



**3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference  
on Public Policy (ICPP3)  
June 28-30, 2017 – Singapore**

*Panel : Policymaking and Legitimacy: Challenges, Choices, and Opportunities in Contemporary Developments of State Capacity*

***State capacities and public policy implementation:  
a proposal for an integrated framework of analysis***

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## **Abstract**

The present study looked for identifying relevant dimensions and variables for the analysis of the Brazilian federal government capacity for policy implementation. The research is based on a bibliographical review and resulted in the elaboration of an analytical framework for the identification and evaluation of levels and patterns of accumulation and distribution of state capacities among government agencies, areas and programs. This work suggests a framework in four dimensions (analytical, managerial, internal coordination and political) and three levels (individual, organizational and systemic). This framework is the basis for a survey which will be applied in the Brazilian federal agencies.

**Keywords:** state capacity, policy capacity, public policy implementation, Brazilian public administration

## **1. Introduction**

The analytical model presented in this paper seeks to contribute to studies aimed at improving public administration focusing on the formulation and implementation of public policies, management and service delivery. This model's application scope covers the organizations that make up the public administration in general. This paper intends to present this model's analytical framework which will be applied to an investigation that will look at the Brazilian federal administration capacities for public policy formulation and implementation.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The design of this analytical model is the first stage of a broader research conducted by the National School of Public Administration (Enap) of Brazil, which, in 2017, will apply a survey in order to collect data on Brazilian federal agencies. Among the specific policies that should be analyzed from the results of this survey are those implemented through intersectoral programs focused on the Sustainable

The next section presents some theoretical references of the concept of state capacities extracted from the recent literature on the subject. Section 3 describes the analysis model, its categories and analytical parameters, developing the argument in subsections that explore the dimensions of state capacities. Section 4 explains the application of the model and its levels of observation as well as of data and information collection. The final section discusses prospects of the proposed model.

## **2. The State capacities approach**

The state capacity approach revitalizes the discussion and studies on the role of the state. In the field of public administration, the subject of the state had lost its visibility since the period of clashes around the managerial conceptions of the New Public Management movement. As observed by Fukuyama (2012), the same disinterest on the state as a subject of analysis was noticed in the Political Science field, in the 1980s and 1990s, given to the concentration of studies on democracy and political transition which were focused on issues of limiting and controlling political power, instead of trying to understand the accumulation and operation of state power. However, the literature on state capacity came to bring the state back to the focus of discussion in these fields.

Investigations that refer to state capacities, either as a concept or as a theoretical approach to it, can be found nowadays extensively in the research production on issues related to the state and public administration (Fernandes, 2007). A categorization of this production allows us to identify different research aims, such as studies that address the role of the state in economic development (Amsden, 1989; Weiss and Hobson, 1985), emerging forms of governance in the public sector (Kim, 2007; Castells, 1999), experiences of public administration reform and innovation (Manning and Shepherd,

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Development Goals (SDGs). Subsequent steps will investigate the capabilities of the federal administration to perform administrative activities and to provide services.

2008; Shepherd and Valencia, 1996), and assessment of the implementation of cooperation policies and programs for developing countries (Brinkerhoff, 2016).

Starting from the interest in understanding the processes of state formation in comparative historical experiences of economic development, the studies on state capacity turned, more recently, to look at the state's performance in the context of contemporary processes of economic and social development (Gomide and Pires, 2014). The examination of this literature, through a historical-structural perspective, can reveal us increasing multiplicity of capacities dimension given to the proliferation of the functions assumed by the state in its various national configurations and longitudinal trajectories (Fernandes, 2007). Moreover, the state capacity studies allow us to build a dialogue amongst relevant questions and analytical keys from different fields of analysis such as autonomy, governance and quality of government (Fernandes *et al.*, 2017).

Cingolani's (2013) comprehensive bibliographical review suggests that there are many possible conceptualizations for describing state capacities. A non-exhaustive listing, based on its analytical potential could highlight the following dimensions: bureaucratic or administrative, relational, political, military, fiscal, legal, infrastructural and industrial. According to Tilly (1975), for instance, state capacities are evidenced in the extraction of tax resources within a delimited territory, as processes that often counteract the resistance of the population. Skocpol (1985), in her turn, argues that state capacities can be inferred from the implementation of state objectives facing the potential or actual opposition from social groups or limitative socioeconomic circumstances.

