

# **Trends in Public Administration post-NPM Era: innovations in the Brazilian federal government<sup>12</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Considering the importance of the socioeconomic and services improvements occurred in Brazil during last two decades and the fact that the economic explanation seems to be incomplete, one alternative strategy relies on investigating how the public administration has evolved during these years. In that sense, this inquiry assumes that innovations within the federal government in Brazil have followed the trends of international public management, especially post NPM Era. To test this hypothesis, the paper investigates policy innovations focusing on the convergence/divergence of the Brazilian public sector with the trends of international public administration in terms of management principles and directives. First, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken in order to map the post New Public Management (NPM) trends. Based on that, the inquiry made a systematic analysis of the finalist's initiatives of the Federal Award of Public Management Innovation (FAPMI) in Brazil from 2007 to 2015. The findings show that the initiatives mainly followed the management trends, less than 10% of them do not hold any post NPM principle/directive. The research also showed that the most recurrent ones are collaboration/partnership; coordination/control and participation/engagement with minor different between the FAPMI runners up and winners. Finally, the paper compared if the trends vary accordingly to the innovation type, depicted by their thematic areas. Once again, heterogeneity among them was the rule. The most recurrent type, new arrangement is highly related to collaboration and partnership, while internal ends initiatives hold some post NPM principles/directives less usual as bureaucracy's strengthening and leadership.

**Keywords:** New Public Management; Administrative reforms; Management Trends; Innovation.

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## 1. Introduction

In the last decades, economic, social and political-administrative transformations have generated a variety of restructuring process and, consequently, important results in the Brazilian public administration. The country has experienced several advances regarding the socioeconomic indicators, as well as the quality of public services provided by the State. Notwithstanding the improvements in the economic sphere, especially the monetary stability initiated with the Real Plan (1994) and recently the middle class growth (after 2004), the exclusive economic explanation seems to be insufficient to interpret the Brazilian development in the last twenty years, particularly, because the GDP average growth was low in comparison to international patterns.

An alternative explanation may come from the efforts of the Brazilian government in building innovative capacity to formulate and implement effective public policies, despite the recurrent structural limitations, such as fluctuations in revenues, e.g. In this context, this paper's assumes that innovations within the federal government in Brazil have followed the trends of international public management, specially post NPM Era, which has generated improvements in access and quality of public services and, subsequently, has impacted on better socioeconomic indicators.

Based on the internationally widespread propositions of the New Public Management (NPM), in 1995, the federal government initiated a reformist project focused on rearranging the State's intervention scope and the overrun of the bureaucratic model, allegedly inefficient. The project, called *PDRAE* (Directive Plan for the Reform of the State Apparatus) proposed, among others, reducing State activities, by privatizing and publicizing some governmental sectors, the operation of the government strategic core with regulatory role and guided by the managerial model. Therefore, instead of the inflexibility and inefficiency that were a mark of the administrative machinery, the public service would become a result based management organization, similar to the private sector. After partially approved the 1995 reform, the new government that took over in 2003 did not present a distinctive proposal of administrative reform, however, many changes implemented before were kept and others were introduced.

Therefore, the paper aims to investigate the innovative capacity of the Brazilian government by focus on the convergence/divergence of the Brazilian innovation with the trends of international public administration in terms of management principles and directives. The goal is

not to prove the causal relationship between innovations in the public sector and development, which in fact is an assumption of this research on management capacity in Brazil.

To do so, based on the post New Public Management (NPM) trends identified in a literature review from 2007 to 2017, the paper begins a systematic analysis of finalist's initiatives of the Federal Award of Public Management Innovation (FAPMI). Qualitative software is used to help analyzing in which extent the innovations in the Brazilian government have followed the cutting-edge management principles and directives.

Besides this introduction, the inquiry contextualizes the reforms and administrative policies in the federal government, specially, after the beginning of the NPM movement. In the third section, the post New Public Management trends are presented as well as the method employed in the paper's analysis. Then, the empirical analyzes of the innovations are discussed according to the theoretical debate previously presented, followed by final remarks.

## **2. Reforms and Administrative Policies in Brazil**

The Brazilian public administration is well known by its comprehensiveness and complexity. Moreover, another feature that deserves academic's attention regards the high level of its heterogeneity, primarily, in function of the socioeconomic disparities among the federal and subnational level. As result, historically, the central government capacity to formulate and implement policies and management initiatives is far more structured than the states and local government.

Although some interesting innovations have been generated in these subnational levels, for instance, participatory budgeting, most of the reforms and improvements, usually, come first from decision in the federal government. In that sense, Brazil as many other countries have experienced many administrative reforms during the last century in order to respond to the constant transformations in the public sector and society. However, as other Latin American countries, Brazil has always been somehow late regarding the management trends. The focus of this section is to present an overview of the Brazilian public administration's evolution, especially, after the New Public Management movement.

Obviously, the public administration framework is not a result of a single historic moment or a decision of one particular government. Instead, the complexity inherent to it involves a broad set of transformations susceptible to socioeconomic changes that will not necessarily con-

verge, from an ideological point of view. Then, a conjectural analysis intending to explain the nation public management should refer to its evolution, once it regards a development process with several variables and historic phases.

