



OBSERVATÓRIO DAS DESIGUALDADES

TIME MACHINE:

Brazil back on the Hunger Map

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1. Introduction

The challenges of combating hunger increased in the current scenario of the Covid-19 pandemic, which started in Brazil in 2020. It revealed a situation of food insecurity close to that of 2004, when the social programs of food and nutritional security took a breath. Nevertheless, this situation is not only due to the health crisis, which has made social inequalities even more explicit, but is also a result of discredit with the social policies of food and nutritional security that have occurred in Brazil since 2015.

Eating is one of humanity's most basic needs, and the concern with this act is at the center of the permanent daily activities of women and men (CASCUDO, 1967). The most logical deleterious effect of food shortages is hunger. Nowadays, this "natural" consequence gains distinct and paradoxical contours, given that hunger plagues thousands of Brazilians, even in the face of an intense and growing food production

panorama (CONAB, 2021). Hunger, as stated by Abramovay (1991, p.11), although it has a biological character, is a social disease that arises "despite the generosity of nature" due to the result of a "petty social organization with most men".

In Brazil, the 1988 constitutional text established the federative arrangement as a form of state organization and guaranteed federal entities (Union, states, federal district, and municipalities) the status of an agreeing member, with political-administrative autonomy (BRASIL, 1988). This institutional framework requires the Union to build political, institutional, and fiscal means to provide national public policies (ABRÚCIO, 2005; SOUZA, 2005). Hence, the Food and Nutrition Security (SAN) policy, as well as other policies, needs, among other things, federal coordination to achieve the territorial extension of the country. In particular, given its cross-sectional profile (BRONZO, 2007; FALÇONI, 2020), considering

that it is a public policy that combines elements of education, health, social assistance, agriculture, among others.

From a notion of a temporal continuum until the first decade of the 21st century, the trajectory of this policy was marked by fragmentation and discontinuity. This design of the policy underwent course changes in 2003 through the Zero Hunger Program (PFZ), which established, albeit precariously, some coordination carried forward by the Federal Government, guided by the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS), and the Bolsa Família Program (PBF) in 2004 (SILVA, 2014), but without a long-term institutional guarantee. Even because the public policies with greater coordination of the Federal Government depend, at least, on an arrangement of political, institutional, and fiscal capacities. Without them, it becomes difficult to achieve success, considering the autonomy of subnational

governments and the need for induction to adhere to and implement the programs defined in another sphere.

2. Trajectory of public policies on Food and Nutrition Security

After World War I, with the creation of the League of Nations, the fight against hunger became an issue discussed worldwide, albeit with few concrete actions on the part of the member countries. More forceful strategies were devised decades later, with the end of World War II and the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945, and its special agencies, including the *Food and Agriculture Organization* (FAO), which became the main organizational strategy in the fight against hunger worldwide (SILVA, 2014).

In Brazil, studies conducted since the 1930s by Josué de Castro¹ have contributed decisively to identifying the association between hunger and poverty, in addition to food scarcity². Although identified, the strategies to combat hunger were insufficient since these discussions ran into a conflict of interests between governments, the market, and international organizations for agriculture's economic development and modernization (SILVA, 2014).

From the 1950s, government actions in the food area began to be implemented based on programs aimed at specific social groups involving institutions and spheres of government (TARTAGLIA; BARROS, 2003). The

¹Josué de Castro was born in 1908 and died in 1973. Physician, geographer and social scientist was one of the icons of the fight against hunger in Brazil. His research, of a hygienist nature – the result of his time – showed evidence of the social causes of hunger and how it was distributed geographically unequally in the Brazilian territory (MAGALHÃES, 1997).

²The presence of Josué de Castro at the United Nations fostered a growing discussion at the international level on the understanding of multidimensional strategies that should be adopted to ensure an adequate level of food security for populations (MACHADO, 2006).

economic programs developed in Brazil "were strongly influenced by international organizations, with well-articulated interests to constitute markets for their industrialized products" (SILVA, 2014, p.18). In the context of the influence of international organizations that supported the establishment of markets for industrialized products, a design of programs was developed that favored the consumption of industrialized foods and aggravated the situation of those people with greater difficulties of access, especially due to the high cost. According to the author, "this scenario favored the argument of the need for modernization of the agricultural sector, mainly in developing countries, led by the innovations of the chemical industry, a process that became known as the Green Revolution" (2014, p.10).

Without effective solutions and with the still pungent problem of world hunger, the First World Food Conference of the United Nations was held in 1974 in

Rome, Italy, promoted in a world scenario of food scarcity. The discussions of this conference reaffirmed the debate on the problem of hunger from a more socio-political and not only a technical perspective. That is, to understand the problem of world hunger as a multidimensional process influenced by poverty and inadequate and insufficient food intake (SILVA, 2014).

According to Melo *et al.* (2017), from the 1980s, hunger began to be linked to demand and distribution, that is, to economic access, not production. This was because it was possible to perceive the paradox linked to an increase in food production combined with the increase in hunger in the world. Another important event was the International Conference on Nutrition, organized by FAO in 1992, which incorporated the concept of food and nutrition security into the current debate on the hunger issue (MALUF; MENEZES, 2000).

Authors such as Barros and Tartaglia (2003, p.120) consider that "(...) at the end of the 1980s, however, the existing programs were gradually being technically and financially emptied". Moreover, the world context of the growth of neoliberal policies in the early 1990s was marked by the State's removal from interventionist social policies, including food programs. In this decade, efforts by international organizations, such as the FAO, associated The Right to Food (DHAA) with the guarantee of food and nutritional security at the World Food Summit, which was also held in Rome and was attended by representatives from 186 countries (BELIK; SILVA; TAKAGI, 2001). Thus, adequate food was agreed upon as a right where "(...) everyone must have access to food of good nutritional quality and that is free of chemical components that may harm human health" (MALUF; MENEZES, 2000, p.2).

The most progressive initiatives in this line of combating

hunger and misery, from the beginning of the 1990s, even if contrary to the directions proclaimed by the policies guided by the “Washington Consensus”, manifested with the creation, in 1993, of the so-called “Action of Citizenship Against Hunger, Misery, and for Life”, emanating from civil society at the initiative of sociologist Herbert de Souza (Betinho), awakening public opinion and encouraging the creation of solidarity committees by the country (BARROS; TARTAGLIA, 2003). This period was marked by a great social mobilization in relation to hunger and misery, reinforcing the need for concrete actions to combat social ills.

In the government of Itamar Franco (October/1992-1994), the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA) was created, an advisory body linked to the presidency of the Republic, composed of ministers of state and representatives of civil society (BELIK *et al.*, 2001). Such initiatives are unfolded by the Brazilian

federative design, states, and municipalities, with the creation of their own participatory councils. At the sub-national level, such SAN policy councils operate independently and without an obligation in their constitution.

At the beginning of the first Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1995-1998), already in the first year, in 1995, CONSEA was extinguished, and the “Solidarity Community Program” was created, triggering, according to Belik *et al.* (2001, p.124), “(...) a new fragmentation of public policies to combat hunger”. In the following decade, in 2001, the national proposal of the “Zero Hunger Program”³ was launched, based on the diagnosis that the cause of hunger in the country was poverty and income concentration, which prevented access to nutritious food (SILVA; BELIK; TAKAGI, 2001). Again, the ideology left by Josué de Castro was resumed for the construction of strategies to combat hunger

³The program was created within the framework of the Institute of Citizenship, an NGO linked to the Workers' Party (PT).

and poverty. Nevertheless, the Zero Hunger Program only gained formality in 2003, with the inauguration of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010), disclosing its implementation in his inaugural speech.

The foundation of the Zero Hunger Program was that hunger in Brazil was and still is caused by poverty and income concentration, not by low food production. These causes did not allow people adequate access to food and therefore increased the degree of food and nutritional insecurity of a large part of the population. Thus, to understand some of the structure of the national SAN policy that gained strength, coordination, and resources from 2003, the present analysis focuses on the legal basis, the institutional structure, and the fiscal resources for its provision. Considering that many programs make up this policy and are distributed in several Ministries (given the profile of transversality of this public policy), the intention is to examine those who mobilized

the largest volume of resources from the Federal Government. The reference period considers that the SAN policy has become central to the national agenda since 2003, extending until 2015. After this year, there was a turn in the government agenda, with impacts on food security policy that will be addressed below.

