



An Analytical Framework for Understanding Governance, Public Action, and Organizational Coordination: A Systematic Literature Review

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Abstract

Background: The increasing complexity of public policy challenges has transformed governance systems, requiring effective coordination among diverse institutions. However, existing studies often examine governance paradigms, public action approaches, and coordination mechanisms separately.

Objective: This study develops and proposes an integrated analytical framework for understanding the interrelationships among governance forms, public action approaches, and organizational coordination modes within the public sector.

Methods: This study applies a systematic review of 45 scholarly works published between 2000 and 2024, drawn from major academic databases including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar using predefined selection criteria. Thematic coding and conceptual framework construction were employed to trace recurring patterns within governance scholarship.

Results: The findings reveal three key contributions: first, the framework traces how public-sector governance has evolved from classical bureaucratic administration to managerial reforms and, subsequently, to collaborative governance arrangements, with each transition generating distinctive coordination mechanisms. Second, the analysis synthesizes four coordination modes (hierarchy, markets, networks, and collaboration) and establishes their alignment with specific governance paradigms. Third, the study identifies critical coordination challenges including specialization-coordination tensions, departmentalism, and accountability gaps.

Conclusion: The proposed framework provides a structured diagnostic tool for researchers and practitioners to analyze coordination effectiveness within specific governance contexts. Future research should empirically test this framework across diverse institutional settings.

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INTRODUCTION

As society demands have changed over time, different forms of governance, public action strategies, and organizational coordination techniques have all changed. The growing complexity of public policy challenges (including climate change, urbanization, public health crises, and digital governance) has intensified the need for effective coordination across institutional

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boundaries (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020; Torfing, 2023). While extensive scholarly attention has been directed toward individual governance paradigms, a significant gap remains in the literature: the absence of an integrated analytical framework that systematically maps the relationships among governance forms, public action approaches, and organizational coordination modes across their evolutionary development. Previous studies have examined these dimensions in isolation (governance paradigms (Lund-Tønnesen, 2026; Osborne, 2009; Torfing et al., 2012), coordination mechanisms (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026; Peters, 2015), and public action approaches (Klijn et al., 2025; Thynne & Peters, 2015) without providing a unified conceptual architecture. The novelty of this study lies in synthesizing these fragmented streams into a single integrated framework that enables scholars and practitioners to diagnose coordination challenges within specific governance contexts. Specifically, this study addresses two research questions: (1) How do organizational coordination modes align with different governance paradigms and public action approaches? (2) What are the critical coordination challenges that emerge across these governance arrangements, and what mechanisms can address them? There are several ways to coordinate: ‘*hierarchy*,’ ‘*contracts*,’ ‘*collaboration*,’ and ‘*networks*,’ (detail is shown in Figure 1) (Emerson et al., 2011; Knill & Tosun, 2012; Larsen et al., 2025; Peters, 2015; Provan & Kenis, 2008). ‘*Interventionist governance*,’ ‘*regulated self-governance*,’ and ‘*cooperative governance*’ (Knill & Tosun, 2012) ‘*statism*,’ ‘*state-market dualism*,’ ‘*state-civil society dualism*,’ and ‘*state-market-civil society synergism*’ (Klijn et al., 2025; Thynne, 2021; Thynne & Peters, 2015); ‘*old public administration*’ (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003; Hood, 1991; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026) ‘*new public management*’ (Hood, 1991, 1994), and ‘*new public governance*’ (Osborne, 2009; Ruccucci, 2026). The Figure 1 is adapted from Hood (1991), Denhardt and Denhardt (2003), Provan and Kenis (2008), Osborne (2009), Knill and Tosun (2012), Popp et al. (2014), Thynne and Peters (2015), Peters (2015), Thynne (2021) Barabasz (2026).

