



## PERFORMANCE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCHES IN THE PRODUCTION OF HEALTH POLICIES DURING THE LULA II AND DILMA I TERMS OF OFFICE

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**Abstract:** Considering the particularities of Brazilian coalition presidentialism, this study intended to characterize the role of the Executive and Legislative branches in approving health policies during the Lula II (2007 to 2010) and Dilma I (2011-2014) mandates, through the use of typologies. It was observed a preference of both powers for distributive proposals: of a more programmatic character and with greater coverage, in terms of beneficiaries, when initiated by the Executive; and with a higher level of discretion and with a large proportion of symbolic proposals, in the case of those initiated by parliamentarians. The predominance of the theme of "Prevention" revealed the contextual phase of expanding the scope of the SUS legal framework.

**Keywords:** health policies; content of legislative production; functioning of political powers; Legislative Branch.

### 1 Introduction

In presidentialism, voters elect their president directly and independently of the Legislative vote. The elected Chief Executive has a fixed term, appoints the members of the government, and has specific and limited legislative powers (SHUGART; CAREY, 1992). In Brazil, the combination of the strong presidency, extensive and heterogeneous federalism, open list proportional representation, multiparty system, and bicameralism makes it unlikely that the President's party will achieve a majority in Congress, which hinders the logic of governability. The solution to this problem was the formation of a party-based coalition to allow the President to govern in the minority through negotiations between the parties that make up the President's support base. The balance of government thus reflects its ability to build agreements with parties in the Legislative Branch. For this reason, the Brazilian political system came to be named by the expression coined by Sérgio Abranches in 1988 as a coalition presidentialism (ABRANCHES, 1988; LIMONJI, 2006).

The negotiations that take place within the framework of this system must consider that the guiding vector of parliamentary action is the maximization of the possibilities of electoral success in a future election (MAYHEW, 1974) and that the majority profile of Brazilian parliamentarians is characterized by an interest in increasing their personal gains, "their private finances", and in proposing projects and offering resources to their specific clientele. Although it is possible to find programmatically oriented deputies and senators, the open list proportional

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electoral system does not privilege this type of parliamentarian (AMES, 2003).

Thus, and considering the separation of powers between the federal government, state governments, and municipal governments, the President of the Republic faces a reasonable number of “veto players” and must “always be rebuilding majorities” to conduct their government projects (AMES, 2003). In this context, coalitions have been formed, under volatile bases, which depend on the moods of the congressional and state oligarchies since 1945, except the period of military dictatorship (1964-85), which weakened the implementation of public policies necessary for the country (ABRANCHES, 2018).

The 1988 Constitution (BRASIL, 2020) considerably expanded the institutional powers given to the President of the Republic by providing for the faculties of editing provisional measures, veto, an exclusive initiative in fundamental matters, and urgent requests for projects of presidential authorship, which maximized the power of the Executive's agenda. At the same time, the legislative process was revised to centralize decision-making capacity in the hands of party leaders in the National Congress, which favored the organization of the coalition on a partisan basis. Such instruments conferred privileges on the President of the Republic and their government agenda, including policies of national scope due to their electoral jurisdiction (of national scope).

To succeed in approving their proposals, the President uses the party system and its prerogatives in their favor. However, they are pressured to make concessions to their support base in various areas, such as the budget and public policy. This permanent bargaining for benefits, especially fiscal resources, as a prerequisite for legislative decisions and the discipline of coalitions has become a hallmark of the Brazilian political system. Thus, despite the insurgency of institutional tools in favor of governability, the broad fragmentation of the National Congress and clientelism in the Brazilian context constitute perennial historical phenomena that have influenced the organization of the political coalition and the legislative process over the years (MELLO, 2017; ABRANCHES, 2018).

In this sense, Ames (1995) demonstrated that the predominant pattern of parliamentary behavior is marked by the search for public resources for specific locations through the federal budget (*pork barrel* policy) as part of the electoral strategy of these actors. However, studies based on the analysis of the characteristics of non-budgetary public policies presented and approved in the National Congress indicated that the fulfillment of geographically localized demands is not relevant through these types of proposals and that general or sectional impact policies that cover large social segments prevail (AMORIM NETO; SANTOS, 2003; LEMOS, 2001; RICCI, 2003). Such findings gave new guise to the narrow interpretation that parliamentarians focused on re-election, prioritizing only the distribution of benefits for their electoral district. Thus, it became necessary to apply a broader concept, which provides for circumstances in which there is support, by parliamentarians, of demands of interest groups, not

of specific regions, and even of norms of general interest, without losing sight of the interest in re-election (ARNOLD, 1990; LEMOS, 2001).

Faced with these indications of other interests by parliamentarians, which are not only those benefiting their geographically located strongholds, and the existing institutional limitations to both the executive and legislative branches of government, this paper sought to describe the result of the balance of forces between the Powers in terms of the most successful types of policies, of the initiative of each of these powers, through a qualitative study of health policies initiated in two terms of office selected converted into the norm. Furthermore, considering that the object of analysis was health policies, we also sought to characterize the roles of these actors in the legislative production in this thematic field. The two terms of office selected were the second term of the Lula government (Lula II) and the first term of the Dilma government (Dilma I).

## **2 Typologies employed**

The following typologies for classifying public policies were used for this study: Wilson's (1973), with the reinterpretation given by Méndez (1993), based on the distribution of costs and benefits; the one developed by GPE Saúde (Grupo de Pesquisa e Extensão do Centro de Formação, Treinamento e Aperfeiçoamento of the Chamber of Deputies on the Legislative and Health Policy in Brazil) (CARVALHO *et al.*, 2011), which distinguishes health policies in functional themes; and the one based on Mello (2017), which differentiates distributive policies according to the level of discretion and the types of beneficiaries.

