



Peer Review Report


PEER REVIEW REPORT FOR:

Braga, G. B., & Martins, D. G. (2023). Building a state capacity index for municipal governments of Minas Gerais. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*, 27(1), e210135. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-7849rac2022210135.en>

HOW TO CITE THIS PEER REVIEW REPORT:

Braga, G. B., Martins, D. G., & Grin, E. (2022). Peer review report for: Building a state capacity index for municipal governments of Minas Gerais. RAC. *Revista de Administração Contemporânea*. *Zenodo*. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7101861>

REVIEWERS:

-  Eduardo Grin (Fundação Getulio Vargas, EESP, Brazil)
The other reviewers did not authorize the disclosure of their reports.

ROUND 1

Reviewer 1 report

Reviewer 1 for this round chose not to disclose his/her review report.

Reviewer 2 report

Reviewer 2 for this round chose not to disclose his/her review report.

Reviewer 3 report

Reviewer: Eduardo Grin

Date review returned: September 11, 2021

Recommendation: Major revision

Comments to the authors

The paper develops a very interesting and useful tool for measuring municipal state capacity. Indeed, this literature is still creeping in Brazilian local governments studies. The authors were a very honest job when debating dimensions and variables that could make up the ICI. The utilization of maps with colors it is a great manner to show the situation of municipal state capacity. In sum, the paper is relevant contribution to thicken our poor knowledge on how Brazilian local government work in a context of decentralized federalism. Below I present some comments for the authors.

1. The title: I think a better title it could be something how “Perspectives on the institutional capacity of the municipal governments of Minas Gerais”.

2. The abstract: I think the description of the context it should be about municipal context, and not about the concept of institutional capacity itself.

3. Introduction:

3.1 Cingolani (2013) develops the concept of state capacity and not institutional capacity. Institutional capacity, according to Grindle (1996) is one dimension of the concept of state capacity. The correct concept is state capacity, including because the authors offer a multidimensional perspective and not an approach only focused on institutional capacity.

3.2 *Gespública* was implemented basically in the federal level. Secondly, the design of this program was very limited to provide an encompassing methodology to help municipalities to develop their state capacities. I recommend reviewing this assertion to moderate it. *Gespública* is a very limited program to incentive the modernization of the public administration. Its sustainability over time was very weak. Its design is very debatable. I think is a very weak reference to underpin the empirical contest based on the *Gespública*. On the other hand, there are other federal programs dedicated to incentive the building municipal capacity e.g. PMAT and PNAFM). But inexplicably the authors are silent on other programs.

4. Section 2 - Performance measures and institutional capacity

4.1 About the definition of measurement levels I do recommend using the book by Grindle (1997) because this scheme based on different levels is well developed in this book. GRINDLEE, M. S. (ed.). *Getting Good Government: capacity building in the public sector of developing countries*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

4.2 The author assert: “Thus, the search for an examination of the efficiency of municipal governments was based on the possibility of IC analysis and comparison considering the administrative, fiscal and political dimensions of municipal governments at the organizational level”. Thus, it seems that the authors assume both the state centric and relational approach in the literature of state capacity. Also, in choosing the organization level the authors opt to build the index based on inputs (the administrative, fiscal and political dimensions) for good public policies. This kind of information are relevant for the readers.

4.3 The author assert: “Therefore, based on Huerta’s (2008), Gomes’ (2010) and Wu et al. (2015) theoretical contributions, this quantitative study will examine the administrative, fiscal and political IC dimensions of the municipalities and the IC dimensions of the municipalities. The next section will present the methodological procedures that guided this work”. However: a) Only to mention these authors is not enough. It is also needs to explain what think these authors and their theoretical views

b) Wu et al. (2015): This author was not included in the table 1.

c) Certainly, the paper lacks a more grounded theoretical support on state capacity literature. For instance, the readers do not know what is the debate on the literature considering the dimensions chosen by the authors (see “Notas sobre a construção do conceito de capacidades estatais” (Grin, 2012). Secondly, it is lacking a more structured building of the concept on IC (see literature on that: Sartori (1970), Gerring (1999) e Goertz (2006), just to mention some of them:

GERRING, John. 1999. “What makes a concept good? A criterial framework for understanding concept formation in the social sciences”. *Polity*, v. 31, n. 3: 357-393.

GERRING, John & BARESI, Paul. 2002. “Putting ordinary language to work: a min-max strategy of concept formation in the social sciences”. *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, v. 15, n. 2: 201-232.1.

