Article

Brazilian policy agenda: priorities and changes in the dynamics of attention on the federal budget distribution (2000-2021)

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Studies on policy agenda have adopted several indicators to measure the attention and priorities of governments to analyze the processes of policy change and policy dynamics. Based on the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) applied on the patterns of policy change, the distribution of the public budget has stood out as one of the instruments that best express the levels of attention and priority for governments in different sectors. This study seeks to investigate the pattern of government attention on the federal budget distribution in Brazil. Thus, this work maps the dynamics of government attention on the distribution of the federal approved budget over the last two decades (2000-2021), identifying (i) what are the percentage levels of attention to the different sectors of public policies over time and (ii) the conjunctural and institutional factors that guide the levels of government attention in the budget distribution of the federal government in Brazil. A database of the federal approved budget from 2000 to 2021 was created, in which the 814 combinations of expenditure functions and subfunctions were coded into 21 sectors according to the methodology of the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP). The results indicate that government attention on the distribution of the Brazilian federal budget operates in a mostly incremental pattern over time, permeated by punctuations in specific sectoral policies, thus proving the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory at the national level. As for future research agenda, the study shows the need for further sectoral studies that explain the causes and effects of changes on government attention, their relationships with the legislative agenda, and the impacts of moments of institutional crisis in defining priorities in budget distribution.

Keywords: policy agenda; public budget; punctuated equilibrium theory; government attention; incrementalism; budget dynamics.

Agenda governamental brasileira: prioridades e mudanças na dinâmica da atenção sobre a distribuição orçamentária da União (2000-2021)

Os estudos sobre agenda governamental têm adotado diversos indicadores para mensurar a atenção e as prioridades dos governos, a fim de analisar os processos de formulação e mudança de políticas públicas. Com base nas prerrogativas da teoria do equilíbrio pontuado sobre os padrões de mudanças na dinâmica das políticas, a distribuição do orçamento público tem se destacado como um dos instrumentos que melhor expressam os níveis de atenção e as prioridades dos governos em diferentes setores. Nesse contexto, alinhado a uma agenda internacional, este estudo busca investigar o padrão da atenção governamental acerca da distribuição orçamentária no Brasil. Assim, o objetivo deste trabalho é mapear a dinâmica da atenção governamental sobre a disposição do orçamento aprovado da União ao longo das últimas duas décadas (2000-2021), identificando os níveis percentuais de atenção aos diferentes setores de políticas públicas ao longo do tempo e os fatores conjunturais e institucionais que balizam os níveis de atenção governamental na classificação orçamentária. Para isso, foi formulado um banco de dados do orçamento aprovado de 2000 a 2021, no qual as 814 combinações de funções e subfunções de gastos foram codificadas em 21 setores, conforme metodologia do *comparative agenda project* (CAP). Os resultados indicam que a atenção governamental sobre essa distribuição opera sob um padrão majoritariamente incremental no decorrer do tempo, mas permeado por pontuações no equilíbrio em políticas setoriais específicas, comprovando a teoria do equilíbrio pontuado (*punctuated equilibrium theory* [PET]) no cenário nacional. De igual modo, apontam para a necessidade de mais estudos setoriais que expliquem as causas e os efeitos das pontuações na atenção governamental, suas relações com mudanças na agenda legislativa e os impactos de momentos de crises institucionais na definição de prioridades na distribuição orçamentária, apontados como agendas futuras a partir deste trabalho.

Palavras-chave: agenda governamental; orçamento público; equilíbrio pontuado; atenção governamental; incrementalismo; dinâmicas orçamentárias.

Agenda del gobierno brasileño: prioridades y cambios en la dinámica de atención a la distribución del presupuesto federal (2000-2021)

Los estudios sobre la agenda gubernamental adoptaron varios indicadores para medir la atención y las prioridades de los gobiernos a los efectos de analizar los procesos de formulación y cambio de políticas públicas. Desde las prerrogativas de la teoría del equilibrio puntuado sobre los patrones de cambios en la dinámica de las políticas, la distribución del presupuesto público se ha destacado como uno de los instrumentos que mejor expresan los niveles de atención y las prioridades de los gobiernos de los diferentes sectores. En ese contexto, de acuerdo con una agenda internacional, este estudio busca investigar cuál es el patrón de atención gubernamental respecto a la distribución presupuestaria en Brasil. Así, el objetivo de este trabajo es mapear la dinámica de atención gubernamental sobre la distribución del presupuesto federal aprobado en las últimas dos décadas (2000-2021), identificando (i) cuáles son los niveles porcentuales de atención a los diferentes sectores de las políticas públicas a lo largo del tiempo y (ii) los factores coyunturales e institucionales que orientan los niveles de atención del gobierno en la clasificación presupuestaria federal. Para ello, se creó una base de datos del presupuesto aprobado de 2000 a 2021, en la que se codificaron las 814 combinaciones de funciones y subfunciones del gasto en 21 sectores, según la metodología del Proyecto de Agenda Comparada (CAP). Los resultados indican que la atención del gobierno sobre la distribución del presupuesto opera en un patrón mayoritariamente incremental en el tiempo, pero permeado por puntajes de equilibrio en políticas sectoriales específicas, demostrando así la teoría del equilibrio puntuado a nivel nacional. Asimismo, señalan la necesidad de mayores estudios sectoriales que expliquen las causas y efectos de los puntajes en la atención del gobierno, sus relaciones con los cambios en la agenda legislativa y los impactos de los momentos de crisis institucional en la definición de prioridades en la distribución presupuestaria, identificadas como futuras agendas a partir de este trabajo.

Palabras clave: agenda gubernamental; presupuesto público; equilibrio puntuado; atención gubernamental; incrementalismo; dinámica del presupuesto.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) proposed by Baumgartner and Jones in the early 1990s in the United States has been consolidating over the last three decades as one of the most relevant theoretical and methodological references for analyzing the formation and change processes of the governmental agenda. Despite the PET's peculiarities and innovations – which will be discussed in the next section – most of its fundamental precepts are directly connected with previous studies that, to a certain extent, inaugurated the field of knowledge about policy agenda-setting, seeking to understand the competitive process by recognition and prioritization of issues, by government actors, in a scenario of uncertainties, limited rationality, and marked by asymmetry in information processing.

Government agenda studies generally assume that the ability of governments to recognize problems and formulate public policies is limited. Due to various constraints, including cognitive, budgetary, and time limitations, decision-makers cannot simultaneously address (nor identify) all of society's problems. This necessitates prioritization and the selection of issues to be addressed at a given moment, often excluding many other topics that remain off the agenda. Policy agenda studies aim to comprehend and analyze how governments prioritize specific issues and the dynamics of change in public policies.

Therefore, government attention plays a central role in analyzing this dynamic and competitive process, as it is recognized as one of the limited resources prominently featured in major models of public policy analysis. Building upon earlier proposals made in the seminal works of Cobb and Elder (1971, 1972) and Kingdon (1984), PET both propels and elucidates the process and changes in public policies. The significant innovation it introduces to the agenda field lies in its ability to reconcile two previously opposing logics of policy change patterns: incrementalism (Lindblom, 1959) and rapid changes (Cairney, 2013; Kingdon, 1984).

Based on a new methodological framework organized around the creation of data that maps and measures the distribution of government attention over time, the theory establishes a relationship between the longitudinal distribution of attention and changes in public policies. Its analysis of the variations in the allocation of attention to different policies explains how attention is distributed within the policy process. When dealing with policy change processes, PET reconciles large incremental periods characterized by small adjustments in public policies with brief moments of major transformations, called punctuated equilibrium.

Numerous documents are employed to test PET, not only within the context of the United States but globally. These documents are also referred to as indicators of government attention by scholars in the field (Capella, Brasil, & Sudano, 2015) and can originate from proposals and normative acts, such as bills and decrees, speeches and presidential addresses, media reports; public opinion; and budget allocations. These sources have consistently revealed a pattern of punctuated equilibrium

within the dynamics of attention to public policies, where incremental changes present abrupt shifts at specific moments.

