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Policy Analysis Styles in Brazil

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Abstract

This paper examines the development and main characteristics of Policy Analysis styles in Brazil, based the field’s output in the 20 years following the promulgation of the Brazilian Constitution in 1988. The term “styles” refer to the methodological orientation that has been used for Policy Analysis in Brazil. In this sense, the article discusses two main styles, the economic and the socio-political. Within each style it is possible to identify three basic approaches referring to the scope of the analysis — macro, meso, and micro. It is argued that, because Policy Analysis developed in Brazil without the influence of the “founding fathers” of the field, it relies mainly on the methods that have been used in Economic, Sociology, Political Science, and Anthropology. Policy Analysis is still a young discipline in Brazil, but it is likely to expand due to society’s growing complexity, which will lead to increasing demand for sensible public policies.
1. Introduction

The evolution of policy analysis in Brazil followed a different path than the one seen in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, and other developed countries, evolving independently from the Anglo-Saxon intellectual tradition. Up to today, classical authors in the field of policy analysis — such as Harold Lasswell, Charles Lindblom, Theodore Lowi, Yehezkel Dror, March and Olsen, among others — have not been translated into Portuguese. The only exception is Herbert Simon, who had his book *Administrative Behavior* (1972) translated and published in Brazil in 1957 thanks to a cooperation programme between the Brazilian government and the USAID; however, the book is out of print since 1972. Therefore, most policy makers in Brazil did not have contact with of the classical books on policy analysis during their academic studies and even latter as professionals.

Policy analysis as a specialized field emerged in the early 1950s in the United States as a subfield within Political Science, having as its landmark the publication of the book *The Policy Sciences: Recent Developments in Scope and Method* (Lerner and Lasswell, 1951). In Brazil, during this same period, the intellectual and political attentions were focused on economic development strategies. In this context, the works of the United Nation’s Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean (ECLA-CEPAL) became the main intellectual influence in the formulation of public policies in Brazil and throughout Latin America. One important work of this period was Raúl Prebisch’s essay, *Economic Development in Latin America and its Principal Problems* (1950). Thus, while in the United States policy analysis emerged from Political Science, in Brazil and in other Latin-American countries policy analysis meant, above all, the analysis of policies aimed at promoting economic development.

This emphasis on economic development lasted for several decades, until it found its limits in the economic downturn of the late 1970s, a period marked in Brazil by the failure of the II Development Plan and by the debt crisis (Carneiro, 2002). The 1980s became to be known to as the “lost decade” due to the long period of recession in Brazil and Latin America that followed the changes in the global economic environment. Throughout the decade, developmentalist pol-
icities started to be replaced by macroeconomic adjustment policies, which included privatization of state companies and financial liberalization. However, this scenario slowly began to change once again. Despite the neoliberal adjustment policies that predominated during the 1990s, this period was also characterized by the redemocratization of Brazil,\(^\text{1}\) which included the enactment of a new constitution, assuring social rights. This led to a new political status for social policies.

From the end of 1988 onwards, social policies became the instruments for the access to social rights, acquiring the same importance previously assigned to economic policies. As a consequence, policy analysis finally emerged as a specialized field of investigation in Brazil, moving beyond economic analysis. Because policy analysis emerged in Brazil without having previous contact with the Anglo-Saxon tradition, the methodological styles adopted in the field were influenced by the disciplines historically important in the previous decades. Thus, due to the importance of development policies, policy analysis in Brazil still rely in methods that emerge from Economics; in this chapter, we will refer to these methods as the “economic style”. It includes methods based on measurable performance indicators and also those normally employed in the analysis of infrastructure projects, such as cost-benefit analysis. Thanks to the development of other disciplines within the social sciences in Brazil, the methodological repertory associated with the practice of policy analysis expanded. In the 1950s Sociology was already a well established discipline in Brazil (Botelho and Schwarcz, 2009) and from the mid 1960 onward, political science as an empirical discipline began to make its mark in the social sciences in the country under the influence of the North-American universities (Forjaz, 1997). In the late 1980s, sociology and political science — as well as anthropology — began providing methodological tools which were then applied to policy analysis; we will refer to these methods as the “socio-political style”. This style includes a wide variety of methods, which do not necessarily share the same epistemological

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\(^{1}\) After a military coup in 1964, Brazil was ruled by authoritarian governments until 1985, when the Congress elected as president the civilian Tancredo Neves, who led the redemocratization process.
assumptions. Some of the methods included in this style are associated to positivism, while others stem from the interpretative sociology tradition.

