

## Are Ministerial Gates Closed? Party Politicization and Fractionalization in the Federal Political Bureaucracy (1999-2018)

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In this study, we explore novel data concerning party affiliations within ministries to characterize political-party appointments in high and mid-level bureaucracy from 1999 to 2018. We argue that party cleavages within these organizations hold significant importance. To scrutinize the variance among ministries, we propose an index of intra-ministerial party fractionalization. By emphasizing the distinction between party politicization and fractionalization as separate dimensions that vary significantly among ministries, our argument underscores the importance of intra-ministerial party cleavages in understanding government dynamics and the relationship between federal Executive power and Legislative branches. Furthermore, we contend that paying attention to political-party divides within each ministry has been an overlooked dimension in the analyses of governmental processes and Brazilian coalition presidentialism. Nevertheless, it stands as a pivotal factor for success in navigating relations with the Legislature and identifying hurdles to effective governance of federal public policies.

**Keywords:** Appointed positions; political appointments; patronage; coalition presidentialism; federal Executive.

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The distribution of political-party power within each presidential administration becomes apparent not only through the control of high-level decision-making offices within the bureaucracy, but also extends beyond mere position-holding. An essential aspect for comprehending the differences in the Executive's effectiveness in advancing its public policy agenda lies in how conflicts regarding control of these bureaucratic positions are managed.

In general, the appointment of ministers serves as a key indicator of party power within a government. This inference can be drawn from statements such as 'the PMDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement Party] controls the Ministry of Health', which broadly suggests that the party<sup>1</sup> will exert influence over offices, public policies, and budgetary resources within the ministry's jurisdiction. Our paper emphasizes the need to move beyond the mere assumption of ministerial control over portfolios. Instead, we explore facets of political power division within the Executive for a more nuanced analysis of the governmental process in Brazilian coalition presidentialism. We argue that the plurality of parties and the myriad responsibilities associated with different sub-ministerial agencies reflect a more intricate power division than what is typically captured by the conventional model used to analyze the proportionality – or coalescence – of ministries.

The coexistence of multiple parties in the upper-level bureaucratic echelons within the same ministerial portfolio should not be seen as an exception, but rather as the standard. This acknowledgment underscores the importance of reassessing and reframing the analytical terms used to understand strategies of party power division within the presidential cabinet. Additionally, considering the potential implications of multipartyism at sub-ministerial levels is crucial for understanding two essential dimensions in the study of the governmental process. Firstly, the interaction patterns between the Legislative and Executive branches, as well as the Executive's success rate in legislative proceedings, as analyzed by Bersch, Lopez and Taylor (2022). Secondly, governmental coordination amidst the multiplicity of parties holding decision-making positions within federal government bodies. To this end, we examined the presence of political party members in Senior Management and Advisory (DAS) offices in both the mid-level bureaucratic hierarchy (DAS 01 to 04) and top-level

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<sup>1</sup>Identifying precisely which individuals within the party demands a distinct analytical approach.

bureaucracy (DAS 05 and 06) using original data compiled from the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) and the records of the Integrated Personnel Administration System (SIAPE). Based on recommendations from analyses conducted by Lopez and Praça (2015; 2015a) and Cavalcante and Lotta (2015) regarding the characteristics of each bureaucratic management level and their relationship with the political, party, and administrative spheres, we categorized the positions into two groups. Essentially, both studies identify a qualitative shift starting from DAS-5; the political importance and administrative authority of positions at this level and beyond make them central in political bargaining. Grouping serves as a tool for analytical conciseness, considering the limited space of this paper, which does not permit exploration of each level separately. We examined the period from the second term of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) administration to the end of the Temer administration, encompassing the timeframe for which we have available data.

In the next section, we delve into a segment of the literature focused on the distribution of party power within the Executive. Section 03 details our methodology for constructing the data on party members. Transitioning to Section 04, we offer a longitudinal description of the data on party members, categorized by ministry, in the middle and high bureaucratic echelons. Section 05 introduces and discusses party fragmentation within ministries, while Section 06 analyzes the key implications of the presented data and proposes an agenda for future research. Finally, our concluding remarks encapsulate a summary of our argument.

### **Coalition management and power division in the federal executive**

The literature on presidential appointments to bureaucratic offices has primarily focused on the process of partisan – and nonpartisan – appointments for ministerial offices, including the calculations, bargaining games involved, and the implications of the cabinet profile for the government’s success in the legislative arena (ALMEIDA, 2018; AMORIM NETO, 2019; BERTHOLINI and PEREIRA, 2017). While much of this literature centers on ministerial appointments, a portion of the international literature acknowledges, that managing coalitions in multi-party presidential systems is a more intricate process. Compared to less fragmented coalition governments, such as those in European parliamentary systems (ABRANCHES, 2018; LAVER and SCHOFIELD, 1998; LAVER and SHEPSLE, 1996;

MÜLLER and STROM, 2003), or in some multiparty presidential systems (BERSCH, LOPEZ, and TAYLOR, 2022; CHAISTY, CHEESEMAN, and POWER, 2018)

In Brazil, Abranches (1988) identified, during the early stages of the re-democratization process, the array of tools at the president's disposal to tackle the 'Brazilian institutional dilemma' of governing within a presidential, federal, bicameral, multi-party system with proportional representation. He recognized that the most daunting challenge was integrating cleavages of interests into ministerial representation to address the manifold demands arising from political fragmentation, partly as a result of social fragmentation itself.

Over a decade later, in an article that would become paramount to this debate, Amorim Neto (2000; 2019) proposed, from a different angle, that a more proportional division of ministries in relation to the size of the parties within the coalition would increase the support of these parties for the presidential agenda (ALMEIDA, 2018; AMORIM NETO, 2000). Bertholini and Pereira (2017) employed equity in the distribution of ministerial portfolios as a measure to assess the costs of governance and evaluate the proficiency of presidents in 'coalition management'. In fact, appointing party-affiliated ministers is one of the primary tools at the disposal of the Brazilian president for governing with legislative majorities (RAILE, PEREIRA, and POWER, 2011).

Subsequent research agendas have redirected their focus towards comprehending the internal dynamics of the Executive branch itself. This approach prioritizes identifying the relative political weight of each ministry in shaping public policies and its impact on bargaining calculations for government formation and management (GAYLORD and RENNÓ, 2015; SILVA, 2018, 2014). Further ramifications within this research agenda have highlighted the existence of distinct ministerial clusters (PALOTTI, 2017), the relative political weight of each portfolio in calculating parliamentary support for the president (ZUCCO, SILVA, and POWER, 2019), and the characteristics of the decision-making process amidst the plurality of parties, ministries, and agents with veto power within the Executive (GOMIDE and CAVALCANTE, 2019). Research into the power division within the Executive has also resulted in descriptions of the characteristics and profiles of the decision-making bureaucracy and the nature of public policies under the jurisdiction of each ministry (D'ARAÚJO, 2018; 2010; SILVA and LOPEZ, 2021).

Recent empirical advancements have uncovered clusters of sub-ministerial bodies characterized by varying profiles in the management and career bureaucracy, highlighting differences in capabilities, decision-making autonomy, and the extent of party dominance (BERSCH, PRAÇA, and TAYLOR, 2017). By shifting the focus from ministries to the sub-ministerial level, these scholars have revealed a spectrum of variations among these agencies, ranging from pockets of excellence with structured careers and non-politicized to sectors lacking their own careers and highly politicized.

Our article contributes to this body of literature by analyzing appointments of party members to positions in the federal upper and middle-level bureaucracies, spanning ministries and associated agencies, using longitudinal data covering twenty years. Indirectly, we aim to contribute to the discussion on how the division of sub-ministerial power and in the top-level appointed positions inform strategies of power division within the Executive amidst a fragmented legislature with dozens of parties, as well as myriad thematic, regional, or state-based caucuses and party factions.

There are two additional motivations for analyzing the appointments of party members to the decision-making bureaucracy. Firstly, creating a comparative dashboard of appointments allows us to determine whether the political-party leadership of a given ministerial portfolio monopolizes access to positions of power within the ministry and, metaphorically speaking, keeps the 'gate closed'. This allows us to refine and fine-tune analytical measures from the literature that equate the partisan power in the Executive to the number of ministerial portfolios controlled by each of the ruling coalition parties.

