

Navigating turf wars: disruptions in the politics of bureaucracy in Brazil¹

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DOI: 10.1590/0103-3352.2024.43.275476

Introduction

The statement “*Personnel is Policy*” was famously made by Scott Faulkner, the human resources director of the Reagan administration. This was during the presidential transition in 1980 when conservatives engaged in an “internal insurrection” against moderate Republicans. As a result of this dispute, the conservative faction gained control of hiring and was able to steer the direction of the Administration (Hauser; Segal, 2020). In this regard, a change in occupying certain positions cannot be regarded as a mere administrative formality.

At the onset of the *Nova República*, the appointment of Rubens Ricupero to the position in Geneva³ elicited uneasiness and surprise among a group of diplomats. This appointment deviated from the expected norm, which implied that the position was typically reserved for diplomat-economists. Ambassador Sebastião do Rego Barros, the former head of the Economic Department, remarked that Ricupero’s appointment caused a stir among diplomats with economic backgrounds who had expertise in economic matters and aspired to be

1 Acknowledgements: the author thanks Thales Carvalho, Yulieth Martinez and the two anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments.

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appointed to Geneva. Consequently, this appointment sparked some turmoil within the diplomatic community (Castelan, 2010).

This episode raises pertinent questions about the intentions behind presidential action, as it may signify a reevaluation of Brazil's position in the international arena. Castelan (2010) asserts that prominent officials such as President Sarney, Minister Olavo Setubal, and Itamaraty's Secretary-General Paulo Tarso Flecha de Lima regarded Brazil's obstructive stance in the Uruguay Round, advocated by George Álvares Maciel and defended by Paulo Nogueira Batista, as having an "ideological" basis.

During the government transition from Fernando Henrique Cardoso to Lula, there were reports in the media of numerous instances of a phenomenon commonly referred to as "musical chairs." One such episode involved the consideration of seven ambassadors, out of which six had been appointed to their positions during the administration of former President Fernando Henrique. Notably, Sergio Amaral, a former Minister of Development, Industry, and Foreign Trade under FHC, was serving in Paris and was to be replaced by Vera Pedrosa. The displacement of Amaral holds significance not only because he was part of the diplomatic entourage during Fernando Henrique's government (Fonseca Júnior, 2011) but also due to his subsequent reinstatement to the ministry and assignment to the Brazilian embassy in Washington with the rise of Temer to power and the appointment of José Serra as chancellor.

Usually, *turf battles* are fought in silence and out of public view. Most of the time, they can only be accessed through position papers, newsletters, and verbal barbs (Farnsworth, 1984). However, during Lula's administration (2003-2011), the silence of diplomats in the public debate was broken, and these agents began to feature increasingly in discussions about the country's international role (Azevedo, 2007; Barbosa, 2018; Lafer, 2009; Ricupero, 2010).

Cruz (2004) and Casarões (2012) have noted that during the Collor administration, the relationship between the MRE and the presidency of the Republic was affected by the redistributive dimension of resources. As a result, winners and losers emerged within the bureaucracy, leading to contested narratives that sometimes manifested as accusations of a particular government deviating from an abstract and alleged national interest.

Keeping this in mind, our primary research question is: how do *turf wars* influence intra-bureaucratic dynamics? We posit that the Ministry is not a cohesive entity but rather an arena of persistent power struggles. To achieve this objective, the article is structured as follows. In the theoretical section, we deepen into the concepts of bureaucratic politics and the politics of bureaucracy, subsequently focusing on the phenomenon of turf wars. We then present the data and three analytical strategies – Case Study, Narrative Policy Analysis, and Content Analysis. Lastly, we explore the selected cases.

In summary, our case studies illuminate various facets of these power struggles. (A) The well-known rivalry between Paulo Tarso and Rubens Barbosa, (B) the unexpected dispute involving Celso Amorim and Roberto Abdenur, (C) the internationalization of the presidential crisis, and (D) the repercussions of Ernesto Araújo and the Knights of the Revolution provide valuable insights into the intricate dynamics of appointments and their repercussions within the House of the Baron of Rio Branco.

Navigating turf wars and disruptions in the politics of bureaucracy

The bureaucratic politics-centered approach provides a perspective on public policy that sees it as the result of a decision-making process characterized by conflicts, negotiations, and compromises among various government organizations. This approach recognizes that different government organizations pursue their own interests, including protecting their areas of responsibility (*turf*) and advocating for their preferred approaches to address policy challenges within their jurisdiction (Allison, 1969; Bach, 2021).

A key aspect emphasized by this theoretical framework is the significant role played by non-elected bureaucrats in shaping policy choices through conflicts of ideas and interests during the decision-making process. Understanding the often opaque interactions among the various actors in the Executive during deliberations that involve negotiation between elected and non-elected individuals is crucial (Hart; Wille, 2012). Due to functional specialization and the resulting division of labor, bureaucratic politics arises from the need to reconcile different rationalities cultivated within each government organization, each with its own goals and varying attention to different aspects of a given policy problem (Bach, 2021; Cyert; Feigenbaum; March, 1959).

In this context, bargaining and coordination become necessary due to the interdependence involved in taking actions towards a common direction. During times of crisis, for example, disagreements over visions and solutions to address a specific problem may lead to what is known as “turf wars”, hindering coordinated action among different organizations (Bach; Wegrich, 2019). This idea emphasizes that the necessary specialization within and between organizations leads to the development of different perspectives on political problems and their solutions. As organizations pursue their institutional goals and mandates, they inevitably encounter the need to protect their jurisdiction and territory (Finke, 2020; Peters, 2019).

