

Public governance in Brazil: identification, analysis, and consolidation of a reference framework for the Union, States, and Federal District¹

Governança pública no Brasil: identificação, análise e consolidação de um modelo de referência (Framework) para a união, estados e o Distrito Federal

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Resumo

O presente resumo expandido descreve o desenho de pesquisa de uma tese de doutorado que tem como objetivo estruturar e validar um *Framework* Referencial de Governança Pública com níveis de maturidade, ajustado ao cenário federativo brasileiro (União, Estados e Distrito Federal). Apesar da forte presença do tema no discurso normativo, sua adoção no Brasil permanece inconsistente e fragmentada, cenário agravado por profundas assimetrias institucionais, financeiras e técnicas entre os entes federativos. Modelos importados do setor privado ou de organismos internacionais frequentemente falham ao não considerar essas desigualdades estruturais e as dinâmicas de coprodução política necessárias à implementação de políticas públicas (Torfing, 2022). Diante disso, o problema de pesquisa investiga como identificar, analisar e validar um framework capaz de direcionar o desenvolvimento gradual da maturidade institucional nos órgãos do Setor Público. Metodologicamente, adota-se uma abordagem de métodos mistos sequenciais dividida em quatro etapas: (1) Revisão Sistemática da Literatura (RSL) com o protocolo PRISMA 2020, operando em bases de alto impacto e literatura cinzenta (TCU, IFAC, OCDE); (2) análise normativa nacional e internacional; (3) estudo de caso múltiplo abrangendo 28 entes federativos, por meio de análise documental aprofundada e solicitações respaldadas pela Lei de Acesso à Informação (LAI); e (4) validação por Método Delphi com especialistas. O referencial teórico mobiliza a Teoria da Agência, a Teoria da Capacidade Estatal, a Teoria Institucional e a Visão Baseada em Recursos (RBV), ampliando-se com perspectivas de governança colaborativa e em rede (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Newman et al., 2004) e com *frameworks* analíticos baseados em dados para diagnóstico e monitoramento da administração pública (Roger & Schuster, 2023).

¹ Linguistic review was performed by Ana Júlia da Silva Bastos de Pinho.

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A tese culminará na apresentação de um modelo validado estatística e qualitativamente, incorporando escalas de maturidade (níveis 1 a 5). Diferentemente de construtos estanques, espera-se que o instrumento final seja responsivo às diferenças de capacidade fiscal e técnica das regiões brasileiras, transpondo a lacuna entre a normatização e a prática operacional por meio de indicadores gerenciais adaptáveis e evidências analíticas robustas.

Palavras-chave: *Framework. Governança Pública. Gestão Pública. Modelo de Maturidade.*

Abstract

This extended abstract outlines the research design of a doctoral thesis aimed at structuring and validating a Reference Framework for Public Governance with maturity levels, tailored to the Brazilian federative scenario (Union, States, and Federal District). Despite the topic's prominence in normative discourse, its adoption in Brazil remains inconsistent and fragmented, a situation exacerbated by deep institutional, financial, and technical asymmetries among federative entities. Imported models from the private sector or international bodies often fail to account for these structural inequalities and the political co-production dynamics required for policy implementation (Torfing, 2022). Therefore, the research problem investigates how to identify, analyse, and validate a framework capable of guiding the gradual development of institutional maturity in Public Sector agencies. Methodologically, a sequential mixed-methods approach is adopted, divided into four stages: (1) Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA 2020 protocol, using high-impact databases and grey literature (TCU, IFAC, OECD); (2) national and international normative analysis; (3) multiple case study covering 28 federative entities, through in-depth documentary analysis and requests supported by the Access to Information Law (LAI); and (4) validation via the Delphi Method with experts. The theoretical framework draws upon Agency Theory, State Capacity Theory, Institutional Theory, and Resource-Based View (RBV), expanded by perspectives on collaborative and network governance (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Newman et al., 2004) and data-driven analytical frameworks for public administration diagnosis and monitoring (Rogger & Schuster, 2023). The thesis will culminate in a statistically and qualitatively validated model incorporating maturity scales (levels 1 to 5). Unlike rigid constructs, the final instrument is expected to be responsive to the fiscal and technical capacity differences across Brazilian regions, bridging the gap between normative discourse and operational practice through adaptable managerial indicators and robust analytical evidence.

