

Political appointments in municipal governments and bureaucratic performance: evaluating achievement

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This article discusses the politicization of the bureaucratic structures of the Brazilian municipalities based on appointed positions. The intention is to demonstrate patterns of political appointments that reflect institutional performance. The data were provided by Munic/IBGE 2005/14 and IpoC- *Instituições Políticas Comparadas*/UFRGS. Firstly, the study observed the degree of variability of the distribution of these positions in municipal structures, and the quality of the appointees' education. Then, an analysis of spatial, global, and local dependence was performed. In addition, the difference in performance among municipalities was statistically tested using the independent t-test. The test compared municipalities' performance concerning the number and education of appointees. The study used the Municipal GDP-Per-Capita, the *Índice Firjan de Desenvolvimento Municipal* (IFDM), and the *Índice de Governança Municipal* (IGM) created by the Federal Board of Administration as proxies for performance. The results stress the complexity of local public management since some of the tests indicate the number and education of appointees as predictors of high performance while other studies do not find the same relationship.

Keywords: political appointment; bureaucratic performance; municipal bureaucracy; state capacity.

Nomeações políticas nos governos municipais e performance burocrática: avaliando o desempenho

Este artigo aborda a politização das estruturas burocráticas dos municípios brasileiros mediante cargos comissionados (CCs). Os dados foram obtidos por meio do banco de dados do grupo de pesquisa Instituições Políticas Comparadas (IpoC), do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE), e dos sites oficiais do Conselho Federal de Administração (CFA) e da Federação das Indústrias do Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN). Inicialmente, verificou-se o grau de variabilidade da distribuição desses cargos nas estruturas municipais e a qualidade instrucional desses servidores. Em seguida, procedeu-se a uma análise de dependência espacial global e local. Além disso, analisou-se estatisticamente, via teste *t* independente, a diferença de desempenho entre os municípios com maiores capacidades dos comissionados em comparação àqueles com menores capacidades dos comissionados e entre os municípios com maiores quantidades de comissionados em comparação àqueles com menores quantidades de comissionados. Como *proxy* de desempenho, utilizou-se o produto interno bruto (PIB) *per capita* municipal, o Índice FIRJAN de Desenvolvimento Municipal (IFDM) e o Índice de Governança Municipal (IGM), criado pelo CFA. O resultado traz à tona a complexidade da administração pública municipal, já que os diversos testes divergem sobre os efeitos da capacitação e da quantidade de servidores comissionados como elementos preditores de um melhor desempenho dos municípios.

Palavras-chave: nomeação política; desempenho burocrático; burocracia municipal; capacidade estatal.

Nombramientos políticos en los gobiernos municipales y performance burocrática: evaluando el desempeño

Este artículo aborda la politización de las estructuras burocráticas de los municipios brasileños a través del uso de cargos comisionados. Los datos se obtuvieron a través del banco de datos del grupo de investigación Instituciones Políticas Comparadas (IpoC), del Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística (IBGE) y de los sitios web oficiales del Consejo Federal de Administración (CFA) y de la Federación de las Industrias de Río de Janeiro (FIRJAN). Inicialmente se verificó el grado de variabilidad de la distribución de esos cargos en las estructuras municipales y la calidad instrucional de esos servidores. A continuación, se procedió a un análisis de dependencia espacial global y local. Además, se analizó estadísticamente, con el uso del test *t* independiente, la diferencia de desempeño entre los municipios con comisionados con más capacidades en relación con los de menos y, entre los municipios con mayores cantidades de comisionados en comparación con los con menos. Como *proxy* de desempeño se utilizó el PIB *per cápita* municipal, el Índice FIRJAN de Desarrollo Municipal (IFDM) y el Índice de Gobernanza Municipal (IGM) creado por el CFA. El resultado revela la complejidad de la administración pública municipal, ya que, algunas pruebas indican la capacitación y la cantidad de servidores como solución y recomendación a los municipios; mientras que otras indican lo contrario.

Palabras clave: nombramiento político; rendimiento burocrático; burocracia municipal; capacidad de los estados.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Private organizations have long been compelled to develop their area of human resources to face the need to adapt and survive. Human resources development has included improvement of employees' skills, competencies, attitudes, and professional experiences, using pragmatic strategies to gain effectiveness and increase profits.

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, several scholars in the field of the administration worked on such strategies, proposing theoretical models to offer effectiveness and predictability to organizations, contributing so they would achieve the desired results.

The field of public administration has adopted some of these strategies of human resources development, seeking to improve effectiveness. However, the Brazilian case demonstrates that it is not rare to find public managers who do not have the required technical skills and professional experience for their position, remaining in office only for political reasons.

An immediate consequence of this situation is that appointed managers' low performance consequently jeopardize the effectiveness of the state apparatus. Notwithstanding, they enjoy a higher degree of legitimacy in comparison to career managers since they are chosen by elected politicians, representing the voters' will.

Although appointed positions in public administration have been associated with patronage, clientelism, and cronyism, they can be interpreted as a form of increasing the leadership capacity of elected officials over the bureaucratic management (Santos, 2009), which strengthens the bureaucracy's *raison d'être*.

The issue of appointed managers vs. career managers has deeper roots in the Brazilian state of democracy and the rule of law. It involves the understanding of how far the public activity can go exclusively on political grounds, without affecting the performance of the state apparatus regarding the provision of public goods and services. It also involves the analysis of the relevance of the political criteria when it comes to strengthening the country.

Thus, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- How are appointed positions distributed in the bureaucratic management of Brazilian municipalities?
- What is the effect of the number of appointed positions in the state apparatus' performance?
- What is the influence of the political appointees' technical knowledge on the state apparatus?

These questions inspire reflections on the management model adopted in the Brazilian public administration and the outlines it should have to guarantee effectiveness.

From an empirical point of view, this research analyzed the bureaucratic structures of Brazilian local governments, as they are the primary locus of public policy production.

The importance of this study lies first on the fact that, in times of public resource scarcity, bureaucratic management performance is crucial to improve the state's capacity to deliver services and, consequently, to improve the country socially and economically. Second, the study comprehends that the legitimacy given from the population toward the public action and the benefits of democracy that stems from such legitimacy is as relevant as the state's performance.

In addition, due to the complexity of the subject, this research has no intention to exhaust the discussions but to cover the main points highlighted based on the approach adopted.

2. CLASSIC BUREAUCRATIC MODEL AND DEMOCRACY

The end of the nineteenth century witnessed the height of the liberal state, following the changes the capitalism promoted, after emerging from the Industrial Revolution. At that time and while analyzing the structures of churches and armies, Max Weber presented studies on the bureaucracy that would change the administration sciences in the following centuries (Tragtenberg, 1992).

Weber's three types of domination are identified according to how society legitimizes each of them:

1. **Charismatic domination:** the power stems from a leader's heroism, affection, oratory, or exemplary character. The influence depends on the leader's personal qualities and, therefore, only lasts as long as such qualities exist;
2. **Traditional domination:** the legitimacy is based on tradition and customs. Thus, institutions are personified in a leader due to possible 'sanctity' or to powers supported by a pre-existing 'contract;'
3. **Legal or rational domination:** the legitimacy is grounded on the law and is primarily guided by rationality and objectivity. In this case, the law states "whom to obey" and "how far to obey," explaining that the authority falls on the position and not on the person in charge.

According to Max Weber, bureaucracy corresponds to the systematic organization of legal or rational domination. It is the element that makes an organizational form superior to others (Marenco, 2017) because it adopts principles that, according to Cardoso (2017), resulting in maximum technical performance – such as precision, continuity, discipline and rigor, and reliability. The adoption of these principles, invariably, would guarantee the organization's maximum efficiency (Lane, 1993; Weber, 2000). The bureaucratic model was expected to be the synthesis of the virtue of knowledge and rationality (Medeiros, 2006).

