

# **Intergovernmental relations in Brazil and their role in public administration: types, structures, and functioning**

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## **Introduction**

Analyzing and to describe the functioning and models and designs of intergovernmental relations (IGRs) and cooperation arrangements between spheres of government in Brazil, after 1988, and their relationship with public administration is the focus of this chapter. Federal systems may or may not create mechanisms for IGRs. In general, negotiations between different governments are necessary for policy coordination (Hueglin and Fenna, 2015). IGRs can be institutionalized or be more informal and ad hoc depending on the historical trajectory of each federation (Bolleyer, 2006; 2009). In addition, urgent demands that generate spillover effects between territories can encourage more cooperative arrangements (e.g. natural disasters or pandemics such as the current COVID-19).

The more formal arenas the IGR arenas are, the stronger the coordination between different governments (Bolleyer, 2006). In this sense, they function as a safeguard of the federation (Bolleyer, 2006; Benkhe and Mueller, 2017) preserving autonomy (self-government) while bringing federal and subnational governments closer together (sharing rule). The balance achieved at these two poles of the equation may indicate the likelihood of greater coordination or conflict with implications for federal robustness (Burgess, 2006; Braun, Palmeiro, and Schnabel, 2017; Bednar, 2009). The type of federative IGRs also depends on the trajectory of each federation and “may be weakly or strongly institutionalized” (Broschek, 2011, p. 667).

Federations characterized by double allocation of attributions generally make the cooperative systems weaker, while the more cooperative ones use them to build arenas or at least agreements between different spheres of government. The likelihood of obtaining cooperation indicates the “capacity of national and subnational governments [...] to work together to solve public policy problems” (Inwood, Johns, and O'Reily, 2011, p. 14). This goal is even more challenging when issues require high levels of coordination and collaboration, as was the case with the COVID-19 pandemic, which required different levels of government to work together and share responsibilities (Parquet and Schertzer, 2020, p. 2).

The way these intergovernmental cooperation arrangements are built varies according to the institutional design assumed in federative countries. In the United States there are almost no formal coordination mechanisms, although within each policy domain there are close political connections. In Brazil there are different intergovernmental arenas, but the health sector is the most striking and institutionalized example of a national system based on federative coordination involving the three levels of government (Grin and Abrucio, 2018a; Grin, Lotta and Abrucio, 2023). In Canada, there are regular meetings between the federal prime minister and provincial prime ministers as well as more specific policy connections between ministers and bureaucrats. In summary, subnational autonomy (self-government) associated with strong coordination mechanisms (shared rule based on intergovernmental cooperation arrangements) can be a means of obtaining benefits from both centralization and decentralization, which affects the functioning of public administration in all spheres of government (Peters, Grin, and Abrucio, 2021)

There are different responses from IGRs, considering the variety of federalisms (Benz and Broschek, 2013). There may be countries where there are more regularized or institutional councils (Bolleyer, 2006) that perform adequately to mobilize intergovernmental efforts (Canada). In other countries, these arenas function as a buffer against conflict or preemption from the national government (Brazil). Finally, countries where the federative dispute generates

ad hoc IGR arrangements for (Argentina) or where decision-making centralization is stronger (Mexico). Different answers can be found with more centralized and decentralized models, as well as supported by coercion, participation or agreements (Hueglin & Fenna, 2015; Kincaid, 2015) and different, but complementary (vertical, horizontal or sectoral) (Philipmore, 2013).

Studying the types to organize intergovernmental forums and councils constitute a subset of IGRs. Assigning different powers and/or functions to different orders of government requires vertical and horizontal cooperation: decisions adopted by one sphere of government often have consequences for citizens of another, and central government administrative action may even affect citizens of all regions. Indeed, the connection between the design and types of IGRs affects the structure and functioning of public administration.

When investigating the existence and types of IGRs it is important to know what purposes they serve and how effective they are in this respect. Furthermore, the purpose of IGRs varies between federations and between public policy sectors. It is also relevant whether a policy field is the exclusive jurisdiction of the central sphere, shared or exclusively regional. Two important analytical issues are: a) direction of interaction - ascending, descending or horizontal - between the actors involved and the hierarchy between them; b) motivation of the existing format of IGRs: influencing other units; preserve jurisdictional autonomy and competences from external interference; cooperation of joint actions or decisions and exchange of information and knowledge sharing (Behnke and Mueller, 2017).

In this sense, considering the experience of the Brazilian federalism, decentralization has become one of the dominant characteristics in the organization of the State in Brazil since 1988. Above all, municipalities have a central role in assuming the main responsibilities for the implementation of public policies, especially in the areas of health, social assistance and education. At the same time, the Brazilian federation gave municipalities constitutional guarantees regarding their autonomy as a federative entity. The combination of these two characteristics was and continues to be important in intergovernmental relations, as the federal government needs to consider the willingness of municipalities to implement public policies whose general guidelines are defined by the Union.