Keywords: *Framework. Public Governance, Public Management. Maturity Model.*

Resumen

Este resumen expandido describe el diseño de investigación de una tesis doctoral que tiene como objetivo estructurar y validar un Marco de Referencia de Gobernanza Pública con niveles de madurez, ajustado al escenario federativo brasileño (Unión, Estados y Distrito Federal). A pesar de la fuerte presencia del tema en el discurso normativo, su adopción en Brasil sigue siendo inconsistente y fragmentada, situación agravada por profundas asimetrías institucionales, financieras y técnicas entre los entes federativos. Los modelos importados del sector privado o de organismos internacionales a menudo fallan al no considerar estas desigualdades estructurales y las dinámicas de coproducción política necesarias para la implementación de políticas públicas (Torfing, 2022). Ante esto, el problema de investigación indaga cómo identificar, analizar y validar un marco capaz de

dirigir el desarrollo gradual de la madurez institucional en los organismos del Sector Público. Metodológicamente, se adopta un enfoque de métodos mixtos secuenciales dividido en cuatro etapas: (1) Revisión Sistemática de la Literatura (RSL) con el protocolo PRISMA 2020, utilizando bases de alto impacto y literatura gris (TCU, IFAC, OCDE); (2) análisis normativo nacional e internacional; (3) estudio de caso múltiple que abarca 28 entes federativos, mediante análisis documental profundo y solicitudes respaldadas por la Ley de Acceso a la Información (LAI); y (4) validación mediante el Método Delphi con expertos. El marco teórico moviliza la Teoría de la Agencia, la Teoría de la Capacidad Estatal, la Teoría Institucional y la Visión Basada en Recursos (RBV), ampliándose con perspectivas de gobernanza colaborativa y en red (Agranoff & McGuire, 2003; Newman et al., 2004) y con marcos analíticos basados en datos para el diagnóstico y monitoreo de la administración pública (Rogger & Schuster, 2023). La tesis culminará con la presentación de un modelo validado, estadística y cualitativamente, incorporando escalas de madurez (niveles 1 a 5). A diferencia de constructos rígidos, se espera que el instrumento final sea sensible a las diferencias de capacidad fiscal y técnica entre las regiones brasileñas, superando la brecha entre la normatividad y la práctica operativa mediante indicadores gerenciales adaptables y evidencia analítica robusta.

Palabras clave: Marco. Gobernanza Pública. Gestión Pública. Modelo de Madurez.

Introduction and Research Problem

Public Governance has established itself as an essential pillar for the modernization of the Democratic Rule of Law, seeking a more transparent, ethical, and results-oriented Public Administration.

The concept, derived from corporate governance, was adapted to the public sector not to generate profit, but to increase the chances of delivering good results to citizens in the form of public policies (TCU, 2020).

Despite the topic's presence in normative discourse, its adoption in Brazil remains inconsistent and fragmented. This scenario is aggravated by profound institutional, financial, and technical asymmetries among federative entities: the Union (1), the States (26), and the Federal District (1).

Many models imported from the private sector or international entities fail to consider these structural inequalities and the complex interdependence dynamics that characterize contemporary governance (Torfing, 2022).

In this context, the established research problem is: How can a Reference Framework for Public Governance, adjusted to the Brazilian federative scenario, be identified, analysed, and validated, capable of guiding the gradual development of institutional maturity in Public Sector agencies and entities?

Objectives

The general objective of the research is to structure a Reference Framework for Public Governance, focused on the Executive Branch, adjusted to the Brazilian federative scenario, capable of guiding the institutional progress of public agencies and entities, considering their structural and operational inequalities. To achieve this purpose, the specific objectives include:

- 1) Conduct a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on Public Governance frameworks.
- 2) Examine national and international normative references.

- 3) Evaluate the adoption of governance models in the executive branch of 28 sample entities (Union, 26 States, and Federal District).
- 4) Propose and validate a reference framework with a maturity scale using the Delphi technique.

Theoretical Framework

To support the research, four major theories are mobilized: Agency Theory, which in the public sector analyses conflicts of interest between the "principal" (citizens) and the "agents" (public managers and politicians); State Capacity Theory, focused on the ability to enforce laws and deliver services; Institutional Theory; and the Resource-Based View (RBV).

The investigation requires a macro-level approach, as it concentrates its focus on the study of comprehensive institutions, policies, and organizational structures of the State. Rigorous operationalization of concepts is crucial; in social sciences, measuring abstract constructs such as "governance" requires precise operational definitions, translating theoretical ideas into empirical indicators that can be scientifically observed and measured (Bhattacharjee, 2025).

