Brazilian Legislation on Executive Power: Provisory or Permanent Measures?
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DOI: 10.36348/SIJCJ.2019.v02i10.007 | Received: 21.10.2019 | Accepted: 28.10.2019 | Published: 30.10.2019

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Abstract

In 1988, the National Constituent Assembly promulgated the Brazilian Constitution, creating the Provisional Measure (MP) through Art. 62, which is a single act of the President of the Republic, due to urgency and relevance of the subject, with an immediate force of law, for a period not superior to 60 days. In this article, N=1,512 MPs, issued from 1988 to 2019, were analyzed. Key findings pointed out 1,160 MPs converted into Laws (77 percent conversion tax), 67 MP processes, from which N=51 MPs are still in force for 18 years. This inconsistency is given by the Constitutional Amendment 32, issued on September 11, 2001, which altered the termination clause over time from Art. 62, paragraph 1st, under investigation. The implications are potential legal uncertainty arising from disparities, regarding provisional measures that became permanent, until appreciated by the Brazilian Congress. Case analysis and discussion complete the present work.

Keywords: Provisory Measure, Federal Constitution, Constitutional Amendment, Brazilian Legislation.

INTRODUCTION

This study presents an extensive investigation of the Brazilian Provisory Measures (Medidas Provisórias, or MPs, in Brazilian Portuguese), as the unit of analysis [1].

Provisory Measures are exclusive acts of the Brazilian chief of the executive power, created by the Constitution 1988, Art. 62, "with an immediate force of law, without the participation of the Legislative Power, due to urgency and relevance of the subject, for a period not superior to 60 days" [2]. Nevertheless, evidence was found that approximately five percent of the overall N=1,512 MPs are still in force after the termination period. In other words, provisory became, became long-life, permanent ones. N=51 MPs are still in force for eighteen years. Such MPs are investigated in this case study.

MP 2.162-72, for instance, from August 23, 2001, ruling the issuance of National Treasury Notes - NTN for the capital increase of the Banco do Brasil S.A., was re-issued 72 times, on a monthly basis, from March 14, 1996 (initially MP 1.367 – MPs sometimes changed their identification number, for distinct classification purposes), since then in process, with full legal force for 18 years.

The answer to the discrepancies studied here lies in the Constitutional Amendment 32 (CA32), issued on September 11, 2001 [5].

The "Citizen Constitution", as became known Constitution 1988, was issued on October 5, 1988, with 117 articles, and Amended 102 times, from 1988 to 2019. In this research, only Art. 62 is under investigation, in which MPs are ruled [2], together with CA32, regarding Art. 62 [5].

In the next sections, methods and limitations are presented. Case analysis, discussion, implications and future research complete the current study.

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METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

This study is qualitative, inductive reasoning, multi-method approach interpretive. It compiled a single descriptive case study with extensive archival research. The unit of analysis is the Brazilian Provisional Measures [1].

This research is limited to Federal Constitution 1988, Art. 62 [2], and Constitutional Amendment 32 [5], regarding Art. 62 modification. Archival research was conducted solely upon the Brazilian Congress database [6].

Moreover, this study is limited also by the Brazilian Federative Republic government system. Other government systems are not part of this study and should be investigated in separate.

Finally, this research is limited to the MPs issued from 1988 to October 2, 2019. Other legal instruments or different periods are not investigated here.

FEDERAL CONSTITUTION 1988

Provisory Measure (MP), is a legal dispositive, exclusive to the executive power. According to the Brazilian Constitution 1988, Art. 62, Title IV, Chapter I (Legislative Power), Section VIII (Legislative Process), subsection III, “In case of relevance and urgency, the President of the Republic may adopt provisional measures, with force of law, and shall submit them immediately to the National Congress” [2].

However, MPs are limited in scope, as originally worded by Art. 62, § 1:
- Nationality, citizenship, political rights, political parties and electoral law;
- Criminal law, criminal and civil procedural law;
- Organization of the judiciary and the public prosecutor, the career and guarantee of its members;
- Multiannual plans, budget guidelines, budget and additional and supplementary credits, except as provided in art. 167, §3 [2]

The tax increase is prevented by §2 — finally, § 12, Art. Sixty-two issued "the provisional measure shall be fully effective until the draft is sanctioned or vetoed” [2] CA 32 has altered the Art. 62, as demonstrated in the next section.

CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT 32

Constitution Amendment 32 (CA32) was issued on September 11, 2001. CA32 altered the following articles from Federal Constitution: (a) 1°, (b) 48, (c) 57, (d) 61, (e) 62, (f) 64, (g) 66, (h) 84, (i) 88, and finally (j) 246. In this research, only art. 62 was studied. Article 62 has been altered on its caput and in § 1:

CA 32, Art. 62. Caput, the following sentence was eliminated (in red)

Em caso de relevância e urgência, o Presidente da República poderá adotar medidas provisórias, com força de lei, devendo submetê-las de imediato ao Congresso Nacional., que, estando em recesso, será convocado extraordinariamente para se reunir no prazo de cinco dias [2, 5]

Directly translated, Art. 62 from CA 32 remained as follows: "In case of relevance and urgency, the president of the Republic should adopt provisory measures, with the full force of law, submitting them to the National Congress."

The sentence in red was suppressed: "(...) even being in recess, should be extraordinarily summoned, in five days. Therefore, CA32 removed the possibility for congress extraordinary convocation within the recess.

CA 32, sole paragraph became § 1:

§ 1 Parágrafo único. EAs vedada a edição de medidas provisórias sobreprenderão matéria:eficácia, desde a edição, se não forem convertidas em lei no prazo de trinta dias, a partir de sua publicação, devendo o Congresso Nacional disciplinar as relações jurídicas delas decorrentes.

In sum, the expiration period of 30 days, counting after the MP publication, was, by CA 32, suppressed from the original Art. 62, from Federal Constitution 1988. In the following sections, the consequences of such an Amendment will be analyzed.

PROVISORY MEASURES (1988 – 2019)

For the purposes of this research, N=1,512 MPs has been investigated, from November 4, 1988 (MP 10) October 2, 2019 (MP 897). Out of these, 1,160 MPs were converted in laws (77 percent), 312 were rejected, terminated (33 percent), or are in the process – 67 (approximately 4.5 percent).

First, Figure 1 illustrates the MPs issued before and after CA 32:

|                | Constitutional Amendment 32 | MPs | MPs Re-editions | Total |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----------------|-------|
| Before         | 1988 - 2001                 | 615 | 9.588           | 10.203|
| After          | 2001 - 2019                 | 897 | 0               | 897   |
| Total          |                             | 1,512| 9.588           | 11.100|

Fig-1: MPs issued before and after CA 32. Source: Brasil, 2019 [6]

Observe in Figure-1 that before the Constitutional Amendment 32 (CA 32), from 1988 to...
2001, the number of MP re-issuance or re-editions reached 9,588 MPs, and after CA 32, dropped to zero.

Figure-2 depicts the number of MPs converted into Laws, before and after the CA 32:

| Constitutional Ammendment 32 | MPs | MPs converted into Laws | Conversion rate (%) |
|-------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Before CA 32 1988 - 2001     | 615 | 479                     | 78%                |
| After CA 32 2001 - 2019      | 897 | 681                     | 76%                |
| Total                         | 1,512 | 1,150                 | 77%                |

Fig-2: MPs converted into Laws. Source: Brasil, 2019 [6]

Note in Figure-2 that the conversion tax decreased slightly after the CA 32 (2 percent) in comparison to both periods (before and after CA 32). Nevertheless, the number of Congress sessions for MP appreciations decreased dramatically; thus, optimizing National Congress performance on MPs. Once MPs are initially, acts of the executive power, not the legislative branch, they might be seen as interference from the executive on congressional matters.

Figure 3 illustrates the MPs rejected and in process, before and after CA 32:

| Constitutional Ammendment 32 | MPs Rejected | Rejection rate (%) | In Process |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------|------------|
| Before CA 32 1988 - 2001     | 615 | 136       | 22% | 51 |
| After CA 32 2001 - 2019      | 897 | 216       | 24% | 16 |
| Total                         | 1,512 | 352       | 23% | 67 |

Fig-3: MPs rejected and in process. Source: Brasil, 2019 [6]

Out of the N=67 total MPs in process, before the CA 32, N=51 MPs remain in force since 2001. After the CA 32, 16 MPs remain in process; however, they are still in due time.