Most ministries have a complex administrative structure, which includes agencies such as autarchies, foundations, secretariats, and superintendencies. Some agencies within ministries often wield power and size comparable to ministries themselves, with enough influence to accommodate party factions (KÖLLNER and BASEDAU, 2005; SCHMIDT et al., 1977) or entire thematic and regional caucuses. Ultimately, the extent of party power-sharing at the sub-ministerial level largely determines party support for the presidential agenda in the legislature. This hypothesis, validated in the empirical analysis by Bersch, Lopez and Taylor (2022), is even more plausible given that the number of political parties typically exceeds the number of ministries. In such a scenario, it is reasonable for smaller or less

legislatively influential parties or groups to occupy fractions of a ministry without necessarily holding the ministerial chair.

The second motivation pertains to how party appointments<sup>2</sup> – i.e. the appointment of party members – helps us understand the profile of public policies proposed in Congress and their implementation across Brazil. An illustrative example of these differences can be seen in the number of party members from the Workers' Party (PT) during the Lula and Dilma administrations in the ministry representing family farming. The Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) – compared to a significantly larger representation of the PMDB in the ministry associated with agribusiness – the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA). In this case, the two parties effectively sought to “solidify the unity of their opposites” (VIANNA, 2009) in agrarian policies.

The following sections suggest a complexity unique to the case of Brazil with far-reaching implications for understanding coalition politics<sup>3</sup>. After presenting the data construction process and methodology, we analyze: 01. party politicization by ministry; 02. party fractionalization within each ministry; and 03. variations in fractionalization over time and its relationship with party fragmentation.

## Data and methodology

The construction of our database followed the model used by Lopez and Silva (2019) due to limitations in the SIAPE data, particularly the absence of information regarding voter registration numbers before 2014. The primary data sources were the SIAPE and the list of party members from the TSE website<sup>4</sup>. From 2014 to 2018, we combined the databases by using a common key: the voter registration number of those appointed to DAS positions.

However, this variable is not available for the period before 2014. The solution was to merge the databases using the names and states of origin of the officeholders

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<sup>2</sup>We have adopted a narrow definition of party appointments: these refer to appointments of individuals affiliated with political parties. This restriction aims to distinguish politically motivated appointments – based on ideological affinity, material interests, patronage, etc — that may not necessarily include party members.

<sup>3</sup>More detailed analyses of national or subnational cases have the advantage of identifying dimensions that empirical analyses comparing national cases do not capture, as they rely on highly aggregated indicators.

<sup>4</sup>To simplify data access and compilation, we utilized the electionsBR package, available for the R software.

and party members as references, along with names identified between 2014 and 2018 to resolve homonyms registered up to 2013. Whenever we found a match between a homonymous party member and the state where the position was held, we considered them as party members. Otherwise, we did not<sup>5</sup>.

Our methodological approach procedure adopted from 1999 to 2013 satisfactorily addressed the issue of homonyms among party members in the TSE database, to whom we could have wrongly attributed party affiliation status, thus indiscriminately inflating the number of individuals associated with political parties. When comparing the two periods, the affiliation rate was similar: 12.9% in the first time interval and 11.8% in the second. Additionally, we implemented temporal controls<sup>6</sup> to exclude cases where the dates of affiliation preceded appointment to office, as well as party membership records outside the 'regular' status, meaning those that were canceled, disaffiliated, or under judicial review. The data on appointees extracted from the SIAPE refer to December of each year.

Using data on the duration of presidential cabinets, ministerial mandates and political parties of the ministers<sup>7</sup>, as well as the length of ministries, we associated the data on party members in the bureaucracy with the information on ministerial cabinets and mandates. In the next section, we will present some of this data before delving into the analysis of party diversity within each ministry.

### **Party membership in the middle and upper ministerial bureaucracy**

Ministries differ significantly in their administrative and organizational structures, available budgets, policy jurisdictions, and the composition of their career staff. However, these differences do not prevent them from forming groups with similar characteristics (SILVA, 2014; SILVA and LOPEZ, 2021). Smaller ministries may have larger discretionary budgets, while larger ministries may encompass affiliated agencies that are politically attractive in their own right. Such is

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<sup>5</sup>The database containing party members before 2014 includes a total of 26% homonymous cases. However, this problem is significantly mitigated when we merge the database of party members with the DAS employee database, considering only those who share both the same name and the same location of assignment. Through this data combination, the total of homonymous cases drops to 5.3%.

<sup>6</sup>The TSE registers and provides information on the party affiliations and disaffiliations of individuals over time.

<sup>7</sup>Data collected, organized, and made available by political scientist Acir Almeida (2020), to whom we extend our gratitude.

the case of sectors within larger ministries, such as the National Education Development Fund (FNDE/MEC), with annual budgets reaching tens of billions of reais, or FUNASA, responsible for investing in sanitation projects in municipalities, and which concentrates a significant volume of legal agreements with municipalities, many of which funded by parliamentary amendments. These characteristics undoubtedly influence the extent of party politicization within these agencies.

Internal factors may also influence party heterogeneity among ministries, such as more structured career paths with larger staff numbers, as observed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance. These characteristics often translate into formal or informal norms favoring career members in appointed positions. Consequently, differences in the party politicization of agencies arise not only from the party sphere but also from these internal factors. Moreover, the substantial number of career personnel within these agencies broadens the pool of available individuals and, consequently, the spectrum of ideological preferences accessible for political leaders to recruit individuals aligned with their preferences (even without formal party affiliation). In other words, the internal supply of personnel influences the likelihood of recruiting individuals from within the agencies themselves.

The nature of public policy jurisdictions and the logistics of their implementation also play a role in party politicization. Ministerial jurisdictions delineate themes with elective affinities within certain ideological spectrums or parties, while Brazil's highly fragmented party system and political landscape broadly shape the internal logic of appointments within the Executive (MOE, 1989). For instance, we can revisit the earlier example of the relationship between the PT and agrarian (and social) policies, which is reflected in the proportion of Workers' Party members within the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA).

The nature of policies is compounded by the volume of budgetary resources. Ministries with larger discretionary budgets or regionally allocated resources, such as the Ministry of Cities (MCID), Ministry of National Integration (MIN), and Ministry of Labor (MTB), tend to party appointees due to their connection with policies implemented in their constituencies (SILVA and LOPEZ, 2021).

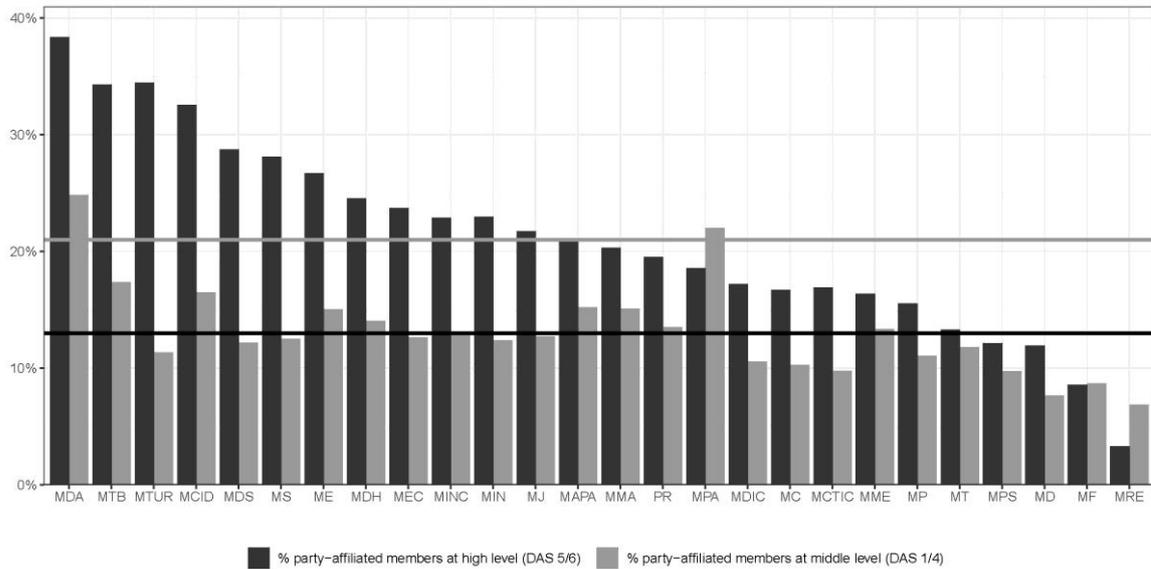
In summary, ministries exhibit heterogeneity in the policies they implement, the size of their administrative structures, the frequency with which they formulate

legislative proposals from the Executive (SILVA, 2014), the total and discretionary budget available, and the profile of interest groups (many of them directly connected with specific parties) that exert pressure on them. The question arises: to what extent does the heterogeneity in these dimensions also translate into varying degrees of party politicization?