In decision-making situations, each part of the government not only seeks to maintain its “mission, standards, and skills” but also strives to defend its “domain of problems” and the opportunities for action over which it has legitimate authority (Bach, 2021). Wilson’s (2019) analogy of an organization being like a fish on a coral reef provides a helpful framework for understanding this process. Just as a fish needs to find a supportive ecological niche to survive, organizations employ various strategies to maintain their territory. These strategies include creating exclusive roles, competing against other organizations with similar tasks, and avoiding tasks that are too far removed from their core responsibilities.

When an organization’s responsibilities are taken over by another state entity, it may result in its extinction. Therefore, territorial conflicts involve more than just budget and personnel allocation, as they have a direct impact on the survival of the organization (Bach, 2021). Territorial disputes can occur at different levels, including inter-agency (Mackenzie, 2010), inter-organizational (Finke, 2020; Foley, 2016; King, 1997; O’Hara; Murphy, 2015; Zegart, 2013), and intra-organizational (Preston, 2015; Smith, 2011).

While the definition of turf wars may vary, it generally refers to *competition among agents for resources, often involving agency heads or division managers, and may result in promotions or publicity* (emphasis added). Among the tactics employed in territory disputes, withholding crucial information, which can significantly affect decision-making, and allocating rivals to low-profile tasks, known as marginalization (Doherty; Lewis; Limbocker, 2019), are

worth mentioning. Based on discussion in the previous topics, we have formulated the following hypothesis for this study:

H.1. MFA is not an organic entity but rather a site of ongoing disputes (*Turf Wars*)

Herrera, Reuben e Ting (2017) assert that although there is a desire for collaboration, external agents involved in territorial disputes do not always have the ability to enforce collaborative behavior. However, we take a different stance on this issue. We argue that in the case of an introverted bureaucracy like Itamaraty, with pronounced chain-of-command structures that prioritize centralization and hierarchy, these elements provide opportunities for presidents to mobilize available control mechanisms (Santos, 2022).

Data and methods

Data collection and analysis

The research project greatly benefits from the material produced by the *Centro de Pesquisa e Documentação de História Contemporânea do Brasil* of the *Fundação Getúlio Vargas* coming from his *Programa de História Oral*. We used twelve in-depth interviews from this source: Fonseca Júnior (2011), Gonçalves (2010), Guerreiro (2010), Hugueney Filho (2016), Kadri (2016), Lampreia (2010, 2016), Pericás Neto (2016), Oliveira (2016), Rezek (2016), and Soares (2016). In addition, we used three memoirs from the *Fundação Alexandre de Gusmão* and *Fundação Getúlio Vargas*: Amado (2013), and Barbosa (2018), which includes a chapter by Almeida (2018). We also referenced an academic article by Farias (2016) entitled “Os inconformistas disciplinados: Gerações, alianças e reforma na política externa brasileira (1930-1964)”. The sources used in this research share the common characteristic of allowing the interviewee/narrator to trace their life story or episodes. Through this process, we can consider socio-economic, political, and intra-bureaucratic circumstances in the reconstruction of their trajectory, creating a connection between biography and history. It is important to note that these sources also provide descriptions that allow us to reconstruct the dynamics of group formation, as well as moments of disputes and dissonance inside the bureaucracy.

Case studies

This study provides a systematic analysis of different interest groups' and political strategies in the policy arena of the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, using four episodes during the *Nova República* (1985-onwards) as case studies. At first glance, the Foreign Ministry appeared to have a cohesive and organic self-image, with a tradition of "reinventing itself" (Castelan, 2010; Cheibub, 1985) This perception may have discouraged investigations into conflicts and dissonance inside this bureaucracy. However, the case studies reveal that the movement of elites is a process that generates noise and disruption. As noted by other authors, our challenge here is to capture the complexity of a phenomenon such as the everyday struggles that often occur behind the scenes and gather relevant information about them (Lopes; Praça, 2015).

In this research, we employed Revealing Case Sampling, a case selection strategy in qualitative research designed to identify and explore cases with the potential to unveil significant insights, patterns, or essential characteristics related to the phenomenon under investigation. This approach is commonly utilized when the goal is to attain a profound and enriching understanding of the phenomenon, prioritizing the discovery of enlightening information (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Gerring, 2004; George; Bennett, 2005; Mahoney; Goertz, 2006; Yin, 2009).

Selecting cases in the context of "turf wars" is a complex task, contingent on publicly available evidence. It is crucial to acknowledge that the literature suggests that territorial disputes typically unfold discreetly and away from public scrutiny. They are often only accessible through official documents, newsletters, and verbal exchanges. The selection of cases in a turf wars context is not arbitrary; quite the opposite, it is guided by specific criteria that indicate the likelihood of a case revealing important information. These criteria may encompass elements such as uniqueness, complexity, and contrast. Given the sensitive and often secretive nature of territorial disputes, the meticulous selection of cases is crucial for obtaining meaningful insights and an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question.

In summary, revelatory case sampling is a strategic approach that seeks to identify cases with the potential to significantly enhance the understanding of a phenomenon under investigation, thereby contributing to the advancement

of knowledge in the field. In summary, the case (A) the turf wars between Paulo Tarso and Rubens Barbosa were characterized by their well-known rivalry. In contrast, the dispute (B) involving Celso Amorim and Roberto Abdenur is surprising considering their previous relationships. The (C) Internationalization of the Presidential Crisis, on the other hand, underscores the influence of the domestic context on disputes arising from the appointment of representatives in shaping the country's image abroad. Finally, the case involving (D) Ernesto Araújo and the Knights of the Revolution will elucidate the impact of elections and ideological shifts on the internal dynamics of the House of the Baron of Rio Branco.

