Inter-institutional Mechanism for Collaborative Governance: A Case Study of the Local Management Group in the Formation of the Regional Consortium: Mulheres das Gerais

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the inter-institutional collaborative process undertaken by the Municipalities of Belo Horizonte, Betim, Contagem and Sabará in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte that resulted in the formation of one of the first public consortium in Brazil in line with the recently approved Federal Law 11.107/05: the Regional Consortium for the Promotion of Citizenry Mulheres das Gerais. The Local Management Group (LMG) is the technical staff group from the involved municipalities who played a major role in controlling the transaction costs inherent in the consortiation process. By assessing the profile, nature and characteristics of the LMG it was possible to identify the features that were able to control dimensions related to the asymmetry of forces present in this inter-institutional collaborative process. External factors have also minimized the transaction costs during the implementation process of the Mulheres das Gerais Regional Consortium.

Key words: Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte, collaborative governance, public consortia, inter-institutional mechanism

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Various forms of inter-municipal collaboration efforts and regional governance structures are currently sprouting all over Brazil. The debate on regionalism and the creation of regional institutions capable of targeting the immensity of metropolitan challenges has recently become a central topic of politicians and technocrats alike at all levels of government (Gouvêa, 2001; Machado et al, 2007). Concomitantly, universities, research centers and a diverse set of academic networks are in the process of redirecting their research themes to consider regional spatiality and the complex system of inter-related urban and social variables that shape the quality of life in large metropolitan centres. Some emblematic examples of this new era of regionalism in Brazil include the enactment of Law 11.107/05 (Public Consortia Law), the recent creation of the Metropolitan Agency in the region of Belo Horizonte, the debates on regionalism at the State Legislature in São Paulo, the consortiation strategies set by the State Secretariat of Regional Integration of Pará in the North-east of Brazil, and the consolidation of a new line of research on regional governance by the Observatorio das Metrópoles, coordinated by the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).

Through a case-study approach, this article will focus on the advances and challenges of inter-institutional collaboration during the creation of the Regional Consortium for the Promotion of Citizenry: Mulheres das Gerais in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte. A qualitative analysis of the collaborative process will assess the effectiveness of the Local Management Group (LMG) in reducing the so-called transaction costs of inter-institutional collaboration, as defined by Machado (2007). Similar to the approach used by Machado, this paper adopts the application of transaction costs to the metropolitan context as an exploratory tool to understand the complexity of metropolitan governance. However, in contrast to Machado’s approach, which focuses on four macro categories (regional identity, asymmetry of forces, path dependence and the role of (pre)existing metropolitan institutions), this work focuses on five dimensions of the
asymmetry of forces among the four municipalities which created the Regional Consortium: Mulheres das Gerais: political, legal, technical, administrative and budgetary asymmetries. Furthermore, this work attempts to identify the role of the Local Management Group in reducing the transaction costs resulting from the aforementioned five dimensions.

To achieve the aforementioned objective, the first section of the article begins with a contextualization of metropolitan governance in Brazil followed by a discussion of the various dimensions and variables of inter-institutional collaboration. The second section introduces the reader to the Bilateral Project entitled “New Public Consortia for Metropolitan Governance” that is being implemented by the University of British Columbia in Canada and the Federal Ministry of Cities in Brazil, and its regional experience in the Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Region. The third section adopts a case-study approach to discuss in greater detail the role of the Local Management Group in implementing the Regional Consortium: Mulheres das Gerais, according to the process outlined by the Federal Law 11.107/05 in creating a public consortium. The fourth section discusses the findings by suggesting a theoretical model depicting the complexity and multi-dimensionality of collaborative governance. The fifth section concludes with some final remarks and suggestions for future research.

2.0 Metropolitan Governance in Brazil

It is undisputed that the rapid expansion of metropolitan areas in Brazil has generated great challenges for municipalities in the provision of wide array of public services. The expansion of large metropolitan cities, with high spatial inequalities and social exclusion created in a relatively short period of time, has required the allocation of unprecedented investments and the creation of innovative inter-institutional frameworks for the provision of a wide range of public services (Gouvea, 2001). Nevertheless, the available resources (both technical and financial), never met the demands caused by the rapid growth of these cities. Moreover, the economic crisis and industrial decentralization process that occurred in the 1980s caused metropolitan areas to become the loci of poverty and social exclusion. In essence, we could say that the social inequality and exclusion question in Brazil today is, above all, a metropolitan question (Klink, 2003).

To understand the complexity of the metropolitan framework and, to a large degree, the inability of public institutions to lead with these ever-changing dynamics, one must first consider Brazil’s legal federative framework. The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 had made good progress in terms of political decentralization, administrative and financial autonomy, by trying to strengthen the states and municipalities, deeply shaken by the authoritarian regime established in 1964. Undeniably, the Constitution, with regards to the city, was firmly devoted to municipal autonomy (Azevedo & Guia, 2000).

For the first time in the history of the country, this autonomy has been constitutionally guaranteed as a separate level in the organization of the federative state (Afonso & Mello, 2000). With regards to the division of powers, the Constitution defined that municipal councils had the right to “legislate on matters of local interest” and “organize and provide directly or under the grant or permission, public services of local interest.” Simultaneously, in the chapter relating to the powers of the states, the Constitution stated that “states may, by supplementary
law, establish metropolitan regions, cities and microregions, formed by groups of neighbouring municipalities to join the organization, planning and implementation of public functions of common interest.” The Federal Constitution does not, however, offer any adequate definition and distinction between public functions of common interest and public services of local interest (Machado, 2007).

What can be noted with almost absolute certainty is that, with the exception of some isolated and incomplete initiatives, real alternatives to resolve the metropolitan issue have not emerged in the country so far (Gouvêa, 2001). In general, one can observe that public institutions have not been able to create mechanisms strong enough to propose a structural change in the design of municipalities inserted in metropolitan areas. In addition, there is an evident multiplicity of interests involved as well as structural imbalances and asymmetries (budget, staff, policies, etc.) that complicate the articulation of a consolidated metropolitan action, thus hampering the mobilization and integration of various actors in the creation of collaborative and metropolitan structures (Azevedo & Guia, 2000).