While the total universe of appointees to DAS offices averages 13% of party members, the percentage varies significantly across ministries and the hierarchy of the office. In mid-level DAS positions (levels 01 to 04), the annual average of party members ranges from a minimum of 07%, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE), to a maximum of 25%, in the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA). The four ministries with the highest number of party members, alongside the MDA, are the ministries of Fishing and Aquaculture, Labor, Cities, and Agriculture. Conversely, ministries such as Science and Technology, Social Security, Finance, Foreign Affairs, and Defense have up to 10% of party appointees in their ranks. Notably, the MDA reached 32% of party members between 2012 and 2015.

On the other hand, the average percentage of party members in high-level positions (DAS 05 and 06) predictably rises to 21%. However, we also find considerable variations, ranging from a minimum of 03% in offices in the MRE, which traditionally adhere to their own endogenous rules and internal criteria for career advancement, to a maximum of 38% in the MDA. Additionally, the Ministries of Labor, Tourism, and Social Development also show a higher number of party members among DAS 05 and 06 positions, contrary to what we find in mid-level positions for the latter two ministries (see Graph 01). The average percentage of party members at 13% in DAS offices initially suggests low party politicization of these offices, especially considering that the percentage of party members in the general Brazilian population is not significantly lower. However, the rise in the percentage to nearly 30% among DAS level 06 positions suggests a growing political and party representation among top-level officeholders. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the presence of party members serves as an approximation of a broader politicization phenomenon. This includes appointments based on political-party criteria that do not necessarily imply formal party affiliation. Moreover, the uneven distribution of party members across the analyzed ministries suggests the existence of a political-party bias in the appointment process.

**Graph 01.** Total and average number of party members in the middle and top levels bureaucracy, by Ministry (1999-2018) (In %)



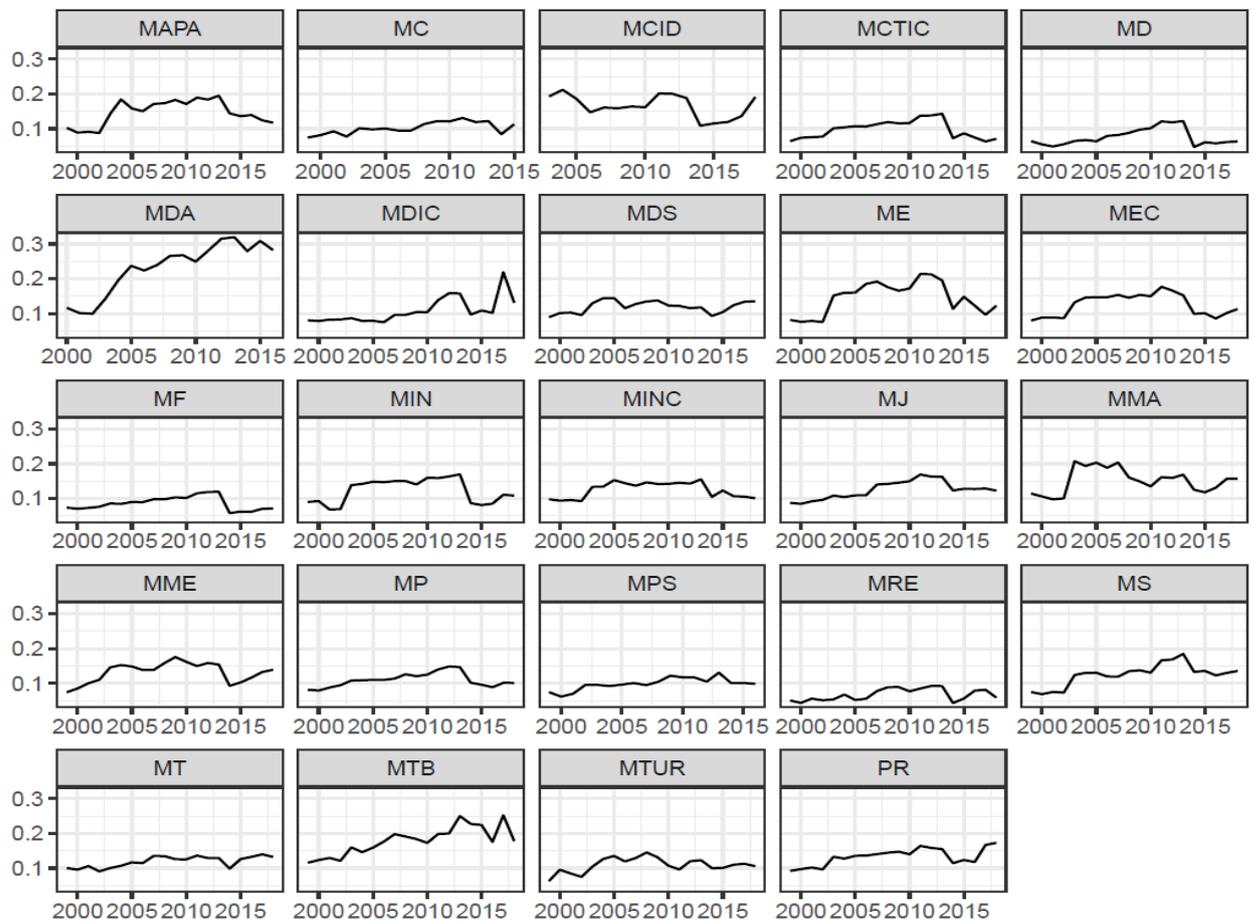
Note: The gray horizontal line indicates the average number of members at the high level, while the horizontal black line represents the average number of members at the middle level.

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

Note: Ministry of Communications (MC); Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTIC); Ministry of Defense (MD); Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade (MDIC); Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Ministry of Sports (ME); Ministry of Finance (MF); Ministry of Culture (MinC); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Ministry of the Environment (MMA); Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME); Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management (MP); Ministry of Social Security (MPS); and Ministry of Tourism (MTUR), Ministry of Fishing and Aquaculture (MPA); Presidency of the Republic (PR).

In addition to the variation within ministries, the data also reveals a notable increase in the number and proportion of party members since the PT administrations in 2003. This phenomenon may be attributed to the PT’s organizational structure as a more organic party, with a greater pool of cadres available for management offices. Furthermore, the party is structured into major factions – or ‘partisan tendencies’, as they refer to themselves – which fiercely compete for positions within the federal Executive.