Budget distribution is one of the primary indicators Jones and Baumgartner (2015) used to demonstrate this theory in the US system. Studies conducted by the authors and replicated in other countries (Baumgartner, Foucaut, & François, 2006; Baumgartner et al., 2017; Breunig, 2006; Breunig & Koski, 2006; Jones et al., 2009; Robinson, Caver, Meier, & O'Toole, 2007; Ryu, 2009; Sebok & Berki, 2018) consider budget distribution data, from 1948 to 2003, across various public policy sectors in the United States. The findings show discreet adjustments in several sectors and substantial increases that double or triple the funding assigned to certain sectoral policies at specific times. Consequently, PET posits a direct relationship between government attention and the percentages of budgetary allocation to different public policy sectors.

Financial resources, which are both scarce and finite, are allocated and distributed to implement the decision-makers' public policy priorities. By quantifying and contrasting the percentage levels of resources allocated to various sectoral domains within the state's purview, we can, through the lens of PET, grasp the dynamics of government attention, its patterns, shifts, and institutional benchmarks.

This article investigates the pattern of government attention on the federal government's budget distribution to bring Brazilian literature closer to this international debate. Is it possible to observe the same incremental and punctuation dynamics found in international studies? How do national institutional and contextual arrangements guide or impact budget distribution patterns in the country?

This article analyzes the public budget through the approved Annual Budget Law (LOA) from 2000 to 2021. It contributes to a broader body of work and national studies aiming to examine the processes of agenda-setting and change within the Brazilian government, employing synthetic theories and models as analytical tools. Notably, it introduces, for the first time, a comprehensive mapping and longitudinal and cross-sectional analysis of Brazilian budget data, along with their distribution across various policy sectors. This analysis is conducted using a methodological framework internationally disseminated by the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP).

The federal public budget has consistently been a focal point in national politics and a part of daily life. However, what truly evolves within the national government agenda in terms of prioritizing budget distribution? Which policy sectors receive financial backing, and how much do they receive? Which sectors are excluded? To what extent do ongoing reform efforts and regulatory revisions influence and reshape the allocation of funds among public policies? Fluctuations in the broader context, shifts in government leadership, and crises can all impact the funds allocated to various sectors, such as health and education, within Brazilian social policies. What factors influence the dynamics of this process?

In this context, aligned with an international agenda, this work maps the dynamics of government attention on the distribution of the Brazilian federal government's approved budget over the last two decades (2000-2021). It identifies the percentage levels of attention allocated to various policy sectors and the conjunctural and institutional factors that guide the levels of government attention within this framework.

A database was created for this research based on the approved budget from 2000 to 2021. Within this database, the 814 combinations of expenditure functions and subfunctions were codified and systematically organized into 21 distinct policy sectors, as per the Comparative Agenda Project

(CAP) framework. This approach, inspired by studies conducted by Baumgartner and Jones, serves to operationalize, and extend the scope of PET beyond the context of the United States. The resulting longitudinal database captures the evolving dynamics of attention in budget distribution across each of the 21 policy sectors over two decades.

The data analysis follows general patterns of proportional attention change. Subsequently, the sectoral policies are singled out from the complete dataset and clustered based on their cross-cutting behavior, considering the time horizon and the proportional position relative to other variables. While it may not be feasible to elucidate the specific nuances of each of the 21 sectoral policies or pinpoint precise reasons for fluctuations in the percentage of resources allocated by decision-makers, we do identify pathways and events that could potentially indicate causality. These insights may prove valuable for future studies dedicated to in-depth sectoral analyses.

This article is structured into seven sections, encompassing this introduction. The following section introduces the theoretical model of the agenda, with an analysis of the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory developed by Baumgartner and Jones. The third section provides context for Brazil's budgetary process, highlighting changes that occurred after the 1988 Constitution. The fourth section outlines the methodological approach to constructing the budget database, followed by a section dedicated to explain the coding process. The sixth section presents the results of the budget data analysis spanning the 22 fiscal years. Finally, the last section offers insights and considerations for this research agenda and outline future steps.

2. AGENDA THEORY AND THE PUBLIC BUDGET

Agenda-setting can be conceptualized as a competitive process of choices in which various themes and subjects vie for a coveted spot on the decision-makers' priority list (Capella, 2007; Cobb & Elder, 1971, 1972; Kingdon, 1984). Grounded in the principles of bounded rationality (Simon, 1977) and influenced by the presence of high transaction and information costs (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993, 2015; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005), policymakers' attention is a central focus in studies concerning agenda-setting and change. The allocation of government attention emerges as a pivotal variable since it is impossible to acknowledge all social problems, thus preventing the government from addressing all of them concurrently.

Consequently, it is equally unfeasible to formulate and implement public policies that solve all the public problems within a given society. In this context, it is necessary to identify and select the issues that will be included in government priorities, as well as those that will be excluded.

It is precisely within this framework that studies on policy agenda-setting are developed, focusing on examining the prioritization process, decision-makers' choices, and their decisions to exclude certain issues within specific societies during particular periods (Capella, 2007; Kingdon, 1984). The field of agenda literature has integrated various models, theories, and subjects of study, particularly since the publications that initiated the realm of synthetic models of public policy analysis (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993; Kingdon, 1984; Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1993). By employing diverse methodological and analytical tools, the models devised by Baumgartner and Jones have become a benchmark in studies concerning the formation and transformation of the governmental agenda.

In this analysis, particular emphasis will be placed on the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) by Baumgartner and Jones (1993). This theory is grounded in a foundational theoretical premise

that establishes a connection between government attention and information processing levels and the inclusion of a policy in the agenda. It sheds light on the dynamic nature of changes within public policies. Baumgartner and Jones (2015) posit that political systems are subject to various information streams from various actors and institutions. These entities seek to interpret and construct new problem frames to effect changes in public policies.

Simultaneously, groups and institutions with policy monopoly – i.e., those who have the monopoly of the policy's image, operate within the policy subsystem, and are responsible for framing issues and proposing solutions across various sectoral policies – tend to resist the inclusion of new actors strongly. This resistance makes it challenging to redefine the established image (Jones & Baumgartner, 2005). Consequently, "This dynamic leads to a distribution of policy changes that has mostly very small, incremental policy changes, a few really big changes, and fewer moderate changes adapting to the severity of the problem the political system faces. Policymakers either ignore the problem while it festers or overreact to it when it reaches almost unmanageable proportions." (Brasil & Jones, 2020, p. 1491).

Recognizing attention as a finite resource, the authors underscore the concept of bounded rationality as a significant obstacle that hinders governments from effectively addressing all the information generated across the various policy sectors and subsystems. In their view, agenda-setting involves allocating government attention to particular issues, and within this process, alterations in established priorities can ultimately result in policy change (Baumgartner & Jones, 2015; Jones & Baumgartner, 2005).

Therefore, Baumgartner and Jones (1993) developed a system designed to monitor government attention toward different sectoral policies based on various documents, conceptualized here as government attention indicators (Capella et al., 2015). The initiative launched by these authors, known as the Policy Agenda Project (PAP), had the primary goal of systematically monitoring government attention devoted to various policies over extended periods to evaluate fluctuations and enduring patterns in the levels of attention allocated to each policy sector.

Among the documents considered in this analysis, Baumgartner and Jones, along with other researchers involved in national projects affiliated with the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP), have chosen to focus on speeches, addresses, and normative acts from both the executive and legislative branches. Additionally, they have utilized data derived from the budget, the media, and public opinion. These sources are monitored and analyzed to track topics with the potential to influence the framing of public issues and the shaping of the governmental agenda, observing their emergence or disappearance from the public debate (Baumgartner et al., 2017; Breunig & Koski, 2006; Breunig, Koski, & Mortensen, 2010).

Regarding the budgetary process, the authors' analysis underscores that the allocation of expenditures is shaped by political competition, where different sectors vie for priority in budget appropriations, reflecting their influence in the political arena. This prioritization results in varying budget allocations to different sectors. As previously emphasized by Lindblom (1959) and Wildalvsky (1969), public budgets tend to evolve incrementally. Consequently, the status quo becomes the predominant norm as human cognition grapples with the immense number of variables involved in the budgeting process. This incremental growth, coupled with the intricate interplay of complex budgetary rules and resource scarcity, contributes to the inflexibility in determining public spending.

Nonetheless, there are periods of systemic change when policymakers are confronted with urgent and pressing issues or when significant policy shifts occur. These events result in a surge of attention directed towards a specific problem, occasionally leading to a budget reallocation (Baumgartner & Jones, 2005). Within this process, it is crucial to emphasize that budgetary governance is marked by a natural tension between two opposing forces. On one side, there is the influence of institutional rules and incrementalism, which tends to uphold the status quo, maintaining established public funding allocations. On the other side, the pressure exerted by new demands for inclusion can alter the hierarchy of programmatic priorities.