Nevertheless, twenty years after the promulgation of the current Constitution, it is possible to observe some policy initiatives at all three levels of government that try to draw alliances involving the municipalities, the State and even the Federal government in an attempt to find solutions to problems of common interest through alternative forms of collaboration.

There is now a consensus that in complex societies (especially federations like Brazil) one sphere of government (vertically or horizontally speaking), does not have the power and resources to overcome the ingrained social and infrastructural predicaments of cities in metropolitan regions. However, the metropolitan setting can have a leadership role in the agglutination of allies for the elaboration of policy agendas and formation of robust and legitimate coalitions in order to develop and implement innovative public policies that take into consideration all related constitutional powers. Nonetheless, due to specific complexities in each public policy area, most initiatives to promote alliances among stakeholders and coalitions face a number of endemic challenges (Azevedo & Guia, 2000).

In light of the above, it is necessary to contemplate the complexities posed by the legal dimension when creating inter-institutional governance structures. Although the reflection on the legal dimension is necessary, it does not provide a complete assessment of the challenges posed by collaborative governance because, in addition to the high legal complexity, there are other factors that hinder the involvement and participation of relevant actors in the process of drafting and discussing the metropolitan governance question. In the next section we will explore some of these factors.

2.1 Five Dimensions of the Asymmetry of Forces and the Inherited Transaction Costs

Mapping the contextual factors and the dimensions of inter-institutional collaboration is an essential step in identifying the existing institutional asymmetries and congruencies that can either increase or reduce the transaction costs of inter-institutional collaboration.

Transaction costs, as defined by Machado, are “the real and perceived costs of cooperation which have to be assumed by the actors which are acting personally or in the name of an
organization to celebrate, execute and control the agreements within the metropolitan framework. Whereas reduced costs will foster a more dynamic metropolitan management, elevated costs make difficult or even inhibit the regional administration” (Machado, 2007, p. 17).

For the purpose of this article, a “contextual factor of collaboration” is defined as a set of supra-institutional variables, i.e., those that institutions have little or no control over. Out of the four categories of transaction costs (as applied to the metropolitan context) laid out by Machado (2007), three refer to contextual factors, that is, regional identity, path dependence and the role of (pre)existing metropolitan institutions. These factors can either inhibit or induce the dimensions of collaboration, and are omnipresent to some degree in all inter-institutional collaborative frameworks. In contrast to the contextual factors of collaboration, a fourth category (asymmetry of forces) inherits dimensions that are controllable, to some degree, by the institutions.

To identify the dimensions of the asymmetry of forces among potential government agents involved in collaborative processes, we can refer to the matrix developed by Mello and Azevedo (1997). The matrix classified different arenas where decision-making required the brokerage of interests among government agencies and organized groups of society into low/high political centrality and low/high technical complexity. In this study, the issue of metropolitan regions was characterized in the low quadrant regarding its political centrality (low on the political agenda), and in the high quadrant, implying great technical complexity and requiring the involvement of experts in shaping policy on the subject. This result has a direct impact on the perception of both the political and technical dimensions of metropolitan governance (Mello & Azevedo, 1997). If on one hand the metropolitan question demands great technical know-how, than smaller municipalities with more modest technical teams may appear at a disadvantage in the negotiation process. Similarly, the political culture within a specific municipality may or may not be oriented towards inter-institutional dialogue, which again may increase its transaction costs.

Furthermore and closely related to the political dimension is the budgetary question. A study carried out by Azevedo and Guia (2000) showed the huge inequalities between municipalities that comprise the Brazilian metropolitan regions, with regards to the population and budgetary dynamics. Significant differences in revenue per capita, differences in composition of expenditure, variations in performance levels of socio-economic indicators, are just a few of the budgetary complexities that are inherited in any inter-institutional collaborative structures. The asymmetries within the administrative dimension also can increase the transaction costs of an inter-institutional collaborative framework. Smaller teams will have a greater difficulty in dedicating people to specific, yet crucial, administrative tasks such as internal communication, and in allocating tenured public officials for highly technical and/or strategic positions in regional organizations (Azevedo & Guia, 2000).

To understand the complexity of inter-institutional collaborative governance, we must examine the process through administrative, financial, technical, political and legal dimensions at the municipal management level. These five key dimensions shape the asymmetries of forces and determine the institutional building process, and as such, need to be reflected in the creation of an institutional mechanism to manage and implement the collaborative framework.

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Thus the question arises: What institutional mechanism can mitigate the perceived and actual transaction costs of collaboration and at same time maintain a continuous and transparent flow of information?

2.2 The New Public Consortium Law: 11.107/05

In light of the limitations suffered by the Brazilian experiences of top-down metropolitan administration, the federal government through a number of strategic ministries directly related to the metropolitan question (such as the Ministry of Cities and the Ministry of Internal Affairs) have advocated horizontal and voluntary approaches to the consolidation of metropolitan governance (Machado, 2007). The two main legal instruments to these forms of voluntary cooperation are intergovernmental agreements and consortia. The first one is of a more precarious nature, tied to the development of a specific program or project, often stipulating its validity period. On the other hand, the public consortium instrument has a more robust legal foundation and is aimed at strengthening the provision of services through collaborative governance structures. This instrument has recently been enhanced with the Constitutional Amendment No. 19 of 1998, which created the concept of “associated management of services through the implementation of consortia” and with the recent approval of Federal Law No. 11107 of 2005, which regulates the creation of consortia (Machado, 2007).

The main objective of the federal government in passing this law was to create a new and more robust statute of Public Consortia that could complement the existing Brazilian federative structure and improve the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 (Trevas, 2005). As previously mentioned, despite having an advanced federative organizational structure, the Brazilian Federation did not have, until now, instruments and mechanism of articulation and cooperation between federative entities, inclusive that of shared responsibility. In this sense, “the key aspect of the public consortia law was to create a regulatory instrument for horizontal and vertical cooperation among the three spheres of governance, opening the possibility to strengthen the intervention of public power and to optimize and rationalize the application of public resources in the execution of responsibilities that are shared among the three levels of government” (Trevas, 2005, p. 3).