3. Institutionalization of the National Food and Nutrition Security Policy: as far as possible (2003-2015)

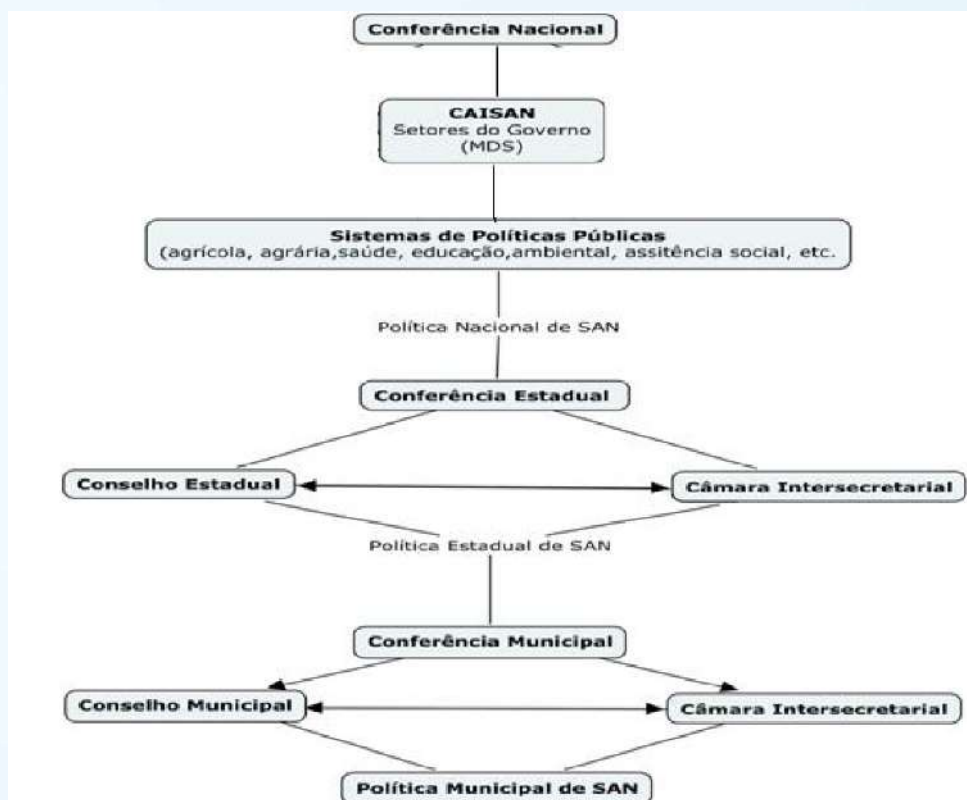
Some normative guarantees in relation to SAN have the beginning of its institutionalization from the Federal Constitution of 1988. Among these rights are the minimum wage sufficient for basic needs, including (in formal terms) food and supplementary feeding programs in schools. Besides, the Union, the states, and the municipalities must “foster agricultural production and organize food supply” (BRASIL, 1988). In the same line of “institutional formalities”, the right

to food for children, adolescents, and young people is also provided for in the constitutional text. Another guarantee is using resources from the Fund for Combating and Eradicating Poverty in supplementary nutrition actions (BRASIL, 1988). Despite these considerations in the constitutional text, the dates of the established goals for eradicating hunger and misery were postponed since two decades later, in 2010, food was recognized as a social right in Article 6 of the Federal Constitution, based on Constitutional Amendment No. 64/2010.

The agenda of this public policy changed with the beginning of the Lula government, with the strengthening of SAN, as the fight against hunger was defined as one of the government's priorities. In 2006, the Organic Law on Food and Nutrition Security (LOSAN) created a national food and nutrition security system (SISAN).

With voluntary adherence, it replicates, in the states and municipalities, an institutional framework supported by four foundations: (1) a municipal/state law, which establishes the principles, objectives, and guidelines of the public policy of SAN in its respective federative entity; (2) a participatory council, which works as a direct channel of civil society in the decisions of the government, which can be advisory, deliberative, supervisory, and/or normative; (3) an intersectoral chamber, responsible for articulating the different government portfolios in the preparation and execution of the SAN policy; and (4) a Food and Nutrition Security plan, which defines the objectives and means of achieving them in four years, concomitantly as a Multiannual Plan (PPA). Figure 1 below summarizes this institutional framework created in the context of this political agenda and that would later lose the national CONSEA, extinct in 2019.

Figure 1 - Structure of the Food and Nutrition Security System in Brazil.



Source: adapted from Leão, Maluf (2012, p.32).

At the center of this SAN agenda of the Lula government, the Bolsa Família Program (PBF), the National School Feeding Program (PNAE), the Food Acquisition Program (PAA), and

the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (PRONAF) stood out. Chart 1 shows this normative set that now carries a diversity of actions and programs to combat hunger in the country.

Chart 1 - Legislation establishing each of the SAN policy programs analyzed

Program	Legislation
National School Feeding Program	Decree No. 37,106, of March 31, 1955

National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming	Decree No. 1,946, of June 28, 1996
Food Acquisition Program	Law No. 10,696 (art. 19), of July 2, 2003
Bolsa Família Program	Law No. 10,836, of January 9, 2004

Source: Prepared by the authors.

3.1. The Zero Hunger Program and SAN's public policy

From the 2000s, the theme of access to food gained centrality on the agenda of the Lula government, giving volume to the institutional engineering of SAN policy in a context that brought to mind the strength of social and political mobilization from the 1980s and 1990s (SILVA, 2014). This effort materialized in the PFZ, launched in 2001, as already pointed out, based on a proposal for a food security policy for Brazil, resulting from the participation of almost a hundred technicians and specialists. The favorable context for an agenda with the world food agenda should be emphasized, which led to the world food

summit, held in Rome in 1996 and organized by the FAO, to define goals for reducing the number of undernourished people on the planet (BELIK, 2012).

In operational terms, structural, specific, and local actions were foreseen in the PFZ, emphasizing minimum income support and programs such as agrarian reform. Among the more than 40 defined programs, emergency food baskets were donated to specific audiences – such as the settlers of agrarian reform and food education, to be introduced in the elementary school curriculum. In the field of local actions, the establishment of new relationships with retailers and distributors stood out, with

the installation of food banks for medium and large cities and popular restaurants to promote healthy food at a low price for workers who circulate in the centers of large cities (BELIK, 2012).

The institutional design of the PFZ was prepared based on consultations with representatives of the Federal Government, civil society, state and municipal governments, culminating in Provisional Measure No. 103, of January 2003, which defined the recreation of CONSEA as an advisory body to the Presidency of the Republic. CONSEA, created in 1993 and extinguished in 1997, would comprise 1/3 of government sectors and 2/3 of civil society. The priorities assumed, the political support of the Presidency and the inclusion of the topic strategically on the government's agenda were strengths within the CONSEA, in contrast to the fragility of the Council of the Solidarity Community (BURLANDY, 2009; BELIK, 2012).

Besides the re-creation of CONSEA, among other institutional definitions, the Extraordinary Ministry of Food Security and Fight against Hunger (MESA) was established, linked to the Presidency of the Republic, which was in charge of the formulation and implementation of food and nutritional security policies, and would later be integrated into the Ministry of Social Development and Fight against Hunger (MDS). It should be noted that in 2004, the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale (EBIA) was used for the first time in the research on food security conducted by the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE).

Regarding the government's main action to combat hunger and poverty, the Bolsa Família Program was initially regulated by the National Food Access Program, known as the "Food Card", created by Provisional Measure No. 108, of February 2003, which joined other existing

income transfers. Nonetheless, the Federal Government changed this strategy in October 2003, with the launch of the Bolsa Família Program (PBF⁴). The PBF provided for the transfer of monetary resources to families in poverty and extreme poverty, in an articulated way to access health and education services (through conditionalities), and intersectoral actions and complementary programs (SILVA, 2014; VASCONCELOS *et al.*, 2019). The MDS, from the merger of the MESA, the Ministry of Social Action (MAS), and the Executive Department of the PBF, was in charge of the management of the program. The PBF encompassed previous income transfer programs and was consolidated as the main government action to combat hunger and misery. In an articulated way, the use of the CadÚnico was disseminated (SILVA, 2014).