In this context, budgetary expenditures, and their allocation within the approved Annual Budget Law (LOA) form an indicator extensively utilized by researchers on the international stage. The central argument posits that the percentage of the budget approved and designated for each policy sector reflects government priorities in the realm of public policies. Analyzing the evolution of government attention in the context of budget distribution over an extended period can unveil shifts in priorities and changes in public policies.

When calculating percentage changes in budget allocations across various categories of sectoral policies within a single nation and examining the frequency distribution, the authors observed results that deviated from the typical distribution expected in an incremental budgeting system. This implies that in the process of distributing the budget among different public policies, there are significant variations, often resulting in substantial changes or punctuations.

Hence, budget allocation is viewed as a highly relevant indicator of government attention in studies concerning the dynamics of changes in public policies. Alterations in this allocation mean shifts in government priorities (Jones et al., 2009). As the authors assert, "Because budgets are reflections of priorities, and budget change distribution reflect changing priorities, the dynamics of budget changes could well indicate the occasional occurrence of bursts of urgency about the external world" (Jones et al., 2009, p. 870).

Numerous analyses of government attention and the dynamics of policy changes have been conducted using budget data within CAP. These data have consistently supported the hypothesis of punctuated equilibrium across different countries, political systems, and levels of government despite the presence of political and institutional variations among them (Baumgartner et al., 2009).

> In a comparative study of distributions of budget changes among seven developed democracies, Jones et al. (2009) found punctuated distributions in all cases examined. Fagan, Jones, and Wlezien (2017) similarly found all country-level distributions they studied to be characterized by substantial kurtosis, as was the combined distribution presented above. Positive kurtosis also characterizes sub-national governments, including U.S. states (Breunig & Koski, 2006) and U.S. local governments (Jordan, 2003), Indian states (Karmarkar, 2016), Danish local govern ments (Jones et al., 2009), and Texas school districts (Robinson, 2004). Specific policy areas within single political systems seem generally to be characterized by punctuations (True, 2000). Jones, Sulkin, and Larsen (2003) considered various stages of the policy process in the U.S., and Baumgartner et al. (2009) did so in three western countries; both teams found that friction increased from the input stage to the policymaking stage to the policy output stage (Jones, Epp, & Baumgartner, 2019, pp. 11-12).

In the analysis presented in this text, it is crucial to comprehend the dynamics of budgetary resource distribution across various sectors of public policies funded by the federal government budget. This distribution encompasses periods of stability as well as moments characterized by punctuation and change. The analytical model employed in the CAP project centers on assessing the positioning of budget allocations within different policy sectors as stipulated in the annual law. In this study, we will adhere to this approach, recognizing that, in the context of Brazil, it is also valuable to explore alterations in the hierarchy of priorities.

Budget execution holds particular significance in Brazil due to the authoritative nature of the Annual Budget Law (LOA) and the frequent economic and political instability that often prompts governments to alter their priorities just a few months after legal approval. This reallocation of expenditures is particularly pronounced within the discretionary portion of the budget, which constitutes the smallest segment. A substantial portion of the Brazilian budget is earmarked by constitutional rules, determining its high level of rigidity (Rezende, 2015). Furthermore, some of the changes in budget execution within one fiscal year are absorbed and reflected in the subsequent LOA. This leads to incremental adjustments over the years, which can be observed and analyzed through longitudinal comparisons.

3. BUDGETARY INSTITUTIONALITY AND THE BRAZILIAN ECONOMIC CONTEXT

The punctuated equilibrium analysis, as applied in the studies by Baumgartner and Jones, involves comparing long-term longitudinal data. This comparison is undertaken to capture the dynamics of stability in financing public policies, including their incremental growth in budget appropriations and any eventual ruptures or significant shifts. Such shifts may manifest as a loss of budgetary attention in certain sectors, substantial increases in others, or even the introduction of new budgetary functions.

In addition to the limitations posed by decision-makers' bounded rationality, which influences the agenda-setting process and the subsequent distribution of government attention among different public policy sectors, this process is further shaped by a range of institutional contingencies. Within the context of establishing legal regulations (institutions) that will govern the allocation of budgetary priorities, political actors engage in calculations intended to align with their preferences for resource allocation. However, once these rules are implemented, they become a part of the framework for subsequent decision-making processes, even though they may be subject to alteration in the future.

Therefore, for the appropriate application of PET in the Brazilian context, it is crucial to grasp the institutional framework encompassing the budgetary regulations adopted in the country and how they evolve in response to political conflicts and shifts in the economic landscape.

In Brazil, the budgetary process is marked by a certain contradiction between its programmatic planning structure and its practical implementation, which often leans toward incrementalism and the inertia of public expenditures (Core, 2001). The budget structure established for all levels of government in Brazil is the program budget, heavily influenced by US techniques like the Planning and Programming Budget System (PPBS) and performance budgeting (Machado, 2012). This framework was defined following the enactment of Law 4,320 on March 17, 1964 (Lei nº 4.320, de 17 de março de 1964), just before the emergence of the military government in Brazil, and further refined through regulations and other legislation during the 1970s (Core, 2001).

Despite the detailed information on expenses included in the proposed model for budget preparation and execution, fundamental elements crucial for the planning and decision-making

process, such as cost systems and performance indicators, were not adequately developed (Core, 2001; Rezende, 2015). Several decades after the adoption of this new model, the Brazilian budgetary process continued, in practice, to closely resemble the traditional budget model critiqued by Simon (1977). In this model, the budget proposal is essentially reconstructed each year, primarily based on expenses from previous years, adjusted using certain deflators. This process is characterized by strong inertia and incrementalism (Piscitelli, 1988). Furthermore, during budget execution, there are changes in expenditure priorities, meaning that the government's agenda in the Brazilian context not only shifts from year to year but also within the same year.

The implementation of the programmatic budget during military governments, characterized by a lack of open political discourse and control over defining priorities and agendas by technocrats and political leaders who were disinclined toward democratic dialogue, had a detrimental impact on its development. Some aspects of this situation began to change with the enactment of the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, which introduced a balanced division of powers between the executive and the legislative branches in the budgetary process. It also emphasized legal expenditures in social sectors, safeguarding them from political influence, but regrettably, it did not shield them from inflation (Bacha, 1994).

A significant shift in this process occurred in the early 2000s, thanks to the budget reform spearheaded by Minister Bresser-Pereira during the administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (Core, 2001). This reform led to the restructuring of the Brazilian public budget and remains in effect today. Under this framework, programmatic definitions are given priority within the four-year plan (PPA) and are subsequently detailed and operationalized in the Annual Budget Law (LOA), with programs bridging these two legal instruments (Core, 2001).

In addition to the structural changes, it is crucial to note that the budget reform also coincided with the approval of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) in 2000. Passed as Complementary Law 101 on May 4, 2000 (Lei complementar nº 101, de 04 de maio de 2000), the LRF sought to reduce government indebtedness and impose limits on personnel expenses. It had significant repercussions for budgetary expenditures, introducing measures such as criminalizing deficits and public debts and prioritizing the policy of achieving a primary surplus to signal good governance (S. P. Nunes & R. C. Nunes, 2002).

The entire process of change that has unfolded since the 1988 Federal Constitution aimed to enhance control over the budgetary process. This endeavor began with the fight against inflation through the "Real" plan in 1994, establishing a new currency, and continued with the subsequent normative changes mentioned above. These alterations resulted in a significant shift in the agenda, as the focus on combating inflation and managing debt led to the de-emphasis of social sectors like education, health, and social assistance in order to obtain a permanent fiscal stabilization fund, which remained in place until the mid-2000s.

The evolution of the budgetary process from the 1980s to the first decade of the 2000s ultimately resulted in a tightening of the federal budget. This included reducing the government's discretionary capacity and converging fiscal regulations with those designed to prioritize social expenditures, particularly in education, health, and social security. These social spending areas are safeguarded within the political arena due to their connection to taxes and contributions (Rezende, 2015).

The overlapping of fiscal and social agendas in Brazil has been a subject of significant controversy. Even preceding the military governments, the Brazilian budget experienced intense distributional conflicts, where the sum of desired expenditures exceeded the revenue projections, a situation common to most public budgets. In Brazil, however, budget negotiations primarily occur within the political

sphere and are poorly understood by society. This is partly attributed to the technical complexity of budgetary matters and partly to the hierarchical nature of government decision-making.