The first actual administrative reform was undertaken during 1930's by a dictatorial regime as consequence of an increasing process of modernization due intense economic and social transformations. The country has passed from an agrarian to industrial economy; however, the public administration in Brazil, at that moment, was far from the traditional model of public bureaucracy, in Weberian terms. Instead of bureaucratic rules and procedures, the structures and processes of the State apparatus were mainly patrimonialist, which fostered the culture and behavior of patronage, corporatism, physiology and corruption.

The administrative reform aimed to align a more interventionist role of the State with a more professional public bureaucracy, grounded on the Weberian bureaucratic assumptions (Torres, 2012). In that sense, the government created new agencies that selected civil servants by public contests and the technical qualification. The main guideline was to promote rationalization of methods in the public service and budgeting process (Da Costa, 2008). Notwithstanding, despite the issue priority by the government, the results were far from planned. On one hand, the authoritarian modernization introduced important components of Weberian bureaucracy; on the other hand, just few agencies actually adopted these features. In this hybrid setting of public management, some islands of bureaucratic excellence were surrounded by an ocean of patrimonialist culture (Matias Pereira, 2008).

Years later, Brazil experienced the second major administrative reform during another dictatorial regime, in this time, ruled by the military. The reform, materialized by the Decree Law N° 200 of 1967, is considered the most systematic and ambitious project to change the federal government framework and operational mode (Da Costa, 2008). Overall, the Decree Law aimed to reframe the federal public administration's organization, the rules and procedures regarding budgetary and financial management, the civil service structure and government procurement as well. The reform was grounded on five main principles: i) coordination; ii) control; iii) planning; iv) devolution; and; decentralization. This last assumption was widely implemented; for instance, almost three hundred public companies and seventy indirect administration agencies were created during the years following the Decree's publication (Torres, 2012).

At the end of the military regime, another effort was undertaken in order to reform public management. The Ministry of Debureaucratization, created in 1979, started a national program with the same name (*Programa Nacional de Desburocratização*) in order to simplify and rationalize organizational norms so as to make public sector more dynamic and agile. The initiative aimed to deal with the loss of control over the several indirect administration agencies, multiplied after the Decree Law N° 200 and to improve service delivery to society, as well as to facilitate the budgeting and personnel management (Da Costa, 2008; Torres, 2012). The program did not achieve the outputs expected, which contributed to the ministry's extinction. It is also worth mentioning that most of the actions and the main principles of the program were not in line with the administrative reforms, based on the NPM assumptions, which were beginning to dominate the developed countries agenda during this period.

The second half of the 80's, the country began an intense democratization process, which ended with the Federal Constitution of 1988. Some crucial guidelines for the policymaking were established, such as social participation, decentralization, as well as universalistic principles in the social security system. In terms of management, on one hand, the Constitution may be considered a reversal for some aspects regarding procurement and civil service stability, recruitment and retirement rules (Bresser Pereira, 1999; 2002). On the other hand, the strengthening of planning and budgeting tools, social and external/internal control, as also some directives regarding mandatory public tender to all permanent careers and creation of schools of government demonstrate signs of improvements in the public sector towards the professionalization of the bureaucracy.

The first elected President after the military regime, Fernando Collor, embraced the Washington Consensus Agenda, focus on layout and privatization policies. Before being impeached after two year and a half, the Nation Program of Privatization has sold over seventy public companies, especially, in former state monopolies, such as energy, telecommunications, mining and oil. The process and results were highly criticized because of the intense downsizing and privatization without proper debate with important social groups (Da Costa, 2008; Torres, 2012).

The New Public Management's guidelines were, indeed, incorporated to the federal government in the first Cardoso Administration (1995-1998). An especial department was created to lead the reform (Ministério da Administração Federal e da Reforma do Estado - MARE). Car-

doso appointed a former economy minister to run the program, Bresser Pereira, that relied on the Anglo-Saxons' experiences to turn the public administration rules more flexible through management reform as a means of overcoming the performance deficit of the Brazilian public sector.

The program, called Plano Diretor de Reforma do Aparelho do Estado (Brazil, 1995) aimed:

- To increase the state's governance, understood as its administrative capacity to govern effectively and efficiently, turning the public services back to the citizens;
- To limit the State's role to essential functions;
- Decentralizing almost all policies to states and municipalities;
- Partially transfer from the Union to the states regional policies, in order to foster cooperation between them.

In sum, the ambitious goals had different results. On one hand, the privatization initiatives were successful along with creation of agencies to regulate the privatized sectors, as well as fostering the evaluation's culture of, especially of performance, decentralization of social policies and some innovations linked to planning and budgeting (Gaetani, 2003; Da Costa, 2008; Abrucio, 2007). On the other hand, the effort to incorporate instruments of personnel management in the public service and the project of publicization, i.e. transferring responsibility to society to manage social policy, similarly to the quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation (quangos) in UK, were far from implemented. Despite that, the publicization front has been spread in the subnational level, in many areas such as education and health (Bresser Pereira, 2002; Abrúcio 2007; Brulon, Ohayon and Rosenberg, 2012).