The Food Acquisition Program (PAA), created in 2003,

⁴The Bolsa Família Program was extinguished by MP 1,061/2021, which creates in its place the "Brazil Aid Program".

was implemented through a partnership between the MDS, the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), and the National Supply Company (CONAB). The PAA integrates agricultural policy and food security policy and allows the public purchase of products from family farmers, without bidding, and their donation to social entities, such as the School Meal and other public institutions of the care network, creating an institutional market for family farming, with consequences in promoting the local economy (SILVA, 2014).

Of those already existing, between 2003 and 2015, the National School Feeding Program (PNAE) presented significant advances, such as the promotion of healthy eating in public and private schools⁵ (BRASIL, 2006). It introduced the acquisition of food from Family Farming (BRASIL, 2009). Under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, PNAE had its resources expanded from a

⁵Interministerial Ordinance No. 1,010, of May 8, 2006, which extended the program to all students in the public basic education network.

partnership signed between this ministry and MESA (SILVA, 2014). With a change in its legal framework, which opened space for some guidelines that highlight the incentive to healthy eating in the school environment and the preferential purchase of local products from family farming (by at least 30%), of formal requirement (VASCONCELOS, *et al.*, 2019), PNAE was linked by normative principle (via Law No. 11,947, of 2009) to family farming and food security (CASTRO; FREITAS, 2021).

Similarly, the National Program for the Strengthening of Family Farming (PRONAF), created in 1996 through Decree No. 1,946, to provide technical and financial support to family farming, was remodeled in 2003, with an increase in the volume of resources and the number of families involved, in addition to a diversification of its target audience (SILVA, 2014). Under the MDA's responsibility, PRONAF benefited other regions, to the detriment of the Northeast region,

the region of the country with the largest number of family farms, but this relationship began to change in the 2000s (CASTRO; FREITAS, 2021). From 1999 to 2019, the Northeast region more than doubled its participation in the number of contracts and increased its participation in access to PRONAF resources (BACCARIN; OLIVEIRA, 2021). Brazil Without Poverty Program, launched in 2011, highlighted initiatives for productive inclusion and food education, as well as readjustments in the values of the PBF and other SAN programs (SILVA, 2014).

In terms of budget allocation, allocated throughout the bonanza of food security policies, known between 2003 and 2015, the programs of the SAN policy main recipients in the distribution of financial resources were: Bolsa Família Program with 51.2%, National School Feeding Program with 12.1%, the Food Acquisition Program with 4.1%, and the National Family Farming Program with 3.6% (CUSTÓDIO;

YUBA; CYRILLO, 2013), responsible for the largest volume of funds from the Federal Government. This period coincides with the last years of the agenda implemented in the country, in which social policies were treated as investments and sought to reduce socioeconomic inequalities, boosting economic development in the country.

3.2. The current (lack of) importance of SAN policies and social participation

The public policy of food and nutrition in Brazil, for 11 years, more specifically between 2003 and 2014, during Lula's government and Dilma's first term, had as its centrality the discourse of combating hunger and misery. From the second term of office of Dilma Rousseff (2015-2016) began the weakening of SAN policies, with this period being marked by the recession and the increase in unemployment rates due to the global economic crisis, accentuated by the political crisis

that culminated in the *impeachment* of the president in August 2016. On an interim basis, Michel Temer took over in May 2016. In his government, institutional and programmatic disruptions are accentuated, with budget cuts and rights setbacks that have weakened social policies to reduce hunger and promote food and nutritional security (VASCONCELOS, 2019).

Among his actions are the extinction of the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA⁶), and approval of the new tax regime established by Constitutional Amendment No. 95, which defines the government's spending floor, freezing it for 20 years. In this list of limits are the expenses with the Ministries, the Judicial Branch, Congress, salaries of servants (such as teachers, and health professionals, among others), social benefits, pensions, salary allowance, unemployment insurance, investments (infrastructure, for example),

⁶MP No. 726, of May 12, 2016, issued by the acting President Michel Temer extinguished the Ministry of Agrarian Development.

besides cutting 11% of the Bolsa Família Program, reducing 99.8% of the resources of the Food Acquisition Program (PAA) for Purchase with Simultaneous Donation, stoppage of agrarian reform, flexibilization of the territorial rights of indigenous peoples, quilombola communities, and other peoples, environmental standards, the release of pesticides and transgenics, reduction of resources for living programs with the semi-arid in a dry period (NASCIMENTO, 2019). By weakening these policies,

actions in SAN are affected, given its cross-sectional profile. Attached, Figure 6 and Chart 2 show the timeline of the government's evolution of supply and food security actions (1940-2021) and an overview of the main institutional changes that weakened SAN policy.

Table 1 shows the weakening of the National Plan for Food and Nutrition Security through the budgetary data for 2014 and 2018 of the Plan's programs and goals.

Table 1 - Percentage of budget reduction of programs and goals of the National Plan for Food and Nutrition Security. Brazil, 2014-2018.

Percentage of budget reduction of programs and goals of the National Plan for Food and Nutrition Security. Brazil, 2014-2018			
Program / Goals	LOA (2014)	LOA (2018)	Reduction (%)
Distribution of food to traditional and specific population groups (basic food basket)	R\$82 million	R\$27.4 million	67
Ecological concession program	R\$106.2 million	-	100
Support for the sustainable development of quilombola communities, indigenous	R\$6 million	-	100

peoples, and traditional peoples and communities			
Technical Assistance and Rural Extension (ATER)	R\$630 million	R\$185.4 million	71
Technical Assistance and Rural Extension for settled and extractive families (ATES)	R\$357 million	R\$19.7 million	94
Productive inclusion of women	R\$32.5 million	R\$3.6 million	89
Food Acquisition Program (PAA)	R\$1.3 billion	R\$431 million	67
"Water for All" Program (Cisterns)	R\$248.8 million	R\$40.8 million	94
International Humanitarian Cooperation	R\$38.4 million	R\$6.3 million	84

Source: Vasconcelos (2019, p.9)

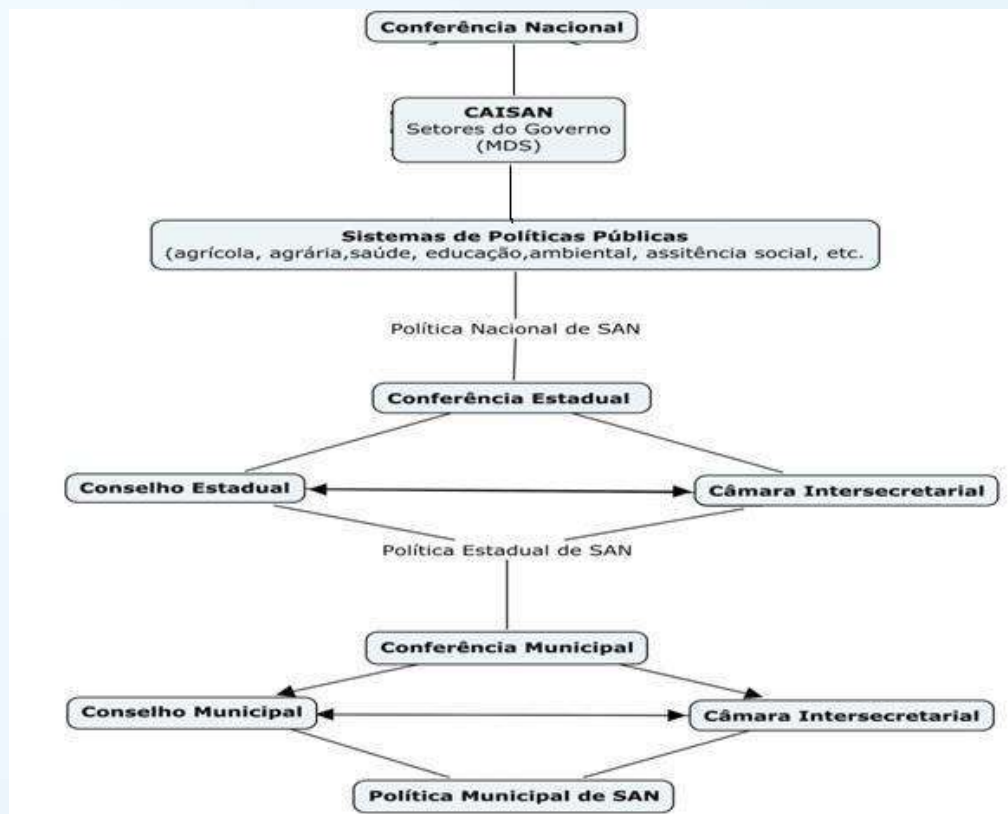
As a cross-sectional policy, SAN is weakened by budgetary retractions in the programs and actions identified in Table 1. With the loss of space on the government agenda, even before the election of Jair Bolsonaro in 2018, this worsened already in the new government's first year, starting in 2019. A first act of the government in this regard was the publication of Provisional Measure No. 870 that extinguished

CONSEA, exonerated the employees of the National Department of SAN (SESAN) on February 6, 2019, vetoed the Multiannual Plan (PPA) 2020-2023 with the budgetary commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and by Decree No. 9759/2019 dissolved the national commission responsible for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Brazil. Administratively, the SAN instances were being

dismantled and relocated to other social policies. Figure 2 below shows the institutional framework

of SAN without the national CONSEA.

