affected the largest economies from 2007 to 2010 – in the national agenda. Brazil's increased participation in the external arena, which resulted from the country's good economic performance, brought to the domestic agenda priorities that did not exist in other years, as shown in the priorities for 2008 and 2009, in which foreign policy and economy concentrate 50% of presidential attention.

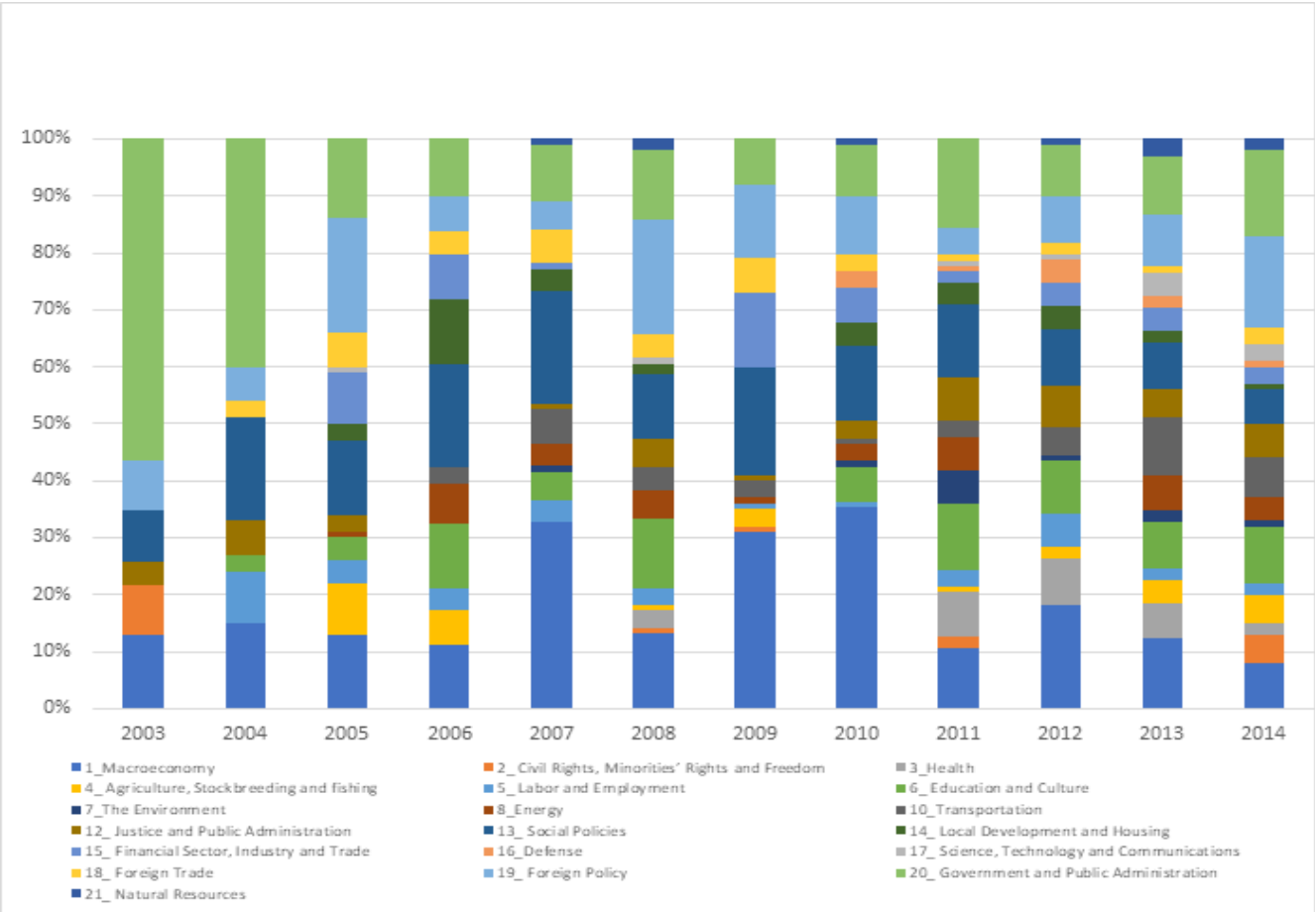
In 2011, with Dilma Rousseff's administration, concentration decreases, while the size of analyzed data increases significantly. If during Lula's administrations, two or three indicators accounted for 50% of the attention in the analyzed documents, in Rousseff's administration, that percentage is only reached by adding five or six different sector policies. In addition to maintaining macroeconomics, social policies, government and public administration and education, other key policies also appear in the agenda: in 2012, health policies and justice and internal administration policies; in 2013, there is a peak in transportation policies, which figure as the second focus of attention in the period. The same pattern is found the following year, 2014.