The scheme reinterpreted based on Wilson (1973) begins with the recognition that the variation of the policy content conditions the political process; i.e., it assumes that different types of policies engender different levels of conflict and participation in the legislative process. By this method, health policies were classified into four main categories based on the characteristics of the distribution of costs and benefits: distributive, regulatory, redistributive, and majority (Chart 1). Based on the classification, it was possible to make predictions about the level of conflict in the arena, higher in cases where there is a greater concentration of costs and the performance of interest groups, and more intense when the policies in process direct them to concentrated benefits or costs. In addition, the approach made it possible to assess the institutional margin given to the legislator and the President of the Republic for the distribution of benefits, concentrated or diffuse, and the willingness of actors to impose costs on specific segments, in favor of others or for the benefit of society as a whole.

**Chart 1** – Classification scheme proposed by Wilson (1973) with the reinterpretation given by Méndez (1993)

		BENEFITS	
		Concentrated	Diffuse
COSTS	Diffuse	Distributive Policy	Majority Policy
	Concentrated	Redistributive Policy	Regulatory Policy

Source: Méndez (1993).

Considering the study conducted by Mello (2017), for whom the President of the Republic proposes distributive policies with benefits directed to social groups or segments through well-defined regulations, and that, in contrast, legislators prefer to support highly discretionary crony programs, this research sought to analyze the distributive policies initiated by the Executive and Legislative in more detail. Thus, distributive policies were classified as high, intermediate, or low, according to the degree of regulation provided in the proposal or the policy that, by chance, was being changed. Programs with extensive regulation and clear and objective access rules were classified as having a low level of discretion. The most simplified legislation, without provision for complementary regulation or a clear definition of the criteria for access to the benefit, was classified as having a high level of discretion. Those that defined few rules or referred to complementary regulation were classified as having an intermediate level of discretion.

These distributive policies were also categorized according to the target segment of the benefits provided in the policy. Thus, the benefits could be divided into corporative, educational, symbolic, international, regional, and those intended for private legal entities, vulnerable groups, and federate entities. This classification made it possible to assess better which groups were most favored by the Congress' performance.

The GPE Saúde typology is based on the functional classification of health policies, subdividing them into five main themes: Health Care (“Care”); Health Promotion and Prevention and Disease Control (“Prevention”); Rights and Responsibilities (“Rights”); Health Management, Resources and Research (“Management”); and Other Health-Related Themes. This approach allowed the characterization of the fields of action most addressed in the approved standards and the standardization phase in which the health sector was studied.

### **3 Performance of the National Congress: Electoral Connection versus Party System**

From the perspective of the electoral connection proposed by Mayhew (1974), Congress is formed by individuals who are politically oriented to maximize their chances of re-election and who do not focus on substantial policies to solve problems effectively. Thus, the legislator has incentives to "provide services" to the interests of groups that have "available electoral resources" (MAYHEW, 1974, our translation). This means that the parliamentarian tends to

support the approval of policies with concentrated political benefits for specific groups, provided they appreciate their gains, and this appreciation is converted into tangible electoral advantages.

This behavior is explained by the logic of the functioning of specific institutional systems that encourage electoral competition between politicians and make them individually dependent on campaign financing and public political support. In Brazil, the open-list proportional representation system encourages competitive behavior among candidates, including among party colleagues. To successfully seek political office, candidates must differentiate themselves from competitors and meet demands from a sufficiently large subset of their electorate (MELLO, 2017).

According to the model described by Arnold (1990), legislators' decisions are oriented to satisfy both immediate aspirations and voters' future assessment of parliamentary performance, the so-called "potential preference" of citizens. Thus, parliamentarians try to anticipate the small analysis of the costs and benefits of each citizen's policies regarding their welfare and evaluate how an issue under analysis, even if it is not an immediate demand of the electorate, can become necessary during the election.

Citizens will not have a preference for any policy when they do not understand its costs and benefits. On the other hand, they will oppose it if they detect costs or support it if they detect benefits. When they detect costs and benefits, the citizens will calculate the intensity of the preference so that the costs have greater relevance than the benefits, i.e., the preferences are more intense when there are costs involved (ARNOLD, 1990).

The perception of these costs and benefits by voters depends on the salience of the policy. The greater the magnitude of the effects of the policy, the shorter the term of these effects, the greater the proximity to others affected, and the greater the influence of an instigator who helps reveal the issue. The magnitude would be related to quantifying the impact on the citizen, such as the amount of price reduction, taxes, etc. The more significant the relative impact, the more likely the affected person will realize the cost imposed on them. The effects of policies can be short-term or long-term. Citizens perceive the former more easily since the first stages of a multi-stage policy are more likely to occur and, thus, be understood. Proximity to others affected is a function of the degree to which group or geographical effects are concentrated, i.e., it depends on the degree of physical proximity or the existence of communication channels between those affected. Finally, the presence of an instigator who helps to reveal the issue refers to the existence of an opinion leader who educates citizens on specific issues, using mass media to disseminate their information free of charge. Business organizations, interest group members, or the President of the Republic may act as instigators. Thus, the existence of intense, short-term effects, concentrated by groups or geographical areas (high salience), causes great interest in those affected. On the other hand, low-intensity, long-

term, and diffuse effects (low salience) would hardly cross the line of perception (ARNOLD, 1990).

Thus, the tendency to approve policies that serve organized groups through concentrated benefits is more significant when the issue is salient or potentially salient for these particular groups, called “attentive citizens” and not for the so-called “inattentive citizens”. The level of attention of citizens can be modulated through the action of the legislator who takes over the conduction of the proposal, which can increase or reduce the traceability of the decision-making process (through greater or lesser transparency of this process, for example). Thus, organized groups may identify or not their supporters or opponents. Such groups have incentives to reward or punish legislators for their actions and thus have advantages in approving proposals of their interests (ARNOLD, 1990).