Figure 2 - Structure of the Food and Nutrition Security System in Brazil without the national CONSEA



Source: adapted from Leão, Maluf (2012, p.32).

The measures already taken as a "business card" of the government had an immediate effect, reaching several axes of action linked to popular participation within the Federal Executive and for the control and inspection of public policies. As is the case of CONSEA, a body whose link was direct with the

Presidency of the Republic, acting in the monitoring and promotion of the right to food and collaborating directly with the National System of Food and Nutrition Security (SISAN).

More objectively, the negligent positioning in the face of one of the most blatant ills,

which is hunger, by the Federal Government, shows signs that this agenda has a smaller space in the conduct of public management, directly impacting the DHAA. This fact can be illustrated by the proposal presented by Fecomercio-SP to increase the expiry date of the products in the market, causing the population to consume items outside the expiration date⁷. A similar agenda was proposed by the Minister of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply when defending the relaxation of the shelf life of food so that they can reduce prices. The speech was at the 1st Forum of the National Supply Chain, in June 2021, on the same day that the Minister of Economy defended that unused food throughout the day in restaurants was destined to feed beggars and helpless people; “it is better than letting it spoil”⁸. The speeches of the state ministers were satirized in the cartoon below.

7

See:
<https://www.fecomercio.com.br/noticia/cartaz-sobre-prazo-de-validade-fecomerciosp-pede-veto-a-proje-to-com-nova-obrigatoriedade-para-comercio>.

8

See:<https://www.cnnbrasil.com.br/business/governo-pode-flexibilizar-prazo-de-validade-de-alimentos/>.

Figure 3 – Charge Hunger and misery: the day of "donation" to feed.



Source: Prepared by the authors.

The image is a caricature of a real and chaotic scenario of the country's conjuncture, aggravated by the absence of a national orientation that results in demobilization. Voluntary and isolated actions of civil society remain without communication and without a common organization, making them more fragile in the face of attacks in favor of the retraction of spaces of social participation.

In this context, attention is drawn to dismantling the National Council for Food and Nutrition

Security when its actions and coordination are very much needed. And because they do not act in a coordinated way, the spaces of participation of civil society (via councils) in the subnational spheres end up losing national orientation, which causes demobilization, weakening them. In fact, there is a “wave of demobilization”, which tends to affect the resumption of civil society participation in these spaces since the fear of building a council that can be dismissed at any time becomes present, given

the institutional instability that can reinforce disinterest in social participation. The return of National CAISAN⁹ only with the representation of the government, without contemplating the insertion of civil society, demonstrates that participation is not a structural element fostered by the current government. Such issues make it increasingly difficult to maintain the advances and rights conquered by society, and the Federal Government follows a neoliberal agenda. The arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic only highlighted the fact of distancing the Human Right to Adequate Food for a large portion of the population.

The pandemic has made social inequalities and the scenario of socioeconomic instability that Brazil faces even more intense, with the aggravation of the Federal Government's delay in proposing measures and/or guidelines to combat Covid-19 and food insecurity, which became even

more evident with it. With the deprivation of regular access to food, associated with insufficient income, food insecurity in the country has expanded. (GALINDO, *et al*, 2021; SOUZA, *et al*, 2021)

Ensuring food security is worrying, especially considering the loss of political space for food and nutrition security policies. An important milestone for the beginning of this loss of space occurs exactly with the assumption of Temer's interim government. It intensified in the current government.

The decline in measures to combat hunger has become even more pronounced in the last two years. From 2013 to 2018, according to PNAD and POF, food insecurity had grown 8.0% per year. In the Bolsonaro government, the acceleration was even more intense. According to VigiSAN, from 2018 to 2020, Brazil's hunger increase was 27.6%. In two years, the number of people in serious food insecurity - going hungry - jumped from 10.3 million to 19.1 million. Almost 9 million

⁹CAISAN's return by federal decree No. 10,713 of June 7, 2021.

more Brazilians began to experience hunger in their daily lives. The increase in food prices during the pandemic is also linked to the discouragement of policies related to family farming. One of the effects of these political choices was the end of the government's price-regulating stocks. This dismantling becomes clear with the closure and sale of the warehouses of the national supply company (CONAB). Without an agricultural policy of price regulation in 2021, the real devaluing for several factors ends up being a stimulus for export, and the consequent domestic market shortage for basic food, reaching mainly the poorest and most vulnerable families. The dismantling of public policies aimed at guaranteeing SAN impacts living conditions, production, and access to food, directs a portion of the population to extreme vulnerability, and increases food insecurity in the country.

4. **Social setback and worsening hunger**

The crises increasingly explain that food insecurity is closely linked to the economy, especially when prices rise rapidly and the number of unemployed people in the population grows rapidly, as has been happening in the current political and socioeconomic crisis that plagues the country. In 2020, the Research Network on Sovereignty and Food and Nutrition Security (PENSSAN NETWORK) conducted a population survey to verify the situation of food insecurity in Brazil. Given the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Brazilian society, the already precarious living and working conditions were aggravated by frailties in the country's social protection system. As a result, the pandemic highlighted social and economic inequalities, leading to hunger and poverty in the population (REDE PENSSAN, 2021; DE PAULA, ZIMMERMANN, 2021).

To ascertain this scenario, the researchers of the PENSSAN

Network applied a closed questionnaire to a representative sample of the Brazilian population, composed of 2,180 households in rural and urban areas of all regions of the country, in which they mapped the situation of households in the three months before the interviews, which occurred in December 2020. To measure food (in)security, they used the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale (EBIA), already established in the academic literature and used by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) since 2004. Questions that sought to mediate sociodemographic and economic variables such as income, sex, color, a condition in the labor market, and region of residence of the population were complemented to detect possible causal links between them and food insecurity.

This methodology was initially developed in the 1980s at Cornell University (known as the “*Cornell Indicator*”), which used qualitative methods to analyze

food insecurity among women considered poor (CAMPBELL, 1991; RADIMER, *et al.*, 1992). The qualitative study allowed preparing a quantitative scale based on 10 questions, which addressed problems related to the number of calories available concerning future food insufficiency (CAMPBELL, 1991; LORENZANA; SANJUR, 1999). The scale assesses not only the occurrence of food deprivation, variety, and the commitment of other essential family expenditures for food acquisition but also the identification of the fear of immediate future deprivation, characterizing INSAN gradually (FRONGILLO, JR., 1996; BALLARD; KEPPLER; CAFIERO, 2013).

This scale was resized in the 1990s by researchers from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), based on a survey based on 15 questions (RADIMER *et al.*, 1992). It refers to the sum of a score attributed to questions that assess the perception of problems regarding

the diversity and/or quantity of food available, resulting in hunger, even the concern of individuals for the possibility of not having food regularly, where it would be possible to perceive the so-called food insecurity, which can be expressed long before the establishment of malnutrition situations. Thus, people who do not have the resources to purchase enough food for their families, based on this method, can consider themselves in a situation of food insecurity, even if clinically they do not present signs of malnutrition (RADIMER et al., 1992; MACHADO, 2010; BALLARD; KEPPLER; CAFIERO, 2013).