In addition to the two main methodological styles — economic and socio-political —, policy analyses in Brazil may also be characterized by the scope of analysis. Policy studies that focus on the broader implications of social policies will be referred here as the “macro” approach. For example, in the area of health, macro level approaches seek to evaluate the impact of the Unified Health System (SUS) in society’s well-being or its accomplishments regarding stated goals. The micro level approach has a narrower scope of analysis; it corresponds to the analysis of programmes that deal with specific and localized policy issues or focus on localized outcomes of policies. Examples of this approach are analyses that investigate the outcomes of educational policies in a given school or that examine the costs-effectiveness of a preventive programme for a specific type of health problem. As it will be discussed in more detail in the following section, many policy analysis studies within the micro level approach have been criticized for their excessive fragmentation and lack of methodological rigour. This type of micro approach is commonly found in academic studies and provides a large amount of the public information on governmental policies. The lack of relevance of such fragmented information could be remediated by meta-analysis studies. However, these are very rarely undertaken. The micro approach is also common in the analyses of “best practices” in Brazil, especially those that focus on local level policies and programmes.\(^2\) Despite the dissemination of “best practices”, the theoretical debates are still in insipient in the Brazilian context (Andrews, 2008). Finally, the ‘meso’ level approach corresponds to policy analyses that focus on specific policies or programmes, but associate their findings to broader policy issues. Studies within this approach may have a narrower focus and may explore a specific outcome, but deliberately seek to relate their findings to an overall analysis of the policy in question. Thus, policy analyses corresponding to this approach hold an intermediate character \(\textit{vis-à-vis}\) the macro and micro policy analysis approaches.

\(^2\) For an overall analysis of best practices at the local level in Brazil, see Farah (2008).
Most studies within the economic style tend to adopt the macro approach. They are often based on analyses of indicators and other quantitative variables and focus in the overall outcome of a given policy. It should be mentioned, however, that these studies also tend to rely on methods used in microeconomics. As critics have pointed out, these studies often neglect the qualitative aspects of policies. Within the socio-political style one can find all the three approaches, although the meso and micro are more common.

It is important to keep in mind that the classificatory framework described above has a heuristic purpose and is not intended to be a fully developed typology. The framework, therefore, has the purpose of organizing the diversity of policy analysis studies undertaken in Brazil in the past 20 years. This is particularly important due to the lack of a tradition in the field of policy analysis in Brazil. As Brazilian scholars have pointed out, despite recent developments, the field is still characterized by the lack of rigorous application of theories and methods (Souza, 2003). In addition, there is a proliferation of sectorial studies that focus on specific policy areas — health, education, or social assistance. Vertical integration of findings, therefore, is not feasible due to the different theoretical and methodological orientations underpinning each policy area. It has also been argued that policy analyses in Brazil tend to focus on specific aspects or stages of policies; the overall analysis is thus split in investigations about agenda setting, policy formulation, legitimation, management, implementation, and evaluation (Souza, 2003). Most policy analysis investigations in Brazil can be best described as a mix of agenda setting, implementation, and evaluation. The idea of the ‘policy cycle’, though well known in academic circles, has not been fully assimilated due to the lack of previous engagement with the Anglo-Saxon theoretical tradition.

Another consequence of the lack of theoretical tradition in the field is that policy analysis’s terminology became problematic in Brazil. Policy analysis studies rarely mention Lasswell’s terminology “knowledge of” and “knowledge in” (Lasswell, 2000), thus failing to make this differentiation explicit. Despite the intense terminological debates in the developed world, it is possible to say that an operational agreement on terminology has been settled in these countries.
Therefore, in Europe and in the United States the term “policy analysis” has been more often associated to the idea of “knowledge in”. In Brazil, however, this type of terminological debate is almost absent. Terms in use in the Brazilian context have been borrowed from the international academic literature, but because a clear link with the Anglo-Saxon tradition is missing, the terms “policy analysis” and “policy evaluation” are often used interchangeably.

In the following sections the two methodological styles — economic and socio-political — and the three scope level approaches — macro, meso, and micro — will be briefly discussed by means of examples of policy analyses undertaken in contemporary Brazil. These examples were drawn from the areas of health, education, and social assistance. As mentioned above, the expansion of social policies after the enactment of the 1988 Constitution was responsible for the emergence policy analysis as a field of inquiry in Brazil. Not surprisingly, most policy analysis studies developed in Brazil in the past two decades focus in these three policy areas. One caveat in necessary here: the cases selected are not statically representative, although they can be regarded as typical. The selection aims at presenting cases that best illustrate the diversity of methods and approaches found in the field of policy analysis in Brazil.