The procedural and contextual aspects of public consortia formation are the focus of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) funded New Public Consortia for Metropolitan Governance Project (NPC Project) that is currently being implemented in five metropolitan regions in Brazil. The Public Consortia Law was pre-defined as the legal parameter of collaboration, specifically oriented towards the formation of public consortia, although the main goal of the NPC Project was not the creation of five consortia (one in each region). In essence, the Federal Law 11.107/05 was seen as a guideline of inter-institutional collaboration implying that the process (developing collaborative, consortiated approaches between federative entities) was just as important, if not more, as the potential outcome (consortia formation).
3.0 CASE STUDY: REGIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR THE PROMOTION OF CITIZENRY: MULHERES DAS GERAIS

The New Public Consortia for Metropolitan Governance (NPC) Project, designed over a period of two years (2004-2006) by the University of British Columbia and Brazil’s Ministry of Cities and to be implemented by 19 municipalities in 5 metropolitan regions in Brazil during the 2006-2010 period, draws both energy and inspiration from the highly dynamic and accentuated debate on regionalism in Brazil.

A unique aspect of this bilateral project that sets itself apart from other regional initiatives is its focus on the promotion of social equality through metropolitan governance. Whereas the majority of other regional initiatives concentrate on the efficient provision of public services through a regional approach, the five regional projects that compose the NPC Project have a special focus on the promotion of social equity, especially oriented at the most disadvantaged population. This approach generated a new perspective on the regional dialogue emphasizing the role of municipal governments in joining forces to strengthen specific regional public policies that directly impact the quality of life of the poorest and most disadvantaged populations in metropolitan regions.

The following map identifies the metropolitan region and the municipalities that participate in the NPC Project as well as the collaborative themes chosen by the municipalities as policy areas of common interest.²

Figure 1: Five Metropolitan Regions and 19 municipalities participating in the NPC Project referencing the themes of common interest.

3.1 Bottom-up Approach to Project Design and Development

Since the inception of the New Public Consortia for Metropolitan Governance Project, the modus operandi of collaboration was seen through the bottom-up prism. The definition of the bottom-up approach was brought about by three underlying principles:

² More information on the Project can be found at WWW.chs.ubc.ca/consortia
1. **ownership**: local and regional actors defined their path, suggested changes to the implementation plan, defined strategies and contributed with innovative ideas based on their knowledge, life experience and expertise in public institutions. This, in turn, generated a strong project identity and commitment to the set goals and objectives;

2. **empowerment**: the proximity to grassroots mobilization/movement induced a higher level of representation of the population’s interests and thus validated the effort and process. This principle is directly opposite to trends of assistance-based development;

3. **sustainability**: local decision making processes had to consider the viability of the actions that were foreseen as a priority during the elaboration of the strategic action plans and the entire collaborative process. This rationale implies that the process would be implemented within the limits of the available human and financial resource parameters without becoming dependent on external and finite resources.

These three principles guided the collaboration-building process in and among the municipalities within the regions where the project has been implemented. These principles also induced the creation of Local Management Groups (LMGs) in each municipality. In addition to the core five municipalities originally engaged in the Project, 14 new municipalities joined the regional consortiation effort. In 2007, a multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional Project working group (“Local Management Group”) was created in each of the five Brazilian regions to deal with the complexities, uncertainties, asymmetries and multi-dimensionality encapsulated in the consortiation and/or inter-institutional collaborative process.

The number of municipal representatives actively participating in the project increased from an average of two in each metropolitan region to over 100 officials involved in the planning, implementation and decision-making of the consortia-building efforts in all five regions. The following chart summarizes the regional policy focus of the initial inter-institutional collaborative governance effort undertaken in the five metropolitan regions.

**Table 1: Key Policy Areas of the Consortiation Efforts of the NPC Regional Projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metropolitan Region</th>
<th>Regional Policy Focus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Region of São Paulo</td>
<td>Since the inception of the NPC Project, the collaboration process in the Metropolitan Region of São Paulo included the Municipalities of Santo André, Osasco and Diadema. The object of the consortiation effort was to establish a regional agenda for ‘decent work’ as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The scope of the regional project was to elaborate methodologies, and implement regional public policies that foster decent work. The activities foreseen on the project focused on the autonomous workers in the civil construction segment (mainly residents of informal settlements), considering that the civil construction sector exemplified the highest indexes of ‘indecent work’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Region of Recife</td>
<td>The NPC Project in this region involves the Municipalities of Recife, Camaragibe and Olinda. The focus of the initial consortiation work was on the theme of ‘urban violence prevention’. Five potential consortium actions that were identified through numerous inter-municipal meetings included: 1) building safe urban spaces; 2) campaigns against violence specifically oriented at youth, combined with youth-employment strategies; 3) formulation of preventative policing strategies and; 4) formulation of conflict resolution strategies. Special attention was being</td>
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given to youth visions and perspectives. Youth in informal settlements (especially the Beberibe River Basin) were seen as the main protagonists in this consortium effort.

| Metropolitan Region of Fortaleza | The consortium effort in this region included the Municipalities of Fortaleza, Caucaia, Maranguape and Maracanaú. The central theme of the consortium effort was ‘social and environmental re-qualification’ of the Maranguapinho River basin. The key regional consortium actions identified as critical components to target the common challenge included: 1) environmental education specifically targeting the population groups that are currently extracting sand from the Maranguapinho River banks; 2) income generation strategies through community gardens targeting women groups. This axis can also be integrated with environmental education, food security and social inclusion; 3) social housing complexes and urbanization of informal settlements; 4) water and sewage treatment upgrades. The focus of this sub-theme was to work with the State Water Treatment Company to upgrade its effectiveness in providing clean water and sewage treatment. |
| Region of Santarem | The consortium effort in the Region included the municipalities of Santarém, Juruti, Placas, Belterra and Aveiro. The common objective of the inter-institutional collaborative effort was the creation of a water and sewage treatment consortium able to provide these services to the population in the urban centers. |
| Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte | The consortium effort in this region included the Municipalities of Belo Horizonte, Contagem, Betim and Sabará and was thematically co-coordinated by the National Secretariat for Women Policies (SPM). The main theme of the consortium effort was ‘gender equity’ and the fight against violence against women. The inter-institutional collaborative effort resulted in the creation in March of 2007 of the Regional Consortium for the Promotion of Citizenry: Mulheres das Gerais. |

The subsequent sections of this work carries out a detailed analysis of the consortiation process that led to the formation of the Mulheres das Gerais Regional Consortium in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte, and of the role and effectiveness of the LMGs in conducing the inter-institutional collaborative efforts.