Rationality is a key concept in the notion of bureaucracy, presenting a "calculating" characteristic since it favors one way of acting over another (Guerreiro Ramos, 1989), or it favors a specific system that rationally divides the work according to its goals (Medeiros, 2006). Therefore, the exact application of the bureaucratic model would exclude human values and emotions from organizational units, replacing these characteristics with science and reason (Reed, 1998).

It is important to note that the legal or rational type of domination sought to adopt in public administration a contextual perspective typical of that historical moment. The idea was that public institutions should primarily have efficient administrative structures, regardless of the relevance of the political leadership's legitimacy to conduct public affairs properly.

Waldo (2012) offered an extended interpretation of the issue, stating that, at that time, science opposed the democracy within the public administration, as it was considered hostile toward efficiency. This point of view led Mintzberg (1984, p. 357) to describe this type of domination as "machine bureaucracy."

However, even being a 'machine bureaucracy,' the model sought to enable the government of large social groups, controlling the organizations' power. It used written norms, hierarchy, formalities,

impersonality, division of labor, and selection of personnel, based on technical and objective characteristics. Thus, when civil servants adopt such protocols *ex-ante*, it is possible to reduce the discretion in administrative activities, ultimately ensuring the achievement of results (Marenco, 2017; Weber, 1984).

This tendency toward bureaucratic professionalization was contrary to the logic prevailing in the US President Andrew Jackson's mandate (from 1829 to 1837). During those years, problems of delegation arising from the relationship between elected politicians and career managers were solved by replacing career managers based on purely discretionary criteria, creating "representative bureaucracies," in practice known as "spoils system" (Carpenter, 2001; Peters, 2001; Peters & Pierre, 2010; Rouban, 2010).

In the Weberian model, the policy implementation should be guided by science and coordinated by the executive branch. Implementation should be separated from the processes of agenda-setting and elaboration of public policies, which are stages of the policy cycle to be developed in the political sphere (Henry, 1975). Aragão (1997, p. 109, our translation) adds affirming that "the typical characteristics of the political leader were opposed to those of the bureaucrat, who should privilege their activity in the office." Thus, "Weber's bureaucrats were concerned only with carrying out their assignments and contributing to the fulfillment of the goals of the apparatus as a whole" (Evans, 1993, p. 115). They were, therefore, oblivious of the typical political games around public policies (Farah, 2011; Waldo, 2012).

This feature is crucial in Weber's model, i.e., to distinguish the "politics" and the "administration structure" of the organization through impersonality and other attributes (Minogue, Polidano, & Hulme, 1998; Waldo, 1971). Also, this feature aligns the model with assumptions by Woodrow Wilson (1887) and Frank Goodnow (1900) (founders of public administration), who explicitly advocated the separation between public administration and politics.

Therefore, the state should create institutional foundations to guarantee that political interests and particular commitments do not influence in the administration structure, protecting the state's assets from particular interests (Cardoso, 2017). Measures in this direction would be, for instance, replacing rewards and prizes with fixed wages, creating long-term career positions instead of using appointed short-term employees, recruiting personnel based on meritocratic criteria, replacing elected or appointed civil servants with career professionals, and substituting the attitudes based on personal criteria with the complete impersonality of the bureaucratic system (Bendix, 1964; Oliveira, 2007; Weber, 1984). In so doing, public administration ceased to be personal and become a state-owned asset (Aragão, 1997).

In the same way, this model would keep the power within an impersonal institution, governed by statutes and official documents, instead of a personal body, based on the leadership's discretionary criteria.

As a consequence, organizations from all over the world started to use this bureaucratic model to contain the cultural patrimonialism and to offer greater administrative efficiency to the state apparatus (Aragão, 1997; Ferreira, 1996), meeting the particular interests of a new bourgeoisie regarding the state management.

During this movement of dissemination, the bureaucratic public administration model found its way to Brazil, arriving effectively in 1938, with the creation of the *Departamento Administrativo do Serviço Público* (DASP) (public service administrative department). The DASP sought to replace the

administration where public and private assets were wrongly mixed, fighting cronyism, paternalism, and clientelism within the state apparatus (Abrucio, Pedroti, & Pó, 2010; Rabelo, 2011).

According to Maciel (2007), the consolidation of the bureaucratic public administration in Brazil was a product of the more recent elaboration of the Brazilian Federal Constitution (CF, 1988). For the author, the process of drafting the constitution was intense and mobilized different social segments, who sought, ultimately, to consolidate their interests in process democratically. In practice, the implementation of the democratic constitutional mechanisms was conducted through a political decentralization of the state, overcoming the authoritarian and centralizing government practices observed in the previous period (a few years before the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution, the country was subjected to an authoritative military government). Also, these mechanisms contributed to building a new organizational model anchored in participatory management (Cardoso & Nunes, 2015; Frazee & Abrucio, 2009).

The decentralization process after the 1988 Constitution allowed observing an extensive politicization of different areas of public administration, helping citizens to exercise some control of the public sphere. This capability was reproduced in all levels of government, where citizens elected the chief of the executive branch.

The possibility of dissipating internal conflicts at the end of an electoral process is a characteristic of the democratic system, understood as a mechanism able to designate the maximum leader of the public administration. Theoretically, as soon as the leadership is elected – with the support of the majority of voters –, political directions are defined according to work plans and political positions presented during the electoral campaign.

However, there are some issues to consider: how would the elected leader of public bureaucracy, chosen for their political and biased work plans and positioning, be able to lead a municipal bureaucratic structure that, in theory, must have technical and impersonal performance? Also, how can one force the professional bureaucracy to accept carrying out a biased political decision, even though the majority of the population supports such a decision? Finally, how will politicians implement their biased decisions counting on bureaucratic agents who enjoy autonomous and professional careers?

The most appropriate answer underlying all these issues is the politicization of bureaucracy, using appointed positions. This strategy allows forming a group of leaders, managers, and advisors aligned with and committed to the executive political leadership.

3. POLITIZATION OF BUREAUCRACY AND THE TRADE-OFF BETWEEN RESPONSIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

As observed above, the politicization of some government agencies is how executive political leaders carry out the implementation of biased projects and decisions in a bureaucracy established as entirely impartial. The politicization helps to circumvent situations where the public bureaucratic management has distinct preferences compared to the population's will (Lewis, 2005), which means that politicization may be considered a mechanism to harness the state apparatus toward the will of the people, manifested and legitimized in elections.

Also, the politicization strategy reduces the bureaucracy's potential insulation, leading the state apparatus to be more responsive to the population's demand.

According to Bok (2003), more political appointees in public administration would give the government a higher capacity to fight inertia, introduce new ideas, and keep the government in contact with different interest groups.

Therefore, political appointments may be a way to increase the degree of institutional responsiveness (Santos, 2009), to the extent that it would offer citizens a higher capacity to exercise power over the public sphere.

Studies such as Lewis (2005, 2007), however, showed that, in general, public policies led by appointed managers selected exclusively based on political reasons, are less effective when compared to those conducted by career managers. The study by Krause, Lewis, and Douglas (2006), complemented these findings, demonstrating that – when considering the variable ‘training’ in the analysis of data – the improvement of appointed managers’ technical capacities results in more effectiveness.

For Santos (2009), the politicization of public administration is usually connected to a reduction in the technical capacity of the state agencies, affecting their competence and effectiveness, as well as worsening the work environment. In addition, Ayllón and Guerrero (2005) point out a correlation between the excess of administrative politicization and the increase in illegal practices, clientelism, and nepotism.

