

EDITORIAL

Administration, management, and public policies: interfaces and dialogues with the organizational field

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The field of public administration and management works to develop government services, manage programs, and encourage policy implementation. This field's stakeholders are managers, policymakers, constituent populations, and society as a whole at the local, state, national, or international levels. The discussion and dialogue among political systems, modernization of the state, public management, and the reflection of these different elements in the organizational field are, to say the least, complex and timely.

This thematic issue of *Cadernos EBAPE.BR* on public administration counts on the special contribution of guest editor, Ph.D. Alketa Peci. She is President of the ANPAD – Brazilian Academy of Management and editor-in-chief of the *Brazilian Journal of Public Administration (RAP)* at FGV EBAPE. Professor Peci presents the necessary interfaces and dialogues between studies in administration and public management and the organizational field, which is the editorial scope guiding our journal.

Over 100 years ago, Woodrow Wilson summarized public administration as “the government in action.” This definition resonates nowadays as a pragmatic and dialectical conception of a public bureaucracy immersed in modern society. The relationships the public sector establishes with politics, the market, and civil society vary over time, altering how the government, the bureaucracy, and public managers act, i.e., the public administration changes as the state's role changes. In this editorial, we reflect on structural and conjectural changes and the challenges they represent for researchers in this rich, multidisciplinary, and multifaceted field.

For decades, in Brazil and worldwide, the Weberian “ideal” model of bureaucracy has been challenged by equally ideal new models of market and network. The Weberian bureaucracy is based on rational-legal authority, seeking administrative efficiency and securing democratic principles via representative democracy. Elected politicians delegate public management to professional technicians (bureaucrats), who seek to optimize efficiency and productivity, observing principles such as impersonalism and universalization.

Contrary to what is ambiguously advocated in movements such as new public management, the ideal market model encourages competition between public agencies and between the public and private. It sees the choice resulting from this competition as the best democratic and managerial principle.

Finally, the network model is based on the democratic principle of direct participation and collaboration, promoting collaborative (or contractual) governance with different actors (profit or non-profit) and citizens in general. If, on the one hand, these actors are considered indispensable in elaborating and implementing public policies, on the other, the state's role is modified to become coordinator, connector, or regulator of this complex network of political actors.

From the Vargas government until the 1980s, public bureaucracies were largely responsible for formulating, implementing, and controlling public policies, generating dysfunctions, and accumulating expertise and knowledge. The expansion of the bureaucracy reflected Brazil's developmental project, unlike North American progressivism or European social welfare. As a result, the large Brazilian state-owned companies (characterized with “bras” in their names), dominant in several economic and industrial sectors, generated regional inequalities and technocracy expansion.

The state crisis and the processes of economic liberalization and democratization transformed the public administration's role. Over the past few decades, Brazil has ceased to be a direct provider in important economic and social sectors and has started to rely on the participation of private companies and civil society organizations in the implementation of various public policies. A set of independent regulatory agencies emerged to control complex contractual relationships with private companies. At the same time, a growing number of civil society organizations emerged, recognized as social organizations (called OS, they are private organizations that establish contracts with the government to carry out public services), civil society organizations of public interest (called OSCIPS, they are private institutions that carry out activities of public interest and may establish partnerships and receive grants from the government), and other non-profit organizations. These institutions have implemented social policies in areas such as health, science and technology, and welfare, running almost exclusively on public funding – a model that increased under more socially oriented governments.

Today, the field of Brazilian public administration is marked by syncretic institutions, inspired by the ideals of bureaucracy, market, or network. They are marked by remnants of the past but also by innovations in unexpected dimensions, such as evidence-based decision-making or capillarity of participation. These institutional logics guide the action of political actors in the field. However, the new century has found the Brazilian government working on a still-unfinished project of universalization of public services and under great social pressure for inclusion and collective well-being, reflecting the precepts of the country's 1988 Federal Constitution.

Although the structure supporting the state's services has essentially changed from hierarchical bureaucracies to complex contractual networks, the bureaucracy that should now be responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring contracts continues to operate along the same lines as the centralizing hierarchy. In practice, the state maintains the focus on processes, documents, certificates, and invoices, i.e., on formal elements that do not help unveil the true nature of the market to which it cooperates or establishes contracts. Although mistrust prevails, there is a lack of experience to reveal the cartels that dominate various sectors of public procurement to verify that a good part of the organizations of civil society that receive public funds have, among their founding partners, politicians or public servants. This verification is necessary but insufficient to break the link between the contracts with public sector contracts and politicians.

The public administration becomes hostage to its own inefficiencies in the administrative sphere – specifically in planning, implementation, and monitoring activities. This situation opens space for the discretionary action of the control bodies, which today have shown greater competence to understand the complexity of the relationships mentioned above. When society demands more government action, public administrators fail to make decisions and effectively act.

The challenges highlighted above are reflected in the reputational crisis that marks the public sector in Brazil today and in the extremely low levels of trust in government (Latinobarómetro, 2021). Undoubtedly, negative media coverage, exacerbated by emphasizing the allegations of corruption associated with the well-known Operation Car Wash, aggravates the image of the public sector before the population (Peci, 2021) but does not explain the crisis of legitimacy of the bureaucracy. Add to this already challenging scenario the threats arising from political polarization and the risks posed by populist and authoritarian governments that privilege loyalty over bureaucratic professionalism, as extensive field research on populism and democratic threats indicates (Dussauge-Laguna & Aguilar, 2017; Peters & Pierre, 2019; Moynihan & Roberts, 2021).