In this context, there are four experiences of interaction instruments between the federal government and the municipalities. The most advanced and formalized models are in the areas of health and social assistance, in which a federative agreement arena brings together managers from the three levels of government. This forum is called the Tripartite Intermanagers Commission and is an integral part of intergovernmental management within the scope, respectively, of the Unified Health and Social Assistance Systems. They are mandatory instances of agreement, which reduces the conditions for the federal government to adopt centralized and unilateral decisions. In education, an informal and ad hoc model works in which the federal government eventually consults municipalities through their national union representation. There is also a formal forum - Council of the Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and the Valorization of Education Professionals - in which municipalities have a minority presence, but without the same strength as their counterparts in health and social assistance.

The other important experience was the Federative Articulation Committee, which formally existed from 2003 to 2014, a consultative forum coordinated by the federal government in which the three national associations of municipalities held half of the chairs. Many matters of municipal interest were agreed in this forum. The article analyzes these experiences and discusses how municipalities have managed to channel and advocate their interests, and the implications that can be obtained by comparing the three models in the Brazilian case.

Describing and analyzing the design, and political and administrative drivers of Brazilian IGRs, four institutionalized types of intergovernmental relations will be analyzed and

how each of these models integrates public administration bodies in the three spheres of government:

1. 1 Vertical forum made up of generalists (Council of Federation). This was replaced, in 2023, by the Council of Federation.
2. 5 horizontal forums formed by generalists (Forum of Governors and 4 Interstate Consortia).
3. 4 vertical forums formed by sectoral specialists (intergovernmental councils formed by the respective Federal Ministries and by representatives from state and municipal councils in the areas of health, social assistance, and education, and directly by state secretariats in the case of finance).
4. 28 horizontal forums formed by sectoral specialists (health, social assistance, finance and education) at the state and municipal level as well as inter-municipal consortia in more than 28 policy sectors.

According to Wright (1988), political-administrative generalists are usually elected political leaders who are responsible for all government actions while specialists are the leaders and administrators responsible for public policy sectors. Vertical arenas are made up of more than one level of government while horizontal arenas are made up of governments of the same level.

Based on the analysis of these four types of cooperation and IGR models, it will be possible to identify the effects for public administration in the three spheres of government. In the Brazilian case, these are the main organizational models of IGRs, which justifies their selection as an object of analysis. However, the structure and functioning of the IGRs are highly contextual, so that it is important to insert this debate in the process of political, administrative and fiscal decentralization that began in Brazil with the new Federal Constitution of 1988 (FC 88), enacted after the end of military rule. Considering that, the chapter has five sections. First, a general context of the Brazilian cooperative federalism and IGRs. The following four sections analyze each type of institutionalized types of intergovernmental relations. I close this chapter with concluding remarks.

### **1. The institutions of cooperative federalism intergovernmental relations**

Public policy decentralization was a core theme of the FC 88. The assumption was that the more policies were decided and/or implemented at the local level, the closer they would be to the citizens, thus ensuring greater government accountability. The tendency to municipalize the management of public policies was very strong. It was believed that decentralizing would mean democratizing and increasing government efficiency, a supposition that is not always was found necessarily true (Arretche, 1996; Abrucio & Soares, 2001).

Certainly, the FC 88 did not ignore the need to create intergovernmental mechanisms and to guarantee resources and power to subnational governments while the federal government could play an active role in regulating the behavior of the states and municipalities. Therefore, most legislative competences were defined as responsibility of central government, giving it the capacity to establish national standards for public policies (Franzese, 2010). The administrative and financial resources of the federal government also have a lot of power to induce, although it does not completely determine, the behavior of subnational entities in the federative game (Arretche, 1999).

But there were some gaps in the federative plan since 1988 legislation to improve the federative framework and intergovernmental relations are still one of the most sensitive issues in public policies. Furthermore, decentralization assumed different meanings and content in each policy area depending on the prior distribution of competences and the control exercised over resources by the three levels of government (Arretche, 2012).

However, the policy devolution and responsibilities to subnational governments that took place up to the mid-1990s generated a centrifugal model that was less oriented toward

cooperation between the three levels of government (Abrucio, 2005). Decentralization was organized on the basis of different arrangements that considered the characteristics of each sector and public policy, the previous sharing of responsibilities, and financial control over resources among the three levels of government (Abrucio and Grin, 2015).