Narrative policy analysis (NPA) and content analysis

Narrative can be defined as a story that progresses sequentially and is composed of episodes, symbols, and archetypal characters in the unfolding of its plot (Abell, 2004; McBeth; Shanahan; Jones, 2005; McComas; Shanahan, 1999). Narrative Policy Analysis suggests that groups strategically act through narratives (McBeth; Shanahan; Jones, 2005). Jones; Mcbeth (2010) argues that interest group narratives encompass both primary beliefs and political strategies, but the latter are much more dynamic. Competing political narratives employ various strategies, such as identifying winners and losers, framing who benefits and who bears the costs in political conflict, using condensing symbols, engaging issues in larger political proxies, and exploiting scientific uncertainty.

Therefore, our goal with the sources was to access the devices that stimulate the circulation of elites, expose their redistributive nature, and understand the mediation of presidential nomination. We utilized a *Thematic Content Analysis* approach on the dataset and employed the RQDA language package, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, in our analysis. The selection of the RQDA software for content analysis can be justified for various reasons, particularly when considering the qualitative analysis of textual data, such as interviews, open questionnaire responses, social media content, among others (Chandra; Shang, 2019).

According to Bardin (2004), content analysis involves three stages: (a) pre-analysis; (b) exploration of the material; and (c) treatment and interpretation of results (Sampaio, Lycarião, 2021; Sampaio *et al*, 2021; Sampaio *et al*, 2022).

The *first stage* involves planning the analysis, selecting and organizing the material to facilitate data retrieval (Villalba, 2020). To accomplish this, we utilized the RQDA language package to organize the data based on the categories of documents mentioned in the previous section (in-depth interviews, memoirs, book chapters, testimonies, and statements). Additionally, during the *(a) pre-analysis stage*, research questions and hypotheses are formulated, and codes are developed (in deductive research). Before delving into the codes themselves, it is essential to clarify the process by which they were generated. The process comprised the following steps: 1) Initial Data Review; 2) Identification of Recurring Themes; 3) Grouping of Related Concepts; 4) Theoretical Reflection and Consultation of Existing Literature; 5) Continuous Iteration; and 6) Pilot Test (Sampaio, Lycarião, 2021; Sampaio *et al*, 2021; Sampaio *et al*, 2022).

Having stated that, we initiated the process by 1) comprehensively reviewing the data to identify emerging themes and patterns. This initial reading step had the positive externality of familiarizing us with the content. Simultaneously, while reading, we 2) pinpointed themes and concepts that consistently appeared, enabling us to 3) group similar or interrelated concepts under a main category. As these processes unfolded subsequent to 4) theoretical reflection and, consequently, after the literature review, this reading guided the formation of categories capturing specific aspects of the analyzed phenomenon (consolidated in the fourth column of Table 1 below). Throughout the data analysis, after applying the initial categories, it was possible, following a 6) Pilot Test and through a 5) Iteration, to revise and adjust the categories as new insights emerged from the data. Table 1 below illustrates the outcome of the described process.

Table 1 - Coders

Code categories	Description	Codes	Justification
01. Relationships	As turf wars involve opposition between distinct groups, it is necessary to investigate the mechanisms of relationship (groups formation) within the Ministry.	01.1. <i>Genealogy</i>	"Within the Brazilian diplomatic corps, two orders of kinship can be identified: (i) " real kinship ," which is linked to the private, domestic sphere, and (ii) "symbolic kinship," which stems from the hierarchy and organizational structure" (Moura, 2006, p. 12).
01. Relationships		01.2. <i>Institutional</i>	"Within the Brazilian diplomatic corps, two orders of kinship can be identified: (i) "real kinship," which is linked to the private, domestic sphere, and (ii) " symbolic kinship ," which stems from the hierarchy and organizational structure" (Moura, 2006, p. 12).
01. Relationships		01.3. <i>Marriage</i>	The argument about the elitism of Itamaraty often overlooks the fact that many of the bonds, esprit de corps, and even matrimonial alliances within the Brazilian diplomatic corps are formed after individuals have entered the diplomatic career, as Moura (2006, p. 29) has pointed out.
01. Relationships		01.5. <i>Friendships</i>	"But then, the DA at Itamaraty at the time which was headed by a fellow editor of mine who was officially a good friend of mine " (Oliveira, 2016, p. 9)
01. Relationships		01.6. <i>Power of Relations</i>	Given the diversity in the types of relationships, it is valuable to examine the evidence of the roles played by these relationships in turf wars.
02. Resources		In the context of disputes, it is necessary to examine the evidence regarding the availability of resources and the methods of their distribution.	02.1. <i>Promotion</i>
02. Resources	02.2. <i>Appointments</i>		"It is also natural for ministers to seek people they trust for more sensitive positions , without resorting to arbitrariness or truculence" (Amorim, <i>apud</i> Schreiber, 2017, emphasis added).
03. Signaling	A signal is an observable attribute that conveys information about an individual (Connelly, <i>et al</i> , 2011).	03.1. <i>Reputation</i>	Taking into account the significance of group leaders , it is essential to investigate the evidence of the signaling performance of these roles.
03. Signaling		03.2. <i>Mediation</i>	Taking into account the significance of the mediating role of presidents , it is essential to investigate the evidence on the signaling performance of these roles.

Source: the author.

