

Article

Reassessing the Brazilian bureaucratic public administration paradigm: legal-rational bureaucracy prior to 1930

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This article examines theoretical critiques and empirical evidence indicating the need to reassess the adequacy of the bureaucratic public administration (BPA) paradigm in Brazil. The BPA is one of the three paradigms of Brazil's historical-administrative evolution, as defined by Bresser-Pereira. In his view, BPA emerges as highly rational in 1930 and becomes increasingly irrational after the 1988 Constitution. Bureaucratization is seen as an event rather than as a process, an assumption criticized both by historical research on bureaucracies (e.g., Crooks and Parsons) and by critical Weberian interpretations developed by Brazilian thinkers such as Guerreiro Ramos, Tragtenberg, and Prestes Motta. Our historical research, based on documents registered in the National Archives and the National Library databases, finds evidence of formal and legal rationalization in Brazil before 1930, supporting the critical interpretation. Historical records indicate rational claims for state action as a form of rational domination, defining jurisdiction and functional attributions, and designing a rational hierarchical organizational structure. There were four administrative reforms prior to 1930, whose ministerial departmentalization persists to the present day and confirms the bureaucratization process before the BPA. These findings indicate that the BPA, as a paradigm, requires reassessment.

Keywords: bureaucratic public administration; paradigm; rationalization; bureaucracy; power.

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Reavaliando o paradigma da administração pública burocrática brasileira: a burocracia racional-legal pré-1930

Este artigo discute críticas teóricas e evidências empíricas que apontam a necessidade de reavaliação da adequação do paradigma da Administração Pública Burocrática (APB) no Brasil. A APB é um dos três paradigmas da evolução histórico-administrativa brasileira definidos por Bresser-Pereira. Em sua análise, a APB surge extremamente racional, em 1930, e se torna irracional, sobretudo a partir de 1988, com a Constituição. A burocratização, portanto, seria um evento, e não um processo, o que é criticado nas pesquisas históricas sobre burocracias, como em Crooks e Parsons, e nas interpretações organizacionais críticas weberianas brasileiras, de Guerreiro Ramos, Tragtenberg e Prestes Motta. A pesquisa histórica, com base em documentos registrados na base de dados do Arquivo Nacional e da Biblioteca Nacional, apresenta evidências de racionalização formal e legal pré-1930 no Brasil, favorecendo a interpretação crítica. Encontra-se em documentos históricos o acionamento do Estado e de sua infraestrutura como forma de dominação racional, a definição de jurisdição e de atribuições funcionais, e a estruturação organizacional racional hierarquizada – com 4 reformas administrativas anteriores a 1930, cujas departamentalizações ministeriais alcançam os dias atuais e demonstram a burocratização antes da APB. Isso demonstra que a APB, como paradigma, precisa ser reavaliada.

Palavras-chave: administração pública burocrática; paradigma; racionalização; burocracia; poder.

Reevaluación del paradigma de la administración pública burocrática brasileña: burocracia racional-legal antes de 1930

Este artículo analiza las críticas teóricas y la evidencia empírica que indican la necesidad de reevaluar el paradigma de la Administración pública burocrática (APB) en Brasil. La APB es uno de los tres paradigmas de la evolución histórico-administrativa brasileña, según la definición de Bresser-Pereira. Según él, la APB surgió como extremadamente racional en 1930 y se volvió irracional a partir de 1988, especialmente debido a la Constitución. La burocratización, por lo tanto, se considera un evento, y no un proceso, lo cual es criticado por investigaciones históricas sobre burocracias, como las de Crooks y Parsons, y en las interpretaciones weberianas críticas de pensadores brasileños (Guerreiro Ramos, Tragtenberg y Prestes Motta). La investigación histórica, basada en documentos registrados en las bases de datos del Archivo Nacional y la Biblioteca Nacional, presenta evidencia de una racionalización formal y legal antes de 1930 en Brasil, lo que favorece la interpretación crítica. Los documentos históricos indican reivindicaciones racionales de la acción del Estado como forma de dominación racional, definiendo la jurisdicción y las atribuciones funcionales, y diseñando una estructura organizativa jerárquica racional, con cuatro reformas administrativas anteriores a 1930, cuya departamentalización ministerial llega hasta la actualidad y confirma el proceso de burocratización anterior a la BPA. Esto demuestra que la APB, como paradigma, debe ser reevaluada.

Palabras clave: administración pública burocrática; paradigma; racionalización; burocracia; poder.

1. INTRODUCTION

Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997, 2000, 2017, 2022) defines Bureaucratic Public Administration (BPA) as one of the three organizational paradigms of Brazil's historical-administrative evolution. According to his analysis, BPA emerged from an extremely rational Weberian model adopted during the Vargas government reforms that began in 1930. However, it became unsustainably irrational and dysfunctional after the 1988 Constitution was adopted.

This interpretation differs from analyses of Weberian bureaucratization by Guerreiro Ramos (1960, 1984, 1946/2006, 1981/2022), Tragtenberg (1966, 1997, 2005, 1974/2006), and Prestes Motta (1986). These authors emphasize that bureaucracy is a form of power and control resulting from a long, erratic process of rationalization, rather than an isolated episode of applying a management model.

Based on this critical reading, the paradigmatic approach of BPA appears to exaggerate the simplification of bureaucracy, oscillating between idealized rationality and caricatured irrationality. This approach has little adherence to Weberian theory or the empirical evidence of historical administrative research in Brazil.

Therefore, the objective of this article is to present theoretical and empirical evidence that calls into question the sustainability of BPA as an inaugural paradigm of Weberian rationality in Brazil, requiring its reassessment. To this end, the article is divided into four sections, in addition to this introduction. The first part discusses the paradigmatic approach of BPA in Brazil according to Bresser-Pereira's Weberian interpretation. The second part presents an analysis of bureaucracy in light of the critical Weberian interpretations of Guerreiro Ramos, Tragtenberg, and Prestes Motta. The third part presents evidence of pre-1930 rationalization based on historical documents and analyzed data from the Brazilian Public Administration Memory Project (MAPA) and the online collection of the National Archives Information System (SIAN), which is maintained by the Brazilian National Archives, as well as documents from the Brazilian Digital Newspaper Library (National Library). This evidence is more in line with Weber's critical proposal than with the BPA paradigm. Finally, the concluding remarks are presented.

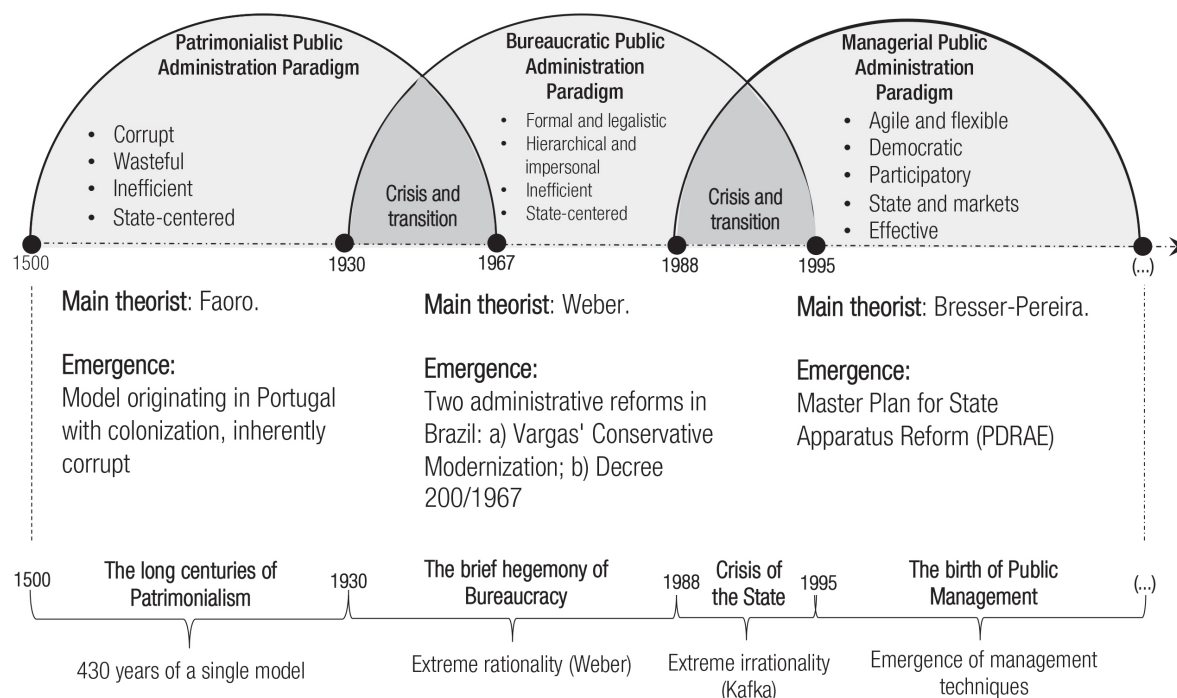
2. THE PARADIGM OF BUREAUCRATIC PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL

As discussed by Duarte and Zouain (2022), the paradigmatic approach was first adapted to public administration in Brazil by Tânia Keinert (1994), who was influenced by Nicholas Henry's (1975) proposal for the United States. However, the most influential version in the organizational field was disseminated by Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997, 1998, 2017, 2022) and the Latin American Center for Administration for Development (CLAD, 1999), following the public administration reform movement of the 1990s.

The CLAD (1999, p. 127) proposed changing the country's "organizational paradigm" by evolving from Patrimonialist Public Administration (PPA) to Bureaucratic Public Administration (BPA) until reaching Managerial Public Administration (MPA). Although the original notion of a "paradigm" comes from philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn and relates to hegemonic practices, methods, and theories in a scientific field, Bresser-Pereira works with it more as a management model than a scientific paradigm.

According to Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997, 2017, 2022) and the CLAD (1999), these organizational paradigms would have the following characteristics: a) PPA (1500-1930) would be centered on the state and be corrupt, wasteful, and inefficient due to its foundation in disorganized patrimonialism (the confusion between public and private property), which stems from the medieval Portuguese heritage, as discussed by Raymundo Faoro (1958/2021); b) BPA (1930-1995) would also be centered on the state and be formalistic, legalistic, and impersonal, as analyzed by Max Weber. It emerged in Brazil with the Vargas administrative reform of the 1930s. However, its legalistic excesses led to the dysfunctional irrationality of formal rigidity, as crystallized in the 1988 Constitution; and c) GPA (from 1995 onwards), a model developed by Bresser-Pereira, would be characterized as agile, flexible, democratic, and participatory, balancing the state and markets and resulting from the managerial reform of the 1990s when public management emerged in the country.

Administrative literature also refers to these models as the "three historical forms of administration" (Costin, 2010, p. 31). This reduces the efforts to rationalize Brazilian public administration to just three moments in the 20th century: the Administrative Department of Public Service (DASP) in 1936; Decree-Law No. 200 of February 25, 1967; and the Master Plan for State Apparatus Reform (PDRAE) in 1995 (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1 THE PARADIGMS OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997, 2017, 2022) and the CLAD (1999).

These paradigms would therefore combine administrative elements – principles and organizational techniques that differentiate each management model – such as managing the state as if it were private property (PPA), emphasizing the formal legalism of the state's organizational structure (BPA), or encouraging the adoption of private-sector management techniques (GPA). They would also combine historical elements – institutional milestones of state administrative reform.

These paradigms would then have very different durations: 430 years of patrimonialism, 65 years of the bureaucratic model, and 30 years of managerialism. These durations suggest a historical process of model replacement, in which BPA emerges as “a replacement for patrimonial forms of state administration” (Bresser-Pereira, 1997, p. 348). The conservative modernization process carried out by Vargas is considered the starting point of this replacement process (Fonseca, 2007).

On this basis, it is argued that, in Brazilian public administration, “the first reform was the bureaucratic one in 1936” (Bresser-Pereira, 1996, p. 7) – that is, “the reform that Max Weber analyzed definitively” and that “rejected patrimonialist administration and made it professional” (Bresser-Pereira, 2017, p. 152). Following this event, a continuous process of formal exacerbation occurred, leading to an irrational management model. According to Bresser-Pereira (1996, pp. 9-16), this model culminated in the “bureaucratic setback of the 1988 Constitution,” a milestone of “extreme bureaucratic rigidity” in the country. The bureaucratic dysfunctions cited by Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997) and the CLAD (1999) are primarily economic (e.g., the cost of the civil service, wage pressure,

and social security resulting from the single legal regime) rather than Weberian aspects of bureaucracy (e.g., specialization, formalization, hierarchy, and impersonality).

This paradigmatic approach was widely disseminated throughout the country and continues to be reproduced in the literature, as evidenced by Table 1. Influenced by international literature, this approach identified a drive for bureaucratic rationalization in several countries around the world, particularly during the transition from the 19th to the 20th century. This concept was explored by Barzelay (1992), whose work was cited repeatedly by Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997) and the CLAD (1999).

This view emphasizes the transitions between different modes of state organization, primarily identifying moments of legal rationality consolidation based on the institutionalization or diffusion of bureaucratic aspects analyzed by Weber. In Brazil, this moment was identified during the Vargas government, beginning in 1930. This idea is also demonstrated in Nunes's (1997) discussion of bureaucratic insulation, in dialogue with Bresser-Pereira's work.

TABLE 1 DISSEMINATION OF THE PARADIGMATIC APPROACH IN SPECIALIZED LITERATURE IN BRAZIL

Academic works	Authors
Scientific articles	Andrews & Kouzmin (1998)
	Guimarães (2000)
	Saraiva & Capelão (2000)
	Coutinho (2000)
	Seabra (2001)
	Medeiros (2006)
	Matias-Pereira (2008c)
	Oliveira et al. (2010)
	Andion (2012)
	Oliveira & Paula (2014)
	Drumond et al. (2014)
	Silva (2017)
	Cavalcante (2018)
	Melo et al. (2019)
	Lima & Peixe (2020)
	Pereira & Correia (2020)
	Miranda et al. (2020)
	Karam & Silva (2019)
	Botelho (2020)
	Mascarenhas & Ribas (2021)
	Botelho & Held (2021)
	Hable & Oliveira (2022)
	Arruda & Costa (2022)
	Duarte & Zouain (2022)
	Silva & Santos (2022)

(Continue)

Academic works	Authors
Articles presented at scientific meetings (Annual Meeting of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Administration – EnAnpad and Public Administration Conference – EnAPG)	Porsse & Klering (2006) Prado & Cruz (2006) Ribeiro et al. (2008) Fadul & Silva (2008) Silva & Castro (2019)
Books	Paula (2005/2020) Matias-Pereira (2008a; 2008b; 2009; 2014) Costin (2010) Abrucio (2020) Maximiano & Nohara (2021) Paludo & Oliveira (2021) Cavalcante (2020, 2023)

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

However, there are indications that the paradigmatic claim of BPA as an isolated inaugural event of Weberian rationality in the country is questionable, both theoretically and historically. Contemporary criticism refers to this problem as a “staged” view that “does not capture the complexity of public administration, much less national specificities,” as Abrucio (2020, p. 16) argues.

From a theoretical standpoint, the view of bureaucratization as a unilateral episode defined from the top down by a bureaucratic elite is criticized. This idea had already been questioned by the Frankfurt School’s critical reading of Weber (1921/1999), especially by Adorno (2009), Marcuse (1964/2015), and Habermas (1981/2012a, 1981/2012b). These theorists revived the idea that bureaucracy is a form of power and control resulting from a long, conflictual, and erratic process of rationalization. In Brazil, this view was discussed by Guerreiro Ramos, Maurício Tragtenberg, and Fernando Prestes Motta.

Empirically, questions arise about the failure to acknowledge historical evidence of other Weberian characteristics of bureaucracy that existed in Brazil before 1930. These characteristics include the definition of jurisdiction, functional specialization, formalization, legalism, and the demand for state action to impose violence (both material and symbolic), exercise police power, and fulfill financial obligations. BPA ignores these elements as a paradigm due to its simplistic characterization as a management model opposed to patrimonialism. This leads to the disregard of all organizational complexity that existed during Brazil’s colonial and imperial periods. Recent historical research and available data sources related to Brazil’s administrative structure reinforce these questions. These theoretical and empirical points will be discussed below.