Data obtained on the capacity and priorities of Rousseff's administration open new avenues for analyzing government agenda in the studied period. Three points are relevant and deserve attention: the first relates to an expansion in agenda capacity, with several topics not previously mentioned appearing in the introduction text of Rousseff's administration, such as health, defense and transportation policies. The second point shows a concomitant increase in diversity, i.e., in addition to being bigger, the agenda is also broader and less concentrated. Finally, the third point also shows an inversion of priority topics compared to those in Lula's first and second administrations. These elements can lead us to various scenarios that explain such changes. Some of them are explained by focusing events such as the rise of transport policy issues and the proximity to major sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games, or even the Demonstrations of June 2013. Other policies, however,

come from the government itself, such as health policies starting in 2011, without the need for an external factor.

The last line in Table 2 presents diversity data for each year calculated with maximum diversity = 2.95. Except for 2009, where there is a decline in diversity, we can see an almost continuous process of growth in the diversity of topics that caught the presidency's attention in the initial section of the Messages to the National Congress. In 2003, the first year of Lula's administration, the low diversity is portrayed by an entropy indicator equal to 1.36. At the other end, the two last years of Rousseff's administration show the highest diversity indices, with values close to 2.73 and 2.65, very close to the maximum diversity of 2.95. In agenda studies, diversity plays an extremely important role in understanding policymakers' priorities. The graph below represents this difference in attention diversity over time.

Graph 1. Distribution of attention to codes over the 2003-2014 period



Note: Data cover the Introduction to the Messages to the National Congress from 2003 to 2014. Percentages add up to 100% in the columns, indicating the relative share of attention to all subtopics.

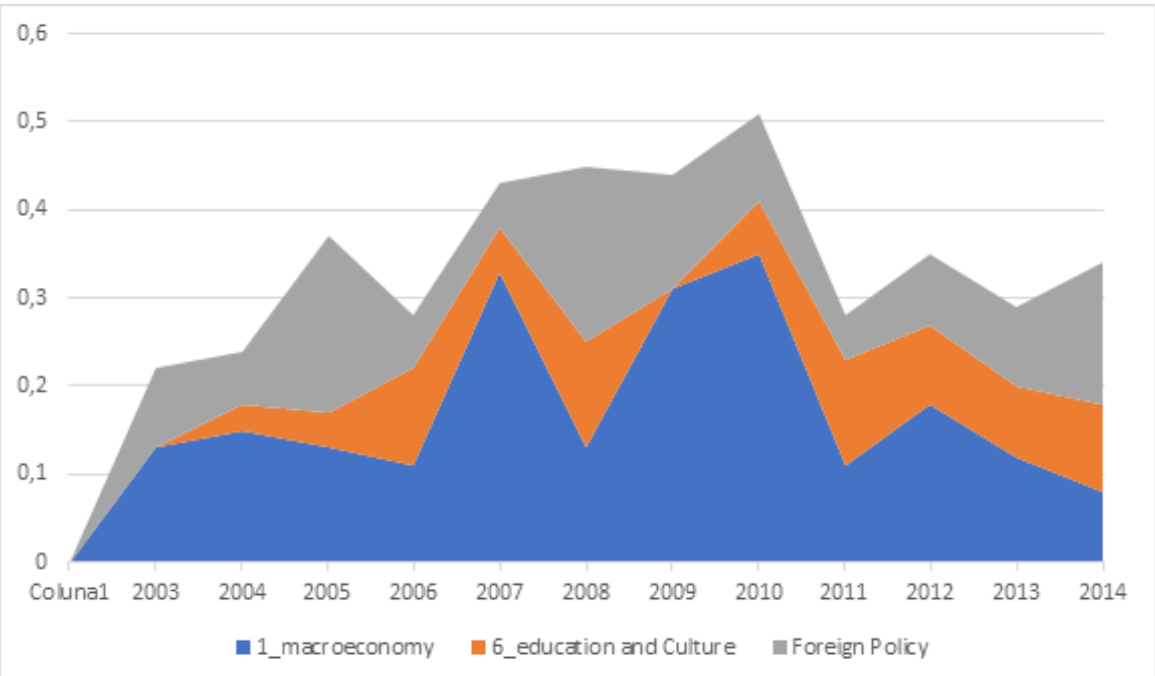
Graph 1 illustrates the dynamics of attention on various policies that captured the presidency's attention in the Messages to Congress. In this representation, each of the 19 indicators makes up a fraction of the attention, and together they account for 100% of the annual document analyzed. The more attention on an indicator, the larger its size in

