Melhorar a governança metropolitana: Um estudo de caso da Grande São Paulo

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Resumo

Um dos maiores desafios para os gestores públicos hoje é o desenvolvimento da governança metropolitana. O contexto brasileiro torna esta missão ainda mais complexa pela ausência de um enquadramento jurídico bem delimitado e estruturado para organizar a cooperação entre entes federativos. Nesse contexto, a Prefeitura de São Paulo tem buscado assumir maior protagonismo e dispor ferramentas para construir um novo conceito de região metropolitana em que as cidades trabalhem de modo cooperativo. Este artigo explora as dificuldades para desenvolver arranjos institucionais em regiões metropolitanas e se concentra em dois objetivos. Em primeiro lugar, pretende-se obter uma visão geral das capacidades de gestão em todas as cidades da Região Metropolitana de São Paulo. Em segundo lugar, tendo em conta as arenas de cooperação como conselhos metropolitanos, câmaras técnicas e consórcios, são indicados alguns caminhos e iniciativas capazes de reforçar a governança metropolitana na tentativa de construir uma agenda intragovernamental efetiva.

Palavras-chave: Governança metropolitana, Governança multinível, Cooperação intragovernamental.

Abstract

One of the biggest challenges for public managers today is to develop metropolitan governance. The Brazilian federative background makes this mission even more complex. It still lacks a well-delimited and structured legal framework to organize the federative system. The São Paulo county administration is trying to assume a leading role and develop tools to build up a new metropolitan region concept consisting in different counties working together under a meaningful cooperation. This paper explores the difficulties to develop institutional metropolitan arrangements and focuses on two main goals. Firstly, it intends to get an overview of the management abilities in all counties of the São Paulo Metropolitan Area. Secondly, taking into account arenas of cooperation such as metropolitan boards, technical chambers and consortiums, it suggests some paths and initiatives to reinforce the metropolitan governance and to build an intra-governmental agenda.

Keywords: Metropolitan management, Multi-level governance, Intra-governmental cooperation.

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Introduction

In the first half of 20th century, Brazil went through an intense migratory flow. As industries developed, families who were used to live in rural areas moved to the cities aiming at a better life. This demographic growth brought a disorderly urbanization in the suburbs multiplying slums and squatter housing, without an appropriate infrastructure or public service investments (KLINK, 2011).

Although the urbanization phenomenon occurred in the entire country, cities like São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro became huge metropolis. Thus, legal frameworks for metropolitan areas started to be drawn.

Because Brazil was living under a military dictatorship, the legislation was built following a non-democratic and vertical logic, from top down. Metropolitan areas had an essential role in economy development and were strategic regions for the military state. However, they had not been accepted as federative institutions and did not fulfill their main political objective (BEST, 2011). Thus since the beginning there were jurisdiction conflicts between levels of government and between units of the same level; in other words, tensions in inter and intra-governmental relations (SOUZA, 2003).

In 1988, the new Constitution asserted federalism as the Brazilian democratic system and included the county (or município, in Portuguese) as a federative institution, with political, administrative and financial autonomy. The same text gave to the states the competence to manage metropolitan areas; nevertheless, it was not clear how the relationship of the three government levels would work and nor who would coordinate each issue. To sum up, lawmakers have finally broke the centralized models which had brought together the metropolitan areas until then (SOUZA, 2003) without improving intergovernmental cooperation instruments.

In addition, since 1994, after the “Plano Real” implantation, it became clear how serious were state’s and counties’ arrearages. They were not able to invest properly in public policies and improvements. Today, the pressure for services exceeds the ability of updating the infrastructure and the execution of projects; many public projects are already lagged when undertaken.

For these reasons, the metropolitan arrangement is one of the biggest challenges to plan and implement shared and adequate public policies. Governments and public managers face countless possibilities of governance procedures and protocols to build
the best way of implementing these policies and answering people’s demands.

This debate is essential for improving life standards, since metropolitan areas are strategic in the capitalist system and are able to boost national development. Such strength comes from the concentration of skilled workers and their huge market network, favorable inputs in the world economy scenario (KLINK, 2011).

Such is the case of the São Paulo Metropolitan Area. The huge urban spread includes 20 million inhabitants and has been through a rapid conurbation process. The counties’ boundaries have been merging slowly whilst housing, transportation and health demands have grown exponentially. The Greater São Paulo outlook not only demonstrates how impossible it is to solve problems by isolated initiatives, but also reinforces the necessity of a planning strategy change, a better federative integration and a bigger inclination to build cooperation between governments; only with such improvements, public policies will be more effective.