As mentioned, legislators do not act only to respond to pressures and specific interests of attentive audiences. Still, they often anticipate policies that, in their assessment, can influence the electorate’s attitude during voting without necessarily being linked to a specific gain. Therefore, an assessment of the “potential preferences” at a future time is made. This creates favorable conditions for Congress to support policies of general or diffuse interest, i.e., policies with broad benefits for society, even if there is an incidence of concentrated costs on a specific segment. In this case, electoral pressure emerges if the issue is salient or potentially salient for a substantial number of citizens and if the entrepreneur of the proposal is talented and fights for the defense of the interests of this public, creating visibility of the process and, therefore, traceability of the legislator's action. This exposure is essential for the approval of these proposals since decisions are made considering the actions of future competitors in the elections, which could associate the names of legislators with an unwanted positioning in the eyes of their electorate. Support for such diffuse policies, which serve general or shared interests, would be more related to meeting the potential preferences of the electorate, the construction of an image of an ideal representative, and the defense of shared values about ideal policies for society (ARNOLD, 1990; LEMOS, 2001).

However, it should be considered that if there is a solid desire to provide concentrated benefits without arousing contrary reactions from the electorate, procedures that camouflage individual actions and destroy the chain of traceability of individual actions of legislators could be adopted. There are several possible forms to reduce the visibility of this process and, therefore, to minimize electoral judgment, either by delegating authority to the Executive, by holding secret meetings to discuss matters, by voting without nominal registration, or by inserting issues into the so-called “bus projects”, which are extensive projects and address several different issues. The definition of procedural routes will depend on coalition leaders' decisions and other legislators' reactions to them (ARNOLD, 1990).

The model developed by Arnold (1990) further considers that people value many things

that do not contribute to their material welfare. For example, projects aimed at people with disabilities are popular even among people who do not share the disability. Likewise, projects that address the protection of species and green areas are well-regarded by the general population. This is due to the belief that the government must assist the less fortunate groups and provide general benefits for present and future generations. Thus, there may be support for proposals with benefits concentrated in specific segments or even diffuse in society. It would be linked not to instrumental rationality but to shared values about ideal policies for society as a whole. Defenses of matters of this nature link the image of the parliamentarian to an ideal stereotype (LEMOS, 2001).

It is also noteworthy that Arnold (1990) somewhat deconstructs the traditional understanding of congressional support for programs with concentrated geographic benefits. According to this author, proposals of this nature are not very successful in Congress, despite being defended by parliamentarians from the benefited region. This is because proponents must broaden the distribution of benefits through the eligibility criteria to attract enough legislators to approve the proposal, which reduces individual benefits and, consequently, enthusiasm in defending the matter. When they are associated with group benefits, they become more consistent due to the possibility of forming a more stable support base (ARNOLD, 1990).

Therefore, the model described by Arnold (1990) identifies the possibility of parliamentary support for a broad spectrum of policies as a response to the assessment of the electorate's will or as a form of favoring specific groups, provided this does not put re-election at risk. In Brazil, the incentives to patronage in the National Congress lead to negotiations more focused on benefits than on solutions of national scope or long-term programmatic agreements. Thus, the resulting policies tend to present quality deficits, favoring corruption networks and political-business interests (ABRANCHES, 2018).

According to Mello (2017), Brazilian legislators show greater interest in discretionary crony schemes, i.e., policies that distribute benefits and that are not so well regulated, to allow local managers to have room for maneuver to direct such benefits, bearing in mind the possibilities of electoral return. Thus, as a result of party pressure and belonging to the coalition, they may even support certain well-regulated programmatic, social expenditures proposed by the Executive, which do not bring so much credit to local political operators, but which do not generate damage to their patronage, but, at some point, they will try to place policies that will allow them to meet particularist demands (MELLO, 2017).

Legislator interests are modulated by coalition formation and a strong party system, which force politicians to work together around a presidential agenda. Despite the party weakness in the electoral arena, there is a relevant role of the parties in the National Congress, given the centralization of powers in the hands of party leaders, which minimizes, but does not cancel, the individualistic behavior of the parliamentarian (AMORIM NETO, 2000;

FIGUEIREDO; LIMONGI, 1995; SANTOS, 1997, 1999). Thus, Presidents would be able to govern despite the fragmented party system.

Given the complexity of coalition presidentialism, both the party interpretation and the electoral connection coexist in the decision-making arena and result in arrangements that depend on the balance of political forces in a given period (MELLO, 2017). Thus, although conditioned to follow party leaders when in office, legislators act according to the type of connection established with their electorate during the term, not only during elections. The President's legislative powers and the regimental rules of Congress, which allow party leaders to impose discipline, are valuable tools in voting on projects of interest to the President of the Republic (FIGUEIREDO; LIMONGI, 1999, 2006, 2007; SANTOS, 2003). However, they are more effective in policies that have a limited impact on the electoral prospects, especially of government coalition members. If the presidential agenda threatens such prospects, incentives for cooperation will be limited (MELLO, 2017).

#### **4 Presidential Performance: Policies of National Impact**

In Brazil and much of Latin America, Presidents are the only elected officials tied to a national constituency. This national reach encourages Presidents to develop a coherent, centralized response to social problems and resist the appeals of localized crony networks. Moreover, unlike legislators, they are held accountable by the public for virtually every aspect of national performance. Thus, they present preferences for national development policies and programmatic social policies. Incentives in this regard occur because Presidents are equally concerned about re-election or who will become President after they leave office. Generally, they do not entirely abandon frontline politics and consider the possibility of running for a third non-consecutive term (MELLO, 2017).