In short, some studies show the executive branch’s use of politicization to increase control and remove inertia of the state apparatus, as well as reduce the bureaucratic management’s tendency to insulation. In other words, the politicization is used to instrumentalize the state apparatus and increase responsiveness. However, other studies demonstrate that exacerbated politicization is correlated to the reduction of the public agencies’ technical capacity, to worse performance, and to the increase of corruption, clientelism, and nepotism.

The influence of politicization in public administration leads authors such as Maranto (2001), Lewis (2007), and Ballenstedt (2007) to argue that reducing the number of excessive appointed positions is a factor that contributes to improving the government’s managerial capacity.

In the case of Brazil, considering the country’s recent history of an authoritarian regime, the reduction of politically appointed positions in the bureaucratic management could bring back the memories of that socio-historical context, which let the population without democratic representation for a long time. The presence of politicians who could connect the society and the state bureaucracy was demanded for years to meet the population’s suppressed requests.

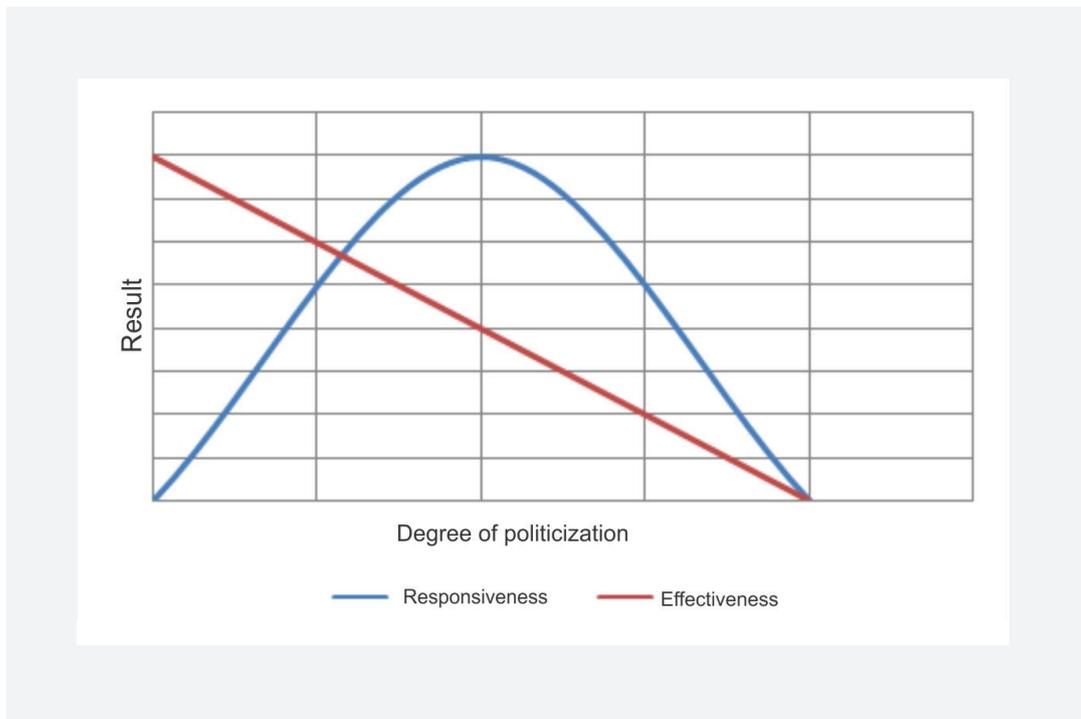
Therefore, the state faces the challenge of finding a balance, identifying the extent the number of politically appointed positions should be reduced within the bureaucracy, in order to improve effectiveness without affecting the quality of the democracy and social control of the population over the government. After all, both the low politicization of bureaucracy and the low qualification of appointed managers end up weakening the democratic rule of law. A wrong balance results in poor performance or little responsiveness, consequently increasing the population’s distrust of public policies and institutions (Santos, 2009).

Another issue regarding such imbalance is the fact that excessive politicization compromises institutional effectiveness, reaching levels that society no longer accepts. In this case, the politically-oriented action contributes to dissolve the legitimacy of the bureaucratic management, and it becomes no longer justifiable due to its incapacity to operate (Santos, 2009). A paradox emerges, where the excess of politicization to increase the responsiveness of the state apparatus results precisely in a lack of

such responsiveness. Instead, it contributes to building a more democratic state, and the politicization acts in the opposite way (Lewis, 2005; Rourke, 1976).

The complexity of the problem leads to a collective action dilemma, the public leadership option between effectiveness or responsiveness, added to particular elements of the Brazilian historical context mentioned above. Figure 1 simply represents how responsiveness and effectiveness vary depending on the degree of politicization in any bureaucracy.

FIGURE 1 EFFECTIVENESS AND RESPONSIVENESS ACCORDING TO THE DEGREE OF POLITICIZATION OF THE BUREAUCRATIC MANAGEMENT



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Figure 1 allows inferring that “effectiveness” is a negative function of the increase in politicization when filling positions in the government since it overlaps political loyalty with technical rationality as a parameter of choice. In parallel, “responsiveness” shows curvilinear behavior, increased as a result of the correspondence between median political and electoral preferences and bureaucratic choices aligned with them. The curve, however, reverses as their saturation compromises the ability to implement government programs.

In this sense, it is crucial to seek a degree of political intervention that guarantees a level of bureaucratic effectiveness minimally acceptable to society, at the same time that the public interest is represented, offering the system its democratic characteristics. Therefore, the questions that emerge from these reflections are:

- To what extent should a public bureaucracy be politicized?
- What would be the optimum point?

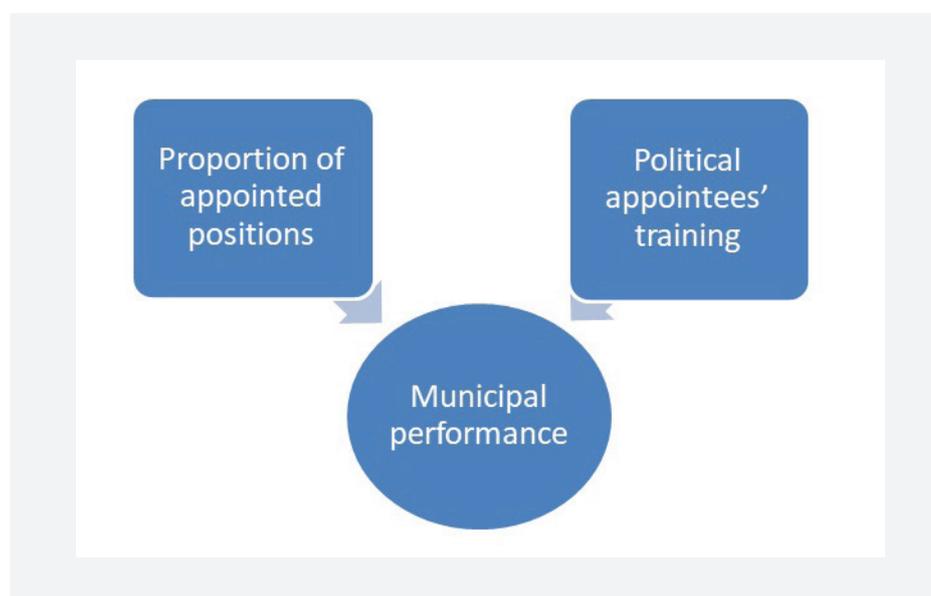
4. METHODOLOGY

The theoretical argument adopted considers that a municipal bureaucratic structure can reach an optimum level of political appointees. This optimal level is achieved based on the number of appointed positions (APs) in comparison to the total number of career civil servants, and on quality, i.e., the level of the appointees' training.