Especially after 1995, the Federal Government began to adopt measures designed to bring decentralization and joint coordination closer together to ease the role of public administration both in policy decision-making authority and policy-making attributions (Arretche, 2009): it is up to the central government to formulate public policies while subnational units essentially assume their implementation. This division of attributions was a central reason for the Federal Government to install vertical and sectoral intergovernmental forum and public health and social assistance policies since the mid 1990s plus a federal forum of financial issues whose installation had occurred in 1975. In a more informal way and more restricted as for its focus the same model it was adopted by education sector.

This model extant at the federal level influenced its mirroring in horizontal and sectoral forum involving both state and municipal government mainly in health, education, finances, and social assistance. Other areas without federal forum also created intergovernmental state forum sectors such as culture, public administration, planning, tourism, public security, science, technology and innovation affairs and energy affairs, among others. In addition, although inter-municipal consortia are a reality since the 1960s, this process was boosted after the promulgation of a federal law allowing the creation of public consortia in line with the Brazilian administrative law, which generated more legal stability for these arrangements (Grin and Abrucio, 2017).

Regarding forum of intergovernmental relations based on jurisdictional lines, their appearance occurred in two moments after 2003. Firstly, the federal government created an original forum, including considering the comparative experience, called Committee on Federative Articulation (CAF) formed by national and municipal representatives. In other countries where this type of forum exists, state governments usually have a prominent role. The second phase in the expansion of intergovernmental relations based on jurisdictional lines is more recent and somehow influenced by the confluence of two factors: the upsurge of the COVID-19 and the confrontation of Bolsonaro government against governors and the federal constitution. Both reasons created political incentives for the states' governors increase their collaboration through two channels: the Forum of Governors and regional cooperation based on the creation of four inter-state consortia.

## **2. The Committee of Federative Articulation: generalist and vertical cooperation model**

The CAF was created in 2003, during the first Lula administration (2003-2006), to generate a federative “meeting of agendas” between the central government and the national municipal associations. Its objective was to build a federative pact with the municipalities so that they would no longer be supporting characters in the construction of federal public policies. However, state governments were excluded for political reasons: most governors were elected in 2002 by political parties in opposition to the federal government, which is why an attempt was made to dialogue directly with municipalities<sup>1</sup>.

CAF had three levels of management: the Plenary, the Technical Secretariat and the Working Groups. The Plenary, the highest decision-making body, always by consensus, was composed of 19 representatives of the federal government and 18 members of the national entities of the three municipal associations – the Brazilian Association of Municipalities, the National Confederation of Municipalities and the National Front of Mayors. The Technical Secretariat was formed by the Executive Secretaries of the municipal associations and

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<sup>1</sup> As Brazilian federalism is trine, and each sphere is autonomous from the others, the federal government does not interfere in the constitutional competence of the States when it acts in partnership with the municipalities.

representatives of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and the Subcommittee of Federative Affairs (SAF). The SAF was in charge of the Executive Secretariat, although its organizational and technical structure was non-existent for this (Grin, 2020).

With CAF, the federative pact acquired political relevance by being housed as an advisory body of the Secretariat for Institutional Relations (SRI) of the Presidency of the Republic, and with the committee acting as a direct expression of the head of government. But when compared with the German and Australian experiences in which premiers run the cooperation arenas, CAF did not have the same political and constitutional density (Grin and Abrucio, 2018). CAF was established by presidential decree, and this was a striking difference compared to the German, Swiss, South African, Canadian and Australian cases, as constitutional and/or legal support gave it a fragile intergovernmental decision-making authority. Thus, this forum essentially acted as an articulation structure, but without command or enforcement power over other federal bodies. Actions to promote “intergovernmental partnership” focused on “jurisdictions” (territories) did not overcome the challenges of involving “functions” (sectoral policies) in the proposed initiatives (Grin and Abrucio, 2018b).

In Brazil, arrangements based on public policies are the dominant form of intergovernmental cooperation, which has pushed those of a jurisdictional nature into the background. Therefore, obtaining the adhesion of central bodies was difficult for a federative forum with limited decision-making authority and devoid of technical capacity. As intragovernmental cooperation was not the rule, this situation limited its results in the intergovernmental arena. CAF coordinated the efforts of central agencies aimed at qualifying municipal administrations but did not have the decision-making capacity to implement any action. The ascendancy of sectorial bodies superseded the model of territorial cooperation and CAF had no veto power over actions that impacted municipalities, like the German Bundesrat in matters involving the interests of territorial entities (Gunlicks, 2003).

Furthermore, after 2007, CAF lost legitimacy with municipal entities, which limited its role as an intergovernmental liaison. Even the successes achieved by CAF in the arena of fiscal federalism between 2003 and 2006 (increased intergovernmental transfers in the main federal fund whose rules for use are not conditional and new rates for municipal taxes) were not enough to drive the modernization of municipal management. The view that municipalities would have more financial resources to qualify their relations with the federal sphere did not materialize. In line with Krane and Wright (2000), even the fiscal results, which were the most tangible, contributed little to the qualification of municipal administrations.