In 2003, Brazil experienced a change of government with a left-wing party (Labor Party – PT) leading the Executive for the first time. Although the discourse was intensely against administrative reforms, defined as consequence of the neoliberal movements, in certain extent, some initiatives from the previous governments were still in the agenda. In that sense, the social policy decentralization processes to the local governments, some privatization of public services, a pension system reform as well as policies towards management's performance were undertaken during the Labor Party's Administration (Abrúcio, 2007; Abrucio and Gaetani, 2011). However, the civil service began a reorganization process, based on personnel quantitatively increasing and

diversification of careers, under a clear strategy of state development (Cavalcante and Carvalho, 2017). Besides, the administrative policies highlighted participatory, transparency and policy evaluation as crucial values to the public management since then.

In sum, despite the fact that any mention to administrative reforms was seen as “bad word” during the PT’s government, this paper’s empirical analysis will show, the public policies and their innovations implemented then were detached from the international management trends.

### **3. The Post New Public Management trends**

The historical contextualization is important to figure out in which extent the management’s movements and, subsequently, the administrative reforms have impacted the public sector’s framework in Brazil. The strategies of major reforms have fallen into disuse, primarily because of their high transactional cost that the most radical changes tend to generate. The obstacles and resistances inherent in reform processes produce results that are usually far from planned.

Therefore, more recently, governments worldwide have preferred to focus on specific and constant improvements in processes and services, which Pollitt and Bouckaert (2011) call micro-improvements. They may also be understood as innovations in management that are increasingly gaining a strategic dimension in the public sector. Despite the variety of concepts, innovations in government are usually related to the upgrading of organizational processes, implementation of new products, procedures, services, policies or systems (Osborne and Brown; 2005; Bekkers, Edelenbos and Steijn, 2011; De Vries, Bekkers and Tummers, 2014).

Before analyzing by the convergence/divergence of the innovations in the Brazilian federal government with the public management’s trends in terms of principles and directives, first, the paper presents which are these trends and how they were summarized. A literature review was undertaken regarding the public administration evolution after the hegemony of the New Public Management – NPM. In order to do so, the inquiry grounded the analysis on books of renowned publishers in the field of public administration and major international academic journals<sup>3</sup> from 2007 to 2016. The descriptors used for searching was “*new public management*”;

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<sup>3</sup> The list of journals included Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory; Public Administration Review; Governance; International Public Management Journal and; Public Administration.

*“public service reform”*; *“post new public management”*; *“administrative reform”* and *“public management reform”*. As a result, twenty-five (27) books and fifty-nine (59) articles were selected, including comparative analysis and specific countries cases studies. In both types of publications the research on developed nations prevails. In short, this literature diversity reinforces the perception of the importance of the subject in the recent academic production.

Regarding the outputs and consequences of the administrative reforms, to a large extent, converges in some points. The first involves the vision of gradualism and continuity after NPM rather than overcoming. Christensen and Lægreid (2007) argue that New Public Management has a restrictive effect on subsequent reforms. In general, what is observed are neither convergent nor divergent processes in which each trajectory is restricted by the specific internal and external contexts, administrative traditions and history of each government? Reformist experiences are even difficult to analyze from a single perspective approach, since variations are the rule rather than the exception.

In the same sense, the new post-NPM trends do not mean that the characteristics of NPM are disappearing. For instance, performance management and focus on results/impacts continue in the agenda. The third generation of reforms in place, in practice, reflects the successes and failures of the reforms of the previous decades (Greve, Lægreid and Rykkja, 2016)

State reforms include distinct models or NPM variations that converge in the advancement of the NPM premises, but emphasize differently assumptions and management mechanisms that, in some cases, are repeated in the models or paradigms. In other words, they are overlapping between them, depending on the political forces, path dependence and historical backgrounds of the nations (Pollitt and Bouckaert, 2011).

It is important to note that the complexity of the development of such models/paradigms tends to generate difficulties and skepticism in analytical capacities of simplification, as Goldfinch and Wallis (2010: 1108) argue “... where NPM has not been adopted substantively ... it is problematic to propose a shift to a post-NPM world, when there has never been one of NPM.”

Undoubtedly, this is not a trivial exercise, but it is consensual that significant changes have occurred in the way the public sector has been operating in the last decades, which differ from the management tendencies propagated between the late 1970s and early 1990s. Therefore, it is now time to move forward in the attempt to identify the characteristics of what can be called post NPM period. In this direction, Table 2 summarizes its trends in terms of principles and



guidelines of public management. The ordering follows the frequency of recurrence in the articles and books analyzed in this literature review.