the bar, just as the more colors and more divisions in the bar, the more indicators will be present in that document. By combining also concentration and diversity indicators, this graph allows analyzing the longitudinal behavior of attention on each indicator over time. Through this analysis, it is possible to see which indicators keep a constant concentration of the presidents' attention and which ones come in and out of their priority list.

Briefly resuming the general thesis of punctuation, we selected sector policies of the studied administrations in order to illustrate three types of government policy attention behavior. The first example is represented by the punctuated equilibrium itself, i.e., policies that, for different reasons, remain stable in presidential attention for long periods, but at some point have a peak of attention (Graph 2). The second behavior illustrates incrementalism, i.e., policies that receive attention from administrations, but stably and with small, incremental changes over time (Graph 3). The third and last behavior pattern is related to policies that do not enter the agenda or occupy an insignificant place in the analyzed priorities (Graph 4).

The policies that make up the macroeconomics, foreign policy and education indicators form a set with the highest levels of attention and the highest degree of permanence over the analyzed period. However, attention to these policies cannot be said to be balanced and constant over time. For example, the average attention on the macroeconomics indicator is 18%, but there is a peak of attention on this topic from 2007 to 2010, reaching 33%. As for foreign policy, the average of 16% is characterized by peaks of 20% and points as low as 9%.

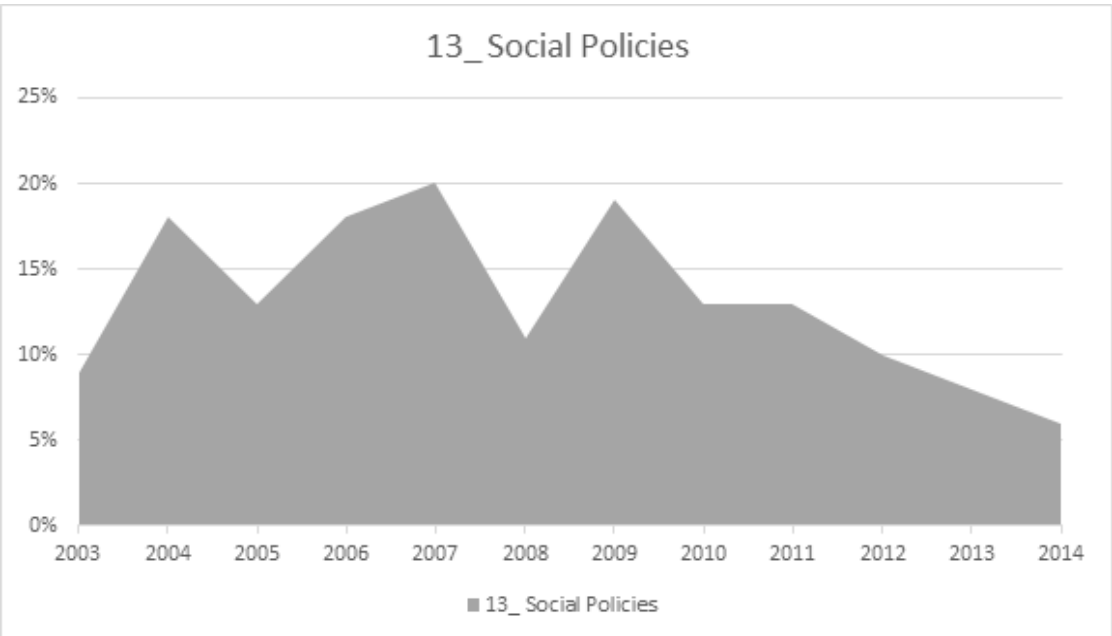
Graph 2. Attention to the macroeconomic, foreign policy and education indicators over time