2. The socio-political style

One example of the socio-political style that adopts the macro approach in the area of health policy can be seen the article by Cohn (2009), which discusses the changes in the Brazilian Public Health System (SUS) since its conception in the late 1980s. In order for one to understand the methodological approach chosen for the article — the critical essay —, it is necessary to briefly present the context that brought about the reform in the health system in Brazil in 1988. Before the enactment of the democratic constitution, only those working in the formal labour market — roughly 50 percent of the population — had the right to medical assistance in public clinics and hospitals. Although some health services such as vaccination and a few ambulatory services were available to the population at large, the public health system in Brazil was not universal by any means. The struggle for universal health care was part of the overall struggle for
democracy in Brazil during the years of the authoritarian regime (1964-1985). One of the most important social movements in activity during this period was the Movimento Sanitarista, also called Partido Sanitarista. Composed by union and community leaders, left leaned health professionals, and progressive intellectuals, this movement defended a public health system founded in the principles of universality, equity, participation, and decentralization (Escorel, 1999). The Brazilian Centre for Health Studies - CEBES, the movements’ think-tank, developed studies and proposals that became the intellectual foundation of the public and universal health care system, the SUS, introduced by the 1988 constitution. The creation of the SUS was regarded by many analysts as “revolutionary”, because it broke away from the corporative approach that previously dominated health care policies in Brazil.

Cohn’s article presents a diagnosis of SUS’s transformations under the influence of neoliberal reforms introduced in Brazil in the 1990s. The author situates her analysis in the shift from SUS’s original principles — universality, equity, participation, and decentralization — to the cost control and managerial approach, including the outsourcing of public health services. This shift, goes the argument, has not been restricted to actual health policies, but is also noticeable in the production of knowledge in the field. Academic and non-academic studies that once discussed issues such as democracy, role of the state, structural dimensions related to health/illness, had been replaced by studies adopting a technicist and pragmatic approach. As outsourcing expands within the SUS, she doubts whether state regulation by itself would be able to adequately guarantee the public interest, because managers of out-sourced services are almost exclusively focused on the cost-effectiveness aspects of health care. She is also suspicious of ‘family health programmes’, which she sees as a conservative attempt to control families, especially the poor. Cohn fears that debates on health reform are increasingly dominated by the technical-scientific dimension, diminishing the attention to SUS’s political dimension. In sum, her essay is a criticism of recent changes introduced in the Brazilian public health system, as well as to the way policy analysts and academics have been dealing with those changes.
It should be noted here that while in Anglo-Saxon countries the essay is not the standard ‘method’ for policy analysis, in Brazil the essay continues to have an important role in the social sciences, including in policy analysis. This is quite possibly the consequence of the context present when Sociology was introduced in Brazil in the 1920s. Before becoming an academic discipline focusing in empirical investigation, Sociology was regarded as a tool for policy formulation, aiding the intellectual debates on the role of education in society (Almeida, 2008). During the autocratic period from 1938 to 1945, known as Estado Novo, the debates on education shifted from ‘education for society’, i.e., education as a social right, to “education for the homeland”, i.e., education as a means for buttress nationalist feelings in the citizenry. This period witnessed the initial steps for the creation of universities in Brazil, which were then modelled on the French universities. As a consequence of the construction of universities, Sociology finally acquired the status of an academic discipline. However, the empirical methods that characterized the discipline in the United States did not take hold in Brazil until the 1960s. Meanwhile, the essay remained as the preferred “method” of Brazilian sociologists for several decades. The now classical book on the cultural character of the Brazil, Raízes do Brasil (1936/1995), by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, is perhaps the most memorable example of the importance of the essay in the development of the social sciences in Brazil. Despite the assimilation of empirical methods from the 1960s onwards, the essay form continues to be widely adopted by Brazilian sociologists and political scientists and, consequently, by policy analysts as well.

