IV World Planning Schools Congress

## Track 1- Governance, Politics, Ethics and Conflict in Planning

**Governance experiences in Brazil: in search of capacities for a shared metropolitan agenda**

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ABSTRACT

In the globalized age, largely populated metropolitan areas, typically bringing together a number of different cities and extending over wide territories, face growing social, economic and environmental problems. International experience shows that, faced with resource constraints and conflicting interests, metropolitan management is, by and large, mostly ineffective while contributing to aggravate existing inequalities. Having to face rapid urban growth, housing shortages, informality and poverty, the Brazilian experience in metropolitan planning also reveals serious shortcomings. It can be argued that, since 1973, reflecting changing tendencies of the central administration, metropolitan management in Brazil underwent three stages. The first was a developmental phase, which spanned decades of centralized planning, and in which public agencies had access to a stream of financial resources. The second was a phase of neoliberal policies, which promoted decentralization and discredited centralized planning, and in which metropolitan agencies received reduced financial support. The third is a more recent, neo-developmental phase, which tends towards decentralization and social participation, and in which agencies are faced with insufficient resources and spreading problems. The lack of top-down directives and the absence of a national urban policy, as well as the 1988 National Constitution determination that the states establish metropolitan regions, gave rise to a multiplication in the number of these official agglomerations. Among various tendencies, four types of agencies and institutional provisions emerge, represented in the following metropolitan regions: Salvador, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte and the Great ABC Intercity Consortium[[3]](#footnote-3). Aside from regional inequalities, each will have distinct historical paths which emerge in different social, economic and political situations and contribute to produce a setting which brings together resources and drawbacks. The assembly of institutional and political conditions that support the creation and implementation of common endeavors in a given setting can be understood as governance. One of the assumptions of this study is that qualified institutionalization, social organization and wide participation are factors in building a governance system, which occurs through the provision of public functions of common interest and the formulation of a shared metropolitan agenda. Hence, the objective of this article is to identify the scope and limits of different metropolitan governance arrangements in Brazil. An approximation to the metropolitan region of Montreal, whose regional authority dates back from the 1970s, guided an exploratory research including visits and interviews with key influential groups related to metropolitan planning. The aim was to elicit criteria expressing governance conditions in that context which might be applicable in other experiences. The four basic factors are: 1) institutional arrangement and regulatory frameworks; 2) form of articulation and coordination of governmental action spheres; 3) financial resources management; 4) forms of planning and negotiation. The application of the criteria supported the design of dimensions that structure the discussion and analysis of the experiences of the four Brazilian metropolitan regions selected. To further the understanding of the dynamics involved, the procedures included bibliographical and documental research. In Salvador Metropolitan Region, labeled the *institutional metropolitan recuperation* model, a top down metropolitan authority established in 1973 became through the years a rigid and fragmented organization. The present time context reveals both a lack of cooperative participation in planning and in public policies and a move towards change. Potentialities that enhance the scope of the governance arrangement are the creation in 2014 of a new metropolitan authority that include diverse institutions with a metropolitan vision. Limitations are few consortium management practices, an incipient public participation in metropolitan level and a fragile structure for the construction of public policies in order to mitigate the existing extreme socio-spatial inequalities. In Curitiba Metropolitan Region, labeled the *centralized metropolitan management* model, a top down metropolitan authority since 1973 represents a non-integrated planning metropolitan area. As a result, the present time context remains a centralized set of policies that benefits mostly the metropolitan nucleus, Curitiba. Potentialities that enhance the scope of the governance arrangement are the existence of several qualified metropolitan agencies in the region and a few initiatives in consortium practices. Limitations are a lack of spaces or channels for public participation and the fragility of its institutional framework, which reveals clashes between the metropolitan planning body and the transport system agency. In Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Region, labeled the *hybrid metropolitan management* model, a top down metropolitan authority established in 1973, underwent an innovative institutional arrangement in 2004. The present time context shows a system of organizations and agencies that cooperate to carry out public functions of common interest, supported by a Metropolitan Development Fund. Potentialities that enhance the scope of the governance arrangement are formal institutional arrangements, several initiatives in successful consortium practices, protagonists from horizontal and vertical dimensions and diversified representation in the formulation of public policies. Limitations are a strong polarization of the metropolitan nucleus, Belo Horizonte, in relation to the other municipalities and an evident socio-spatial segregation represented by hundreds of *favelas* in the metropolitan area. In the ABC Intercity Consortium, labeled the *cooperative metropolitan management* model, a voluntary consortium of seven municipalities was created in 1990, as a sub set of the official metropolitan region of São Paulo. The present time context is one of a strong yet partly informal governance structure. Potentialities that enhance the scope of the governance arrangement are the efforts to legitimate the Consortium in 2010 according to the Brazilian public consortium law of 2005. Due to its complex articulation with participative agencies, the Consortium has been successful in formulating and carrying out public policies in its sub metropolitan scale. Limitations are the still unconsolidated public participation and the lack of direct access to official metropolitan funds. The analysis of the four different experiences shows that, in the various cases, there are major obstacles towards building a shared metropolitan agenda. In addition, there is a permanent difficulty to carry out public functions of common interest. Faced with conflicting forces, building conditions for social, economic and territorial justice represent essential steps towards a strong and collaborative governance system.

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3. ABC refers to the initials of the three municipalities within seven which are part of the Consortium: Santo André, São Bernardo do Campo and São Caetano do Sul. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)