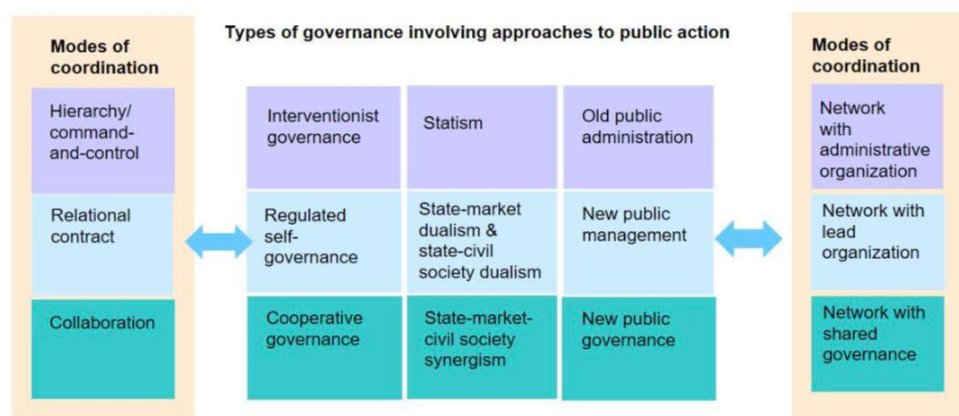


Figure 1. Different Forms of Governance, Public Action Strategies, and Organizational Coordination

RESEARCH METHODS

A systematic review guided by the PRISMA protocol (Page et al., 2021) was adopted, taking a qualitative-conceptual stance to integrate existing scholarly and empirical insights into a unified analytical model. Three major databases were searched, namely Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, using the following query terms: “governance AND coordination AND public sector,” “public action AND organizational coordination,” and “governance paradigms AND coordination modes.” Studies were included if they were (1) peer-reviewed articles, monographs, or book chapters from 1990 to 2024; (2) written in English; and (3) substantively concerned with governance, public action, or organizational coordination in government settings. Exclusion criteria removed: (1) non-peer-reviewed grey literature unless authored by recognized international organizations; (2) articles not directly relevant to governance-coordination linkages; (3) duplicate publications. The initial search yielded 287 results; after removing duplicates and applying screening criteria, 45 publications were selected for in-depth analysis. Analysis proceeded through a three-phase thematic synthesis (Thomas & Harden, 2008): first,

open coding of core concepts at the sentence level; second, clustering of codes into descriptive categories spanning governance, public action, and coordination; and third, distillation of overarching analytical themes that informed the integrated framework.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analytical Perspectives on Governance and Public Action

In recent decades, public governance has undergone quick and significant change. New ideas and conceptions have challenged long-standing principles, and significant global concerns like COVID-19 have hastened this change (Torfing, 2023). One might examine ‘governance’ as a network, system, or process (Bank, 2017; Kooiman, 1993; Yang et al., 2026). Policy networks, public management through public-private partnerships, and other similar structures have all been referred to under this ‘umbrella concept’ (Lund-Tønnesen, 2026; Pierre & Peters, 2000). According to Torfing et al. (2012) and Torfing and Ansell (2016), it generally refers to the interactive procedures that a government uses to lead society and the economy toward collaboratively negotiated objectives with shared purposes for conducting public action (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025).

Rhodes (2007) characterizes governance essentially as steering through networked relationships (Ricucci, 2026). Ostrom (1990) frames it as the body of collectively crafted rules regulating individual and group conduct. The UNDP (1997) broadens the concept, defining governance as the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority over a nation's affairs at all levels as well as institutions, procedures, and mechanisms that allow individuals and groups to express their interests, exercise their legal rights, fulfill their responsibilities, and resolve conflicts, the United Nations Development Program (1997) underscores both individual and collective rights in governance processes. Because no single stakeholder commands all the knowledge or resources needed for tackling multifaceted policy problems, collaborative interaction among diverse actors is indispensable (Kooiman, 1993; Yang et al., 2026), and the interplay among state, market, and societal networks constitutes a core governance dynamic (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025; Torfing et al., 2012).