This methodology was adapted to the Brazilian case. It resulted in the development of the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale (EBIA) in conditions to be able to ascertain how people perceive food insecurity, whether it is their own or that of their family. Thus, it allows capturing not only those

physical dimensions that show signs of malnutrition or undernourishment, but also manages to extract the psychological dimensions of food insecurity (FRONGILLO, JR., 1996; PNAD, 2013).

The first evaluation of this scale was conducted by the Brazilian Institute of Statistics and Geography (IBGE) in 2004 as a Supplementary Survey of the 2004 National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) on Food Security.

The number of “yes” answers is a predictor of a measure from food security to severe insecurity. Chart 3, along with Chart 4, shows the questions used in the surveys with the families, and the evaluation parameters, always considering two groups: over and under 18 years of age living in the household. It is noteworthy that the measurement unit is the family, not the individual.

Chart 3: Questionnaire of the Brazilian Food Insecurity Scale

1	In the last three months, have the residents of this household had concerns that food would run out before they could buy or receive more food?	8	In the last three months, has any resident aged 18 years or older ever had just one meal a day or gone a whole day without eating because there was no money to buy food?
2	In the last three months, did food run out before the residents of this household had the money to buy more food?	9	In the last three months, has any resident under 18 ever stopped eating a healthy and varied diet because there was no money to buy food?
3	In the last three months, have the residents of this household run out of money for a healthy and varied diet?	10	In the last three months, has any resident under 18 ever not eaten enough food because there was no money to buy food?
4	In the last three months, have the residents of this household only eaten some food they still had because the money ran out?	11	In the last three months, has the amount of food from the meals of a resident under the age of 18 ever been reduced because there was no money to buy food?
5	In the last three months, has a resident aged 18 years or older stopped eating a meal because there was no money to buy food?	12	In the last three months, have any residents under 18 ever stopped eating a meal because there was no money to buy food?
6	In the last three months, has any residents aged 18 or over ever eaten less than they should have because there was no money to buy food?	13	In the last three months, have any residents under 18 ever felt hungry, but did not eat because there was no money to buy food?
7	In the last three months, have any residents aged 18 or over ever felt	14	In the last three months, has any resident under 18 ever eaten just one meal a day or gone without

hungry, but did not eat because there was no money to buy food?		eating for a whole day because there was no money to buy food?
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Source: Center for Studies in Food Research/MDS, 2010.

Answers Yes (1) and No (0)

Score for classification= sum of positive answers (from 0 to 14)

Chart 4: Cut-off points for household classification

Classification	EBIA	
	Households with children under 18 years old	Households without children under 18 years old
Food Security	0	0
Mild Insecurity	1-5	1-3
Moderate Insecurity	6-9	4-5
Severe Insecurity	10-14	6-8

Source: Center for Studies in Food Research/MDS, 2010.

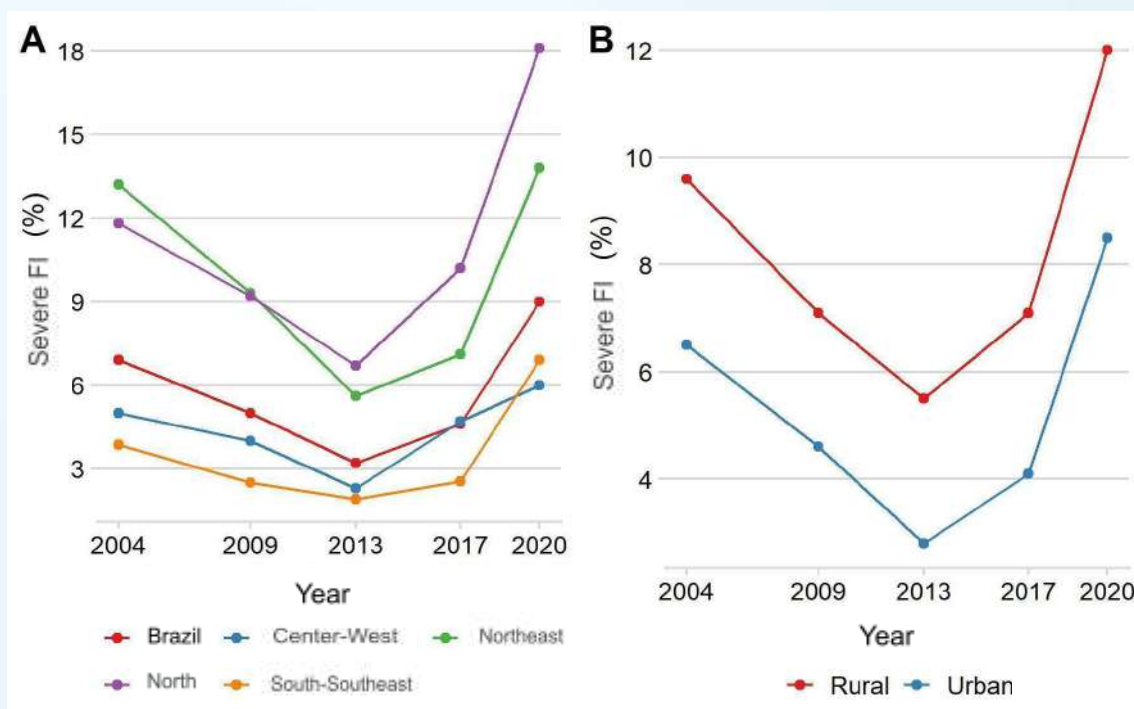
Of the 14 questions of the EBIA questionnaire, eight are related to adults living in the household and six to residents under the age of 18. Each question of the scale, referring to the period of 90 days before the day of the interview, is given the alternatives of answers "yes" and "no". The first evaluates the presence of "yes" answers to the research questions, in which the conditions of low or

no nutrition are measured among the investigated population. The second consists of reading the answers given to the 14 questions. If the answer is yes, the frequency of occurrence of the event in this period is asked, offering the following alternative answers: "almost every day", "in a few days", and "in just one or two days", according to the answers.

The recent results of the application of EBIA show that, in 2020, the level of severe food insecurity, in which hunger becomes an everyday experience. It reached 9% of the population: a higher proportion than the 6.9% in 2004. Currently, the situation is

worse than 17 years ago in all regions, both in rural and urban areas (Figure 3). In this bleak picture, it is worth mentioning the North region, where serious food insecurity reaches 18%, which means that almost one in five families in the North suffer from hunger daily.

Figure 3: Evolution of severe food insecurity in Brazil and Great Regions (A) and by urban x rural situation of the household (B). Proportions related to total households.



Source: (IBGE, 2005, 2014, 2019; REDE PENSSAN, 2021). Prepared by the authors,

As for the causes, the results of the VIGISAN project, summarized in Chart 5, are in line with previous research, which find the same associations (BEZERRA; OLINDA; PEDRAZA, 2017; LIGNANI,

et al., 2020). Of all the variables tested in these many studies, income seems to be the most associated and with the greatest effects on food insecurity. Generally operationalized in *per*

capita monthly household income (RDPC), it tends to act more as a mediator of the effect of other elements, such as education, gender, race, the occupational situation of the head of the household, access to sanitation, access to drinking water, housing condition of the residence, number of residents under 18, belonging to traditional populations (quilombolas, indigenous, riverside), whether the residence is in rural or urban areas and, finally, participation or not in conditional income transfer

programs – notably the Bolsa Família Program. Black and brown women, heads of the family, unemployed, residents of the rural areas of the North and Northeast, with many people in the household, tend to have a lower RDPC. With a low income and a large family, one cannot get quality (and frequent) food for everyone. Mainly in a country that went through the rural/urban inversion in the 1950s/60s and where, today, food is obtained mainly through purchase in the market.

