

# Analyzing corruption scandals investigated by parliamentary inquiries: A process-tracing approach

## Análisis de los escándalos de corrupción investigados por comisiones parlamentarias: un enfoque basado en el seguimiento de procesos

**Luiz Fernando Miranda** 

Universidad Federal del Pará, Brasil.

[lfmiranda2005@gmail.com](mailto:lfmiranda2005@gmail.com)

**Luiz Pedone** 

Universidad Federal Fluminense

[lpedone@uol.com.br](mailto:lpedone@uol.com.br) - [luizpedone@id.uff.br](mailto:luizpedone@id.uff.br)

**Duília Dalyana R. da Nóbrega** 

Universidad Federal de Pernambuco.

[duilia.dalyana@ufpe.br](mailto:duilia.dalyana@ufpe.br)

**Article:** recibido 08/10/2025 y aceptado: 26/11/2025

### How to cite this article:

Miranda, L. F., Pedone, L., & Nóbrega, D. D. R. da. (2025). Analyzing corruption scandals investigated by parliamentary inquiries: A process-tracing approach. *Reflexión Política*, 27(56), 70-84, doi: <https://doi.org/10.29375/01240781.5502>

### Abstract

*This article examines the strategic behavior of government and opposition actors in relation to Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (PCIs) in Brazil, which arise from corruption scandals that function as institutional “fire alarms”. Using the process-tracing method, the study examines three emblematic cases: PC Farias (1992), Financial System (1999), and Votes-for-Cash (Mensalão, 2005). Based on a qualitative analysis of legislative documents and press sources, the article identifies political strategies used to obstruct, delay, or influence investigations. The findings suggest that the degree of political organization and cohesion on each side plays a crucial role in determining the outcome and impact of the inquiries.*

**Keywords:** Ecorruption, Brazil, Executive-Legislative relations, parliamentary committees of inquiry (PCI), process-tracing

### Resumen

*Este artículo examina el comportamiento estratégico de los actores gubernamentales y de la oposición en relación con las Comisiones Parlamentarias de Investigación (CPI) en Brasil, las cuales surgen de escándalos de corrupción que funcionan como “alarmas de incendio” institucionales. Mediante el método de process tracing, el estudio analiza tres casos emblemáticos: PC Farias (1992), Sistema Financiero (1999) y Mensalão (2005). A partir de un análisis cualitativo de documentos legislativos y fuentes de prensa, se identifican estrategias políticas empleadas para obstruir, retrasar o influir en las investigaciones. Los resultados indican que el grado de organización política y cohesión de cada parte desempeña un papel clave en los resultados y el impacto de las investigaciones.*

**Palabras clave:** corrupción; Brasil; relaciones Ejecutivo-Legislativo; comisiones parlamentarias de investigación (CPI); process tracing.

## Resumo

*Este artigo examina o comportamento estratégico de atores do governo e da oposição em relação às Comissões Parlamentares de Inquérito (CPIs) no Brasil, que emergem de escândalos de corrupção e funcionam como “alarmes de incêndio” institucionais. Utilizando o método de process tracing, o estudo analisa três casos emblemáticos: PC Farias (1992), Bancos (1999) e Mensalão (2005). Com base em uma análise qualitativa de documentos legislativos e de fontes da imprensa, o artigo identifica estratégias políticas empregadas para obstruir, atrasar ou influenciar as investigações. Os resultados sugerem que o grau de organização e coesão política de cada lado desempenha papel crucial na determinação dos desfechos e dos impactos das comissões de inquérito.*

**Palabras clave:** *corrupção; Brasil; relações Executivo-Legislativo; comissões parlamentares de inquérito (CPI); process tracing*

## I. Introduction

The debate on coalitional presidentialism in Brazil began with Abranches (1988). He argued that Brazil's institutional fragility results from the unusual combination of presidentialism, a multiparty system, and open-list proportional representation. This structure, he claimed, creates difficulties in governance. This line of reasoning was further developed by Mainwaring (2001). Later, Ames (2003) deepened the discussion by linking the open-list system to weak party discipline. According to him, this system increases legislators' dependence on the executive, fostering clientelism and political bargaining.

A pivotal moment in this debate occurred with the publication of a influential study by Figueiredo and Limongi (1999). Their central argument challenges the notion that political party indiscipline in Brazilian politics is anomalous. Instead, they highlight constitutional prerogatives embedded in the new charter that empower the president, including: (i) exclusive legislative initiative, (ii) the authority to issue provisional measures and urgent requests, (iii) veto power, and (iv) the establishment of the *Caucus of Party Leaders*<sup>1</sup>, which holds significant influence over nominations to standing committees.

The debate has advanced with the use of economic models, which have improved the quality of research. Amorim Neto (2006) identified two patterns in coalitional presidentialism. According to his findings, Brazilian presidents govern through either majority coalitions – formed by multiple parties – or minority governments without such support. These patterns show the flexibility and variation in Brazil's political system.

The debate surrounding the effectiveness of Brazilian political institutions continues, with many scholars aligning with Figueiredo and Limongi's (1999) thesis on coalition presidentialism. This discourse gained renewed urgency following the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff and the election of Jair Bolsonaro, highlighting challenges in coalition management, growing opposition assertiveness, and political tensions between the Chamber of Deputies' President Eduardo Cunha (Brazilian Democratic Movement Party, henceforth PMDB) and the Workers' Party government (henceforth PT). Central questions include whether these institutions function effectively, if coalitional presidentialism maintains majorities primarily through side payments or corruption, and whether minority coalition governments face an inherent risk of impeachment.

This study contributes to this ongoing debate by analyzing executive-legislative relations through three case studies of Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (henceforth PCIs<sup>2</sup>) established amid corruption scandals. It seeks to answer: How do government and opposition actors behave during PCIs, and what political strategies emerge in response to these high-profile investigations?

- 
1. The Caucus of Party Leaders is a body composed of the leaders of political parties, tasked with organizing the legislative agenda for issues to be presented for voting during plenary sessions in the Chamber of Deputies.
  2. "PCIs are temporary committees composed of individual members of Congress to investigate specific allegations of unethical or administrative misconduct, corruption, etc. The 1988 Constitution did not change the rules established in the 1946 Constitution, but it strengthened Congress's power to initiate investigations. It gave PCIs the power of investigation equivalent to that of the judiciary and determined that their reports may be sent to the Public Attorney's Office to advance civil or criminal proceedings and to hold offenders criminally responsible. (art. 58, § 3º). (...) Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry can be formed in any House, or by both Houses in conjunction (so-called mixed PCIs). For their creation, they require the support of one-third of the House in which it was initiated. The Chamber of Deputies imposes limits on the number of PCIs: only five can function simultaneously. For this reason, there is always a list of approved PCIs waiting to begin their investigations. It is possible to constitute a sixth PCI, but this requires a majority vote in both Houses." (...) The "composition" of a PCI should be proportional to the number of seats which each party has in the House and, by internal rules; the leaders of parties are responsible for the nomination of its members" (Figueiredo, 2001, pp. 695-696)".

The academic literature on corruption and scandals in Brazil is still emerging. Political science contributions to the topic remain limited, although some key studies stand out (Grün, 2011; Jucá et al, 2016). Much of the research continues to be rooted in economics, often relying on the Corruption Perceptions Index (Ades & Di Tella, 1999; Treisman, 2000). In the Brazilian context, political science interest in corruption has grown over time (Fleischer, 2002; Filgueiras, 2009), yet the theme has only recently gained stronger academic relevance. Recent contributions have adopted innovative methods and explored new dimensions of Brazilian politics (Bonifácio & Fucks, 2017; Filgueiras & Aranha, 2019).

We will address the question above using process-tracing, a method that facilitates inference when quantitative measurement is not feasible (Beach and Pedersen, 2013). Given the absence of reliable metrics for measuring corruption for this study (Geddes and Ribeiro Neto, 2000), this qualitative approach enables the identification of potential causal relationships within case studies (Gerring, 2007; Beach and Rholfin, 2015).

Initial debates in Brazil regarding process-tracing (Perissinotto and Nunes, 2023; Silva e Cunha, 2014) have primarily centered on a limited number of studies applying the method to specific cases, notably those by Amorim Neto and Rodriguez (2016) and Teixeira Junior and Lucena Silva (2017). Thus, our study demonstrates the usefulness of this relatively new yet still underused method.