Another challenge for CAF to build its federative agenda was to overcome the “joint decision trap”, as its deliberations were adopted only by consensus. However, unlike the German and Australian cases, its decisions had no guarantee that they would be implemented, as this was a forum for advice and consultation without the power to adopt binding agendas. The fact that themes of municipal interest did not generate agreement between the federal bodies that composed it exemplifies this “trap”: by not being approved by consensus, its practical effect was to maintain the status quo of actions implemented by existing sectoral bodies at the federal level (Grin and Abrucio, 2018b).

The case of CAF shows a situation in which the federative pact, unlike the Australian case, cannot surround “the central agencies” because as these “escaped” from CAF an “intergovernmental body with a national mandate” was not generated. Considering the Australian experience, Painter (1998) argues that this political capacity was essential in the case of the Council of Australian Governments for territorial cooperation to be implemented, which was achieved through regular interactions between a key group of federal agencies and subnational governments.

CAF was closer to being a consultative body proposing policies and studies on municipal management. However, an intergovernmental forum with this limitation of

intragovernmental power did not have the political resources to mediate agreements aimed at constituting a “renewed Federation”. According to Agranoff and McGuire (1998), a criterion for assessing whether territorial cooperation holds intragovernmental power resources is its effectiveness in removing internal governmental barriers. When it came to transferring intergovernmental agreements to intragovernmental dynamics, federal agencies assumed the tasks of regulating the decisions agreed upon in CAF, which generated problems in their implementation. The greater the gap between CAF and the bureaucracies of federal agencies, the less intergovernmental cooperation was generated. According to Berman (2003), not being successful in facing these obstacles can inhibit intergovernmental activity as instances of federative cooperation may not have political resources to promote the interests of entities within the governmental system. That was the reality of CAF.

The diagnosis that the Brazilian Federation lacked a territorial arena for intergovernmental cooperation with municipal entities, as the existing instances were sectoral or aimed only at involving the States, did not generate an effective model with CAF's action. Intergovernmental forums with these characteristics do not depend only on territorial adherence but, as they are transversal to sectoral policies, they demand intragovernmental authority over agencies and ministries. Compared to the experience of the German, Canadian and Australian territorial cooperation forums, this was the main reason for CAF's failure. This issue can differentiate forums with enforcement capacity from those that are nothing more than “pseudo-arenas” (Pressman, 1975) or “advisory groups” (Inwood, Johns and O’Reilly, 2011).

The German and Canadian experiences were successful because they consolidated themselves as a forum formed by polities, aligned policies and operated in intergovernmental management by having technical and organizational capabilities to establish links between the central level and the subnational sphere. The gathering of these three dimensions depends on the political and federative legitimacy achieved but mainly stems from the legal and/or constitutional rules that define its decision-making scope. However, without intragovernmental power resources, the possibility of effective action in intergovernmental relations is reduced, which can condition the reach of its decisions. In this respect, the Brazilian experience differs greatly from the German and Australian models as the strength of policies is greater than the power of subnational polities in federative cooperation (Grin and Abrucio, 2018b).

Finally, it is important to highlight that the federative undertaking proposed by CAF did not involve the states because they were mostly from opposition parties. The construction of federative arenas involving the three levels of government is one of the institutional foundations of health and social assistance policy systems, but it did not form the basis of the model adopted by CAF. As evidenced by the intergovernmental management of health and social assistance, the presence of the states, lander or provinces is essential to support federative cooperation and also essential to understand the successes achieved in the German, Australian and Canadian experiences.

In summary, given the international experience – and considering the importance of this type of forum having to hold intragovernmental power to influence issues of federative inequality that affect municipal administration – institutions such as CAF have limited power resources to act in the intergovernmental arena. Because of that, after an initial success to deal with pressing federative demands, the CAF lost political force and momentum after 2011.

### **3. Governors' Forum and the experiences of Interstate Consortia**

The Governors Forum (FG) was established in 2017 and officially called the Permanent Forum of Governors of the States and the Federal District which acts as an informal entity for articulating positions that brings together the 27 state governments represented by their governors. The Forum also counts on the work of the National College of 27 Attorneys General of the States and the Federal District, and a Technical Committee composed of 27 Secretaries

of Finance. The second cooperation experience is the four interstate consortia that exist in the five regions of the country and allow the definition of common actions.

The FG is based on a political pact and based on a protocol between governors without any formal legal norm as a support. The meetings happen in ad hoc way and a without fixed schedule. As a forum focused on interchanging of information, sharing good practices, and building of a common agenda about topics to discuss with the federal government. Their decisions are not obligatory for the state members, so that there is not any legal or formal level of bindingness. Once FG is only formed by governors, federal government does not interfere and its functioning. The secretariat is rotative formed by the state whose governor is its chair.