Based on our previous discussion, our unit of analysis is centered on themes. There are different ways of conceptualizing themes. On the one hand, it can involve establishing categories that capture relevant aspects of the data related to the research question. It can represent a single pattern that emerges from the data. In other words, disputes can create convergences that are fueled by the establishment of relationships.

Guided by the hypotheses formulated from the theoretical debate presented and reaffirming the deductive nature of the research, we established the following categorical coders to *(b) explore the material*. In view of this, we divided our groups into three: i) 01. Relationships; 02. Resources; 03. Signaling, each with its corresponding subgroups and its Description. So, for the *(c) treatment and interpretation of results*, considering the variety of techniques, we adopted a *categorical approach to explore the data* and *presented the results through Narrative Analysis*.

Disputes, dissonances, and clan battles: the quest for power and influence

Oliveira (2016) suggests that part of the elites' circulation during the Collor period was linked to Marcus Coimbra's actions. Coimbra⁴ attempted to demonstrate to Collor that a new era had begun, and they were better people who would leave behind those from the past. When asked about the diplomats who would be affected by the reshuffling, particularly those at the top of their careers, he mentioned that Paulo Tarso himself was among the diplomats targeted for the attempt at control. According to Oliveira: "They even made new legislation there that forced many people to retire within months. It was silly. A nonsense. And the thing was very badly done. It's not respectable at all. It was a period... a period... Luckily Brazil doesn't have a lot of problems. If we don't do too much foolishness, it doesn't happen" (Oliveira, 2016, p. 22, translation).

Lampreia (2010, p. 117) narrates that during his tenure as Itamaraty's trustee, he inherited a Ministry marked by personal conflicts. In his assessment, this was a result of "the divisive measures that were taken during the Collor years." Thus, as the Secretary-General, it was up to the diplomat to "manage

4 Brazilian diplomat. He was Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic during the Collor government. After becoming a widower, he married Leda Collor de Mello (President Collor's sister). He was therefore the president's brother-in-law.

these conflicts, which were often tiring and painful” (Lampreia, 2010, p. 117, translation). Intra-bureaucratic conflicts were also mentioned by diplomats on other occasions and documents. For Barbosa (2018), Itamaraty “is full of groups: Azeredo da Silveira’s group, Paulo Tarso’s group.” When describing these disputes, Almeida (2018) stated that these *clan battles* are “*common in introverted bureaucracies like Itamaraty*” (Almeida, 2018, p. 14, emphasis added, translation).

First round: Paulo Tarso and Rubens Barbosa – the role of lobbies in the politics of bureaucracy

Paulo Tarso Flecha de Lima, a highly respected diplomat within the Ministry, saw his career trajectory change when he was appointed to the General Secretariat. Known for his influence, he was referred to as the *Roi Soleil* by Almeida (2018), highlighting his significant role in Itamaraty. According to Almeida (2018), Flecha owed his position to a “*lobby mineiro*” as he had a direct connection to the late elected president, Tancredo Neves. As several works (Barros, 2011; Casarões, 2012; Lampreia, 2010) have also noted that the diplomat was considered a “virtual chancellor” or even a “real chancellor”, which he became soon after the appointment of the chancellor, Roberto de Abreu Sodré (1986-1990), a wealthy coffee grower and former governor of São Paulo, chosen by President Sarney, a close friend. Upon taking office, one of Flecha Lima’s first actions was to dismiss Rubens Barbosa, with whom he had a “notorious competition, if not animosity or hostility”, as noted by Almeida (2018, p. 10).

Rubens Barbosa is a character who witnessed territory disputes between Azeredo da Silveira and Paulo Tarso during a prior period before his time in the Ministry. According to Barbosa: “Although they were important positions, Azeredo da Silveira didn’t have a favorable opinion of him. There were internal rivalries within Itamaraty due to professional disagreements between them” (Barbosa, 2018, p. 11).

Unbeknownst to him, he would soon find himself entangled in fresh disputes with Tarso Flecha. According to Almeida (2018), before Olavo de Setúbal’s departure as Minister (1985-1986), he arranged for Barbosa to become the head of the administration, the “most powerful position among the various functional estates of Itamaraty, immediately after that of Secretary General

of the House, then held by the powerful Ambassador Paulo Tarso Flecha de Lima” (Almeida, 2018, p. 12, translation). However, Flecha fired Barbosa from this position. While Flecha Lima relied on his Minas Gerais lobby, Barbosa was supported by his São Paulo lobby, to whom Almeida (2018) attributes his removal to the Under-Secretariat for Multilateral Affairs.

According to Almeida (Almeida, 2018), Rubens Barbosa utilized his influential network, including his lobby from São Paulo, to secure a significant position within the Brazilian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Almeida notes that Barbosa’s strategic maneuvering enabled him to establish an Under-Secretariat for Multilateral affairs, a feat accomplished even before the conclusion of 1985. This achievement involved Barbosa swapping positions with another ambassador who previously occupied the role.

In contrast, Barbosa (2018) himself highlights his tenure in Brasília as instrumental in expanding his influence and visibility within the political landscape. He emphasizes that his position afforded him access to key figures within the government, including parliamentarians. Through these interactions, Barbosa cultivated a close friendship with André Franco Montoro and his family. This personal connection sparked Barbosa’s interest in Christian democracy, illustrating the significant impact of personal relationships on his political outlook and trajectory.