Several distinct yet interconnected governance types can be identified. State-centered interactions characterize ‘interventionist governance,’ in which the state is primarily responsible for providing public goods and services, with private actors in the market and civil society having limited capacity and involvement in governance (Knill & Tosun, 2012; Zahariadis & Taylor, 2025). According to Thynne and Peters (2015), this entails ‘statism’ with a combination of state command, control, and policy actions. Such configurations align with what is termed traditional or classical public administration (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026), in which policy design and implementation are contained within a vertically integrated bureaucratic apparatus (Osborne, 2009; Ricucci, 2026).

A second governance variant arises when the state crafts legal and procedural conditions enabling market and civil-society participation with graduated autonomy, known as ‘regulated self-governance.’ Knill and Tosun (2012) refer to this form of governance as ‘state-market dualism’ and ‘state-civil society dualism’ (Klijn et al., 2025; Thynne, 2021; Thynne & Peters, 2015). This arrangement implies substantive public-private interaction. Reflecting the ‘managerialism’ (Pollitt, 2016) and the involvement of non-government players in public governance (Hood, 1991, 1994), it captures core features of ‘new public management.’ This paradigm pivots from prescriptive bureaucratic regulation toward output-oriented performance targets, competitive service delivery, and entrepreneurial organizational cultures (Hood, 1991; Krogh & Triantafillou, 2024; Osborne, 2009).

A key component of ‘cooperative governance’ (Knill & Tosun, 2012) represents the deepest level of multi-actor engagement, described as ‘state-market-civil society synergism’ (Barabasch et al., 2026; Thynne, 2021). Here, public and non-state actors jointly develop governance standards and co-produce policy, replacing top-down mandates with negotiated commitments (Barabasch et al., 2026; Knill & Tosun, 2012). These arrangements are examples of ‘new public governance’ (Osborne, 2009) or ‘new governance’ (Rhodes, 1996; Ricucci, 2026). This paradigm foregrounds collaborative alliances among interdependent stakeholders who navigate the inherent plurality of contemporary public action through negotiation and shared accountability (Osborne, 2009;

Riccucci, 2026). Coordination between organizations as well as coordination inside organizations across their many divisions and sections is a component of all forms of contact. While preserving suitable levels of specialization, the goal is to promote the integration of relevant contributions to organizational goals. Drawing from the synthesis of 45 reviewed publications, this study identifies three distinct governance-coordination alignment patterns. First, interventionist governance predominantly relies on hierarchical coordination, characterized by command-and-control mechanisms and bureaucratic compliance (Peters, 2015; Riccucci, 2026). Second, regulated self-governance employs market-based coordination through contracting, competitive tendering, and performance incentives (Hood, 1991; Krogh & Triantafyllou, 2024; Osborne, 2009; Riccucci, 2026). Third, cooperative governance leverages network and collaborative coordination through trust-based partnerships, joint goal-setting, and shared accountability (Emerson et al., 2011; Larsen et al., 2025; Provan & Kenis, 2008). This tripartite alignment constitutes the core theoretical contribution of the proposed analytical framework.

Analytical Perspectives on Organizational Coordination

Peters (2015) observes that coordination constitutes one of the most enduring administrative challenges in public life (Garaudel, 2025). Every organization, regardless of purpose, must engage in coordination to align efforts toward collective objectives (Garaudel, 2025; B. G. Peters, 2021; Van de Ven et al., 1976). Although the term '*coordination*' lacks a single authoritative definition, it is commonly understood as both the act of aligning decisions across units and the outcome of that alignment (Peters, 2015) coupled with the extent to which each organization takes the actions of others into account (Garaudel, 2025; Hall, 1976).