It is not possible to win Presidential elections based on providing privileged access to small groups of voters. Instead, candidates must win a majority's support, which includes patrons and those who do not have access to the protection offered by a crony network. Thus, they should strive to devise acceptable social policies throughout the country – both for potential beneficiaries and wealthier voters, who will pay the costs of income redistribution (MELLO, 2017).

Mello (2017) attested that Presidential candidates running for re-election or supported by the incumbent President benefit from presidential anti-poverty programs based on well-defined rules, i.e., programs that have broad regulations, with clear and objective access rules and that confer a low level of discretion on the manager or executor of the policy at the time of implementation. However, their vote share is not systematically affected by highly discretionary programs formalized in simpler legislation that allow manipulation by policy enforcers to reward patrons or punish detractors.

The construction of a programmatic framework of public policies is favored when Presidents have resources that give them an advantage in the design and implementation of policies and the budgetary process to guarantee the financing of these new policies. CF/88 (BRASIL, [2020]) dramatically increased the powers of the Presidency, providing it with control over the budget and appointments to government posts. Thus, such resources are used for the co-optation of legislator support in several areas, i.e., Presidents give legislators (especially in the coalition) control of the resources needed to maintain and expand their electoral sustainment networks. In return, however, they demand support for rules-based policies, the passage of which helps promote the President. This system has created political stability, forcing Congress and the President to commit to their different spending priorities, resulting in the current reality that resources must be divided between programmatic and crony initiatives without one decisively defeating the other (MELLO, 2017).

### **5 Health Policy Production: Normative Connection (at Risk) and Greater Institutional Capacity of the Executive Branch**

After the enactment of CF/88 (BRASIL, [2020]), the actors of the political system must consider the guidelines contained in the constitutional text when adjusting their proposals for health policies. This conditioning is called by Gomes (2011) "normative connection", which limits the options of the actors and creates a kind of path-dependent on the trajectory (path dependency).

The constitutional directives determined that the health system should be public and universal and provide comprehensive and accessible care to all who needed it, without distinction. CF/88 (BRASIL, [2020]) also foresaw the principles of governability with accountability and budgetary responsibility, which decision-makers should also observe when formulating any public policy. Thus, implementing health policies necessarily involves a complex weighting between the need to expand the supply of actions and health services and the availability of resources, given the competition between the various state sectors (GOMES, 2011).

Gomes (2011), studying the period from 1999 to 2006, and Godoi (2008), which covered the period from 1988 to 2008, identified the predominance of policies of actions and health services and benefits. The two studies detected relevant participation of symbolic standards, which are those aimed at paying homage or instituting commemorative dates and a growing number of health programs or specific actions aimed at meeting the demands of certain segments of society. The latter "segment the right to health, discriminating rights for some groups" (BAPTISTA, 2010), relativize the constitutional principles of universality and integrality and tend to lead to worsening inequality in health care for Brazilians (LUCCHESI, 2009).

## 6 Hypotheses

The central hypotheses of this work are described below, based on the described form of functioning of the Legislative and Executive Branches in the presidential coalition system and the specificities of the production of health policies, which were tested for the health policies presented in the Lula II and Dilma I terms of office that were converted into a legal standard.

As legislators show great interest in crony schemes (ABRANCHES, 2018; AMES, 2003; MAYHEW, 1974; MELLO, 2017), i.e., in policies that provide for the granting of benefits, bearing in mind the possibilities of electoral return:

**Hypothesis 1:** The ordinary non-budgetary proposals of the legislative initiative have a predominantly distributive nature, i.e., they provide benefits directed to specific sectors or groups, even if they are broad groups of society dispersed throughout the national territory (such as vulnerable groups: the elderly, children, the economically vulnerable, etc.).

Members of Congress tend to propose/support not only policies of concentrated benefits (to interest groups or geographic regions) but also policies of diffuse benefits, given the interest in meeting the potential future preferences of their voters in building an image of an ideal representative, in defending widely accepted values, or in taking positions on issues important to the electorate (ARNOLD, 1990; LEMOS, 2001). Therefore:

**Hypothesis 2:** The production of parliamentary initiative policies is also marked by the distribution of diffuse benefits throughout society.

Considering that Presidents are oriented to support policies of national impact aimed at solving the various problems found in society (MELLO, 2017):

**Hypothesis 3:** The production of ordinary non-budgetary laws of initiative in the Executive contemplates a more significant number of policies that foresee diffuse benefits.

The studies by Godoi (2008) and Gomes (2011) demonstrated a predominance of health actions and services groups' policies. Thus:

**Hypothesis 4:** The approval of ordinary non-budgetary proposals by the two powers is characterized by a large proportion of proposals on the theme "health care", according to the typology of the GPE Saúde (CARVALHO *et al.*, 2011), which would be the category that encompasses the contents that are closest to those covered by the group of "Health actions and services", predominant in the analyzes of Godoi (2008) and Gomes (2011).

Health policies should be elaborated according to the normative connection, i.e., according to constitutional principles (GOMES, 2011). However, the growth of laws that direct the SUS service to specific groups has been observed, which hurt the constitutional principles of equity and integrality (GODOI, 2008; BAPTISTA, 2010), and symbolic laws, which are laws that address tributes or commemorative dates, with a lower density of content. Considering the logic of the functioning of Congress, it is to be expected that this type of fragmentary politics

and opposed normative connection originates primarily in the proposals of parliamentary initiative and symbolic policies. Therefore:

**Hypothesis 5:** Most symbolic policies and assistance policies prioritizing the care of specific groups, the so-called “fragmenting integrality” standards, originate in the Legislative.

As the Executive Branch has a greater focus on national policies (MELLO, 2017), and considering that it has greater control over the budget and constitutional prerogative of private initiative in matters related to the administrative organization of public services (GODOI, 2008; GOMES, 2011), it is expected that it will focus on matters related to the management and structure of the SUS in the ordinary and complementary routes. Thus:

**Hypothesis 6:** The Executive has a relevant role in approving policies on the theme “Management, Resources, and Research in Health”.