GOERTZ, G. 2006. *Social Science Concepts. A user's Guide*. Princeton University Press: Princeton and Oxford.

SARTORI, Giovanni. 1970. "Concept misinformation in comparative politics". *The American Political Science Review*, v. 64, n. 4: 1033-1053.

5. Methodology

5.1 Why do the authors only use 2015? Why don't develop the index based on panel? It is because does not exist available information?

5.2 Why did the author choose municipalities in Minas Gerais? The description of the characteristics is not a surrogate for the theoretical and/or empirical motivation for choosing the localities in this state.

5.3 Dimensions of institutional capacity:

In general, the three dimensions are poorly supported in the literature. Below I recommend some articles to thicken the theoretical background.

The composition of this multidimensional index, according to Grindle, also it should be considered the institutional dimension: capacity institutional: definition of "game rules" relating to economic regulation and behavior political role of social actors; d) capacity politics: establishing channels legitimate and effective to deal with demands (Grindle, 1996). Putnam (2006) also uses the concept in a multidimensional way by proposing 12 indicators for evaluate "institutional capacities" because "the effectiveness of an institution depends on its ability to conduct your business well internal". In this case, municipal instruments of planning available on MUNIC website it should be considered. For example, the instruments used by the municipalities do define the "rules of the game" in urban policies as this information is available on the MUNIC website (for 2015 and 2018). I do recommend to incorporate this new dimension in the ICI because in doing so the index in fact it will be more robust and complete.

Based on the state centric approach the state does not only "process", but mainly steers according to its own political priorities (see Skocpol, 2002). Or, in an alternative approach, the concept of embedded autonomy by Peter Evans.

As for the administrative dimension I do not understand how to disregard the characteristics of municipal bureaucracy (data available on MUNIC website). More recent literature on this dimension could be useful:

BATISTA, M. Burocracia local e qualidade da implementação de políticas descentralizadas: uma análise da gestão de recursos federais pelos municípios brasileiros. *Revista do Serviço Público*, v. 66, n.3, pp.345-370, 2015.

DOLLERY, B. et al. *Local Public, Fiscal and Financial Governance: An International Perspective*. Switzerland: Pallgrave McMillan, 2020.

LIMA, L. L. et al. Planejamento governamental nos municípios brasileiros: em direção a uma agenda de pesquisa. *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, v. 18, n. 2, pp-323-335, 2020a.

LIMA, L. L. et al. Plano Plurianual como proxy para medir capacidades estatais: um estudo sobre o planejamento governamental nos municípios da região metropolitana de Porto Alegre. *Urbe. Revista Brasileira de Gestão Urbana*, 12, pp. 1-16, 2020b.

MARENCO, A. Burocracias Profissionais Ampliam Capacidade Estatal para Implementar Políticas? Governos, Burocratas e Legislação em Municípios Brasileiros. *DADOS – Revista de Ciências Sociais*, v. 60, n. 4, pp. 1025-1058, 2017.

MARENCO, A.; STROHCHOEN, M. T. B.; JONER, W. Capacidade estatal, burocracia e tributação nos municípios brasileiros. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, v. 25, n. 64, pp.3-21, 2017.

PAPI, L. P. e DEMARCO, D. J. Planejamento governamental nos municípios brasileiros: um debate sobre a construção das capacidades estatais no RGS. In: 11º Encontro da ABCP, Curitiba, 2018. *Anais...Curitiba: ABCP*. p. 1-26.

PAPI, L. P. e DEMARCO, D. J. e LIMA, L. L. Capacidades Estatais e Planejamento governamental municipal: uma análise no Rio Grande do Sul. In: VI Encontro Brasileiro de Administração Pública, Salvador, 2019. *Salvador: SBAP*, 2019. p. 1-16.

The selection of these two variables is too confused as level of socioeconomic development is not only dependent from state capacity. Also, there is a problem of endogeneity: Do municipalities are more developed because they have more state capacity? Or municipalities have more state capacity for being more developed. Because of that many studies testing levels of state capacity, at most, use socioeconomic context as control variables. Thirdly, one index it should ideally be to understand how is organized the local government. In adding socioeconomic context, the index mixes characteristics of local government with municipal ones.