Coordination operates on two fronts: internally, by weaving together the various sub-units that collectively fulfil organizational tasks (Garaudel, 2025; Van de Ven et al., 1976), and externally, by monitoring and adjusting to the activities of partner organizations' activities (Garaudel, 2025; Hall et al., 1977) in pursuit of mutually acceptable policy directions (B. G. Peters, 2021). Related terms such as '*cooperation*,' '*coherence*,' '*collaboration*,' and '*integration*' overlap in practice but carry nuanced distinctions. '*cooperation*' refers to less formal relationships for the mutual benefit of organizations, '*coordination*' is thought to entail regularizing patterns of interaction among the organizations with more formal structures and procedures (Peters, 2015; Schermerhorn, 1975; Sedgwick & Lemaire, 2024; Weiss, 1989). According to Peters (2015), '*collaboration*' is a method of cooperation and constructive communication across organizations. These types of organizational interactions, which entail a high degree of coordination both inside and between the public and private sectors, are ways to accomplish the objectives of governance (Garaudel, 2025; Peters, 2015).

Coordination becomes difficult once the government is sufficiently varied to create multiple organizations that offer distinct services or the same service in various ways (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026; Peters, 2015). When members of an organization collaborate and assign tasks to one another, a coordination structure is imposed on the work division (Gulick, 1937). When organizations attempt to achieve their objectives and manage their surroundings, coordination takes place (Garaudel, 2025; Hall et al., 1977). Governments often employ authority and hierarchy to accomplish coordination (Garaudel, 2025; Peters, 2015); however, horizontal management is becoming increasingly important (Peters, 2015, 2021). As early as 1937, Gulick (1937) highlighted the relationship between public policy and aims, as well as how the administrative system was created to achieve these objectives (Clarke, 2024). The two basic aspects of organization were coordination and specialization. The term '*specialization*' refers to the horizontal and vertical specialization of public organizations based on clients, region, purpose, and method. Formal organization can facilitate two types of coordination: horizontal coordination, which allows actors on the same level to coordinate and make decisions, and hierarchical and vertical coordination, also known as the command-and-control principle, which emphasizes the distribution of tasks among hierarchical levels (Egeberg & Trondal, 2018, 2020; Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025).

The primary responsibility is to make sure that the main goals of the organization such as a department that offers a specific service do not clash and that the procedures are consistent. If the organization is based on '*process*,' like a professional organization, the work procedures must

be standardized, and the leader must ensure that the processes are coordinated to generate services that meet the needs. Regardless of the methods employed or the goal of the service, some organizations are founded based on the 'persons' (clientele) they serve, such as an organization that addresses all facets of veterans. Additionally, some firms are founded based solely on 'place,' regardless of the methods or services offered. Additionally, coordination issues will be exacerbated when organizations are partially based on people, process, and place and partially on purpose (Clarke, 2024; Gulick, 1937). Reliance on organizational coordination alone is insufficient for effective operation; instead, a dominant core idea serves as the basis for action, and 'self-coordination' is necessary for loyalty and inventiveness (Clarke, 2024; Gulick, 1937).

According to Lam (2005), the following circumstances would make coordination easier: the division of labor entails a straightforward distribution of the workload; the information and expertise required to complete the subtasks is minimal; all actors involved in the collaborative effort fully comprehend what is beneficial for the collective performance and are selfless; and the environment is stable with clear clientele and performance measures (de Wee & Jakoet-Salie, 2025). Therefore, a hierarchy that prioritizes command and control, rule compliance, and division of labor would be adequate for efficient coordination. Though, these circumstances are uncommon. The problem of coordination in government, which has been dealing with more complicated challenges these days, cannot be solved by simple command and control. To achieve effective coordination, actors and stakeholders must build mutual trust and connections. The definition of tasks, the distribution of duties, and the sharing of information and knowledge among actors to comprehend functions and actions would all be part of organizational coordination. These tasks must be completed to accomplish specific goals, and they must follow predetermined guidelines or protocols that outline how actors should work together to implement policies more effectively to address public issues (Cejudo & L, 2017; Christensen & Læg Reid, 2008; de Wee & Jakoet-Salie, 2025).