Paradoxically, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the central role of public management and a professional bureaucracy, which needs to revive mechanisms of decision-making autonomy, strengthen itself in an environment of cooperation and federative coordination, and undergo qualitative changes that eliminate bureaucratic distortions and favor its legitimacy and action power (Peci & Teixeira, 2021). Understanding the rationale dominating the field of contemporary public management and guiding its action requires the effort and collective reflection of many researchers who work at the interface of public administration and management and the organizational field.

This thematic issue helps to delimit a new cycle, in which *Cadernos EBAPE.BR* resumes its direction toward studies discussing the organizational field, privileging the debate and the plurality of ontologies, epistemologies, methodologies, and theoretical approaches in organizational studies. The journal invites authors and researchers in the area of administration, management, and public policies to dialogue with other scientific journals in the area, such as *RAP* (published by FGV EBAPE) and *Cadernos de Gestão Pública e Cidadania* (CGPC) (Journal of Public Management and Citizenship) (published by FGV EAESP).

The first article of this thematic issue of *Cadernos EBAPE.BR* discusses “**Social management and community development: the power of informal organization in social interest housing projects.**” The authors Suzana Melissa de Moura Mafra da Silva and Washington José de Souza, present the quality of dialogue and intersubjective relationships that lead to emancipatory initiatives and reveal improvements in community life.

Carlos Augusto Alves de Sousa Júnior and Diego Costa Mendes, in **“Public policies for the LGBT population: a literature review,”** identify obstacles to LGBT public policies in Brazil, such as the lack of laws protecting rights, problems in the dialogue between the state and civil society, lack of budget forecast for plans and programs, and the absence of political representation.

The third article, **“Dynamics of the abortion agenda in the Brazilian Senate from 1988 to October 2020,”** by Maria Clara Figueiredo Dalla Costa Ames, Mauricio Custódio Serafim, Marcello Beckert Zappellini, and Andrei Costa Colonetti, adopts documentary research and content analysis, to present the results of 33 legislative proposals, 295 pronouncements, and 6 public hearings on abortion in Brazil, contributing to an agenda for future research.

Marcos Caldeira and Simone Cristina Dufloth, in **“International guidelines and the Brazilian law of state-owned companies: convergence toward cutting-edge integrity, compliance, and anti-corruption practices,”** investigate the convergence between these three guiding elements introduced by the law on state-owned enterprises, and the international best practices. The authors suggest an agenda of applied studies to explore and understand the challenges of implementing the law and its outcomes in the universe of state-owned companies.

The next article **“State capacity and performance from the perception of Brazilian bureaucrats: development and validation of a structural equation model”** by Alexandre de Ávila Gomide, Raphael Amorim Machado, and Pedro Melo Albuquerque seeks to validate a model to measure state capacities, specifically considering the Brazilian federal government.

In **“The Brazilian pension system in the context of social security: an analysis of policy agenda-setting,”** Raquel Andrade Silva de Oliveira, Bruno Tavares, Thiago de Melo Teixeira da Costa, and Suely de Fátima Ramos Silveira analyze through the theory of multiples flows, how social security became an element of social welfare within the scope of public policies in the 1988 Brazilian Federal Constitution.

Ellysson Fernandes Rosa, Estela Najberg, Lauren de Lacerda Nunes, and João Luiz Passador, in **“How philosophy can enlighten public management in times of political polarization,”** help to understand the structure of the knowledge applied to public administration and how public managers can better separate private opinion and institutional points of view.

Adriano Massuda, Ana Maria Malik, Gonzalo Vecina Neto, Renato Tasca, and Walter Cintra Ferreira Junior reviewed scientific literature and official documents published by Brazilian and international health governmental agencies to obtain data related to the organization of health systems. The study **“The resilience of the Brazilian National Health System in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic,”** focused on the organization of such systems in the face of public health emergencies.

In **“Resilience and permanence of public values: an analysis of administrative contracts in Brazil,”** Fernanda Alves Andrade Guarido, Eloy Eros da Silva Nogueira, and Mayla Cristina Costa Maroni Saraiva reflect, from a sociological perspective, the public values and normative and cultural standards of society, analyzing the management models of the Brazilian public administration.

Adauto de Vasconcelos Montenegro, Ana Paula Moreno Pinho, Antonio Caubi Ribeiro Tupinambá, and Raquel Libório Feitosa, in **“Is it possible to find managerial innovation and people management practices focused on innovation in federal universities?”** discuss managerial innovation and people management practices focused on innovation in two federal universities.

The article **“Institutional complexity in the field of sport after the implementation of a local tax incentive law in Santos, Brazil,”** by Donald Veronico Alves da Silva and Patricia Maria E. Mendonça, demonstrates that the program’s implementation reveals ambiguities and conflicts of institutional logics existing in the field of sports, expanding the scope of market logic.

“Electronic Government services in Brazil: an analysis of impact factors on the citizen’s usage decision”, by Luiz Claudio Mendes Vargas, Marie Anne Macadar, Peter Fernandes Wanke, and Jorge Junio Moreira Antunes, deals with the factors that influence the use of e-government services by citizens, aiming to assess whether sociodemographic aspects have an influence on such decision.

Finally, Geraldo Tessarini Junior and Patrícia Saltorato discuss the experiences and perceptions of technical-administrative civil servants regarding the organization of their work in the article **“Work organization of technical-administrative employees in a federal educational institution: an approach on career, tasks, and interpersonal relationships”**.

We wish you a pleasant read!

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