3. REASSESSING BUREAUCRATIC PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN BRAZIL: THE THEORETICAL DEBATE

As discussed by the authors (Dantas, 2022; Jasmin, 2021; Mascaro, 2024; Mata, 2017), the Weberian debate in Brazil is long-standing and diverse. Jasmin (2021, p. 789) identifies two primary trends. On the one hand, the heirs of the “institutional strand” founded by Raymundo Faoro (1958/2021) sought to “identify patrimonialism and the state” as “the solution to Brazil’s ‘delay’ in political reforms.” On

the other hand, Jasmin (2021, pp. 789-790) discusses Florestan Fernandes, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, and José Murilo de Carvalho. These scholars conceived of a “societal” approach, in which the state is not autonomous and detached from society as Faoro (1958/2021) interpreted it. According to Faoro, the state is “the main cause of the country’s ills,” not society.

In the “societal” approach, Jasmin (2021, p. 790) explains that “the relations between the bureaucratic establishment and political elites would be much more complex.” However, the institutional strand does not dwell on these complexities. Therefore, the Weberian institutional and societal interpretations are similar to two approaches to public bureaucracy in Brazil.

One view emphasizes the characteristics of bureaucracy, such as formalism, impersonality, hierarchy, and legalism. The other view relates bureaucracy to the rationalization process of modernity and primarily understands it as a form of power. Bresser-Pereira (1996, 1997, 2017, 2022) is a leading figure in the first group and a member of the CLAD (1999). He was directly influenced by the institutional strand of Faoro (1958/2021), who attempted to establish a direct opposition between patrimonialism (seen as essentially corrupt and nepotistic) and bureaucracy (seen as essentially rational).

Based on these characteristics, he advocated for a bureaucratic approach to public administration. The works of Prestes Motta (1986), Maurício Tragtenberg (2005, 2006), and Guerreiro Ramos (1960, 1984, 1946/2006, 1981/2022) stand out in the second strand. These authors recover the idea of bureaucracy as the result of a long process of rationalization. This process impacts the formation of rational-legal domination, which is a form of exercising power and control in society.

Therefore, this second strand is similar to Weberian interpretations of the Frankfurt School (Adorno, 2009; Marcuse, 1964/2015) and, above all, Habermas (1981/2012a, 1981/2012b). It demonstrates that the concept of a Weberian management model did not exist for Weber himself because he analyzed a diverse, broad, and irregular rationalization process.

In Brazil, within the organizational field, the works of Prestes Motta (1986), Maurício Tragtenberg (2005, 1974/2006), and Guerreiro Ramos (1960, 1984, 1946/2006, 1981/2022) are more aligned with this understanding, as discussed by Faria and Meneghetti (2011) and Camara (2012). This perspective is also evident in contemporary sociology, particularly in the works of Michael Löwy (2014) and Jessé Souza (2022, 2024).

Despite writing a book on bureaucracy with Prestes Motta (Motta & Bresser-Pereira, 1980/2004), Bresser-Pereira favored an essayistic historical perspective, which is not based so much on empirical evidence (Silva & Pereira, 2021). This perspective highlights the generic characteristics of bureaucracy in Weber in order to compose a vision of the Brazilian bureaucratic state that aligns with Faoro’s institutional strand (1958/2021). However, based on the works of Ramos, Tragtenberg, and Motta, one can recover the Weberian trail of rationalization and social domination.

As discussed by Andrews (2000), Paula (2007), and Souza and Ornelas (2015), Guerreiro Ramos is the thinker who, among the three mentioned, presented the Weberian interpretation closest to the critical revival carried out by the Frankfurt School, especially through his dialogue with Habermas. According to Ramos (1946/2006, p. 268), Max Weber made “the most successful attempt to establish a sociological science of history.”

Within this analytical framework, studying the state means understanding the historical and empirical process of rationalization that culminates in the formation of “national power.” Ramos (1960, p. 18) discusses this concept based on Weber’s definition of power as “the opportunity that an

individual or group has to impose their will on common action, even against the resistance of others who participate in it.”

The national power of the state is therefore a legal power legitimized by rational law, which only occurs in modernity. Ramos (1946/2006, p. 274) differentiates this from patrimonialism because, for him, “the patrimonial structure is pre-bureaucratic and therefore incompatible with rational economics, law, and fiscal policy.” This interpretation anticipates Jessé Souza’s (2022, 2024) contemporary critique of Brazilian patrimonialist anachronism. In this critique, Faoro’s (1958/2021) institutionalism transforms patrimonialism (a premodern concept) into a synonym for corruption (a modern concept) – something that Bresser-Pereira also does.

According to Souza (2024, p. 93), “one cannot speak of corruption in the modern sense before the French Revolution and the invention of the idea of popular sovereignty,” as “before that, it was unthinkable that public goods existed that belonged to everyone and could be stolen by private individuals.” Therefore, bureaucracy is not a 20th-century phenomenon, but rather a historical feature dating back to the formation of the modern nation-state.

As Paula (2008, p. 956) argues, Maurício Tragtenberg (1966, 1997, 2005, 1974/2006) was also “a discerning student of Weber” with whom he shared “concerns,” especially “regarding the problems of rationalization, secularization, and bureaucratization of social structures.” Tragtenberg (1974/2006, p. 139) therefore assertively concludes: “For Weber, bureaucracy is a type of power.”

According to Tragtenberg (1974/2006, p. 28), Weber was interested in how this form of power materializes through organizations as “an instrument of the dominant classes,” whether they are private companies or the state. Thus, the private sector becomes bureaucratized as well as the public sector, an idea that Weber himself defended in his concept of the disenchantment of the world. In this sense, public administration is a practical expression of the rational-legal domination of those who run the state. However, this does not mean that bureaucracy is exclusively a product of rationalization in the public sector.

Fernando Prestes Motta also views state bureaucracy as the result of a long process of rationalization and conflict. According to Motta (1981/2000, p. 25), “the creation of the state is, therefore, the confession that a society has entered into contradiction,” opposing the dispute between the economic power of the markets and the political power of the state. Thus, the author revives the discussion of bureaucracy within Weber’s analytical framework of historical forms of domination (traditional, charismatic, and rational-legal or legal-bureaucratic), arguing, in an organizational reading, that “domination is expressed as organization” (Motta, 1986, p. 68).

Therefore, rational-legal or legal-bureaucratic public administration is not an event, but rather a process of domination in motion. This process reflects an evolution of organizational modes that become increasingly formal, impersonal, and hierarchical over time. The focus of bureaucracy is control through rational domination in a continuous historical process of work specialization. This process does not occur as a rupture via the episodic application of a specific managerial model.

Prestes Motta (1986, 1981/2000), Tragtenberg (1980/2005, 1974/2006), and Guerreiro Ramos (1960, 1946/2006, 1981/2022) paved the way for a critical reinterpretation of Weber’s theory of bureaucracy in Brazil. However, the contribution of these authors is not in line with the paradigmatic approach established in the country.

Their historical perspective emphasizes complex evolution with advances and setbacks, aligning with recent historical research that highlights the administrative organization of Brazil during

the colonial and imperial periods (Fragoso, 2024; Fragoso & Bicalho, 2022; Sampaio, 2020). This perspective is also supported by data from MAPA and the SIAN online collection, maintained by the Brazilian National Archives and National Library, as discussed below.

However, the paradigmatic approach proposed by Bresser-Pereira remains a relevant reference for identifying the major milestones in the transition of modes of organizing public administration in Brazil. This approach indicates the moments when the rational-legal emphasis (objectivity, impersonality, and technical standardization, as understood by the critical Weberian reading as instrumental rationality) spreads more deeply throughout the various instances of the national public sector. Table 2 below summarizes these two approaches.