In general, coordination is seen as a means of achieving goals (Greenwood, 2015) and the process of improving program collaboration (Cowen & Trantidis, 2025; Peters, 2021). According to Lindblom (1965), a collection of decisions is considered coordinated if modifications have been made so that the negative effects of any one decision on other decisions in the set are somewhat and frequently avoided, minimized, counterbalanced, or outweighed (Jungherr, 2023). It is more challenging to define well-coordinated programs, even though individuals can identify them when they are operating (Jungherr, 2023; Peters, 2021). Measuring coordination and interactive governance processes would also be more challenging (Jensen, 2014; Kuhlmann et al., 2025; Peters, 2021). When coordination fails, evaluation would be simpler. According to Peters (Peters, 2015, 2021), coordination fails when the actions of the participating organizations include characteristics like redundancy (more than one organization performs the same task), lacunae (no organization performs a necessary task), contradiction, or incoherence (policies with the same clients have different goals/requirements). Furthermore, Peters (2021) believes that measuring attempts to accomplish the coordination goal would be simpler than measuring the actual results of coordination measurements. He goes on to say that while attendance in inter-organizational meetings would be obvious, assessing results would be difficult.

Considering the coordination issues, Torfing et al. (2012) offer criteria for evaluating governance. Policy makers' comprehension of possibilities and issues, the necessity of flexible and feasible policies, implementation coordination, and response to feedback and learning are some of the factors (Madanchian & Taherdoost, 2025). Metcalfe (1994) created the widely used scale to gauge collaboration inside the European Union (Sinervo et al., 2026). The independence of organizations, communication with other ministers, consultation with other ministers, avoiding divergences among ministers, seeking consensus among ministers, arbitrating policy differences, establishing central policies, limiting ministerial action, and common strategic approaches to policy are the first nine points on this scale (Metcalfe, 1994; Sinervo et al., 2026). Nevertheless, the stages' definition is ambiguous and open to several interpretations (Peters, 2021).

With dimensions including 'Institutional Criteria,' 'Legislative Criteria,' 'Administrative Criteria,' 'Financial Measures,' 'Market Measures,' 'Technical Measures,' 'Communication Measures,' and 'Hybrid Measures,' Briassoulis (2000) created a measurement scheme for policy integration that focused more on the tools used to accomplish integration (Briassoulis, 2025). Therefore,

rather than the actual accomplishment of that aim, it is more about the description of the attempts. However, this measurement technique offers a helpful checklist about government integration strategies (Peters, 2021). There are many factors that impact the public sector's performance, and coordination is just one of them; it is not a magic bullet (Peters, 2021). Some academics concentrate on '*policy integration*,' which is another facet of coordination that calls for various policy components to be consistent with one another and policy options to be assessed based on their effects on aggregated utility (Iqbal et al., 2025; Lafferty & Hovden, 2003; Peters, 2015), which is challenging to accomplish.

Although people can identify well-coordinated programs when they are working, it is challenging to define and evaluate the efficacy of coordination (Peters, 2021). Furthermore, evaluating the efficiency of interactive governance and coordination procedures would be significantly more challenging (Jensen, 2014; Kuhlmann et al., 2025; Peters, 2021). Since it is difficult to compare procedures and results in many situations, it is still difficult to determine how much coordination contributes to effectiveness and what coordination structure works best. However, as coordination is typically thought of as a means of achieving goals (Cowen & Trantidis, 2025; Greenwood, 2015), insufficient coordination may contribute, among other things, to the failure to achieve goals. When evaluating the efficacy of coordination, Peters' criteria for determining when coordination fails that is, when organizational acts entail duplication, lacunae, contradiction, or incoherence are helpful.