In his narrative of his career trajectory, Paulo Roberto de Almeida (2018, p. 13) explains that despite receiving support from Rubens Barbosa, his removal from his position was challenged. He states, “Despite the personal efforts of ambassadors Marcílio and Ricupero, my removal to Washington was effectively blocked by the SG [Secretary General]”. In his view, the then-Secretary General, Paulo Tarso, was hindering his transfer because he had ambitions to surround Ambassador Marcílio with his own envoys at the expense of those chosen by the ambassador (Almeida, 2018).

In the midst of the conflict between Paulo Tarso and Rubens Barbosa, Paulo Roberto de Almeida found himself in a territorial dispute. In his chapter, which informs this section, he highlights the importance of cultivating close relationships with colleagues. He demonstrates that Rubens Barbosa’s removals had a clear impact on his own functional displacements. According to Almeida: “This professional interaction lasted several decades, encompassing

almost my entire active career in the diplomatic service” (Almeida, 2018, p. 14, translation). In one passage, he recalls that “shortly after, he [Barbosa] sent for me from the Secretariat of Relations with Congress to work in his SGAM office” (Almeida, 2018, p. 14, translation).⁵

This excerpt is revealing not only from the perspective of cultivating relationships but also in terms of territory disputes. The diplomat further states that he would have immediately accepted the invitation had there not been a fear of “functional terrorism” from some colleagues who warned him that “if I went to work with Rubens Barbosa, *I would be ‘marked’ by SG Flecha de Lima* and I would have *no chance of promotion or any good removal* while he was in charge of the House” (Almeida, 2018, p. 15, emphasis added, translation).

Similar to Barbosa’s relationship with Paulo Roberto de Almeida, Tarso also had his own ally. According to Barros (2011, p. 33, translation), “During our career, I had connected a lot with Paulo Tarso. We did some things together. I went with Paulo Tarso to Iraq”. In the same way that Paulo Roberto de Almeida recounts his collaborations with Barbosa, Rego Barros also highlights the impact of his connection with Tarso on his career. He notes, “when he was undersecretary, he asked the minister to nominate me as the head of the Economic Department. Something that made me very happy [...]. Sarney *asked Paulo Tarso for someone* [...] who knew me, and *Paulo Tarso said he was going to appoint me*” (Barros, 2011, p. 33 emphasis added, translation). Amaury Banhos Porto de Oliveira (2016) also mentions Tarso’s influence on his career, stating that “Paulo Tarso, *who was the one who chose Singapore* for me to be ambassador, moved things around, *took a guy who was there and sent him to another post*, sent me, then, to Singapore” (Oliveira, 2016, p. 14, emphasis added, translation).

Second round: Celso Amorim and Roberto Abdenur – the clash of the “Barbudinhos”⁶

The territorial dispute between the “barbudinhos” Celso Amorim and Roberto Abdenur has different characteristics from the previously narrated

5 According to Almeida: “Reassured of this acceptance, I went on to work, for the third time, with Rubens Barbosa” (Almeida, 2018, p. 14).

6 “Barbudinhos”: “The group of diplomats who formed a circle around the chancellor Ramiro Saraiva Guerreiro in the 1970s was named after the U.S. Ambassador Anthony Motley, who advocated for a more independent foreign policy” (Marin, 2003).

episodes. While the Tarso-Barbosa rivalry had deeper roots (Barbosa, 2018), the trajectories of Amorim-Abdenur had some coincidences. Both joined the MRE in the same period, and Abdenur served as Amorim's deputy during his first term as chancellor (1993-1994).

The differences between Abdenur and Amorim became apparent after Abdenur retired, which gave him the freedom to express his assessment of the Workers' Party's foreign policy without potential institutional restrictions. Belém Lopes (2011) refers to this as the beginning of a "noisy politicization". Abdenur gave an interview to *Veja* magazine in 2007, in which he used strong language to describe Amorim's tenure as Chancellor. He accused the Ministry of being ideologically biased and claimed that there was "such a process of indoctrination in Itamaraty" that "didn't even happen during the dictatorship" (Abdenur *apud* Azevedo, 2007, translation).

Abdenur was not satisfied with the interview alone. During his visit to Congress, he reiterated his accusations of ideological conduct in the country's foreign policy, which he had previously made in his interview with *Veja* magazine (Azevedo, 2007). Senator Eduardo Azeredo (PSDB-MG) invited him to speak before the Commission, and Senator Flexa Ribeiro (PSDB-PA) also supported the request (Agência Senado, 2007a). Abdenur criticized the administration's handling of several issues, including his belief that Hugo Chávez had turned Venezuela into a dictatorship, Brazil's missed opportunity to conclude the Free Trade Area of the Americas due to a perceived anti-American sentiment within the administration, and the prioritization of South-South cooperation over relations with the United States.

The significance of Abdenur's viewpoints lies in the fact that he portrayed himself as a representative of his friends and colleagues of his generation (Agência Senado, 2007a). The ambassador directed his criticism towards an alleged attempt to indoctrinate Secretary General Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães. In Abdenur's view, this framing of ideas was reflected in the establishment of mandatory readings that had "national-developmental" and "anti-imperialist" aspects. Abdenur reiterated that the ideas stimulated by the leadership also played a role in resource redistribution. Therefore, ideological engagement has become an essential element for career advancement (Agência Senado 2007c; Marin, 2007).

The dissonance between the two “*barbudinhos*” is striking, especially considering their history of functional encounters, as noted by Celso Amorim himself: “We were colleagues for 40 years” (Celso..., 2007, translation). Amorim confirmed that during their long collaboration, they had worked together on different occasions, including when Abdenur served as his secretary general during his time as minister in the Itamar Franco government. It was Amorim who selected Abdenur as the ambassador to Washington, and he expressed his respect for the diplomat by acknowledging his excellent performance in these roles (Celso..., 2007).

