Recent History of the Federal Government Organization[1,2]

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1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Brazilian government has undergone profound changes. New ministries and special secretariats were created. At the same time, the existing ministries were also changed, having created new secretariats and their corresponding departments.

However, this movement was reversed as of the second semester of 2015. Some ministries and special secretariats were extinguished through the agglutination of assignments in the remaining ministries.

This article sheds light on the organizational universe as a conditioning element of the state's ability to deliver goods and services to society,[5] by analyzing the history of the Federal Direct Administration's administrative structure in the recent period.

The research analyzed the decrees establishing the procedural structure of ministries and secretariats with the status of a ministry. For this purpose, we built a database that shows the organizational history of the ministries as of 1994 by observing the secretariats and departments created, transformed, or extinct throughout the period in question. We collected data on the procedural structure for 38 ministries and special secretariats,[6] and regulatory acts that create or extinguish ministries or secretariats.

The organizational changes observed could happen under two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that it responds to government activity's complexification due to societal demands. The second is that it happens due to government negotiations within the coalitional presidentialism. Such hypotheses are not exclusive and may be tested in later stages of the research.

Moreover, we discuss inflections in this history, such as those related to the organizational response to expanding social participation in public administration. It is also discussed the rise of special secretariats with ministries status as a way to introduce or raise specific issues related to society's demands to the government agenda or to obtain more negotiating power to maintain the coalition in Congress.

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5. "The government's ability to implement its decisions is also an important part of public policy and a key factor, which affects the types of action that the government will take into account" (Howlett, Ramesh and Perl, 2013, p. 8, our translation).
6. It does not include the Central Bank.

2 HISTORY OF THE NUMBER OF MINISTRIES AS OF 1994

Between 1994 and 2015, the number of agencies holding the status of ministry experienced significant growth, going from 26 in the first government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (FHC) to 39 at the beginning of the second government of Dilma. It meant an increase of 50% in twenty years[7] (table 1). It should be noted that during this period, such changes were not guided by a definite organization policy of the Federal Public Administration.[8]

TABLE 1

History of the number of ministries and special secretariats (1994-2016)

Government	Ministry	Extraordinary ministry	**Total including extraordinary ministry**	Military ministries	**Total of ministries including military ministries**	Agencies of the Presidency with ministry status	Presidency of the Central Bank of Brazil with minister status	**Total overall of structures with ministry status**
FHC 1 (1995-1998)	17	4	**21**	3	**24**	2	0	**26**
FHC 2 (1999-2002)	20	1	**21**	0	**21**	6	0	**27**
Lula 1 (2003-2006)	23	0	**23**	0	**23**	6	1	**30**
Lula 2 (2007-2010)	24	0	**24**	0	**24**	12	1	**37**
Dilma 1 (2011-2014)	24	0	**24**	0	**24**	14	1	**39**
Dilma 2 (2015-2016)	24	0	**24**	0	**24**	14	1	**39**
Temer (2016-)	21	0	**21**	0	**21**	5	1	**27**

Authors' elaboration.

It is worth noting that after the FHC's second government, a new trend appears regarding structures with ministry status. Instead of creating new ministries or appointing extraordinary ministers, subsequent governments adopted a new strategy, raising the status of some presidency of the Republic special secretaries to ministries, keeping the exact terminology of "Secretariat".

The new strategy draws less attention to the number of ministries since they are not designated as such. Still, it produces practical results both in raising one or more issues on the government agenda (at least in formal terms) and increasing the negotiating power with more valued positions in the power distribution within the coalition.

Therefore, this new strategy was consolidated during the second Lula's and Dilma's governments. It reached its highest point in 2015, when the Federal Public Administration had 39 agencies in total with ministry status, with, at the same time, a framework of progressive party system fragmentation within a context of coalitional presidentialism.

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7. Note that the total number of agencies with the ministry status was reduced at the end of the second Dilma government and the beginning of the Temer government. However, the number of departments was not reduced in the same proportion, indicating the agglutination of structures into the remaining ministries.

8. Generally, the Federal Direct Administration organization is set by its law at the beginning of presidential terms. The Decree-Law No. 200 of 1967 remains in force as a guideline for the Federal Public Administration organization, which is limited to establishing concepts and subordination. According to the records, in 2007, there was an initiative to propose an organic law. The Ministry of Planning established a committee of jurists for this purpose; however, the document produced never was presented to the Legislative.

The strategy above has several implications from the point of view of public apparatus administration and government capacity to coordinate and implement public policies. Given the resources naturally limited by the budget and capacity set, a more significant fragmentation – through the horizontal function differentiation – tends to produce the dispersal of efforts, weakening the capacity for action. Further research shall investigate the resource dispersion in the different structures and their effects on the programmed results. For now, table 1 shows the administrative structure history as of 1994.