**Table 1 – Post NPM Trends**

<b>Principles and Guidelines</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Authors</b>
Collaboration and Partnership	Collaborative processes and partnerships in a variety of ways - within the public sector, with the private sector and third sector.	Collaboration; partnership/partner; cooperation; co-participation; co-creation; co-production.	Christensen e Læg Reid (2007); Birrell (2008); Evans (2009); Currie, Grubnic e Hodges (2011); Shaw (2013) Griffiths, Kippin e Stoker (2013); Schiavo-Campo (2014); O'Flynn, Blackman e Halligan (2014); Dubnick e Frederickson (2011); Fossetøl, Breit, Andreassen e Klemsdal (2015); Greve, Læg Reid e Rykkja (2016) e Menicucci e Gontijo (2016)
Network	Networking in the provision of public services (formulation, implementation and control).	Networks; network management; network governance.	Christensen e Læg Reid (2007); Evans (2009); Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Lodge e Gill (2010); Currie, Grubnic e Hodges (2011); Perez <i>et al.</i> (2011); Meynhardt e Diefenbach (2012); O'Flynn, Blackman e Halligan (2014); Fossetøl, Breit, Andreassen e Klemsdal (2015); Greve, Læg Reid e Lise (2016)
Integrated and Holistic Approach of Public Management	The premise of integrated public services and administrative perspective of government as a whole, cohesive and coherent (not fragmented or competitive) - <i>joined-up government</i> and <i>whole of government</i> .	Integration; integrality; transversality; cross-cutting; government cohesion; government coherence; whole-of-government; <i>joined-up government</i> .	Dunleavy <i>et al.</i> , (2006); Christensen e Læg Reid (2007); Birrel (2008); Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Pierre e Ingraham (2010); Lodge e Gill (2010) Perez <i>et al.</i> (2011); Griffiths, Kippin e Stoker (2013); Schiavo-Campo e McFerson (2014); O'Flynn, Blackman e Halligan (2014); Fossetøl, Breit, Andreassen e Klemsdal (2015); Greve, Læg Reid e Rykkja (2016)
Accountability	Processes of increasing accountability and responsiveness of public administration to society.	Accountability; responsiveness; transparency.	Dunleavy <i>et al.</i> , (2006); Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Pierre e Ingraham (2010); Shaw (2013) Schiavo-Campo e McFerson (2014); Dommett e Flinders (2014); Dubnick e Frederickson (2011); Menicucci e Gontijo (2016)

Participation and Engagement	Expansion of social participation channels in the policymaking and fostering the involvement of society in public management as a value and source of legitimacy.	Social control; participation; engagement; social articulation; power-sharing; participatory democracy; sharing; involvement; inclusion (in decision-making).	Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Pierre e Ingraham (2010); Perez <i>et al.</i> (2011) Fenwick e McMillan (2012); Shaw (2013); Dommett e Flinders (2014); Greve, Læg Reid e Rykkja (2016); Menicucci e Gontijo (2016)
Leadership	Importance of the leader (political, administrative or citizen) in public management, especially in entrepreneurial processes.	Manager; boss; direction; leader; leadership; political conduction; strategic direction; entrepreneurship; technical direction.	Goldfinch e Wallis (2009); Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Pierre e Ingraham (2010); O'reilly e Reed (2010); Currie, Grubnic e Hodges (2011); O'Flynn, Blackman e Halligan (2014); Menicucci e Gontijo (2016)
Coordination and Control	Strengthening the coordination and control capacities in order to generate coherence and cohesion in public services.	Coordination; control; management; direction; command; supervision; articulation; arrangement; monitoring.	Christensen e Læg Reid (2007); Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Lodge e Gill (2010); Perez <i>et al.</i> (2011); Dommett e Flinders (2014); Greve, Læg Reid e Rykkja (2016)
<i>E-government</i> and Information and Communications Technology (ICT)	Frequent incorporation of the ICT use to increase the transparency in the public sector, as well as to provide citizens' access and involvement.	ICT; e-government; information technology; digital government; electronic government; e-gov; information system; transparency.	Dunleavy <i>et al.</i> , (2006); Goldfinch e Wallis (2009); Goldfinch e Wallis (2010); Dubnick e Frederickson (2011); Greve, Læg Reid e Rykkja (2016)
Strengthening Public Bureaucracy	Professionalization and appreciation of the state's staff, however, a bureaucracy more efficient, interdisciplinary and responsive to society.	Training; improvement; professionalism; specialization; qualification; appreciation; recognition; empowerment (bureaucracy).	Dunleavy <i>et al.</i> , (2006); Goldfinch e Wallis (2009); Lodge e Gill (2010); Perez <i>et al.</i> (2011); Griffiths, Kippin e Stoker (2013)

Source: Own Elaboration.

First, it should be stressed that the studies analyzed address other principles and guidelines other than those listed in the table above, such as: efficiency and quality of public services, equity, decentralization, citizen focus, among others. However, their references are much less recurrent. Most of them are closely associated with the first and second generation NPM, which

does not suggest that they are not important or outdated, they remain on the public administration agenda, but they are no longer innovative trends and, consequently, do not lead to the current public management debate.

Secondly, the table show the recurrence of several principles/guidelines in the literature, which was also expected, since the complexity of public administration demands that the public sector functions to meet different perspectives and needs. The clustering of principles/guidelines is not new, since they also coexisted even in the traditional (bureaucratic) administration and in the original version of the New Public Management. So, normally, they can be analyzed jointly. As an example, whole-of-government, to a great extent, presupposes the emphasis on coordination and control of government activities.

Likewise, collaborative and partnerships in public services may also involve networking between players from both within and outside government. Such a finding converges with Greve, Læg Reid and Rykkja's (2016: 157) statement that "Like NPM, post-NPM can to some extent be seen as a 'shopping basket' of different methods." Therefore, innovative changes in public management - in processes and services - are expected to stem from the mix of these tendencies and not necessarily from the restricted focus on one of them.