The challenge of resolving conflicts in budget allocation is closely tied to the struggle to accommodate public expenditures. This challenge is compounded by the difficulty in addressing and reforming the structure of Brazilian revenues, particularly tax revenues, which are deemed inefficient and regressive, disproportionately burdening the poorest segments of the population (Afonso & Castro, 2020; Lazzari, 2021; Lazzari, Arretche, & Mahlmeister, 2022).

The inability to address the distributive conflict has led to the quest for adjustment mechanisms that provide technical and political support to the Annual Budget Law (LOA). Incrementalism emerges as an efficient mechanism, starting from budget allocations that have already been negotiated among interest groups and allowing for marginal adjustments. Over the decades, inflation has also served as an adjustment mechanism by creating the illusion that it would be possible to accommodate all the pressure of expenses in the LOA, which would then be eroded by inflation during budget execution (Bacha, 1994; Guardia, 1993).

The enactment of fiscal rules has played a significant role in shifting the focus of dispute and politics, as it is no longer within the purview of politicians to determine the level of adjustment – this is now defined by legal norms. This shift occurred with the approval of the Fiscal Responsibility Law (LRF) and, more recently, with Constitutional Amendment 95 of December 15, 2016, commonly known as the Spending Ceiling Amendment. Consequently, any unresolved conflicts must conform to the spending ceiling. The need for new expenditures to address issues such as poverty, malnutrition, and the environmental crisis, among others, will have to adhere to this limit within the Annual Budget Law (LOA) until the fundamental distributive conflict in Brazilian society is resolved.

Within this context of significant changes in expenditure regulations and budget construction in Brazil, this article proposes an analytical-descriptive approach to examining the dynamics of government attention regarding the budgetary allocation of the federal government from 2000 to 2021. This examination is conducted through the theoretical framework of agenda-setting, particularly Baumgartner and Jones's (1993) PET. Observing, describing, and analyzing budget distribution entails, in the context of agenda-setting theories, comprehending the dynamics of government attention and the patterns of changes in public policies in Brazil.

By employing both longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses, this study seeks to provide insight into the patterns of approved budget allocations over time and isolates the percentage allocation for specific sectoral policies, comparing them with other sectoral policies that collectively constitute the budget, including their respective earmarked expenses.

4. METHODOLOGY

The comprehension of the federal public budget's composition and structure, its distribution dynamics among sectoral policies, and the subsequent analysis of incrementalism and punctuation events will be undertaken using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods for data analysis. This approach encompasses content analysis focusing on coding techniques and database development. These databases will be structured from predefined variables established by the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP), as outlined in Box 1.

Starting from this point, the initial step involves the collection of data from the federal public budget, spanning from 2000 to 2021. This data is sourced from the Federal Budget Panel within the

Integrated Planning and Budget System (Siop), under the purview of the Brazilian National Treasury Secretariat (STN). The expenses under analysis pertain to the original appropriations within the Annual Budget Law (LOA). These expenses are linked to the proposals put forth by the executive branch in the form of the bill proposing the Annual Budget Law (Ploa), and they are subsequently approved by the legislative following discussions, modifications, and voting. The classification of the expenses is based on their function and sub-function. This classification allows for the identification of the specific policy sector to which the budgetary expenditure is allocated.

Expenses related to the categories of "interest and debt charges" and "debt amortization" have been omitted from the analysis. These categories are excluded as they do not pertain to sectoral policies, which constitute the primary focus of this article. Consequently, the object of study centers on the public policy sectors vying for a portion of the budget allocated to sectoral policies. Additionally, this methodological decision facilitates and enriches the comparison of the Brazilian case with other international cases.

The expenses analyzed in this article encompass federal government expenditures, including not only appropriations proposed by the executive but also parliamentary amendments of various types – individual or collective amendments and, more recently, amendments introduced by the bills' rapporteur (nicknamed "secret budget"). Furthermore, they encompass all three budgets within the Annual Budget Law (LOA): tax budget, which includes most of the expenses and pertains to the outlays of all governmental agencies and branches within both direct and indirect administration; social security budget, which refers to expenditures for health, social assistance, and social security. It has a functional character that can permeate all federal administration agencies; and, finally, investment by companies, which includes investments carried out by companies in which the government holds the majority of share capital with voting rights, either directly or indirectly (Giacomoni, 2010, pp. 226-227, our translation).

Following the selection of budget data, functions, and subfunctions, a coding process was employed based on the classification method utilized by the Brazilian Policy Agenda Project (BPAP). This coding process serves as a content analysis tool involving the organization and categorization of data into predetermined categories. For each combination of expenditure function and subfunction, a category was assigned according to the guidelines outlined in the Brazilian codebook, which is segmented into 21 sectoral policies, as presented in Box 1.

The analytical categories provided below, referred to as major topics, were initially formulated by Bevan (2019). The major topics represent 21 distinct categories of sectoral policies. These standardized topics are employed by all member countries of the Comparative Agenda Project (CAP), including Brazil, which facilitates comparative studies. The adaptation, translation, revision, and customization for the national context were conducted by the BPAP coordinators in 2019.

BOX 1   CLASSIFICATION OF THE BRAZILIAN CODEBOOK REGARDING SECTORAL POLICIES

Code	Description of Major Topics - Sectoral Policies
1	Macroeconomics
2	Civil Rights, Minority Issues, and Civil Liberties
3	Health
4	Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

Continue

Code	Description of Major Topics - Sectoral Policies
5	Labor and Employment
6	Education
7	Environment
8	Energy
9	Immigration and Refugee Issues
10	Transportation
12	Law, Justice, Crimes, and Violence
13	Social Welfare
14	Housing, Infrastructure, and Land Reform
15	Banking, Finance, and Domestic Commerce
16	Defense, Armed Forces, Military, and Warfare
17	Science, Technology, and Communications
18	Foreign Trade
19	International Affairs and Foreign Aid
20	Government Operations
21	Natural Resources and Territorial Issues
23	Culture, Sports, and Leisure

Source: Adapted from Bevan (2019).

To ensure the reliability of the data encoding process, two researchers conducted the encoding independently within a double-blind system, with a third researcher cross-verifying the results. The criteria for coding were jointly defined following the CAP method. Following the encoding process, a quantitative analysis of the data was executed. This phase involves the mapping and exploration of the dynamics of budget distribution over time. It entails measuring the percentage contribution of each sectoral policy to the overall expenditure of policies. As a result, the sum of the percentages for all categories should correspond to the total sectoral expenditure for the year. It is important to note that this study does not focus on the absolute value of expenses or their variations.

Subsequently, the initial analysis will involve a cross-sectional and comparative assessment of the distribution percentages for each year. This analysis aims to highlight the priorities within the approved budgeted expenses. Additionally, it will seek to determine whether the examined period exhibited characteristics of incrementalism or if there were discernible instances of significant punctuations. In the event of punctuation, the goal is to comprehend the context in which these punctuations potentially occurred. This examination will follow an analytical framework guided by PET and the methodologies employed by CAP members.

5. CODING PROCESS

We identified a total of 814 different combinations of functions and subfunctions within the budget data from 2000 to 2021. However, it is important to note that not all of these combinations were present in every year of the historical series. Some categories were created or excluded in specific years, particularly among the subfunctions. Additionally, it is worth highlighting that, following the publication of Ordinance 42 on April 14, 1999 (Portaria nº 42, de 14 de abril de 1999), by the Ministry of State for Budget and Management, "subfunctions may be combined with functions other than those to which they are linked" (Art. § 4º). This means that a subfunction typically associated with one function can also be linked to others. For example, the "primary care" subfunction is typically associated with the function "health," but it can also appear within other functions like "education" (Core, 2001).

The codification process involved examining each combination of function and subfunction to determine the specific public policy sector it corresponds to. Based on this analysis, one of the codes provided in Box 1 could be assigned. However, it's worth noting that the classification process can be complicated by the fact that a single function may include subfunctions from various areas. Therefore, codification had to be carried out by considering both the function and subfunction levels for accurate categorization.