Regarding the Forum, four factors have driven its functioning: a) fiscal nature: the loss of relevance of states in Brazilian federalism and the burden of maintaining the provision of public policies; b) assumed role in the COVID-19 pandemic with the absence of the federal government; c) institutional learning: the previous experience of the forums of governors in the regions of the country that could be extended to the national arena as a way of reinforcing the intergovernmental lobby with the federal government in matters of tax nature, federal transfers and the federative pact itself regarding the constitutionally guaranteed state autonomy; d) federative disputes: the role played by the Bolsonaro government and its vision of a confrontational federalism with subnational entities (Abrucio et al., 2020). The analysis carried out here on the Governors' Forum is, to my knowledge, the first academic work, so that there are no previous references in the literature.

Considering the first topic, Brazilian federalism favored municipalities in its decentralizing arrangement initiated in 1988 as the main responsible for the implementation of social welfare policies. The States had functions more focused on the coordination and co-financing of policies. However, the Union gradually reduced constitutional transfers by creating sources of funding not shared with the States (Arretche, 2012). At the same time, states expanded their responsibilities which increases their expenses. The FC 88 defines a series of universal social rights in health, social assistance, public security and education, and these are areas that are costly to finance and provide, especially for states and municipalities. In objective terms, the weakening of the federal pact defined by the FC 88 that has been impacting state finances and the quality of public service provision. The Governors' Forum, therefore, has been strongly guided by the need to discuss changes in revenue sharing and competences of the Union, states and municipalities.

In the Covid-19 pandemic, the unexpectedly triggered crisis not only catapulted governors as protagonists but also reinforced the foundations for a more institutional and politically consolidated model of federative horizontal collaboration. Facing the pandemic strengthened federalism as the Supreme Court recognized the powers of states and municipalities to combat the health crisis (Abrucio et al. 2020). Above all, it became a strong incentive to bring governors closer together, despite ideological and party differences, which increased the agreed execution of actions.

The crisis triggered by Covid-19, in an unforeseen way, intensified the cooperation between governors that had already been taking place due to the lack of political authority and the federative conflict initiated by President Bolsonaro. It will still be necessary to verify whether the states will continue to advance in their collective action agenda. But considering the way this Forum has been guiding the federal government since 2020, and more recently with its organization to renegotiate tax and fiscal issues with the newly sworn-in Lula government, the probability of strengthening itself as an arena of intergovernmental cooperation should grow in the next years.

Finally, the institutional learning and policy diffusion derived from the previous experience of the regional forums of governors that showed the importance of collective action. The first intergovernmental cooperation process installed, in 1999, was the Southern

Development and Integration Council (CODESUR), which is a Governors' Forum which brings together 4 states in the Center-South of the country. The second experiment was the Northeast Governors Forum installed in 2000 (bringing together 9 of the 27 states) which annually consolidates an integrated development agenda between the states and the federal government. The Forum of Governors of the Legal Amazon meets annually, since 2008, to discuss sustainable development in its 9 states. At each meeting, a letter is drawn up with the demands presented to civil society and the federal government. This bottom-up process of intergovernmental cooperation, in which all states in each region participate, ended up converging on a more coordinated action across the federation.

Another form of horizontal cooperation between generalists is the recent experience of interstate consortia. Also, the existent literature is still incipient, but some works have been analyzing this intergovernmental cooperation arrangement ((Brom, 2021). There are currently four interstate consortia legally supported by the federal law that, since 2005, governs the creation and operation of public consortia. The most consolidated model is the so-called Consortium of the Northeast that brings together its nine states, created in 2019, also in the wake of the intergovernmental relationship crisis generated by the Bolsonaro government.

The consortium is a legal, political and economic instrument for the integration of states in order to generate sustainable development in the region. Their decisions are bindingness to all states since they signed up a contract agreeing upon this. Among the possibilities opened up by its creation are the carrying out of joint purchases, the integrated implementation of public policies, modernizing public administration, attracting investments and cooperation also at an international level. The consortium gained international notoriety with the creation of the Scientific Committee to Combat the Coronavirus which brought together scientists and a network of Brazilian collaborators and several countries. Another contribution of this intergovernmental cooperation forum is the setting up of governance forums among public managers in areas such as social assistance administration and planning, culture, economic development, education, finance, environment, health and tourism (Brom, 2021).