3 INTERNAL TRANSFORMATIONS IN MINISTRIES

As of 1994, the ministerial structures underwent several procedural changes. Some modifications were observed as the procedural structures changed by decrees. This survey focuses on changes at higher hierarchical levels (secretariats and departments).[9] Table 2 shows the number of changes for each ministry within the period analyzed and the average number of changes per year after their creation.[10]

TABLE 2

Changes in ministries' organizational structure

Ministry	Start year	End year	Changes	Changes per year
Ministry of Planning	1996	2017	27	1.29
Ministry of Economics	1991	2017	25	0.96
Ministry of Social Security	1992	2011	18	0.95
Secretariat of Strategic Affairs	2008	2013	3	0.60
Institutional Security Office	2002	2013	7	0.64
Ministry of Health	1991	2016	17	0.68
Ministry of Justice	1991	2016	16	0.64
Secretariat for Institutional Relations	2005	2011	3	0.50
Ministry of Development of Industry and Trade	1993	2016	14	0.61
Ministry of Sport	2003	2016	7	0.54
Secretariat-General of the Presidency	2003	2015	6	0.50
Office of the Chief of Staff	1993	2017	13	0.54
Ministry of Education	1990	2017	14	0.52
Ministry of Agriculture	1990	2016	13	0.50
Ministry of Culture	1995	2016	10	0.48
Ministry of Agrarian Development	2000	2010	4	0.40
Ministry of Science and Technology	1995	2011	7	0.44
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	1990	2016	12	0.46
Ministry of Defense	1999	2013	6	0.43
Secretariat for Human Rights	2003	2013	4	0.40
Secretariat of Ports	2007	2013	2	0.33
Ministry of Labor	1991	2008	7	0.41
Ministry of Communications	1996	2011	6	0.40
Office of the Comptroller General	2003	2016	5	0.38
Secretariat of Policies for Women	2003	2014	4	0.36

(Continues)

9. It refers to the hierarchy level run by leadership and advising positions (*direção e assessoramento* – DAS) – levels 5 and 6. It does not include changes in general coordination, coordination among others.
10. The start and end periods vary since several ministries were created and extinct over the decades of 1990, 2000, and 2010.

(Continuation)

Ministry	Start year	End year	Changes	Changes per year
Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality	2003	2010	2	0.29
Attorney General's Office	2010	2017	2	0.29
Ministry of Social Development	2004	2016	4	0.33
Ministry of Tourism	2003	2015	4	0.33
Ministry of Integration	2000	2017	6	0.35
Ministry of the Environment	1994	2017	8	0.35
Ministry of Mines and Energy	1992	2016	6	0.25
Ministry of Transport	1992	2016	5	0.21
Ministry of Cities	2003	2016	2	0.15
Secretariat for Micro and Small Enterprises	2013	2013	0	0.00
Secretariat of Fisheries	2009	2009	0	0.00
Secretariat of Civil Aviation	2011	2011	0	0.00
Secretariat of Communication	2008	2008	0	0.00

Source: Procedural Structure Alteration Decrees.
Authors' elaboration.

Table 2 indicates a dynamism in organizational structures, especially in the older ministries, such as the Ministries of Planning, Finance, and Social Security, which presented, on average and respectively, 1.29, 0.96, and 0.95 changes in their structures per year for the reference period. We can also observe that, due to the constant environmental changes, organizational flexibility is a desirable attribute when characterized as a result of the adaptation process to the demands of the external environment to provide the organization with a greater capacity to meet them (Tachizawa and Scaico, 2006).

In most cases, the change observed in this study meant growth. For instance, in 1999, the Ministry of Planning had six core unities[11] and seventeen departments linked to them, and in 2015, it grew to 8 offices and 26 departments. Therefore, during this period, it seems to have been the general behavior of most of the ministerial agencies. The special secretariats of the Presidency of the Republic, in turn, derive from the first FHC government and expanded more notably as of the first Lula government. After a while, they achieved Ministry status. For this work, we classify the secretariats as having ministry status in three categories: secretariats for direct support to the presidency, secretariats related to social demands, and secretariats related to infrastructure and the fishing industry. The first group is the Secretariat of Institutional Relations, the Secretariat of Strategic Affairs, and the Secretariat of Communication. In the second group are: the General Secretariat, the Secretariat for Human Rights, the Secretariat of Policies for Women, and the Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality. The third includes the Secretariat of Ports, the Secretariat of Civil Aviation, and the Secretariat of Fisheries.