The next section will examine various studies on PCIs in Brazil. Despite significant contributions to the field, the available information on these institutions remains limited. Subsequently, the dynamics of process-tracing and our analytical framework will be outlined. The following section will present the key facts (descriptive inferences) of the three PCIs, along with the causal inferences derived from these events. Finally, the systematized material will be analyzed, and our conclusions will be presented.

## **1 Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (PCIs)**

Although still relatively nascent, research on the Brazilian legislature has been expanding significantly. However, this growth has not been equally distributed to the study of PCIs, where academic production remains limited, fragmented across disciplines, and often lacks interdisciplinary dialogue. In the legal field, important contributions include studies focused on the institutional and procedural aspects of PCIs (Cerqueira, 1999; Bulos, 2000; Guanabara & Pexinho, 2001). In anthropology and sociology, some relevant studies have examined PCIs within the broader context of institutional performance and public accountability (Bezerra, 1995; Schilling, 1997). In political science, key studies have examined PCIs in relation to legislative behavior and political dynamics (Figueiredo, 2001; Pedone, 2002; Taylor & Buraneli, 2007). More recently, new studies present up-to-date analytical frameworks regarding parliamentary inquiry commissions (Centurione et al., 2011; Buna, 2018; Figueiredo & Melo, 2021).

Despite early paradigms suggesting the Executive's dominance over the Legislative, recent developments signal a significant shift that could redefine coalition presidentialism in Brazil. The impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff and the election of former President Jair Bolsonaro exemplify the Legislature's reconfigured role amid the rise of the far right. Current debates focus on budgetary control, particularly concerning Mandatory Individual Amendments and Reporter Amendments<sup>3</sup>. These emerging power struggles between the branches of government highlight the evolving dynamics of Brazilian politics. Although this discourse is still unfolding, recent studies, such as those by Bonfim et al. (2023) provide valuable insights into these issues.

It is important to highlight that the PCIs analyzed in this study took place prior to the current paradigm shift, reflecting a distinct Executive-Legislative relationship. As our focus is on PCIs arising from corruption scandals, which bypass the emerging legislative patterns, the findings contribute to understanding both historical and contemporary PCI dynamics. This analysis also informs theoretical interpretations of Executive-Legislative relations in Brazil.

Concluding this preliminary discussion on the studies of PCIs and the broader debate on executive-legislative relations in Brazil, we now turn to methodological and research questions.

---

3. Mandatory individual amendments refer to amendments to the Annual Budget Bill (PLOA) submitted individually by deputies and senators, whose budgetary and financial execution is constitutionally mandatory. Rapporteur amendments are a type of budget amendment introduced in 2020 that allows the rapporteur of the Annual Budget Law (LOA) to include amendments that the Executive is expected to prioritize. The press labeled them the "secret budget" because they lack clear criteria for allocating or designating funds, which makes oversight of how the money is spent more difficult.

## 2 Methodology and Related Questions

Initially, the study seeks to answer descriptive questions, based on an examination of legislative documents and the newspapers analyzed. How do the government and the opposition actors behave during PCIs, and what political strategies emerge in response to these high-profile investigations? What actions are taken, and how do the government and the opposition behave in response to a PCI? More specifically, what behavioral patterns characterize government and opposition responses during PCI investigations into corruption scandals? Furthermore, how do veto players – those with institutional power to block or influence decision-making – manage to obstruct the development or outcome of such investigations?

Building on the descriptive inferences generated, causal questions were formulated to better understand the nature of the relationship between corruption scandals and the trajectory of the CPIs that emerge from them. Accordingly, the study also seeks to answer the following question: Under what conditions do developments in a scandal increase a CPI's ability to move forward? To what extent are the government's and the opposition's actions during a CPI shaped by corruption scandals?

From these central questions, additional inquiries emerge: Are PCIs typically initiated in response to “ringing fire alarms,” as described by McCubbins and Schwartz (1984)? If so, what institutional or political factors contribute to their continuity, and under what circumstances are they weakened, interrupted, or prematurely terminated?

The core argument of this study is that any incumbent government, motivated by the pursuit of re-election and political survival, will actively seek to minimize the electoral damage caused by corruption scandals<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, when a PCI poses a threat to the government's political image or legitimacy, strategies of obstruction, containment, or narrative control are likely to emerge. Conversely, if a PCI threatens the political interests of the opposition, it may also seek to hinder its progress, limit its scope, or delegitimize its findings.

### 2.1 Data Collection

To analyze the functioning of PCIs, this study employs a qualitative approach grounded in document and media analysis. Two primary sources of data were utilized: (1) official legislative documents and (2) press coverage.

For legislative data, we examined procedural records, including committee meeting transcripts, voting records, and both partial and final reports produced by the PCIs. These materials provide direct insight into the committees' institutional development and internal dynamics. For media sources, we relied on widely circulated national newspapers and weekly magazines. These press materials were essential for capturing real-time narratives, political reactions, and public framing of events throughout the investigation period.

To reduce potential bias arising from newspapers' editorial interests, the study initially examined a set of nationally circulating newspapers. As the research progressed, it became apparent that the news coverage largely overlapped across outlets. This allowed reducing the number of newspapers analyzed without risking undue emphasis on a story of exclusive interest to a single newspaper.

This methodological triangulation – cross-referencing legislative and media sources – allowed for a comprehensive, chronological reconstruction of each case, as well as an assessment of the political strategies employed by both government and opposition actors over time.

### 2.2 Case Selection

Three Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (PCIs) were selected:

1. PC Farias (1992)
2. Financial System [The Banks] (1999)
3. Votes-for-Cash ['Mensalão'] (2005)

The selection was based on three criteria:

- (i) each occurred under a different president (Collor, Cardoso, and Lula);
- (ii) all were responses to major corruption scandals; and

4. We treat this as a theoretical assumption under a rational-politician framework.

(iii) all completed the full investigative process with final reports. These cases allow for cross-government comparison while ensuring analytical consistency.

Regarding case exclusion, the case-selection criteria allowed for only one case per administration, and all cases had to be PCIs from the post-authoritarian democratic period. More specifically, each selected case had to fit one of the following profiles: (i) a case illustrating opposition control over the PCI (illustrated by the PC Farias PCI); (ii) a case illustrating government control over the PCI (illustrated by the Banks PCI); and (iii) a case illustrating mutual lack of interest by both government and opposition in advancing the investigation (illustrated by the Votes-for-Cash PCI). Once these criteria were met, additional cases were excluded to avoid redundancy.

Accordingly, the Budget PCI (1993) was excluded because it occurred under a transitional government (Itamar Franco) and, substantively, it overlaps with the dynamics captured by the PC Farias case. As another example, the Bingos CPI (2005) was excluded: although it was an important PCI, it was comparatively less central (politically and analytically) than the Postal Service and Votes-for-Cash PCIs (both in 2005), which better fit the selection logic and offered greater leverage for within-period comparison.

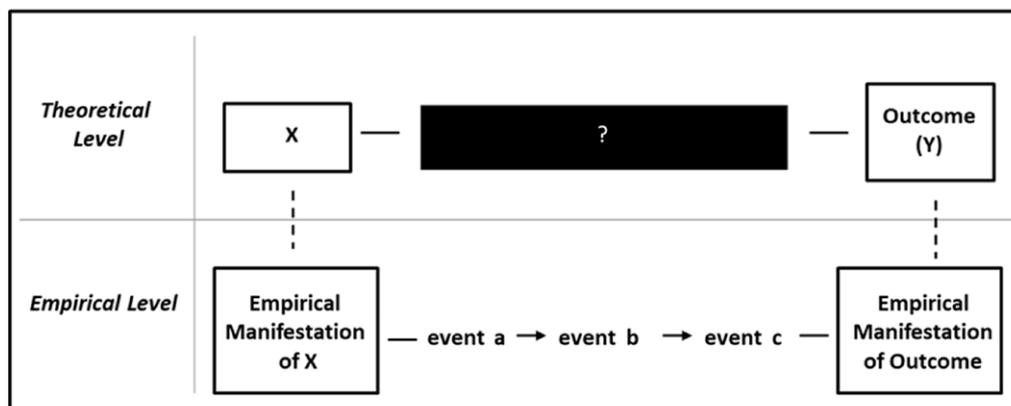
The decision to examine three PCIs in comparative perspective, rather than focusing on a single case, is based on the methodological possibility of such an approach (Beach and Rholfin, 2015) and on the premise that the analysis gains depth when comparing three similar commissions that yielded distinct results, prompting us to inquire into the reasons for this variation.