Similar is the performance of the Interstate Consortium for Sustainable Development of the Legal Amazon, created in 2017, which brings together 9 states in the North region. The consortium seeks to contribute to economic and social development, innovation in public administration, science and technology, modernization of the regional economy with a view to its integration into the national and international economy, integration of public security policies and the prison system, attracting investments for the conservation of biodiversity, forests, climate and low carbon economy and incentive to public-private partnerships. The consortium has 7 sectoral chambers to implement projects in the areas of planning and strategic management, environment and sustainable development, education, health, public security, public communication and fiscal and tax management.

The Interstate Consortium for the Development of Central Brazil (BrC), created in 2015, is formed by 8 states and aims to promote the economic and social development of the region through intergovernmental cooperation. Its focus is on formulating regional policies and enabling projects, partnerships, resources and skills in the areas of economic development, infrastructure and logistics, improvement of the business and entrepreneurship environment, public administration (focus on dialogue with society, education, institutional articulation, balance tax, management by results and participatory management). The consortium's website has information on 12 projects with their status (purchase of medicines, combating dengue, preservation, rural assistance, among others), all of which are linked to one or more SDGs, which is a reference for their action. The transparency of its initiatives is a relevant feature.

The South and Southeast Integration Consortium (COSUD) was created in 2019 aiming to consolidate the cooperation agenda between the states of the South and Southeast with themes that meet economic, social and environmental demands. The two regions concentrate

70% of the national GDP and more than half of the Brazilian population. Among the consortium's priority areas are public safety, combating smuggling, the prison system, health, reducing bureaucracy, tourism, education, economic development, logistics and transport, innovation and technology.

The horizontal intergovernmental cooperation arrangements formed by generalists have a recent trajectory, so that it is not yet possible to evaluate the results achieved for public administration. However, the ongoing initiatives and the way in which the state bureaucracy has participated in the initiatives indicates that public administration is involved in their implementation.

It is worth noting that the interstate consortia continue to operate even though they have gone through more than one electoral cycle (in the case of BrC and Amazônia Legal two cycles). This matters as transaction costs for maintaining consortia involve coexistence between governments of different party ideologies. Thus, the survival of this institutionality is something to be highlighted, especially given the moment of strong political polarization that exists in Brazilian society (Abrucio et al., 2020). For reasons of a conjunctural nature (the Bolsonaro project of a concentrating and conflictive federalism against states and municipalities), structural (imbalances in fiscal federalism), antecedents (the virtuous experience of interstate cooperation in the regions) and the need to act to face a complex intergovernmental problem (Paquet and Schertzer, 2020) such as the pandemic, a confluence of factors favorable to the installation and reinforcement of this type of IGRs in Brazilian federalism was created.

By expanding the horizontal cooperation arenas and reinforcing the collective action of state governments, Brazilian federalism is closer to other countries where this has been a reality for some time. This is the case in Germany where regional forums formed by the *Landers* function (Lottha and Blumenthal, 2015; Schnabel, 2020) and in Canada where the Council of Federation brings together provincial premiers (Adams, Bergeron, and Bonnard, 2015), the United States where the Council of State Governments and the National Association of Governors (Bowman, 2017) and in Mexico the National Conference of Governors (Ruiz, 2020). The novelty in the Brazilian case, in a comparative perspective, are the interstate consortia built as legal personalities in accordance with the federal legislation that governs these arrangements.

#### **4. Sectoral and vertical cooperation in Brazilian federalism**

After 1988, Brazilian federalism intensified the decentralization of social policies to states and municipalities which soon gave rise to the need for federative coordination. This demand was initially more pronounced in the area of health and later in social assistance policy as both are organized into a single national system whose financing and operating rules need to be formally agreed upon between the three spheres of government. In the case of education, due to the previous trajectory of greater autonomy of state and municipal school networks, this format of intergovernmental cooperation is more fragile, limited in scope and organized on a more informal basis. In the field of fiscal federalism, the intergovernmental council has operated since 1975 during the military dictatorship and had its existence ratified by FC 88. These are the most relevant sectoral and vertical intergovernmental forums in the experience of Brazilian federalism and will be discussed in this section.

The dominant paradigm is the Unified Health System (SUS) that, since 1993, institutionalized a collegiate and consensual federative coordination and decision-making style (Abrucio and Grin, 2015; Fructuoso, 2010). As an attribution shared by all the states in the Brazilian federation, the challenge lies in defining deliberative and decision-making mechanisms. This has been addressed with the creation of institutional decision-making forums in which municipal, state, and federal managers participate: The Tripartite Interagency Committee (CIT) brings together officials from the three levels of government and, in Brazil's 27 states and Bipartite Interagency Committees (CIB) bring together state and municipal officials. These committees are anchored, in their turn, in the National Council of Municipal

Health Departments (CONASEMS) and the National Council of Health Secretaries (CONASS), which are horizontal and federative coordination forums (Leandro and Menicucci, 2018).