The main criteria for the coding process are:

1) Expenses related to employee salaries, mainly found in the "general administration" subfunction, were assigned to the respective function, as these expenses represent a significant resource for public policy and reflect a prioritization of that sector.
2) Expenses categorized as bureaucracy benefits, such as health or food assistance, were classified under the bureaucracy category (code 20), as they do not specifically pertain to a particular policy.
3) Expenses related to the "training of human resources" subfunction were allocated to the respective functions.
4) Social security expenses, whether under the general regime or statutory regime, were grouped under the social security and labor category (code 5).
5) Expenditures related to information technology, scientific development, and social communication, regardless of the sector they belonged to, were placed in the "science, technology, and communications" category (code 17).
6) Educational or health expenses incurred by any other sector were classified as educational or health expenses unless they fell under the category of bureaucratic benefits (criterion 2).
7) Two additional categories were created due to the high level of specificity of certain types of expenses: code 99 for the contingency reserve and code 28 for other unidentified expenses in the budget, which will be excluded from the analyses.[1]

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[1] Code 99, related to the contingency reserve, although not representing a sectoral policy, will be translated into a sectoral policy within the context of budget execution. This is why it was retained for analysis. Conversely, code 28, which predominantly pertains to "special charges," was excluded because it does not relate to a specific sectoral policy or the production of a particular good or service.

Following the criteria and analyzing all 814 combinations of functions and subfunctions, each was coded into one of the 23 categories from the BPAP codebook (including two created specifically for this article). This coding process assigned one of the 23 codes to each of the 9,925 expenses in the entire dataset covering the period from 2000 to 2021. Subsequently, these expenses were aggregated by category and year, resulting in a box with 22 rows[2] corresponding to public policy sectors and 22 columns corresponding to each year, totaling 484 values.

6. RESULTS

The public budget is the most objective instrument through which governments can express their preferences and priorities for different policy sectors. Most public policies require financial resources for implementation, so the allocation of budgetary funds to these different sectors expresses their attention in the governmental agenda. Evidently, these expressions are limited by institutional and contextual factors, which limit government actions.

Among the institutional factors that stand out are the earmarked resources, mandatory expenses, and fiscal responsibility rules. The contextual factor worth highlighting is the economic cycles that influence revenue levels and expenses. Therefore, budget allocation can be viewed as the outcome of subtracting the institutional and contextual factors that condition it from the sum of government preferences and priorities.

Using PET, the empirical analyses in this section aim to identify the dynamics of government attention in budgetary distribution. In the Brazilian case, we investigate the presence of incrementalism and punctuations in government attention to the federal budget priorities, which may indicate changes in public policies. It is important to note that we do not intend to comprehensively identify all the explanatory factors of incrementalism and government attention punctuations in all policy sectors.

6.1. Budgetary attention of the total federal budget

Graph 1 illustrates the government's focus on budget distribution across various public policy sectors. The sectors with the highest average resource allocation between 2000 and 2021 are social security, health, education, social assistance, and contingency reserve, in that order. Throughout the years, the attention percentages shows variations, indicating shifts in government priorities for different public policy sectors. However, these five areas consistently represent a substantial portion of the budget, comprising at least 70% of the budget allocation in almost every year of the dataset. Starting in 2015, they even exceeded the 80% mark of the budget. Social security consistently stands out, typically accounting for around 50% of the budget, while health and education expenses also consistently receive significant attention in most years.

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[2] The budgetary classification did not identify any expense in code 9 – Immigration and Refugee Issues.

GRAPH 1   BUDGETARY ATTENTION OF POLICY SECTORS (2000 TO 2021)
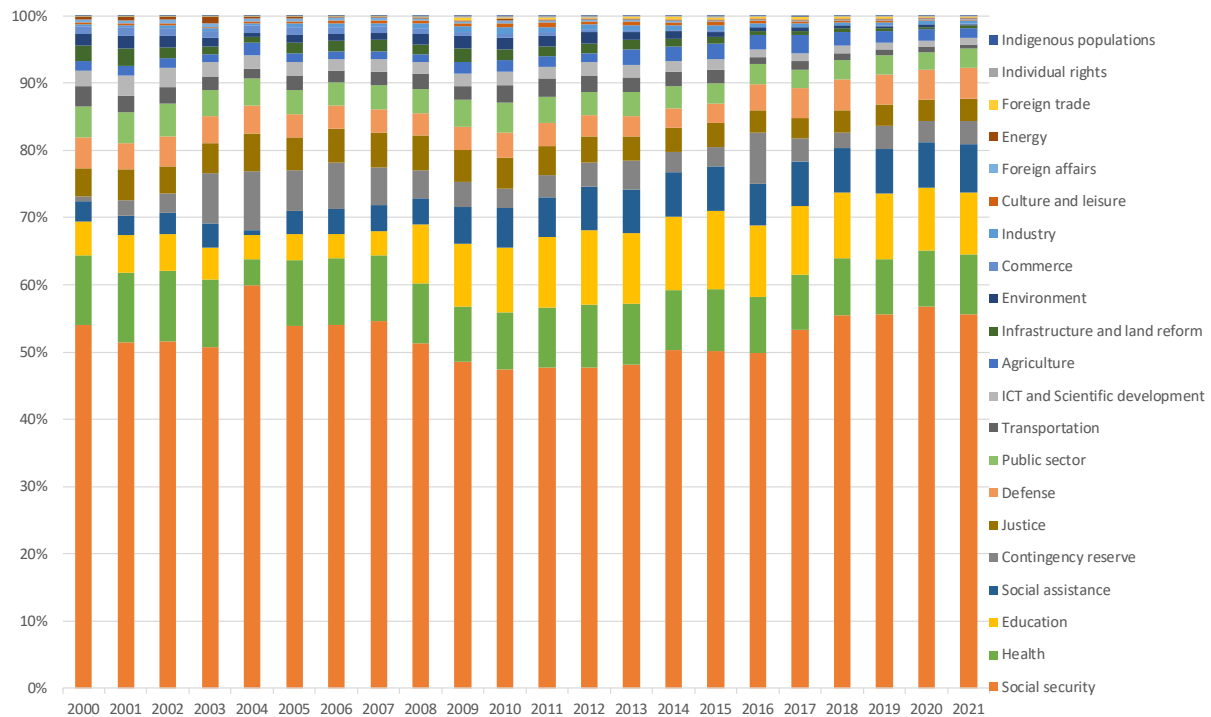
Note: The organization of categories was conducted based on the average considering all years analyzed.
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The significant level of government attention given to budget allocation for social security can be attributed, in large part, to the extensive number of beneficiaries and the mandatory nature of such expenditures. Consequently, institutional constraints arising from political disputes and expressed through legislative actions dictate that the government must execute these allocations (Giacomoni, 2010). Regulation changes can influence government attention regarding budget distribution, thereby affecting the dynamics of attention and potentially leading to transformations in public policies. Nevertheless, despite budget distribution being influenced by changes in the rules of the game, it is not solely about adhering to established norms. There is still room for expressing priorities in budget allocation beyond the constraints imposed by regulations.

Similarly, the substantial government attention directed toward budgetary allocation for health and education expenses is influenced by institutional obligations and earmarked resources. In the case of education, this obligation has been enshrined in the 1988 Federal Constitution, requiring the allocation of 18% of tax revenue (in the case of the federal government) to the maintenance and development of education. The mandatory allocation toward health was established through Constitutional Amendment 29 of September 13, 2000 (Emenda constitucional nº 29, de 13 de setembro de 2000), and has changed over the years. Nowadays, the mandatory expenditures should correspond to the values executed in the previous year and increase proportionally to the gross domestic product (GDP).

Complementary Law 141 of January 13, 2012 (Lei complementar nº 141, de 13 de janeiro de 2012), maintained the percentages of mandatory expenditures for states and municipalities, as well as sanctions for non-compliance, while controversies persisted regarding the rule for the federal government. Constitutional Amendment 86 of March 17, 2015 (Emenda constitucional nº 86, de 17 de março de 2015), defined minimum percentages based on net current revenue for the federal government, ranging from 13.2% in 2016 to 15% in 2020. The bill of Constitutional Amendment 1 of 2015 (Proposta de Emenda à Constituição n° 1, de 2015), which was approved in the first round in the Chamber of Deputies, proposed new minimum percentages for the federal government, with gradual changes: 14.8% of net current revenue in 2017, 15.5% in 2018, 16.2% in 2019, with anticipated growth up to 19.4% in 2024 (Levi, 2016). However, in 2016, the constitutional amendment on the spending ceiling (Constitutional Amendment 95 of December 15, 2016) advanced the earmarking of 15% of resources for health while also earmarking revenues for health and education, thus setting a ceiling for both areas in 2017, for 20 years (Bassi, 2018; Rossi & Dweck, 2016).