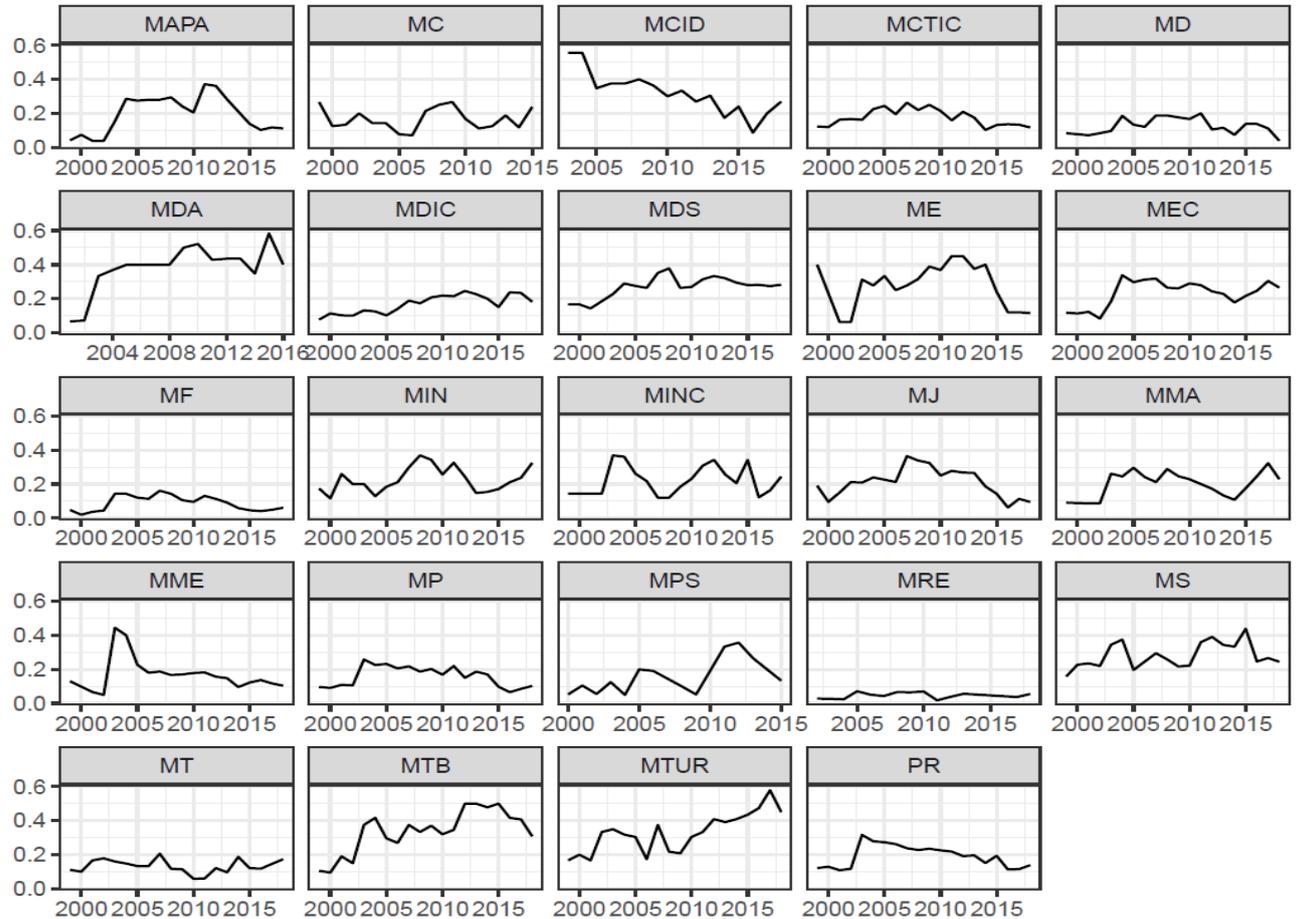
Graphs 02 and 03 display the annual rates of party membership in middle and upper-level positions, categorized by ministry. In both graphs, the rise in the proportion of party members occurred primarily in the ministries of Agrarian Development, Social Security, Mines and Energy, Social Development, and Agriculture and Livestock. Conversely, the Ministry of Cities (MCID) and the Ministry of Environment (MMA) experienced a decline in the percentage of party members.

**Graph 02.** Party members in mid-level DAS positions, by ministry (levels 01 to 04)

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

Note: CAPTION: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA); Ministry of Communications (MC); Ministry of Cities (MCID); Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTIC); Ministry of Defense (MD); Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA); Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade (MDIC); Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Ministry of Sports (ME); Ministry of Education (MEC); Ministry of Finance (MF); Ministry of National Integration (MIN); Ministry of Culture (MinC); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Ministry of the Environment (MMA); Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME); Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management (MP); Ministry of Social Security (MPS); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE); Ministry of Health (MS); Ministry of Transport (MT); Ministry of Labor (MTB); Ministry of Tourism (MTUR); and Presidency of the Republic (PR).

Nevertheless, the average number of party members varies between groups of ministries with similar profiles, as highlighted by Batista da Silva and Lopez (2021). The authors identified sectoral groupings of ministerial portfolios based on the nature of the policies under their jurisdiction, the characteristics of budgetary actions and programs, and the centrality of the ministries in policy formulation. The typology, inspired by Lowi (1964), categorizes ministries into five groups: coordination, social policies, income distribution, regulation, and ministries serving as political patronage. Some of the variations in politicization result from the distinct policy profiles of each ministry.

**Graph 03.** Party members in top-level DAS positions, by ministry (levels 05 and 06)

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

Note: Caption: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA); Ministry of Communications MC); Ministry of Cities (MCID); Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTIC); Ministry of Defense (MD); Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA); Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade (MDIC); Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Ministry of Sports (ME); Ministry of Education (MEC); Ministry of Finance (MF); Ministry of National Integration (MIN); Ministry of Culture (MinC); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Ministry of the Environment (MMA); Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME); Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management (MP); Ministry of Social Security (MPS); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE); Ministry of Health (MS); Ministry of Transport (MT); Ministry of Labor (MTB); Ministry of Tourism (MTUR); and Presidency of the Republic (PR).

Indeed, coordination ministries, such as Finance and Planning, typically show lower levels of party politicization. Conversely, patronage ministries, such as Tourism and Sports, tend to be more susceptible to clientelism, leading to a higher proportion of party members in their ranks. According to the model proposed by Miller (2000), these variations may result from factors external to the ministries, and in the case of the Ministry of Finance (MF), greater bureaucratization and bureaucratic autonomy

may serve as a means to address commitment problems. Further empirical case-centered analyses are necessary to provide answers to such questions.

The party politicization of DAS offices increased during the PT administrations, but not solely due to the inclusion of members from Lula and Dilma's political party. Other parties, particularly those affiliated with the governing coalition, also contributed with their members to the composition of the federal bureaucracy. In the following sections, we will analyze the level of intra-ministerial homogeneity in each ministry.

### Intra-ministerial party fractionalization

Multi-party coalitions are an essential component in Brazilian presidentialism. However, the negotiation process for appointing management and leadership positions within each ministry, as well as the level of party heterogeneity and the number of parties involved, remains unclear. To analyze the level of party fragmentation within ministries, we employed the Golosov fractionalization measure (2010), which is well-suited for multi-party systems and widely used in the Brazilian literature (BERTHOLINI, PEREIRA, and RENNÓ JR., 2018; COELHO, CAVALCANTE, and TURGEON, 2016). Formally, we have:

$$IG = \sum_1^x \frac{1}{1 + (s_1^2/s_i) - s_i}$$

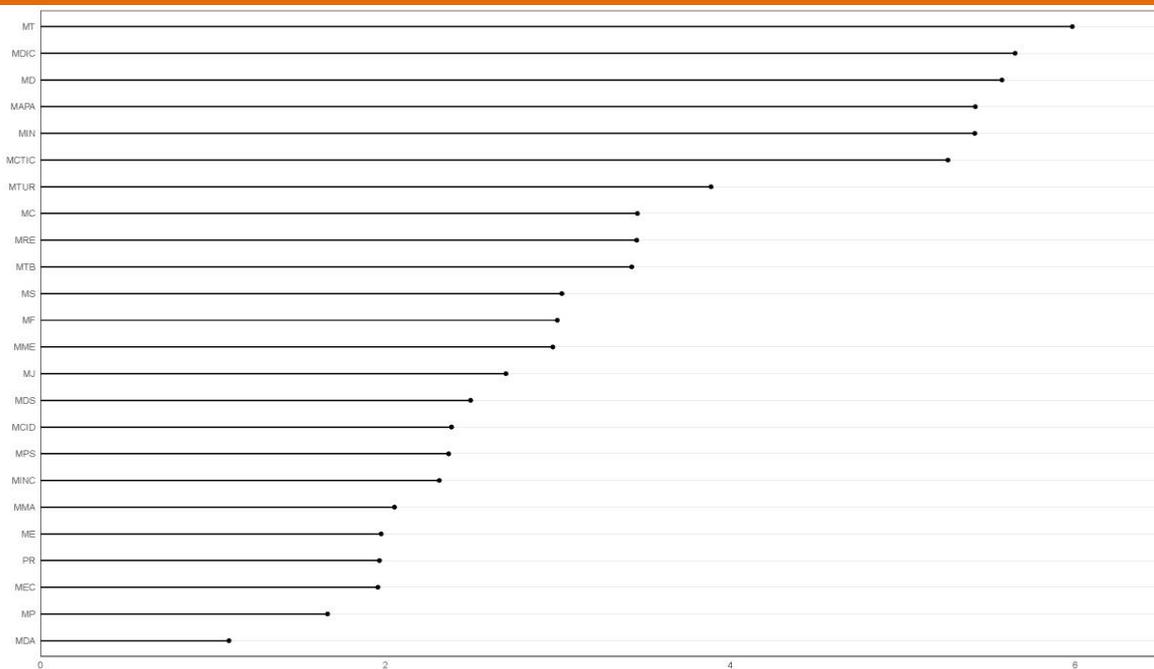
Where  $s$  represents the proportion of DAS positions occupied by a party within the total number of party members. The Golosov index (2010) corrects distortions in the measurement method proposed by Laakso and Taagepera (1979), which can arise from extreme cases, particularly prevalent in coalition regimes characterized by high party fragmentation.