According to the findings of Mello (2017), the distributive policies of the presidential initiative are predominantly programmatic and guided by clear and defined access rules, in addition to having coherence with a national development policy agenda. Those of parliamentary origin, in turn, have a high level of discretion, i.e., they do not have the conditions of access and operation so well outlined by the standard to give greater freedom to the local operator. Given such findings:

**Hypothesis 7:** Policies of a distributive nature approved on the initiative of the Executive have a low level of discretion, while those of parliamentary origin have a high level of discretion.

## 7 Methodology

The methodology used involved the analysis of the set of non-budgetary ordinary proposals with Health Policy Content (as classified according to the typology of the GPE Saúde) of the non-budgetary ordinary routes initiated in the periods from 2007 to 2010 (Lula II mandate) and from 2011 to 2014 (Dilma I mandate) and which were converted into a legal norm until January 2020. This set totaled 223 proposals. Budgetary standards were excluded from this part of the work since they address authorizations of expenditures and an indication of their sources of financing, generally deriving from policies established in other non-budgetary standards.

The health proposals that were converted into law were then classified according to the typology adapted by Wilson (1973), described in section 2, which allowed a relative characterization of the distribution of costs and benefits of both Executive and Legislative health policies, in addition to making inferences about the types of arenas faced during the processing of these policies.

A survey was also conducted on the distribution of the selected proposals among the four thematic groups of health described by the typology developed by GPE Saúde

(CARVALHO *et al.*, 2011), discussed in section 2. With this, it was possible to identify the functional types of health policies that most focused the attention of the powers. In addition, by crossing these thematic groups with the arenas foreseen in the model adapted by Wilson (1973), we sought to identify the existence of preferential arenas for each health policy theme.

Finally, the distributive policies approved in the ordinary non-budgetary route, initiated by both the Executive and Legislative, were analyzed according to the typology described in section 2 to verify whether the trend of choosing policies based on rules by the Executive and discretionary policies by the Legislative was confirmed for the health policies initiated in the Lula II and Dilma I terms of office. In addition, the beneficiaries of these policies were identified to distinguish the segments that exert the most significant influence on the political system.

### **8 Characterization of health policies during the Lula II and Dilma I terms of office**

By applying Wilson's (1973) adapted typology to ordinary non-budgetary proposals that contained health policies presented during the Lula II and Dilma I governments and that were converted into law by January 2020, the results shown in Tables 1 to 3 were obtained. In terms of office analyzed, the distributive policies presented the highest proportion of approval, both when evaluating together the proposals of the non-budgetary ordinary route, which includes the bills and the non-budgetary Provisional Presidential Decrees (Table 1), and when analyzing such proposals in isolation (Tables 2 and 3). The quantitative superiority of such policies was observed for the proposals initiated by the President of the Republic and those of parliamentary initiative. This data revealed a predilection for policies that confer concentrated benefits to specific segments of society.

Among the parliamentary initiative projects, regulatory policies took second place in quantitative terms, in the list of successful policies, in both terms of office analyzed. This demonstrates the relevant occurrence of the phenomenon indicated by Arnold (1990) of approval of policies of general or diffuse interest of society by parliamentarians, with the consequent imposition of concentrated costs on specific sectors. According to this author, this occurs on issues of great prominence for a high number of citizens, which require decision-making by Congress, and also when one wishes to meet the potential future preferences of the electorate, build an image of an ideal representative, and defend widely accepted values in society. The approval of majority legislative initiative standards, which, in the same way, do not distribute crony benefits but, on the contrary, have a broader impact on society, can also be supported on the grounds mentioned above.

In the case of proposals initiated by the Executive and in the general classification order, there is variation between the different types. In the Lula II term, majority policies appeared in front of regulatory ones, which did not occur in the Dilma I term (for ordinary non-

budgetary proposals and Provisional Presidential Decrees). In the case of these two types of policies, it is assumed that the Executive has a stronger role to play, given that they provide for the broad distribution of benefits without focusing on any specific segment, which is assumed to be, as already stated, an objective of the Presidents.

Redistributive policies, in turn, did not obtain great expressiveness, although they exceeded the proportion of the majority standards of Legislative initiative in Lula II. In these cases, because some groups are benefited or harmed, the arena is more conflicted, and Congress acts as an arbitrator in a zero-sum game in which there is a winning group and a losing group. It is, therefore, to be assumed that these policies are avoided or that they are difficult to approve. In case of success, the groups that confer the greatest electoral returns on parliamentarians tend to be chosen as beneficiaries.

**Table 1** – Distribution of the types of non-budgetary ordinary proposals of the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I converted into law, according to the typology adapted from Wilson (1973)

Types of Policy	2007-2010					2011-2014				
	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total
	N	%	N	%	%	N	%	N	%	%
Distributive	23	15.97	33	22.92	38.89	12	15.19	18	22.78	37.97
Regulatory	7	4.86	17	11.81	16.67	9	11.39	13	16.46	27.85
Majority	17	11.81	10	6.94	18.75	6	7.59	5	6.33	13.92
Redistributive	6	4.17	13	9.03	13.19	1	1.27	8	10.13	11.39
Mixed	13	9.03	5	3.47	12.50	5	6.33	2	2.53	8.86
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>45.83</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>54.17</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41.77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>58.23</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: The author, 2020.