Examples include the creation of the Secretariat for Human Rights, the Secretariat of Policies for Women, and the Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality. In the 1990s, policies for those audiences were connected to the Secretariat of Citizenship Rights inside the Ministry of Justice,

11. The core units (*secretarias finalísticas*) are referenced herein as the units responsible for conducting public policies with different competencies from the advisory and support units (the ones who execute the support activities for the core ones).

which had two departments: the Department of Human Rights and the Department of Children and Adolescents (Decree No. 1,796 of January 24, 1996).[12]

In 1998, the Secretariat was transformed into the Secretariat for Human Rights (Decree No. 2,802 of October 13, 1998). Its responsibility was "to promote and fight for the rights of citizens, children, adolescents, women, persons with disabilities, the elderly, black persons and other minorities" (Brasil, 1998, article 8º, section I, our translation). During Lula's government, this secretariat was connected to the Presidency. The dissolution of competencies provoked an organizational fragmentation, from which specific secretariats were created for each audience: Secretariat of Human Rights, Secretariat of Policies for Women, and Secretariat for Policies to Promote Racial Equality.

Therefore, if we look at this rise of status inside the organizational structure as an indication of the subject gaining priority in the government's agenda, on the one hand, one can say that the movement to prioritize social agendas began during FHC's first term. However, it was significantly expanded during Lula's first government. On the other hand, looking at the negotiation capital under the government's coalition, creating new positions with minister status was a much more used strategy after Lula's first government and during the Dilma's.

4 HORIZONTAL DIFFERENTIATION OVER THE PERIOD

During the analyzed period, the governmental structure transformations show a strong horizontal differentiation,[13] both by the differentiation of competencies exposed by the growth in the number of ministries – as seen previously showed – and by the differentiation within the ministries made explicit by the increase in the number of secretariats and their respective departments. Aiming at illustrating the change history, figure 1 shows the evolution of the number of departments related to special departments,[14] of several ministries for the period assessed.[15]

We can verify that the number of departments in the ministries analyzed rose from 81 to 247 in 2015. There was continuous growth during the period; however, the great leap was between 2003 and 2006, as shown in figure 1.

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12. Available at: <https://goo.gl/uNhHvM>. Accessed on: Aug. 18, 2017.

13. Organizational structures are essentially characterized by design defined by the hierarchy and the division of labor, that is, by the organization's vertical and horizontal differentiation (Hall, 1996).

14. In general, the evidence shows that the hierarchical structure of ministries can be made up of up to seven hierarchical levels below the minister. At the first level, the secretariats are comprised of departments at its immediate lower level.

15. The survey on internal changes in ministries includes the ones that existed in 1994, although extinct later, and those created as of the same year. Were excluded from this survey – in addition to the secretariats with ministry status: the Central Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of the Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministries of the Army, Navy, and Airforce, due to the limited comparability after their discontinuity as of 1994, or the lack of a ministry status at the start period, or for having different designation, or, even, for including alteration decrees without mentioning the department level.

FIGURE 1

Evolution of the number of departments connected to the federal government's special secretariats (1995-2015)
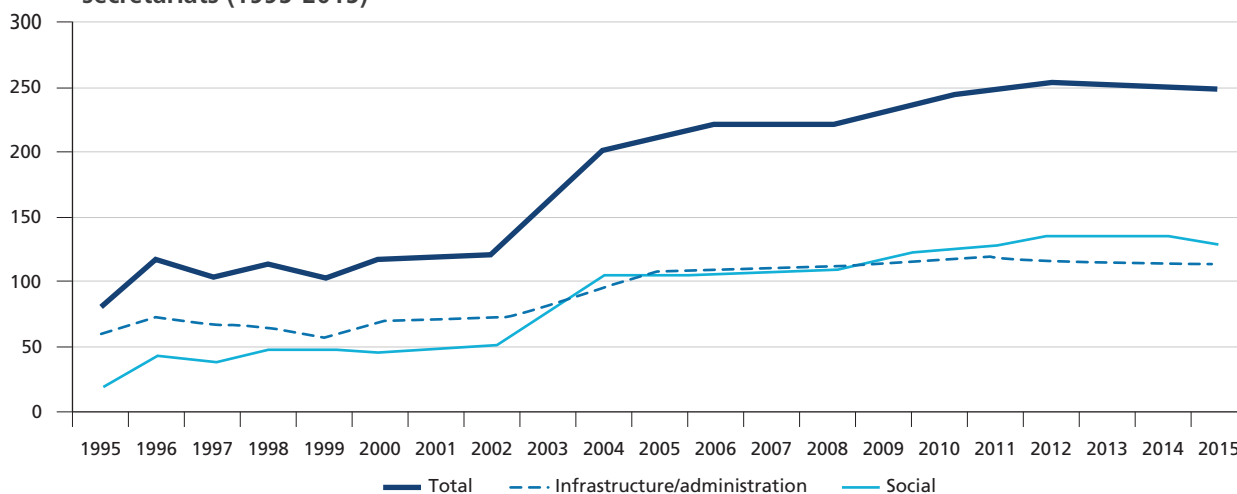
Source: Procedural Structure Alteration Decrees.
Authors' elaboration.