### 3.2 LMG: Inter-institutional Mechanism for Collaboration Governance

The implementation of the project in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte began in June of 2006. From June to December 2006, the regional implementation team had one regional project coordinator (who held a Deputy Secretary position) and four technical coordinators representing the four municipalities and their respective gender equality offices. During the first six months, the project faced four major difficulties: 1) raising internal (within their respective municipal structures) awareness about the project; 2) gaining political support from decision-makers; 3) lack of a clear coordination centre to disseminate the project’s information; and 4) lack of a project identity (UBC/CHS, 2007).

In response to these challenges, the LMG in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (MRBH) was set up officially in March of 2007 including representatives of top-level municipal managers, a multidisciplinary technical team and a legal council.
The following diagram illustrates the structure and profile of the LMG as a function of the aforementioned five dimensions that shape the asymmetries of forces within the inter-institutional collaboration framework.

**Figure 2: Diagram of the three levels of the LMG, profile of members and relation to the five dimensions of collaboration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five Dimensions of Collaboration</th>
<th>Three Levels of the Local Management Group</th>
<th>Profile of the Group Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Management Group</td>
<td>• Direct channel with the Public Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>Technical Group and Coordination Nucleus</td>
<td>• Decision making power with regards to budgetary issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td>Legal Accounting &amp; Financial Group</td>
<td>• Systemic vision of the organization and theme related</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical / Theme Based</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Knowledgeable of the public policy in question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal/ Organizational</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Systemic vision of the public policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• With interest and availability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Innovative / Entrepreneurial Spirit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Special attention was given to the profiles of the group members. Commitment, understanding of the theme and political wit was emphasized at the technical level. At the legal level, a general understanding of the Consortia Law was the key determinant. Finally, high-level public managers with a systemic vision and a direct channel to the mayor were sought after to integrate the management group. Two high-level managers from each municipality are represented in the management group: 1) one from the secretariat directly responsible for the implementation of the public service; and 2) one from either Central Government Secretariat or Administrative Planning Secretariat. The two latter ones were perceived to have the most direct access to the Mayor’s office. For the other two levels of the LMG (i.e., Technical and Legal Levels) there was no limit on the number of people involved. The Technical group included representatives of a wide array of secretariats, reflecting the multi-dimensional and transversal nature of the gender equity theme.

For each level of the LMG, specific responsibilities were assigned according to the municipal representative’s hierarchical position in their local institution and their knowledge base. The following table summarizes the key attributes and responsibilities of each level of the LMG.

**Table 2: Key Attributes and Responsibilities of the LMG members per Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brazilian Team Profile</th>
<th>Key Attributes and Responsibilities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Group</td>
<td>• Liaise at the executive level with secretaries to acquire and strengthen institutional support for the Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Define the direction and effort of the consortium process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Each municipality had to nominate their representatives for the Local Management Group through a municipal decree signed by the mayor. Due to the large participation in the LMG (approximately 15 people from each municipality), it was considered better to create an Inter-municipal Local Management Group (ILMG) with representation from each municipality at all three levels.

The foreseen advantages of the ILMG structure were: 1) the maximized interactivity among the levels of the LMG; 2) reduced bureaucratic procedures; and 3) consolidated project identity. In order to facilitate the flow of information between the levels of the LMG (vertical flows) and among the municipal LMGs (horizontal flow), the ILMG had the support of the Coordination Nucleus.

The Coordination Nucleus played a pivotal role in the implementation of the consortiation process. The specific tasks of the Coordination Nucleus included: a) maintain a transparent flow of information among all levels and municipal teams, b) give prompt and strategic advice regarding the implementation phases of the consortiation process (based on information received from the Management, Technical and Legal Groups), c) suggest and disseminate schedule of meetings and reinforce the participation of all actors, d) act as a repository of project information and maintain the project’s memory, e) initiate contact with internal and external actors identified as strategic for the implementation process, f) develop action plan proposals and present to the ILMG at general meetings, and g) plan and implement events as decided by the Management Group during internal meetings. In addition, due to the international nature of the project, the Coordination Nucleus also had the responsibility to facilitate and disseminate the information flow between regional partners and the Canadian contributors (UBC, 2008).

The following diagram illustrates the constellation of the LMGs, the position of the ILMG and Coordination Nucleus as well as it exemplifies the foreseen advantages/characteristics of the ILMG with regards to the collaborative process in which the LMGs were inserted.
3.3 A synopsis of strategic Activities and the Role of the LMG

The LMG in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte (MRBH) was set up officially in March of 2007 including representatives of top-level municipal managers, a multidisciplinary technical team and a legal council. From March until June of 2007 the technical representatives of the LMG met on a number of occasions to define the technical approach (also known as the consoritiated methodology) to fight violence against women. This process resulted in the definition of both preventative programs (i.e, non-sexist and non-discriminatory education, awareness campaigns, community women leadership programs, and database and monitoring development) and public services for women that were already facing domestic abuse (specifically the constitution of an inter-municipal Shelter House and Half-way House for battered women). During this time period the technical team also met with representatives from the newly inaugurated State Office for Women Rights and the two Departments from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Sociology and Women Studies Department and Law School’s Polos Cidadania Program). By doing so, the technical team gained valuable contributions in the formulation of programs geared at prevention of gender violence (UBC, 2008).

By mid-April of 2007, during a general meeting, the LMG nominated members from each municipality and each level of the LMG to compose an Inter-municipal Management Group (ILMG). This decision reflected the challenges that the municipal LMGs were facing in improving the flow of information, in maintaining a regular schedule of meetings, and in making strategic decisions in function of the large number of participants in the municipal
The creation of the ILMG greatly improved the collaborative effort among the four municipalities.