TABLE 2 CHARACTERISTICS OF BPA AND THE CRITICAL WEBERIAN APPROACH

Characteristics	BPA	Critical Weberian approach
Main authors in Brazil	Bresser-Pereira	Guerreiro Ramos, Tragtenberg, Prestes Motta.
Weber's reading	Weber analyzed bureaucracy mainly as a management model (a set of practices that make up a specific mode of organization).	Weber analyzed bureaucracy as a process of rationalization linked to the sociology of domination (rational relations of power and obedience historically constructed in societies).
Historical reading	Emphasizes bureaucratic rationality as a stage of historical transition of management models (one of the organizational paradigms that succeed each other over time).	Emphasizes the rationalization process as a long, conflictual, and erratic historical phenomenon, with setbacks, advances, and disputes.
Organizational focus	Emphasis on identifying, at a given historical moment in the public sector, the institutionalization of the characteristics analyzed by Weber for bureaucratic organizations (legalism, impersonality, objectivity, formalism).	Emphasis on the historical understanding of the process of building the administrative infrastructure of the state as part of a long arc of development of the exercise of power by dominant social groups.
Main application in the public sector	Allows for the identification of major milestones in the transition of modes of state organization, indicating moments of institutionalization and diffusion of certain practices in various instances of the public sector.	Allows for the identification of the dynamics of disputes over the organization of the state over time, focusing on the use of its administrative infrastructure to impose rational domination in the interests of certain social groups.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

4. HISTORICAL EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE: THE RATIONAL-LEGAL STATE BUREAUCRACY BEFORE 1930

As discussed by Costa and Costa (2016), Durant (2020), Mills and Novicevic (2020), and Raadschelders (2020), there has been a recent call to strengthen historical research in public administration, which has driven an increase in research on the historical formation of bureaucracies. Along these lines, Crooks and Parsons (2016) echo an analysis widely used in the humanities and social sciences (Blunt, 2021; Clegg et al., 2016; Cunha et al., 2023; Gratton et al., 2021; Jørgensen, 2012; Rego et al., 2010; Silva, 2024; Sousa, 2013; Warner, 2007; Yang, 2022). They emphasize the importance of historical research in addressing two simplistic views of the bureaucratic phenomenon. The first is the idealization of Weberian bureaucracy (extreme rationality), which Weber himself never did (Ringer, 2004). The second is the view of total dysfunctionality (extreme irrationality), as in Kafka.

An empirical historical analysis does not allow bureaucracy to be treated as a moment, whether rational or irrational, nor as an event that can be reduced to a complete rational utopia or a total irrational dystopia. Rather, it is necessary to analyze bureaucracy as the complex social phenomenon it is. Bureaucracy involves the exercise of power (domination) and results from a long process of rationalization (specialization, systematization, and formalization). This process coexists with traces of irrationality, as Chen (2024) analyzed in the bureaucratization of pre-Imperial China.

Goldstone and Haldon (2009, p. 9) point out that the maintenance of past empires shows that their survival depended on creating bureaucracies – that is, organizational command structures with rules, work specializations, hierarchies, and, above all, an organized “bureaucratic elite,” or technical leadership capable of “sustaining the formation of the state.”

Analyzing bureaucracy in this way changes how we understand the formation of Brazilian public administration. The organization of the colonial and imperial periods can be interpreted similarly to the model presented by Crooks and Parsons (2016): a prolonged process of bureaucratization as a means of exercising power and as a formal expression of Portuguese domination, and later, of the economic and political elite of independent Brazil.

The patrimonialist irrationality of the public sector was not broken 430 years after colonization began through administrative reorganization. From the beginning, there was rational domination that was not peaceful. It encountered resistance and contestation, including disputes between elites and opposition from dominated peoples and competing foreign forces. Thus, the bureaucratization process of the Brazilian state has its roots in the different rational strategies of domination (material and symbolic) that were used. The patrimonialist elements that existed at the time do not negate the predominance of rationality.

This interpretation aligns with the historiography proposed by the Old Regime in the Tropics (*Antigo Regime nos Trópicos* – ART) approach. This scientific historical research challenges the essayistic interpretation of Brazilian history. This interpretation includes the work of Faoro (1958/2021), which greatly influenced Bresser-Pereira. As discussed by Fragoso (2024), Fragoso and Bicalho (2022), and Sampaio (2020), the ART approach discusses historical, empirical evidence, such as official documents, letters, dispatches, communications, registry certificates, and so on, of the organization of Portuguese domination in Brazil. The ART approach highlights that the Portuguese imperial domination project was complex and rational. It was also characterized by various instances of power struggles spread across several continents (Pluricontinental Monarchy). This project was multifaceted and was influenced reciprocally by the network of relations between the colonies themselves and with the

Kingdom. This complex dynamic expanded to the Empire and left organizational traces fundamental to the Republic. However, these traces were not merely patrimonial but also bureaucratic (Table 3).

TABLE 3 SET OF CHARACTERISTICS THAT DEMONSTRATE BUREAUCRATIC ELEMENTS IN THE OLD REGIME IN THE TROPICS

Concept	Definition	Organizational characteristic	Weberian elements
Synodal political order	Formal institutionalized political power dispersed across legal norms and institutions, covering distinct social nuclei between the Kingdom and the Colonies (Cosentino, 2014).	Pluricontinental Monarchy: Geographically distant bureaucracies (royal and colonial nuclei) rationally unified by legal formalization inspired by natural law (Sampaio, 2020).	Rational-legal domination: political order based on written and formal norms, legally establishing a geographical specialization of bureaucracies.
“Polysynodal and corporate” administrative organization	Power disputed, but at the same time shared by various social groups that were formally linked to distinct organizations (corporations) (State, Chambers, Church) (Fragoso, 2014; Fragoso & Gouvêa, 2009; Santos et al., 2014).	Corporate Monarchy: Network of “competing powers” (<i>poli</i>) ranging “from the aristocracy to municipal communes” (synods), with the coexistence of municipal self-government, formal control by the Metropolis, and the influence of the Catholic Church (Fragoso, 2014, p. 16). The corporate is understood as the relative “autonomy of social bodies,” claiming the sharing of material and symbolic power of domination (Fragoso & Gouvêa, 2009, p. 38).	Bureaucratic (rational-legal) elements: organizations formally established by law, which coexisted with written rules (codes), work specializations (positions and functions), and their own chains of command (hierarchies).

(Continue)

Concept	Definition	Organizational characteristic	Weberian elements
Importance of the concept of Empire, of “loving obedience,” and the centrality of slavery	The State and its bureaucracies were rationally activated to impose the process of physical domination (just wars and the enslavement of indigenous peoples and Africans), consent to subjective-symbolic domination (the Church), and enable material domination (productive exploitation and the economy of favors) (Amantino, 2006; Fragoso, 2024; Fragoso & Krause, 2014).	Bureaucracy as a form of power and domination The organizational infrastructure that was built was geared toward imposing Portuguese domination in the formation of its empire. “Loving obedience” was the “social discipline” imposed on the basis of notions of “resignation and destiny,” grounded in the soteriological discourse of charity, a rational symbolic element of coordination of Portuguese domination (Fragoso, 2024, p. 118). Favors, graces, and gifts were symbolic and material rewards for services rendered to the Crown, whose concession “was not the result of its liberality, but rather the fulfillment of a moral obligation to repay the services rendered by its vassals” (Sampaio, 2020, p. 9).	Weberian sociology of domination: organizations rationally structured under the notions of obedience and domination (symbolic and material).

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on Amantino (2006), Cosentino (2014), Fragoso (2014, 2024), Fragoso and Gouvêa (2009), Fragoso and Krause (2014), Santos et al. (2014), and Sampaio (2020).

Part of the problem with BPA is that it is a paradigm characterized in opposition to patrimonialism. Faoro (1958/2021) reduced patrimonialism to a conservative liberal interpretation synonymous with corruption, as discussed by Souza (2022, 2024). Faoro (1958/2021) interpreted the payments, titles, and appointments made by the Portuguese Crown as inherently corrupt and possible to overcome only through the adoption of impersonal rules.