Among the policy sectors with the lowest percentages of attention, expenditures related to indigenous populations, individual rights, foreign trade, energy, and foreign affairs stand out. Over the years, the level of attention each area receives through expenditure approvals varies, but they consistently rank among the sectors with the lowest percentage of the federal budget distribution.

## 6.2. Sectoral budgetary attention of the federal government

The sectoral analysis of the budget enables us to examine the dynamics of government attention toward the federal government's budget priorities within each public policy sector, allowing us to identify punctuations, incrementalism, and decrementalism patterns. Incrementalism is characterized by small, gradual increases in government attention, while decrementalism involves decreasing marginal adjustments of government attention. In this subsection, we aggregate the different public policy sectors based on their level of budgetary attention and behavioral similarities.

Graph 2 combines the four social policy sectors with the highest levels of government attention and the contingency reserve. The consistently high levels of attention to these policies and their incremental dynamics over time can be attributed primarily to the establishment of norms and legislation that mandate substantial budget allocations to these sectors. Despite the overall stability of these percentages, there are discernible changes in the expenditure pattern within these policies.

The first significant punctuation observed in the graph occurred in 2004, with a notable increase in social security expenditures and a decrease in health and social assistance expenditures. The integration of these three policies within the social security budget (Giacomoni, 2010) could potentially explain this phenomenon. Another punctuation in government attention is evident in 2007, with an increased focus on educational policy attributed to the establishment of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education (Fundeb). This initiative raised the percentage of resources contributed by the federal government to 10% of what states and municipalities allocated to the fund (Bernardo, Abrantes, Almeida, & Rodrigues, 2020; Pinto, 2014).

Finally, there is a punctuation of contingency reserves in 2016, potentially explained by the political crisis at the time, which demanded the lack of definition of a larger portion of budget expenditures so that these definitions occur during budget execution, following the political needs.

GRAPH 2   **BUDGETARY ATTENTION TO HEALTH, SOCIAL SECURITY, EDUCATION, AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE (2000 TO 2021)**
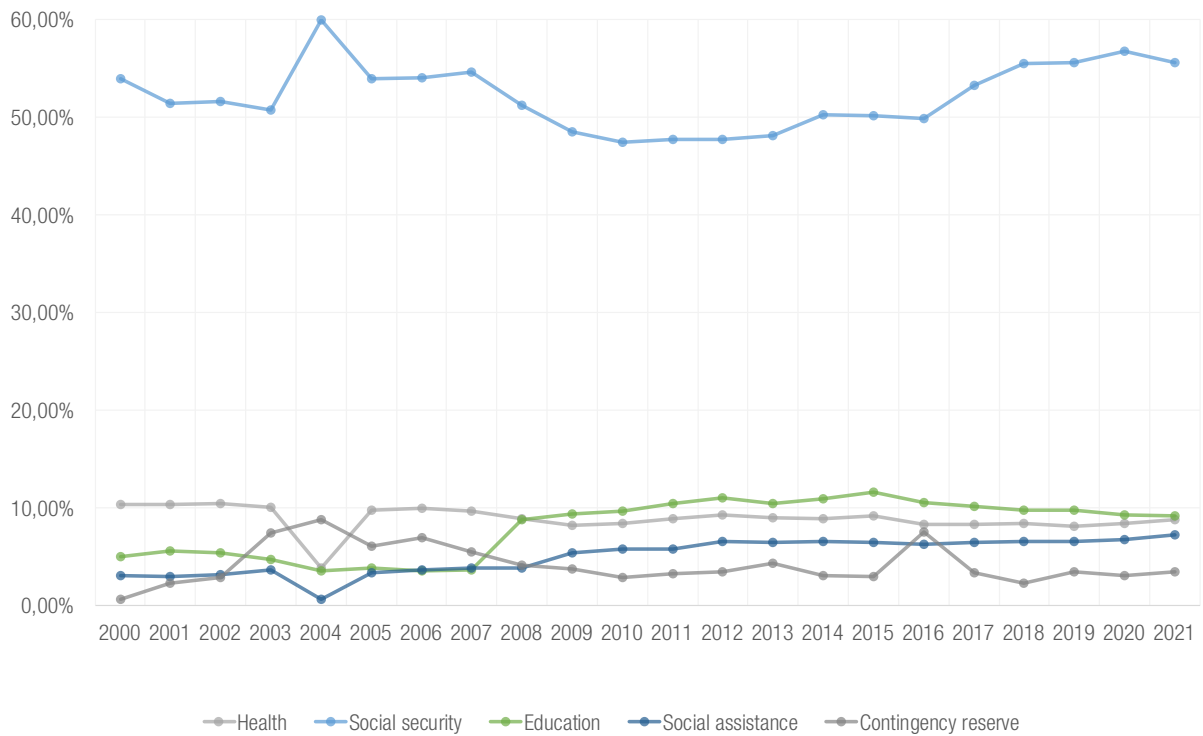
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Graph 3 presents three public administration sectors characterized by relatively high budgetary attention, albeit smaller than the sectors in Graph 2. Additionally, Graph 3 exhibits more noticeable punctuations in government attention than the previous graph. Regarding the public sector, it is noteworthy that, despite these punctuations, its overall trajectory shows a declining trend over the period. This downward trend may be associated with factors such as the Fiscal Responsibility Law (Lei complementar nº 101, de 04 de maio de 2000), which limits the growth of the public sector, particularly in personnel expenses (S. P. Nunes & R. C. Nunes, 2002). Furthermore, this trend can also be attributed to the justice sector, where personnel-related expenses are a major component, as well as to the defense sector, which exhibited a decrease in budgetary attention until 2015.