The concept of state capacity can be usefully applied in researches that explore multiple dimensions, through which capacities are expressed as manifestations of the power of

the state in action. These dimensions can be related to specific sources of observation and their respective factors or variables that indicate the materialization of capacities in the structure and processes of public administration. Investigations on state capacities use the concept for different analytical purposes: as a factor or variable of analysis, as an element of contextualization or as a subsumed factor to other categorizations or variables. However, in all these uses a promising potential is verified for applied research design. The concept opens perspectives for the elaboration of analytical constructs that integrate conceptual references from the theories of institutionalization with the organizational studies, focusing on the resources, processes and structures that make up the structure of the public administration.

The state capacity approach allows great flexibility for research applications and analytical developments. However, while this flexibility is attractive, it also poses challenges in its application which demands very clear and justifiable methodological choices. Cingolani (2013) highlights, for instance, the difficulties of observation of the phenomenon and the risks of circularity of the model. Mazzuca (2012), in his turn, draws attention to the problems arising from conceptual overlaps and imprecision in the definition of the object of observation.

### **3. The analysis model**

The model proposed in this work is based on some analytical demarcations that are methodological and conceptual premises necessary to ensure its consistency and feasibility for research operationalization. The model presupposes levels and units of analysis and is based on a systematization of the dimensions of capacities, associated with the purposes of state action, inferred from the literature on the subject. In addition, the model incorporates the specification of the sources of observation for obtaining data

and information that are evidence of state capacities, which are categorized with the support of the analytical lenses provided by scientific disciplines in the field of public administration. The description of these delimitations is presented in the following paragraphs. Figure 1, in Annex I, presents the synthesis of the model and its categorizations.

The **first demarcation** refers to the levels and units of analysis for the operation of the model. Most works of state capacity literature focus on the state as a macrostructure that bears resources and accumulates capabilities. The model proposed aims to study individuals and organizations that make up the public administration as an embodiment of the state in its functions of policy formulation and implementation. As it will be mentioned further below, this analytical framework is inspired in the model proposed by Wu *et al.* (2015), which considers the individual, organizational and a systemic level of state capacity observation. Accordingly, one argues that it allows the collection and analysis of data on capacities and conditions for public policy formulation and implementation in the individual level as well as in other levels such within each governmental agency, sector or government policy, and in a systemic level, involving coordination arrangements between organizations from different realms. Therefore, this model looks both the individuals that make up the state bureaucracy and the organizations in their various formats and arrangements that conform the public administration.<sup>2</sup>

The state capacity approach adopted in this model differs from the studies that explore the theme from issues directly related to the performance of states in economic

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<sup>2</sup> Studies on bureaucracy have a strong affinity with this model because they turn to the understanding of bureaucrats as individuals inserted in organizations and influenced by the culture, norms and processes inherent in the civil service.

development.<sup>3</sup> However, they are not contradictory paths insofar as it is possible to explore conceptual nexuses, variables and research hypotheses that allow one to examine how the construction of the bureaucratic structures of the states affects the performance of public policies and the administrative activities of the states.

In this sense, the construction of state capacities seems to be crucially linked to the creation of professionalized bureaucracies that, in different configurations, represent the political-institutional substrate of public administration given to their responsibility for the implementation of government decisions (Cingolani, 2014: 36). The studies produced by Evans *et al.* (1985) suggest multiple possible outcomes which are discussed through medium-range approaches in order to understand the role of bureaucratic structures in state performance. Moreover, it explores the embeddedness and technical-political relationships existing between bureaucracy, governments and society.

The approach developed in this work is close to the research developed by Wu *et al.* (2015), which proposes to gather information – by means of surveys and countries case studies - on the profile and perceptions of public servants to understand the existing state capacities in public administration bodies. Wu *et al.*'s (2015) model considers not only organizations internal dynamics but also their interactions with other public organizations and with the external environment.

The **second demarcation** refers to the purposes of state action, an aspect often highlighted in the state capacity literature as an enabler for accomplishing tasks, objectives or for the fulfillment of functions or roles (Hanson and Sigman, 2011). State

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<sup>3</sup> Thus, differs from investigations such as the one carried out by Fukuyama (2013) which seeks comparability across states and works with a more comprehensive level of aggregation and analysis.

action is carried out in a multiplicity of forms of action by means of its organizational structures, processes, instruments, people and other organizational resources.

The literature on state capacities has focused mainly on understanding the conditions that affect the state action, aspects that impact state performance and the accomplishment of its results (Fernandes *et al.*, 2017). There are several possibilities of research subjects which are equally relevant for understanding the states dynamics: the analysis of state performance in the formulation and implementation of policies, in carrying out administrative activities or in the provision of services to the citizen. These three alternatives are appropriate to the analysis model proposed in this paper. In fact, one assumes that in order to undertake a comprehensive investigation on the state and its performance, it is recommendable to look at all these state action areas in an aggregated and integrated manner.