Although theoretically possible, operationalizing such broad concepts represent a great challenge, which is aggravated by the difficulty of isolating the specific effects of these variables. There are numerous factors influencing proxies that could be used to measure outcomes in terms of municipalities' performance.

By using a predominantly quantitative approach, this exploratory study aimed to unveil patterns regarding political appointments and their relation with institutional performance. Therefore, this research focuses on the variables in Figure 2.

FIGURE 2 RESEARCH VARIABLES



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Appointed positions are the functional and autonomous positions that can be held by individuals without a career in the public agency they serve. Usually, these positions are linked to management, leadership, and advisory roles, demanding trust, and personal commitment between the appointee and the political leadership.

Therefore, the higher the proportion of APs in a bureaucracy, possibly the higher the control of the executive political leadership. However, there is a maximum limit on the number of these positions without significantly compromising institutional performance.

The study analyzed the instructional capacity of the appointees, observed through their education. The instructional capacity of the personnel is expected to influence outcomes by enhancing institutional performance.

The municipalities' performance was the variable with the most significant weaknesses, given that there are several indices published by the media, each focusing on different perspectives. The research adopted more than one index, and they were considered proxies to capture the institutional performance based on different, yet complementary nuances.

In this sense, the research adopted the municipal GDP per capita, the FIRJAN Municipal Development Index (IFDM), and the Municipal Governance Index (IGM), created by the Brazilian Federal Council of Administration (CFA).

The data were obtained through the database of the research group Comparative Political Institutions (IpoC) of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) and the official websites of CFA and the Federation of Industries of Rio de Janeiro (FIRJAN).

In addition, to identify the cases and better insulate the effect of the variables on performance, only municipalities categorized by the IBGE as having up to 20,000 inhabitants were analyzed. Municipalities with missing or unclear numbers for the variables were also eliminated.

Initially, an exploratory analysis of the distribution of these variables in the Brazilian territory was performed. Then, the study conducted global and local Moran's I spatial autocorrelation estimates, using data from 2014.

In order to assess the effect of the 'proportion of appointed positions' and 'training' of the APs on performance, two different samples were created.

The first sample contained the top quartile of APs with more training, and the APs in the lower quartile, with the least training. Thus, in the same sample, there are extreme cases, making it easier to compare the institutional performance when having APs with more training.

To better isolate the effects generated by the variable 'training,' reducing the interference of one variable in the results of the other, only those municipalities that in the variable 'proportion of appointed positions (APs)' showed values between + 1 and -1 deviation standard of the mean. The objective was to prevent extreme cases of 'proportion of APs' from biasing the analysis of the variable 'training.'

The same selection logic was used to define the second sample, containing the data of the 'proportion of APs.' Therefore, municipalities that, in addition to belonging to the upper and lower quartile, had the variable 'training' within the limit + 1-1 standard deviation of the mean were selected.

Note that the intention was not to study all Brazilian municipalities, but only those where it was possible to insulate the effects of the variables 'training' and 'proportion of AP' on performance, avoiding interpretive biases. The first sample consisted of 1,118 municipal bureaucracies (453 more 'training' and 665 less 'training') and the second with 1,026 (424 with a more significant 'proportion of APs' and 598 with less).

Finally, data were analyzed using the t-test for independent samples, which allows comparing means of two independent groups (samples that are not related to each other). Simple linear regression

was also used in situations where there is reason to assume a cause-effect relationship between two quantitative variables, and it is desired to express this relationship mathematically (Hear, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2005).

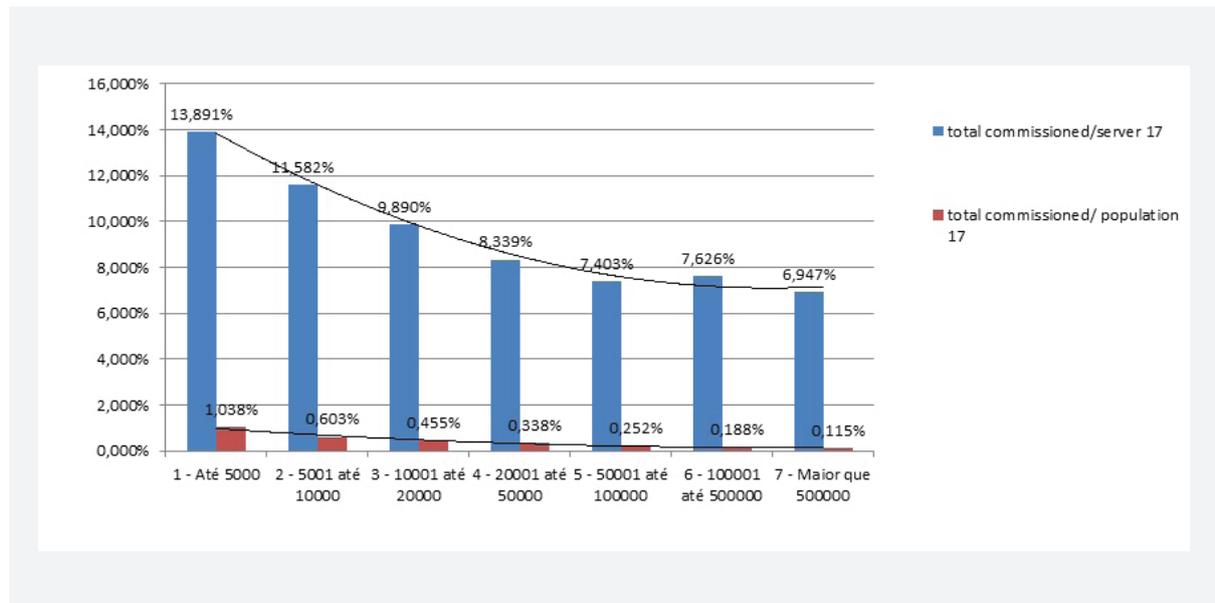
5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Brazil has a heterogeneous federative structure, with 5,570 municipalities distributed in 26 states and 1 Federal District. Each municipality has a mayor as the leader of the executive branch, and councilors, elected by proportional representation to serve at the city council, which is the local legislative branch.

Mayors are entitled to appoint executive secretaries to rule different areas of the public administration, as well as other professionals to serve in different appointed positions available in the local bureaucratic management, exercising managerial, leadership, and advisory roles.

During the exploratory analysis, the study observed the appointed positions at the local level, identifying the relation between the number of APs and the municipality’s total population, and the relation of the number of APs and the total number of civil servants in the direct administration. The research sought to identify if the proportional number of APs decreases as the size of the municipality increases. The analysis revealed behavior similar to that found by Marenco (2017), analyzing the number of employees per inhabitant/size of the municipality (Figure 3).