However, recent historical research considers this approach an anachronism since, at the time, a logic prevailed that is currently referred to as the “gift economy” (Sampaio, 2020, p. 9) based on favors or the common good. These favors, graces, and gifts were medieval Portuguese institutions that rewarded services to the Crown considered relevant to the “common good” of society. The granting of these rewards “was not the result of liberality, but rather the fulfillment of a moral obligation to repay the services rendered by its vassals” (Sampaio, 2020, p. 9).

These institutions were formal and rationally grounded in law. As Fragoso (2024, p. 131) discusses, this was part of how the “ideal society” of the time was organized. Its perceptions naturalized

“inequality.” “For the time,” Fragoso (2024, p. 131) states, “in that model of society, political leaders naturally had privileges because they took care of the *respublica*.” It was expected that there would be differences in treatment, symbolic recognition, and income. This does not mean that these practices were not questioned; it only reinforces the idea that one cannot project the contemporary view of corruption onto Portuguese patrimonialism to attribute its origin to it.

This oversimplification (corrupt patrimonialism versus bureaucratization) obscures the concept of bureaucracy as a rational means of power used for domination. This domination is formally activated via letters, requests, and orders and is substantiated and disseminated through recorded opinions and decisions. These elements of bureaucracy have been in place since the beginning of colonization. According to Weber (1946/1982, p. 230), “the administration of a modern office is based on written documents (‘the archives’), preserved in their original or draft form.”

In this sense, various modes of rational domination were formally articulated in pre-1930 organizational dynamics since the Colony. These dynamics were designed to impose domination. They were not invented in 1930, when the emphasis shifted to the impersonal reorganization of the federal public service. However, it is necessary to understand the various Weberian dimensions of the bureaucratic process.

Tragtenberg (1974/2006, p. 139) stated that “for Weber, bureaucracy implies the predominance of formalism, the existence of written rules, a hierarchical structure, a horizontal and vertical division of labor, and impersonality in the recruitment of staff.” Several of these aspects already existed in Brazil before 1930 (Araújo, 2021). Even the impersonal form of entry through public competitions was not invented in 1930 but rather expanded upon.

The Charter of April 20, 1758, already established rules for obtaining positions in the judiciary and treasury through competitive examinations (National Archives, 2022). As Maia (2021, p. 667) points out, “the public competitive examination became the official means of entry into some institutions, such as the National Treasury linked to the Ministry of Finance, from 1831 onward,” as determined in Article 96 of the Law of October 4, 1831. Similarly, Decree No. 1,387 of April 28, 1854, established rules for admission by competitive examination to the Medical Schools of the Empire in its articles 62 to 69 and 76 to 86.

Research conducted in the MAPA/SIAN databases involved direct consultations with each organizational structure available for each historical period analyzed (Colonial Brazil, the Empire, and the Old Republic). The legal basis of these structures was analyzed and confirmed through public information on the websites of the Federal Chamber and the Federal Government. Specific searches were also conducted for terms related to symbolic and material domination, such as favor, gift, and just war.

According to SIAN data, the positions of storekeeper and overseer were the first in Brazilian public administration. They were created in 1501 with specific formal duties (National Archives, 2022). The captain-general position in Brazil was created by a letter patent from King João III in 1530. Similarly, the General Government system designed a new administrative structure in 1548, which was formally created through regulations. This structure defined the specialized positions of governor-general, chief treasurer of the State of Brazil, treasurers, treasurer-general, and treasury judge.

Since 1549, appointments to the position of governor-general, since 1553 to the position of physician or surgeon-major, and since 1772 to the position of governor of captaincies were all formal, by royal charter, with specific duties. The Foundry houses and the Treasury of the Mines were

established in 1603 by the first mineral land ordinance. The first court of appeals in the colony, the Court of Appeals of the State of Brazil, was established by decree in 1609. The flight of the Portuguese court to the Brazilian colony in 1808 led to major administrative restructuring implemented through decrees and decisions. This restructuring resulted in the establishment of the Royal Treasury, the State Secretariats for Foreign Affairs and War, and the State Secretariat for Naval Affairs and Overseas Domains, among other positions and bodies, in the Colony.

Table 4 presents examples of historical documents from the Overseas Historical Archive database. These documents demonstrate that the process of appointment to positions was formal, written, documented, approved, and published by 1630, as it still is today in the Brazilian civil service (doc. 3). Similarly, formal requests for favors and payments for services rendered were not considered corrupt or immoral but rather a rational duty of the state. The fulfillment of this duty was formally demanded via letters, requests, and permits. For instance, documents from 1638 and 1721 (docs. 4 and 6) request the habit of Christ with effective tenancy. This payment was made to a member of the Order of Christ, a religious and military order, demonstrating the rational combination of symbolic (religious), material (economic), and political (state) domination.

There was also the formal delegation of powers to exercise police powers of collection, inspection, and control, both for economic activities, such as the extraction of brazilwood in 1604 (doc. 1), and for administrative expenses in 1615 (doc. 2). Additionally, officials were appointed (Chief Treasurer) in 1630 (doc. 3), and records were organized in 1721 (doc. 5). These aspects are all bureaucratic elements discussed and analyzed by Weber.

TABLE 4 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS THAT DEMONSTRATE THE FORMAL-LEGAL RATIONALITY PRIOR TO 1930 IN THE USE OF THE STATE FOR THE EXERCISE OF ECONOMIC (COLLECTION, CONTROL, AND PAYMENTS) AND POLITICAL (ORGANIZATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE) DOMINATION

Doc.	Date	Content	Theme	Source
1	July 12, 1604	Certified letter (transcript) from the King of Portugal, Filipe II, to brazilwood contractors, imposing sanctions on those who extracted it without a license or had it in their possession without being a contractor.	Organization of the Public Service	Overseas Historical Archive (AHU_ACL_CU_005, Box 1\Doc. 1)
2	March 31, 1615	Charter from the King of Portugal, Filipe II, granting powers to the governor of the state of Brazil, Gaspar de Sousa, to collect funds and spend money from the Royal Treasury to meet necessary expenses, revoking clauses from previous regulations and letters patent.	Organization of the Public Service	Overseas Historical Archive (AHU_ACL_CU_005, Box 1\Doc. 4)
3	ca.1630	Opinion on the appointment of persons to the position of Chief Treasurer of the Royal Treasury of the state of Brazil.	Organization of the Public Service	Overseas Historical Archive (AHU_ACL_CU_005, Box 1\Doc. 16)
4	March 22, 1638	Supply and statement by the Secretary of State, Francisco de Lucena, on the charter of the King of Portugal, Filipe III, regarding the favor granted to Valentim de Lemos Pereira, for having rendered services in the restoration of Bahia, of a position in the judiciary or treasury, for his son-in-law.	Economy of Favors	Overseas Historical Archive (AHU_ACL_CU_005, Box 1\Doc. 25)
5	August 25, 1638	Order from the Treasury Council instructing that the necessary warrants be issued so that the Chief Treasurer of the Royal Treasury of the state of Brazil could systematize the documentation of each ship carrying money to the Kingdom.	Organization of the Public Service	Overseas Historical Archive (AHU_ACL_CU_005, Box 1\Doc. 27)
6	January 29, 1721	Request from the paper clerk of the Overseas Council Secretariat, Miguel de Macedo Ribeiro, to the king [João V] requesting the habit of Christ with effective allowance for himself and one of his sons and daughters, in remuneration for his services and those of his brother Paulo de Macedo Neto.	Economy of Favors	Overseas Historical Archive (AHU_ACL_CU_089, Box 2\Doc. 120)

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on the online collection of the Brazilian Digital Newspaper Library (National Library) and the online collection of SIAN.

Furthermore, one of the main proofs of bureaucracy as a rational-legal power is its formal activation to impose violence. One of its most concrete and historically documented manifestations occurred when it was used to combat the resistance of indigenous peoples in the colonial region. According to the ART interpretation, this helped shape the organizational structure of the General Government (Cosentino, 2014).

Tables 5 and 6 illustrate documents formally requesting the state's activation as an organized, bureaucratic form of violent domination to establish "just wars" against indigenous peoples. These documents are rationally written, justified, and well-founded demands for state intervention, calling for the provision of weapons, ammunition, or payments to deliberately impose horror, extermination, and enslavement of indigenous peoples between 1651 and 1743.