The evaluation is expanded with perspectives on interactive and network governance, which recognize that no isolated actor possesses sufficient knowledge or capacity to solve complex and dynamic public problems (Torfinn, 2022).

Legitimacy and accountability in these arrangements depend on transparency, deliberation, and the capacity to justify decisions before public forums and affected citizens.

Furthermore, recent literature on government analytics reinforces that the evaluation of state capacity must go beyond aggregated averages, considering organizational heterogeneity, measurement invariance, and the need to transform theoretical constructs into operationalizable and comparable metrics (Rogger & Schuster, 2023).

Methodological Design

The research adopts a sequential mixed-methods design of qualitative, exploratory, descriptive, and interventional nature. The use of mixed methods allows triangulation of quantitative and qualitative data, leveraging the unique strengths of each approach to generate deeper insights into complex social phenomena (Bhattacharjee, 2025; DeCarlo, 2025).

The methodological execution will occur in four integrated stages:

- 1) **Systematic Literature Review (SLR):** using of the PRISMA 2020 protocol, operating in high-impact databases (Scopus, Web of Science, among others) and grey literature (reports from TCU, IFAC, OECD), for extraction of fundamental governance dimensions.
- 2) **Normative Analysis:** mapping and comparison of laws, decrees, resolutions, and national and international guidelines that guide governance in the public sector.
- 3) **Multiple Case Study:** the 28 federative entities will be analysed as cases through in-depth documentary analysis (Official Gazettes, transparency portals) and requests supported by the Access to Information Law (LAI). Data collection will follow principles of government data analysis that prioritize procedural quality, evidence traceability, and cross-validation of indicators (Rogger & Schuster, 2023).

- 4) **Modified Delphi Method and Action Research:** a panel of 30 governance experts will undergo iterative rounds of questionnaires aimed at validating the proposed framework, with a minimum consensus criterion of 80%. The final stage has contours of action research, in which the researcher acts collaboratively to test governance practices and implement solutions that help the public sector achieve its objectives vis-à-vis citizens (DeCarlo, 2025).

Table 1. Synopsis of Scientific Research

STAGE	DESCRIPTION	SUBPRODUCTS
1) SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW (SLR)	PRISMA 2020: high-impact databases me+ grey literature	a) Robust scientific references to support initial thesis sections. b) Extended abstract (for scientific congress). c) Scientific literature review article for later publication. d) Specific scientific literature on Public Governance Frameworks (Critical Input for Stage 2).
2) CONSTRUCTION OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK	Structuring of framework with maturity levels, elements, indicators, and manual	a) Structured Framework – Maturity Levels; Elements; Indicators; Manual (Critical Inputs for Stages 4 and 5) b) Extended abstract (for scientific congress) c) Technological article d) Scientific article for later publication
3) MULTIPLE CASE STUDY (EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF UNION, STATES, AND FEDERAL DISTRICT)	Documentary analysis + LAI requests for 28 federative entities	a) Interviews with 15 experts. b) Case Study (Critical Input for Stage 5). c) Extended abstract (for scientific congress). d) Scientific article for later publication.
4) VALIDATION OF PUBLIC GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK	Delphi Method with 30 experts; minimum 80% consensus	a) Structured and Validated Framework, with participation of 30 experts – Delphi Method (Critical Input for Stage 5). b) Extended abstract. c) Scientific article for later publication.
THESIS QUALIFICATION (By 10/30/2028) <i>Formal academic milestone</i>		
5) FINALIZATION OF THESIS DOCUMENT	Integration of all stages; final writing	a) Thesis (the complete document). b) Scientific article for later publication. c) Thesis defence.
THESIS DEFENSE <i>(Formal academic milestone: 09/19/2029)</i>		
THESIS DEPOSIT <i>(Formal academic milestone: 10/19/2029)</i>		

Note: prepared by the author.

Expected Results and Conclusion

The thesis will culminate in the presentation of a statistically and qualitatively validated Model (Framework) that incorporates maturity scales (levels 1 to 5).

Unlike imported and rigid models, it is expected that the final construct will be responsive to the differences in fiscal and technical capacity across diverse Brazilian regions.

The research will contribute to the state of the art and to the practice of Public Administration by offering managers and control bodies a pragmatic tool for self-assessment, planning, and responsible accountability (accountability).

Thus, the aim is for science to fulfil its role in strengthening governability and the Democratic Rule of Law, promoting governance arrangements that are not only normatively desirable but also empirically viable and analytically robust.

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