As for fiscal dimension could be considered a more recent and focused literature on Brazilian municipalities. See:

GRIN, E. J. et al. Sobre desconexões e hiatos: uma análise de capacidades estatais e finanças públicas em municípios brasileiros. *Cadernos Gestão Pública e Cidadania*, v. 23, n. 76, pp. 312-336, 2018.

MENDES, W. A. e FERREIRA, M. A.M. A influência da accountability na capacidade estatal, na alocação dos recursos

públicos e no desenvolvimento socioeconômico em municípios brasileiros. *Revista de Contabilidade Contemporânea*, v. 18, n. 46, pp. 131-147, 2021.

GRIN, E. J. O verso e o reverso da cooperação federativa e da difusão vertical de políticas para promover capacidade estatal nos municípios brasileiros. *Administração Pública e Gestão Social*, v. 13, n. 2, p. 1-24, 2021.

6. Section on discussion and results:

6.1 This comment about the municipal councils deserves an additional observation, based on the state capacity debate. Local autonomy decision it is a very relevant aspect in that perhaps could be considered the disposition of local governments to create local councils without any necessity of federal laws that enforce the implementation of this forums in health and social assistance. However, in education policy there is not any federal law obliging the municipalities. In fact, federal laws oblige localities to implement FUNDEB Councils and Municipal Council on School Feeding. Also, it is not theoretically clear why do choose sports and cultural assets since these areas are less relevant than, for instance, living, environment among others?

6.2 About the intermunicipal consortia: The Brazilian literature on consortium highlights that smaller municipalities are more prone to come into these arrangements seeking to compensate their weakness. How Minas Gerais has a large set of small localities it makes sense this results.

6.3 About the fiscal dimension: Also, it should be considered: a) many municipalities do not have local economy to extract local taxes; b) local bureaucracies are technically weak; c) many localities still were not able to modernize their administrative apparatus; d) the constitutional frame for local taxing penalizes the municipalities since the taxes are only charged over urban properties and economy; e) the so called "fiscal war" also is relevant. The decentralization process is one side of this situation, but it is not enough to understand this very complex federative landscape.

6.4 What are the criteria to define low, moderate or good performance? Why do not use high, medium and low according to the definition of a threshold. How was defined these ICI thresholds (table 4)? There is not any previous explanation about it to provide a more objective criteria for the measuring.

6.5 "Salvato et al. (2006); Lopes and Toyoshima (2008); Silva (2009) and Reis et al. (2013), which emphasized the concentration of municipalities with poor socioeconomic structures in the North and Northeast mesoregions of Minas Gerais, in comparison to the other mesoregions of the same state". This kind of inference is biased and plagued with endogeneity problem. I recommend recalculating the index without using socioeconomic context since these variables always will generate conclusions such as: the poorer regions are bad ranked as for their ICI.

6.6 "Therefore, this study is adjacent to Huerta's (2008) conception, which emphasizes that

to analyze the institutional capacity of a municipal government, first, it must be recognized that although this capacity is expressed particularly in municipal government, it is also associated with other government areas and Union powers. It requires, then, the joint and harmonious action of all the federated entities in order to best provide services and public goods". See the conclusions of the article "Las capacidades estatales de los municipios brasileños en un contexto de descentralización de políticas" which corroborate this assertion.

7. Conclusion

One more suggestion for futures research: One very relevant agenda it could be to analyse different levels of state capacity considering more sophisticated statistic tools in order to associate public policies results with municipal state capacities.

Additional Questions:

Does the manuscript contain new and significant information to justify publication?: Yes

Does the Abstract (Summary) clearly and accurately describe the content of the article?: No

Is the problem significant and concisely stated?: Yes

Are the methods described comprehensively?: Yes

Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the results?: No

Is adequate reference made to other work in the field?: No

Is the language acceptable?: Yes

Does the article have data and / or materials that could be made publicly available by the authors?: Yes

Please state any conflict(s) of interest that you have in relation to the review of this paper (state "none" if this is not applicable): None

Rating:

Interest: 1. Excellent

Quality: 1. Excellent

Originality: 1. Excellent

Overall: 1. Excellent

Authors' Responses

Viçosa , 07 de outubro de 2021

Prezado Editor-chefe
Professor Marcelo Bispo, Ph. D.