By August of 2007 the ILMG created a draft of the Protocol of Intentions of the Consortium (as defined by the Federal Law) and soon after, in September, designed a preliminary budget of the Consortium including the definition of municipal contributions based on population ratio. It is important to mention that this process was achieved through a consensus-based approach.

During the months of August-October of 2007, the ILMG discussed the inter-municipal funding formula for the consortia. Finally, the Management Level of the ILMG defined the formula based on the population ratio among the four municipalities (ie. Belo Horizonte 69%, Contagem 17%, Betim 10% and Sabará 4%). Parallel to the funding formula meetings, the technical representatives of the ILMG elaborated a first draft of the Consortia’s annual budget, amounting to approximately R$640.000,00. During a general meeting with the participation of the Municipal LMGs, the ILMG defined that the budget would only cover the expenses and operation costs of the Shelter House (service provision) during its first year. Programs targeted at violence prevention would be funded through external resources, relying on the consortium’s legal ability and agility to raise these external funds from state and federal agencies.

The Protocol of Intentions was officially signed by the four mayors on the 10th October (National Day for the Prevention of Violence against Women). During the next four months, the Protocol of Intentions was carefully scrutinized by the local municipal councils and civil society. By March 2008, all the municipal councils ratified the Protocol of Intentions passing it as municipal law, constituting legally the Consortium. On the 29 March, the Consortium was officially inaugurated in the City of Contagem (the only municipality out of the four with a women mayor). The event was attended by the Ministry of Cities, the Mayors of the four municipalities, the Federal Minister for Gender Issues and NPC Project Manager.

Since then, the Chief Council of the Consortium (composed of the 4 Mayors) elected the Mayor of Contagem, Marilia Campos, as the President of the Consortium, during its first General Assembly (May 29th). During this General Assembly the Draft of the Statutory Bylaw of the Consortium was presented and discussed by the municipalities’ legal councils. Over the next two months the Consortium’s Board of Directors (composed of Municipal Secretaries that belonged to the Management Level of the ILMG) met on numerous occasions to discuss in detail the Statutory Bylaw, revised the Budgetary Contribution Ratio and financial values, and nominated the technical team to work in the Consortium Mulheres das Gerais.

In April 2008, in order to reflect about the consortiation process, the NPC Project conducted a focus group session with all the members of the Local Management Groups. Some key findings identified were some of the possible variables that fostered and strengthened the inter-institutional collaborative process, such as the representation of civil society in the technical level of the LMG and the inclusion of the Municipal Institutional Planning Secretariats in the Management Level of the municipal LMGs.

In August 2008, the technical team of the ILMG revisited the draft Budgetary Contract that was prepared in October 2007. The technical team presented the 2nd draft of the Budgetary Contract to the managers of the ILMG, starting the negotiations between Municipal Accounting and
Finances Secretariats to identify the best budgetary mechanism to transfer financial contributions from each municipality Municipal Budgetary Plans for 2009. The accounting team met on numerous occasions during the month of August and September with the legal and the technical team to identify what would be the best mechanism to transfer the funds from the municipal budget to the Consortium.

On the 3 September 2008, during the 2nd General Assembly of the Consortium, the mayors’ representatives approved both the Consortium’s Statutory Bylaw and the Consortium’s Budget for 2009, thus guaranteeing that the proposed budget would have the ‘surety bond’ from the mayors in face of their municipal councils. The councils of the four municipalities approved the 2009 municipal budgets (including the budget of the Consortium) in January 2009.

From December 2008 to February 2009 the ILMG concentrated its collaborative efforts on four major fronts including: 1) elaboration of the Consortium’s Programmatic Contract; 2) elaboration of the Budgetary Contract; 3) nomination of the Consortium’s Superintendent; and 4) assisting the new municipal governments with the transition period.

The development of the Programmatic Contract was carried out by the technical teams of the municipal LMGs. During a two-day seminar, sixty representatives of the municipal departments and programs directly related to the operation of the consortiated Shelter House discussed the functioning and service provision parameters of these facilities as well as the implementation of a regional assistance network. This event also included the presence of the Federal Ministry of Women Rights. From the event was formed a Draft Programmatic Contract.

The legal counsel of the ILMG in collaboration with the accounting team of each municipality prepared the draft Budgetary Contract presented to the Consortium’s Board of Directors. The contract essentially documents the budgetary and financial definitions approved by the four municipalities during the 2nd General Assembly.

The third key task that is currently being targeted by the Management Level of the ILMG is the nomination of the Consortium’s Superintendent. The Mayor of Contagem and President of the Consortium, Marilia Campos, has decided to hand over the nomination process to the Coordination Nucleus of the ILMG thus acknowledging its fundamental role in designing and implementing the Consortium.

The fourth and perhaps the most important front of action that the ILMG is focused on, is to build awareness within the newly elected governments and securing their commitment and support in the implementation of the Public Consortium. During the months of January and February, a special inter-municipal task force was created within the ILMG to carry out meetings with the newly elected Mayors of Betim, Belo Horizonte and Sabará. The meetings were crucial to present the project’s successes and discuss the next steps in consolidating the consortium. The Mayors and their Secretaries had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the functioning of the ILMG, and clarify the objectives, goals and planned operation of the consortium.
4.0 ANALYSIS

4.1 Role and Effectiveness of the LMG in achieving key Project Milestones

The LMG in the Belo Horizonte Metropolitan Regions (BHMR) had a broad composition including representatives from the Institutional Planning, and Government Secretariats, in addition to the Secretariats directly responsible for implementing gender-specific municipal programs. This approach gave the LMG the essential influence in their respective municipalities and increased the project’s visibility. It is important to note that both the Institutional Planning and Government Secretariats are transversal and often have a systemic vision of the entire institution, and they often benefit from a close relationship with the Mayor’s office. The proximity of these secretariats to the Mayor’s office has proven itself extremely valuable in helping to define priorities and readapt the project’s management throughout the implementation of the project. This was the case in securing the presence of the Mayors during the most crucial events such as the signing of the Protocol of Intentions and the official inauguration of the Consortium.

