Brief Methodological Note[1]

The subjects defined for this investigation were mid-level bureaucrats, as this is the level which acts as an intermediate between the most technical areas and the upper ranks. Subjects at this level are mostly responsible for representing the department in a range of different forums and spaces, therefore interacting with other policies and actors. They are, therefore, influential actors in the sense that they hold positions that engage in conversations with people with greater decision-making power, while also having more autonomy—that is, the power to manage their own teams (Freire, Viana, and Palotti, 2015).

a) Selection of Respondents

DAS level 4[2] and 5 positions are characterized as mid-level bureaucracy. To identify potential respondents, we used tables that are published on the website of the Ministry of Social Development[3]—Ministry of Citizenship in 2021—, with the list of all limited non-career appointments ("commissioned positions") and the names of the servants holding each position in a given month. These data are not disclosed specifically on a regular basis. In 4 years (48 months—2015 to 2018), we identified that a total of 15 tables were disclosed, in the following years and months: 2015—May, November, and December / 2016—April, July, August, November / 2017—May, June, September, November, and December.

The data showed that the SNAS had, from 2015 to 2018, 6 DAS 5 positions assigned to the Deputy Secretary and the Directors of the Secretariat, and 19 DAS 4 positions, assigned to advisors and general coordinators. Due to the flow of appointments and dismissals over time, we initially identified 80 people holding these positions. However, 4 of them did not perform their duties in the Secretariat,[4] while 10 held a position in the area for a very brief amount of time (less than 3 months, that is, they appear in only one table). These two groups were disregarded, as they did not conduct significant work in social assistance policy. Therefore, the universe of potential interviews included 66 people.

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[1] This study was initially explored by Denise Direito in her doctoral dissertation "From favorable to contrary winds: state actors, perceptions and practices of participation in Social Assistance (2015 to 2018), 2021. Available at: http://www.realp.unb.br/jspui/handle/10482/43463. The data were reanalyzed and explored for the Research Project "Crisis and Reconfigurations of Political Activism and Democracy in Brazil," funded by FAP-DF, N. 00193-00000319/2023-83.

[2] In the period we investigated (2015-2018), positions in the federal government were called Senior Management and Advisory positions (DAS) and levels ranged from 1 to 6, with the lowest number being the lowest in the hierarchy, going up the ranks as the numbers increased. DAS 6, at that time, usually meant national heads of department.

[3] http://www.mdsgov.br/webarquivos/acesso_informacao/servidores/. Accessed in March/2019.

[4] It is common practice within the Brazilian federal public administration to appoint people in one area who, in reality, perform a job in a different area, as it is difficult to change organizational charts and structures. These are, therefore, informal arrangements.

We interviewed a total of 44 officials—that is, almost 70 percent of the defined universe, of which 13 held a DAS 5 position, which basically represents 85 percent of the total number of workers holding these positions in the period being investigated.

Respondents in the Rousseff/Campello administration were classified considering those who left the government (dismissed) up to three months after President Dilma Rousseff was initially removed from office. The respondents who were appointed afterwards were classified as workers in the Temer/Terra administration. Respondents who performed roles that partially or fully cover the Rousseff/Campello administration and partially or fully the Temer/Terra administration were called Permanent. Several respondents, it should be noted, are permanent servants of the SNAS, career civil servants at the federal level, or held minor positions before being appointed to DAS 4 and 5 positions. For our classification, we only considered the year of appointment to/dismissal from the positions specified in our analysis.

As a commitment was made between the interviewer and the respondents to **protect their identities**, which can only be disclosed with their express consent, each respondent was identified by a random number from 1 to 44. All analyses will be made considering this numbering system. We address all respondents as women—that is, using only the female pronoun to refer to them. Not only this is a way to make it difficult to identify them—that is, to protect their identity—, but we also consider that social assistance positions are mostly held by women.

a) Treatment of Respondents

The responses to the semi-structured questionnaire were analyzed using the software NVivo, in which several relevant aspects for our research were coded. The classification of the interviews into attributes, according to Table 01 featured in the article, was based on their life stories as told by the respondents, generating the profile table available on Page 1 of the attached file "Dados Artigo-Brazilian Final." Some fields, including gender, employment type, and education are not included in the table, as they could make it possible to identify the respondents.

After the beginning of the analysis of the interviews, we noticed that some respondents expressed very similar perspectives on social participation. However, similarly, we also observed a very challenging attitude in them, questioning things ranging from the model of participatory institutions adopted in Brazil to the contributions that participation effectively brings to the social assistance policy. To simplify our analyses, a bias/position indicator was created from a given set of codes.

The following codes were cross-referenced (Matrix Coding Query—NVivo 12): Negative Conf.; Positive Conf.; Negative Participation/Positive Participation. In summary, we identified that some respondents had substantially more negative points than positive ones

and vice versa. Next, we read all the material again to verify whether the coding was adequate and mirrored the content of the interviews. From this process, we identified four profiles: *(i)* favorable bias/position: those that generally address social participation and the model adopted in Brazil in a positive way; *(ii)* critical favorable bias/position means those interviews that are favorable to the current model, but advocate even more deliberative processes and greater decision-making power to non-governmental actors, *(iii)* the unfavorable bias/position includes respondents who express strong criticism, whether about the model, the excessive power granted to non-governmental actors, and/or the invasion of attributions by civil society into the space of deliberation and implementation of state actors, and, finally, *(iv)* neutral, in which respondents talked strictly about norms and did not want to expose their assessment of the process.

When analyzing the data, we noticed that profile 1—favorable bias/position and profile 2—critical favorable bias/position were similar in terms of presenting favorable points, advocating, as criticism, for more participation. These two profiles were thus combined in a favorable bias/position. The unfavorable bias/position and the neutral bias/position were kept separately in our analysis.

Tables 01, 02, 03, and 04 in the article were produced based on these data, according to Pages 3 to 10 in the annex "Dados Artigo-Brazilian Final."

In addition to the semi-structured questions, the respondents were also asked to rank 8 statements from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In this analysis, we used the answers to question #1—**Does civil society that participates in deliberation forums help bring solutions to the social assistance policy?** The responses were treated by the software R, programming available in the file CodigoR-Final-Q1, based on the responses presented in the file "DadosExcelConfianca," which resulted in Figures 02 and 03 presented in the article.

Finally, we detailed the analysis of the meanings of participation used in Table 2 in the article. We initially searched for terms identified as recurrent words in the literature about the meanings given to social participation. Subsequently, we read the interviews again and conducted a textual analysis of them, which allowed us to identify the meanings respondents gave to social participation. We found that a specific word was not mentioned in some interviews, but we could deduce the meaning that was being attributed to it. In other cases, the word was mentioned in the interview, but it might not be referring to the meanings of participation. For example, we were discussing how management considered that uninterested listening was the role they assigned to social participation, but the respondent did not agree with it, arguing that deliberation was fundamental. In this sense, we adjusted the Table of Meanings, showing that, for that respondent, participation means deliberation. Some excerpts that better summarized the respondents' statements were transcribed to the Table of Meanings on Page 13 of the attached file "Dados Artigo-Brazilian Final."