The purposes of state action can be defined as the conjunction of three elements. First and foremost, the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, services and administrative activities, as conditions that ensure the achieved performance through results perceived by society. Second, the mobilization and coordination of internal resources to provide the necessary coordination and articulation for coherent decision-making and implementation processes of government issues and particularly their policies and programs. Third, the maintenance of legitimacy *vis-à-vis* society, which depends on the interlocution between public administration and its external environment, in which there is a diversity of sectors of society with multiple demands and perceptions on state performance.

In the context of the Brazilian research literature, the works of Gomide *et al.* (2014) and Pires and Gomide (2015) deal with performance in the implementation of public



policies, focusing on government programs and their organizational arrangements. Recent works coordinated by Enap, which analyzed the performance of the middle-ranking bureaucracy, addressed the construction of state capacities and the performance of this segment in investment programs (Pires, 2015) and in the body responsible for tax collection (Silva, 2015). The research delineated by Wu *et al.* (2015) aims to study the perception of bureaucrats in relation to the capacity to implement public policies at the individual, organizational and systemic levels.

Finally, the **third demarcation** refers to the dimensions of the state capacities that are to be explored with this model, thus categorized: analytical, managerial, internal coordination and political. These dimensions can be grouped into two macrodimensions, respectively, administrative and relational, considering their nature and dynamics. The administrative dimensions refer, predominantly, to the capacities accumulated and operationalized in the structures and processes that conform the organizations of the public administration. Relational dimensions, in turn, refer to capabilities that are constructed in a crucial way, through interactions established internally and externally to the public administration, involving bureaucrats themselves, politicians, representatives of society and other actors.

### **3.1. Administrative capacity**

Administrative capacity consists of observable resources or means of public administration that ensure the physical functioning of organizations. This definition considers as a unity of observation, an organization systems and other forms of centralization, concentration or verticalization, such as divisions, conglomerates and consortia. These capabilities are categorized in the model in analytical and management capacities. As conceived in Wu *et al.* (2015), the first one refers to the assimilation and

application of relevant contents of technical and scientific knowledge on public policies to the decision-making process. The public servants are primarily responsible for this assimilation process, although it can also be measured in organizations' information systems and databases. The management capacities, in turn, refer to knowledge and skills related to the application of models, parameters and standards of administration as a technical and scientific discipline in decision making on the allocation of organizational resources.<sup>4</sup>

Analytical skills can be found in assessing the knowledge and skills accumulated individually among public servants, or collectively in teams or within administrative units and organizations. Recruitment, capacity building, personnel management and knowledge management are key to the development of these capabilities. The construction of these capacities presupposes the internalization of knowledge contents adequate to the satisfactory accomplishment of activities, delivery of services and implementation of public policies, as requirements for an efficient and effective performance of the public administration. The analytical capabilities are evidenced in public servants' level of expertise of specific technical and scientific knowledge considered relevant for the purposes of governmental public policies. These capabilities are also found as systematized knowledge stocked in information systems and documentary production.

Management skills, in turn, are more strongly associated with the historical construction of public administration and its embodiment according to the characteristics of the Weberian bureaucracy (Weber, 1984). Although assuming different historical

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<sup>4</sup> Although the premise of scientific management as an objective and neutral reference for organization has been harshly criticized in the evolutionary trajectory of the administration field, it still remains the notion that the management of means by the state or any organization can be subject to verifiable rules and parameters of resources rationalization and optimization.

configurations, bureaucracy as a typification of public administration organization relies on the constitution of public servant cadres recruited by meritocratic principles and oriented to perform according to norms and legal precepts and objective technical parameters.

In addition to its personnel organization as bureaucracy, other components also affect the functioning of the administrative machine, specifically the framework of laws and regulations, the budget, internal decision-making processes, and information systems. In this sense, the ability to elaborate and approve clear and effective rules, the adequacy of resource allocation - through budget programming and execution - and the generation, analysis and use of data and information in decision making and process management are evidences of administrative capacities in state action. Satisfactory performance in the use of these resources efficiently and effectively is considered a fundamental requirement for the successful performance of the state in the implementation of its decisions and policies.

The proposed analytical model presupposes that the dimension of the administrative capacity refers to the resources that contribute to the efficient and effective performance of the public administration. These are more tangible and cumulative resources, in a more easily observable way, and therefore, can be considered as more objectively measurable, when compared to the other dimensions.