The Municipal LMGs and the ILMG also played a crucial role in defining the project’s identity, which was perceived as a key step in consolidating the multi-disciplinary and inter/intra-sectoral teams composed of technical staff and top-level managers. The identity was created through a clear definition of attributes and responsibilities assigned to each level of the LMGs as well as through the implementation of a regular schedule of meetings according to the needs outlined in the strategic action plan.

The multidisciplinary composition of the LMG was structured to correlate to the five key dimensions of the consortium process that shape the asymmetries of forces (as defined in section 2.1 of this paper). Considering the highly innovative nature of the project, the distinct levels of the LMGs and the ILMG paid particular attention to the political calendar and the impediments that it could generate within the consortium process. This can be clearly observed with the decision to fast-track the voting of the municipal laws (to ratify the Public Consortium) in December 2007, rather than waiting until March 2008 (as was originally laid out in the strategic action plan). This strategic move avoided the political negotiation that usually occurs just before the election period officially began in June. Another example of how the LMG responded to the political calendar is illustrated by the intensity of meetings that occurred between July and September 2008 to approve the statutory bylaw and the Consortium’s 2009 Budget, both of which could have paralyzed the project’s implementation plan if they had not been included in the 2009 Budget Proposals of each municipality.

Another important feature of the Municipal LMGs and the ILMG was its ability to enforce transparent information flows. This was a particularly difficult task considering that the nature of the challenges reflected in the asymmetries of: a) technical information and knowledge in inter-institutional collaborative settings, b) the political agenda, c) availability of human resources, d) legal processes and; e) administrative bottlenecks. By opting for transparency, the LMG placed significant effort in democratizing information, a key building block in inter-institutional consensus building. The responsibility of acting as an information broker was delegated to the Coordination Nucleus, which was also responsible for catalyzing both horizontal and vertical information flows.
The project faced a series of challenges that ‘conspired’ against its strategic implementation plan. The following Table 3 lists the key project milestones and cross-references them with the nature of the challenge posed by the project milestone, the three levels of the LMG that were responsible for implementation and the key characteristic that facilitated the collaborative process:

Table 3: Key Project Milestones and the Role of the LMG in facilitating the collaborative process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Project Milestones</th>
<th>Nature of Challenge</th>
<th>Key Level(s) of the LMG</th>
<th>Key Characteristic of LMG that facilitated the collaborative process</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identification of objectives of common interest</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary theme (gender equity)</td>
<td>Technical Level</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary composition of the LMG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preservation of municipal autonomy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Horizontal information flows to identify common interests and strengths/weaknesses of each municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of actions that should be migrated from the municipality to the consortium</td>
<td></td>
<td>Establishment of theoretical baseline among all municipal technical team members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration of technical viability studies</td>
<td>Lack of municipal and/or regional database on domestic violence trends</td>
<td>Technical Level</td>
<td>Technical Teams ability to create strategic partnerships with federal university and the National Secretariat for Women Rights to subsidise the information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of information system at the existing Shelter House</td>
<td>Coordination Nucleus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaboration of the Protocol of Intentions Draft</td>
<td>Highly complex document requiring political, legal and technical definition</td>
<td>Management Level</td>
<td>Legal representatives participating in training workshops on the 11.107/05 law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budgetary anxiety expressed by the top-level management</td>
<td>Technical Level</td>
<td>Definition by Management Level to draw a draft of the yearly budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of legal knowledge regarding the 11.107/05 legislation</td>
<td>Legal Level</td>
<td>Involvement of the Legal group in technical discussions from the beginning of the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination Nucleus</td>
<td>Elaboration of the Charter of Collaboration Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adherence to the rule of consensus building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signing of the Protocol of Intentions</td>
<td>End-of-year municipal calendar</td>
<td>Management Level</td>
<td>Leverage of strategic date to commemorate event (giving visibility to Mayors)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ratification of the Protocol of Intentions into Municipal Law</td>
<td>End-of-year municipal calendar</td>
<td>Management Level</td>
<td>Leverage of political allies to push the signing of the contract in the municipal councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political negotiations in the municipal councils</td>
<td>Technical Level</td>
<td>Meetings with Mayor and councilmen with the participation of the Management and Technical Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordination Nucleus</td>
<td>Designation of public meetings at the council to discuss law with civil society</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Elaboration of the Consortium Contract and signing | Administrative hassles  
Political arm-wrestling between two municipalities | Management Level  
Technical Level | Definition of Management Level to pass the municipal laws without amendments  
Definition by the technical team of a key and symbolic date to sign the contract  
Definition by the Management Level of the location to sign contract  
Continuous flow of information between the Management and Technical levels to maintain designated date  
Invitation of Women’s Rights Minister to the event |
| Integration into the indirect administration of the Consortiated entities | Incongruence of the Law 11.107/05 with other administrative regulations  
Lack of knowledge on the procedural steps of integration | Management Level  
Legal & Accounting Level  
Coordination Nucleus | Formation of the accounting sub-group within the legal level of the LMG  
Series of meetings between the accounting representatives from the municipalities and mixed meetings between management and accounting groups  
Consultations with Higher Account Tribunals to receive technical note on best approach |
| Issue of Business Number and opening of bank account | Need to nominate accountant to act as the legal representative of the consortium | Management Level  
Legal & Accounting Level | Flow of vertical information between the management and accounting levels to clarify the necessity to have an exclusive accountant for the job  
Definition at the Management Level of the team designated from the municipalities to work in the consortium  
Nomination of accountant for consortium |
| Proceedings of Budgetary Destination | Incongruence of the Law 11.107/05 with other administrative regulations  
Lack of knowledge on the procedural steps of integration  
Deadline for Budgetary Calendar looming | Legal & Accounting Level  
Management Level  
Coordination Nucleus | Definition of a specific due date to give time for municipalities to include budget allocation in the 2009 Municipal Budget Proposals  
Inter-institutional meetings between legal and accounting levels to define best approach for budgetary destination |
| Elaboration of the Budgetary Contract | Changes in the budget values approved by municipal budget bylaws  
Incomplete information from some municipalities | Legal Level | Definition by Management Level of due date to present the draft Budgetary contract |
Signing of the Budgetary Contract | IN PROCESS
---|---
Elaboration of the Program Contract | - Multidisciplinary theme (gender equity)
|   - Preservation of municipal autonomy
| - Technical Level
|   - Legal Level
| - Multidisciplinary composition of the LMG
| - Horizontal information flows to identify common interests and strengths/weaknesses of each municipality
| - Establishment of theoretical baseline among all municipal technical team members
| - Mapping of regional assistance network
| - Inclusion of suggestions from other regional experiences