**Table 2** – Distribution of the types of Bills in the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I converted into law, according to the typology adapted from Wilson (1973)

Types of Policy	2007-2010					2011-2014				
	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total
	N	%	N	%	%	N	%	N	%	%
Distributive	9	8.57	33	31.43	40.00	3	5.36	18	32.14	37.50
Regulatory	3	2.86	17	16.19	19.05	3	5.36	13	23.21	28.57
Majority	8	7.62	10	9.52	17.14	4	7.14	5	8.93	16.07
Redistributive	1	0.95	13	12.38	13.33	0	0.00	8	14.29	14.29
Mixed	6	5.71	5	4.76	10.48	0	0.00	2	3.57	3.57
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25.71</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>74.29</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>17.86</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>82.14</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: The author, 2020.

**Table 3** – Distribution of the types of non-budgetary Provisional Presidential Decrees in the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I converted into law, according to the typology adapted from Wilson (1973)

Types of Policy	2007-2010		2011-2014	
	N	%	N	%
Distributive	14	35.90	9	165.00
Regulatory	4	10.26	6	110.00
Majority	9	23.08	2	36.67
Redistributive	5	12.82	1	18.33
Mixed	7	17.95	5	91.67
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>421.67</b>

Source: The author, 2020.

These findings reveal the parliamentary appreciation for the initiation of policies with concentrated benefits, which could be justified by the need to attract support from specific segments, focusing on re-election (electoral connection). However, the option for policies with diffuse benefits (regulatory and majority policies) reveals the parliamentary intention to satisfy “potential preferences” important at election time, to defend shared values about ideal policies for society, and to build a stereotype that impacts the electorate's perception of the parliamentarian's performance (LEMOS, 2001). **Hypotheses 1 and 2, provided for in section 6, could thus be confirmed.**

There was also a tendency to prioritize distributive policies in the case of the Executive Branch, which indicated the propensity of the government, in the ordinary route, to give preference to policies that met specific demands of society, which, in general, entail less conflicting arenas of appreciation. **These results led to the rejection of hypothesis 3, provided for in section 6, which provided for greater initiation of diffuse benefits policies by the Executive.**

To evaluate the influence of mixed policies in the general context of approved policies, all approved proposals were reclassified into policies without concentrated costs, which covered distributive, majority, and those that presented both types of policies combined in a single proposal, and policies with concentrated costs, which included proposals that contained, in the formal text, regulatory or redistributive commands, even if they also presented majority or distributive devices. With this more condensed classification (Table 4) there is a strong propensity of Congress to approve policies without concentrated costs, i.e., that do not harm any specific sector and, thus, do not generate conflicts during the process. This trend was observed for both Presidential and parliamentary proposals.

**Table 4** – Distribution of ordinary non-budgetary proposals in the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I converted into law, according to the concentration of costs

Types of Policy	2007-2010					2011-2014				
	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total
	N	%	N	%	%	N	%	N	%	%
No concentrated costs*	45	31.25	45	31.25	62.50	18	22.78	24	30.38	53.16
With concentrated costs**	21	14.58	33	22.92	37.50	15	18.99	22	27.85	46.84
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>45.83</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>54.17</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>41.77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>58.23</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: The author, 2020.

Note: \* Proposals that exclusively contained distributive and majority policies;

\*\* Proposals that contained redistributive and regulatory policies.

According to the typology of the GPE Saúde, the results shown in Table 5 were obtained regarding the analysis of the health topics covered by the ordinary non-budgetary proposals that contained health policies presented during the Lula II and Dilma I governments and that were converted into law by January 2020. “Prevention” policies dominated the approval agenda in the two terms analyzed, surpassing 50% in both cases. It was the most prevalent policy theme both among the proposals initiated by the President and among those of parliamentarians. Graphs 1 and 2 also show that this is a theme with relevant participation in all policy categories, especially in the distributive arena in the Lula II term and in the regulatory arena in Dilma I.

The highlight of the theme of “Prevention” possibly stems from its wide scope; the contextual phase in which the SUS was found in the analyzed period; the high proportion of symbolic standards, classified in this theme, and the normative connection. As the health system was broadly conceived by CF/88, guided by the principles of universality and comprehensiveness of care, and considering that the regulation of these devices was carried out in the immediate post-constitutional period (in the 1990s), the most recent legislative production has focused on more comprehensive conditioning factors that may impact the health condition of the population.

**These results led to the rejection of hypothesis 4, provided for in section 6, which indicated the predominance of standards of the theme "Health Care",** considering the observations made by Gomes (2011) and Godoi (2008) that the standards that address health actions and services would prevail. The theme “Care” was the least covered in all pathways, which can be explained by the narrower scope of this category in the typology used. It cannot be said that there was a change in the approval profile concerning the periods studied by the authors mentioned above in view of the specificities of the typologies used in each work.

The low participation of the theme “Care” is related to the already mentioned normative connection in the Brazilian legal system, according to which infra-constitutional standards

should be elaborated according to constitutional principles. Considering the breadth of the principles of comprehensiveness and universality of health care provided for in CF/88, little margin would remain for the adoption of standards that address care services. However, as already discussed in section 5, there has been a movement towards non-compliance with the normative connection and the approval of policies that fragment comprehensiveness. The fact that this theme has appeared more frequently in the distributive arena (Graphs 1 and 2), very often related to policies for the provision of services to vulnerable groups, corroborates this understanding. **The greater participation of the Legislative in this theme confirms part of hypothesis 5, provided for in section 6, indicating less programmatic behavior of parliamentarians in relation to the Executive.**

Policies on the themes “Rights” and “Management” follow the preventive proposals in the order of general proportion and those presented by the Legislative. This order is reversed in the case of initiative proposals of the Executive since “Management” policies are more numerous than those addressing “Rights”. **This confirms hypothesis 6, provided for in section 6, considering that the Executive Branch has a greater interest, in addition to being an Exclusive initiative in matters related to the structuring and organization of its services.**