The research data also indicate that the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Mines and Energy presented more changes for the period.

In the cases of the Health Education Ministries, evidence indicates that the expansion reflects some inflection in the government's agenda in favor of social issues. Similarly, the case of the Ministry of Mines and Energy points to progress in infrastructure issues, especially when there was the risk of a crisis in the availability of electricity.

The Ministry of Social Development, responsible for essential policies on the social agenda, remained practically stable between 2010 and 2016. On the other hand, one can observe that the expansion of the Ministry of Planning was more significant than those of the Ministries of Health and Education. In other words, the relevance of social issues to the government's agenda loses importance for a sole explanation of the expansion process verified.

Note that when the special secretariats were created and elevated to the status of ministry (more evident in 2003), the Ministry of Justice had part of its role taken to form new secretariats. Nevertheless, it continued with its movement of substantial expansion through the horizontal differentiation of its departments. From a political point of view, it is worth observing that this type of expansion means an increase in the number of positions of free appointment and fulfillment of duty (positions of trust). It means more capital to be used in negotiations within the government coalition framework.

It is also worth highlighting the dissemination of collegiate bodies within the organizational structures. From 1994-2015, collegiate bodies increased from 30 to 78 in the 23 agencies under the scope.

These collegiate bodies can represent ways of opening the federal government to social participation in the tasks of control and advice or the formulation of the federal government's decisions

regarding courses of action when composed of representatives of civil society or as mechanisms of decentralization of power when consisting of representatives from the government itself.[16]

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The initial findings of the research point out a continuous growth of the organizational structure within the Brazilian Federal Public Administration between the FHC's first government and the end of Dilma's term. This expansion is strongly characterized by a fragmentation resulting from the dissolution of attributions (functional specialization) – equivalent to a transformation marked by the creation of specialized agencies and the narrowing of areas of expertise.

As a starting point, the organizational structure's quantitative dimension and the verification of a substantial narrowing of areas of operation, in themselves, do not answer questions about the main issues of these transformations and their impacts on the organizational capacity of the Federal Public Administration in meeting the demands of society. Therefore, we need to look into and compare motivations, competencies, and conditions of action of the new structures created and those expanded to observe the adherence and functional and political relevance of those for each public policy case.

Nevertheless, the absence of an explicit policy for the organization of the Federal Public Administration throughout the analyzed period is striking; the research results suggest that there are still no criteria to guide such transformations.

On the other hand, the transformations' quantitative dimension herein reported and the identification of their areas of concentration throughout the structure point to particular organizational flexibility as a mechanism for responding to strains from the external environment, either as a response to social demands or as consequences of government negotiations, within coalitional presidentialism framework. This observation points to a dynamic organization comprising institutions capable of promoting adjustments within short periods.

In addition, overcoming the Wilsonian thought that public administration would be an apolitical field, the organizational structure's history of transformations reflects permanent strains between the political field and public action organization. Throughout the period, there is a significant multiplication of negotiation capital within the coalition through the expansion of structures, whose immediate result is the availability of positions of free appointment and fulfillment of duty. As a future research agenda, one should investigate how much of this expansion would be associated with our coalitional presidentialism and its growing party system fragmentation.

As a result of the strains in the relations between the Public Administration and society, the significant expansion of the number of collegiates in the structure of the Federal Public Administration reveals advances toward the formal opening of new spaces for participation or decentralization of the decision-making power. Over the last few years, the effectiveness and quality of participation and the conditions for exercising democracy in those spaces have been systematically studied, indicating heterogeneous contexts.

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16. According to Salgado (2012, p. 125, our translation), and taking as reference the Decree-Law No. 200 of 1967, "the governance systems of the Direct Administration units are single. That is, the coordination and decision-making processes are carried out – at all hierarchical levels – through the individual action of command positions with due communication to subordinate managers".

In the dynamic context of increasing demands and complex interactions, we need to understand the limits and possibilities of our Public Administration organization. Therefore, in an urgent research agenda, it is recommended to investigate the state's capacity related to its internal dynamics in terms of attributions and distribution of resources in its structure. Types of influence generated by our political institutionalization when interacting with the Public Administration and how it engages with society are also essential topics to the research agenda.

In the future, it would also be worth studying how the flexibility of changes observed here affected the public apparatus's organizational capacity to meet society's growing and increasingly complex demands.

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