Signing of the Program Contract | IN PROCESS

4.2 The Role of External Factors in the collaborative process

Undeniably, the municipal LMGs and the ILMG were fundamental instruments in catalyzing the inter-institutional collaborative effort and in carrying out the process outlined by the Federal Law 11.107/05 to create and consolidate the Public Consortium. The ILMG’s ability to carry out these tasks can be directly linked to its structure and the profile of its members, which reflected the five dimensions of collaboration and the challenges held therein.

To a certain extent, we can conclude that the structure of this institutionalized mechanism of collaboration was successful at reducing bureaucracy with the public institution and, more importantly, was able to maintain a transparent flow of information, an essential element in consolidating the inter-institutional effort. This experience generated a highly innovative model of collaboration—one that resulted in the formation of the 1st Public Consortium exclusively oriented at promoting social equity.

However, it is necessary to mention the role that external factors had regarding the consolidation of the Public Consortium. The political atmosphere at the time and, more specifically, the affinity between the State Government and the Municipality of Belo Horizonte indirectly facilitated the interaction between the State and the consortiated municipalities. This happened because there was no political antagonistic feeling between the involved municipalities—especially in Belo Horizonte as the core city in the process—and both municipal and state governments were actively involved in creating inter-institutional collaborative mechanisms for the metropolitan region of Belo Horizonte. Examples of these efforts include the enactment of the Metropolitan Agency, the Forum for Metropolitan Development, and the involvement of the State Secretariat for Urban and Regional Development in the creation of other Public Consortia in the Metropolitan Region and other regions in the State of Minas Gerais. All these variables offered fertile grounds for inter-institutional collaboration, and by doing so, indirectly reduced the transaction costs. (Machado, 2007)
Another external element to consider is the fact that the four municipalities already shared a history of ‘informal cooperation’. Members of the Coordination Nucleus already worked together on issues related to gender equity. The common vision of a great good helped to extrapolate the municipal boundaries and the municipal technical and budgetary asymmetries. It should be pointed out that many of the team participants are militants, both from the feminist movement and/or of political parties and as such have shared goals for promoting social equity. The identity of the group was inherited in this grass-root and bottom-up approach. On many occasions the vision of the Coordination Nucleus helped to overcome administrative, technical and political hurdles, that otherwise would have increased the perception of the transaction costs.

Notwithstanding, it is also important to reflect on the municipal LMGs and ILMG’s shortcomings. First and foremost, the ILMG was unable to guarantee that the Consortium would have a sufficient full-time workforce. The political decision was that the consortium would begin to operate with public employees transferred from their respective municipalities (except for the position of the Superintendent which would be hired by the Consortium), until a formal selection process could be implemented to hire the consortium’s staff. This decision had the objective to reduce the initial operational costs of the consortium. But due to administrative bottlenecks and conditions brought about by the municipal elections, the process of transferring the employees was reduced to the nomination of the Consortium’s Thematic Coordinator. To compound this challenge, and partially due to the instability caused by the municipal elections, the ILMG have been overly cautious, and understandably so (considering the seriousness of the decision), with the nomination of the Consortium’s superintendent.

To some degree the challenges faced by the Consortium have, up to a point, hindered the formation of the Consortium’s own identity. That is, the ILMG still perceived itself as an independent mechanism, rather than seeing itself as a component of the Consortium’s organizational structure. This fact has been aggravated by changes in the composition of the municipal LMGs and ILMG, caused by the municipal elections and the inevitable changes in government.

Currently the ILMG is designing a strategy to deal with this fact through an agenda of meetings with the Mayors of each municipality and the re-assignment of new members to the ILMG as a component of the Public Consortium.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Characteristics of Successful Collaborative Mechanisms

The purpose of the preceding section was to show the role and effectiveness of the Local Management Groups as the institutional mechanism that was used in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte to promote inter-institutional collaboration. This role was important for managing and diluting political, financial, administrative, technical and legal transaction costs. The analysis followed the legal and procedural framework set by the federal Public Consortia Law as the basis for consolidating inter-institutional collaboration. The chronological narration...
of events aimed to facilitate the identification of how the five dimensions either fostered and/or inhibited inter-institutional collaboration.

Of the five regions where the NPC Project is currently being implemented, the municipal Local Management Groups and the Inter-municipal Local Management Group in the Metropolitan Region of Belo Horizonte were the most successful at stimulating inter-institutional collaboration and minimizing the implied transaction costs. Based on this case study, it is possible to identify some key points and lessons learned with regards to the profile, nature and role of this inter-institutional mechanism in fostering collaborative arrangements:

- Municipalities started with LMGs and later created ILMGs to increase the horizontal and vertical interaction between the members and increase the flow of information;
- ILMGs had their Coordination Nucleus based in Municipal Secretariats;
- ILMGs adhered to the principle of multi-disciplinarity in the composition of the Management Level (top-level officials) and Technical Level (staff);
- Legal counsel participated from the beginning in the technical discussions;
- The ILMG and the Coordination Nucleus placed considerable effort in informing civil society the regional collaboration effort;
- ILMGs and municipal LMGs dedicated the effort in building a Charter of Collaboration Principles as the first exercise in consensus building;
- ILMGs focused initially on the process-side of forming the collaborative framework rather than focusing on the action-side of regional intervention;
- Pilot projects were used to test regional approach to dealing with the common challenge that they were facing;
- ILMGs were able to create partnerships with state and federal agencies and ministries, to further advance their agenda and in return obtain visibility and technical support; and
- ILMGs were able to withstand the political turmoil caused by the municipal elections by continuously investing in regional articulations and awareness building within their institutions.