The graph dispersion in the previous image shows, for macroeconomics, education and foreign policy, a behavior with three phases: the first, which includes the first Lula administration, from 2003 to 2006, is marked by a period of balanced and stable attention to these topics. One can see, for these three indicators, moderate and constant levels of attention over the first four years analyzed. The second phase, which occurs in 2007, 2010 and 2012, shows a break in the balance of attention on these indicators, thus changing the profile characterized in the first phase. Punctuation in equlibrium is demonstrated by attention peaks that reach twice their mean value. Finally, the third phase is characterized by the return of balance and maintenance of mean attention values, thus setting a scenario close to that found in the first phase, prior to the punctuation. Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 2005) describe this behavior as typical of policy change processes. In the selected cases, the change in governmental attention can be explained by several factors that would require a case-by-case analysis. However, the literature shows that change in attention can be caused by factors such as staff changes, position changes, new actors entering or leaving the scenario, focusing events, change in the international arena, economic crises, and the emergence of new technologies.

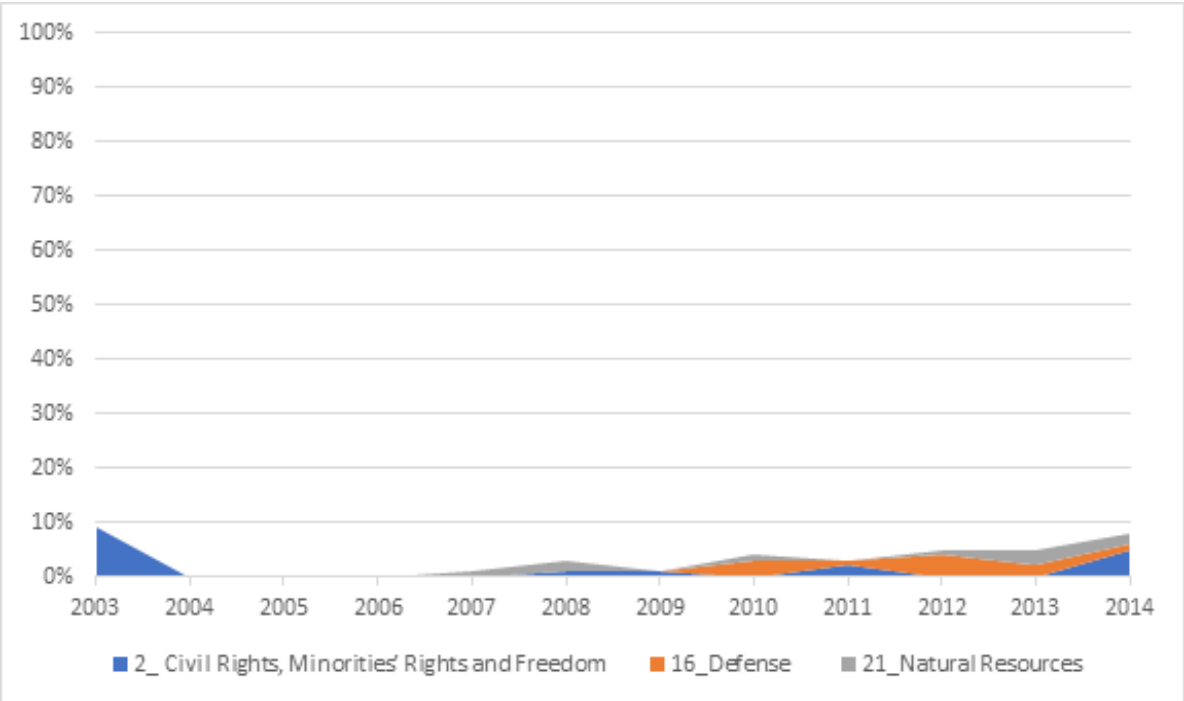
Another type of behavior is characterized by incrementalism. According to Baumgartner and Jones (1993, 2005), such times are marked by minor adjustments and gradual changes in policy. The graphical representation of incremental periods shows continuity and balance in the attention dedicated to an indicator. A clear example of this can be seen in the analysis of sector policies over the period analyzed. Despite small upward or downward movements, there are no major punctuations on the attention to that policy or declines that could mean a barrier to the entrance of the topic into the presidency's agenda.