GRAPH 3   BUDGETARY ATTENTION TO JUSTICE, DEFENSE, AND PUBLIC SECTOR (2000 TO 2021)
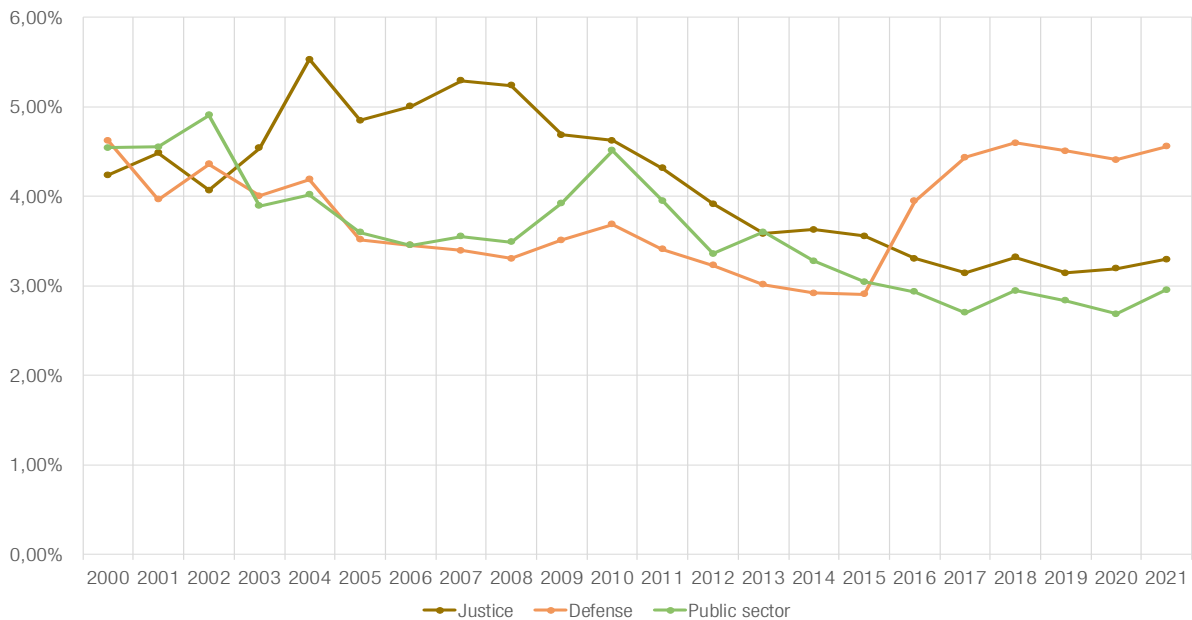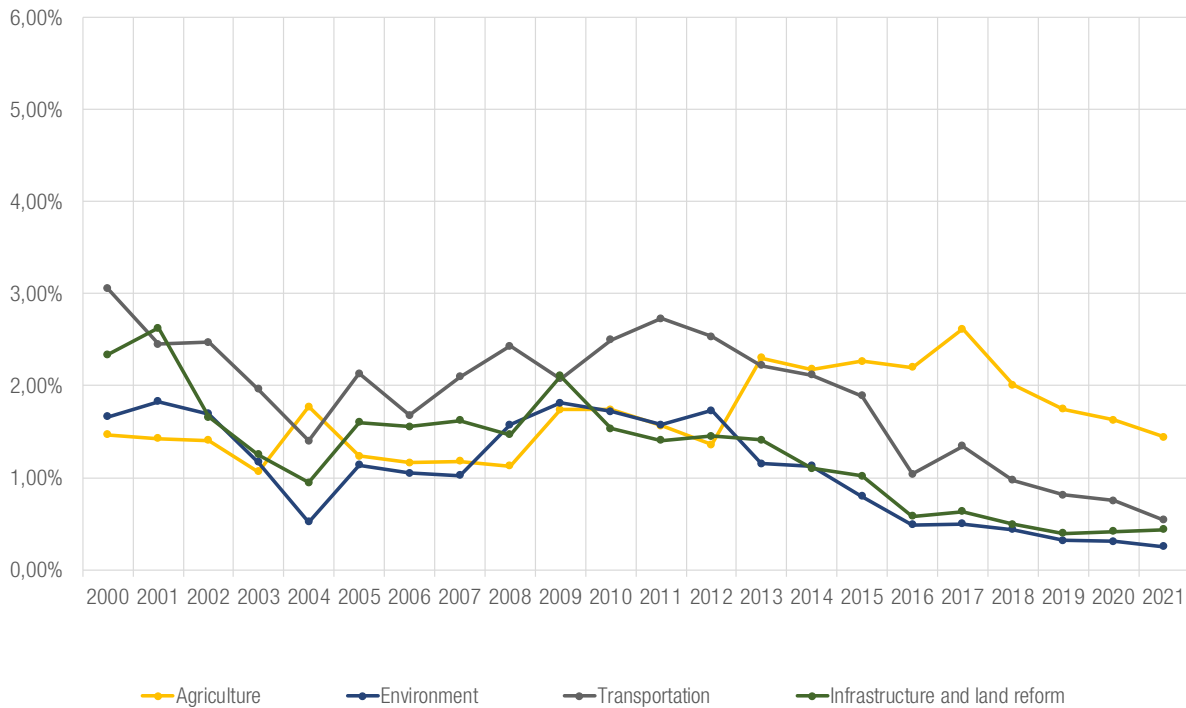

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In Graph 4, the agriculture, environment, transport, and infrastructure policies exhibit behavior similar to that of the justice, defense, and public sector, showing punctuations throughout the studied period, either with an increase or decrease in their budgetary allocations. However, these policies fall into the medium category of budgetary attention, representing a share of 1% to 3% of the total expenses. Upon closer examination, agricultural policies exhibit punctuations that may be linked to factors such as minimum price policies, regulatory stocks, and agricultural funding (Santos & Freitas, 2017). Between 2012 and 2013, as outlined in the 2012 LDO, there was an expansion of agricultural credit for agribusiness through Banco do Brasil bank and the purchase of food from family farming to ensure regulatory stocks for low-income families.

In the post-2017 period, there is a clear budget reduction in all four policies, with a particular emphasis on agriculture and transport. This reduction is primarily attributed to the implementation of the spending ceiling rule, as stipulated by Constitutional Amendment 95 of December 15, 2016. Under this rule, primary expenditures are constrained from growing beyond the inflation adjustment. Given that social security expenses continue to increase and there are minimum allocation requirements for health and education, as established in 2017, the remaining areas, which pertain to discretionary expenses, experience contraction. This reduction is especially notable in sectors related to infrastructure, primarily associated with public investments rather than mandatory expenses like costs with personnel (Souza & Ferreira, 2020).

GRAPH 4   **BUDGETARY ATTENTION TO AGRICULTURE, ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORTATION, AND INFRASTRUCTURE (2000 TO 2021)**

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Graph 5 depicts a decrease in trade, information technology, scientific development, and foreign relations policies over 22 years. These policies experienced a decline in budgetary attention, with their participation in the LOA decreasing by as much as 50%. An important observation is that, unlike the other graphs, the punctuations are considerably lower, and the percentage variations from one year to another are less abrupt. This justifies the grouping of these sectors for analysis. Despite the prevalence of this behavior, there are still some indications of punctuations within the analyzed period.

GRAPH 5   BUDGETARY ATTENTION TO COMMERCE, ICT, SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENT, AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS (2000 TO 2021)
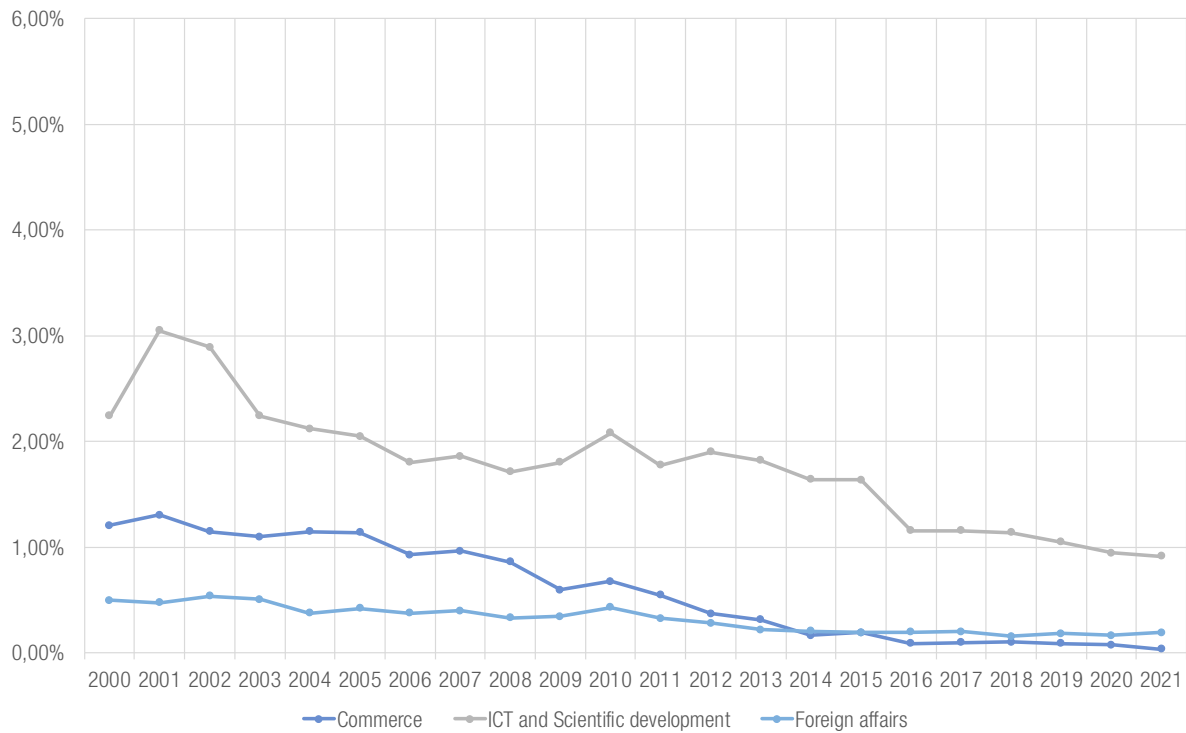
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Lastly, in Graph 6, the group of public policies encompassing industry, individual rights, energy, foreign trade, indigenous population, and culture and leisure accounted for the lowest proportions of government budgetary attention. When measuring their proportional participation in the LOA, these sectors represented values lower than 1%. However, their trajectories exhibit both declines and growths, demonstrating significant oscillations in government attention to these sectors during the studied period. Among these six elements, policies dedicated to indigenous populations behave differently, maintaining constant stability over the 20-year period with low values, consistently close to zero.