#### **4. Innovations in the Federal Government**

##### ***4.1. Federal Award of Public Management Innovation (FAPMI)***

Before discussing in which extent the innovations in Brazilian government is convergence or divergence with the trends of international public administration, in this subsection the inquiry briefly presents how the Federal Award of Public Management Innovation (FAPMI) functions.

The FAPMI has been held annually since 1996 by the National School of Public Administration (Enap). Besides the public value's goal, FMIA has also provided a wide source of data for studies and research aimed at increasing knowledge about innovation in public management. The reports of the winning initiatives are available an online database that, during the last two decades, has been used by researchers as a secondary source for a variety of studies and publications (Camoës, Cavalcante and Severo, 2016).

The award recognizes innovation as changes in previous practices, by incorporating new elements of public administration or a new combination of existing mechanisms that produces

significant results in the public service<sup>4</sup>. FMIA has a primary focus: public management activities, projects and programs at the federal level that include the whole diversity of public organizations.

Generally, the prize includes a set of steps. First, the contest invitation is mailed to all federal government agencies and also released by email and social media. Secondly, applications take place usually from June to August by filling in a form with descriptive questions and a self-evaluation of results and contribution. On average, over one hundred of applications are made nationwide. Then, the assessment processes begin. The members of the judging committee, composed by senior civil servants, scholars and consultants specialized in public sector innovation; evaluate every validated initiative, based on the following rating criteria:

- Efficient use of resources;
- Sustainability degree of the initiative implementation and results;
- Impact of the initiative outputs in terms of: problem solving, meeting the demand of the target audience or the citizens' rights;
- Innovation over previous practices (new elements and processes);
- Integration with other internal initiatives, external or partnerships;
- Civil servants' participation and involvement;
- Promotion of transparency, participation or social control.

This is followed by the selection of 20 initiatives the year's finalists that are visited by members of the technical committee, in this case, composed by selected civil servants with graduate degree and considerable practical experience in different fields of public administration. During the visit, the innovation's leaders are demanded to answer several questions previously formulated by the judging committee and to demonstrate the initiatives' outputs. In the end of the year, both committees meet and discuss all twenty nominees and, finally, the judging committee selects the ten most innovative initiatives. By March, an official ceremony takes place with the presentation of the winners and the final classification. Besides their trophies, the best-ranked usually are rewarded with international technical visits offered by foreign embassies.

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<sup>4</sup> For more information about FMIA's rules and procedures, see <https://inovacao.enap.gov.br/o-concurso/>.

During the last two decades, the prize went through several restructures and improvements with the aim to ameliorate the criteria and selection procedures of the winning initiatives. From 2007 to 2015, the methodology, described above, kept the same criteria, categories and processes, which help to use comparatively these innovations as unit of analysis.

#### **4.2. Empirical Analysis**

To analyze how the Brazilian innovations are placed in the current public management debate, the paper uses the principles/directives, as well as their meanings, set out in the table 1 as protocol aimed at identifying the presence or lack of the management trends in the Federal Public Management Award runners up and winners' reports, 180 in total and twenty per year.

The initiatives reports were categorized by content analysis<sup>5</sup> using the keywords related to the trends meaning (figure 5 of the paper's appendix). Three steps were followed: *i*) construction of categories (trends); *ii*) analysis and categorization of each initiative by two research assistants, separately and guided by the protocol description; *iii*) validation by the author in case of disagreements. The database is composed of dummy variables (binary dichotomous) with 0 (zero) if the principle/directive is not identified and one (1) in case of its presence. Then, the paper employs descriptive and networking analyzes to discuss the results.

The figure one depicts the trends' distribution identified in the FMIA's initiatives, including all initiatives analyzed – ninety (90) winners and ninety (90) nominees not awarded.

Some interesting findings can be draw from the figure. First and the most important one is the Brazilian Federal Government, represented by its management innovations, and definitely has been following the public administration trends mapped by the international literature. Despite the fact that the adherence of them is diversified, it is evident the convergence. This result is even more striking since just a thirteen innovations do not follow any post NPM trend. In other words, only 7% of the FMIA initiatives do not show any aspect covered by the protocol.