### 2.3 The Choice of Case Study Method: process-tracing

The primary rationale for selecting the process-tracing method lies in its ability to meet the methodological criterion of internal validity (Gerring, 2007; Bennett and Checkel, 2015). Process-tracing enables the identification and examination of detailed causal mechanisms through a sequential chain of events, represented as  $X_1 \rightarrow X_2 \rightarrow X_3 \rightarrow X_4 \rightarrow Y$ . This structured approach allows for a rigorous analysis of how initial conditions and intermediate steps contribute to specific outcomes, ensuring a robust understanding of the causal dynamics within the cases studied.

A more detailed and schematic explanation of this causal chain can be found in Beach and Pedersen (2013, p. 34). They illustrate how process-tracing operates through a step-by-step analysis of causal mechanisms, linking initial conditions ( $X_1$ ) to intermediate processes ( $X_2, X_3, X_4$ ) and ultimately to the observed outcome ( $Y$ ). This framework emphasizes the importance of systematically tracing each link in the chain to ensure the validity and reliability of causal inferences.

**Table 1.** Empirical narratives are the Black Box of the mechanism



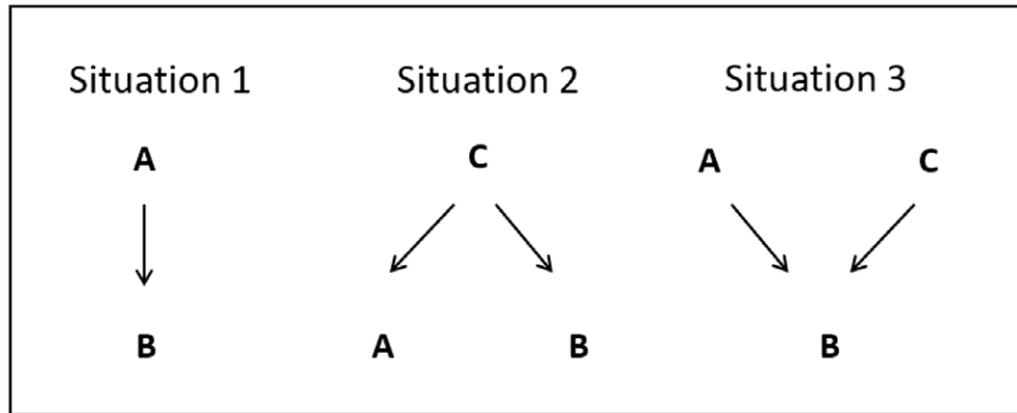
Reproduced from Beach and Pedersen 2013, p. 34

In other words, event X is presumed to generate event Y through a series of unknown intermediate events (the so-called 'Black Box'). By employing empirical descriptions, this process is unpacked, revealing a chain of events:  $X \rightarrow \text{event a} \rightarrow \text{event b} \rightarrow \text{event c} \rightarrow Y$ .

It is important to note that there is no assumption of unidirectionality among events. An event may lead to a single subsequent event or multiple events, while two or more events may converge to cause

a single event, among other possible causal relationships, as illustrated in the following table. Thus, one objective of this study is to explain how corruption scandals (X) trigger a process culminating in the vote (or consideration) of a PCI's final report (Y).

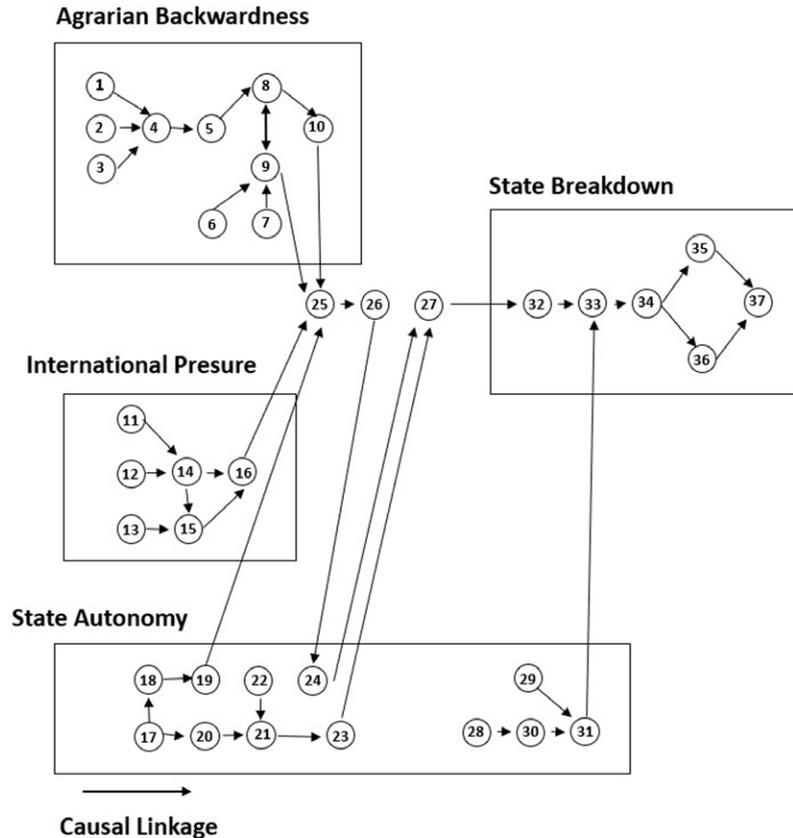
**Table 2.** Directions of Causality (Dependency between Events)



*Reproduced from Beach and Pedersen 2013, p. 133*

A clear and concise definition of process-tracing is provided by Collier: “Process-tracing (...) is an analytical tool for drawing descriptive and causal inferences from pieces of evidence. These pieces are understood as part of a temporal sequence of events or phenomena” (Collier, 2011, p. 824). The process-tracing analyses will follow the model proposed by Mahoney (1999, p. 1166).

**Table 3.** Visualization of the Breakdown of the French State Using the Process-Tracing Method



*Reproduced from Mahoney 1999, p.1166*

After outlining the article's methodological framework, the next section summarizes the events surrounding the PCIs, including the government's and the opposition's behavior. Following this, the analysis will determine whether, and how, potential causes influenced specific changes, assessing the strength of evidence for cause-and-effect linkages in the process-tracing of events for each PCI.

### **3 The Main Events of the PC Farias, Banks and Votes-for-Cash PCIs**

#### **3.1 The PC Farias PCI: key events**

The PC Farias PCI was established on June 1, 1992, during the presidency of Fernando Collor. (National Renovation Party, henceforth PRN<sup>5</sup>). Its creation was driven by serious accusations made by the president's brother, Pedro Collor de Mello, who alleged that both President Collor and his campaign treasurer, Paulo César Farias (henceforth PC Farias), had been involved in a wide-ranging scheme of extortion, corruption, and illicit campaign financing. These claims intensified political pressure and led to the formal initiation of the investigation by Congress.

The initial spark for the PCI came in October 1990, when Luís Octávio da Motta Veiga, former president of Petrobras, publicly claimed that he had been extorted. He accused PC Farias of using his close ties to President Collor to secure BRL 40 million in public financing for the airline Vasp. In May 1992, following the leak of PC Farias's tax returns, opposition parties in Congress succeeded in establishing the PCI. In the same month, Pedro Collor gave a widely publicized interview in *Veja* magazine, alleging that PC Farias had pressured business leaders to fund Collor's campaign under the guise of business expenses, raising an estimated BRL 100 million.

In June 1992, Pedro Collor testified before the committee, confirming that PC Farias had profited from insider information and engaged in blackmail since Collor's tenure as governor of Alagoas. Later that month, PC Farias also testified, admitting to falsifying campaign finance records submitted to the Superior Electoral Court (Tribunal Superior Eleitoral) and to acting as an intermediary between Petrobras and the state government. These confessions significantly escalated the political crisis and further eroded the legitimacy of the Collor administration.

Francisco Eriberto França, the personal driver of Ana Acioly, President Fernando Collor's personal secretary, revealed to the press that he had used funds from PC Farias's companies to cover the president's personal expenses. In light of these accusations, Francisco Eriberto was summoned to testify before the PCI. On July 1, 1992, he confirmed that he had been making such payments since the electoral campaign.