Another method largely used in policy analysis in Brazil is the case study. The micro level approach in more common among the studies, but a few policy analysis studies adopt the meso level approach. One example is the study by Ribeiro and Costa (2000) that examines the effectiveness of intermunicipal health consortiums. Although most of their analysis is focused on the experience of the Consórcio Intermunicipal de Saúde da Microrregião de Penápolis (CISA), one of the oldest health care consortiums in Brazil, their goal has a broader intent. They seek to evaluate the performance of the intermunicipal health care consortiums regarding citizens’ access to medical specialties and other aspects of health care provision, such as the reduction of idle capacity in
hospitals. Thus, they are concerned with the features that CISA has in common with other health care consortiums, and not with its specific characteristics. Their conclusion, accordingly, is an encompassing one: “The consortiums, above all, are an innovation because they create unusual parameters of cooperation and coordination of the health policy at the local level.” (Ribeiro and Costa, 2000, p. 217).

However, few policy analysis studies that have adopted the case study method managed to deal with the meso level approach. The expansion of graduate programmes in the social sciences seems to explain the proliferation of the micro level approach in Brazil, especially in the fields of health and education. The expansion led to the regulation of the graduate programs by CAPES, a federal agency linked to the Ministry of Education. One of the regulations that is still polemic up to today is the requirement — punishable with downgrading in CAPES quality grade system — that students complete their dissertations and theses within two and four years, respectively. In the social sciences, one “solution” to complete research within these short time spans was the adoption of the case study, a strategy that in many situations ended up being inappropriate.

The misuses of case studies in policy analysis are fairly common in the field of education. As mentioned above, in its beginnings, research in the area of education was expected to provide solutions to public policy problems (Almeida, 2008). Nevertheless, the “policy science orientation” approach slowly began to shift to a more academic orientation. In the 1970s several graduate programmes in education were created, introducing new themes, methodologies and theoretical references (André, 2006). From the 1980s onwards action-research and other qualitative methods used in the disciplines of Anthropology, History, and Philosophy disseminated within the field of education. Nevertheless, despite the gains in complexity and diversity favoured by the institutionalization of educational research in the academy, methodological deficiencies began to mount. André argues that this problem was linked to possible defective training in research procedures intensified by time constraints imposed to Master’s and Doctorate programmes in Brazil. Scholars began to note that a growing number of studies in the field of edu-
cation selected a too narrow portion of reality, lacked a clear methodological approach, or failed to analyze results from a theoretical perspective. In addition, the case study approach was often misunderstood. As Alves-Mazzotti (2006) pointed out, many researchers say they have developed a case study only because they selected a specific object — a school, a class —, without concern to whether the ‘case’ in question can contribute to the knowledge base of the field. Moreover, some authors disseminated the belief that case studies are an ‘easy’ research strategy. Consequently, the micro level approach disseminated in the field of education.

Case studies are also common in the field of social assistance. This is the case of the study by Rego (2010) that investigated the impact of the Bolsa Família in the lives of poor women. In this federal programme — as is also the case in other CCT programmes around the world — women are chiefly the recipients of the cash payments and also the ones responsible for assuring that the programme’s conditionalities are met. Rego interviewed women in the poorest families included in the programme, which did not have a regular income and whose lives were a daily struggle for subsistence. Based on the interviews with these women, the author argues that the programme was helping them to get a basic social right: to remain alive. Another aspect that Rego emphasizes is that these women were also able to make choices — what to buy for the children or whether to separate from a partner. This aspect of the Bolsa Família had a positive impact in the subjectivity of the poor women, allowing them to enjoy a concept of citizenship that was previously alien to them. Following the theoretical arguments made by Nancy Fraser and other authors, Rego argues that distributive justice policies should not only repair economic and social injustices, but also transform the cultural and educational contexts that impact “bivalent collectivities”, that is, social groups that suffer exclusion not only due to social and economic

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3 Conditionalities include regular school attendance for children under 15 years old, taking vaccines and other health care prevention measures provided by public clinics.
factors, but also due to gender, ethnicity, or cultural affiliation.\textsuperscript{4} Thus, the \textit{Bolsa Família} should be a permanent programme, guaranteeing access to basic citizens’ rights, and become the aware of the needs of bivalent collectivities.