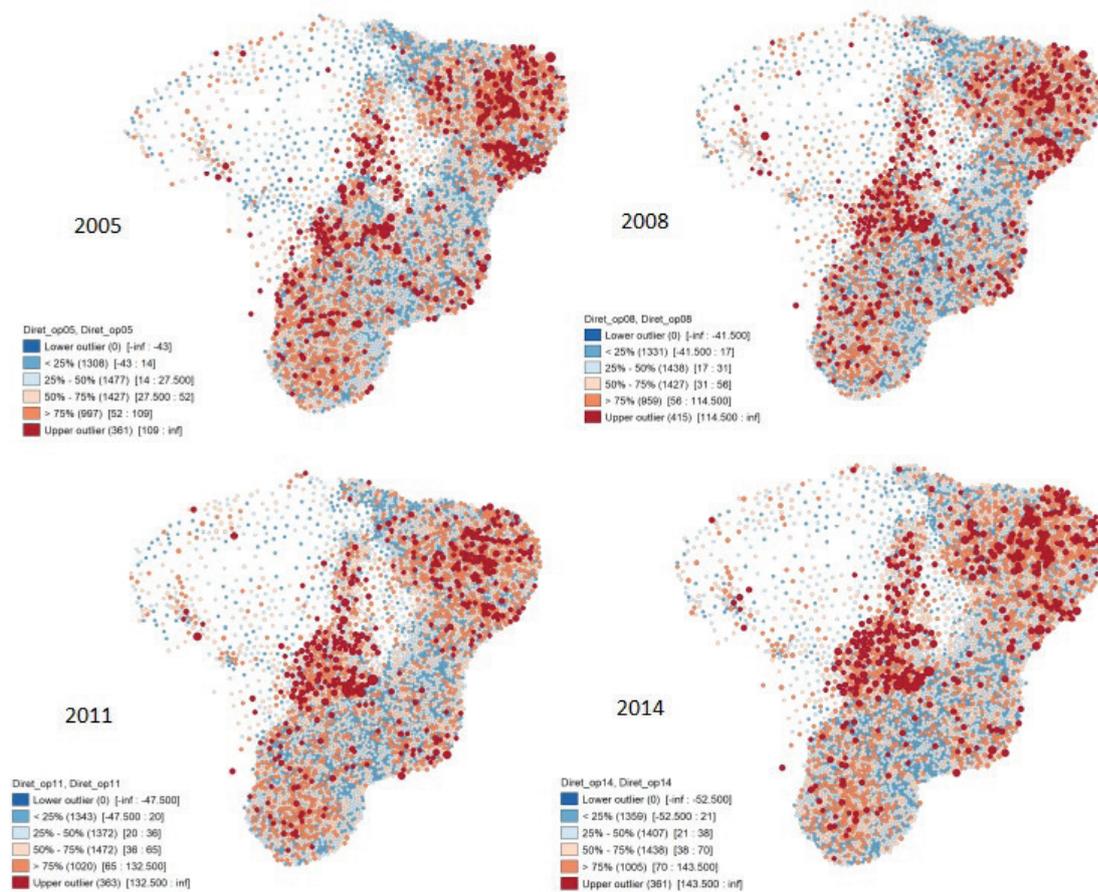
FIGURE 3 AVERAGE PERCENTAGE OF APPOINTED POSITIONS PER INHABITANT AND PER CIVIL SERVANT IN DIRECT ADMINISTRATION/CLASS IBGE, 2017



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The cartogram function was used to see how the number of APs per inhabitant was distributed to identify how these politically appointed positions spread in Brazil.

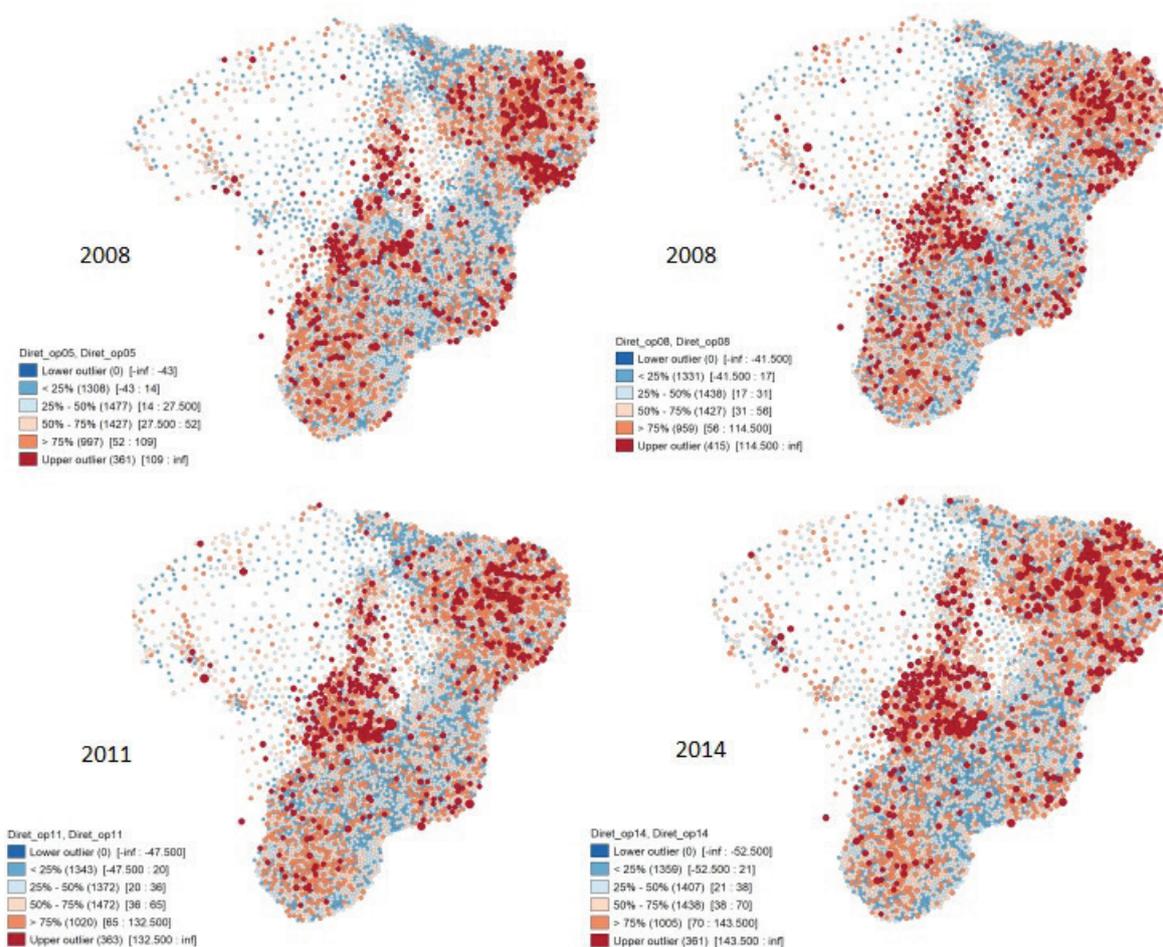
FIGURE 4 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS / POPULATION IN BRAZILIAN MUNICIPALITIES IN 2005, 2008, 2011, AND 2014



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The study treated the data on the number of APs per total number of civil servants in the direct administration of the municipality. Figure 5 shows this distribution, and it is possible to observe that it is very similar to that shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 5 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS/CIVIL SERVANTS IN THE DIRECT ADMINISTRATION OF MUNICIPALITIES IN 2005, 2008, 2011, AND 2014