GRAPH 6 **BUDGETARY ATTENTION TO INDUSTRY, INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, ENERGY, FOREIGN TRADE, INDIGENOUS POPULATION, AND CULTURE AND LEISURE (2000 TO 2021)**
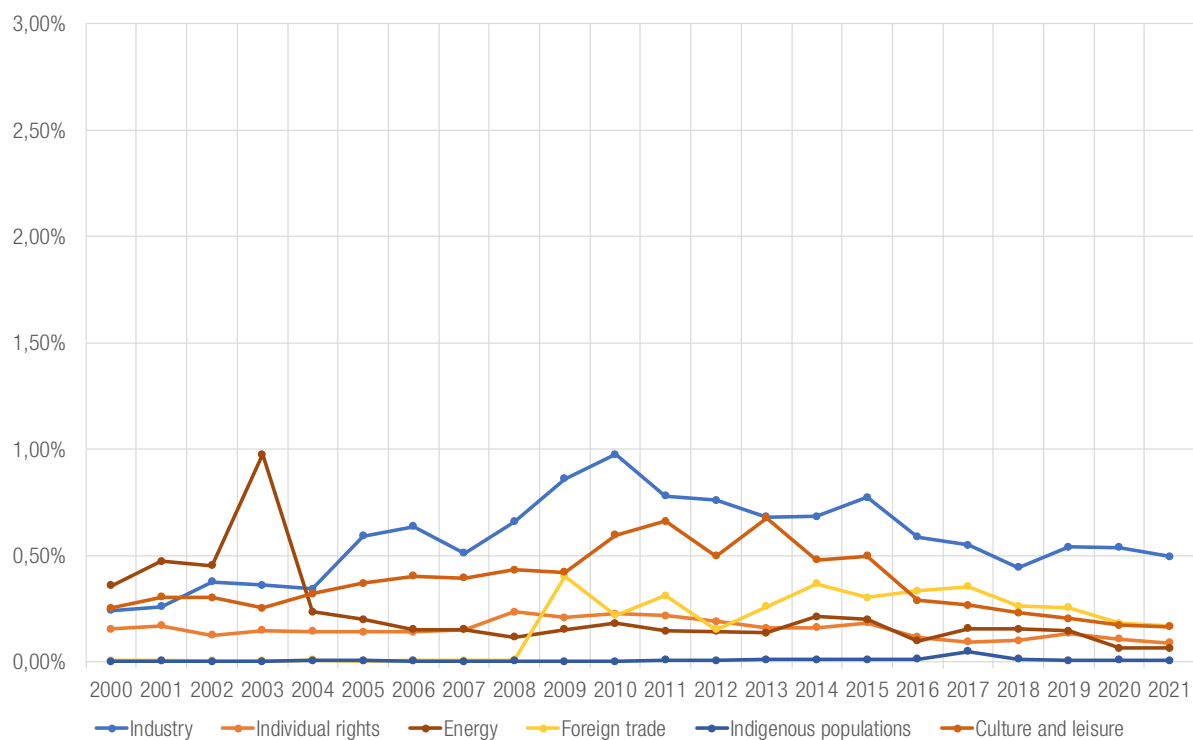
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Culture policies at the federal level have always depended heavily on tax incentive laws, such as the Rouanet and Audiovisual Laws, with little access to public funds guaranteed by the federal government general budget (*Orçamento Geral da União* – OGU). This situation had some inflection of change during the second term of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and the first of President Dilma Rousseff when efforts were made to establish a unified cultural system. This initiative aimed to increase resources from the National Culture Fund (FNC) for transfers to municipalities, ensuring a more equitable distribution of resources both regionally and across various types of cultural activities, which was not guaranteed by tax incentives alone.

This endeavor assumed the participation of municipalities and conditional transfers coordinated by the Ministry of Culture (MinC). However, this process was disrupted in 2016 with a change in government and new budgetary rules, ultimately leading to the dissolution of the MinC. Areas related to individual and indigenous rights have historically received limited federal funding. Graph 6 illustrates an attempt to allocate more budget resources during President Lula da Silva's second term and President Rousseff's first term. Nevertheless, like several other areas reliant on discretionary spending not protected by constitutional mandates, funding for these sectors also experienced significant cuts after 2017, as documented in a report by the Institute of Socioeconomic Studies (Inesc, 2022).

7. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

With the creation and analysis of a unique database covering the allocation of the Brazilian federal government's budget over a two-decade period (2000-2021), this study was conducted through the theoretical framework and application of the Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (PET) and observed elements of the literature on policy change. The research sought to comprehend the dynamic of agenda-setting and change in public policies in Brazil. Among the key findings from our cross-sectional analyses on the allocation of the annual budget among policy sectors and its changes over time, we observed a process characterized by significant stability and limited changes in proportional budget allocation. This dynamic predominantly reflects incrementalism.

However, there are more abrupt and significant punctuations and changes in government attention in the budget allocation process in some policy sectors, clashing with the incremental dynamics prevailing in most of the analyzed period. Such punctuated changes can be better understood when we highlight the behavior of policy sectors in longitudinal analyses.

Thus, the results are strongly supported by PET postulations and largely corroborate international studies in the field that investigate other cases from the same theoretical perspective of government agenda and changes in public policies. Therefore, this article demonstrates that PET, when applied to the analysis of Brazilian budget allocation, expands beyond the borders of developed countries and can be observed in countries along the Global South, which possess different structures and systems from those where the model has frequently been applied. Along with US case studies, this article is one of the few empirical pieces utilizing the CAP structure to analyze budgetary attention in a presidential and federative country, thereby broadening horizons for theory verification.

The particularities of the Brazilian context, whether perennial or dated, must be considered in this type of analysis. These aspects should inform the application of the theory to the Brazilian case and shed light on research findings. Consequently, we note the shifts in budget allocation that occurred during the transition between the governments of President Cardoso and President Lula da Silva, which marked the initiation of a new agenda of public policies, particularly in the social sphere. Furthermore, the period from 2015 to 2021 was characterized by significant institutional instability due to the impeachment of President Rousseff. The subsequent mandates (Presidents Temer and Bolsonaro) put forward changes in fiscal rules and implemented reforms, such as those related to social security and labor. This period also saw the upheaval of various public policy systems (Fagnani, 2017).

The various sectoral punctuations in government attention emerged at distinct times throughout the analyzed period and across different public policy sectors. Despite efforts to identify normative and conjunctural elements that shed light on these shifts in sectoral attention, future research should delve deeper into the causal mechanisms that explain the punctuations and dynamics of government attention in each policy sector and their tangible impacts on public policies. Nevertheless, as explored in this article, sectoral changes appear to be closely linked to shifts in government, wherein ideas and values often transform with the election of new actors.

Another key conclusion lies in how governmental priorities, as expressed in the decision-making agenda through the approval of norms and legislation, can profoundly impact the dynamics of governmental attention and lead to changes in budget distribution. These analyses have sectoral implications that can be further explored based on the results presented in this work.

Beyond the evident concern regarding underfunding in specific sectors of public policy, there is a second latent issue that surfaces in this scenario, pointing the way for future investigations: the shifting power dynamics among actors involved in the definition and subsequent execution of the discretionary portion of the budget, which finances the production and implementation of public policies.

The role of legislative actors, bolstered by the dynamics of approving parliamentary amendments – both individual and collective, and, more recently, the amendments included in the budget law by the bill's rapporteur, the so-called "secret budget" – increasingly diminishes the executive's authority to set the budget agenda, allocate funds, and drive policy production. Additionally, transparency in monitoring priorities and forecasting resources no longer resides solely within the executive's purview but extends to legislative actors and their amendments.

This article aims to bring Brazil closer to the latest literature on government priorities as observed in annual budget documents. In consonance with studies on the policy process, policy change, and agenda-setting – especially with the application of PET in Brazil – this work does not end with the analyses presented here. The findings presented pave the way for new agendas, including examining the relationship between the executive and legislative branches in shaping the budget, conducting comparative analyses on priorities and changes between the initial budget proposal, the LOA, and the executed budget, and exploring sector-specific agendas that seek to analyze and comprehend the dynamics of particular policy sectors, their moments of incrementalism, the causes behind punctuated equilibrium, and the effects over time.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The entire data set supporting this study's results is available in the Comparative Agendas Project repository with the identifiers Brazil, Dataset, and Federal Budget. Retrieved from https://www.comparativeagendas.net/brazil