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**BOSSUET'S PARADOX: SOME INSTITUTIONAL ASPECTS OF THE
NATURALIZATION OF INEQUALITY**

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The socially non-excluding growth requires the implementation of comprehensive social policies that act not only in response to specific social cases and situations but in an integrated manner within society as a fundamental part of the development strategy. However, public responsibility and the expansion of social rights have been subject to criticism, grounded in the view that social policy is essentially compensatory and in the fiscal field is represented by the impact on commitment of a significant portion of the public budget. These criticisms also reflect a continued trust in the private sphere and individual effort as the main drivers of progress, arguments that, however, are considered limited and questionable.

The Welfare State has played a crucial role in reducing inequalities, serving as the primary means through which societies have sought to ensure a minimum level of resources distributed to most of their citizens. A contributing factor to the increase in inequality in recent decades has been the reduction of social protection in contrast to the rising social needs. Atkinson (2015, p. 242) concluded that "no advanced economy has achieved a low level of inequality and/or relative poverty with reduced social spending," regardless of the

country's positive performance in other dimensions. This reflects the recognition that development presupposes a significant role for the state, whether to ensure adequate levels of well-being or to maintain acceptable limits of social inequality, not confined solely to income issues.

Income inequality is just one facet of social inequality. From a broader perspective, however, the debate takes on a different hue. Poverty, for example, even when affecting only a portion of society, resonates broadly in the dynamics of social life. Inequality is both a political and economic idea, addressing aspects of the common and the just. Rosanvallon (2011) shows that inequality is experienced collectively. Far from impacting only the less privileged, it encompasses society as a whole and has widespread adverse effects.

In European countries, China, or Brazil, most of people perceive that they live in an unjust society but do not translate this belief into demands or political decisions capable of changing the situation. In this way, inequality seems to be implicitly tolerated; there is a pervasive sense that inequalities have grown "too much." However, this coexists with the tacit acceptance of various specific forms of inequality, accompanied by silent resistance to any practical measures to correct them. Generalized social discontent is associated with practical passivity in the face of non-existent social welfare policies.

This situation is referred to by Rosanvallon (2011) as the Bossuet Paradox, in reference to Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet, who said, " God laughs at men who complain of the consequences while cherishing the causes". Indeed, there is a comprehensive rejection of society in its current form while accepting the mechanisms that build and structure it. Although inequalities are repudiated, we recognize the systems that, in general, produce these inequalities. In his work, Rosanvallon (2011) presents various pathologies of equality, illustrating a constant tension between achieved forms of equality and resistance to the egalitarian idea.

Inequality also takes on a political dimension, as the Bossuet Paradox induces a sense of helplessness. Despite an increasing understanding of the nature of inequality, too little is done to take it over. Thus, in the face of a lamentable situation, passivity prevails. Due to our inability to understand our own political paralysis, anxiety fuels the search for scapegoats and propels us into the false illusion of the immutability of facts, leading to the naturalization of inequality.

It is in these aspects that the institutionalist approach of Veblen (2007) and Dugger (1989) under the concepts of "scapegoats" and " Enabling myths "

helps explain the Bossuet Paradox, brought by Rosanvallon (2011), concerning certain aspects that contribute to the naturalization of inequality. According to Veblen (2007), scapegoats are composed of ideas or practices that represent, to some extent, a threat to the continuity of the social status quo and therefore carry a negative connotation. Dominant social groups choose scapegoats to blame them for the issues of the economic system, the non-functioning of institutions, or social inequality. The scapegoats express some prejudgement historically rooted in society and is widely accepted for this reason. Enabling myths, on the other hand, are mechanisms of social control that allow stratified societies to keep lower social strata in their places without revolting against higher strata, sustaining the continuation of the domination of a superior social group over others (DUGGER, 1989).

Thus, this work aims to analyze three pathologies of equality presented by Rosavallon (2011): the industrial regime and necessary inequality, the individualism of universality, and constituent racism, in light of the institutionalist theory of Veblen and Dugger, contributing to the understanding of the naturalization of inequality.

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Palavras-chave: original institutionalist theory; inequality; scapegoating; emulation.