### **3.2. Relational capacity**

While the analysis of administrative capacity deals with the accumulation of resources in a more tangible way, relational capacity refers to the resources generated by the process of interaction between different entities – which could be either individuals, groups or organizations (Emirbayer 1997, Marques 2006). Thus, while administrative

capacities are built by the accumulation of resources produced from an organization's initiatives, relational capacities are built on open processes that involve external dialogue and eventually conflict, negotiation, and consensus. They are capacities that presuppose a greater complexity of factors and some difficulty for their verification in the research. Nevertheless, they are fundamental to the performance of public administration in the many situations in which it must be able to coordinate itself internally and maintain relationships within its working environment. In such situations, governance to promote effective change or introduce innovations does not rely on a single point of public administration but requires articulation between different organizations.

In this analytical model, the relational capacities are distinguished between the internal coordination capacity of public administration and the political capacity to act in the external environment.<sup>5</sup> Internal coordination as a capacity is reflected in the mechanisms and instances of coordination and articulation of decisions, in the interorganizational structures and in the mechanisms of monitoring and control of public policies and governments as a whole. The coordination capacity presupposes the exercise of external interlocution for the exchange of information, coordination of objectives and projects, negotiation and consensus building around actions that involve collaboration among organizations to achieve them. The emerging issues in the literature regarding the coordination of government action and the intersectoral articulation of public policies are associated with this dimension.

The construction of political capacity requires the identification and recognition of the diverse sources and resources of power, as well as of the multiple interests and

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<sup>5</sup> Approaches such as that of Gomide *et al.* (2014) and Pires and Gomide (2015) include the coordination and internal organization of the State as resources that integrate the dimension of administrative capacity.

ideologies distributed in society (Repetto, 2004). The analysis of this dimension is based on the contemporary literature on governance and democracy. State action does not develop in isolation and is not neutral in relation to the issues of power which, in the context of contemporary states, originate not only from the state apparatus, but also from civil society and the international environment.

Relational capacity in its two subdimensions - internal and political coordination - is embedded in the analytical model as the dimension of capabilities that ensures the conditions for regular and coherent functioning of public administration. Regarding its internal scope, it manifests itself in the preservation of internal cohesion as an expression of the agency power of public administration, resolving disputes, conflicts and overlaps between its organizations while preserving and reaffirming its identity and autonomy. Regarding the external relations of public administration, political capacity reflects the intensity and quality of its interactions with other political entities, such as the legislative and judicial branches, external control bodies, international organizations and with society in its plurality, including citizens, companies and entities of organized society, among others.

Studies that discuss effects of deliberative processes or participatory instances on public policy implementation point out that bureaucrats and public organizations are inherently prepared to interact with society (Nassuno, 2011; Souza, 2016). Even though this is an untested supposition, one may argue that it prevails as well in studies that examine the interaction between public administration agencies or individuals and other interlocutors, such as the judiciary and legislative instances or external control bodies. In all these cases, it seems to have a subjacent comprehension that political decision is the determinant factor of the interactional result. In other words, one assumes that once a decision is taken, bureaucrats and agencies will be prepared to carry out any necessary

interactional measure (conversations, negotiations, more formal partnerships, etc.) so to reach the defined goal.

As abovementioned, this investigation starts from a different set of assumptions. It argues that the interactional encounters can produce distinct results. Moreover, in order to find out what affects these results it is essential to examine the micro level of individuals and organizations. Thus, discussing what sort of individual or organizational capacities are important to build fruitful relationships of public policy implementation, they brought a valuable contribution to policy studies focusing the interactions between bureaucrats or between state and civil society representatives in participatory spaces.

This view can add relevant elements to the proposed analytical model brought by recent studies that examined bureaucrats influence in policy implementation. Cavalcante and Lotta (2015) studied the middle-range bureaucrat's influence while Abers (2015) and Viana (2017) analysed the relevance of individual's values and perceptions of these bureaucrat's concerning their engagement with specific causes and their attitudes towards the policy. The researches of Klijn (1996) and Rhodes (2006) recognizes the influence of policy networks formed between bureaucrats and policy stakeholders.

To sum up, the analytical model suggests that state capacities should ensure the internal cohesion and coherence of state action and gain legitimacy vis-à-vis society. More broadly, the good performance of governments, insofar as they depend on a well-organized public administration and able to implement their decisions, is crucially affected by the efficient use of their organizational resources, by coordinating their actions and by keeping interlocution with society so to legitimate the purposes of their actions.

### **3.3. Autonomy**

Autonomy is a factor or attribute often discussed in the state capacity literature, though not necessarily as a specific capacity or dimension. According to Fukuyama (2013), it is associated with capacity, both considered as explanatory variables of the quality of government. Bersch *et al.* (2013) analyze variations between these two factors for the comparison involving organizations and public policies. The autonomy of the state refers to the construction and maintenance of an identity embodied in its bureaucracy which is based on constitutional legality and on acting according to the principles of the Weberian model. Although this definition is susceptible of criticism and limitations, the definition of autonomy adopted in this analytical model is directly related to the state capacity, in its four dimensions, because it must be considered as a precondition for its construction. Thus, autonomy can be considered as an intervening factor or variable in the construction and maintenance of state capabilities.