Chart 5: Results of the VIGISAN survey

Income	Sex	Color	Work	Region	Rural versus Urban
Households with ¼ of the minimum wage per capita presented a prevalence	Households in which the reference “head of	Blacks/browns are most affected by severe FI	Severe FI was six times higher when unemployment occurred and four times higher in informal work	The North and Northeast regions had three and two times more households exposed to	12% of households in the rural area in severe FI

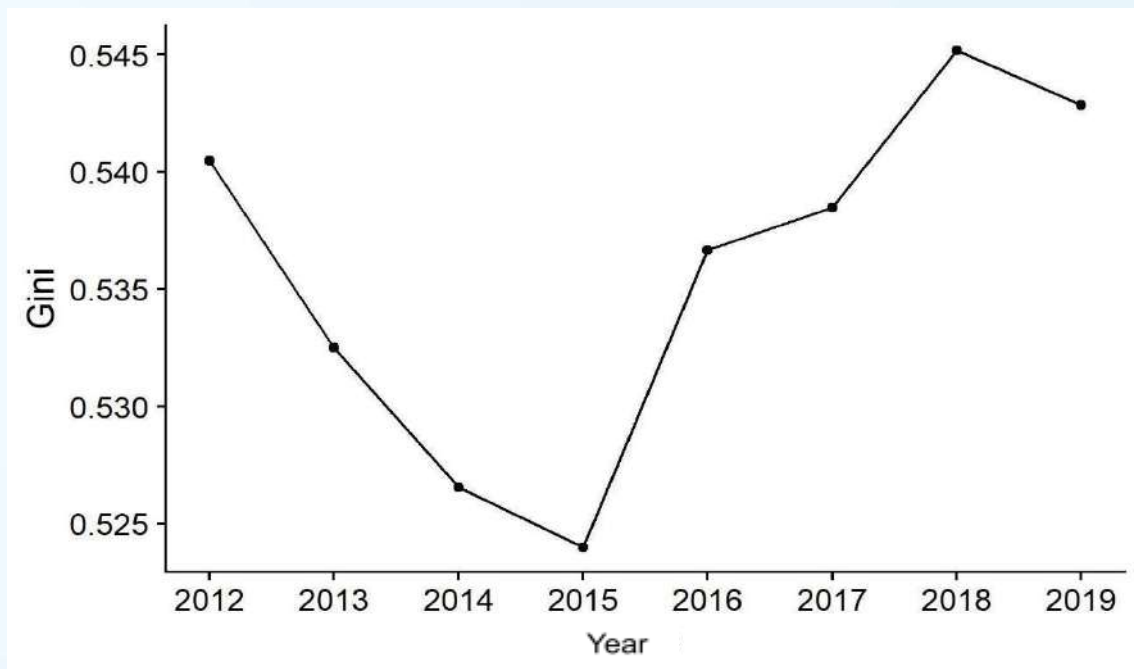
e of severe FI 2.5 times higher than the national mean.	household" is female, FI is more recurrent		situations. FI increased by 19% in households with some unemployed resident	severe FI than the South/Southeast regions.	
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Source: (REDE PENSSAN, 2021). Prepared by the authors

Given the importance of *per capita* household income in measuring food and nutritional insecurity, it is not surprising that the situation has worsened. According to data from the continuous PNAD, inequality in *per capita* household income, measured by the GINI index, after falling until 2015, rose again. In 2018, before the Covid-19 pandemic and the last year for which microdata is available, it had already returned to 2012 levels (Figure 4). While in 2015, 10% of the poorest households had a *per*

capita household income of R\$281.00 (the IPCA deflated all values here for October 2021), in 2019, this amount fell to R\$231.00. To make matters worse, food has not gotten any cheaper. According to data from the Inter-Union Department of Statistics and Socioeconomic Studies (DIEESE), in 2015, a basic basket cost, on average, R\$477.00. In October 2021, this amount was already around R\$590.00 – an increase of 25%, which, added to the fall in household incomes of the poorest, has aggravated food insecurity.

Figure 4: GINI index of *per capita* household income (2012-19)



All results indicate that the growth of food insecurity (FI) was not a novelty of the pandemic. This only intensified a process that began with the austerity policies implemented in Brazil since 2014, characteristics of a neoliberal agenda based on fiscal adjustments and reduction of investments in social policies, which, among other consequences, discouraged programs to promote family farming, implemented the

so-called “spending ceiling”¹⁰ and reduced resources in areas such as health and education. Therefore, it is an anti-state welfare-social policy that does not envisage an end in the short term (MARIANO, 2017).

In the 2012 and 2018 editions of the basic municipal information survey (MUNIC), IBGE investigated the structure of SAN policy in the

¹⁰The ceiling of public spending refers to Constitutional Amendment No. 95, which amended part of the Federal Constitution of 1988, instituting a new standard of fiscal regime, which limits the growth of Brazilian government spending for 20 years, including those linked to public policies.

municipalities. Those with the participatory council, municipal law, and intersectoral chamber increased in these six years. It even increased the number of municipalities in which some training is conducted. However, the percentage of councils in which budget allocation remained almost unchanged at around 30%. Even worse, those who have some municipal plan decreased. It could be argued that the decrease is because many of these plans would still be in preparation, as only after the law is enacted, the

council and the intersectoral chamber are instituted, that the plan is elaborated. LOSAN, for example, dates back to 2006, with the first national plan only coming to light in 2011. But when we look more closely, we see that, of the 986 municipalities that said they had a municipal plan in 2012, only 135 (13.7%) said the same for 2018. The non-renewal of the municipal plan, coupled with the loss of budget allocation, shows a probable discontinuity of this public policy at the municipal level.

Chart 6: SAN structure in municipal administrations

Description / Year	Number in 2012	Number in 2018	Δ%
Municipal Law	827	1,211	46.4
Municipal Council	1,507	2,030	34.7
Municipal Plan	986	569	-42.3
Intersectoral Chamber	291	622	113.8
Councils in which training of members is conducted	17.3%	38.2%	---
Councils with budget allocation (%)	30.5%	31.7%	---

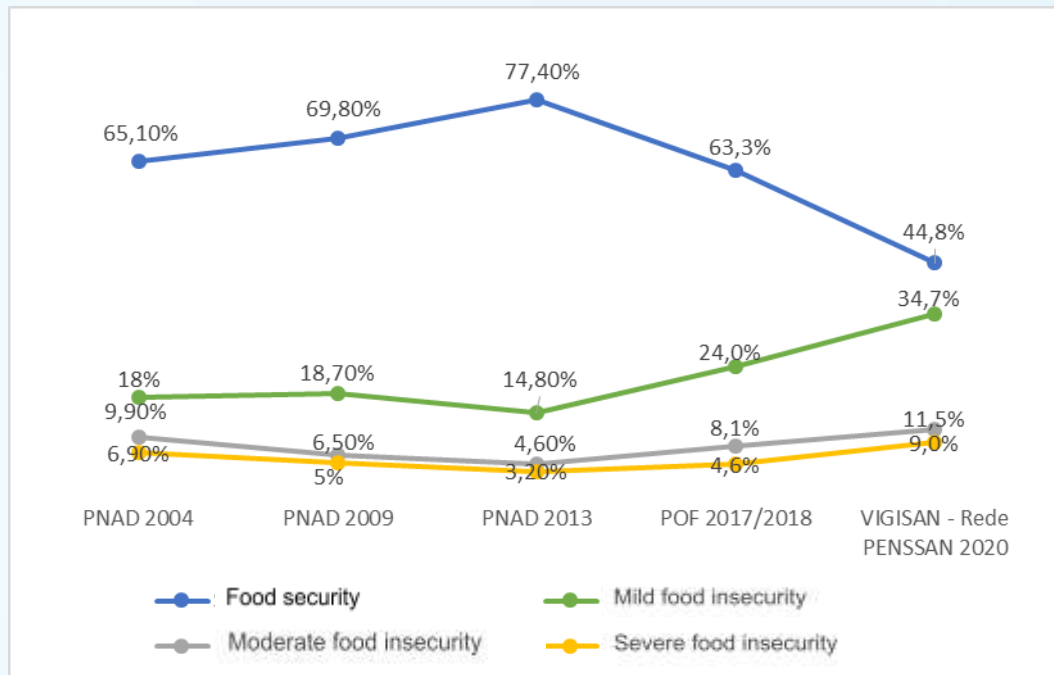
Source: Prepared by the authors based on the regulations.

After almost a decade of advances (2004 to 2013) promoted by the state's action, which had on its agenda the urgency to fight hunger and ensure a better food security situation from the implementation of coordinated public policies, the neoliberal political option, added to the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, led to serious food insecurity in Brazil to a worse scenario than in 2004. Hunger, therefore, is not only a result of the health crisis, but also of political choices and the organization of an economic system that combines a leaner state and an informal workforce, which occurs in Brazil, with measures by its governments that have opted for an economic

model of income concentration, increased unemployment, informality, and the deactivation of social protection policies and programs.