The Brazilian Bar Association formally expressed its support for impeachment on August 18, 1992, while awaiting the PCI to finalize its work. Before the impeachment request was forwarded to the Chamber of Deputies, Federal Deputy Benito Gama (Liberal Front Party, henceforth PFL) stated on August 20 that sufficient evidence existed to further investigate the criminal connections between President Collor and PC Farias. The Final Report of the PC Farias PCI was voted on August 26, confirming President Fernando Collor's criminal responsibility.

#### **3.2 The Financial System [The Banks] PCI: key events**

The PCI to investigate the Financial System was established in the Federal Senate at the beginning of President Cardoso's second term in 1999. Its primary focus was the financial bailout provided by the Brazilian Central Bank to Marka and FonteCindam banks. Central Bank directors were questioned about the necessity of this operation and the potential use of insider information by the banks' executives. The key events of the PCI and its surrounding context are outlined below.

On January 14, 1999, the Brazilian Stock Exchange (BM&F) established a maximum rate of BRL 1.25 for U.S. dollar contracts amid worsening market liquidity. While most banks in short positions fulfilled their obligations with BM&F, the situation for Marka and FonteCindam banks was different. Marka alone held 12,000 contracts under its name. In response, the Central Bank opted to inject liquidity into the market by selling U.S. dollars to these two financial institutions. The negotiations with the banks were led by Claudio Mauch, the Central Bank's Supervision Director, and his team.

On February 23, 1999, Federal Deputy Aloizio Mercadante (PT) submitted a grievance to the Chamber of Deputies, highlighting how some banks with short positions drastically altered their positions

---

5. The National Reconstruction Party (*Partido da Reconstrução Nacional*, PRN) was a small political organization in Brazil, founded in 1989 to support Fernando Collor de Mello's presidential bid. It lacked both an institutional structure and a stable social base, and it was officially dissolved in 2000.

just before the significant depreciation of the Brazilian currency on January 13, 1999. A request to open a PCI was subsequently submitted in February.

Disputes between PMDB and PFL, two of the government's major allied parties, along with PMDB's dissatisfaction over delays in the appointment of party members to government positions and budget cuts to the Ministry of Transport (controlled by PMDB), served as key motives for the government's coalition base to strongly support the creation of the Banks PCI.

In an interview on April 14, Francisco Lopes, former president of the Brazilian Central Bank, confirmed that the bank had covered Marka's positions in the futures market by selling dollars below the prevailing market exchange rate.

On April 15, Luiz Carlos Alvarez, former Supervision Director of the Brazilian Central Bank, and Arminio Fraga, former president of the Central Bank, testified before the PCI. Alvarez asserted that the Central Bank's actions were appropriate. Arminio Fraga highlighted the dilemma faced by the institution: either risk triggering a systemic economic crisis or sell dollars at a favorable rate to Marka and FonteCindam.

On the same day, during a joint operation conducted by the Federal Police and the Public Attorney's Office, a note addressed to Francisco Lopes was discovered at the residence of Marka's owner, Salvatore Cacciola. In the note, Cacciola requested that Lopes intervene with Cláudio Mauch to ensure the sale of dollars below the official exchange rate.

On April 19, during a private session, the Public Attorney's Office informed members of the Banks PCI that a letter from Sérgio Bragança, a former partner of Francisco Lopes at the Macrométrica consulting firm, had been found at Lopes's residence. The letter revealed that of the total funds deposited in foreign bank accounts under Bragança's name, USD 1.675 million belonged to the former president of the Central Bank. According to accusations reported by a weekly magazine, Bragança had allegedly sold confidential information obtained from Lopes to the financial market.

On May 7, President Cardoso held a breakfast meeting with the presidents of the Brazilian Social Democracy Party (henceforth PSDB), PFL, and PMDB (being the first the ruling party, and the other two, the supporting coalition parties) and announced an agreement to restructure the Central Bank's oversight operations in the financial market. In exchange, the agreement aimed to neutralize the Banks' PCI while allowing the investigations to continue, thereby preserving the senators' credibility. The primary concern was that the PCI might implicate Finance Minister Pedro Malan, potentially jeopardizing Brazil's economic management.

On September 21, the committee decided to extend its work until November 30. At the November 25, 1999, session, the final report of the Banks PCI was approved by ten senators. The report recommended both civil and criminal liability for all Brazilian Central Bank directors involved in the bailout of Marka and FonteCindam banks.

### **3.3 The Votes-for-cash PCI [*'Mensalão'*]: key events**

The Votes-for-Cash Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (PCI), commonly known as the '*Mensalão*' PCI, was established in July 2005 during President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's first term. Its creation resulted from a political compromise between the government and opposition: although the initiative came from the opposition, the Workers' Party (PT) agreed to support the inquiry only if it also investigated alleged vote-buying during President Fernando Henrique Cardoso's 1997 re-election. The PCI was triggered by the '*Postal Service scandal*', which emerged in May 2005 when a postal service official was caught on video accepting a bribe and claiming to act on behalf of the Brazilian Labor Party (henceforth PTB), led by federal deputy Roberto Jefferson.

On June 6, 2005, Roberto Jefferson publicly revealed a second scandal: a monthly bribe scheme – BRL 30,000 per congressman – to secure legislative support for the government. He named PT treasurer Delúbio Soares as the key operator of the scheme and coined the term '*Mensalão*', which soon became synonymous with the scandal. A few days later, Jefferson gave another interview providing additional details, including the origin of the funds – from both state-owned and private companies – and introduced Marcos Valério as a central intermediary in the operation.

Jefferson testified before the Congressional Ethics Council on June 14, confirming the accusations and admitting to receiving BRL4 million from the PT's slush fund. He accused José Dirceu, then Lula's Chief of Staff, of being the mastermind behind the operation and listed several congressmen who allegedly benefited from the scheme. Meanwhile, financial records confirmed large withdrawals from accounts belonging to Valério and his companies at Banco Rural, matching the timeline of Jefferson's allegations.

In early July, it was revealed that Valério, Soares, and José Genoíno (PT President at the time) had guaranteed a BRL 2.4 million loan from BMG Bank to the PT. Both Valério and Soares later admitted

the existence of these loans and their use for undisclosed party financing. The PCI was officially launched on July 20. During August, additional testimonies – particularly from Jefferson and Soares – further reinforced the corruption allegations, including the diversion of funds to finance election campaigns.

By September, the PCI had uncovered substantial evidence, including a list of 18 politicians involved and the confirmation that BRL 55 million had been funneled through bank loans and state-owned companies. On November 1, Valério provided further documents linking the Liberal Party (henceforth PL) to the bribery scheme. Despite these developments, political maneuvering intensified. The opposition sought to extend the PCI’s deadline by 120 days, while the government pushed to conclude the inquiry, ultimately limiting the extension to 30 days.

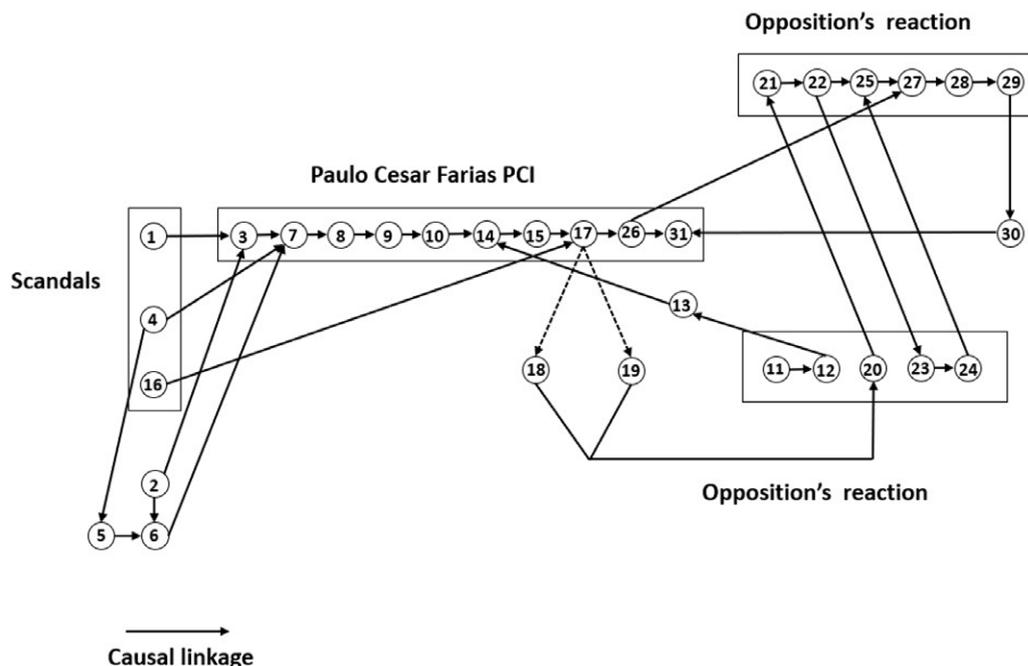
On November 17, the PCI presented its final report, authored by Ibrahim Abi-Ackel (Progressive Party, henceforth PP), in a largely symbolic session with minimal attendance. The report rejected the thesis of monthly bribes but acknowledged a slush fund used to finance electoral campaigns and secure congressional support. However, it failed to recommend any indictments. While the PCI’s effectiveness was hindered by political interference, the Mensalão scandal later had significant legal consequences, with many of the implicated individuals tried and convicted by the Supreme Federal Court.