However, it is not speculative to suggest that the expectation of Abdenur’s continued tenure at the U.S. embassy in the second Lula administration created tension in their relationship. Abdenur was removed from his position “48 hours after the reelection of President Lula,” a move that he believed did not reflect his relationship with Amorim or his position as a veteran diplomat. Abdenur stated that he did not receive the consideration he deserved and that these circumstances had affected him personally, demonstrating that even long-term relationships can be shaken (Azevedo, 2007).

Given the publicity surrounding Abdenur’s criticism, it would not be surprising if Amorim responded. In fact, he was repeatedly asked to position himself on the issue. In one instance, Amorim used irony to respond to the criticism, stating that he needed to “promote a couple of Marxists to have someone to talk to” and that he had no one to exchange ideas with, as everyone wanted to talk about the United States (Celso..., 2007, translation).

Third round: the return of those who left - the internationalization of the presidential crisis and the “guerrilla government” in bureaucratic politics

In 2011, President Rousseff’s election was expected to represent a continuity of the foreign policy strategies of her predecessor. However, during her administration, Brazil faced new international challenges and domestic instabilities, which led to a reevaluation of its international role and a perceived

7 “Ironically, Abdenur revealed that he joined his career driven by the developmentalist and anti-American ideology that dominated in the 1960s. He was part of a group of young men who were close to Chancellor Saraiva Guerreiro [...]. In this group were also Celso Amorim and Samuel Pinheiro Guimarães - although they didn’t have beards at the time” (Agência Senado, 2007b).

retreat in its foreign policy profile (Cervo; Lessa, 2014; Cornetet, 2014; Malamud, 2011). By 2016, during her second term, political instability in the country had reached a critical point.

Dilma's impeachment process coincided with her heightened international exposure. There were concerns that her participation in international forums, such as the United Nations General Assembly and the Paris Agreement signing event, could reflect the country's domestic turmoil. At the time, there were fears that the term "coup" would be used in the UN pulpit. Despite some reluctance to use the term "parliamentary coup," the President did not remain completely silent on the domestic situation: "I cannot conclude without mentioning the challenging moment that Brazil is currently facing. Nevertheless, it's important to highlight that Brazil is a remarkable country, with a society that has conquered authoritarianism and established a thriving democracy" (Aquino, 2016, translation).

In this context, in an episode that can be considered resistance (or what the literature calls *guerrilla government*)⁸, Milton Rondó Filho, diplomat in charge of the General-Coordinator of International Actions to Fight Hunger, sent out, by email, circulars denouncing Dilma's impeachment process. However, as could not be otherwise in a political crisis, the incident led, by means of a request authored by Senator Ricardo Ferraço (PMDB-ES), the congress to summon minister Mauro Vieira. In exposing the motivations, the senator stated that "the use of the public machine for this type of partial and untruthful propaganda needs clarification [...]. Itamaraty should be a State organ. These are very strange times" (Melo, 2016, translation).

The president of the Foreign Relations and National Defense Commission (CRE), also from the PSDB, indicated that the diplomat was a kind of loose cannon, and his actions would be a noise since he was not in communion with the minister and Itamaraty (Senado questionará..., 2016). After José Serra became the head of the foreign affairs portfolio, Rondó was removed from his position, and the General Coordination of International Actions for the Fight against Hunger was abolished.⁹

8 Can be defined as a phenomenon in which career civil servants take actions intended to work against the will, either implicitly or explicitly communicated, of their superiors (O'Leary, 2019).

9 "The Coordination was extinguished as part of the administrative reorganization and redistribution of competencies of the MRE, reflected in Decree 8,817, of July 21, 2016, and resulting from Decree 8,785, of June 10, 2016, which determined the leaning of the structure and the devolution of 46 commissioned positions of the MRE" (Brasil, 2016).

The government of Michel Temer had to deal with the search for legitimacy at the international level, given the suspicion about the way in which his arrival at the highest office of the Republic took place. The difficulties imposed by this movement deepened a reactive foreign policy, which began in the administration of his predecessor due to domestic difficulties (Cervo; Lessa, 2014; Cornetet, 2014; Malamud, 2011; Oliveira, 2018).

The first moves of the new Chief Executive indicated the need to sell himself internationally. One of those summoned to compose the defense squadron was diplomat Sergio Amaral.¹⁰ He had been a relevant interlocutor during Fernando Henrique's government and had been appointed to the country's representation in the United States. During his nomination defense in the Senate, he made clear his task in that office. In his words, "if the impeachment is confirmed, this issue will naturally develop and, above all, will be explained. This will require from the embassy, above all, a work of clarification of how constitutional issues work in Brazil" (Garcia, 2016, translation). This resulted in the demand by the Minister of State, Senator José Serra, for the defense of the foreign impediment through a telegraphic circular, the Cirtel 101296 (Silano; Fonseca, 2019).

Fourth round: the empire strikes back – Ernesto Araújo and the Knights of the "Revolution"

In his inauguration speech, Ernesto Araújo, who was chosen to spearhead a revolution in foreign policy, demonstrated his alignment with the government's agenda. He frequently used terms such as globalism, Foro de São Paulo, and made allusions to God and family (Brasil, 2019). Araújo delegated the ministry's second most important position to his taskmaster: Otávio Brandelli.¹¹ During the Temer government, Brandelli served as the director of the Mercosur Department during Venezuela's suspension from the bloc.