From 1988 to 2019, eight Brazilian presidents took office, as shown in Figure-4, as follows:

| President                        | MPs | MPs converted into Laws | Conversion rate (%) |
|----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 30\textsuperscript{o} Tancredo Neves | 0   | 0                       | 0                  |
| 31\textsuperscript{o} José Sarney    | 121 | 101                     | 83%                |
| 32\textsuperscript{o} Fernando Collor | 96  | 73                      | 76%                |
| 33\textsuperscript{o} Itamar Franco | 78  | 67                      | 86%                |
| 34\textsuperscript{o} Fernando Henrique Cardoso | 422 | 322                     | 76%                |
| 35\textsuperscript{o} Luís Inácio Lula da Silva | 419 | 366                     | 87%                |
| 36\textsuperscript{o} Dilma Rousseff | 222 | 156                     | 70%                |
| 37\textsuperscript{o} Michel Temer | 126 | 70                      | 56%                |
| 38\textsuperscript{o} Jair Messias Bolsonaro | 28  | 5                       | 18%                |
| Total                            | 1,512 | 1,160             | 77%                |

Fig-4: MPs Conversion per president. Source: Brasil, 2019 [6]

Observe in Figure 4, that the 30\textsuperscript{o} President, Tancredo Neves, passed away on April 21, 1985, and never took office, replaced by José Sarney, from 1985 to 1991.

President Michel Temer occupied the office for two years and 213 days, due to the Dilma Roussef’s impeachment process. The same happened to Fernando Collor, impeached and later substituted for Itamar Franco. Lula da Silva was the president who issued the highest number of MPs converted into Laws. However, both left-wing administrations (Lula’s and Dilma’s, from Labor Party – PT) were the most corrupt within the entire Brazilian history. Lula is also the only former Brazilian president convicted for corruption, and laundry money, currently in prison, for nine years and six months reclusion.

Michel Temer was the president with the highest number of MPs per term: 4.5 MPs per month, almost one MP per week during his short term.

President Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration (1995-2003), issued the highest number of MPs and reeditions: 422 MPs, plus 9,438 re-editions, totaled 9,860 MPs in eight years mandate.

Finally, President Jair Bolsonaro took office on January 1st, 2019, and cannot be full evaluated because his term has not yet completed a year. So far, twenty MPs were issued by Bolsonaro, and five were converted in Laws, and fifteen are in process, in due time.

PERMANENT MEASURES?