When comparing party fractionalization (Graph 04) in the sub-ministerial power division at the upper echelon, where there is a higher degree of party politicization in the bureaucracy, we find appointments from a more diverse range of parties in each ministry. Although this power division and its implications are not typically discussed in the specialized literature, they play a significant role in the political calculations of legislators, parties, and the Presidency

when defining government coalition strategies and monitoring legislative support for the president.

Graph 04 reveals a significant variation in the degree of fractionalization across ministries. The MT, MDIC, MD, MAPA, and MIN are the ministries with the highest fractionalization, each with more than 05 parties represented. Conversely, the ME, Presidency, MEC, MP, and MDA, exhibit the lowest fractionalization, each with less than 02 parties represented.

**Graph 04.** Average party fractionalization in the top-level bureaucracy, by ministry (1999-2018)



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

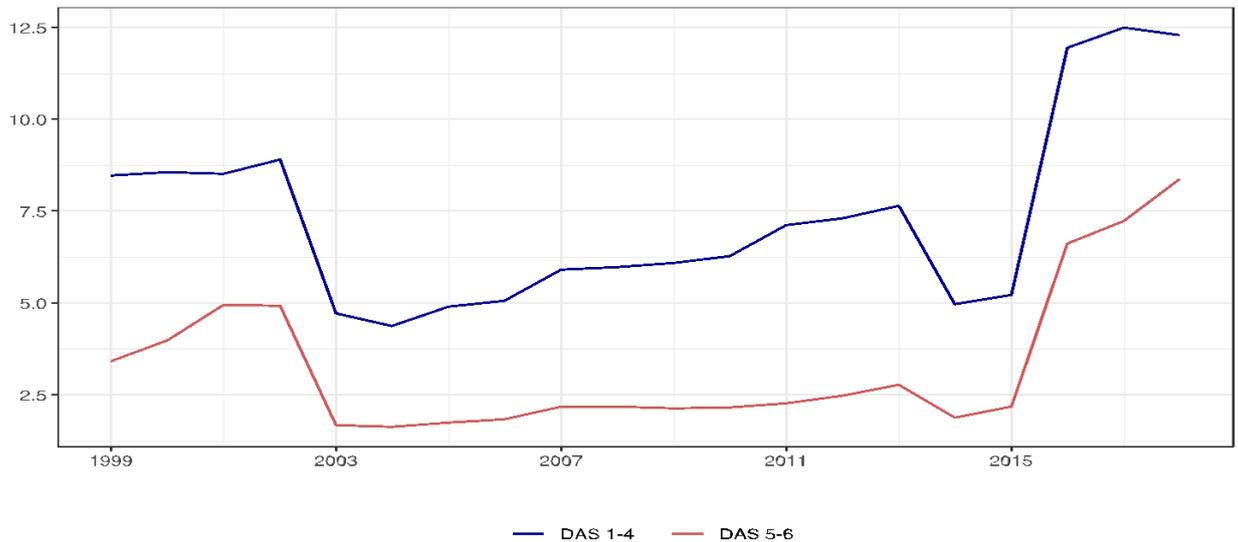
Note: Caption: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA); Ministry of Communications MC); Ministry of Cities (MCID); Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTIC); Ministry of Defense (MD); Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA); Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade (MDIC); Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Ministry of Sports (ME); Ministry of Education (MEC); Ministry of Finance (MF); Ministry of National Integration (MIN); Ministry of Culture (MinC); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Ministry of the Environment (MMA); Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME); Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management (MP); Ministry of Social Security (MPS); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE); Ministry of Health (MS); Ministry of Transport (MT); Ministry of Labor (MTB); Ministry of Tourism (MTUR); and Presidency of the Republic (PR).

Fractionalization varies over time, suggesting that the profiles of those recruited for the top-tier bureaucracy adapt to the contextual political landscape and power dynamics within each government coalition. In certain ministries, such as the Ministry of Cities (MCID), fractionalization started high but later declined; meanwhile,

in the Ministry of Sports, it began low, rose, and then fell again. Conversely, in the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA), fractionalization started low but eventually reached relatively high levels.

Party fractionalization is higher in the middle tier, where variation over time is also lower (Graph 05). In the top tier, two important aspects stand out. Firstly, there is lower average fractionalization among DAS 05 and 06 positions (3.3 compared to 7.34 in levels 01 to 04). Party diversity is lower in higher echelons because there are fewer available positions overall, and especially because there is greater party control over access to these positions. In other words, the party-political filter is more stringent for positions that hold greater political-administrative power (LOPEZ, 2015). Hence, it is not surprising that the average turnover rate for top-tier positions within a six-month period is significantly higher than the average found in the middle tier (LOPEZ and GUEDES, 2022), as competition among parties for control of these positions intensifies at the highest level, and political changes have a direct impact on this segment of the bureaucracy<sup>8</sup>. The second aspect concerns the increased concentration of party members in top-tier positions shortly after the beginning of the PT administration.