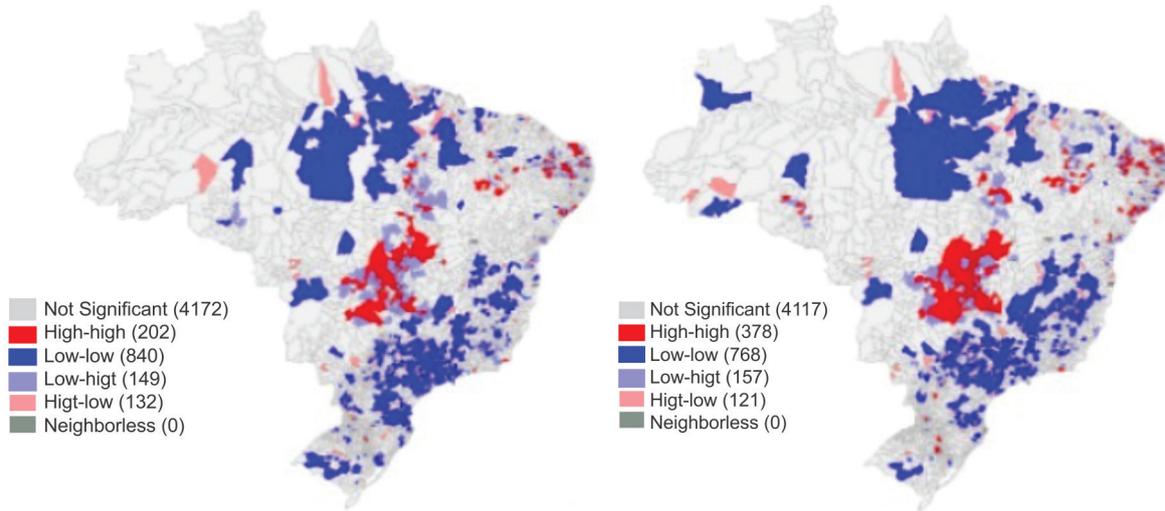
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The distribution suggests the existence of non-casual agglomerations, that is, the spatial dependence between municipal units. In this sense, global and local Moran's I spatial autocorrelation was used for the distribution, referring to data for 2014.

As for global dependencies, Moran's I, although statistically significant, showed values of 0.21 and 0.28, respectively. Thus, despite the rejection of the null hypotheses of spatial randomness, the analysis of the spatial autocorrelations were quite modest.

In the analysis of local autocorrelation, the maps depict agglomerations indicating the statistical significance. However, there is little predominance of spatial autocorrelation patterns for positive local relationships (High-High and Low-Low) and negative relationships (High-Low and Low-High). However, it is sufficient to identify two or three dominant groups, with better-defined characteristics (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6 SPATIAL AUTOCORRELATION OF THE PROPORTION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS/INHABITANTS/DIRECT ADMINISTRATION IN 2014



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

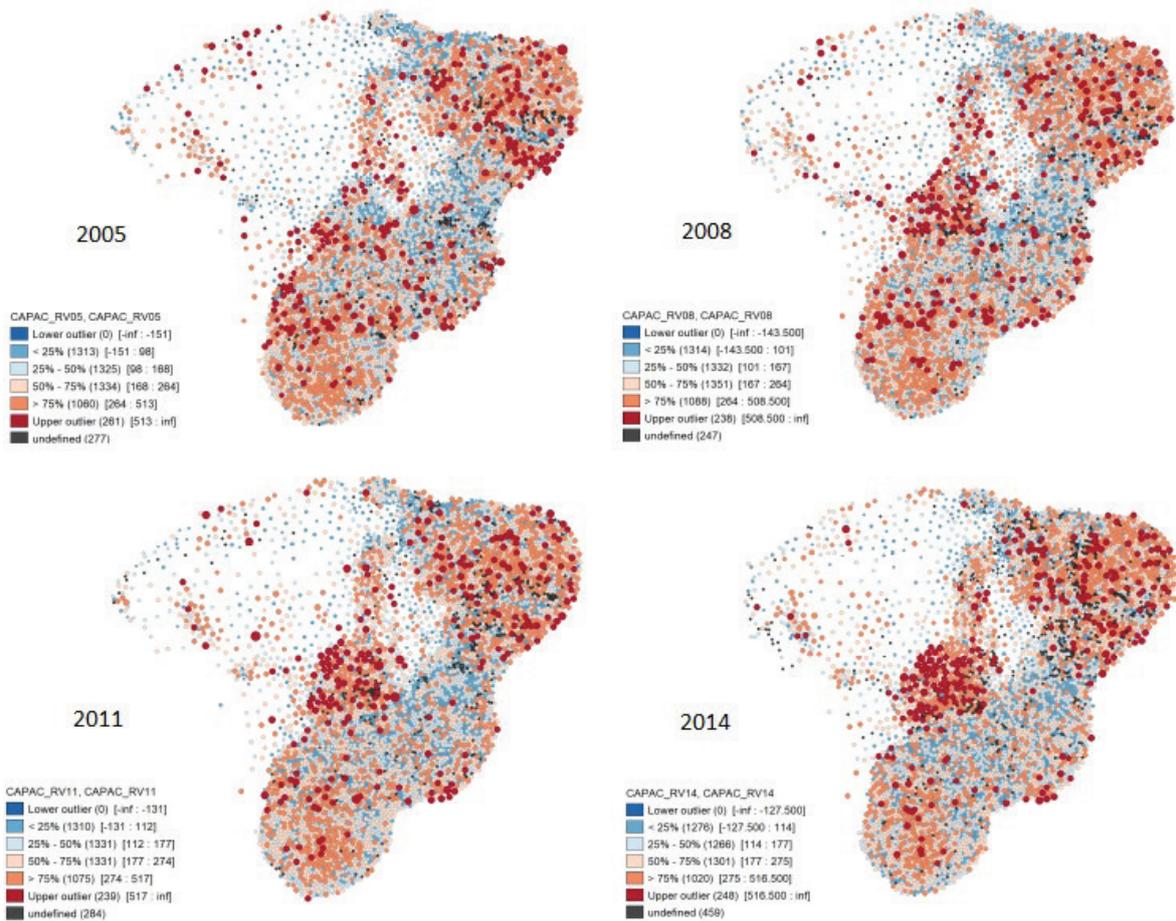
As for the APs’ training in Brazil, the study worked with the concept “professionalization of the appointees,” and created a factor resulting from the weighted arithmetic average of the number of civil servants applied to weights, according to the training. Then, this was divided by the total number of employees, in order to standardize them in relation to each other, according to the following formula:

$$\frac{((\text{Serv. SemInst} * 1) + (\text{Serv. Fund} * 2) + (\text{Serv. Méd} * 3) + (\text{Serv. Sup} * 4) + (\text{Serv. Póst} * 5))}{15}$$

Total Servers Direct Administration

In the estimation of Moran’s I global spatial autocorrelation, the value found was 0.28, with statistical significance, and rejecting the null hypothesis of spatial randomness. Spatial autocorrelation proved to be modest.

FIGURE 7 DISTRIBUTION OF TRAINING OF APPOINTED POSITIONS/CIVIL SERVANTS OF THE DIRECT ADMINISTRATION IN 2005, 2008, 2011, AND 2014



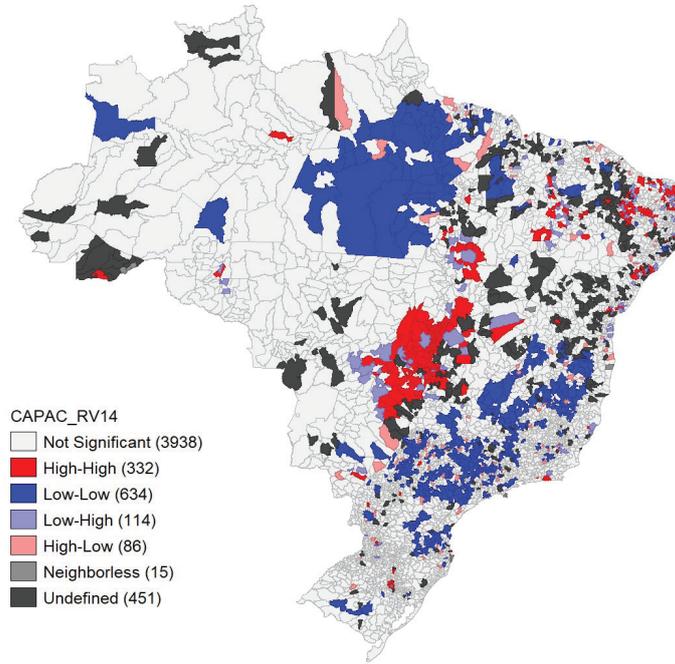
Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the analysis of local autocorrelation, the map shows municipalities, indicating the statistical significance of the patterns of autocorrelation. However, there is little dominance of patterns of spatial dependence, both for positive relationships of local autocorrelation (High-High and Low-Low) and for negative relationships (High-Low and Low-High). However, it is still possible to affirm the existence of 2 or 3 larger groups of predominance.