The initial moves of the new government and the new circumstances in the House demonstrated a fierce power struggle. Within the bureaucracy, there was a sense that "anyone who expresses critical thinking is punished" due to

10 "A visceral critic of the-candidate Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva during the previous administration, Amaral benefited from an agreement between Lula and Fernando Henrique in late 2002" (Marin, 2005).

11 Brazilian diplomat. Ernesto Araújo's trusted figure. According to Araújo: "I am happy to announce Ambassador Otávio Brandelli, a diplomat of widely recognized competence and dedication, as the future Secretary General of Foreign Affairs. He will be my right-hand man to implement President Bolsonaro's foreign policy" (Araújo, 2018).

the extreme right-wing ideology of Jair Bolsonaro's administration (Meyerfeld, 2020). Although Meyerfeld's statements to *Le Monde* were off-record, other comments from government officials indicate a focus on reorganizing the diplomatic corps. Eduardo Bolsonaro claimed that "Itamaraty is one of the Ministries where this Marxist ideology is most deeply rooted and where there would be a greater repulse to President Jair Bolsonaro" (Agência Estado, 2018).

The administrative reorganization of the Ministry involved a reduction of positions from nine to seven and the replacement of all heads at once, which was unprecedented (Meyerfeld, 2020). One incident that highlights the government's attention to the reshuffling of positions was the rapid (un)appointment (Brasil, 2021a) of Audo Faleiro as head of the Division of Europe I, a position he had not even assumed. Faleiro's previous role as a trusted advisor of Marco Aurelio Garcia was cited as a reason for his dismissal.

In this particular context, the removal of prominent figures from the previous government, such as Luiz Alberto Figueiredo, Mauro Vieira, and Antônio Patriota, from their posts to other countries like Qatar, Croatia, and Egypt,¹² respectively, is not a surprising move. However, such removals should be examined thoroughly as they may suggest a deliberate choice for self-exile or turnover, which is one of the strategies available to resist the incoming government. For example, there have been instances where diplomats have refused to represent the new government abroad, as evidenced by statements like "I wasn't going to represent this clown government abroad! I preferred to take a step back" (Meyerfeld, 2020).

On the other hand, there were some instances of support for the new government. Some diplomats signaled their willingness to defend the incoming administration. As a recent convert to Bolsonaroism, Luis Fernando Serra faced three challenging situations during his assignment to Paris: the diplomatic crisis between Bolsonaro and Macron due to criticism of the Brazilian president's environmental policies, the global impact of the murder of councilwoman Marielle Franco (Mello, 2020), and criticism of the government's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic (Alonso; Pinto, 2021).

¹² According to the diplomats interviewed, there are ongoing "ideological persecutions" orchestrated by an office that is described as "totalitarian" or "inquisitorial", primarily targeting the "barbudinhos". These are the diplomats who joined the agency during the presidencies of Lula (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and are perceived to have emerged from the left (Meyerfeld, 2020).

Brasília's messages in defense of the Bolsonaro administration were echoed in all three instances. During the first, Serra stated, "When you see 300 NGOs in the Amazon and zero in the Northeast, you can suspect there is a hidden agenda or prejudice against Northeasterners. Choose one" (Alencar, 2019). In response to the worldwide repercussions of the second, Senator Laurence Cohen (Communist Party) and Representative Christine Pires (Socialist Party) sent a letter to the country's embassy in Paris, requesting information about the assassination of Marielle Franco. Finally, concerning health management and in response to an editorial in *Le Monde*, Serra defended the thesis of selective or vertical containment. However, he later showed sympathy for the so-called "*early treatment*," marking another occasion for positioning in relation to the health crisis (Tortorello, 2021).¹³

The actions of the Brazilian ambassador in Paris did not go unnoticed by the President of the Republic. During a speech expressing his expectations for the actions of ambassadors abroad, he stated that he hoped Brazilian diplomatic representatives would bring the truth to other countries. In a minor concern, he pointed out that embassies did not have his picture, and although he argued that the complaint did not represent a narcissistic denunciation, he questioned whether there were ambassadors thinking about the "Free Lula" movement (Bolsonaro, 2019). The president emphasized that Brazilian embassies should carry the truth, and praised Ambassador Serra's performance in France, including his response in French to what he believed an unfair attacks against Brazil (Gullino, 2019).

Maria Nazareth Farani Azevedo is another key figure available to take on a leading role in the Bolsonaro administration. Farani caught the attention of Palácio do Planalto (the presidential palace) following a public debate with former parliamentarian Jean Wyllys. Wyllys had been invited to participate in a discussion on populism, and Farani surprised the audience by intervening and suggesting that the President had not left the country even after being attacked, thereby making a not-so-subtle counterpoint with Wyllys

13 "I am not a medical professional or a scientist, but it is notable to me that the dire predictions of the pandemic's impact in Africa have not come to fruition. Some have suggested that the resistance of Africans to COVID-19 may be linked to the widespread use of anti-parasitic drugs, such as ivermectin and hydroxychloroquine, for an extended period of time. While I am not a scientist, there is growing evidence that early treatment may be effective, as suggested by many experts in the field" (Tortorello, 2021).

(Neves, 2019). Both Farani's and Serra's interventions did not go unnoticed. Farani's actions were praised by Minister Damares Alves.¹⁴

Farani Azevedo's actions may have played a role in reducing mistrust towards the diplomat, who had previously served as head of Celso Amorim's cabinet. During her tenure in Geneva, changes in foreign policy regarding human rights were noticeable, including Brazil's support for Israel's demands during a debate on the end of the country's occupation of the Golan Heights. It was the responsibility of the country's representative to state that "Brazil considers that the present text is unbalanced and biased, as it concerns only a part of the human rights concerns of the Syrian people" (Na ONU..., 2019). Following her time in Geneva, the ambassador was appointed as Consul General of Brazil in New York (Brasil, 2021b).