A qualitative method commonly used in policy analysis in Brazil is ethnography. It has been used in studies in the fields of health, education, race relations, and public security, among others. Yet, the use of a method that regarded as the turf of Anthropology is involved in controversy: some anthropologists argue that one cannot adopt ethnography as method while disregarding the theoretical cannons of the discipline. Sarti (2010), for example, argues that there are two strains in Anthropology claiming authority on health, illness, pain and body: the “medical Anthropology” and the “Anthropology of health”. The first strain has an instrumental character, putting itself at the service of biomedical knowledge. She argues that this strain chose one particular interpretation of health and illness in disregard for all the other possible interpretations, becoming a supplementary branch of western medicine. Anthropology of health, on the other hand, denies any instrumental purpose for the knowledge it produces; contrary to medical Anthropology, this strain is committed to Anthropology’s relativist tradition. As the argument goes, Anthropology of health, in addition of denying any preeminent status to bio-medicine, does not see any value in its accomplishments. Consequently, it has nothing to say about the social distribution of the knowledge produced by scientific medicine. Minayo (1991), one the other hand, takes the point of view that Anthropology should aid the analysis and formulation of health policies; thus, it should not disregard the usefulness of the knowledge it produces. This is supported by a few arguments. To begin with, Anthropology is not intrinsically neutral. In the past, the discipline has served the interests of colonialist policies; this, however, should not lead one to conclude that the Anthropology itself is responsible for colonialism. In fact, it may serve the interests of disfranchised groups. ‘Scientific medicine’ does not necessarily serve one social inter-

\textsuperscript{4}The author also noted the feelings of humiliation and shame of the men in those poor families for not being able to earn regular money. In the article she does not discuss how this problem could be addressed.
est over the other and should be regarded as an asset belonging to humanity. Likewise, the knowledge and methods of Anthropology can — and should — aid the formulation of public policies.

**The economic style**

Despite the expansion of the socio-political style following the introduction of social rights in the 1988 constitution, Economics has not ceased to be the most important discipline for policy analysis in Brazil. As argued in the introduction of this chapter, this is a corollary of historical factors. In addition to the importance that developmentalism in policy formulation in Brazil, the federal agencies that first started to formulate and analyze public policies performed mainly economic analyses. One paradigmatic example of the focus on economic analysis is the *Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas Aplicadas - IPEA*. This federal think-tank, founded in 1964, states as its mission “to produce, articulate and disseminate knowledge to improve public policies and contribute to the planning of Brazil’s development” (IPEA, 2010, pp 2). The institute was initially linked to the Ministry of Planning, but it is now linked to the Secretariat for Strategic Affairs, a department closely linked to the President’s office. *IPEA*’s intellectual output is mostly presented in a series of Discussion Papers, which have been continuously published since 1979. *IPEA* has increased the output on the analysis of social policies from 2000 onwards; it also started to hire social scientists with advanced degrees in Sociology and Political Science. Nevertheless, most of *IPEA*’s studies can be defined as economic analysis of public policies. Among the Discussion Papers published between 2010 and 2011, only five percent used qualitative methods; the remaining papers were either economic studies or social studies using econometrics and other quantitative methods.

In 2008, the Department of Health Economics, Investments and Development - *DESID*, a technical division within the Brazilian Ministry of Health, released a 100 pages long brochure to disseminate microeconomic methods for decision making in health policy, including cost-effectiveness, cost-utility and cost-benefit analyses (Brazilian Ministry of Health, 2010). Ugá
(1995) noted that the use of microeconomics techniques for the evaluation of health policies has divided health professionals in two opposing camps: one expressing “love” for the quantitative methods and the rationalization of decision making, and the other expressing ‘hate’ for the idea that a human life can be appraised in monetary units. She argues that the two groups fail to correctly grasp the limitations and usefulness of microeconomic methods. Nevertheless, whatever the perspective one holds regarding the application microeconomic methods in the analysis of health policies, it is necessary to realise that they have come to stay.

A similar debate refers to the presuppositions that of Economics imply for the analysis of social policies. While social sciences methods can be used for good or for evil, methodological procedures more often than not carry the presuppositions of the theories from which they originated. For this reason, policy analysts should identify the normative aspects that theories and methodological approaches imply for policy analysis. Currently the Bolsa Família is the largest Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme in the world, distributing allowances to about 12.5 million families (Brazilian Ministry of Social Development, 2010). Its importance as a social policy has stirred debates and controversies. In their study on the impact of the Bolsa Família on child labour, Cacciamali et al. (2010) argue that one advantage of CCT programmes is that they easily adaptable to budgetary constraints, because they are not a social right and “can be suspended at any moment” (p. 273). This is in sharp contrast to the analysis made by Rego and briefly described in the previous section. For her, the Bolsa Família should become a permanent programme because it can help citizens hold on to the most basic social right of all: life. The paper by Cacciamali and his colleagues follows the principles of human capital theory, that is, assert that poverty reduction is a means to economic growth; the analysis by Rego, in contrast, asserts the preponderance of social rights.