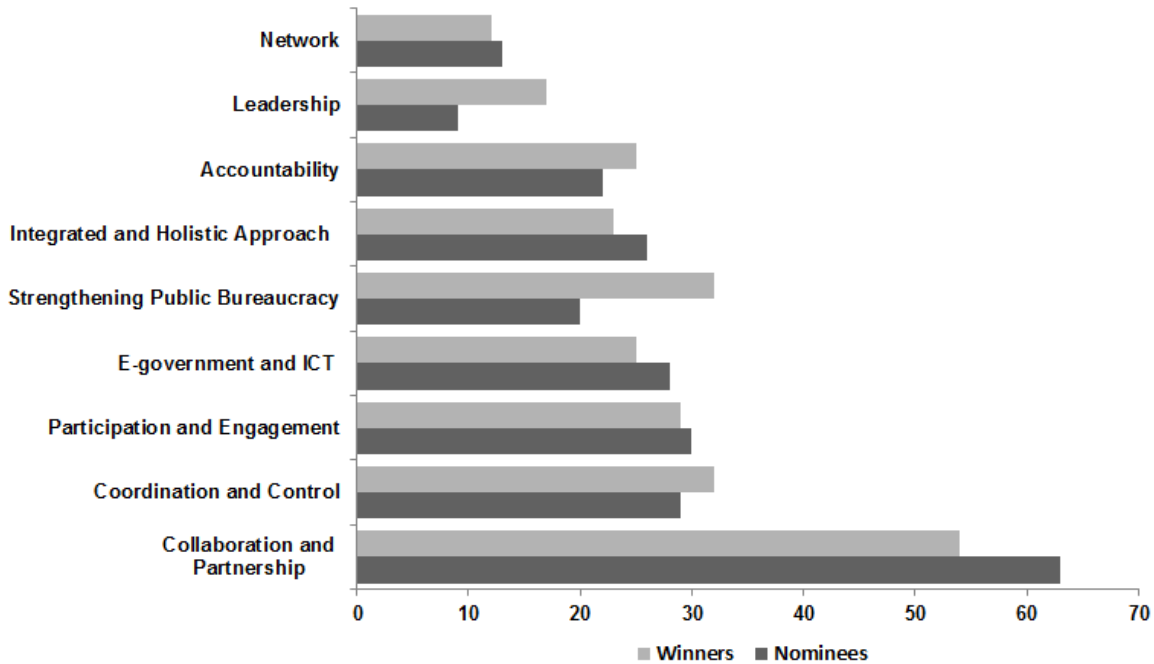
In quantitative terms, the occurrence of collaboration and partnership seems to maintain the lead identified by the literature review. In this case, almost 2/3 of the Brazilian innovations (117) somehow incorporate components of this trend. The following ones are coordination/control and participation/engagement with 61 and 59 cases, respectively. On the other side of the figure, leadership (26) and network (25) are the less reported by the innovations staff. It is

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<sup>5</sup> The research used qualitative software (Atlas TI) to help the analysis.

a surprising finding because the literature strongly argues that the latter are crucial drivers of public sector innovation (De Vries, Bekkers and Tummers, 2015).

**Figure 1 – Management Trends’ Distribution among Federal Government Innovations**

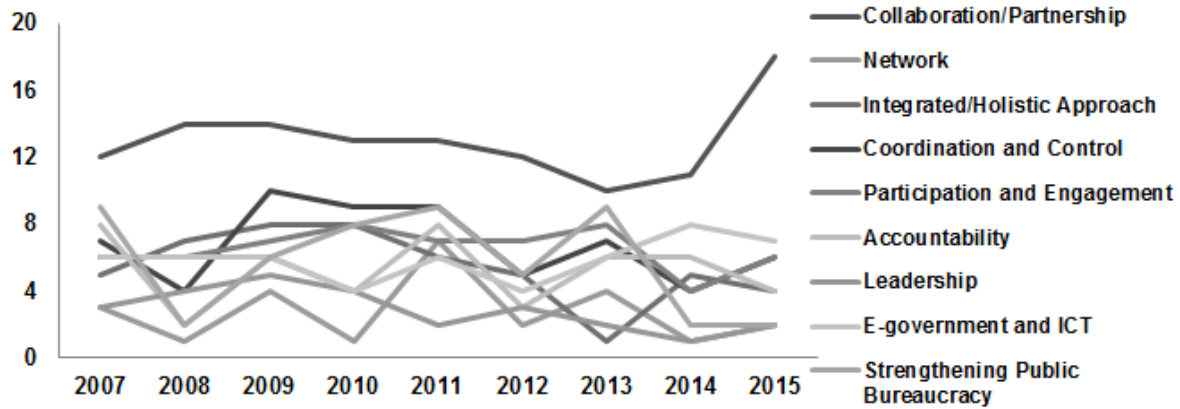


Source: Own Elaboration.

Moreover, the presences of the principles and guidelines normally follow a similar pattern between FMIA’s winners and nominees. As the bars show, in six of nine trends the difference between them is quite small (less than 10% of initiatives). Nevertheless, only in collaboration and partnership the amount of awarded innovations is significantly inferior to nominees, on the other hand, the opposite occurs in leadership and strengthening public bureaucracy. A possible explanation may rely on the fact that the former trend is so widespread among the initiatives that has not been valued as innovative by the judges in comparison with the latter.

Another way of looking at the principles/directives in the public administration by its innovations is under a longitudinal perspective. In this perspective, the main purpose is to explore some possible changes of post NPM trends occurrence during the analyzed period. To do so, figure 2 shows their distribution on all 180 innovations, disaggregated by FMIA editions.

**Figure 2 – Management Trends’ Distribution, by year**



Source: Own Elaboration.

First, what pops up is the lack of uniformity in almost every management principle and directive. Different from collaboration and partnership, that also varies but not so intensively, the rest of the trends show significant ups and downs. This result may suggest that the Brazilian Federal government innovations have followed the international trends, however, the occurrence of them does not modify during the period. Perhaps, because nine years is relatively short to indicate such a turnover.