Some nations, especially those in Asia with a Confucian heritage, have a '*harmony*' or '*he xie*' component to their governance (Barr, 2010; Poocharoen, 2025), which requires diversity rather than homogeneity or social conformity (Poocharoen, 2025; Yu, 2010). Balance, accommodation, and negotiation are necessary for harmonization in governance (Li, 2010; Rachmad, 2023), which calls for cooperation and coordination throughout the process. It seeks to accomplish the state-society synergy, which necessitates a balanced strategy to coordinate the allocation, monitoring, and delivery of communal public goods to citizens (Gong et al., 2026; Tao et al., 2010). However, in many cases, achieving the ideal would be quite challenging. Although Singapore has been effective in implementing '*harmony*' in government, it tends to limit the scope of social and political discourse (Barr, 2010; Poocharoen, 2025). Following 1997, political fragmentation and a reduction in government capacity presented significant issues for Hong Kong, which were further exacerbated by the regional and global financial crisis (Cheung, 2010; Cheung, 2004; Gong et al., 2026). To re-cement Hong Kong society, Cheung (2010) noted that there was growing social discord, a decline in cohesiveness, and a loss of a common vision in Hong Kong after 1997 (Gong et al., 2026). This necessitated a strong commitment to reestablishing trust and harmony, appreciating diversity, and developing inclusive politics of consensus to increase stakeholder participation.

Analytical Perspectives on Organizational Coordination Modes

In term of coordination typology, certain forms of organizational coordination are embodied in the types of governance that involve approaches to public action and cooperation. Peters (2015) describes the modes as hierarchy, markets, networks, and cooperation, whereas Knill and Tosun (2012) generalize them as hierarchy, markets, and networks (Barabasz et al., 2026). To accomplish governance objectives, these approaches involve both hierarchical and non-hierarchical methods. The modes are influenced by the relationship dynamics between public and private players, much as the delivery of goods and services is influenced by how coordination issues are resolved. A typology of coordination arrangements is made up of the organizational coordination modes (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026; MacCarthaigh & Molenveld, 2018; Verhoest et al., 2007). Figure 2 below shows a typology that includes networks, markets, and hierarchies, which is adapted from MacCarthaigh and Molenveld (2018) and Lund-Tønnesen (2026).

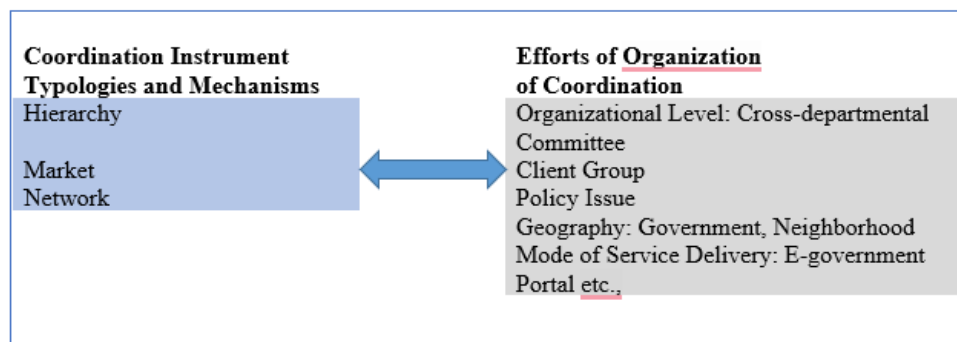


Figure 2. Presenting the Coordination Instrument Typologies and Mechanisms and Efforts of Organization of Coordination

Rooted in Weberian bureaucratic theory and emphasizing the division of labor and responsibilities with established rules, procedures, legitimacy, and power as coordination tools, *hierarchy* coordinates through codified rules, formalized authority, and a clear division of responsibilities, primarily implemented through legislative mandates and administrative directives (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026; Peters, 2003). Goal-setting and compliance monitoring flow through a well-defined chain of command. Under hierarchical governance, the state retains primary policy-making authority and can compel private-actor compliance, creating an inherently asymmetric power relationship. To create and provide common goods like infrastructure and education, the state steps in through the hierarchy. Although hierarchy provides a stable, predictable governance framework and ensures equitable rule application, its principal weakness lies in limited responsiveness to local needs and insufficient feedback from non-state stakeholders (Barabach et al., 2026; Knill & Tosun, 2012).