As an answer to these challenges, the São Paulo state government approved a bill in 2011 to reorganize the Metropolitan Area as a regional governmental unit of the state territory. The law established a Development Council to establish strategic projects involving the representatives of all 39 counties of the area; an Advisory Council to bring the discussions down to civil society sectors; and a self-governed legal entity, a so-called autarquia (in Portuguese), to plan and execute mutual interest projects.

At the centre of this structure is the International and Federative Affairs Municipal Secretary of the São Paulo county, whose managers believed that other counties did not have appropriate departments or workers enough to operate a metropolitan agenda. Located in the state capital, these managers felt that they received more requests and claims than assistance or proposals.

Hence, this research was developed to help them to diagnose the difficulties of these counties in dealing with metropolitan issues and, thereby, show a way to strengthen cooperation among them.

Methodology

This paper seeks to identify the major difficulties for a real integration of the public policies from the counties of the São Paulo Metropolitan Area. By finding what the obstacles are we not only diagnose the problems but also suggest possible solutions.

In preparation for this work we (1) organized meetings to plan and discuss the
proposed objectives; (2) researched a wide range of literature to understand the historical process of the metropolitan phenomenon in Brazil and in the world; to learn more about metropolitan regions, intergovernmental cooperation, metropolitan management and multi-level governance; to comprehend how the Brazilian federative characteristics impact cooperation between the federative levels; (3) held individual interviews with politicians, academic researchers, civil servants and professors that helped to draft the recommendations in section 3; (4) promoted field surveys to collect information about how the counties deal with metropolitan questions and if this issue is important to them.

In order to detect the counties’ structures, we elaborated an eight-question survey which asked, for example, the number of workers dedicated solely to metropolitan policies, how present were metropolitan issues in their day to day work, how did they face the plan of increasing cooperation. The original idea was to get data from all 39 counties; however, only 18 of them answered the survey (Arujá, Biritiba Mirim, Embu, Ferraz de Vasconcelos, Guararema, Guarulhos, Jandira, Mauá, Mogi das Cruzes, Osasco, Pirapora do Bom Jesus, Ribeirão Pires, Rio Grande da Serra, Santa Isabel, Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo, São Lourenço da Serra and Vargem Grande Paulista). The survey was carried out during June/July 2013.

**Findings**

The survey tried to discover how the counties and their managers faced metropolitan issues; if metropolitan integration was in their agenda; and which municipal institutions were dealing with it.

![Graphic 1 - Presence of an administrative structure to deal with metropolitan issues](image-url)
The objective of the first question was to evaluate if the counties had an exclusive structure to manage metropolitan articulation, both internally as coordinator of regional interests and externally in the articulation with other counties.

Results showed that most of them did not have a specific structure to deal with metropolitan issues. There were some counties which had institutions to deal with these, however, they did not exist not solely for this purpose.

We found that this lack of a metropolitan exclusive structure is quite common, since normally the municipal bureaucracy is distributed by public areas in each secretary, such as transportation, education or economic development. Furthermore, the results denoted a fragmented and sparse management model, that is, that there was no coordination aiming at articulating the public policies of a county with the corresponding ones of its neighbors.

As can be seen in graphic 2, the second question of the survey explored the number of administrative department workers who dealt with metropolitan matters. The answers indicated that metropolitan coordination structures, when they exist, were quite small and despicable. Only one county has reported a ten-people team; most had from two to five people to organize and coordinate metropolitan issues. The most impressive data was the high quantity of counties that had not a single technician in charge to
promote metropolitan questions within their administration (38%). It showed the negligible attention the administrations give to metropolitan integration.

Graphic 3 - Municipal departments responsible for metropolitan issues

The survey also asked in which department managers discussed metropolitan issues in those counties where there was not an exclusive sector for that. As shown in graphic 3, seven counties indicated the planning secretary as the place where metropolitan politics took place. We concluded that this division was a traditional model vestige; nonetheless, we noted it as a positive result, since the planning secretary, normally, coordinates medium and long term action.

Moreover, this third question helped us to understand that public managers did not deal with those issues the same way. Thus, metropolitan discussions could happen in different secretaries, according to the local manager.
Graphic 4 - Metropolitan topics present in the discussions

As can be seen in graphic 4, these results were quite homogeneous. In fact, the answers reproduced what the metropolitan legal framework called common interest roles. Three big themes frequently appeared in the counties’ answers: transportation, sanitation and housing. It confirmed the big counties’ dilemmas, as they struggle to improve their basic structures, such as sanitation and public transportation, whilst dealing with real state pressure.