These points and lessons learned refer to both the dimensions of collaboration and the external factors that influence transaction costs intensity, and how stakeholders perceive these costs.

5.2 Multi-level nature of the Collaborative Inter-institutional Framework

The nature of the policy or program that can be a potential object of a collaborative effort can define the perceived transaction costs, and thus, the decision if and whether the policy or program will be implemented collaboratively. Some political scientists emphasize the need to understand how the political agenda is formed as a function of the pressures exerted by interests of various institutional actors and the asymmetry of forces (Souza 2003; Frey, 2000). These studies tend to typify public policies into two categories: distributive and redistributive public policies that have specific decision making processes which inevitably bring a transaction cost.

Distributive polices are those that are financed by society as a whole and promote the distribution of social goods and/or services for strengthening universal rights without an additional fee for the good or service. In contrast, redistributive policies promote the transfer of resources and services from one segment of society to the other, and are financed by tax
collection and user-fees (Frey, 2000). Due to a lack of comparative studies, it is impossible to ascertain whether distributive or redistributive policies are easier to work with through a collaborative inter-institutional framework, that is, whether a type of policy implies higher or lower transaction costs. Thus, the ‘difficulty’ or in other words, the high transaction cost, is a function of the collaborative process that redistributive and distributive policies imply. A second level of analysis should be considered to identify the actual transaction costs of collaborative approaches to public policy development and implementation: that of *procedural* transaction costs.

Inevitably, the five dimensions that shape the asymmetry of forces and the contextual factors influence the perceived and actual costs of transaction, which in turn define the public entrepreneur’s will and ability to engage in inter-institutional collaboration. In essence, the perceived costs of transaction play on how the agents of change answer the key *meta-questions* of inter-institutional collaboration:
1) Why? and For Whom?
2) How? and For what?

The following conceptual diagram illustrates the relationship between the four fundamental questions set by the collaborative approach: the transaction costs at the macro and micro scales; and the contextual factors and dimensions of inter-institutional collaboration which form the ‘mental model’ of the public entrepreneur.

*Figure 4: Conceptual diagram of the Transaction Costs, Entrepreneur Mental Models and the four baseline questions of inter-institutional collaboration*
As the diagram shows, the definition of the transactions costs (at both the macro and micro scale), and the perceptions and anxieties held within the ‘mental model’ have an effect on the definition of the ‘For What’ question and consequently the approach or the ‘How’ question of collaboration.

The assessment of the transaction costs defines the object and intensity of the collaboration as well as the level of interaction. The ‘mental models’ and the perceptions and anxieties held within determine the difficulties of the collaborative dynamic for a specific objective of common interest.

Furthermore, all actors calculate the costs of transactions subjectively, and their ‘mental models’ will be defined by the level of access to a specific type of information (i.e. political/partisan alignments among the entities that share a common interest) and/or the asymmetrical realities of each institution.

It is important to note that the contextual factors and the five dimensions which compose the ‘mental models’, that Machado (based on North) (2007) terms as agents of change or public entrepreneurs, are moved by their subjective perception ‘of opportunity’ as a function of access to information and transparency. Finally, the role that the dimensions play throughout the inter-institutional collaborative cycle also varies, reflecting the specific point of the implementation process.

It is possible to assume that the ‘collective nature’ of distributive policies that envision a ‘greater good through the sustainment of universal rights’ could generate or meet less resistance from the public entrepreneur than, for example, transferring the control of municipal monetary profits collected from user-fees to a regional body (as would be the case for regional transportation authorities, metropolitan solid waste collection and other hard-infrastructure, fee-based oriented metropolitan consortia) (Frey, 2000). However, more studies are required to determine procedural differences between inter-institutional collaborative approaches to distributive and/or redistributive policies.

What we can state, with a certain level of confidence, is that the two levels of analysis are related to one another as they attempt to answer the Why and For Whom question from the macro and micro perspectives.

6.0 Conclusion

The main objective of this article was to present through a case study approach an institutional mechanism capable of mitigating the perceived and actual transaction costs of inter-institutional collaboration while maintaining continuous and transparent flows of information. Undeniably, the ability of the Local Management Group in successfully mitigating the transactions costs during the implementation of the Mulheres das Gerais Regional Consortium is related to its multi-level structure and its members’ profile, which reflected the five dimensions that can shape the asymmetry of forces in inter-institutional collaborative frameworks. During the consortiation process, the political, technical, legal, budgetary and administrative dimensions
were part of the asymmetries between the four municipalities and were monitored in its continuous process of change. The LMG’s ability to react to events and factors and prevent the rise of the actual and perceived transaction costs was a critical factor in implementing the Regional Consortium.

The analysis of this process and of the role that the LMG played in the implementation of the Regional Consortium led to defining two basic features that inter-institutional collaboration mechanisms should have: 1) horizontal and transparent flows of information to promote consensus building; and 2) agility and legitimacy in dealing with highly complex issues through a multi-level structure that incorporates a coordination nucleus.

As was shown through the case study, these two characteristics minimized and in some instances diluted the procedural transaction costs during the consortiation process. But as the analysis also showed, the LMG mechanism’s ability to function is related to external factors. In the Mulheres das Gerais Regional Consortium case, the external factors helped the metropolitan dialogue. The path dependence among the staffs of the four municipalities, and the regional culture that was being promoted by metropolitan-oriented institutions such as the State Secretariat of Urban and Regional Development (SEDRU), greatly reduced the transaction costs in the inter-municipal dialogue, from both a political and technical perspective.

According to the NPC Project’s social equity approach, the Regional Consortium for the Promotion of Citizenry: Mulheres das Gerais is an example of a metropolitan approach to a distributive policy in which the universal right to gender equity is promoted through the fight against violence against women. However, it is still early to say whether the consortium will be capable of sustainably and effectively promote social equity in the long term. Nevertheless, this experience shows that the consortiation process, regardless of its distributive or redistributive policy focus, is highly complex and is replete with real and perceived transaction costs. Further studies are required to map out the different transaction costs held within these two policy realms and, consequently, propose mechanisms capable of minimizing their costs.

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