While the dimensions in which capacity become evident can be observed as accumulations of resources and expression of the state powers in action, autonomy appears in the form of the fulfillment of requirements and of intensities or scales, in relation to which it is possible to gauge the performance of the state in its relationship with society. The studies of Evans *et al.* (1985) and Evans (1992) analyze the dynamics of autonomy as a variable that interferes with the construction of the state and its bureaucracy, leading to different impacts, according to a gradation that presupposes a certain degree of autonomy compatible with the various situations and circumstances of state action.<sup>6</sup> Thus, the impacts of autonomy are not necessarily conducive to capacity building: they are predatory when state action occurs with too much autonomy, associated with authoritarian bureaucracies capturing public resources. On the other

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<sup>6</sup> Evans's (1995) concept of embedded autonomy suggests that building State capabilities requires the simultaneous development of administrative and relational dimensions so that bureaucracy and State organizations gain autonomy but at the same time need to establish relationships with the sectors of society.

hand, the deficits of autonomy lead to the instrumentalization of public policies by sectors of society.

Therefore, according to the analytical model proposed in this study, autonomy is not a cumulative capacity, but a condition or requirement that is, to a certain degree, indispensable to ensure the satisfactory performance of state activities, service delivery and the implementation of its policies, so that it can be preserved against their capture by particularistic interests of society or by the bureaucracy itself.

#### **4. Levels of observation**

This section describes aspects of the model application to empirical research regarding levels of observation as well as data and information collection, in relation to the four dimensions of state capacities. As abovementioned, this model is being proposed for research on public administration organizations and their resources, especially the personnel. The levels of individual and organizational observation are appropriate to this scope of research. In addition, it was considered appropriate to include also the systemic or macro level of public administration, which refers to the organizational arrangements for coordination and articulation between the organizations that comprise it, such as areas or sectors of the state comprised by various organizations, like health, education or environment. This design of observation levels is analogous to the one proposed by Wu *et al.* (2015), which seeks to integrate the individual, organizational and systemic levels. Figure 2, in the Annex II, summarizes the levels of observation of state capacities, as outlined in the model.

##### **4.1. Individual level**

The level of individual's observation refers to the personnel of public administration organizations and corresponds to the resources internalized in the form of individuals'



competencies. That is, individuals assimilate and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes that are expressions of the accumulation of capacities in their four dimensions: analytical, managerial, coordination and political. It is worth noting that this investigation devotes special interest in exploring and discussing the impact of civil servants' actions and conditions for action on public policy implementation.

In general, there is little exploration of this level of observation in the literature on state capacities, which has been focusing their attention on the organizational and systemic levels. Thus, this investigation looked for additional literature in order to identify sources of observation of what is being proposed in this work as individual capacities. The main reference is the study of competences produced within the researches on strategic human resources management in the field of public administration, which is now moving from the classic view of personnel management towards a more comprehensive understanding of the implications of the individuals' contributions to the organization strategy (Camões, 2013).

There are two main lines of thought in this debate. The first, developed by North-American researchers, conceives competences as the set of individual attributes and qualifications which allows the individual to accomplish her tasks or face a specific situation. The second line, in its turn, is proposed by French researchers and takes the context into consideration understanding competences as individuals' accomplishment within the working environment (Camões, 2013).

This investigation adopts a more integrative concept of the term considering both individual attributes and the working environment, following recent Brazilian studies. According to Bruno-Faria and Brandão (2003), "competences represent synergic

combinations of knowledge, skills and attitudes, which are expressed by professional performance, within a specific organizational context”.

Therefore, competences are combinations of individual’s knowledge, skills and attitudes towards a particular aim that, in the context of policy capacities are needed for the effective implementation of public policies (Durand, 2000; Nisembaum, 2000). In this context, competencies would be the link between the individuals conduct and the organizational strategy for policy implementation.

Knowledge is understood as the set of information assimilated and accumulated by the individual throughout his life that allows him to “understand the world” (Durand, 2000). The cadency of information integration to individual’s preexistent scheme of thought affects individuals’ behavior and judgement (Pires, 2005).

Skills regards to the aspect of making intentional use of knowledge to change a specific situation or to face a given problem (Durand, 2000). It is the individual attribute of knowing how to do. Bloom et al. (1979) classifies skills in two groups: intellectual skills – that demands essentially mental processes of information organization and reorganization – and motor skills – that requires basically neuromuscular coordination. Attitude refers to social and affective aspects that arouse as individual’s motivation to do something. This dimension assumes that feelings and emotions towards other people, subjects or events that are relevant for defining individual’s preferences and predispositions (Pires, 2005).