### 3.4 Process-Tracing: PC Farias, Banks and Mensalão PCIs

We have presented the central discussion on Brazil’s coalitional presidentialism, the existing studies on PCIs, and the critical role these committees play in assessing the government’s capacity to protect itself against corruption scandals. Subsequently, we argued that process-tracing is a suitable method for addressing problems that require explaining a chain of events. We then justified the selection of the three PCIs analyzed in this study. Finally, we outlined the descriptive inferences that will serve as the foundation for the next stage: the presentation of the process-tracings for the PC Farias, Banks, and Votes-for-cash PCIs.

Below, the table illustrates the causal mechanisms of the PCIs. The numbers correspond to lists of events used to trace the progression from event X (corruption scandals) to event Y (the PCI’s closing session).

**Process-Tracing 1 – The PC Farias PCI**



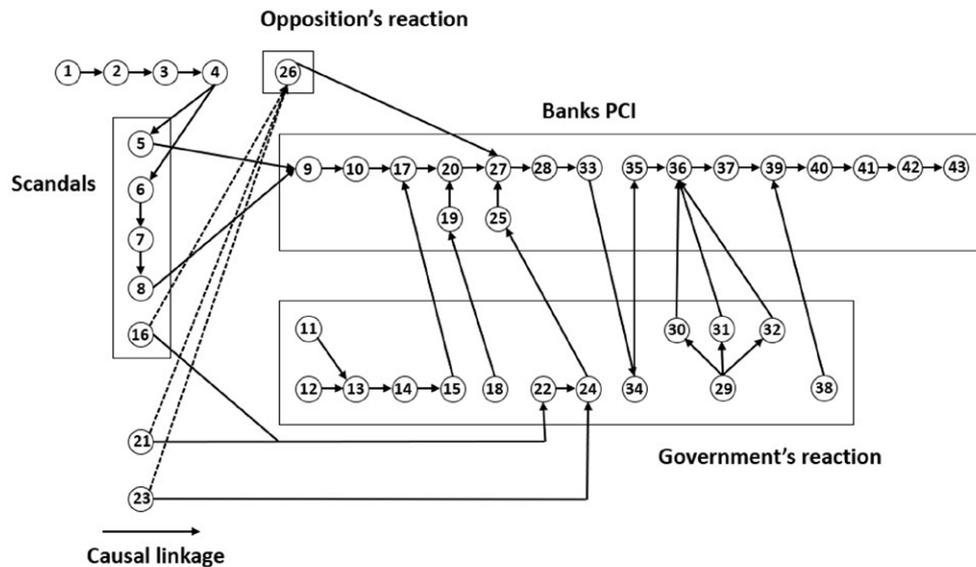
Created by the authors based on various Brazilian newspapers and magazines and Brazilian official documents.<sup>6,7</sup>

6. The Brazilian newspapers and magazines used, as well as the Brazilian official documents used to formulate the three process-tracings, are listed in the references section.  
 7. We define “government reaction” as the actions the government takes to obstruct corruption investigations within the CPI, and “opposition reaction” as the actions the opposition takes to advance those investigations.

### List of events of the PC Farias PCI

1) **October 19, 1990:** The Petrobras scandal is first reported in the press. 2) **March 1992:** Opinion polls reveal a negative public perception of the government's performance during its first two years. 3) **March 27, 1992:** The request to establish the PCI is approved. 4) **March 27, 1992:** Pedro Collor's accusations appear in the press. 5) **March 1992:** A new opinion poll shows a significant decline in the president's popularity. 6) **March 1992:** The opposition gains political momentum. 7) **June 1, 1992:** The PCI is officially created. 8) **June 4, 1992:** Pedro Collor testifies before the PCI. 9) **June 1992:** The investigation gains traction. 10) **June 9, 1992:** Paulo César Farias testifies before the PCI. 11) **June 15, 1992:** Government leaders meet to evaluate the ongoing investigations. 12) **Late June 1992:** Chief of Staff Jorge Bornhausen suggests suspending the PCI's investigation during the mid-year Congressional recess. 13) **June 1992:** Bornhausen's proposal fails, and the PCI continues its work. 14) **June 22, 1992:** Jorge Bandeira, Collor's campaign airplane pilot, testifies before the PCI. 15) **June 1992:** Investigations continue to progress. 16) **June 28, 1992:** Francisco Eriberto, the personal driver of Collor's secretary, makes accusations against the president. 17) **July 1, 1992:** Francisco Eriberto testifies before the PCI. 18) **August 1992:** The Democratic Labor Party (henceforth PDT) withdraws its support for the government. 19) **August 1992:** Street protests begin, demanding the president's impeachment. 20) **August 12, 1992:** The government attempts to secure votes against potential impeachment. 21) **August 12, 1992:** The opposition calls on Leonel Brizola to organize a pro-impeachment campaign. 22) **August 18, 1992:** The Brazilian Bar Association formally supports the impeachment. 23) **August 18, 1992:** The government unsuccessfully tries to use the same legal precedent applied to shelve impeachment proceedings against former president José Sarney to dismiss the impeachment request against Collor. 24) **August 18, 1992:** Bornhausen meets with government leaders to reassess support for the administration. 25) **August 19, 1992:** The opposition meets to secure the two-thirds majority necessary to approve impeachment. 26) **August 20, 1992:** PCI president Deputy Benito Gama (PFL) declares that sufficient evidence exists to hold the president criminally responsible. 27) **August 22, 1992:** Opposition parties decide to expedite the impeachment process. 28) **August 22, 1992:** The president of the Brazilian Press Association agrees to be a signatory to the impeachment request. 29) **August 25, 1992:** The PMDB officially declares its support for impeachment and seeks to accelerate the Chamber vote. 30) **August 1992:** Government defections increase, further weakening Collor's position. 31) **August 26, 1992:** The PCI's final report is voted on and approved by 17 votes to 5, formally charging President Collor with criminal responsibility.

### Process-Tracing 2 – The Banks PCI



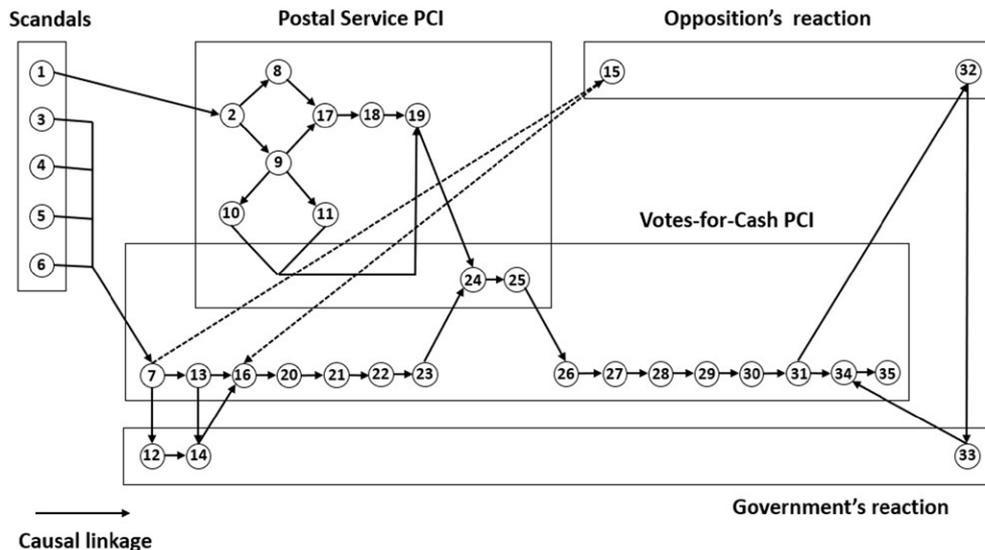
Created by the authors based on various Brazilian newspapers and magazines and Brazilian official documents.