Two essays published by IPEA illustrate the different views underlining the debate on universal versus focused policies. In the first article, Camargo (2003) argues that universal social protection systems, such as the SUS, end up directing fewer resources to the poor because resources are equally distributed between the poor and the well-off. Therefore, in order to make
scarce governmental resources more effective, it is necessary to target the poor. Theodoro and Delgado (2003), on the other hand, argue that the emphasis on cash transfer programmes and other targeted programmes are guided by a presupposition that ultimately impede overcoming poverty and inequality. They argue that targeted programmes are only meant at ameliorating the situation of the poor, but are not addressing the factors generating poverty and inequality in the first place. In these conditions, social policy is reduced to “poverty and misery management” (p 124).

Human capital theory has also been a controversial theory in the debates over educational policies, in Brazil and elsewhere. As seen above, educational policies had experienced a shift on their goals during the Estado Novo (1938-1945). This political context represented the initial step in a broader shift that ended up favouring the emergence economists as analysts of educational policies (Almeida, 2008). Meanwhile, educators trained in Sociology began to lose their political influence, retracting to the academy. Brazil thus became a fertile ground for human capital theory, which was disseminated in the country by the Ford Foundation and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Those were the times when economists that graduated in the University of Chicago saw their professional skills less appreciated in the Kennedy administration, but found a place in international organization, which included the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). In the context of the Cold War, many economists in these international organizations were eager to offer an alternative to the works of ECLAC/CEPAL. Gradually, the studies on educational policies started emphasizing the preparation of workers for the market, distancing themselves from the previous emphasis on education and citizenship. The methodological style of the studies began to shift accordingly, and the quantitative analysis of educational data became paramount to policy analysis in the field. Economists, properly training in statistics and econometric methods, ascended as analysts of educational policies. After the military coup in 1964, the political influence of neoclassical economists increased. In the 1970s, a debate epitomized the conflicting views on the role of education in Brazil. On one side stood those defending the views of human capital theory, arguing that ineq
ties in Brazil could be ameliorated through economic development and economic development could be boosted by education; on the other stood those arguing that inequality had more to do with the political context since 1964, which included limits on workers organization and an economic model that widened the gap between rich and poor. Albert Fishlow, a professor at University of California-Berkeley who visited Brazil several times in the 1970s, defended the view of the former group, while Carlos Geraldo Langoni, a professor at the University of São Paulo, defended the perspective the latter. After a long war fought with academic papers fired from both sides, the dispute finally was settled in favor of human capital theory. The theory is still evocated in most analyses of educational policies up to today and is the driving force behind the main educational policy in Brazil, the FUNDEF.\footnote{The FUNDEF was a fund established in 1997 redistributing governmental resources in order to allow local governments to increase school enrollments in primary education (Brazilian National Congress, 1996a, 1996b). It was later expanded to include pre-school and high-school education and has been renamed to FUNDEB (Brazilian National Congress, 2006).} This policy was successful in promoting school enrollments, but this did not have a significant impact on income distribution. Not surprisingly human resources theorists now claim the poverty/inequality problem is due to lack of quality in education (Tomlinson, 2005). Though Brazil experienced a significant reduction in poverty, this has been attributed to the 	extit{Bolsa Família} and to the overall improvement in the economy (Hoffmann, 2006). A study involving more than 5,500 municipalities in Brazil showed that the highest the level of poverty in a municipality, the lowest is students’ performance (Andrews, 2010). That family income has a strong impact on students’ performance is a fact well-known by policy makers (see Colleman et al, 1966). However, educational policies — in Brazil and elsewhere — continue stubbornly designing policies that focus on schools controlled variables. The ideological power of human capital theory is not to be downplayed.
Final remarks

Policy analysis is still a very young discipline in Brazil and has a long way to go before becoming a field on its own right. At present, it is almost indistinguishable from traditional social sciences disciplines, sharing with them their methods and theories. Nevertheless, is it possible to draw a few conjectures about the future. Policy analysis in Brazil is likely to expand as a field of inquire as a consequence of the increasing complexity of the Brazilian society; the demand for sophisticated public policies will continue to grow thereof. In addition, Brazilian scholars are catching up with the recent developments in the field.

It is worth noting that the number of undergraduate and graduate programmes focusing on public policies has grown substantially since 2005, especially at the public universities. As to the styles in policy analysis, it is likely that the methods used in economic analysis will continue the ones preferred by governmental agencies. Meanwhile, the socio-political style will not lose ground.
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