IBGE released in September 2020 the results of the Household Budget Survey (POF), conducted between June 2017 and July 2018. The data indicate that we returned to the 2004 route, where the numbers regressed to the scenario of more than a decade ago. By comparing with other IBGE publications, it is possible to notice the increase in food insecurity throughout the country and verify that we have returned to the hunger map. Figure 5 illustrates these data.

Figure 5- IBGE publications (2004 to 2018) contrasting with data from the PENSSAN Network (2020)



Source: Prepared by the authors based on data from IBGE and PENSSAN Network.

The data in the graph indicate an accentuation of the food insecurity crisis in 2018, before the pandemic, and, not coincidentally, after approval of the PEC of the spending ceiling. This reinforces the observation that the scenario aggravated by Covid-19 began before the virus arrived. The pandemic unveiled and found the SAN policy defragmented, more precisely with the disarticulation between the structural mechanisms of the policy, which insert social participation in these instances. Besides the increase in food

insecurity in these households, we have in the current situation the increase in hidden hunger, which is reflected by the reduction in the consumption of healthy foods, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Among the foods in the group is meat, with a 44.0% reduction in consumption, followed by fruits, with 41.8%, cheeses, 40.4%, and vegetables, with 36.8%. The egg was the major exception; it had the smallest reduction (18%) and the largest increase in consumption (17.8%). The situation is even worse when the subject is related to people in

a situation of food insecurity, where this reduction was more than 85% of the consumption of healthy foods. In contrast to the

5. Final Considerations

In the wake of actions aimed at ensuring the food security of families, it is necessary to change the current model of economic development that leads to social exclusion, of which hunger is just one of its visible results, as are unemployment, poverty, and the concentration of land and income.

According to Alves et al. (2008, p.77), "grain production in Brazil between 1991 and 2006, for example, grew 106.74%, while the area, 24.5%, and productivity, 66.7%", reflecting the increasing agricultural production in the country. According to Conab, the third survey of the 2021/22 grain harvest (monitoring the Brazilian harvest) points to a growth in production compared to the 2020/21 season, with an indication of total volume in the order of 291.1 million tons, signaling an increase of 15.1% (CONAB, 2021). In 2006, a

consumption of these foods, there is an increase in ultra-processed foods, rich in sodium, sugar, and fat (GALINDO, *et al.*, 2021).

volume of 117.3 million tons of grain had been harvested, according to IBGE (O Globo Economia, 07.19.2007), which gives a dimension of the expressiveness of the increase in Brazilian agricultural production over the last years.

Looking at the data evolution, it can be said peremptorily that hunger in Brazil has its roots in problems such as concentration of income and land, unemployment and food prices that often do not match the purchasing power of most of the population (DEL GROSSI, 2019).

The significant increase in the price of food and products in the markets, the exorbitant expansion of the population in poverty, and Brazil's return to the hunger map opened up the problems of food insecurity.

Families have been seen in extreme hunger situations, people turning trash in search of food scraps to consume or allocating themselves near restaurants to request leftover food, and finding malnourished children and adults on the streets only shows how much food insecurity is present in the country.

In the wake of the hardships, the significant increase in the price of food stands out in the face of a growing increase in poverty and hunger, which leaves no doubt about the problems of food insecurity that afflict a huge number of families and throw light on poverty and its darker side, the precarious access to food. The Covid-19 pandemic only aggravated such issues.

The decline in measures to combat hunger has become even

more pronounced in the last two years. From 2013 to 2018, according to PNAD and POF, food insecurity had grown 8.0% per year. In the Bolsonaro government, there is an acceleration in this situation because, according to VigiSAN, from 2018 to 2020, the increase in hunger in Brazil was 27.6%. In two years, the number of people in serious food insecurity - going hungry - jumped from 10.3 million to 19.1 million. Almost 9 million more Brazilians began to experience hunger in their daily lives.

Such data make it clear that the country's transversal public policies of food and nutritional security are fundamental, especially when faced with the Brazilian context of deep social inequality.

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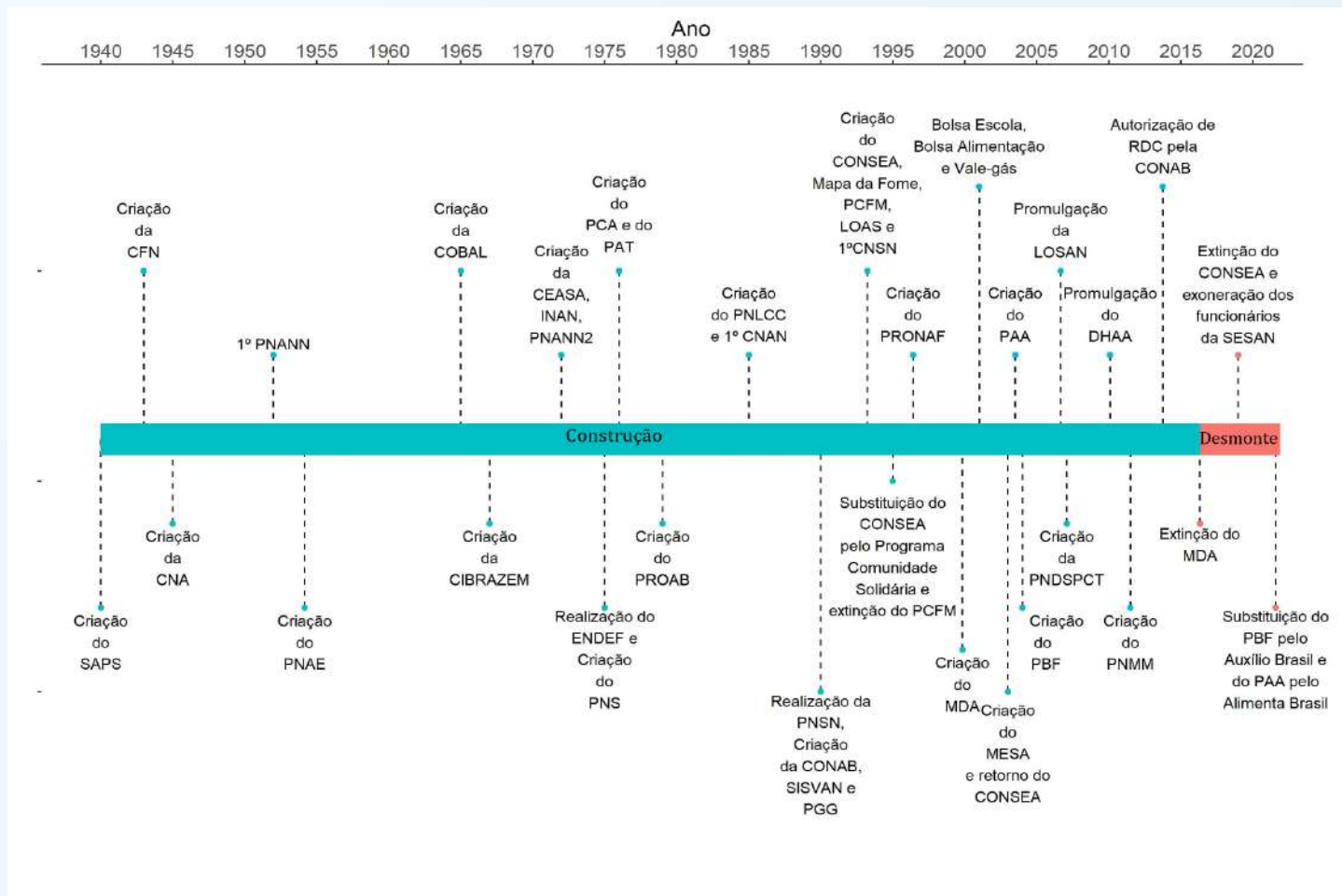
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Annex

Figure 6:

Evolution of Actions of Supply and Food Security by Government 1940 - 2021 (Vargas to Bolsonaro).



Source: Prepared by the authors based on Machado, 2006 and decrees and provisional measures.