Enviamos aos senhores a nova versão do artigo intitulado “PERSPECTIVAS SOBRE A CAPACIDADE INSTITUCIONAL DAS ESTRUTURAS ADMINISTRATIVAS DE MINAS GERAIS “, sob a identificação RAC-2021-0135, para publicação na Revista de Administração Contemporânea. Esta versão foi adaptada de acordo com as sugestões dos revisores. Ressaltamos nossos esforços no sentido de buscar atender todas as sugestões. Nos poucos momentos em que uma exceção foi necessária, procuramos deixar clara nossa decisão, sempre mantendo a coerência entre as propostas de pesquisa e a qualidade da comunicação científica. Em anexo, encaminhamos o relatório com as críticas e sugestões dos revisores, bem como as alterações realizadas por nós. Aproveitamos este espaço para agradecer aos revisores pelas relevantes contribuições, que acresceram qualidade ao artigo, fato que nos motivou a incorporar as observações ponderadas. Esperamos ter satisfeito as condições necessárias para publicação deste importante instrumento de divulgação científica.

Agradecemos também à equipe editorial pela atenção.

Respeitosamente,
Autores

Reviewer 1:

The authors' responses to the comments of Reviewer 1 for this round were omitted from this report, since the reviewer did not authorize the disclosure of his/her report.

Reviewer 2:

The authors' responses to the comments of Reviewer 2 for this round were omitted from this report, since the reviewer did not authorize the disclosure of his/her report.

Reviewer 3:

Peer Review:

The comments of Reviewer 3 for this round, which were copied by the authors, were omitted from this report to avoid unnecessary text repetition.

Initiatives By Authors

O título foi alterado, conforme sugestões dos revisores e com base no aporte teórico desta pesquisa para: “PERSPECTIVES ON THE STATE CAPACITY OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES OF MINAS GERAIS.”

Conforme sugestão dos revisores e embasados pelos autores (Gomes 2010; Cingolani 2013; Evans, P. et al., 2014; Lindvall e Teorell 2016; Grin e Abrúcio 2019). Padronizamos o conceito como “Capacidade Estatal”.

Foram acrescentados estudos mais recentes de periódicos científicos, com fator de impacto reconhecido na academia, sobre a temática abordada no artigo.

Acrescentamos a fundamentação teórica, tanto na abordagem centrada no estado quanto na abordagem relacional, voltada para a construção e implementação de políticas públicas.

Agregamos a fundamentação teórica às discussões promovidas pelos principais autores, aportes teóricos, dessa pesquisa: Huerta 2008; Gomes 2010 e Wu et al., 2015). Acrescentamos

Fizemos a inclusão dos autores Wu et al., 2015 na tabela 1.

Todas as figuras, tabelas e quadros foram adequados, conforme a padronização proposta do conceito: Capacidade Estatal.

Justificamos, complementarmente, o uso dos dados que embasaram a criação do Índice de Capacidade Estatal. Vale ressaltar que o uso de um painel seria inviabilizada, dado que houveram alterações nos meios de coleta dos dados secundários ao longo dos anos.

A escolha dos conselhos foi dada a disponibilidade de dados, todos que haviam disponibilidade foram considerados.

O índice, como todos na literatura, tem limitações, estamos cientes que não estão contempladas todas as variáveis possíveis como proxy para capacidade estatal. No entanto, considerando os dados disponíveis e as limitações, entendemos que buscamos a mensuração mais adequada possível da capacidade estatal.

Com o intuito de demonstrar as alterações realizadas convidamos os editores a visualizar a comparação entre os documentos enviados. A comparação das versões do artigo pode ser visualizada em: <https://draftable.com/compare/zwvflIOGAGXf>

ROUND 2

Reviewer 1 report

Reviewer 1 for this round chose not to disclose his/her review report.

Reviewer 2 report

Reviewer: Eduardo Grin

Date review returned: December 17, 2021

Recommendation: Major revision

Comments to the authors

Thank very much for the opportunity for reviewing once again this paper. However, the improvements made by the authors are too superficial. The paper continuous almost the same and the majority of the suggestions not even were considered or at least answered. This, I believe still remain many relevant aspects which should be reviewed. Because of that I am repeating many comment that were not took into account by the authors.

1. Title: The title: I think a better title it could be something how "Perspectives on the institutional capacity of the municipal governments of Minas Gerais". I will insist on this topic since the article does not deal with state level. Structures is too general. Why does not municipalities?

2. I do not understand how a description about context refers to "conceito de capacidade institucional é compreendido como o conjunto de capacidades que as instituições possuem para a consecução dos objetivos públicos". Does the context is not about municipal state capacity em MG?