N= 51 Provisory Measures issued before CA 32 are still in force, as illustrated in Figure 5 and 6:
| #   | MPs       | Reediting | In force since | Subject                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-----------|-----------|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1   | 2.229-43  | 41        | 10.09.2001     | Federal career organization                                                                                                             |
| 2   | 2.228-1   | 1         | 10.09.2001     | Cinema National Politics (PRODECINE)                                                                                                     |
| 3   | 2.227     | 0         | 05.09.2001     | Alters Law 10.192/01                                                                                                                     |
| 4   | 2.226     | 0         | 04.09.2001     | Adds item to CLT                                                                                                                        |
| 5   | 2.225-45  | 44        | 04.09.2001     | Alter Laws 6.368/76, 8.112/90, 8.429/92, and 9.525/97                                                                                     |
| 6   | 2.224     | 0         | 04.09.2001     | Brazilian investments overseas                                                                                                            |
| 7   | 2.220     | 0         | 04.09.2001     | Creation of CNDU - National Development Council                                                                                           |
| 8   | 2.217-3   | 3         | 01.09.2001     | Establishes the National Council for the Integration of Transport Policies, the National Agency of Land Transport, the National Agency of Waterway Transport and the National Department of Transport Infrastructure |
| 9   | 2.216-37  | 37        | 01.09.2001     | Alters Law No. 9.649 of May 27, 1998, - the organization of the Presidency                                                              |
| 10  | 2.215-10  | 10        | 01.09.2001     | Military forces salary - Laws 3.765, and 6.880                                                                                             |
| 11  | 2.214     | 0         | 01.09.2001     | Alters o art. 1 o da Lei n o 10.261 - Union budget                                                                                         |
| 12  | 2.213-1   | 1         | 31.08.2001     | Creates the Bolsa-Renda program, to assist poor families                                                                                   |
| 13  | 2.211     | 0         | 30.08.2001     | Alter Law 9.995, and 10.266. Union budget.                                                                                               |
| 14  | 2.210     | 0         | 30.08.2001     | R$ 50.000.000.00 extra credit for Eney Ministry                                                                                           |
| 15  | 2.209     | 0         | 30.08.2001     | creation of the Brazilian Trader of Emergency Energy - CBEE                                                                             |
| 16  | 2.208     | 0         | 20.08.2001     | Provides for proof of student status and under eighteen                                                                                  |
| 17  | 2.206-1   | 1         | 10.09.2001     | Creates the National Health Minimum Income Program: "Bolsa-Alimentação"                                                                     |
| 18  | 2.200-2   | 2         | 27.08.2001     | Institutes the Brazilian Public Key Infrastructure - ICP-Brasil, transforms the National Institute of Information Technology into a local authority |
| 19  | 2.199-14  | 14        | 27.08.2001     | IIR changes on Tax                                                                                                                      |
| 20  | 2.198-5   | 5         | 27.08.2001     | Creates and installs the Electricity Crisis Management Chamber of the Governing Council, establishes guidelines for programs to deal with the electric power crisis. |
| 21  | 2.197-43  | 43        | 27.08.2001     | Provides for the adoption of measures related to the Financial System of Housing - SFH                                                    |
| 22  | 2.196-3   | 3         | 25.08.2001     | Establishes the Program for Strengthening Federal Financial Institutions and authorizes the creation of the Asset Management Company - EMGEA |
| 23  | 2.192-70  | 70        | 25.08.2001     | Establishes mechanisms to encourage the reduction of the state public sector presence in banking financial activity, provides for the privatization of financial institutions |
| 24  | 2.190-34  | 34        | 24.08.2001     | alters dispositive on ANVISA - National Sanitary Surveillance Agency                                                                     |
| 25  | 2.189-49  | 49        | 24.08.2001     | amends income tax legislation with respect to the withholding tax on income from financial investments,                                   |
| 26  | 2.187-13  | 13        | 27.08.2001     | Provides for the adjustment of benefits maintained by the Social Security                                                                |
| 27  | 2.185-35  | 35        | 27.08.2001     | Refinancing public debt on real estate                                                                                                    |
| 28  | 2.184-23  | 23        | 25.08.2001     | ensures perception of gratification by civil servants Federal Police, Federal District Police Officer, Federal District Civil Police, Federal Highway Police |
| 29  | 2.183-56  | 56        | 27.08.2001     | alter decree 3.365/41, and Laws 4.504/64, 8.177/91, and 8.629/93.                                                                        |
| 30  | 2.181-45  | 45        | 27.08.2001     | Provides for financial transactions between the National Treasury                                                                       |
| 31  | 2.180-35  | 35        | 27.08.2001     | Alter Laws 8.437/1992, 9.028/95, 9.494/97, 7.347/85, 8.429/92, 9.704/98, Decree 5.452/43, Laws 5.869/73, and 4.348/64 |
| 32  | 2.179-36  | 36        | 27.08.2001     | Provides for financial relations between the Union and the Central Bank of Brazil                                                           |
| 33  | 2.178-36  | 36        | 25.08.2001     | Provides for the transfer of funds from the National School Meals Program, institutes the Direct Money at School Program, amends Law 9.533/97. |

Fig. 5: MPs in process. Source: Brasil, 2019 [6]
Observe in both Figures 5 and 6 the N=51 MPs in process, and currently in force, since 2001. By the original Art. 62 paragraph 1, these MPs should be terminated due to validity extinction. However, CA 32, on the one hand, decreased the number of MP reeditions substantially to zero. For instance, in Fig-6, the MP 2.159-70 (#48), was re-issued 70 times and has never been converted into Law, because National Congress did not veto or voted this MP, so far. In sum, what should be temporary became permanent in 51 cases [6], with no further plans for a close appreciation.

**DISCUSSION**

Rodrigo Maia, current president of the Chamber of the Deputies, complains the excessive number of MPs, according to him, a clear interference from the Executive in the Legislative branch, locking the Congress agenda:

What I am concerned about is this interference of the Executive Power in the Legislative Power permanently. We have ten provisional measures locking the agenda in the House of Representatives. Too bad you have an agenda that ends up being almost all monopolized by the Executive Power, "said Maia [7].