Concluding remarks

This study aimed to investigate turf wars on the intra-bureaucratic dynamics within the Brazilian Foreign Ministry. Through the analysis of a qualitative dataset consisting of in-depth interviews, memoirs, book chapters, testimonies, and statements from diplomats, we employed a Narrative Policy Framework and Thematic Content Analysis to gain insights into the intricate dynamics of power struggles and group formation within the Ministry. Our findings support the argument that the Brazilian Foreign Ministry is characterized by ongoing power struggles. The Ministry, rather than being a cohesive entity, is a site where different factions and interest groups compete for influence and control.

While the focus of this study is on the Brazilian Foreign Ministry, it provides insights that can be relevant to other countries or organizations facing similar intra-bureaucratic disputes. One key insight is the significant impact of turf wars on politics and power struggles within government agencies. Additionally, this study underscores the complexity of bureaucratic politics, which often involves intricate negotiations, compromises, and feedback effects. Policymakers need to grasp these dynamics and consider them when making

¹⁴ "My gratitude goes to the entire Brazilian team in Geneva, and I extend my appreciation through Ambassador Maria Nazareth Farani Azevedo, who represents Brazil as the permanent representative to the United Nations in this country" #PátriaAmadaBrasil #Direitoshumanosparatodos" (Alves, 2019).

decisions regarding appointments or other policy actions. Understanding the interplay of interests and power dynamics is crucial for effective governance.

Lastly, this study emphasizes the importance of examining specific cases to gain a deeper understanding of the factors that shape bureaucratic politics in different contexts. By analyzing real-world examples, researchers and policymakers can uncover the unique circumstances and variables that drive bureaucratic behavior, enabling more informed and targeted interventions. Overall, this study illuminates the significance of disputes, the complexity of bureaucratic politics, and the value of case-specific analysis.

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Navegando em guerras de território: perturbações na política da burocracia

Resumo: As guerras de território, que ocorrem dentro e entre agências governamentais, podem levar a conflitos e lutas de poder, pois envolvem competição por recursos, autoridade e influência. Este estudo tem como objetivo aprofundar a nossa compreensão das disputas intra-burocráticas no Ministério das Relações Exteriores do Brasil (MRE). Com isso, nosso problema de investigação é: como as guerras territoriais afetam a dinâmica intra-burocrática? Afirmamos que o MRE não é um todo orgânico, mas sim um

ambiente de disputas contínuas. Utilizando análise narrativa de política e uma análise de conteúdo temática, examinamos um conjunto de dados qualitativos que inclui entrevistas, memórias, capítulos de livros, testemunhos e declarações para aprofundar estas disputas. Através de uma estratégia de casos reveladores, selecionamos estrategicamente episódios para elucidar os fundamentos teóricos apresentados. Os resultados sugerem que a circulação funcional e as disputas são moldadas na construção de relações entre diplomatas ao longo das suas carreiras, e que as mudanças na política geram dinâmicas na circulação funcional desses atores.

Palavras-chave: burocracia, presidentes, guerras de território, nomeações.

Navigating turf wars: disruptions in the politics of bureaucracy in Brazil

Abstract: Turf wars occurring within and between government agencies can lead to conflicts and power struggles as they involve competition for resources, authority, and influence. This study aims to deepen our understanding of intra-bureaucratic disputes within the Brazilian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) (1985-onwards). The research problem is: how do turf wars impact intra-bureaucratic dynamics? We assert that the MFA is not a cohesive entity but rather a site of ongoing disputes. Employing a narrative politics framework and thematic content analysis, we scrutinized a qualitative dataset comprising interviews, memoirs, book chapters, testimonies, and statements to explore these disputes. Through a strategy of revealing cases, we strategically selected instances to elucidate the theoretical foundations presented. The results suggest that the rotation of roles and disputes are focused on the establishment of relationships among diplomats over the course of their careers. Moreover, shifts in the political landscape give rise to novel dynamics in functional mobility.

Keywords: bureaucracy, presidents, turf wars, appointments.

Guerras territoriales: perturbaciones en la política burocrática

Resumen: Las guerras territoriales, que se producen dentro de los organismos gubernamentales y entre ellos, pueden dar lugar a conflictos y luchas de poder, ya que implican la competencia por los recursos, la autoridad y la influencia. Este estudio pretende profundizar nuestra comprensión de las disputas intraburocráticas en el Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores de Brasil. Nuestro problema de investigación es: ¿cómo afectan las guerras territoriales a la dinámica intraburocrática? Argumentamos que el MAE no es un todo orgánico, sino más bien un entorno de disputas continuas. Mediante un análisis político narrativo y un análisis de contenido temático, examinamos un conjunto de datos cualitativos que incluye entrevistas, memorias, capítulos de libros, testimonios y declaraciones para profundizar en estas disputas. Mediante una estrategia de casos reveladores, seleccionamos estratégicamente episodios para dilucidar los fundamentos teóricos presentados. Los resultados sugieren que la circulación funcional y las disputas se moldean en la construcción de las relaciones entre los diplomáticos a lo largo de sus carreras, y que los cambios en la política generan dinámicas en la circulación funcional de estos actores.

Palabras clave: burocracia, presidentes, guerras territoriales, nombramientos.

Submetido em 06 de junho de 2023

Aprovado em 08 de junho de 2024