3. Reinforcing the previous comment: "Gespública is a very limited program to incentive the modernization of the public

administration. Its sustainability over time was very weak. Its design is very debatable. I think is a very weak reference to underpin the empirical context based on the *Gespública*. On the other hand, there are other federal programs dedicated to incentive the building municipal capacity e.g. PMMAT and PNAFM). But inexplicably the authors are silent on other programs.". At least the authors should answer the comment or justify the reason behind the rationale to choose *Gespública* as model to develop municipal state capacity.

4. In the section 3.2 the authors did not incorporate any of the suggested literature, and not even answered why did not they do! This is too bad, because the role of the reviewer is to contribute with the article, and at least deserves justifications from the authors.

5. In the pg. 23: "Before going into the description of the political sub-index, it is necessary to emphasize that the selection of indicators is a delicate task, since there is no formal theory that can guide it with strict objectivity (Januzzi, 2002). On this account, in the calculation of the indicator number of active municipal councils, the councils: child and adolescent and health and education obtained a higher weight (weight two), owing to the fact that, according to the Constitutional Text, their creation is mandatory (Buvnich, 2014). The other councils, having no creation requirement provided by Law, obtained weight one. The calculation of the indicator participation in consortia degree gained the same weight". Comment: This comment deserves an additional observation, based on the state capacity debate. Local autonomy decision it is a very relevant aspect in that perhaps could be considered the disposition of local governments to create local councils without any necessity of federal laws that enforce the implementation of this forums in health and social assistance. However, in education policy there is not any federal law obliging the municipalities. In fact, federal law obliges localities to implement FUNDEB Councils and Municipal Council on School Feeding. Also, it is not theoretically clear why do choose esporte and cultural assets since these areas are less relevant than, for instance, living, environment among others?

6. Pg. 24: "Public consortiums, on the other hand, are considered as a tool used for regional public policies planning that provide local governments with scale economy gains (Cruz, 2001). Comment: The Brazilian literature on consortium highlights that smaller municipalities are more prone to come into these arrangements as a way to compensate their weakness. How Minas Gerais has a large set of small localities it makes sense this results.

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8. About the fiscal dimension (pg. 26-27): Also, it should be considered: a) many municipalities do not have local economy to extract local taxes; b) local bureaucracies are technically weak; c) many localities still were not able to modernize their administrative apparatus; d) the constitutional frame for local taxing penalizes the municipalities since the taxes are only charged over urban properties and economy; e) the so called "fiscal war" also is relevant. The decentralization process is one side of this situation, but it is not enough to understand this very complex federative landscape.

9. TABLE 4 – ICI Classification Caption: How were defined these thresholds? There is not any previous explanation about it in order to provide a more objective criteria.

10. pg. 3.: "Salvato et al. (2006); Lopes and Toyoshima (2008); Silva (2009) and Reis et al. (2013), which emphasized the concentration of municipalities with poor socioeconomic structures in the North and Northeast mesoregions of Minas Gerais, in comparison to the other mesoregions of the same state". This kind of inference is biased and plagued with endogeneity problem. I recommend recalculating the index without using socioeconomic context since these variables always will generate conclusions such as: the poorer regions are bad ranked as for their ICI.

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Please state any conflict(s) of interest that you have in relation to the review of this paper (state "none" if this is not applicable): None

Rating:
Interest:
Quality:
Originality:
Overall:

Authors' Responses

Prezado Editor-chefe

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Autores

Peers Review

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Local autonomy decision it is a very relevant aspect in that perhaps could be considered the disposition of local governments to create local councils without any necessity of federal laws that enforce the implementation of this forums in health and social assistance. However, in education policy there is not any federal law obliging the municipalities. In fact, federal laws obliges localities to implemente FUNDEB Councils and Municipal Council on School Feeding. Also, it is not theoretically clear why do choose esporte and cultural assets since these areas are less relevant than, for instance, living, environment among others?

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Initiatives By Authors

1. TÍTULO ALTERADO (PREVIAMENTE)

Conforme orientação dos revisores, padronizamos o conceito central do nosso estudo para "Capacidade Estatal". Por esse motivo acreditamos que se mantivermos o conceito "capacidade institucional", no título, há o risco de deixarmos o tema ambíguo e de irmos contra as solicitações dos revisores.

2. "Explicar a afirmação" O conceito de capacidade estatal é compreendido como o conjunto de capacidades que as instituições governamentais possuem para a consecução dos objetivos públicos" é algo mais geral, que incorpora (inclusive) os governos municipais (que são instituições governamentais - de nível municipal) e estudados nesta pesquisa científica.