These new spaces of intergovernmental negotiation do not form part of the federative design of the FC 88 for public policies. They are the result of the evolution of a model that was created in the health policy area and that constitute an institutional legacy of this policy for the functioning of the Brazilian federation. In this sense, the innovations of the SUS have been helping to redefine the Brazilian federative model and introduces a new form of intergovernmental negotiation with effects that go beyond this sector. Proof of this is that its institutional format was reproduced in the social assistance area and gave rise to the Unified Social Assistance System (SUAS) (Grin, Lotta, and Abrucio, 2023). Their decisions on administrative issues are taken in a consensual way and are binding for the three spheres of government. Regarding the level of institutionalization, these forums were installed by the Ministry of Health through a type of decree known as Basic Operational Norm. Furthermore, the Ministry of Health manages the Executive Secretariat, and there is not rotation in this function. In the states, the CIBs are linked to Secretaries for Health and representatives of municipal secretariats. The organizational rules are similar to CIT at the national level.

In addition, the cooperative federalism mediated by CIT and CIB management boards are also controlled by national, state, and municipal participatory councils formed by social and government actors. The success of this decision-making style stems from the cooperative behavior of the three government spheres, decentralization, and social participation. With the institution of the CIT, the federal government is no longer able to unilaterally establish norms for subnational governments (Fructuoso, 2010). SUS is not synonymous with perfect balance of forces between the federation's three levels of government in intergovernmental relations, since in these consensus-driven policy-making bodies, political dispute also arises, as each level seeks to achieve best possible outcomes. The federal government provides the funding, drives cooperation, and seek to obtain the best results for itself while subnational governments rely on their power of implementation (Franzese and Abrucio, 2013).

In 2005 the Single Social Assistance System (SUAS) was established as the national arena for intergovernmental coordination. The framework is similar to that of the SUS and is consistent with the characteristics of an "ideal type" system, especially the consensus-based dynamics of federal cooperation and participatory decentralization to subnational governments. This new institutional reality enabled the implementation of cross-federation negotiation and deliberation mechanisms (CIBs and CIT), coordination, and division of competencies across government levels. Similar to the SUS, the system is anchored in the CIT and CIBs as permanent joint management forums that deliberate on the operational aspects of policy implementation by subnational governments. The centrality of the federal government (Soares and Cunha, 2016) was decreased in favor of a more consensus-based and incremental construction. However, since social assistance is historically less organized than the health area, the federal sphere has kept strong regulatory power over the area (Bichir and Simoni Jr., 2021). Because of that, the federal government still has disproportionate agenda power as it is the sphere of government responsible for regulating the SUAS and the largest funder of the system, which in practice gives it asymmetrical power in the deliberations of the CIT. Furthermore, the Ministry manages the Executive Secretariat, and there is not rotation in this function. The decisions on administrative issues are taken in a consensual way and are binding for the three spheres of government. However, since social assistance is historically less organized than the health area, the federal sphere has kept strong regulatory power (Bichir and Simoni Jr., 2021).

Education policy has followed a different path, because state and municipal governments can provide this education to the same universe of students through their separate school networks. Education policy has been marked by little collaboration between these two

levels of government (Abrucio and Grin, 2021). The FC 88 also established a collaboration regime to foster coordination between federation entities.

However, in intergovernmental management there are no cross-federation pacts or institutionalized arrangements for negotiation, as exist in the Health and Social Assistance areas. The history and municipal/state duality of the educational networks are not conducive to intergovernmental cooperation. Though constitutionally enshrined since 2009, the National Education System has not yet been implemented, largely due to difficulties in implementing the collaboration regime between states and municipalities.

A second hurdle has been the absence of tripartite government-level forums to mediate the interests of the three levels of government. For this reason, the decision-making style, although oriented towards the participation of municipal, state, and federal governments and social control, is not formalized as occurs in the SUS and SUAS. CONSED and UNDIME (see next section) are horizontal federation forums, just like CONASS and CONASEMS in the health area and FONSEAS and COGEMAS (see next section) in the social assistance area. But in education, these forums have not been integrated into a national system and are not represented in negotiation committees such as CIBs and the CIT (Grin and Abrucio, 2021).

In the field of fiscal federalism, the National Council for Finance Policy (CONFAZ) was created in 1975 and validated as a federative forum by the FC after 1988. It is made up of the Secretaries of Finance, Finance, Economy, Revenue or Taxation of the 26 States and the Federal District and its meetings are chaired by the Minister of Finance, and there is not rotation in this function. The dominance of federal government in the organization of CONFAZ is very high as it commands the Executive Secretariat.