Graphic 5 – What do you believe that participation in metropolitan affairs should be:
In addition, the survey tried to identify how the counties saw themselves within the São Paulo Metropolitan Area context. As shown in graphic 5, all managers have answered that it was positive being in the metropolitan area. Thus, the data show that São Paulo, as the central county, could unite all counties to build a common and positive metropolitan agenda.

![Graphic 5]

**Graphic 6 - The municipality wants to get involved with Metropolitan Region issues**

Apart from that, as can be seen in graphic 6, we detected that the municipalities were willing to be more involved in metropolitan issues. Every county shared a wish to discuss more metropolitan issues.

The last question offered a space for the counties figure out ways they would desire to take to improve metropolitan development. We highlight the following answers among all those we received:

Elaborating a strategic plan in order to build a metropolitan agenda for long term policies, which surpass the electoral calendar or political rotation;

a) Creating more work teams to discuss specialized metropolitan issues as a way to share information and projects;

b) Development of regional plans and projects for the purpose of external fundraising (federal, state, private or international);
c) Creating a unique substantial database, which would cement municipal, metropolitan and regional information, in order to develop shared projects;

d) Involving the São Paulo State in more tasks in a metropolitan consortium, aiming at reinforcing debates and discussions and, moreover, to support small counties’ demand to being listened.

e) Enable municipal departments, such as the “subprefeituras” (administrative subdivisions) of the state capital, to join regional consortiums, according to closeness or influence factors. Therefore, the capital would be present in more consortiums and public policies would be more integrated.

Recommendations

Accomplished our research and the analysis of its conclusions, we present a set of actions which could support the advancement of metropolitan governance in the Greater São Paulo.

The first one is a state model – which already exists in Greater Santos and Greater Campinas – based on the leadership of the most powerful county and marked by actions taken from top down. Our beliefs to make effective the metropolitan governance process proposed in the state law nº 1.139/2011 are the following:

a) Strengthen the Development Council of Greater São Paulo, which brings together all 39 mayors and São Paulo state representatives;

b) Create the Consulting Council, one for each local region of the Greater São Paulo, with the presence of civil society members, assemblymen and one delegate of the São Paulo county in every council;

c) Create the Metropolitan Authority, whose administration will be carried out by the Development Council of Greater São Paulo;

d) Create the Development Capital Fund of the Greater São Paulo, associated to the São Paulo state but subject to the Financial Council, having as its managers the Development Council and the Metropolitan Authority.

Starting from this structure, which is already settled by the recent state law, efforts must be made to improve the councils’ and the Authority’s operations.

Nonetheless, we perceive that it is time to change the way the São Paulo state has been carrying out its metropolitan policy. Aiming at a more effective cooperation
between counties and among different government levels, we suggest that all counties should have more influence in the decision making and planning processes.

In our view, the state centralized model has proved itself to be inefficient and inappropriate. Decisions taken from top down are, very often, challenged by local institutions; besides, they normally generate duplicate projects or institutional counter-reforms (KLINK, 2011). For this reason, the metropolitan governance must give a louder voice to different counties and perceive the need of executing projects from bottom up.

Therefore, we propose a new institutional model to improve metropolitan integration:

a) The county of São Paulo must increase communication and cooperation with other counties of the metropolitan area. Acting together, the 39 members are able to fight strongly for their requests and have a biggest influence in changing the current state metropolitan governance model into a democratic and legitimate one;

b) The five regional consortiums should be reinforced. All members should join the discussions in an active way. Furthermore, the county of São Paulo ought have one agent in every consortium to stimulate debates and to encourage common proposals for the metropolitan area;

c) It is necessary to create a metropolitan agency with all consortiums united and presided by the state capital, São Paulo. Each consortium will have the right to present proposals and, evidently, to vote against or for projects;

d) Such agency should elaborate rules to establish administrative institutions to assure a proportional representativeness to each county. The state of São Paulo could be a part of the agency but only if it respects the balance between counties. A centralized leadership must be avoided because it would decrease agency integration and could make the agency quite inefficient.

e) The federal government should have a permanent place in this forum, to stimulate the central state to get more involved with metropolitan issues; a federal public manager should join the agency – at the first without the right to vote – as a guarantor of the great infrastructure project;
f) The São Paulo Metropolitan Area must hold a new master plan, to include long and medium term projects and to articulate federal, state and regional planning actions;

g) Creation of permanent specialized forums (based on themes such as sanitation, environment and public transportation) to unite all members once a month in order to discuss solutions and new projects; these new plans should be submitted to the agency that will be created, where the project would undergo evaluation;

h) The new agency must be the central institution in promoting courses and training for metropolitan managers.