### List of Events of the Banks PCI

1) **January 14, 1999:** The Brazilian Stock Exchange (BM&F) sets a maximum rate of BRL 1.25 for dollar contracts. 2) **January 1999:** Market liquidity deteriorates. 3) **January 1999:** Unlike other short-positioned banks that honored their obligations, Marka and FonteCindam face difficulties. Marka alone holds 12,000 contracts. 4) **January 1999:** The Brazilian Central Bank intervenes, adding liquidity to the market by selling dollars to Marka and FonteCindam. Negotiations are led by Claudio Mauch. 5) **January 1999:** A grievance arises, alleging Central Bank contracts with private sector entities caused a loss of USD 7.6 billion, benefiting private companies and individuals. 6) **February 23, 1999:** Federal Deputy Aloizio Mercadante (PT) files a complaint with the Chamber of Deputies, citing suspicious changes in bank positions before the currency depreciation. 7) **February 1999:** Central Bank President Arminio Fraga is summoned to clarify the events. 8) **February 1999:** Fraga's explanations are deemed insufficient. 9) **February 1999:** Mercadante requests the opening of a Senate PCI. 10) **March 30, 1999:** Senator Jader Barbalho (PMDB) formally requests the creation of the PCI despite opposition from President Fernando Henrique Cardoso. 11) **March 1999:** PMDB expresses dissatisfaction over political nominations. 12) **March 1999:** PMDB and PFL compete for influence within the coalition. 13) **April 6, 1999:** Finance Minister Pedro Malan expresses concern that the Banks PCI may paralyze legislative progress on reforms. 14) **April 8, 1999:** President Cardoso requests Senate President Antônio Carlos Magalhães (PFL) to meet with Jader Barbalho (PMDB) and Hugo Napoleão (PFL)

to negotiate PMDB leadership of the PCI. **15) April 1999:** The government prevents the PCI from including both senators and deputies. **16) April 14, 1999:** Former Central Bank President Francisco Lopes admits selling dollars below market price to cover Marka's position. **17) April 14, 1999:** The Banks PCI is formally created. **18) April 1999:** PMDB and PFL compete for control of the Banks and Judiciary PCIs, with disputes between Senator Jader Barbalho (PMDB) and Senator Antônio Carlos Magalhães (PFL). **19) April 1999:** The investigation progresses. **20) April 15, 1999:** Luiz Carlos Alvarez and Arminio Fraga testify before the PCI. **21) April 15, 1999:** A note from Salvatore Cacciola to Francisco Lopes is found, requesting intervention to secure dollar sales below market price. **22) April 18, 1999:** President Cardoso defends Francisco Lopes, attributing his dismissal to operational reasons. **23) April 19, 1999:** The Public Attorney's Office reveals a letter linking Sérgio Bragança and Francisco Lopes to offshore accounts, implicating Lopes in insider trading. **24) April 22, 1999:** President Cardoso directs Pedro Malan to expedite Central Bank investigations. **25) April 1999:** Investigations continue. **26) April 27, 1999:** Deputy Aloizio Mercadante suggests lifting banking secrecy to investigate institutional investment funds, citing suspicious profits exceeding 1,300%. **27) April 28, 1999:** The PCI shifts its focus to beneficiaries of the exchange rate devaluation. **28) May 3, 1999:** Tereza Grossi, Central Bank Supervision Department head, testifies before the PCI. **29) May 4, 1999:** Concerned about the PCI's direction, the government mobilizes allies to defend itself. **30) May 4, 1999:** Minister of Communications Pimenta da Veiga contacts senators to bolster PCI attendance. **31) May 4, 1999:** President Cardoso meets with PSDB senators and PFL leaders to address PCI concerns. **32) May 5, 1999:** Cardoso meets the new Central Bank board, demanding clarity on controversial episodes. **33) May 1999:** Investigations continue. **34) May 5, 1999:** The government fails to hold Aloizio Mercadante's testimony in a private session. **35) May 5, 1999:** Mercadante presents a report listing exchange rate devaluation beneficiaries and alleged insider trading, which the PCI dismisses. **36) May 5, 1999:** The report is received with skepticism by the CPI members. **37) May 1999:** Continuation of the investigations. **38) May 7, 1999:** During a breakfast meeting with the presidents of the main government coalition parties (PSDB, PFL, and PMDB), President Fernando Henrique Cardoso negotiated an agreement to neutralize the PCI without discrediting the senators involved. The concern was that the commission might reach the Minister of Finance, Pedro Malan. **39) August 24, 1999:** Testimonies of Gustavo Franco and Gustavo Loyola, both former presidents of the Central Bank. **40) August, 1999:** Continuation of the investigations. **41) September 21, 1999:** CPI members decide to extend the investigation period until November 30. **42) November 16, 1999:** The partial report is released. Although the alleged information leak was not proven, the amount spent to rescue the Marka and FonteCindam banks was deemed an unjustified loss to the Treasury, and it was suggested that the Public Prosecutor's Office hold the directors of both financial institutions civilly and criminally liable. **43) November 25, 1999:** The final report of the Banks CPI is approved. The document called for the civil and criminal liability of the entire board of directors of the Central Bank, due to the bailout operation involving the Marka and FonteCindam banks.

### Process-Tracing 3 – The Votes-for-Cash PCI



*Created by the authors based on various Brazilian newspapers and magazines and Brazilian official documents.*

#### List of Events of the Votes-for-Cash (Mensalão) PCI

**1) May 18, 2005:** The Postal Service scandal emerges. **2) May 25, 2005:** The request to create the Postal Service PCI<sup>8</sup> is approved. **3) June 6, 2005:** Roberto Jefferson (PTB) accuses allied government parties of receiving monthly payments of BRL 30,000 per parliamentarian to approve government-backed legislation. **4) June 12, 2005:** Roberto Jefferson alleges that the funds, now termed 'Mensalão', came from private companies, with Marcos Valério as

8. The Postal Service PCI was initiated following the release of a video showing agent Maurício Marinho accepting a bribe and implicating Roberto Jefferson, the president of the PTB. Jefferson later disclosed on television that congressmen were receiving monthly bribes, referred to as the 'Mensalão', in exchange for passing government-backed legislation. This revelation prompted the establishment of the Votes-for-Cash PCI. Although conducted separately, the two PCIs shared common themes and culminated in a joint report.