What is the influence of technical knowledge on political appointees on the performance of the institution?

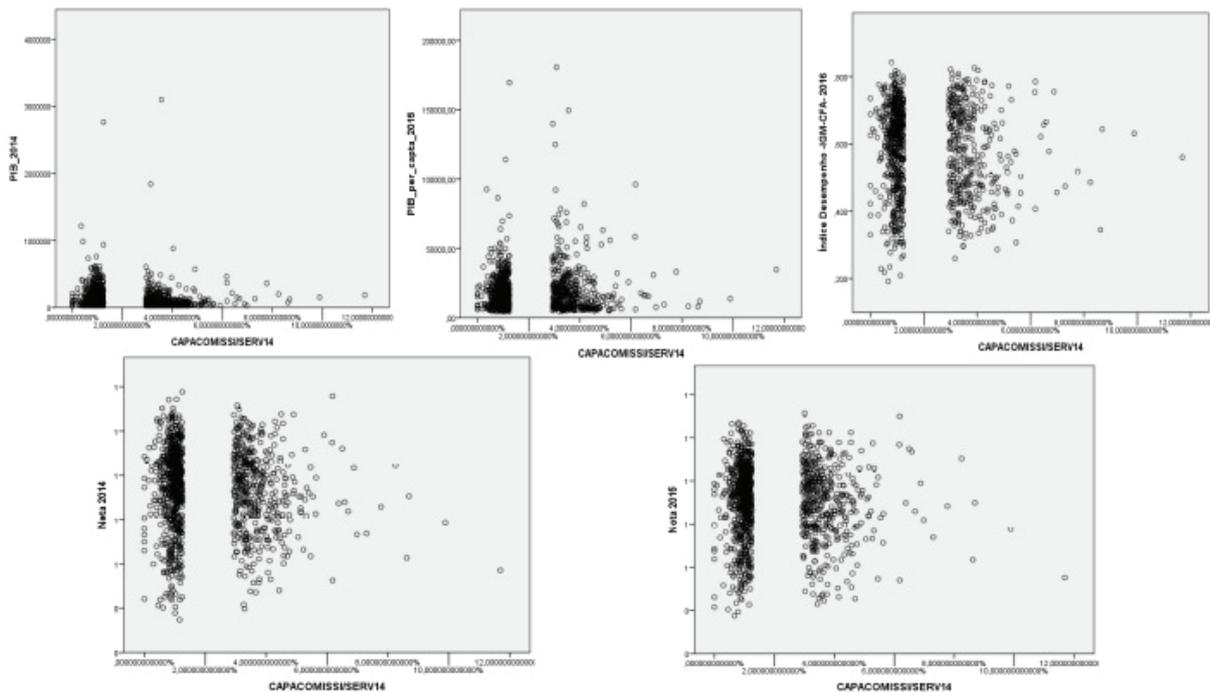
Scatter graphs were created to facilitate the visualization of some behavior patterns.

FIGURE 8 SPATIAL AUTOCORRELATION OF TRAINING OF APPOINTED POSITIONS/INHABITANTS/DIRECT ADMINISTRATION IN 2014



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

FIGURE 9 DISPERSION OF TRAINING OF APPOINTED POSITIONS/PIB PER CAPITA 2014-15/IGM 2016/IFDM 2014-15



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The study tested whether the existence of APs with more training was a differential factor in explaining the variation in the proxies used as a measure of institutional performance between municipalities. The t-test for independent samples was used with the GDP per capita data 2014/15, IGM 2016, and IFDM 2014 and 2015.

The result of the first analysis shows that, on average, GDP per capita 2014 was higher for the municipalities that had APs with more training than those with APs with less training. Municipalities with APs with more training had an average of 19,243.07 and EP = 896.69; and those with APs with least training had an average of 16,581.56 and EP = 571.07; with $t(803) = 2.50$, $p < 0.05$.

The same result is found when using data from GDP per capita 2015, in which the test showed, on average, that the group of APs with more training ($M = 20,154.13$; $EP = 909.56$) also present higher GDP per capita ($M = 17,267.43$; $EP = 512.61$). Given the significance of the test, the null hypothesis is rejected, $t(734.3) = 2.76$; $p < 0.05$.

When using CFA's IGM 2016, the results, even if in a subtle and almost non-significant way, contradict what was expected, given that, according to the tests, on average, the municipalities with APs with more training ($M = 0.57$; $EP = 0.006$) show lower performance than those with APs with the least training ($M = 0.59$; $EP = 0.005$), $t(963) = -2.00$; $p < 0.05$.

In order to unfold the seemingly contradictory results, simple linear regression was carried out to verify whether training is a good predictor of IGM. Thus, the regression showed that training predicts the result obtained in the IGM [$F(1,963) = 7.36$; $p < 0.01$; $R^2 = 0.007$]. However, the percentage of explanation of the result in performance seems extremely low.

The prediction value for the IGM 2016 of the municipalities corresponds to the following formula:

$$y = 0,59 - 0,007 * \text{training APs}$$

In addition, all requirements for performing linear regression were met, such as $N > 20$, values of independent variables, linear relationship of variables, independent residuals, absence of outliers, normality of residues, and homoscedasticity.

When comparing the performance of municipalities with APs with more and less training using the data from IFDM 2014 and 2015, the results were not significant, that is, the null hypotheses are accepted in both tests. This demonstrates that there is no difference in results in these variables due to the APs training: $t(1,101) = -0.09$, $p > 0.05$; and $t(1,009) = -0.73$, $p > 0.05$.