To sum up, knowledge relates to know-what and know-why to do, while skill concerns to know-how to do and, finally, attitude deals with the dimension of wanting to do. The interdependent and complementary combination of these three dimensions make up a competence (Durand, 1998). Figure 3 in Annex I synthetizes that idea. Taking into

consideration the conception above, one can argue that a competence is the ideal assemble of individuals' resources for a specific aim. In other words, knowledge, skills and attitudes are nothing more than resources and conditions that provide the necessary substrate for the individuals' action.

Therefore, this investigation argues that the dimensions of competencies are viable and adequate concepts to translate what one intends to explore as individual capacities<sup>7</sup>. In other words, this work proposes an analytical framework, as shown in Figure 4 in Annex I, which conceives knowledge, skills and attitudes as manifestations of individuals' capacities. Elements of competences are thus the different layers that make up individuals' conditions for action.

Taking this into consideration, one can notice in Figure 4 that, for the individual level, that analytical capacities are mainly related to knowledge resources and research skills (e.g. knowledge on policy instruments or on the public policy field). Technical capacities look at types of knowledge and skills that support individuals' conditions for planning and managerial activities (e.g. knowledge on resources management, planning and organizational skills).

For coordination capacities, managerial skills are also important – though in an interorganizational level – but the main emphasis is given to the interpersonal and interorganizational skills and attitude to leadership (e.g. communicational skills, conflict management skills, etc.). For political capacities, in its turn, relational skills are essential as well as individual values that motivate interactional attitudes (e.g. democratic values and recognition of other actors' relevance).

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<sup>7</sup> In fact, the literature on competences uses the expression “capacity” to refer to the stage in which competences are matured and ready to be used. But in this investigation, we are understanding “capacity” as elements that make up a competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes).

Finally, autonomy deals essentially with values and attitudes (e.g. transparency values, public spirit, level of preservation against harassment and corruption attempts) . To conclude, one argue that regarding the individual level of capacities the most appropriate data collection strategy is to carry out surveys to collect perceptions from public servants.

#### **4.2. Organizational level**

The organizational level refers to the teams and collectivities and to the structures, information systems, processes, documents, databases, among others, that are spaces of accumulation of the resources that compose the capacities of an organization. This level of observation is adopted by several works that address state capacities, using documentary sources of information. In the Brazilian context, for instance, studies carried out by Gomide *et al.* (2014), and Pires and Gomide (2015, 2016) collected information on the political capacities of the Brazilian federal agencies. Bersch et al. (2017), in its turn, analyzed categorized information on autonomy and state capacities.

As depicted in Figure 4, for the organizational level, the proposed analytical framework uses objective variables usually adopted by the capacity studies such as personnel and budget allocation for the administrative dimension or planning process effectiveness and existence of monitoring systems for the coordination dimension or, also, personnel stability for autonomy dimension (Bercsh et al, 2013). In addition, this framework also includes variables suggested by Wu et al. (2016) such as organization commitment to evidence-based policy for the analytical dimension or organizational legitimacy and access to key policy-makers for the political dimension.

Finally, it also proposes additional aspects which are more specific related to the Brazilian context. Examples are objective variables such as the level of earmarked

budget for the autonomy dimension or other aspects which could be better capture by means of the individual's perception such as the organization level of commitment with participatory instances or communication effectiveness with the internal instances of control.

One may argue that the analytical model proposed in this paper opens methodological possibilities for integrating the information obtained at the individual level from public servants with the information about the structures and processes of the organizations. The suggested information retrieval strategy is documental research and staff-oriented surveys of public administration organizations.

### **4.3. Systemic level**

The systemic level includes the structures and other formats of coordination and articulation between organizations and deals basically with the same type of data and information about the organizational resources which are, at this level, accumulated by areas, sectors or systems constituted formally or informally in the public administration. The work of Wu *et al.* (2017) suggests including in this level the broader context of public administration functioning and relational environment.

As shown in Figure 4, most of the resources suggested in Wu *et al.* (2017) 's model for this systemic level were adopted in this framework, though in some cases in different dimensions. However, some additional ones were included such as "society political participation" as a broader scenario for the political dimension or "access to existing resources for internal processes improvements" in the technical administrative level. This level of analysis can also be investigated through documentary and survey analysis with public administration personnel.

## **5. Conclusions**

The concept of state capacities, in its various formulations, has a promising potential for use in applied research guided by methodological requirements of scientific knowledge for the purpose of understanding public administration and its organizations as institutions inserted in complex environments. The concept admits multiple dimensions, making possible to analyze the resources, processes and organizational structures of public administration, the elaboration of diagnoses and the proposition of improvements in organization and management, particularly in relation to the training of public servants.