On average, a FMIA's initiatives have 2.7 trends reported. The differences between the means of trends between winners (2.6) and nominees (2.76) were unexpected, since it would be more plausible to find the opposite. However, the differences are quite small and, obviously, it does not mean that every one of them has the same importance in the innovation process, which was not analyzed by this inquiry due to the lack of this kind of information.

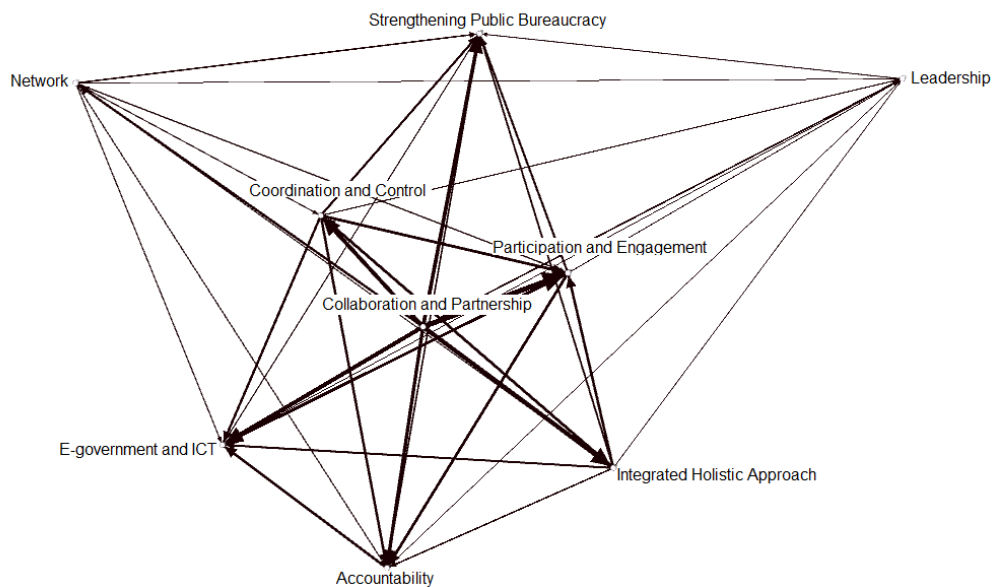
Another result that is worth mentioning is the clustering of principles/directives. During the policymaking not only one but many trends together may influence the implementation process. As expected and in line with the idea of post NPM as a 'shopping basket' of different methods (Greve, Lægreid and Rykkja, 2016), the figure 3 clearly depicts the convergences among the management principles/guidelines. Figure 2 shows the trends' relationship by using a network view of their connections. The thicker the lines between principles/guidelines are, the more intense their convergences.

First, collaboration and partnership covers almost 2/3 of the innovations, because of that this trend is positioned in the network center. However, it does not mean that is equally related

with all other trends. In this particular case, logically, over 80% of the initiatives with network, participation/engagement and integrated/holistic approach also include some type of partnership in their policymaking. On the contrary, the further away from the center, the less reported in the innovations the principles/directives are. These are, primarily, the cases of network and leadership.

As mentioned before, it would be reasonable to believe that the integrated and holistic approach (whole-of-government) presupposes the emphasis on coordination and control of government activities, nevertheless, the empirical analysis does not confirm it. In objective terms, only 50% of the initiatives with the latter were also mapped the presence of the former.

**Figure 3 – Relationship among Management Trends**



Source: Own Elaboration.

Regarding e-government and Information and Communications Technology (ICT), i.e., the frequent incorporation of the ICT use to increase the transparency in the public sector, as well as to provide citizens' access and involvement, as expected, it is possible to see convergence with participation/engagement and accountability. In both cases, around 50% of these



trends are also present in innovations with e-government. On the other hand, the latter is barely related with network, leadership and strengthening bureaucracy.

Besides these analyzes, a question that comes into mind is: do the trends vary accordingly to the innovation type? The table 2 helps to answer the question by relating management principles/directives with innovations grouped by different thematic areas. During the FMIA application process, the initiative's manager has to define which of these areas the innovation fits the most. The figure 4 depicts all thematic area ranked by their frequency in the last nine years of the FMIA.

Although the trends presence levels vary according to predominance of thematic areas, it is evident how different patterns prevails. To begin with, the most common area with 46 initiatives, new arrangement for management and policy, tend to be in almost every case grounded on collaboration and partnership (93%). It is also worth mentioning how this type of innovation is in line with participation and engagement (48%) and holistic approach (46%). On the other hand, surprisingly, networking and leadership do not seem to influence the initiatives focused on implementing new institutional arrangement for management and policy, at least, in the FMIA cases.