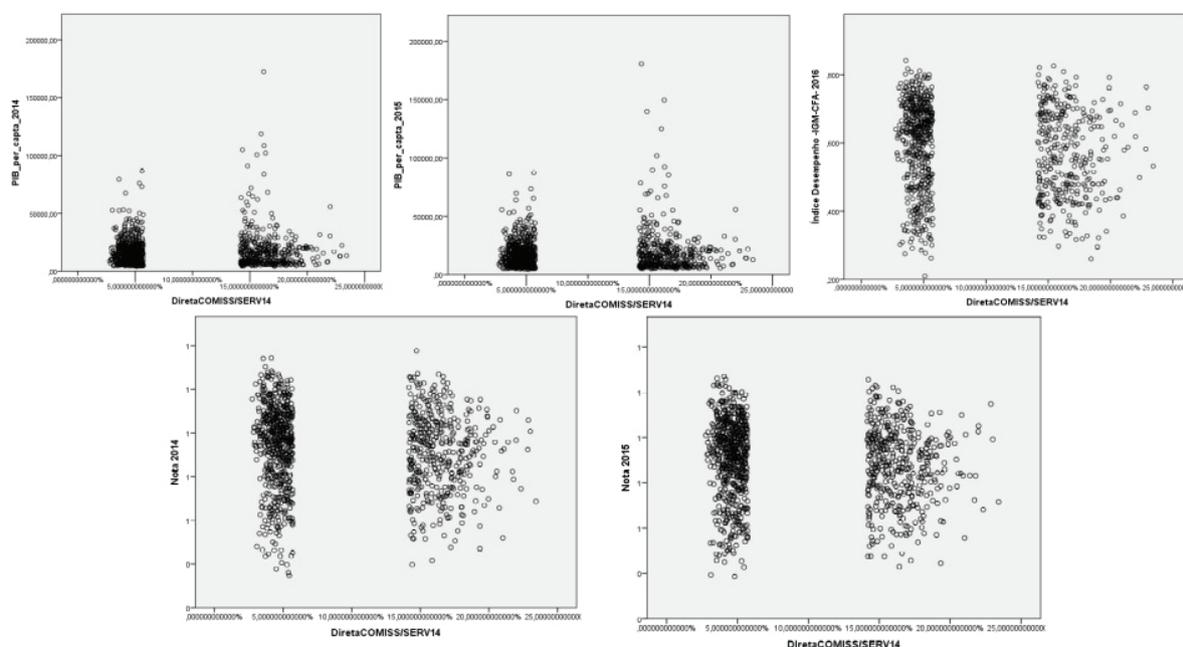
However, what about the effect of the number of appointed positions on institutional performance?

The t-test for independent samples was carried out to verify if the average of the variables considered performance proxy is different for municipalities with a higher proportion of APs to the detriment of those with a lower proportion of APs.

The first results show that, on average, GDP per capita 2014/15 is higher for those municipalities that have a higher proportion of APs, an average of 18,177.25 (2014), and 19,311.90 (2015) and 16,224.30 (2014) and 17,074.56 (2015) for those with the least. With $t(653) = 2.01$, $p < 0.05$ and $t(632) = 2.13$, $p < 0.05$, respectively.

Bearing in mind the considerable differences in means, the study analyzed whether in that sample the larger municipalities – potentially with more vigorous economies – would have more APs and, therefore, those that would have higher GDP per capita compared to smaller municipalities.

FIGURE 10 DISPERSION OF THE PROPORTION OF APPOINTED POSITIONS/PIB PER CAPITA 2014-15/IGM 2016/IFDM 2014-15



Source: Elaborated by the authors.

This hypothesis was not confirmed since the sample had 33% of the municipalities with up to 5,000 inhabitants, 31% with up to 10,000 inhabitants, and 36% up to 20,000 inhabitants. And the average number of APs proportional to the number of civil servants in the direct administration were higher in smaller municipalities (11.51%, 9.22%, and 7.84% respectively).

On the other hand, when performing the test with the CFA IGM 2016 performance variable, it was seen that, on average, those with higher proportion of APs ($M = 0.56$; $EP = 0.006$) have lower performance than those that have less APs ($M = 0.59$; $EP = 0.005$), $t(885) = -3.68$, $p = 0.00$. Confirming the hypothesis that the quality of management decreases when there are many APs.

A similar result was obtained when comparing the performance of bureaucracies that have higher proportion of APs, using FIRJAN's 2014 and 2015 IFDM as the performance indicator, the results of the independent t-test show that municipalities with higher proportion of APs have lower performance ($M = 0.66$, $EP = 0.004$ and $M = 0.64$, $EP = 0.004$) than those with less ($M = 0.67$, $EP = 0.004$ and $M = 0.65$, $EP = 0.004$). The tests are significant, that is, the alternative hypotheses are confirmed: $t(1016) = -2.64$; $p < 0.05$ and $t(1012) = -2.58$; $p < 0.05$.

In short, when analyzing the difference in performance due to training and the proportion of APs in the municipalities, the data show that when observed the variable 'GDP per capita,' the performance is higher for municipalities with APs with more training and for those who have a higher proportion of APs.

When performance is assessed based on the 'IGM,' both the high level of training and the high proportion of APs result in lower performance. However, training was shown to be more discreet in the results, and linear regression demonstrated the importance of APs training in obtaining performance.

Finally, when assessing bureaucracy from the IFDM, the results show that APs training is not a decisive factor in performance. The same does not happen with the proportion of APs, which demonstrated that municipalities with a higher proportion of APs have, on average, lower performance than those with less proportion of APs.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding the politicization of public bureaucracy is an essential step in studies on public policy implementation, particularly regarding mid-level bureaucracy and, in this study, the proportion of politically appointed positions in the state apparatus.

The study of this issue is part of an agenda that aims to unveil mechanisms behind the successful decisions made within governments, positively impacting the economy and society. The topic has the potential to clarify the operation, directions, and performance of governments and their bureaucratic management.

Although normally linked to a negative and stereotyped view of patronage, clientelism, and cronyism, these appointed positions are crucial for the proper operation of the state apparatus. The political appointees contribute mainly by connecting the society and the bureaucratic structure.

The appointed managers are a way for the leaders at the executive branch to exercise command over the state apparatus and, consequently, to be responsive to constituents. However, the misuse of this strategy jeopardizes the organizational performance, hindering the proper operation of the bureaucracy. Thus, political appointments imply several risks and costs discussed in this study.

This study sought to understand some of the dimensions related to the number of appointees in municipal bureaucracies, trying to connect this element to variables indicating the municipalities' performance.

First, the researchers examined the distribution of appointed positions in Brazilian municipalities. Then, the Moran's I global and local spatial autocorrelation was assessed, identifying whether there was a correlation. A moderate autocorrelation between them was observed for the appointees' training and the proportion of APs.

Due to the methodology adopted for determining the samples – through which only municipalities where the effect of the variables on performance could be insulated were selected – the study could not disaggregate the data necessary to carry out detailed analyzes of possible regional differences.

The difference in the municipalities' performance was then examined based on the level of training and the number of APs. When the variable GDP per capita was analyzed, the data show that the performance is higher both for the municipalities with APs with more training and for those with a higher proportion of APs.

When the performance is evaluated by the IGM, both the high capacity and the proportionally high number of APs decrease the municipalities' performance.

A finding that deserved attention was the fact that APs with more training turned out to be related to lower performance. In this sense, a simple linear regression was performed to assess if 'training' was a good predictor for performance measured through the IGM. This procedure revealed significance, demonstrating that APs' training is essential for the municipality performance.

However, when assessing bureaucracy based on the IFDM, the results show that APs' training is not a decisive factor in determining performance. This phenomenon does not happen with the

proportion of APs, which demonstrated that municipalities with more APs have, on average, lower performance than those with fewer APs.

The research demonstrates the subject's complexity since some tests point to the training and the number of appointees as a solution and recommendation to the municipalities, while other tests indicate the opposite.

Thus, the challenge is to deepen the studies in this and other topics relevant and essential to understanding the state apparatus. It is clear that issues such as the turnover of APs, low stability of these positions, these professionals' ability to implement public policies, previous professional experiences, degree of politicization, type of qualification, their relationship with society, contributions to performance depending on the hierarchical level in the organization, bureaucracy, specific contributions from bureaucrats at the management level, mid-level and street-level bureaucrats, in short, several other variables have a significant influence on the results and performance of the state apparatus and constitute a fertile field for a research agenda. However, it is noteworthy that some of these themes do not have data in the MUNIC/BGE database. Therefore, it is not possible to disaggregate information that allows deepening the issue from a promising angle. Thus, research that uses case studies, with a small N, may represent the solution to shedding light on some of these themes. Without this, it is not possible to unravel the stir about the relationship between politics and technique, and between bureaucracy and performance.

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