Market-based competition and a bargaining and contracting process that seeks to create incentives to improve performance, the *market* is also a mode of coordination in which exchange among actors is essential to producing the desired outcome (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026). Unlike hierarchy, this mode assumes that efficient outcomes emerge from voluntary exchange among rational actors operating with adequate information. In practice, however, governments must establish and enforce institutional safeguards such as upholding the game's rules, such as property rights, is required to guarantee the market can operate to mitigate the drawbacks of market coordination and lessen negative externalities (Knill et al., 2020; Knill & Tosun, 2012; Zahariadis & Taylor, 2025).

Networks represent a fundamentally different coordination logic in which interdependent actors address specific policy challenges primarily through horizontal rather than hierarchical interaction (Peters, 2003). These arrangements feature mutual communication channels, shared resource streams (Issett et al., 2011; McDonald III et al., 2024; O'Toole, 1997; Powell, 1990), and are sustained by legitimacy, interpersonal trust, and common values (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026). In network governance, three or more legally autonomous organizations align their efforts to achieve both individual and collective goals (Larsen et al., 2025; Provan & Kenis, 2008). According to Provan and Kenis (2008), networks can be contracted or required, or they can be self-initiated by network members. There are also potential combinations of 'self-governing networks,' 'lead organization networks,' and 'network administrative organizations' (Larsen et al., 2025). These networks, which serve as modalities of coordination, are crucial tools for accomplishing multi-organizational goals, especially when teamwork is needed to solve complicated problems (Agranoff, 2003; Larsen et al., 2025). By working across organizations to find cooperative solutions to issues that are difficult or impossible for one organization to handle alone, they can improve the ability of government actors to formulate and implement public policy in a complex world (Agranoff, 2003; Emerson et al., 2011; 2007; Larsen et al., 2025).

Consequently, comparable forms of coordination are formed by networks and cooperative behavior (Agranoff, 2003; Emerson et al., 2011; Larsen et al., 2025). According to Emerson et al. (2011), collaborative governance encompasses the system environment, governance regime, and

collaborative dynamics (Larsen et al., 2025). The setting reflects a variety of political, legal, social, environmental, and other elements that interact with the ruling regime. The components of dynamics and related action are more likely to be carried out when they are supported by ‘*shared motivation*,’ ‘*principled engagement*,’ and ‘*capacity for joint action*,’ with interactions resulting in appropriate action to carry out the aims of the governing regime.

Analytical Perspectives on Challenges of Organizational Coordination

The two main constraints on the evolution of coordination are size and time (Clarke, 2024; Gulick, 1937). Coordination is relatively easy for small organizations in terms of personnel and operations. Coordination becomes a problem when there are more activities, especially over a larger geographic area (Peters, 2015). It takes time for people to adapt their habits when changes are made, thus coordination will be difficult when there is a time restriction. Therefore, depending on the size of the organization, the complexity of the situation, and the stability of the organization, varying emphasis must be placed on coordination (Clarke, 2024; Gulick, 1937). The problem of coordination to provide effective and efficient service, as in the case of a government delivering services to the public, becomes more complex and challenging with more actors, activities, divergent agendas, and more specialization.

Peters (2015) argues that the expanding public sector itself becomes a source of governance incoherence, as agencies frequently operate with minimal awareness of parallel efforts and limited interest in cross-unit alignment. The resulting knowledge gaps can escalate into political failure. Both horizontal specialization, which distributes functions among organizations at the same administrative tier, and vertical specialization, which allocates authority across hierarchical levels (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026), multiply the number of actors involved and widen inter-organizational gaps. Despite persistent reform efforts, what Peters metaphorically calls the quest for the ‘philosopher’s stone’ of coordination often remains elusive.