**Table 2 – Management Trends, by Innovation Thematic Area**

	New Arrangements (46)	Process Improvement (37)	Information Management (35)	Citizen Service (23)	Monitoring and Evaluation (15)	Planning and Budgeting (15)	Human Resources Management (9)
Collaboration and Partnership	93%	46%	60%	78%	73%	33%	33%
Network	17%	11%	14%	17%	13%	7%	11%
Integrated/Holistic Approach	46%	11%	29%	22%	27%	33%	0%
Coordination and Control	24%	38%	43%	13%	67%	53%	0%
Participation and Engagement	48%	27%	46%	22%	20%	7%	22%
Accountability	20%	22%	37%	30%	47%	7%	22%
Leadership	9%	14%	17%	13%	7%	20%	44%
E-government and ICT	28%	30%	43%	30%	33%	13%	0%
Strengthening Public Bureaucracy	20%	27%	31%	35%	47%	27%	33%

Source: Own Elaboration.

In order to improve the public sector's internal processes, collaboration and partnership (46%) is relevant as well, followed by coordination and control (38%) and e-gov (30%). However, information management's innovations seem to be more impacted by the post NPM principles/directives than the former. In this case, not only the same trends above are more frequent, but also participation and engagement (46%), accountability (37%) and holistic approach (29%) are influential.

Despite the fact that service innovation has dominated the practice and the field of study in the public sector, in the Brazilian Federal Award, it represents only 23 of 180 classified initiatives. Nevertheless, due to citizen service importance to the current debate of public administration, which management trends are necessary to its implementation? This research shows, as the previous types, the occurrence of collaboration and partnership, accountability and e-gov. Moreover, innovations in 1/3 of the cases have undertaken some efforts to strength their bureaucracy in order to improve the service provided.

Monitoring and evaluation strategies have been an imperative in public management, spread worldwide during the NPM Era. The analysis findings, however, show that it has not significantly changed, since it is, on average, the thematic area most influenced by the trends, especially coordination and control (67%), accountability (47%) and strengthening the public service.

The last two types of innovations, Planning and Budgeting and Human Resources Management show different patterns from the rest. Probably, because their internal ends, neither collaboration nor networks seem essential. While in the initiatives related to financial means, coordination and control (53%) and integrated approach (33%) are the most recurring trends, in the HR innovations these post NPM principles/directives do not in any Brazilian Federal innovation at all. The latter, on the contrary, as expected, has bureaucracy's strengthening (33%) and, above all, leadership (44%) the trends most frequent.

## **5. Final Remarks**

Considering the importance of the socioeconomic and services improvements occurred in Brazil during last two decades and the fact that the economic explanation seems to be incomplete, one alternative strategy relies on investigating how the public administration has evolved during these years. One way of addressing it is to analyze how the government has functioned in this period of constant changes. In that sense, this inquiry assumes that innovations within the

federal government in Brazil have followed the trends of international public management, especially post NPM Era. In doing so, it has generated improvements in access and quality of public services and, subsequently, has impacted on better socioeconomic indicators.

To test this hypothesis, the paper investigates policy innovations focusing on the convergence/divergence of the Brazilian public sector with the trends of international public administration in terms of management principles and directives.

First, a comprehensive literature review was undertaken in order to map the post New Public Management (NPM) trends. Based on that, the inquiry made a systematic analysis of the finalist's initiatives of the Federal Award of Public Management Innovation (FAPMI) in Brazil from 2007 to 2015. The findings are very interesting. First, although the new left-wing government was known by its apposite view of NPM reforms, the results show that the initiatives mainly followed the management trends, less than 10% of them do not hold any principle/directive covered by the protocol. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that Brazilian Federal Government has been following the public administration trends. Although their occurrence in the innovations is quite diverse, undoubtedly, they are convergent.

The research also showed that the most recurrent ones are collaboration/partnership; coordination/control and participation/engagement with minor different between the FAPMI runners up and winners. As expected, the innovations hold more than on trend, on average, 2.7 trends reported. However, the network analysis provided an overview the management principles/directives clustering, which clearly show confirmed that the managers rely on combinations of trends in order to implement a successful policy that not necessarily follows predefined guidelines.

Finally, the paper compared if the trends vary accordingly to the innovation type, depicted by their thematic areas. Once again, heterogeneity among them was the rule. The most recurrent type, new arrangement is highly related to collaboration and partnership, while internal ends initiatives, such as Planning and Budgeting and HR Management, not only covers less trends, but also seems to hold some post NPM principles/directives less usual as bureaucracy's strengthening and leadership.

Regarding the research limitations, first, the results must be analyzed with some caution, since the trends' identification was based on the managers' reports. In addition, it is worth highlighting that the initiatives are the ones known as champions, so they do not necessarily re-

flect the ordinary practice in Brazilian public management. However, it's been an analytical strategy increasingly used in studies of public sector innovations (Borins, 2014), including in the Brazilian public administration field of study (Camoës, Cavalcante and Severo, 2016).

Nevertheless, the inquiry presents original findings about framework of the public administration in Brazil, grounded on the current theoretical debate and empirical data. Therefore, it contributes not only to scholars of public management, but also provides information for policymakers to reflect on how to formulate and implement their policies. This kind of research is critical because the debate about public management is often contaminated by simplistic and stereotypical views. Consequently, the knowledge shortcomings tend to generate problems of excessive normativism in the reforms proposals, as well as inadequate adaptations to quite different realities. As a research agenda, the paper paves the way to qualitative and in more detailed researches regarding how the management trends were implemented and their level of salience in the public sector innovations.

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