Graph 3. Attention to the Social Policies indicator over time



Finally, another pattern of attention to indicators can be seen in policies concerning natural resources, defense and civil rights, minorities' rights and freedom. In these cases, there is little attention from policymakers, including periods of blocking to or absence of these issues among the priorities set out in the introduction to the Messages to Congress. Graph 4 illustrates the case of these three indicators.

Graph 4. Attention to indicators natural resources, defense and civil rights, minorities' rights and freedom over time



Another way to analyze data is by administration, rather than by year. Table 3 systematizes data according to the three administrations included in the temporal scope of this study: Lula's first administration (2003-2006); Lula's second administration (2007-2010); Rousseff's first administration (2011-2014).

Table 3. Distribution of attention on codes by administration

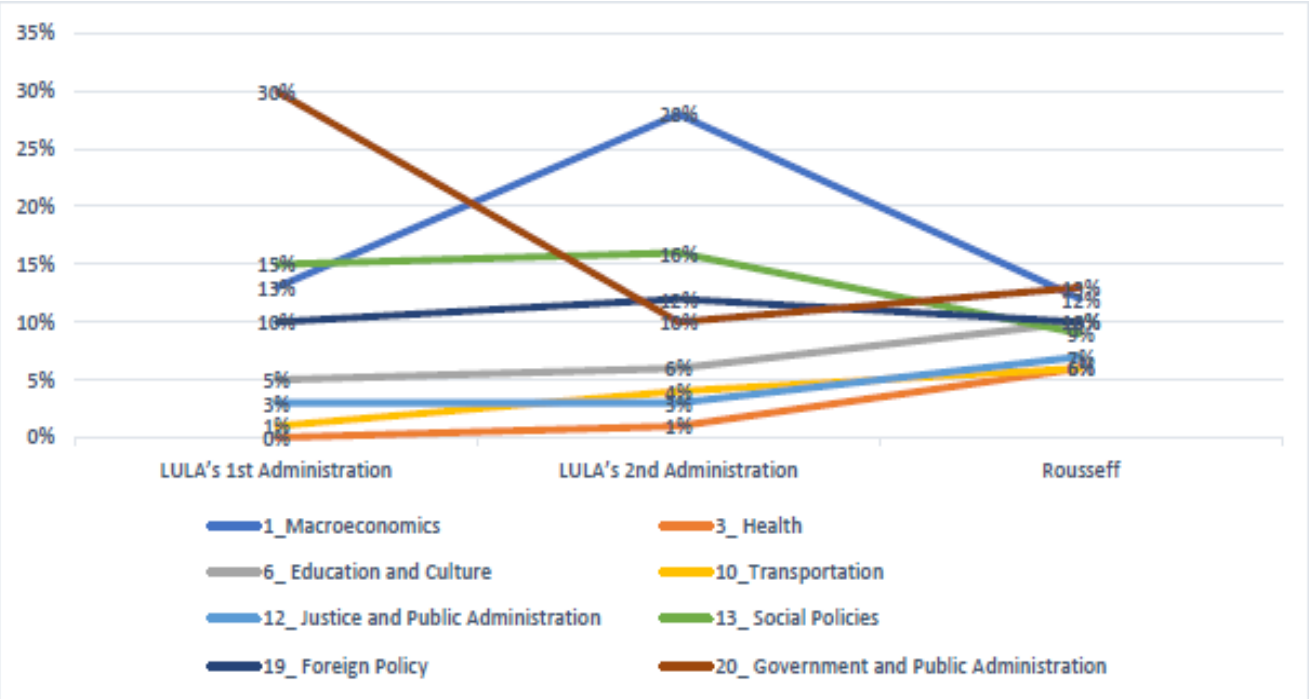
	LULA's 1st Administration	LULA's 2nd Administration	Rousseff	Mean
1_Macroeconomics	13%	28%	12%	18%
2_ Civil Rights, Minorities' Rights and Freedom	2%	1%	2%	2%
3_ Health	0%	1%	6%	2%
4_ Agriculture, Stockbreeding and Fishing	4%	1%	3%	3%
5_ Labor and Employment	4%	2%	3%	3%
6_ Education and Culture	5%	6%	10%	7%
7_ Environment	0%	1%	3%	1%
8_Energy	2%	3%	4%	3%
10_Transportation	1%	4%	6%	4%
12_ Justice and Public Administration	3%	3%	7%	4%
13_ Social Policies	15%	16%	9%	13%
14_ Local Development and Housing	4%	3%	3%	3%
15_ Financial Sector, Industry and Trade	4%	5%	3%	4%
16_Defense	0%	1%	2%	1%
17_ Science, Technology and Communitcation	0%	0%	2%	1%
18_ Foreign Trade	3%	5%	2%	3%
19_ Foreign Policy	10%	12%	10%	11%
20_ Government and Public Administration	30%	10%	13%	18%
21_ Natural Resources	0%	1%	2%	1%