the chief intermediary. **5) June 14, 2005:** Roberto Jefferson testifies before the Ethics Council and names alleged beneficiaries of the scheme. **6) June 14, 2005:** Fernanda Karina Somaggio, Marcos Valério's former secretary, claims to have seen suitcases of money leaving Valério's office. **7) June 14, 2005:** The creation of the Votes-for-Cash PCI is requested. **8) June 29, 2005:** The Postal Service PCI proves that large sums were withdrawn from Marcos Valério's accounts, primarily at Banco Rural. **9) July 2, 2005:** The Postal Service PCI reveals that Marcos Valério, Delúbio Soares, and José Genoíno guaranteed a loan of BRL 2.4 million to the Workers Party (PT) from BMG Bank. **10) July 15, 2005:** Marcos Valério, testifying before the Postal Service PCI, admits the loans were made to PT. **11) July 16, 2005:** Delúbio Soares, in his testimony, also admits to the loans. **12) July 2005:** Disputes arise over signatures for the Votes-for-Cash PCI, as the government demands inclusion of the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration in the investigation. **13) July 20, 2005:** The Votes-for-Cash PCI is formally established. **14) July 2005:** Allied parties vie for control of the PCI presidency and rapporteur positions. **15) July 2005:** Opposition parties contest the PCI presidency and rapporteur positions. **16) July 2005:** The Votes-for-Cash PCI begins its work by analyzing documents and preparing to hear witnesses. **17) July 26, 2005:** The Postal Service PCI rejects the thesis of electoral crime. **18) July 2005:** The investigation progresses. **19) July 28, 2005:** The Postal Service PCI reveals that Marcos Valério's companies issued dozens of checks in series via a Banco Rural account in Belo Horizonte. **20) August 4, 2005:** Roberto Jefferson is interviewed on television before the Votes-for-Cash PCI begins, reiterating José Dirceu's central role in the scheme. **21) August 4, 2005:** In the same interview, Jefferson admits to benefiting from the scheme to bolster PTB campaign funds. **22) August 11, 2005:** The Votes-for-Cash PCI summons the treasurers of PT, PL, and PTB to testify. **23) August 18, 2005:** Delúbio Soares testifies, confirming that part of the funds withdrawn from Marcos Valério's accounts was used for campaign expenses. **24) September 1, 2005:** The Postal Service and Votes-for-Cash PCIs jointly submit a report listing parliamentarians allegedly involved in Mensalão. **25) September 2005:** Following the report, the Presiding Board of the Chamber of Deputies filed suits against 16 of the 18 parliamentarians named. **26) September 27, 2005:** A confrontation occurs between Delúbio Soares, Marcos Valério, and Valdemar Costa Neto at the Votes-for-Cash PCI. **27) November 1, 2005:** Marcos Valério travels to Brasília to collaborate with the Votes-for-Cash PCI, denying being the sole intermediary. **28) Novembro 2005:** Based on Marcos Valério's testimony, the Votes-for-Cash PCI discovers that part of the diverted public funds originated from state-owned enterprises, with an additional BRL 55 million detected as bank loans. **29) November 9, 2005:** Former Transportation Minister Anderson Adauto testifies, admitting to receiving BRL 410,000 from the scheme and using slush funds in all his campaigns. **30) November 2005:** The investigation progresses. **31) November 14, 2005:** PCI rapporteur Ibrahim Abi-Ackel (PP) admits his report is not ready and claims unawareness of the deadline. **32) November 15, 2005:** The opposition attempts to gather signatures to extend the PCI deadline, while the government seeks to block the effort. **33) November 15, 2005:** The government attempts to block the request from gathering enough signatures. **34) November 16, 2005:** The PCI's official deadline. It is agreed to grant one additional day for the report to be read. **35) November 17, 2005:** It dismisses the thesis of regular payments to political parties but finds strong indications that parliamentarians received bribes via irregular transfers from Marcos Valério.

## Analysis and Conclusions:

Contrary to common perceptions that Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (PCIs) “end in pizza” (a Brazilian expression implying ineffectiveness), this study shows that some PCIs have produced concrete results. The PC Farias PCI led directly to the impeachment of President Collor, while the Mensalão PCI resulted in the conviction of 25 politicians. Even cases with fewer judicial consequences, such as the Banks PCI, prompted structural reforms, notably within the Central Bank. These findings demonstrate that PCIs cannot be dismissed as mere tools of political negotiation; they require a more nuanced, case-sensitive analysis.

All the analyses we carried out had the process-tracing method as its starting point. It was this method that enabled us to chain events together so that descriptive inferences were complemented by causal inferences, which, in turn, increased our explanatory capacity. Thus, the method proved to be an innovation in corruption studies, offering a more sophisticated and explanatory methodological framework than the mere descriptive reports found in other studies. We also believe the method's usefulness extends beyond corruption scandals and can be applied to electoral studies, coalition studies, legal studies, and many other areas. We also facilitated the visualization of causal linkages when presenting process-tracing, as proposed by Mahoney (1999).

A structure analogous to a flow diagram allows us to spatially map the events and create comparative sketches, such as those in which we presented the groups of events (scandals that motivated the PCIs, the PCIs, and reactions). This spatial analogy enables better comparisons among processes and a clearer visualization of cause-and-effect relations.

Nevertheless, we can now turn to some of our main questions. *How do the government and the opposition behave when facing a PCI investigation? How is this behaviour affected by the fact that PCIs originate from corruption scandals? Under what conditions do developments in a scandal increase a CPI's ability to move forward? To what extent are the government's and the opposition's actions during a CPI shaped by corruption scandals?*

What distinguishes one PCI from another is precisely the capacity of the government and the opposition for articulation. The criterion of proportional representation reflects, within the PCI, the importance of the government and the opposition's ability to organize politically. If there is no certain

level of organisation by one of the parties, the other ends up imposing their preferences. This can be well demonstrated by the opposition's actions against the Collor government during the PC Farias PCI and the performance of the Fernando Henrique government during the Banks PCI. In the first case, opposition parties (PMDB, PSDB, PT, PDT, etc.) together with the government's inability allowed the opposition's preferences to be imposed. In the second case, the government's extreme organisation and constant concern end up limiting the actions of an opposition that has shown it has no means of imposing itself.

The three PCIs provided, therefore, a good test of this articulatory capacity. In the Votes-for-Cash PCI, we find that both the government and the opposition are uninterested in the investigations. Both sides believed only in investigating the part of the inquiry that interested them, but as they tried to overturn the other, we had a PCI that was significantly paralysed, despite some discoveries.

By using process-tracing, we have been able to identify the means by which the government and the opposition have made an investigation difficult. Both the government and the opposition have a range of actions available to them, depending on their degree of cohesion and organization. Such actions include: meetings, attempts to interrupt PCIs, attempts to avoid the extension of PCI deadlines, disclosure of bluffs, negotiations with allies and/or opportunistic politicians, filibuster, bargaining, political favours, promises, threats, and political sanctions. These are used according to the government's and the opposition's internal capacities to impose their preferences and avoid the costs of corruption scandals.

Another aspect that should be emphasised is that not only do PCIs play a small role in enabling the legislature to supervise the Executive, but they are also a powerful currency of exchange (Figueiredo 2001). The fact that we see some PCIs with strong results does not imply that they lack severe veto points. Nor does it mean that some of them lack the capacity to make a lot of noise and incur costly consequences for the losing side in the investigation. They have the power to grab media attention and public opinion and often serve as a spotlight and springboard for some politicians, especially in an election year. While a PCI for the opposition weakens the government, for government allies, it serves as a means to secure something in return.

Regarding the dynamics of events which allowed the three PCIs to be formed, and which could have a final report to be voted on, or a closing session, it focuses on the "scandal" event. The scandal is the first<sup>9</sup> fact between the act of corruption and the PCI. This scandal is channelled by the interests of politicians who, when they manage to form a PCI, have the spotlight on themselves. This makes it possible to impose their preferences or obtain gains.

A PCI is a form of parliamentary investigation that operates under a "fire-alarm" investigation model (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984). It does not occur routinely, as in the "police-patrol" model; rather, the media uncovers scandals and "sounds the alarm." Opposition politicians then perceive an opportunity to investigate the government and establish a temporary committee. In turn, the committee generates further inquiries, which the press amplifies and deepens, potentially producing new scandals, and so on in a self-reinforcing cycle.

We argue that the dynamics observed across the three PCIs reinforce the importance of political parties and their internal organization in shaping the legislative process within Parliamentary Committees of Inquiry (Cox & McCubbins, 1993). In this sense, the governing coalition seeks to turn the PCI into an arena for agenda control and reputational protection, even outside the plenary floor. In other words, PCIs reproduce the logic of the Coalitional Presidentialism system.

Finally, we can say, although incipiently, that proportional representation is principally responsible for structuring the dynamics of the PCIs and reproduces the logic of the Coalitional Presidentialism during the committees. The logic of PCIs' dynamics is clear when examined through process-tracing.

And if today we see limitations in Figueiredo and Limongi's thesis, it does not mean that the *party theory* (Cox and McCubbins, 1993) is not applicable to the Brazilian Legislative. We have shown that this is precisely what occurs with PCIs (opposition and government organisation dictate the proper functioning of the committee). The present questioning of the preponderance of the Executive over the Legislative appears, therefore, to be what Amorim Neto, Cox, and McCubbins (2003) pointed out to us by identifying multiple political cartels in majority governments and the absence of political cartels in minority governments in Brazil.