3. No que tange às observações do item 3, as devidas alterações foram feitas no texto/artigo.

4. Lamentamos o fato de não termos explicitado anteriormente, como deveríamos, as adições de autores que fizemos no artigo bem como a justificativa que tivemos para a não incorporação de outros; salientamos que estamos gratos pela contribuição do revisor quanto a este aspecto e a tantos outros que ajudaram a aprimorar nosso trabalho.

- Todas as proposições de literaturas a respeito de capacidade estatal foram revistas e consideradas em nossas análises e algumas foram, inclusive, incorporadas, como por exemplo: Grin E. J. Entretanto, observamos que muitos dos autores sugeridos, embora tratassem igualmente do tema mais amplo deste trabalho, não se aproximavam do escopo do nosso estudo, em específico. Além disso, caso fizéssemos a inclusão de toda a literatura proposta, correríamos o risco de não contemplarmos as observações descritas pelo outro revisor. Infelizmente, as próprias limitações de extensão do trabalho para sua publicação dificultam também a possibilidade de incluir acuradamente todas as obras citadas – embora não tenhamos dúvida de que elas fossem agregar ainda mais valor ao trabalho.

5. Uma nota de rodapé reforçando e esclarecendo as ponderações do revisor foi adicionada ao trabalho. A decisão de autonomia local foi considerada tendo-se em vista os conselhos (não definidos por lei) como: esporte e bens culturais por exemplo. Nesse sentido, este estudo considera que os conselhos de educação encabeçados pelo Conselho do FUNDEB e o Conselho Municipal de Alimentação Escolar são obrigatórios.

6. Aqui compreendemos que o revisor concordou com a discussão.

7. e 9. Uma nota de rodapé reforçando e esclarecendo as ponderações do revisor foi adicionada ao trabalho.

8. De fato, o processo de descentralização (do modo como foi realizado) é uma das facetas (talvez a) introdutória para se explicar

as problemáticas expostas pelo revisor, tais como: a) muitos municípios não possuem economia local para extrair impostos locais; b) as burocracias locais são tecnicamente fracas; c) muitas localidades ainda não conseguiram modernizar seu aparato administrativo; d) o enquadramento constitucional da tributação local penaliza os municípios, uma vez que os impostos incidem apenas sobre os imóveis urbanos e a economia; e) a chamada "guerra fiscal" também é relevante. Logo, concordamos que o processo de descentralização é um lado dessa situação, mas não é suficiente para compreender esse cenário federativo tão complexo. Entretanto esse não é o escopo principal deste artigo, e por questões estruturais não poderíamos iniciar estas discussões.

10. Não usar o contexto socioeconômico implicaria em ir contra as orientações do segundo revisor. Por esse motivo, respeitosamente, não podemos atender essa solicitação.

ROUND 3

Reviewer 1 report

Reviewer 1 for this round chose not to disclose his/her review report.

Reviewer 2 report

Reviewer: Eduardo Grin

Date review returned: March 16, 2022

Recommendation: Minor revision

Comments to the authors

Thank very much for the opportunity for reviewing once again this paper. This version of the article explains better the decisions adopted by the authors in a compelling way. I can understand many choices made by the authors as well as the limitations to accept all suggestions presented by the reviewers. Despite that, I have two final observations: a) in the abstract what the authors call context should be related to empirical context and not refer to the theoretical debate; b) considering earlier comment: "Salvato et al. (2006); Lopes and Toyoshima (2008); Silva (2009) and Reis et al. (2013), which emphasized the concentration of municipalities with poor socioeconomic structures in the North and Northeast mesoregions of Minas Gerais, in comparison to the other mesoregions of the same state". This kind of inference is biased and plagued with endogeneity problem. I recommend recalculating the index without using socioeconomic context since these variables always will generate conclusions such as: the poorer regions are bad ranked as for their ICI". It is not acceptable the answer: "Não usar o contexto socioeconômico implicaria em ir contra as orientações do segundo revisor. Por esse motivo, respeitosamente, não podemos atender essa solicitação". Firstly, this is a not compelling answer sounded in a technical analysis. Secondly, I really do not understand how to calculate an index about state capacity which is related to administrative, political, institutional and technical asset internally extant in the municipalities and an external context that is not controlled by the local government. Putting together internal and external factors to calculate the index introduce "confounding factors" and incurs it he problem of endogeneity. The correct option would be calculate the index in two ways: with and without external factors, and if the results do not change there will be more certainty about the structure and methodology of the index. At least, the authors must explain the theoretical reasons to build an index considering both dimensions, since usually any index on state capacity takes external factors as control variables but not as interest variables. So, I recommend to the authors to think more how to solve this issue.