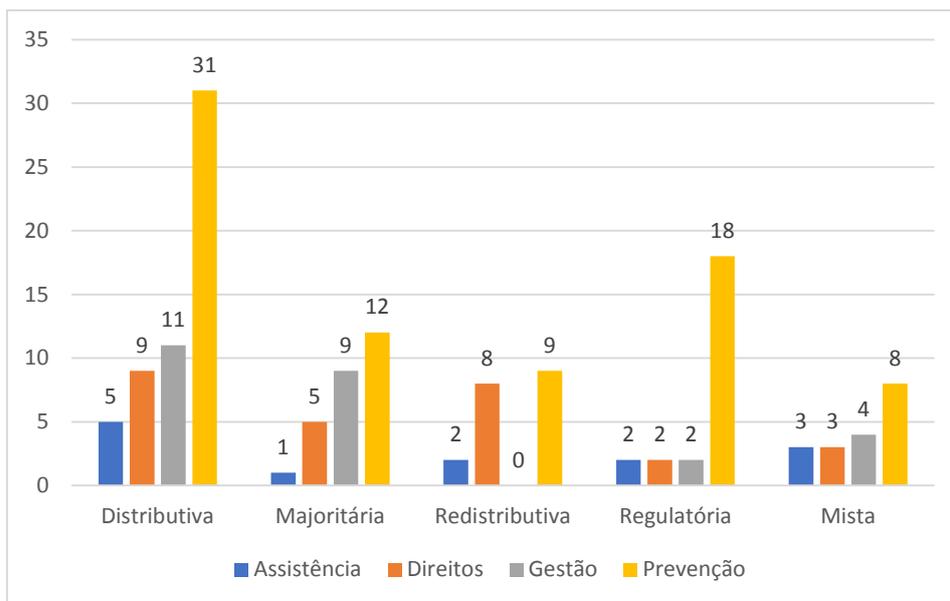
Both the theme “Rights” and “Management” appear with greater intensity in the distributive arena compared to other arenas, as shown in Graphs 1 and 2. This is because the theme “Rights” is widely used for the distribution of benefits to specific groups, as is “Management”, especially in corporate policies.

**Table 5** – Distribution of the types of non-budgetary ordinary proposals of the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I converted into law, according to the typology of GPE Saúde

Themes	2007-2010					2011-2014				
	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total
	N	%	N	%		%	N	%	N	
Care	5	3.47	8	5.56	9.03	1	1.27	10	12.66	13.92
Rights	14	9.72	13	9.03	18.75	7	8.86	7	8.86	17.72
Management	22	15.28	4	2.78	18.06	9	11.39	4	5.06	16.46
Prevention	25	17.36	53	36.81	54.17	16	20.25	25	31.65	51.90
<b>Total</b>	66	45.83	78	54.17	100.00	33	41.77	46	58.23	100.00

Source: The author, 2020.

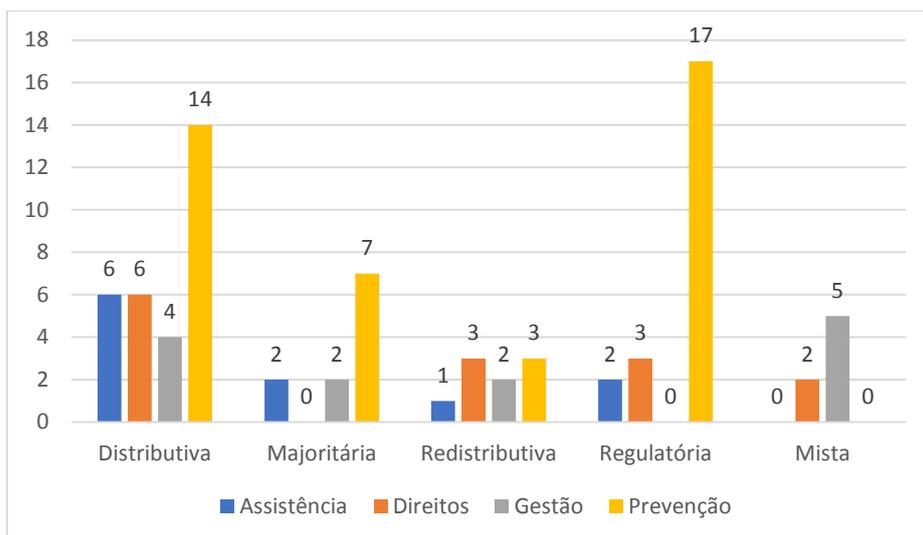
**Graph 1** – Distribution of the ordinary non-budgetary proposals of the health area presented in Lula II converted into law, according to the typology adapted from Wilson (1973) and GPE Saúde



Source: The author, 2020.

Note: Distributive; Majority; Redistributive; Regulatory; Mixed. Care; Rights; Management; Prevention.

**Graph 2** – Distribution of the ordinary non-budgetary proposals of the health area presented in Dilma I converted into law, according to the typology adapted from Wilson (1973) and GPE Saúde



Source: The author, 2020.

Note: Distributive; Majority; Redistributive; Regulatory; Mixed. Care; Rights; Management; Prevention.

A separate analysis of the policies of this category was carried out to verify the predilection for the approval of distributive policies, regardless of the initiating agent, and certify whether the approved health policies, in the analyzed period, present the profile foreseen by Mello (2017). According to this author, the distributive policies proposed by the Presidents would have a programmatic character and be instituted with more complex regulations,

including clear criteria and objectives of access. On the other hand, those initiated by Congressmen would not present regulations or, if they existed, would prove to be simple, subjective, and with a high level of discretion. With this in mind, all approved distributive policies of the analyzed period were assessed in terms of the regulation foreseen in the proposal, then classified according to the level of discretion (Table 6).

