



Distribution of Income and Wealth in Brazil: Methodology, Distributive Justice and Political Action

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Abstract

The present research sought to carry out a multidisciplinary and transversal understanding of the concept of "inequality". Specifically, we sought to investigate economic inequality in Brazil and its extra-economic causes and effects. Our guiding question was: could the concept of "inequality" make an analytical bridge between structure and agency?

Key words:

Inequality, Distributive Justice, Agency.

Introduction

In 2011, a unique phenomenon occurred in recent history, a simultaneous and pervasive outbreak of social protest movements on a global scale. The background: the economic crisis of 2008. Social, wealth and power inequalities seem to be the common denominator of the rebel mob. Could the structure of globalized financial capitalism influence the agency and subjectivity of social actors through the identification and experience of inequalities? Our objective is to retrace the international debate about inequalities, in order to gather the analytical tools of this field of study and make use of it to analyze the recent history of inequalities in Brazil, so that we can suggest an interpretive line for the sharpening of social conflict in Brazil at the closing of the last 15 years of the local political process.

Results and Discussion

We can speak of social inequalities, which usually engage all kinds of contentiousness among individuals; geographical inequalities, which concern asymmetries in access to natural resources and especially to land; of power inequalities, which is a perspective of predilection in our investigation for the opportunity that it gives us to think the relation between the nations in the current imperialist context and among the diverse transnational actors; and economic inequalities, whose key-variable is the distribution of income. Summarizing the international debate and applying it to the Brazilian context, it can be said that the institutions of the colony and slavery forged within the Brazilian identity a social stigma that, from a very early age, encroached on any sense of social nexus between our own - which had been potentialized with the modernization of the country in the twentieth century. Restricted access to property remains one of the most evident vectors of inequality in Brazil. Equally, the dependent and subordinate insertion of the country into the global schemes of political-economic power will determine a fundamental limitation of the State in the promotion of equality: even in the last political

cycle, the PT's redistributive pact was not enough to break the imperative of social exclusion.

Conclusions

The theme of inequality is the order of the day, and it occupies the minds of academics, public and private institutions, political strategists, contestatory movements, women and men in the world of work or within top 1% of the richest, and ethnic minorities. If so, could the concept of "inequality" make an analytical bridge between structure and agency? The answer is yes. In summary, the binomial equity-inequality functions as a driver for the social, cultural and intersubjective recognition of individuals and groups. By acting directly on this binomial, the political-economic structure acts on the demand for recognition of these individuals and groups, impelling them to action (direct or indirect), which, in turn, will act on the same structure, modifying it. In sum, by attacking the subject of "inequality," we can gather the evidence and tendencies of this relationship that is so dear to Western philosophy of the twentieth century, the structure-agency relationship. Regarding the specificity of our research objective, in observing the socioeconomic inequality in Brazil, we can gather clues for understanding the social conflict open to the end of progressive governments.

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