Additional Questions:

Does the manuscript contain new and significant information to justify publication?: Yes

Does the Abstract (Summary) clearly and accurately describe the content of the article?: No

Is the problem significant and concisely stated?: Yes

Are the methods described comprehensively?: Yes

Are the interpretations and conclusions justified by the results?: Yes

Is adequate reference made to other work in the field?: Yes

Is the language acceptable?: Yes

Does the article have data and / or materials that could be made publicly available by the authors?: Yes

Please state any conflict(s) of interest that you have in relation to the review of this paper (state "none" if this is not applicable).: None

Rating:

Interest: 2. Good

Quality: 2. Good

Originality: 2. Good

Overall: 2. Good

Authors' Responses

Viçosa, 20 de abril de 2022

Prezado Editor-chefe

Professor Marcelo Bispo, Ph. D.

Enviamos aos senhores a nova versão do artigo intitulado "PERSPECTIVAS PARA A CONSTRUÇÃO DE UM ÍNDICE DE CAPACIDADE ESTATAL PARA OS GOVERNOS MUNICIPAIS DE MINAS GERAIS ", sob a identificação RAC-2021-0135, para publicação na Revista de Administração Contemporânea. Esta versão foi adaptada de acordo com as sugestões dos revisores. Em anexo, encaminhamos o relatório com as críticas e sugestões dos revisores, bem como as alterações realizadas por nós. Aproveitamos este espaço para, novamente, agradecer aos revisores pelas relevantes contribuições, que acresceram qualidade ao artigo, fato que nos motivou a incorporar as observações ponderadas. Esperamos ter satisfeito as condições necessárias para publicação deste importante instrumento de divulgação científica.

Agradecemos também à equipe editorial pela atenção.

Respeitosamente,

Autores

Peers Review Initiatives By Authors

1) It would be pertinent for a native English speaker to revise the entire article to propose specific terms better and redaction of some phrases. For example, the title in Portuguese does not appear to be reliable in terms of adequacy and exposition of its real meaning for a clear understanding of the readership;

- Nós solicitamos os serviços de um revisor especializado (<http://lattes.cnpq.br/3263645580151032>) para fazer as correções necessárias no artigo.

- Readequamos o título do artigo de modo a tornar o seu conteúdo mais coerente a proposta de pesquisa e mais inteligível para o público leitor.

2) Some adjustments and occasional formatting revisions to fully comply with the journal's guidelines for authors still appear to be necessary for the article's references and illustrations. There are typos in these two items;

- Todo o artigo foi formatado de acordo com as diretrizes de publicação da RAC (versão 2021).

3) Is the abstract what the authors call context should be related to empirical context and not refer to the theoretical debate; • Realizamos as correções solicitadas pelos pareceristas nos "abstracts".

4) Putting together internal and external factors to calculate the index introduce "confounding factors" and incurs it he problem of

endogeneity. The correct option would be calculate the index in two ways: with and without external factors, and if the results do not change there will be more certainty about the structure and methodology of the index. At least, the authors must explain the theoretical reasons to build an index considering both dimensions, since usually any index on state capacity takes external factors as control variables but not as interest variables. So, I recommend to the authors to think more how to solve this issue. • As considerações feitas pelos pareceristas nos permitiram observar um equívoco, de nossa parte, em não explicitar uma importante característica do nosso estudo. Isto é, nossa pesquisa não visou criar um modelo de previsão econométrico, a partir de uma relação de causa e efeito entre variáveis exógenas e endógenas. Nosso trabalho objetivou, por meio de um modelo matemático, criar uma medida empírica de índice de proxy para a capacidade do estado. Desta forma, fizemos as devidas considerações a respeito desta característica do nosso trabalho no tópico de metodologia.

Disclaimer: The content of the Peer Review Report is the full copy of reviewers and authors' reports. Typing and punctuation errors are not edited. Only comments that violate the journal's ethical policies such as derogatory or defamatory comments will be edited (omitted) from the report. In these cases, it will be clearly stated that parts of the report were edited. Check [RAC's policies](#).