The results obtained show that the pattern predicted by Mello (2017) was reproduced for the analyzed policies to confirm the assumption that the health policies of Presidential origin approved in both Lula II and Dilma I present more programmatic content, or are, at least, less subject to manipulation by local managers or policy executors. On the other hand, the standards approved by the Legislative are less regulated and have less definition of access and operating rules, which can generate manipulation of their interpretation, favoring their use for crony purposes. **These findings confirm hypothesis 7, provided in section 6.**

**Table 6** – Distribution of ordinary non-budgetary proposals with distributive policies in the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I and converted into law, according to the level of discretion

Level of Discretion	2007-2010					2011-2014				
	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total
	N	%	N	%		%	N	%	N	
High	4	7.14	31	55.36	62.50	1	3.33	15	50.00	53.33
Intermediary	8	14.29	1	1.79	16.07	6	20.00	2	6.67	26.67
Low	11	19.64	1	1.79	21.43	5	16.67	1	3.33	20.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41.07</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58.93</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: The author, 2020.

Going deeper into the types of beneficiaries of these distributive policies (Table 7), the first issue that draws attention is the proportion of approved symbolic standards, all of which originate from the Legislative Branch, which represent 30.43% and 22.86% of all distributive standards proposed and approved, respectively, during Lula II and Dilma I. This power has also achieved relatively important success in standards that benefit vulnerable groups. These are often less tangible benefits, which are not reflected in public services directly provided to the benefited segment, but in more abstract rights, or, when they address services, they do not present sufficient clarity to outline under what conditions there is or is not a right to access. Therefore, there is a limited capacity for parliamentarians to distribute benefits. Even considering the freedom of action and the greater parliamentary success in approving proposals in commissions, the limited capacity to have budgetary resources for the implementation of policies restricted the more broadly crony performance of the parliamentarian, leaving them to act on symbolic or less tangible issues, which **confirms part of hypothesis 5, provided for in**

## section 6.

The Executive Branch, in turn, could cover a wider range of beneficiaries by distributing benefits, in greater proportion, to public servants, private legal entities, and vulnerable groups. The amounts distributed in these cases generally involve budgetary impacts much more forceful than those generated by parliamentary standards. Likewise, this phenomenon is indicative of the performance of the majority coalition, in the sense of providing the conditions for the greater coverage of specific audiences by the President of the Republic.

**Table 7** – Distribution of ordinary non-budgetary proposals with distributive policies in the health area presented in Lula II and Dilma I and converted into law, according to the types of beneficiaries

Benefits	2007-2010					2011-2014				
	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total	Executive Branch		Legislative Branch		Total
	N	%	N	%	%	N	%	N	%	%
Corporatist	8	14.29	2	3.57	17.86	3	10.00	1	3.33	13.33
Educational	1	1.79	0	0.00	1.79	1	3.33	0	0.00	3.33
Private Legal Entity	7	12.50	0	0.00	12.50	4	13.33	2	6.67	20.00
Vulnerable Groups	4	7.14	10	17.86	25.00	3	10.00	7	23.33	33.33
Vulnerable Group and Private Legal Entity	0	0.00	1	1.79	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Symbolic	0	0.00	20	35.71	35.71	0	0.00	8	26.67	26.67
International	1	1.79	0	0.00	1.79	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
Federated Entities	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00	1	3.33	0	0.00	3.33
Regional	2	3.57	0	0.00	3.57	0	0.00	0	0.00	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>41.07</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>58.93</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40.00</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>60.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: The author, 2020.

## 9 Conclusion

This work demonstrated the relevance of the approval of distributive proposals without concentrated costs, at the initiative of both the Executive and Legislative Branches, revealing the common preference of these powers for policies that guarantee the distribution of benefits to specific segments of society and that provide non-conflicting arenas of appreciation. The parliamentary preference could be easily explained by the electoral connection, which provides that parliamentary behavior is closely linked to their intention to be re-elected, which favors the concentration of benefits in certain segments or sectors of society, meeting the demands and pressures of organized groups that may promote some electoral return. This was confirmed by the fact that most of the approved distributive proposals originating in the Legislative were characterized by high discretion, i.e., they allowed their use in a targeted manner by local managers to maximize electoral gains. The high proportion of symbolic norms of the

parliamentary initiative was also a strong indication of great interest in the demonstration of defense of specific segments, although they do not provide a real guarantee of improvement of life for the groups covered by the norms. These findings also confirm the understanding of Abranches (2018) that Brazilian coalition presidentialism provides for negotiation models that privilege crony schemes and favor the approval of low-quality policies.

On the other hand, the relevant participation of regulatory and majority policies of parliamentary initiative reveal another facet of the electoral connection, which indicates the possibility of parliamentary support for policies of diffuse benefits. According to this concept, the long-sought electoral return can be achieved by meeting voters' "potential preferences", by defending policies considered ideal for society, and by building a stereotype that impacts the electorate's perception of the parliamentarian's performance.

On the other hand, the distributive proposals of the Executive's initiative, characterized by low discretion and a greater range of beneficiaries, indicated a more programmatic intention by the President of the Republic, without deconfiguring the presidential interest in re-election or the election of another allied candidate. Since presidential elections are majority and involve the entire national territory, the search for the resolution of major national problems is considered more effective in winning the electorate.

The predominance of the proposals on "Prevention" in the ordinary route demonstrates normative connection with the constitutional principles and with the nature of the matters specific to this route and indicates the contextual phase in which the SUS regulations are found. Considering that the most structuring organizational norms of the health system were defined in the 1990s, the direction of legislative activity to the various health conditions, through the proposals on "Prevention", indicated that health is in a phase of expansion of its legal framework.

Therefore, these findings reveal a specific profile of approval for health policies initiated under Lula II and Dilma I, indicating differences in performance and the form in which the powers operate. It is possible that these profiles are reproduced for other thematic fields and for other periods, which can only be confirmed by new studies.

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