**Graph 05.** Annual party fractionalization in the middle and top levels (1999-2018)

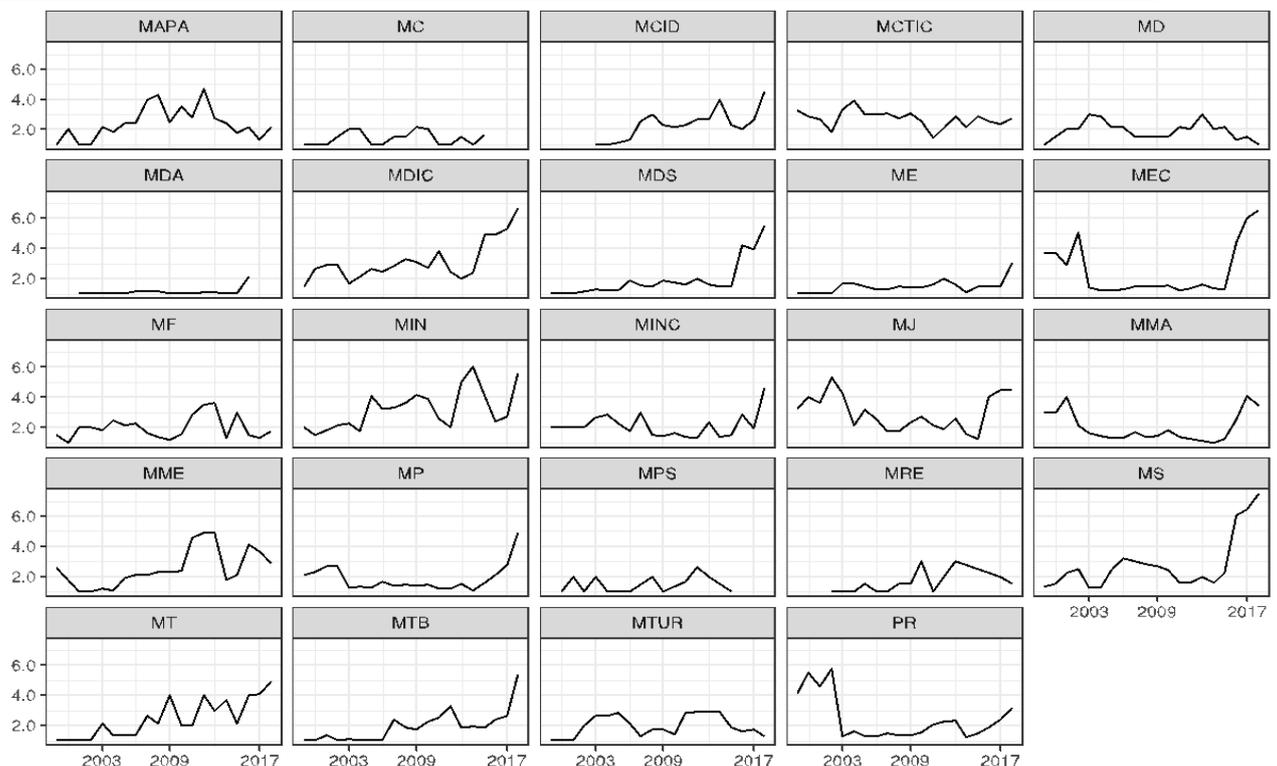


Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

<sup>8</sup>The data show a clear relationship between turnover and the hierarchical level of the position. Consequently, turnover is higher in level 02 compared to level 01, and this trend continues up to level 06, which is the highest among DAS positions.

As depicted in Graph 06, party fractionalization exhibited a pattern of initial highs followed by declines in some ministries, such as the Ministry of Justice (MJ) and the Presidency. Conversely, in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA), party fractionalization began at a low level, increased, and then decreased again. The Ministry of Health (MS), Ministry of Transportation (MT), and Ministry of Labor (MTB) initially demonstrated low party fractionalization but subsequently experienced comparatively high levels. This variation suggests instability within the ministries. However, a comprehensive explanation of these trends falls beyond the scope of this article and warrants further analysis with more detailed data.

**Graph 06.** Annual intra-ministerial party fractionalization in the top level, by ministry (1999-2018)



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

Note: Caption: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA); Ministry of Communications MC); Ministry of Cities (MCID); Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTIC); Ministry of Defense (MD); Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA); Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade (MDIC); Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Ministry of Sports (ME); Ministry of Education (MEC); Ministry of Finance (MF); Ministry of National Integration (MIN); Ministry of Culture (MinC); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Ministry of the Environment (MMA); Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME); Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management (MP); Ministry of Social Security (MPS); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE); Ministry of Health (MS); Ministry of Transport (MT); Ministry of Labor (MTB); Ministry of Tourism (MTUR); and Presidency of the Republic (PR).

Consider the following data: upon assuming the presidency in 2003, the PT had a coalition of 92 parliamentarians in the Chamber of Deputies – Brazil's lower house of the National Congress –, which accounted for 37% of the total government coalition in the legislature. However, they appointed 15 out of 28 ministers, accounting for 54% of the cabinet (ALMEIDA, 2020). Ten years later, in 2013, the party coalition comprised 88 parliamentarians, representing 24% of the legislative coalition, and controlled 47% (n = 15) of the ministries.

However, we observe an increase in intra-ministerial power division starting from 2005, propelled by the inclusion of new party factions linked to the 'mensalão' scandal<sup>9</sup> and the rise in the number of effective parties in the Chamber of Deputies in subsequent periods (ZUCCO and POWER, 2021). From 2004 to 2010, the final year of the Lula administration, intra-ministerial fractionalization surged by 25%. With the conclusion of the PT cycle in 2016, party fractionalization in the top tier sharply escalated, even surpassing levels recorded during the second term of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (Brazilian Social Democracy Party – PSDB) (Graph 05). What we find in this scenario is a redistribution of power within the administrative coalition among the new political parties forming the political-parliamentary base of the Temer administration<sup>10</sup>. The PMDB held 19% (n = 68) of coalition parliamentarians and 30% (n = 07) of ministers, which decreased to twenty in total following reforms in the Federal administrative structure. Additionally, alongside this top-level rearrangement, there was a broader distribution of positions within the administrative coalition, as indicated by the index used. These two changes were more prevalent in this case than at the ministerial level. Consequently, there are three distinct levels of analysis that do not necessarily overlap: the parties in the cabinet, the parties of the ministers, and the parties in the administrative coalition. At this third level, ministries can be understood from a new perspective.

How can we categorize each ministry based on the combination of the number of parties in the governing bureaucracy and the number of party-affiliated appointees?

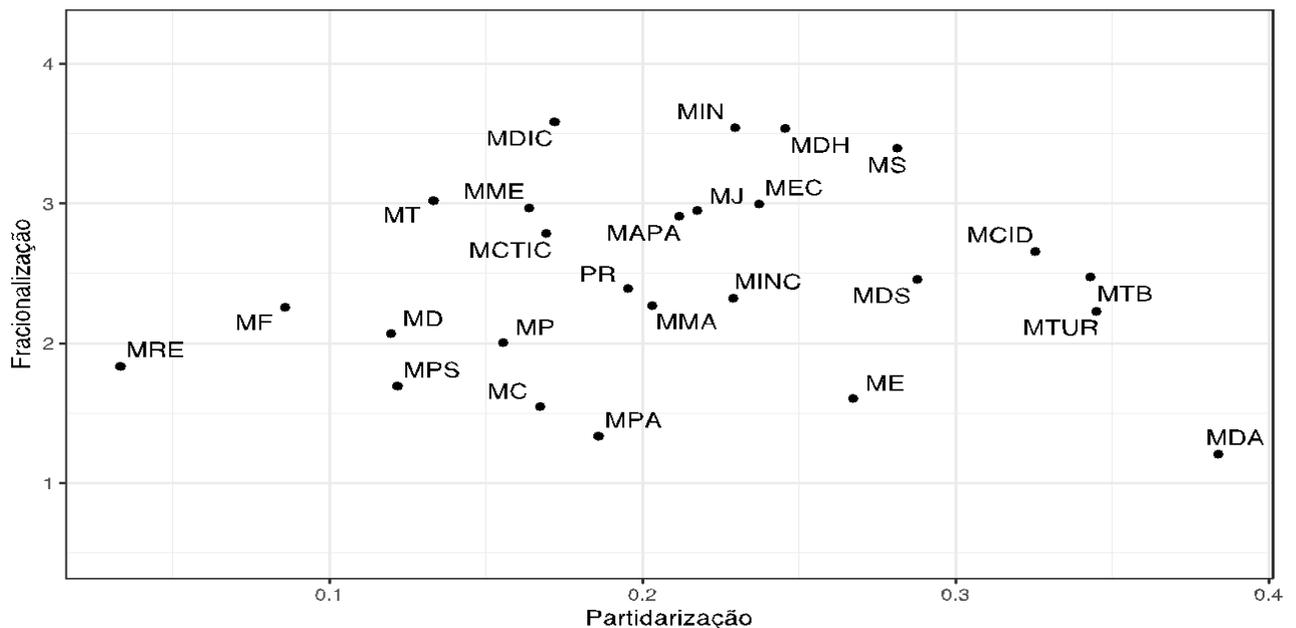
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<sup>9</sup>The 'Mensalão' scandal was a major corruption case that occurred in Brazil in the early 2000s. 'Mensalão' loosely translates to 'big monthly payment' in Portuguese. The scandal came to light in 2005 and involved allegations that members of the ruling Workers' Party (PT) had paid monthly bribes to members of the Brazilian Congress in exchange for their support on key legislative votes.

<sup>10</sup>The starting cabinet in 2016 included the PMDB, PSDB, Democrats (DEM), PP, PR, Social Democratic Party (PSD), PTB, PRB, PSB, and PPS. The parliamentary base comprised these same parties, as well as with the Solidarity Party.