Noteworthy is the rational combination of symbolic (religious) domination and (physical) violence, aiming to "punish the Barbarians" (Table 5, doc. 2) – as a means of defining difference as eliminable – vigorously, "with all our might" (Table 5, doc. 1), not only to exterminate but also "so that this spectacle may serve as a greater horror to them" (Table 6, doc. 1), promising enslavement as a reward – the "reward of the spoils" (Table 5, doc. 1) – in which "the captives shall be distributed" among those who participate in the confrontation (Table 6, doc. 1). These formal requests span almost a hundred years of the colonial period.

TABLE 5 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE OVERSEAS COUNCIL DEMONSTRATING THE RATIONAL LEGAL FORMALIZATION, BEFORE 1930, REQUIRING THE EXERCISE OF BUREAUCRACY AS A FORM OF POWER (DOMINATION) – CLAIM FOR STATE INTERVENTION TO CARRY OUT “JUST WARS” AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES BETWEEN 1651 AND 1732

Doc.	Date	Document	Reason	Excerpt from the document	Source
1	June 20, 1651	Letter to the governor of the Captaincy of Ilhéus, Antonio de Courós Carneiro, from the Count of Castelmelhor, dated June 20, 1651.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“The audacity of the Gentiles compels us to punish their insolence with all our might [...]. Let us enter, and with the advice of the most experienced, let us begin by the river [...] and from there destroy all the villages [...] seeking, on your part, to encourage all those who wish to go with the reward of the spoils, which I hope will be great.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950, p. 113.
2	ca. 1654	Letter from D. Hieronimo de Attaíde, Count of Atouguia. Regiment that took Captain-General Gaspar Roiz Adorno on his journey into the hinterland.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“I hereby inform the Captain-General [...] that I have now taken charge of the journey into the hinterland and the war I am waging against the Barbarian Gentiles, who are disturbing the inhabitants of this Recôncavo [...] the purpose of this journey is to punish the Barbarians who are disturbing the Recôncavo [...] and it is fitting that they be completely destroyed, along with all the others.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950, pp. 37-38.
3	January 16, 1732	Letter from Secretary Manuel Caetano Lopes de Lavre. Dispatch from the Overseas Council.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“[...] I have ordered that in the event that the people of that region flee due to hostilities perpetrated by the Payagoás gentiles, they should take refuge in the city of São Paulo, where they will be granted residence: in this regard.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950, p. 204.

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on the SIAN online collection.

TABLE 6 HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS FROM THE OVERSEAS COUNCIL DEMONSTRATING THE RATIONAL LEGAL FORMALIZATION, BEFORE 1930, REQUIRING THE EXERCISE OF BUREAUCRACY AS A FORM OF POWER (DOMINATION) – CLAIM FOR STATE INTERVENTION TO CARRY OUT “JUST WARS” AGAINST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES BETWEEN 1732 AND 1743

Doc.	Date	Document	Reason	Excerpt from the document	Source
1	February 4, 1732	Letter from the Viceroy of Brazil complaining that the governments of the Captaincies of São Paulo and Minas Gerais are not reporting to him on what is happening in those territories.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“[...] order the Governor of São Paulo to promptly and vigorously seek, by the most effective means, to attack them within their own lodgings, both the Paiaguases gentiles and the other nations that have confederated with them to help them harass us, burning and destroying all their villages, so that this spectacle may serve as a greater horror to them, keeping in captivity all those who can surrender and be captured [...] this war shall be made public, declaring [...] that the captives shall be distributed among those who enter into it, so that those most interested in this endeavor may be employed in the said war and shall be assisted by the Royal Treasury with all the gunpowder and bullets, ammunition, weapons, and other equipment that may be necessary.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950.
2	April 10, 1734	Letter from Secretary Manuel Caetano Lopes de Lavre. Dispatch from the Overseas Council.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“[...] for the expenses of the war, which I ordered to be carried out against the Payaguás Gentiles.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950, p. 245.
3	November 9, 1734	Letter from Secretary Manuel Caetano Lopes de Lavre. Dispatch from the Overseas Council.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“[...] whose expense would increase further in the said year due to the war that is being waged on my orders against the Payagoás gentiles and their confederates.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950, p. 253.
4	April 15, 1743	Letter from Secretary Manuel Caetano Lopes de Lavre. Dispatch from the Overseas Council.	Appeal to the State to promote a “Just War” against Indigenous Peoples.	“[...] order Lieutenant General Manuel Rodrigues de Carvalho to be paid double the salary he earned since leaving the city of São Paulo to wage war on the Payaguás gentiles.”	Historical Documents. Consultations of the Overseas Council of Bahia (1395-1696; 1724-1732), 1950, p. 457.

Source: Elaborated by the authors based on the SIAN online collection.

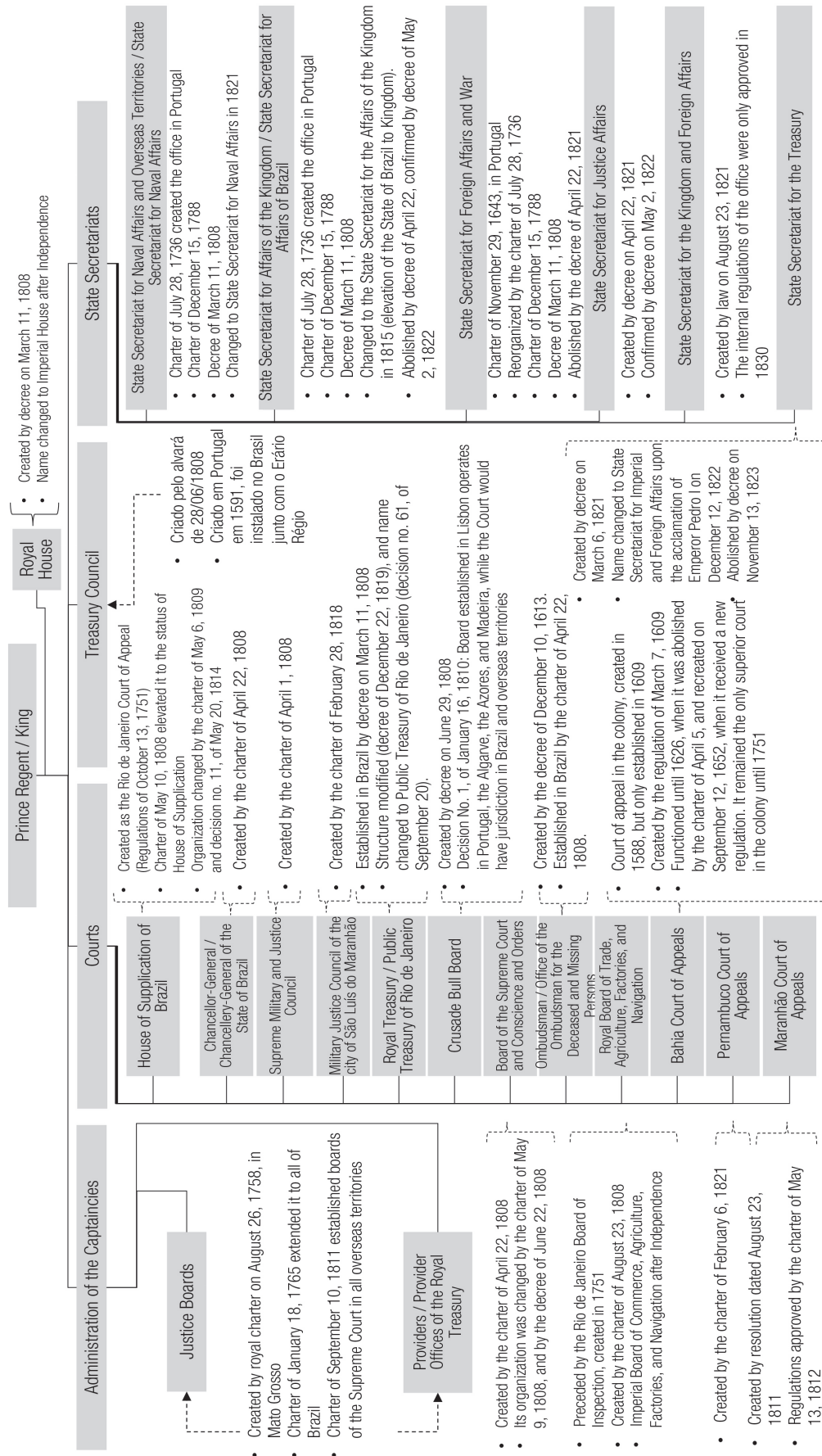
The SIAN databases provide empirical evidence demonstrating the rationalization and formalization of the Brazilian administrative structure since the colonial period. Research on organizational evolution in Brazilian public administration shows that the “administrative organization that was in place after the promulgation of the 1824 Constitution” indicated aspects that “laid *the foundations for a bureaucratic state model* that would still take time to consolidate” (Cabral, 2017, p. 31, emphasis added).