In this scenario, we can see the policies that had greater and less attention in the introduction to the Messages to the National Congress by administration. Starting with policies receiving less attention, it is worth noting some behaviors. Throughout the three administrations analyzed, policies on civil rights, minorities' rights and freedom, natural resources, science, technology and communications and the environment are the ones that concentrate least presidential attention in the Messages to Congress. Particularly with regard to the Lula administration, it is worth noting the low priority given to health policies, a historically relevant sector for Brazil, which comes to receive more attention in the first two years of Rousseff's administration.

In order to map the policies with greater attention, we adopted the limit of 5% for each administration's total, i.e., indicators with more than 5% of attention in each administration are considered the most prominent. In Lula's first term, attention is focused on four different policies: government and public administration; social policies; macroeconomics; and foreign policy. Though attention percentages in Lula's second administration are more diluted, they still indicate continuity in relation to the policies prioritized in his previous administration. However, percentages are reversed, thereby changing the order of attention: macroeconomics becomes the indicator with greatest attention, followed by social policies, foreign policy and government and public administration policy, the indicator with greatest

attention in his first term. There is also the growth and inclusion of a new topic, which thus receives 6% of the presidency's attention in the analyzed document: education policies and the major reforms in Brazilian higher education conducted by the then Education Minister Fernando Haddad. Finally, the Rousseff administration shows an even more diversified scenario in which attention is less concentrated, with the inclusion of new priority topics which add to those of the previous administrations: health, justice and internal administration and transportation. Graph 5 below shows the behavior of these indicators over the three administrations.

Graph 5. Variation in the attention to sector policies by administration (2003-2014)



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the many existing problems and the limited capacity for attention available to each of them, the agenda setting process is related to how attention is allocated (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Agenda theories show that when no attention is dedicated to a topic, there is no expectation of change in public policy (Baumgartner & Jones, 2015). Moreover, leading theorists on agenda-setting and public policy change point out that there are some triggers with a greater potential for promoting such changes. These include: turnover, when there are important changes in legislative and executive positions, new election periods with change of representatives; focusing events such as major natural disasters, isolated crises and events of large public mobilization; and national mood, described as a time of political and economic stability and good institutional climate for change.