The application of the model is adequate to the detailed study of the factors and conditions that affect the construction and maintenance of state capacities in public administrations. In addition, it allows multiple combinations between variables to investigate the distribution of capacities among organizations, areas or sectors, their accumulation levels and trajectories, and the comparative analysis of situations and trajectories. It can also lead one to engage in the investigation of the synchronicity or intervenient dynamics that may exist between the four dimensions and the three levels. In fact, this analytical framework is the basis for the design of a comprehensive survey to be applied with a sample of the approximately 600,000 Brazilian civil servants in the federal level. One expects that the results of that survey could start to address the abovementioned issues.

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## Annex

Figure 1 – Dimensions of State capacity

		<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Sources of observation</b>
<b>Autonomy</b> - Conditions that guarantee the implementation of policies protected from particularist interests	<b>Administrative</b>	<b>Analytical</b>	Efficiency and Efficacy	Conditions that guarantee technical and administrative performance	Data collection and analysis Specific technical knowledge
		<b>Managerial</b>			Managerial skills Financial resources allocation Human resources Norms and regulations Technological resources
	<b>Relational</b>	<b>Internal coordination</b>	Agency	Conditions that guarantee regular functioning and internal coherence	Coordinated decision-making process Inter and intraorganizational structure Monitoring and control
		<b>Political</b>	Legitimacy	Conditions that promote necessary interlocution with the external environment	Social control and accountability Social participations instances Levels of negotiation and interlocution between the Executive and the Legislative and Judiciary powers Relationship with International organizations

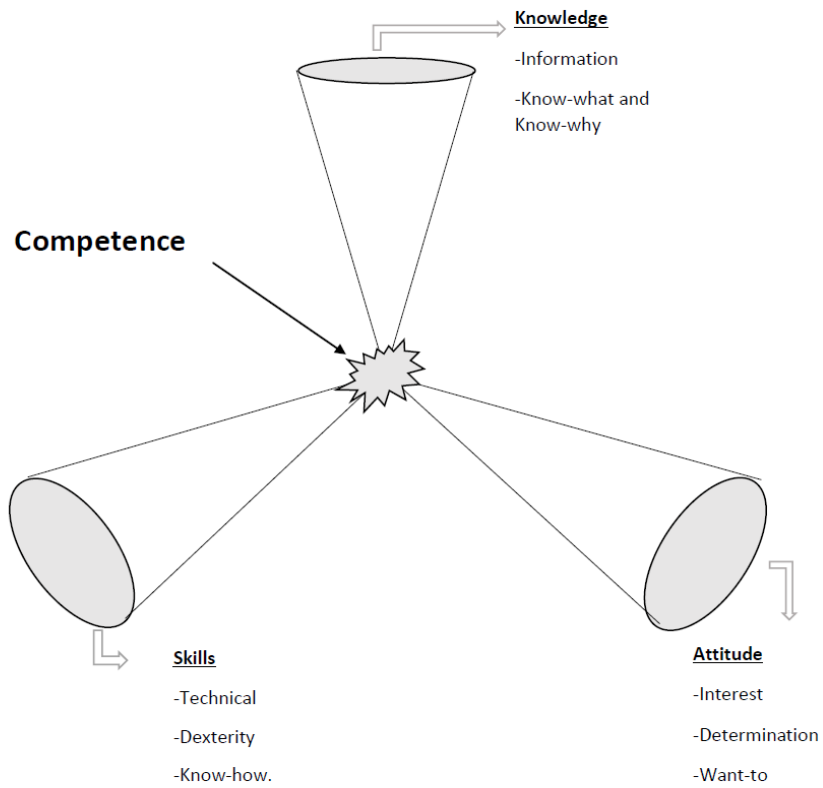
Source: Authors' elaboration

Figure 2 – Levels of observation

<b>DIMENSIONS</b>		<b>Administrative</b>		<b>Relational</b>		<b>Autonomy</b>
		<b>Analytical</b>	<b>Managerial</b>	<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Political</b>	
<b>LEVEL OF RESOURCES</b>	<b>Individual</b>	Individual Analytical	Individual Managerial	Individual Coordination	Individual Political	Individual Autonomy
	<b>Organizational</b>	Organizational Analytical	Organizational Managerial	Organizational Coordination	Organizational Political	Organizational Autonomy
	<b>Systemic</b>	Systemic Analytical	Systemic Managerial	Systemic Coordination	Systemic Political	Systemic Autonomy

Source: Authors' elaboration

Figure 3 – Competences dimensions



Source: Pires, 2005, p. 18; own translation.