Claiming that Brazil’s first administrative reform only occurred in 1930 ignores all the administrative measures taken since 1822 to rationalize the civil service, as Cabral (2017) discusses and analyzes. These measures include the *four administrative reforms of the Brazilian Empire*, which took place: a) from 1822 to 1842, with the redistribution of duties, personnel, and restructuring of secretariats (Ordinance of September 15, 1828; Decision No. 77, of March 15, 1830; Law of October 4, 1831); b) from 1842 to 1859, with changes in the structures of the state secretariats, especially those of Justice, the Empire, and War, putting an end to the pre-Independence administrative structure (Decree No. 256, of November 30, 1842; Decree No. 2,368, of March 5, 1859); c) from 1859 to 1868, with the reorganization of the Public Treasury and the secretariats of Justice, Foreign Affairs, the Navy, the Empire, and War (Decree No. 1,067, of July 28, 1860; Decree No. 2,749, of February 16, 1861; Decree No. 4,154, of April 13, 1868); d) from 1868 to 1891, with the reduction of the state impacted by the expenses of the Paraguayan War and the transition to the Republic (Law No. 23, of October 30, 1891).

As Figures 2, 3, and 4 show, the Brazilian state was already organized into a hierarchical, rational-legal structure distributed according to labor specializations and based on law throughout the 19th century, a trend that intensified over time. Nomenclatures, attributions, and functions were specified in public norms and validated politically and legally. Even structures inherited from the colonial period, such as boards, treasurers and treasuries, chancelleries, and court bodies, were created by formal charters or regulations in the 18th century and reorganized via decrees and laws in the 19th century (see Figures 3 and 4).

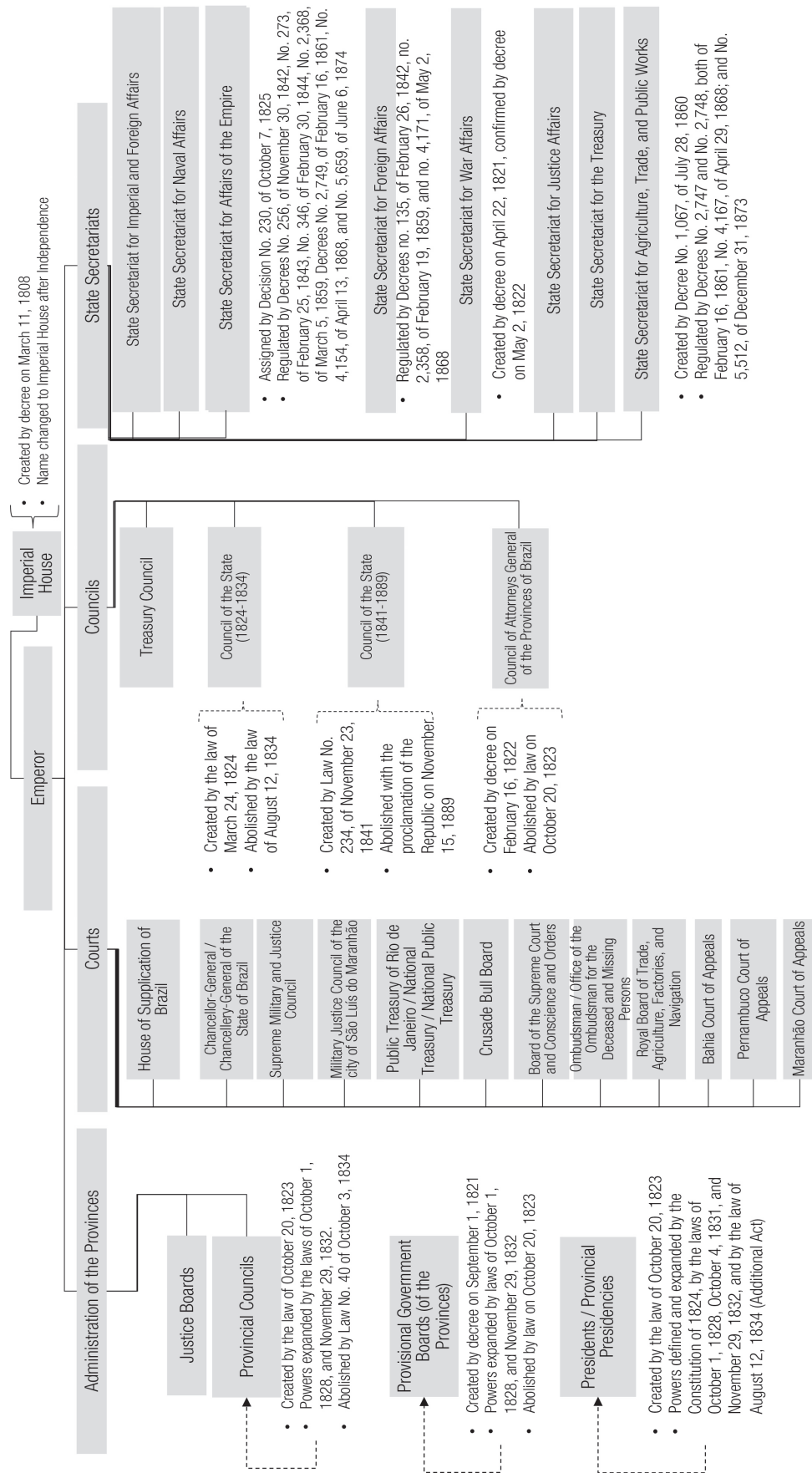
By comparing Figures 2, 3, and 4, one can identify the efforts made by the various bodies throughout the state infrastructure to rationalize their processes. These bodies were in the process of being reduced and concentrated until they reached the format determined by the 1891 reform (Law No. 23, of October 30, 1891), which established the ministerial composition. This format has remained in place to this day, surviving even the administrative reforms of the 20th century, including the managerial reform of 1995 and the neoliberal reform of 2018-2019 (Law No. 13,502, of November 1, 2017; Law No. 13,709, of August 14, 2018; Provisional Measure No. 821, of February 26, 2018; Provisional Measure No. 869, of December 27, 2018; Provisional Measure No. 870, of January 1, 2019) (Carelli, 2022; Cittadino, 2023; Medeiros & Trebat, 2021; Rossi, 2024; Saad-Filho, 2020; Sátyro, 2021; Souza & Hoff, 2019; Søndergaard, 2021).