Data analyzed in this paper strongly dialogue with these theories, and also with the factors that can cause change in presidential priorities and, consequently, in government agenda. Based on this, we can draw three conclusions from the analysis performed here: the first is linked to periods of greater cognitive and institutional friction, mainly characterized by times of macrosystemic changes in which there are significant changes in the overall situation. An example of these changes or possibility of changes is election periods and the very election of Lula, in 2003. During this period, there was a great rupture in the partisan scenario concerning the top of the Brazilian executive branch, particularly in ideological terms. This turnover acts directly on the national mood, and apprehension in various sectors of society, especially in the economic elites, creates barriers and requires adaptation by the governmental agenda of Lula's first administration (2003-2006). It is this national feeling of distrust and insecurity that causes the agenda capacity and diversity to grow smaller, more closed and practically focused on building an internal and institutional environment conducive to democratic governability. High information costs and high decision costs are typical of environments with high institutional and cognitive friction, resulting in low agenda capacity and low diversity of priorities. This relationshipo is shown not only by the agenda's size and low diversity, but also by the topics that occupy the priorities in the first few years of Lula's administration: government and internal administration and macroeconomics. Also concerning the relationship between friction and agenda capacity, the longitudinal analysis clearly shows the incremental and progressive changes within the PT administrations. The temporal evolution is marked by increased agenda capacity and greater plurality of topics in administrations' priorities, while more actors, more problems and more propositions emerge in the governmental agenda. This change could only occur because government foundations were built and economic and political stabilization was achieved both in the domestic scenario and in international relations, as well as in Brazil's relationship with international market and politics.

The second conclusion we can draw from results refers to the cross-sectional analysis, in which we selected some specific policy sectors so as to analyze and understand their behavior over time. Before we get to the conclusions on this topic, it is worth noting

that this paper conducts a macroanalysis, thus spotting change or continuity in the attention to policies. Each change in each public policy or policy sector would require a more focused analysis via case study, with a greater emphasis on the particular sectors. With the kind of analysis performed and lenses used here, we can only indicate and characterize policies' behavior, as well as propose future case studies in order to better understand these sectors. Back to the second conclusion, we selected some cases of interest found in the data analysis in order to demonstrate the power of focusing events to change government attention: the international economic crisis (2007-2010) and the large sporting events (2014). The second year of Lula's second administration, 2008, is marked by a major inflection in the behavior of the agenda. That year, the agenda capacity decreased along with a sharp reduction in the diversity of topics prioritized by the president. The historical series showed steady growth in both indicators (capacity and diversity), but in 2008 there is a pattern of concentration on macroeconomics and foreign policy. A brief, closer look at the period and the data shows that the causal factor of this agenda reduction is related to characteristics of the international economic scenario, particularly the global crisis that lasted from 2007 to 2011, but peaked in 2008 and 2009. Brazil's growing role in the global economic scenario and the crisis that challenged the world's major economies caused this focusing event (crisis) to have a direct impact on the presidency's priorities. The same happens with the abrupt rise of transport policies in the Rousseff administration from 2013 to 2014. Focusing events like the proximity to major sporting events such as the Football World Cup and the Olympic Games, which would take place in the following years, leveraged the topic, which had had low relevance to the presitential agenda in previous years. Moreover, we cannot disregard the focusing event of the June 2013 Demonstrations, which involved protests in several Brazilian cities, caused national repercussions and increased attention on transportation issues.

The third and final conclusion is therefore related to an overview of the three Worker's Party administrations. According the data we mapped and analyzed, one can conclude that changes in the rulers' priorities and changes in the government agenda do not occur only due to macrosystemic changes, such as change of political parties and their left-center-right ideological spectrum. Such changes certainly affect the priorities and features of the government agenda, but that does not imply that same-party administrations, with the same or different rulers, have the same priorities and the same agenda disposition. Internal and external factors build and deconstruct coalitions, demand immediate response and the rapid rise of topics to presidents' priorities. Internal agendas, choosing and changing ministers, the country's economic performance, relationships with the global and international environment are also decisive for setting and changing presidential priorities, far beyond the political party, even though it exerts some degree of cohesion to the analyzed administrations.

In future studies, we intend to combine these results with other indicators of attention of the Executive Branch and other actors in the political system. The method used allows extending the historical series of the analysis, which will allow observing patterns of continuity or rupture with regard to policies

in the agendas of different administrations. Comparative analyzes between the Brazilian government's attention to specific policies and the priorities defined by other national governments can be performed using similar studies as a parameter. Data generated in the study may be combined with other indicators of attention in subsequent studies and be used to analyze specific cases or changes in the attention pattern in time series.

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