Conclusions

The original impression we had about the counties managers, taking into account their will to debate metropolitan development, has changed. Before the research, we thought that we would discover professionals with no interests in metropolitan issues. Fortunately, we found that most public managers we talked to during the fieldwork verification were aware of metropolitan impact over the counties’ policies (graphic 1). However, within the departments work routine, these discussions were quite rare and in some cases not relevant (graphic 2).

Such situation could be a consequence of the complex differences between counties or, besides that, it could be an indication of the managers’ limits in their day to day action, as they usually do not have autonomy to deal with metropolitan decisions. It also could be connected to the lack of metropolitan groups to discuss this or also could be related to the fragile integration between counties’ and the state administrations.

Despite the willingness to deal with metropolitan issues (graphic 5 and 6) and the fact that metropolitan topics have similar importance to them (graphic 4), local governments still do not know what is the best way to tackle them.

There is not a single recipe to develop metropolitan governance. Research and specialized literature have stressed dozens of possibilities to increase counties’ integration. Still, it is possible to select and analyze specific elements which contribute to improve metropolitan governance. According to Lippi (2011), eight aspects indicate possible ways to consolidate such integration.
1. Governmental institutions’ cooperation

In a federation system, the existence of a strong network among different governmental levels is essential to provide efficient management. International metropolises, for instance, work this way. (ABRUCIO, 2010).

Metropolitan problems cannot be solved in isolation. The counties of the São Paulo Metropolitan Area must seek cooperation in order to deal with public projects and to coordinate common interests’ plans, since several projects usually affect more than one county.

2. Polarization of the capital

As an economic and political power, São Paulo is able to act as a protagonist in the metropolitan area. To practice this leadership, the county must not only coach its employees but also give space for all 38 counties without overriding them.

3. Lawmakers involvement

Normally, the political and electoral dynamics in municipal chambers is dominated by the discussion of local problems or of their neighborhoods. These spots are assemblymen’s birthplaces and where they get votes; thus, regional or metropolitan issues have no value for them.

That attitude has to change. And the first step for that is to make metropolitan governance a political and social issue and not only an economic one. As soon as this happen, the counties’ integration will be at municipal chambers agenda (SPINK, TEIXEIRA E CLEMENTE, 2009).

4. Civil society communion

We understand that metropolitan governance cannot depend on governmental actions. Civil society must be involved in decision processes; so, to build people communion, counties need to have transparent institutions and very clear public projects. Greater Belo Horizonte and Greater Recife, for instance, offered spaces for people to debate public policies and open communication channels with civil society.
5. Metropolitan legal framework

Metropolitan areas development requires a distinct legal framework to organize and simplify legal acts from dozens of counties. Probably, the best solution is the creation of a metropolitan authority, as already exists in Greater London, for instance.

The governance structure should create legitimate political spaces that combine coordination, denial and discussion. In addition, it should have members of the municipalities in equal numbers in order to stimulate democratic representation.

6. Central themes

Metropolitan managers must choose which issues are the most challenging ones. These themes would be elected as central, and would stimulate all metropolitan institutions to work on projects associated to them. Technical chambers should be created to make such projects viable. Whereas that there are some issues that affect differently each county, work teams would be selected to evaluate the local problems.

7. Capital and funding sources

An efficient management system must augment regional ways of prospecting funds to deal with the priority projects chosen by the counties. Financial compensation can increase metropolitan integration when tied to institutions obligations. On one hand, financial incentives are not sufficient to mobilize and guarantee partnerships and cooperation projects; on the other hand, if there are no funding mechanisms for metropolitan projects, the metropolitan governance will not work properly (SOUZA, 2003).

8. Political leadership

In federative systems, metropolitan decision processes cannot be hierarchical and centralized. They should be democratic, including all counties as well as different government levels (ABRUCIO, 2005).

Nevertheless, political leaders are essential to leverage debates and purposes. Because metropolitan areas are basically power cores and their institutions are political chambers, the presence of a leader to guide the processes is necessary.
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