---

9. The second one can be the specific facts used as a legal basis to initiate a PCI.

## References:

- Abranches, S. H. (1988). Presidencialismo de coalizão: O dilema institucional brasileiro. *Dados*, 31(1), 5-34. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-3352.2021.34.241841>
- Ades, A., & Di Tella, R. (1999). Rents, competition and corruption. *The American Economic Review*, 89(4), 982-993. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.89.4.982>
- Ames, B. (2003). *Os entraves da democracia no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV.
- Amorim Neto, O. (2006). *Presidencialismo e governabilidade nas Américas*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV.
- Amorim Neto, O., Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (2003). Agenda power in Brazil's *Câmara dos Deputados*. *World Politics*, 55(4), 550-578. <https://doi.org/10.1353/wp.2003.0029>
- Amorim Neto, O., & Rodriguez, J. C. (2016). O novo método histórico-comparativo e seus aportes à ciência política e à administração pública. *Revista de Administração Pública*, 50(6), 1003-1027. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7612156950>
- Beach, D., & Pedersen, R. B. (2013). *Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Beach, D., & Rohlfing, I. (2015). Integrating cross-case analyses and process tracing in set-theoretic research: Strategies and parameters of debate. *Sociological Methods & Research*, 47(1), 3-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049124115613780>
- Bennett, A., & Checkel, J. T. (2015). *Process-tracing: From metaphor to analytical tool*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bezerra, M. O. (1995). *Corrupção: Um estudo sobre o poder público e relações pessoais no Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará.
- Bonfácio, R., & Fucks, M. (2017). Desvendando a relação entre corrupção e participação política na América Latina: Diagnóstico e impactos da exposição a atos corruptos sobre a participação política. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 25(63), 27-52. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1678-987317256302>
- Bonfim, R. W. L., Luz, J. H., & Vasquez, V. (2023). Mandatory individual amendments: A change in the pattern of executive dominance in the Brazilian budgetary and financial cycle. *Brazilian Political Science Review*, 17(2), 1-31. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1981-3821202300020001>
- Bulos, U. (2001). *Comissão parlamentar de inquérito* [Doctoral dissertation, Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo].
- Buna, A. L. C. (2018). *As comissões parlamentares de inquérito e o controle político no Senado (1995-2015)* [Master's thesis, State University of Pará].
- Centurione, D., Vasselai, F., & Cadah, L. (2011). O que fazem as CPIs no Brasil? Uma análise dos relatórios finais das Comissões Parlamentares de Inquérito. *Cadernos Adenauer*, 12(2), O Congresso e o presidencialismo de coalizão.\* Fundação Konrad Adenauer. <https://www.kas.de/pt/web/brasilien/cadernos-adenauer>
- Cerqueira, M. (1999). *Comissões parlamentares de inquérito*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Destaque-IAB.
- Collier, D. (2011). Understanding process tracing. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 44(4), 823-830. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1049096511001429>
- Cox, G. W., & McCubbins, M. D. (1993). *Legislative leviathan: Party government in the House*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Figueiredo, A. (2001). Instituições e política no controle do Executivo. *Dados*, 44(4), 689-727. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0011-52582001000400002>
- Figueiredo, A., & Limongi, F. (1999). *Executivo e Legislativo na nova ordem constitucional*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV.
- Figueiredo, M., & Melo, C. A. V. (2022, junho). *As comissões parlamentares de inquérito e o controle legislativo no Brasil (1987-2021)* [Conference presentation]. X Encontro Brasileiro de Administração Pública, São Paulo, Brasil.
- Filgueiras, F. (2009). A tolerância à corrupção no Brasil: Uma antinomia entre normas morais e prática social. *Opinião Pública*, 15(2), 386-421. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0104-62762009000200005>
- Filgueiras, F., & Aranha, A. L. (2019). Institutional change and accountability: Procedural ecology and defiance of the Brazilian case. *Revista Brasileira de Ciência Política*, 28, 33-64. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0103-335220192802>
- Fleischer, D. (2002). *Corruption in Brazil: Defining, measuring and reducing*. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies.
- Geddes, B., & Ribeiro Neto, A. (2000). Fontes institucionais da corrupção no Brasil. In R. Downes & K. Rosenn (Eds.), *Corrupção e reforma política no Brasil: O impacto do impeachment de Collor* (pp. 25-58). Rio de Janeiro: FGV.
- Gerring, J. (2007). *Case study research: Principles and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Guanabara, R., & Peixinho, M. (2001). *Comissões parlamentares de inquérito: Princípios, poderes e limites*. Rio de Janeiro: Lumen Juris.
- Grün, R. (2011). Escândalos, tsunamis e marolas: Apontamentos e desapontamentos sobre um traço recorrente da realidade. *Revista Brasileira de Ciências Sociais*, 26(77), 151-173. <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-69092011000300013>
- Jucá, I., Melo, M. A., & Rennó, L. (2016). The political cost of corruption: Scandals, campaign finance, and reelection in the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies. *Journal of Politics in Latin America*, 8(2), 3-36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1866802X1600800201>

- Mahoney, J. (1999). Nominal, ordinal, and narrative appraisal in macro-causal analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, 104(4), 1154-1196. <https://doi.org/10.1086/210139>
- Mainwaring, S. (2001). *Sistemas partidários em novas democracias: O caso do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: FGV.
- McCubbins, M. D., & Schwartz, T. (1984). Congressional oversight overlooked: Police patrols versus fire alarms. *American Journal of Political Science*, 28(1), 165-179. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2110792>
- Pedone, L. (2002). O controle pelo Legislativo. In B. Speck (Ed.), *Caminhos da transparência* (pp. 151-170). Campinas: Editora da Unicamp.
- Perissinotto, R., & Nunes, W. (2023). *Introdução aos métodos qualitativos: Comparação histórica, QCA e process tracing* (1ª ed.). São Paulo: Edusp.
- Schilling, F. (1997). *Corrupção intolerável? As comissões parlamentares de inquérito e a luta contra a corrupção no Brasil (1980-1992)* [Doctoral dissertation, University of São Paulo].
- Silva, F., & Cunha, E. (2014). Process-tracing e a produção de inferência causal. *Teoria e Sociedade*, 22, 104-125. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais. <https://periodicos.ufmg.br/index.php/teoriaesociedade>
- Taylor, M. M., & Buranelli, V. C. (2007). Ending up in pizza: Accountability as a problem of institutional arrangement in Brazil. *Latin American Politics and Society*, 49(1), 59-87. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1548-2456.2007.tb00374.x>
- Teixeira Junior, A., & Lucena Silva, A. H. (2017). Explaining defense cooperation with process-tracing: The Brazilian proposal for the creation of UNASUR South American Defense Council. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, 60(2), 1-18. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201700209>
- Treisman, D. (2000). *The causes of corruption: A cross-national study*. *Journal of Public Economics*, 76(3), 399-457. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727\(99\)00092-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0047-2727(99)00092-4)

## Brazilian Legislative Official Documents

- Brasil. Senado Federal. (1992). *Relatório final da Comissão Parlamentar Mista de Inquérito: criada pelo requerimento nº 52/92* [Final report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on PC Farias case]. <https://www2.senado.leg.br/bdsf/handle/id/88802>
- Brasil. Senado Federal. (1999). *Relatório final da Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito: criada pelo requerimento nº 127/99* [Final report of the Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on Banks]. <https://www.senado.gov.br/comissoes/CPI/arquivo/CPMIPC.pdf>
- Brasil. Senado Federal. (2005). *Relatório final da Comissão Parlamentar Mista de Inquérito: criada pelo requerimento nº 7/05* [Final report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry on Votes-for-Cash]. <https://www.congressonacional.leg.br/materias/pesquisa/-/materia/74578>

## Magazines and Newspapers

Magazines: *Veja*; *Isto É*; *Exame* (several editions).

Newspapers: *Folha de São Paulo*; *O Estado de São Paulo*; *O Globo*; *Jornal do Brasil*; *Correio Brasiliense*; *Gazeta Mercantil*; *Jornal de Brasília*; *Tribuna do Brasil* (several editions).

## List of Abbreviations:

BM&F	Brazilian Stock Exchange (Bolsa de Mercadorias e Futuros)
PCI	Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry (Comissão Parlamentar de Inquérito)
PDT	Democratic Labor Party (Partido Democrático Trabalhista)
PFL	Liberal Front Party (Partido da Frente Liberal)
PL	Liberal Party (Partido Liberal)
PMDB	Brazilian Democratic Movement Party (Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro)
PP	Progressive Party (Partido Progressista)
PRN	National Reconstruction Party (Partido da Reconstrução Nacional)
PSDB	Brazilian Social Democracy Party (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira)
PT	Worker's Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores)
PTB	Brazilian Labor Party (Partido Trabalhista Brasileiro)
TSE	Superior Electoral Court ( <i>Tribunal Superior Eleitoral</i> )