Figure 4 – Types of resources



RESOURCES					
DIMENSION	Administrative-Analytical	Administrative-Technical	Relational –Coordination	Relational – Political	Autonomy
LEVEL OF RESOURCES	<i>Individual – Administrative Analytical (IAA)</i>	<i>Individual – Administrative Technical (IAT)</i>	<i>Individual – Coordination (IC)</i>	<i>Individual – Political (IP)</i>	<i>Individual – Autonomy (IA)</i>
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technical knowledge on the public policy</li> <li>2. Knowledge on policy instruments</li> <li>3. Knowledge on normative and legal tools and systems of the policy field</li> <li>4. Research skills and data analysis</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Knowledge on management tools and strategies</li> <li>2. Knowledge on resources management (personnel, technology and budgeting)</li> <li>3. Managerial skills</li> <li>4. Planning and organizational skills</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Leadership (to define courses, to motivate people and to take responsibility for deliver and changes)</li> <li>2. Managerial skills</li> <li>3. Negotiation skills</li> <li>4. Planning and organization skills</li> <li>5. Interpersonal influence</li> <li>6. Communicational skills</li> <li>7. Conflict management skills</li> <li>8. Interpersonal network formation skills</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Scenario analysis skill</li> <li>2. Institutional networking formation skills</li> <li>3. Interpersonal influence skills</li> <li>4. Communicational skills</li> <li>5. Conflict resolution and consensus building skills</li> <li>9. Interpersonal network formation skills</li> <li>6. Negotiation skills</li> <li>7. Democratic values sharing (tolerance, equality promotion, etc.)</li> <li>8. Recognition of others actors relevance for policy implementation in a democratic context</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Level of commitment with the public policy</li> <li>2. Problem identification skills</li> <li>3. Attitude towards solving solutions</li> <li>4. Relational networks with other relevant actors to the public policy</li> <li>5. Values such as ethic, transparency, public spirit</li> <li>6. To recognize and to differentiate the role of politicians and the bureaucracy</li> <li>7. Level of preservation towards harassment, inadequate political interference, traffic of influence and corruption attempts</li> </ol>

<b>Organizational</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Organizational – Administrative Analytical (OAA)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informational resources levels of availability and utilization</li> <li>2. Organization commitment with evidence-based policy</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Organizational – Administrative Technical (OAT)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Availability of resources and financial and personnel systems (quantity of personnel and budget size)</li> <li>2. Efficiency and effectiveness of budget allocation, budget expenditure, personnel allocation and profile</li> <li>3. Level of transparency and institutionalization of the organization operational processes</li> <li>4. Training and internal assessment processes</li> <li>5. Level of institutionalization and effectiveness of norms and regulations</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Organizational-Coordination (OC)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Planning processes effectiveness</li> <li>2. Existence of organizational performance monitoring systems (standards of quality defined, performance indicators defined and monitored)</li> <li>3. Level of transparency and institutionalization of the organization and inter-organizational operational processes</li> <li>4. Level of clarity of the common objectives and roles (competencies and organizational hierarchy defined; delimited jurisdictions)</li> <li>5. Informational and communicational systems which allows intersectorial and intergovernmental coordination</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Organizational – Political (OP)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Organizational legitimacy in society</li> <li>2. Access to policy political decision-makers</li> <li>3. Level of commitment with participatory instances</li> <li>4. Availability and effectiveness of channels of communication and negotiation with other powers and levels of government</li> <li>5. Communication effectiveness with the internal instances of control</li> <li>6. Data publicity and accessibility levels to society</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Organizational – Autonomy (OA)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Level of “earmarked” budget resources</li> <li>2. Personnel level of stability</li> <li>3. Access to policy political decision-makers</li> <li>4. Horizontal and network structures</li> </ol>

		<p><i>Systemic – Administrative Analytical (SAA)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Access to policy consultants</li> <li>2. Political support for rigorous policy analysis</li> <li>3. Access to organizational data &amp; information</li> </ol>	<p><i>Systemic – Administrative Technical (SAT)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Level of access to existing resources for internal processes improvements</li> </ol>	<p><i>Systemic – Coordination (SC)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coherence of relevant society groups</li> <li>2. “Rule of Law”, impartiality and corruption control</li> </ol>	<p><i>Systemic- Political (SP)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political accountability for policies</li> <li>2. Public trust in government</li> <li>3. Participation of civil society in the policy process</li> <li>4. Society political participation</li> </ol>	<p><i>Systemic– Autonomy (AS)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Society public-private network configuration</li> <li>2. Levels of corruption acceptance in society</li> </ol>
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