Annex

**Chart 2 - Evolution of Supply and Food Security Actions
by Government 1940 - 2021 (Vargas to Bolsonaro).**

Vargas Governm ent	1940	Social Security Food Service (SAPS)	Subsidized restaurants for certain categories of salaried employees.
	1943	Production Financing Company (CFN)	Perform activities related to the minimum price assurance policy.
	1945	National Food Commission (CNA)	Define a national policy on food and combating malnutrition.
	1952	1st National Food and Nutrition Plan (PNAN)	Prepared by CNA, it created some milestones for politics, few effected.
	1954	National School Feeding Program (PNAE)	Provision of care in elementary schools
Military Governm ents	1965	Brazilian Food Company (COBAL)	Regulation of the food market, by public supply equipment, mainly in areas not covered by the private initiative.
	1967	Brazilian Warehouse Company (CIBRAZEM)	Act on food inventory control and minimum prices.
	1972	Supply Centers (CEASA)	Food marketing and distribution centers in the states and in some strategic locations in these states.
	1972	National Institute of Food and Nutrition (INAN)	Created due to FAO stimuli.
	1972	National Food and Nutrition Program (PNAN)	Created due to FAO stimuli.
	1975	National Family Expenditure Study (ENDEF)	Diagnose the nutritional profile of Brazilians.
	1975	Nutrition and Health Program (PNS)	Distribution of basic foods (rice, sugar, beans, cornmeal, cassava flour, and powdered milk) to pregnant women, nursing mothers, and children from

			six months to seven years old, in low-income families.
	1976	Supplementary Diet Program (PCA)	Distribution of milk with nutritious formulations for malnourished children.
	1976	Workers' Feeding Program (PAT)	Income tax deduction for companies that implement food actions for workers.
	1979	Basic Food Program in Low-Income Areas (PROAB)	Distribution of basic food to small retailers, in poor areas, at deducted prices (the profit margin could not exceed 20%) deployed in the Northeast region.
José Sarney Government	1985	Popular Food Program (PAP)	Same PROAB model, implemented in other regions
	1985	National Milk Program for Children in Need (PNLCC, milk ticket)	Distribution of one liter of milk/day to families (income up to 2 minimum wages) with children up to 7 years.
	1985	I National Conference on Nutrition (ICNAN) - Development of the 8th National Health Conference	Discuss nutrition problems in the context of health, incorporating the nutritional term Food Security.

Source: Machado, 2006 and based on decrees and provisional measures.

Chart 2 – Chart 2 continued

José Sarney Government	1990	National Health and Nutrition Survey (PNSN)	Diagnose the nutritional profile of Brazilians.
Collor Government	1990 to 93	Extinction of PSA, PCA, and PNLCC	
	1990	People of the People Program	Distribution of basic food baskets to families affected by drought (extinct and incorporated into PRODEA in 1993)
	1990	National Supply Company (CONAB)	Company of regulation of food stocks created from the

			merger of CFN, CIBRAZEM, and COBAL.
	1990	National Food and Nutrition Surveillance System (SISVAN)	Monitoring system of nutritional status data of individuals from all life cycle stages (child, adolescent, adult, older adults, and pregnant woman). Ministry of Health.
	1993	Emergency Food Distribution Program (PRODEA)	Assist with donating food from the basic food basket families in poverty pockets and affected by natural phenomena (droughts, floods, for example).
	1993	Hunger Map (IPEA)	It gave the social and geographical dimension of the hunger situation in Brazil
	1993	Plan to Combat Hunger and Poverty (PCFM)	Articulate an action between government and the market in the fight against poverty through decentralization and partnerships.
	1993	Creation of CONSEA (National Council for Food Security)	Social control council formed by government and civil society representatives to combat hunger.
	1993	Organic Social Assistance Law (LOAS)	Sanction of the Law that ensured the constitutional precepts regarding social security.
	1994	I National Conference on Food Security (ICNSA)	It discussed strategies on the theme "Hunger: a National Question".
	1994	Decentralization of PNAE	The purchases of distributed formulated foods were made by centralized purchase in Brasilia; with decentralization, this task was passed on to the states and municipalities.
Itamar Franco Government			
Fernando H. Cardoso	1995	Extinction of the Plan to Combat Hunger and CONSEA	Solidarity Community Program was implemented in place.
Government	1995	Solidarity Community Program	It proposed actions to combat poverty through actions between federated entities, a private company

			(due to fiscal exhaustion) and NGOs, as well as centralized scholarship programs.
	1999	Creation of the Ministry of Land Policy and Agrarian Development - (MDA)	It had as its national competence policies for the rural environment, for example: agrarian reform and the promotion of the sustainable development of the rural segment by family farmers, land regularization in the Amazon, and identification, recognition, delimitation, demarcation, and titling of land by the remnants of quilombola communities.

Source: Machado, 2006 and based on decrees and provisional measures.

Chart 2 – Chart 2 continued

Fernando H. Cardoso Government	2001	School Grant	Transfer of resources to families with an income of less than 1/2 minimum wages with a school attendance requirement executed by the Ministry of Education.
	2001	Food Grant	Transfer of resources to families with an income of less than 1/2 minimum wages for the purchase of food executed by the Ministry of Health.
	2001	Gas Grant	Transfer of resources to families with an income of less than 1/2 minimum wages, without conditionalities, executed by the Ministry of Mines and Energy.
Lula Government	2003	Creation of the Extraordinary Ministry of State for Food	Ministry in charge of the formulation and

	Security and Fight against Hunger (MESA)	implementation of SAN policies.	
2003	Return of the National Council for Food and Nutrition Security (CONSEA)	It was responsible for exercising social control and acting in formulating, monitoring, and evaluating the Policy. (PNSAN)	
2003	Food Acquisition Program (PAA)	Its competence was to promote access to food and encourage family farming.	
2004	Bolsa Família Program (PBF)	Intended for direct income transfer actions to benefit families in poverty and extreme poverty throughout the country.	
2006	Organic Food and Nutrition Security Act (LOSAN)	It establishes the inclusion by the State of the obligations of promotion, inspection, and evaluation of SAN through public policy.	
2007	National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Traditional Peoples and Communities (PNDSPECT)	Promote the sustainable development of Traditional Peoples and Communities, with emphasis on the recognition, strengthening, and guarantee of their territorial, social, environmental, economic, and cultural rights, with respect and appreciation for their identity, their forms of organization, and their institutions.	
2010	Enactment of the Human Right to Adequate Food (DHAA)	It included food as a social right.	
Dilma Government	2011	National Program Thousand Women	It aimed at professional and technological training articulated with increased education of women in situations of social vulnerability
	2013	Authorization of the Differentiated Public Procurement Regime (RDC) by National	For the contracting of all actions related to the renovation, modernization, expansion, or construction of its own storage units for the

		Supply Company - CONAB	storage and conservation of agricultural products in the natural environment. (National Support Program for Rainwater Capture and Other Social Technologies) ¹¹
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Source: Machado, 2006 and based on decrees and provisional measures.

Chart 2 – Chart 2 continued

Bolsonaro Government	2019	Extinction of CONSEA	Provisional Measure 870
	2019	Dismissal of employees of the National SAN Department (SESAN)	Provisional Measure 870
	2021	Brazil Aid Program	Substitute for the Bolsa Família Program (PBF)
	2021	Feed Brazil Program	Substitute for the Food Acquisition Program (PAA)

Source: Machado, 2006 and based on decrees and provisional measures.

¹¹The Cisterns Program has existed since 2003, but did not have a legal framework. The reservoirs were built in partnership with the states and civil society through contracts. <http://www.ufrgs.br/redesan/news/governo-federal-sanciona-programa-de-cisternas>

STAFF

The Observatory of Inequalities, a partnership between the João Pinheiro Foundation and the Regional Council of Economy – MG, is an extension project of the Public Administration course, which seeks to contribute to the debate on the different faces of social inequality, disseminating and making the knowledge and information on the subject more accessible. The views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily represent the position of the institutions.

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This newsletter results from a partnership between the Observatory of Inequalities of the João Pinheiro Foundation and the State University of North Fluminense Darcy Ribeiro - UENF. On both sides, there was the participation of scholars and researchers from the field and undergraduate and extension students from higher education courses offered by the respective institutions. The project was conducted jointly to offer a complete and multifaceted approach to the topic in question, and the

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