FIGURE 2 BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A RATIONAL-LEGAL BUREAUCRACY BEFORE 1930: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE BETWEEN 1808 AND 1822



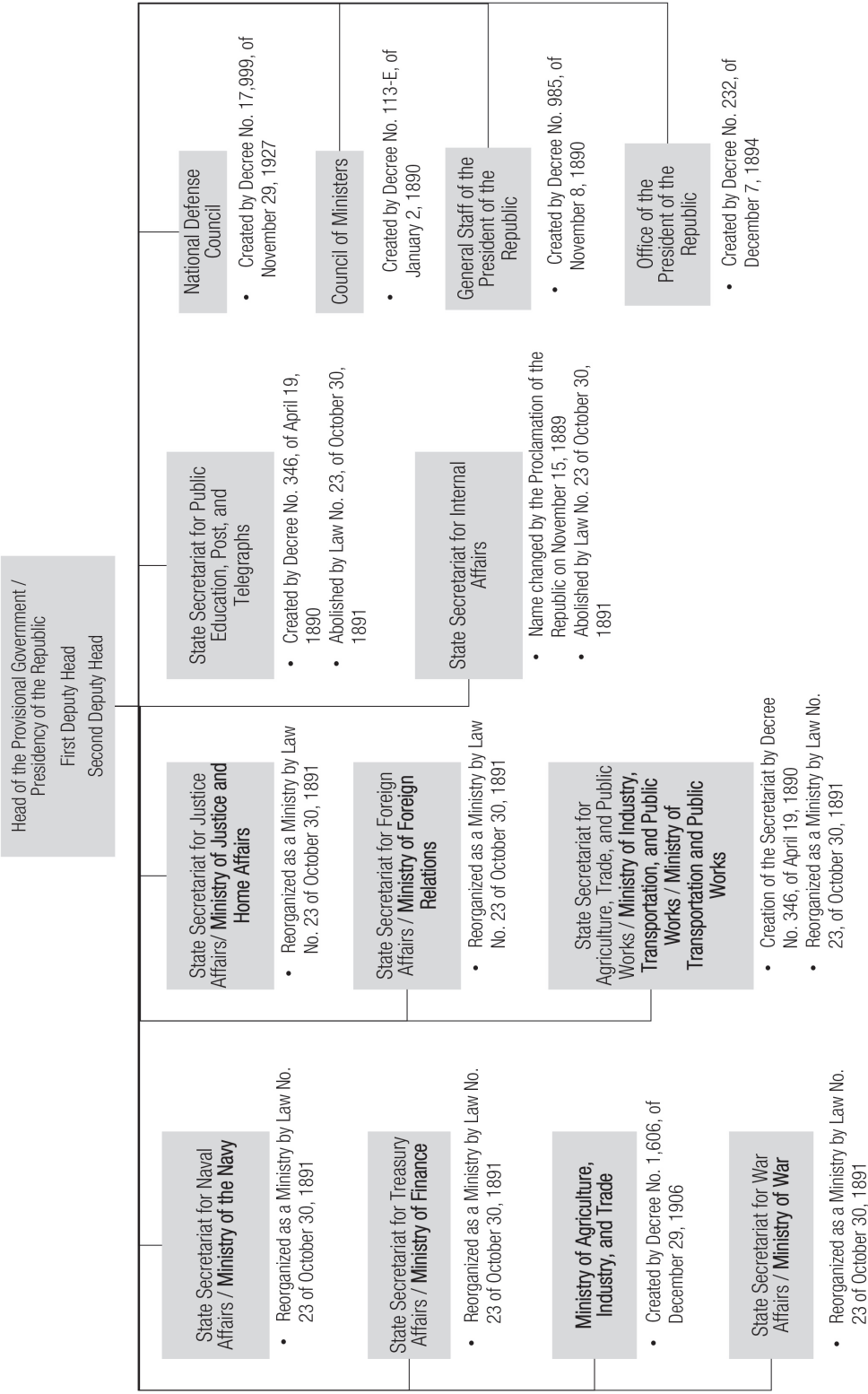
Source: Elaborated by the authors based on MAPA and the SIAN online collection.

FIGURE 3 BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A RATIONAL-LEGAL BUREAUCRACY BEFORE 1930: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE BETWEEN 1822 AND 1889



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on MAPA and the SIAN online collection.

FIGURE 4 BRAZILIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AS A RATIONAL-LEGAL BUREAUCRACY AFTER 1930: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE BETWEEN 1930 AND 1945



Source: Elaborated by the authors based on MAPA and the SIAN online collection.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The BPA paradigm, defined by Bresser-Pereira in the 1990s, represents an important step toward understanding the evolution of public administration in Brazil. However, as historical interpretive disputes in bureaucracy studies demonstrate, it is sometimes interpreted very simplistically. It is viewed as oscillating between an overly rational Weberian model, which emerged in 1930 with the Vargas government's administrative reform, and an irrationally dysfunctional Kafkaesque reality. This reality led to exhaustion beginning in 1988 with the promulgation of the Constitution. Some viewed this as a bureaucratic setback.

Nevertheless, historical interpretations of bureaucracy and the rationalization process present a more complex reading. For example, Habermas's interpretation is based on Weber's work. These interpretations understand bureaucratization as a long, dynamic process of modernization, rather than a bureaucratic moment. Guerreiro Ramos, Tragtenberg, and Prestes Motta's analyses in Brazil pointed to this path, which BPA did not follow.

In the 30 years since the definition of BPA, new research and historical data on the organization of Brazilian public administration during the colonial and imperial periods have emerged. These records, housed in the National Archives and the National Library, cast doubt on the sustainability of the inaugural rational-bureaucratic moment in 1930. Interpretations of recent historical research, such as the ART approach, question the historical essayist reading of Brazil present in BPA, influenced by Faoro (1958/2021) in Bresser-Pereira. These interpretations also relativize the view of 430 years of irrational, corrupt patrimonialism overcome by administrative reorganization in 1930.

These new findings and interpretations suggest that the BPA paradigm – which views bureaucratization as an autonomous model that began in 1930, as opposed to an unchanging patrimonialism that lasted for nearly five centuries – needs to be reevaluated. This article demonstrates that contemporary Brazilian sociological debates have advanced discussions about Weber, and that empirical historical research through the MAPA and ART programs has brought new evidence and interpretations about Brazil's past. This evidence shows that the rational effort to dominate the state was gradually structured bureaucratically.

Since colonial Brazil, formal communications and the rational legal action of the state have been used to establish symbolic and material domination over communal life. Positions, functions, and duties were legally established. A hierarchical organizational structure gradually formed and was maintained based on law and functional specializations since the Empire, when four administrative reforms took place, and advanced to the Republic. Even the impersonal selection process began in the 19th century. The reform of the 1930s accelerated bureaucratization but did not create it in Brazil.

However, there is still much to be explored. We must advance our knowledge of how these organizational structures have functioned over the years, their impacts, and their modes of specialization. Additionally, we must identify the levels of professionalization of typical state careers prior to 1930, such as in the military, the diplomatic corps, and the National Treasury. Recently, Bresser-Pereira (2022) reflected on his work, acknowledging his mistake in treating the crisis of the state as a crisis of the state in the economy because he accepted the Washington Consensus as truth. However, he maintained his diagnosis that the bureaucratic form in which the state was administered had contributed to a crisis of the state. Therefore, it is time to reassess in order to advance our knowledge of the country's bureaucratization process.

In this sense, we suggest conducting empirical research to detect the path of the institutionalization of rational-bureaucratic domination prior to 1930 and to identify elements that have affected the organization of the administrative infrastructure of the state since colonization. For example, one could compare the impact of centuries of slavery on the organizational construction of the Brazilian state with patrimonialism, the element preferred by the paradigmatic approach.

Such research could lead to a more in-depth discussion of the adequacy of the paradigmatic view of public administration, not only in BPA but also in prior models, such as the alleged 430-year patrimonialist model. However, the sociology of domination has limitations in its approach to bureaucracy, one of which is the difficulty of identifying moments of transition between various modes of state organization.

Treating bureaucratization as a long, incremental process of rationalization may give the impression of relativizing the importance of major institutional changes, such as technological transformations, constitutional reforms, and political ruptures. Empirical research on these processes of institutional transformation from the perspective of the sociology of domination would refine the potential contribution of this alternative approach to understanding bureaucratization in the country.

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DATA AVAILABILITY

The entire dataset supporting the results of this study has been made publicly available through the Brazilian Public Administration Memory Project (MAPA), the online collection of the National Archives Information System (SIAN), which is maintained by the Brazilian National Archives, and the Brazilian Digital Newspaper Library (National Library). It can be accessed through the following links: <https://mapa.an.gov.br/>, <https://sian.an.gov.br/>, and <https://memoria.bn.gov.br/>.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

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