Given the drastic reduction of Congress activity regarding MPs, due to the CA 32, it seems an exaggerated commentary. One possible solution for his statelement should be the reduction of Congress recess period, from the current eight weeks to four weeks, like any Brazilian worker. Brazilian Congressmen shall, at discretion, remain on their bases on Mondays and Fridays, in practice working from Tuesdays to Thursdays. In a developing country like Brazil, this recess embarrasses the population and is a waste of public resources. Congress recesses encompass two periods: July 18th -31st (14 days) and from December 22nd to February 1st (42 days) [6]. In total, 56 days of recess, or almost two months. Recess should be decreased to 30 days maximum, like any other regular worker. Therefore, Brazilian Congress would be plenty of time to vote all N=51 MPs in process, as well as hundreds of Projects of Law and other vital reforms current under plodding appreciation pace by the House of Representatives. Congress members should work the same 44 hours workload, as prescribed for entire urban and rural workers, at least to give an example for the overall Brazilian workers, as worded by Article 7, item XIII from the Brazilian Constitution 1988.

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### # MPs # Reeditions In force since Subject

| #  |  | # Reeditions | In force since | Subject |
|----|---|----------------|-----------------|---------|
| 34 | 2.177-44 | 44 | 27.08.2001 | Amends Law No. 9,656 of June 3, 1998, which provides for private health care plans. |
| 35 | 2.174-28 | 28 | 24.08.2001 | constitutes, within the scope of the Executive Branch of the Union, the Voluntary Termination Program - PDV |
| 36 | 2.173-24 | 24 | 24.08.2001 | Provides rules for high school tuition fees |
| 37 | 2.172-32 | 32 | 24.08.2001 | Establishes the nullity of the contractual provisions |
| 38 | 2.170-36 | 36 | 24.08.2001 | Provides for the administration of cash resources of the National Treasury |
| 39 | 2.169-43 | 43 | 25.08.2001 | Extends to civil servants of the Federal Executive Branch the advantage of twenty-eight point eighty six per cent, object of the decision of the Federal Supreme Court |
| 40 | 2.168-40 | 40 | 27.08.2001 | Provides for the Agricultural Production Cooperatives Revitalization Program - RECOOP, authorizes the creation of the National Cooperative Learning Service - SESCOOP |
| 41 | 2.167-53 | 53 | 24.08.2001 | Authorizes the Union to receive in dividends securities and interest on equity to be paid by entities in whose capital the National Treasury participates |
| 42 | 2.166-67 | 67 | 25.08.2001 | It establishes the Transport Allowance, provides for the payment of the military and servants of the Federal Executive Power, including their municipalities, foundations, public companies and companies of mixed economy. |
| 43 | 2.165-36 | 36 | 25.08.2001 | Forrestal Code |
| 44 | 2.164-41 | 41 | 27.08.2001 | Amends the Consolidation of Labor Laws - CLT to provide for part-time work, suspension of employment contract and professional qualification program |
| 45 | 2.163-41 | 41 | 24.08.2001 | Provides for criminal and administrative sanctions arising from conduct and activities harmful to the environment |
| 46 | 2.162-72 | 72 | 24.08.2001 | Provides for the issuance of National Treasury Notes - NTN for the capital increase of Banco do Brasil S.A. |
| 47 | 2.161-35 | 35 | 24.08.2001 | amend procedures related to the National Privatization Program |
| 48 | 2.159-70 | 70 | 27.08.2001 | Amend income tax legislation |
| 49 | 2.158-35 | 35 | 27.08.2001 | Amends the legislation on Social Security Contributions - COFINS, the Social Integration Programs and the Formation of the Civil Servant Patrimony - PIS / PASEP and the Income Tax |
| 50 | 2.157-5 | 5 | 27.08.2001 | Creates the Amazon Development Agency - ADA, extinguishes the Amazon Development Superintendence - SUDAM |
| 51 | 2.156-5 | 5 | 27.08.2001 | Creates the Northeast Development Agency - ADENE, extinguishes the Northeast Development Superintendence - SUDENE |

Fig-6: MPs in process. Source: Brasil, 2019 [6]
workers, at least to give example for the overall Brazilian workers, as worded by Article 7, item XIII from the Brazilian Constitution 1988.

**IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

This study implied in revealing potential law insecurity given the provisory measures have become permanent, from which N=51 are in force for 18 years. Critical appreciation of such MPs is paramount for the Brazilian House of Representatives. Another implication is an increasing number of Brazilian business scenarios directly affected by the MPs in process [8-22], for instance.

Future study is recommended to the impact of the N=51 MPs in process in lawsuits over the past decades. Congress performance indicators should be applied to appreciate the real impact of MPs to the legislative agenda.

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