Both coordination and specialization are issues that governments must address. On the one hand, governments require specialized organizations to provide the public with certain services; on the other hand, coordination of the many specialized tasks is necessary to provide the public with more cohesive and integrated services. However, the segmentation of public policy may result in conflicting and redundant requirements, and specialized structures may make it difficult to integrate the entire range of services needed by the public (Peters, 2015). While specialization gives governments a strong focus to accomplish a particular goal, it also produces blinders that make it difficult for members of the organization to discover a common cause to collaborate with other teams (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026). Because specialization would make it more difficult to provide integrated services to certain groups or areas, it naturally creates new coordination needs (Bouckaert et al., 2010; Lund-Tønnesen, 2026). For the best outcomes, specialization and cooperation would thus need to be balanced. Furthermore, Peters (2015) notes that specialization tends to artificially divide issues rather than offering a comprehensive understanding of the causes and potential solutions for the challenges; consequently, the burden of resolving complex issues is divided among different governmental levels or sectors (Christensen & Lægveid, 2007; de Wee & Jakoet-Salie, 2025).

Contrasting with the ideals of ‘*joined-up government*,’ Hood (2006) notes that ‘*departmentalism*’ describes agencies that function within insulated vertical silos, fiercely protecting organizational territory and deflecting problems onto neighboring units (Aoki et al., 2024). Beyond structural misalignment, governments must also navigate cultural resistance when cross-boundary initiatives disrupt established jurisdictional norms. Particularly under ‘*New Public Management*,’ there is a tendency to divide big public organizations into smaller, more specialized, single-purpose entities in response to policy issues. However, these organizations tend to be more challenging to coordinate because they are more independent and entrepreneurial in nature (Peters, 2015). Additionally, the New Public monitoring’s emphasis on performance monitoring and assessment makes coordination more difficult because individual goals and interests frequently take precedence over the public sector’s overall performance. Public organizations might favor preserving their autonomy and authority over increased coordinating effectiveness (Peters, 2015).

Complex, cross-cutting challenges such as climate change demand interconnected policy responses and heighten the urgency of collaborative and networked governance (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Garner, 2025; Head & Alford, 2015). Yet coordination remains an imperfect remedy for governance shortcomings. In addition to the specialty issue mentioned above, there might be an accountability issue because the combination of financial resources and legal authority makes asset monitoring challenging (Peters, 2015). Additionally, there are issues with the possibility of coordination overlap or coordination underlap involving various entities in the same policy-making process, which could result in policy gaps (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020; Schakel et al., 2025). Evidence from Norway suggests that coordination capacity depends on an interplay of structural factors, such as administrative level, and cultural factors, including mutual trust, conflict intensity, and organizational identification with central authority (Carelli, 2025; Christensen et al., 2019). The structural and cultural dimensions of coordination interact dynamically. Strengthening coordination therefore requires using shared cultural norms as 'institutional glue' and to reinforce the impacts of structure and culture either hierarchically or through negotiations (Christensen & Lægreid, 2008; Zyzak & Farsund, 2025).

CONCLUSION

The analysis shows that overcoming coordination obstacles hinges on whether chosen coordination modes can adequately respond to prevailing political and socioeconomic demands. Across governance phases, coordination arrangements must be tailored to the specific complexity and nature of the tasks at hand. Departmental capacity for integrated service delivery has progressively expanded over the past decade under evolving 'integrated approach' model.

The proposed analytical framework integrates multiple coordination perspectives into a systematic structure enabling researchers and practitioners to diagnose coordination challenges within specific governance contexts. By mapping the alignment between governance paradigms, public action approaches, and coordination modes, the framework provides a structured diagnostic tool applicable across diverse institutional settings.

This study has several limitations. As a systematic literature review, findings are constrained by existing publications without primary empirical data. The framework draws primarily from Western governance literature, potentially limiting applicability to non-Western institutional contexts. Future research should empirically validate this framework through comparative case studies across different national contexts and governance levels.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All elements of this analytical framework were exclusively contributed to by Dr. Sarom Mok. Under his direction, Dr. Ramy Chhun gathered and analyzed the documents. Dr. Mengheang Hor and Dr. Kosal Thay contributed to the critical revision of the text and the interpretation of the findings. Every author contributed to the manuscript's writing and approved the final draft for submission and assumed complete accountability for the content of this work.

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