One approach is to examine the percentage of party members in the top-level bureaucracy and the number of parties represented within the same ministry. Graph 07 illustrates this relationship on a Cartesian plane, showing the dispersion between fractionalization and levels of party politicization. The graph shows Finance and Foreign Affairs as less politicized ministries, contrasted with Cities, Tourism, Labor, and Agrarian Development, which emerge as the most politicized. On the fractionalization axis, ministries such as National Integration, Health, and MDIC are positioned in the upper quadrants, indicating higher fractionalization. Conversely, despite having a high percentage of party members among high-level bureaucrats, Agrarian Development stands out among ministries with lower fractionalization due to the dominance of a single party within the ministry: the Worker's Party.

**Graph 07.** Average levels of fractionalization and party politicization in ministries (1999-2018)



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on SIAPE and TSE.

Note: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA); Ministry of Communications MC); Ministry of Cities (MCID); Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation (MCTIC); Ministry of Defense (MD); Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA); Ministry of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade (MDIC); Ministry of Social Development (MDS); Ministry of Sports (ME); Ministry of Education (MEC); Ministry of Finance (MF); Ministry of National Integration (MIN); Ministry of Culture (MinC); Ministry of Justice (MJ); Ministry of the Environment (MMA); Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME); Ministry of Planning, Budget, and Management (MP); Ministry of Social Security (MPS); Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MRE); Ministry of Health (MS); Ministry of Transport (MT); Ministry of Labor (MTB); Ministry of Tourism (MTUR); and Presidency of the Republic (PR).

We may further analyze four examples representing typical situations: high party representation and high fractionalization (MIN), high party representation and low fractionalization (MDA), low party politicization and medium fractionalization (MF), as well as internal fractionalizations within sub-ministerial bodies.

The Ministry of National Integration (MIN) primarily focuses on regional development policies, with many of its programs involving actions within various territories, often encompassing infrastructure projects. Due to its emphasis on infrastructure development and regional initiatives, along with its broad territorial scope, the ministry holds significant importance for political control of regional party coalitions. Consequently, the MIN is more likely to evolve into a multi-party power configuration compared to other ministries.

The MIN has consistently shown the highest average party fractionalization since its inception in 1999. Despite maintaining party stability at the ministerial level, with a clear predominance of the PMDB, the number of parties – including those outside the coalition – represented in the top echelon of the ministry varied from two (PMDB and PSDB) in 1999 to eight (DEM, PMDB, PDT, PP, PPS, Pros, PSC, and PSDB) in 2018. These parties were distributed within the ministry itself, as well as in the DNOCS, SUDAM, SUDECO, and SUDENE agencies. While the minister's party typically assumes a leading role with the most positions, it seldom holds the majority of party members in the top echelon. In 2011, the PSB assumed control of the ministry, accounting for six out of thirteen party members in the top echelon. The remaining seven positions were distributed among the Democrats, PSDB (both outside the coalition), PT, and PMDB. By 2018, with the PMDB in the presidential office and a more diverse coalition in Congress, the MIN came under PMDB leadership, particularly the party faction from the state of Pará. In addition to the minister, the top echelon included three PMDB members, six members from three coalition parties, and three others from opposition parties.

Considering that the Ministry of Agrarian Development (MDA) has historically focused on defining agrarian policies, supporting family farming, and facilitating land regularization throughout the country, with principles of associativism and cooperativism guiding its programs, the ministry has been closely linked with policies traditionally aligned with left-wing parties. Established in 1999, the MDA significantly expanded its administrative structure during the early years of the PT administration in 2003, until its incorporation into another

ministry in 2016. Throughout this period, it consistently maintained one of the highest rates of party politicization in the top echelon. Unlike the Ministry of National Integration, the MDA primarily represented a single party, perhaps because family farming and agrarian reform were flagship policies under its jurisdiction and important topics on the PT's agenda. From 2003 to 2015, until its structure was incorporated in 2016, the MDA was led by ministers with organic ties to the PT<sup>11</sup>. Party members in the top tier were almost entirely from this party, except for a modest participation of the PDT and PSB. In 2015, all fourteen top-tier party members were affiliated with the PT. In 2016, with the new presidential power coalition, the list of members fragmented across three parties (Graph 07).

The Ministry of Finance (MF) – alongside the Ministry of Planning and the Chief of Staff/Presidency – reigns supreme among the ministries, both due to its control over the “treasury of good fortune and the power of misfortune” (LEAL, 1986, p. 43), as well as its institutionalization of an overarching career bureaucracy that extends into appointed positions. As one of the largest ministries in the government, typically falling under the practical jurisdiction of the president, it has seen some of the longest-serving ministers, nearly all of whom economists. In contrast to the Ministry of National Integration and the Ministry of Agrarian Development, the proportion of party-affiliated members in the top tier is significantly lower: over the twenty-year period analyzed, more than 91% of positions were filled by non-party members. Looking at a three-year span from our dataset, we observe the following trends: in 1999, there was representation from one coalition party and one from the opposition, totaling three positions, while sixty positions had no party-affiliated appointees. By 2006, there were three coalition parties (five positions) and one party from the opposition (one position), along with 47 appointees without formal party affiliation. Moving to 2018, we find two parties from the ruling coalition (four positions) and one from the opposition party (one position), alongside 77 other appointees without party affiliation.

A fourth example illustrates the potential fragmentation within sub-ministerial bodies: the National Supply Company (CONAB), which operates under the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Supply (MAPA). The CONAB plays a

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<sup>11</sup>Namely: Miguel Rossetto, Guilherme Cassel, Afonso Florence, Pepe Vargas, and Patrus Ananias.

pivotal role in national supply policies, storage, and stabilizing food prices, regulating both food stocks and measures to mitigate fluctuations in food prices. It holds significant importance in a country where the agricultural sector is vital to the national economy. The ministry to which the CONAB falls under – MAPA – exemplifies another instance of high presence of party members and high fractionalization. One reason for this is the ministry's longstanding ties with the Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (PMDB), around which other parties gravitate and occasionally secure representation. Additionally, the presence of regional superintendencies distributed across the territory fosters power-sharing among state or regional party coalitions. The CONAB serves as an illustrative example of how sub-ministerial agencies dispersed across territories navigate party arrangements, shedding light on the dynamics between the micropolitics of bureaucratic power spaces and the game of parliamentary support and adherence to the government.

As we have pointed out, the closer proximity of the top-tier ministerial bureaucracy to politically charged decisions render this segment more coveted by politicians and parties. This also results in less openness to a diversity of parties and greater homogeneity, given the predominance of coalition-bound parties. Furthermore, political control over party access is less strict in the middle tier. This disparity between the top and middle tiers is illustrated by the following data: when considering only the minister's party – during their terms – the average of same-party members is 44% and 21% in the top and middle tiers, respectively. The highest percentage of same-party members in the top tier is 92%, observed in the MDA, while the lowest is 07%, found in the MRE. In the middle tier, the highest percentage of members from the minister's party is 68%, in the MDA, while the lowest is 02%, in the MRE. When considering all parties in the coalition – including the minister's party – the average presence of party members rises to 79% and 64% in the top and middle tiers, respectively. This means that 21% and 36% are affiliated with parties outside the coalition. The MDA recorded the highest same-party membership percentage at 100%, while the MPS had the lowest at 55%.

A final observation regarding the evidence presented here pertains not only to the political aspect of party fractionalization within ministries but also to its implications for coordination and implementation capacity. The federal bureaucracy, at both middle and upper echelons, faces a combination of administrative

fragmentation – partly due to the diverse and numerous ministries –, operational instability (LOPEZ and GUEDES, 2022), and fractionalization. The average tenure in middle and upper-tier positions is less than half a presidential term (LOPEZ and SILVA, 2022). Moreover, the high turnover of ministers and appointees, coupled with the fragmentation within ministries housing hundreds of sub-ministerial agencies tasked with coordinating multi-sectoral policies among themselves, poses challenges to policy implementation, often resulting in unsuccessful outcomes.

### **Beyond the ministers: parties, factions, and power arrangements within ministries**

We acknowledge that relying solely on formal party affiliation is an imperfect means of assessing the relative influence of political parties within the administrative structure. However, it seems to be adequate, or at least promising, for investigating new facets of political power distribution within ministries. In exploring into these dimensions, we engage with two theoretical approaches.

The first approach is rooted in the norm of proportionality. According to this perspective, parties are assigned ministerial offices in proportion to their size within the Coalition. In the second approach, the number of ministries or the volume of top-level bureaucratic positions corresponds to the bargaining power of each party. The allocation of power to a party does not necessarily mirror its size in the legislature; rather, it reflects its ability to politically threaten the government's success or, more precisely, the success of presidents. For instance, maintaining the support of a smaller party may be crucial for the government to retain legislative majority (MERSHON, 2001a, p. 278; SCHOFIELD and LAVER, 1985).

Infra-ministerial multipartyism adds new nuances to these theories, particularly when considering that it is party factions that dictate a portion of the appointments based on party criteria. In his analysis of the Christian Democratic Party factions in the Italian parliamentary system, Mershon (2001b) demonstrated that the ability to control fractions of power within a ministry elevates these factions to units of analysis equivalent to parties in the coalition politics of the Executive. Factions also play a significant role in understanding the bargaining dynamics of government formation and the arrangements of political forces in the legislature. Expanding on this argument, we propose that incorporating political groups such as party factions into

the analysis is a necessary step to better explain coalition formation and the political navigation strategies of parties in the federal Executive, regardless of whether this incorporation is based on bargaining models or proportionality (LAVÉR, 1998).

The challenge of accommodating all parties and intraparty cleavages at the ministerial level serves as an incentive to allocate them to sub-ministerial agencies. These agencies offer the advantage of being less visible to public opinion and less susceptible to demands for accountability compared to ministers. Another driving factor is that a significant portion of power demands does not necessarily translate into pressures for public policies but rather for positions as an end in themselves. In summary, alongside the agenda-setting powers in ministries, which include defining budgets and selecting ministers (DEWAN and HORTALA-VALLVE, 2011), an additional tool at the president's disposal in analytical models of presidentialism is the formation of an administrative coalition within the political bureaucracy. This should be understood as appointments below the ministerial level, positioned between the minister and the career civil bureaucracy (BERSCH, LOPEZ and TAYLOR, 2022).

In such a scenario, the multi-party composition of a ministry is influenced by both the number of parties in the cabinet and the number of ministries. In other words, this composition tends to vary depending on the arrangement and competition among parties, which is also influenced by the total number of ministries. It is also reasonable to assume that the Gamsonian proportionality rule (GAMSON, 1961) applies at the sub-ministerial level, meaning that smaller parties do not occupy entire ministries but rather ministerial agencies that function as sub-offices or mini-ministries. As Mershon (2001a; 2001b) suggested for the Italian case, although inter-ministerial multipartyism serves to accommodate factions, these factions may still be bound by the principle of proportionality. Reflecting on Brazil's context, during the PT administrations, which were the longest-lasting in the New Republic, party factions openly competed for spaces and power within ministries, often invoking principles of proportionality to support their claims (NERY et al., 2010; ZANINI, 2007).

By broadening our understanding of the political party solely as a unitary actor, we can explore how policymaking by the minister is influenced by the extent of delegation received from the president, their party, or the parliament, as well as by the necessity for inter-party arrangements within the ministry. In other words, to improve our understanding of the operational model of our federal Executive (ELGIE, 1997;

MÜLLER-ROMMEL and VERCESI, 2020), we must incorporate the ideological diversity of coalitions within the ministries, rather than being limited to ministers alone, to enable us to develop more realistic indices.

The literature on mechanisms of parliamentary control and delegation has discussed the role of vice-ministers, hereby referred to as executive secretaries, as watchdogs overseeing the actions of cabinet parties (PEREIRA et al., 2017; THIES, 2001). When ministers have the autonomy to deviate from policies preferred by a portion of the coalition or the president, it is reasonable to expect the implementation of control mechanisms. The appointment of vice-ministers serves as one such mechanism, alongside formal or informal coalition agreements (CARROLL and COX, 2012; MARTIN and VANBERG, 2011, MÜLLER et al., 2010; THIES, 2001). Similarly, we may inquire whether the presence of different parties in the same ministry also leads to reciprocal control mechanisms over the actions of the parties within each ministry. Different parties in central positions within a same ministry may, in some cases, respond to similar logics, as observed in the case of executive secretaries (PEREIRA et al., 2017).

So, how does one manage fluid coalitions, with unstable parties, high turnover of ministers, a limited number of ministries, regional and sectoral cleavages, as well as electoral incentives to control leadership positions? While bargaining for government formation remains a dynamic game in coalition building and management, it does not prevent the establishment of rules, even if informally, to mitigate costs (MERSHON, 1996, p. 558). These rules offer greater predictability in the relationship between the size and ideological spectrum of parties, voter preferences in public policy, and institutional regulations. An example of such an informal rule that simplifies and guides the bureaucratic power-sharing process is the practice where regional party coalitions determine the appointees for federal offices in the states (LOPEZ and PRAÇA, 2015).

Behind the allocation of spaces for each agent, group, or political faction lies a more nuanced discussion about the party's share in the coalition and calculations regarding the percentage of positions, as well as the absolute number of factions and parties. Strategies employed by the Casa Civil suggest that while appointments are made for parties, individual parliamentarians' names also feature on the President's control lists (PATURY et al., 2011). Personal notes from the former President of the Chamber of Deputies, Eduardo Cunha, included a list of offices and agencies chosen for

his network of influence, rather than ministries. The division of power intertwines party politicization and factionalism, yet understanding the weight of these different dimensions requires more detailed analytical strategies and specific case studies. Various, complementary, and sometimes conflicting metrics coexist, and effectively navigating the bargaining game involves precisely managing these variables to advance the political interests of political parties, politicians, the president, and ministers.

## Conclusions

In this analysis, we explored longitudinal data spanning from 1999 to 2018, focusing on political party members holding mid-level and high-level positions within the Brazilian federal bureaucracy. Our findings reveal a complex and fragmented process in the distribution of power among parties, particularly considering the diverse array of parties within each ministry. We observed that fractionalization was more prevalent at the mid-level (DAS 01 to 04), while party politicization was more pronounced at the top-level (DAS 05 and 06), with the latter exhibiting lower average fractionalization due to parties exerting greater control over access. Ministries showcased a distinctive blend of party politicization – the presence of party members in appointed positions – and fractionalization – the diversity of parties within a single ministry. On opposite ends of the spectrum, we identified ministries characterized by both high fractionalization and party politicization, as well as those featuring low fractionalization and party politicization.

We propose that integrating the dynamics of intra-ministerial power distribution, which includes political-party cleavages (such as factions, coalitions, and political networks), provides a more realistic insight into the management process of government cabinets. Enhances our understanding of the strategic variables behind party support for the federal government in the legislature, and sheds light on a crucial aspect for complexifying the analysis of Executive public policy politics. In other words, examining both intra-ministerial fractionalization and party politicization simultaneously offers a rich perspective for grasping the internal workings of coalition presidentialism.

A more thorough analysis of the relationship between the Executive and Legislative branches at the federal level requires going beyond ministerial

appointments. The political-party and factional distribution of power within ministries – which encompasses dealings with interest groups and their alliances with career bureaucrats and individuals from outside the public sector – constitutes a critical analytical dimension. This dimension is essential for gaining a more realistic and in-depth understanding of: 01. bargaining games and their rules, 02. the interaction between the federal Executive and Legislative branches, and 03. identifying additional elements that contribute to the success of presidents in implementing their government agendas. This overlooked dimension might help explain why the proportionality in the division of ministerial portfolios has done little to explain the legislative support rates for the president (ALMEIDA, 2018). In this regard, Bersch, Lopez, and Taylor (2022) examined the effects of incorporating administrative coalitions – i.e., party-affiliated appointees to high-level positions – when analyzing the president’s success in the legislative arena. They demonstrated that positions in the mid and high-level bureaucracy play a more central role than the ministers themselves. Ministries are not typically closed gates dominated solely by ministers and their parties; instead, they often represent organizations with power dispersed among different factions. Therefore, introducing new analytical lenses and metrics to analyze the bargaining process in coalition management is crucial for gaining a better understanding of the governance process within the federal Executive.

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