Brazil is one of the few federations in which the highest added value tax, levied on the circulation of goods and services, is controlled by the states and not by the federal government. It is up to CONFAZ to decide on preventive measures to combat competition between states. This constitutional rule means that CONFAZ needs to decide, always by consensus, issues related to the granting of tax exemptions, benefits and tax incentives granted by the states. In principle, the decisions should be binding but, in practice, given the trap of joint decision-making and the difficulty in obtaining unanimity in intergovernmental deliberations, many states began to unilaterally grant tax exemptions, benefits and tax incentives in disrespect to the federally agreed rules. The expansion of these tax concessions, without consensus within CONFAZ, which culminated in the so-called a “fiscal war”, outside the constitutional and legal rules, and without prior approval by CONFAZ aiming to attract productive investments. Indeed, the legal system does not have sufficient enforcement to contain state actions since the value-added tax is a constitutional competence of its own, they use their federative autonomy to oppose the agreements generated in CONFAZ or when there is no consensus to continue with their unilateral actions typical of shirking and burden shifting situations (Bednar, 2009).

Brazil has advanced a lot in vertical sectoral cooperation since 1988, especially in health and social assistance which are organized under the institutional design of a unified national system of public policy. These arrangements manage to act as federative safeguards which was fundamental to avoid encroaching actions by the federal government (Bednar, 2009), in the health area, in the face of Covid-19 through tripartite cooperation, for instance. In this model, the federal government has attributions of coordination, regulation and financing, and asserts its “power of the purse”. States and municipalities are relevant actors that participate in the federative cooperation arrangement but are dependent on federal transfers.

In addition, many states and municipalities have less qualified bureaucracies, which makes the relationship with the federal government more asymmetrical in decisions that impact subnational management. Therefore, despite the progress in federative cooperation, it is a model of pact with ascendancy at the federal level closer to the Australian experience than to the

German and Swiss cases in which the institutionality of cooperation is more independent of the action of the national government.

However, the systems model is an important contribution to Brazilian federalism so much so that other areas have followed this path, although without the same success. These are the cases in public safety, environmental conservation, sports, traffic, social interest housing, culture, housing, drug policy, and the promotion of racial equality (Grin and Abrucio, 2021). Due to its relevance, it is worth noting the creation in 2009, but not its implementation, of the National Education System (Abrucio, 2010). Less virtuous has been the trajectory of intergovernmental cooperation in the field of fiscal federalism as race to the bottom processes have produced more competition between states, and also municipalities than federative pacts. This continues to be an Achilles heel of Brazilian federalism, especially in a post-COVID-19 pandemic context in which states and municipalities have lost a lot of revenue.

### 5. Sectoral and horizontal cooperation in Brazilian federalism

The experiences of Brazilian federalism in this IGR format can be organized as follows: a) state and municipal public policy councils that bring together managers from each area to agree on decisions that aim to influence the federative debate at the national level or organize the implementation of the policy in the territories; b) inter-municipal consortia which, in Brazil, are predominantly organized on a sectoral and non-jurisdictional basis. The so-called multipurpose consortiums, formed by the local governments, are far from being the reality so much so that it is not known how many there are in the country. In this regard, it differs from the case of interstate consortia which are organized on a jurisdictional basis and internally structured in a sectoral manner (see table 1).

Table 1 – Forum of horizontal intergovernmental relations in Brazilian federalism created since 1975.

Councils and Forums of State Secretaries	Participant spheres	Started
National Council of Finance Policy (CONFAZ)	States	1975
National Council of State Health Secretaries (CONASS)	States	1983
National Council of Municipal Health Secretaries (CONASEMS)	States	1983
National Forum of Secretaries and State Directors of Culture		1983
Brazilian Association of Capital Finance Secretaries (ABRASF)	States	1983
National Union of Municipal Education Officers (UNDIME)	States	1986
National Council of State Education Secretaries (CONSED)	States	1986
National Council of State Secretaries for Science, Technology and Innovation Affairs (CONSECTI)	States	1987
Forum of Secretaries and Public Leaders of Urban Mobility	States	1990
National Forum of State Education Councils (FONCEDE)	States	1990
National Forum of Secretaries of Social Assistance (FONSEAS)	States	1994
National Forum of Secretaries for Energy Affairs (FNSEME)	States	1995
National Council of Secretaries of State for Administration (CONSAD)	States	2000
National Forum of Tourism Secretaries	States	2000
National Collegiate of Municipal Social Welfare Managers (COGEMAS)	States	2001
National College of State Secretaries of Public Security (CONSESP)	States	2003
National Council of State Secretaries of Planning (CONSEPLAN)	States	2006
National Forum of Culture Secretaries and Managers of Associated Capitals and Cities	States	2008
National Forum of Secretaries and State Managers of Sport and Recreation	States	2011

National Committee of Secretaries of Finance, Finance, Revenue or Taxation of the States and the Federal District (COMSEFAZ)	States	2012
National Forum of Municipal Secretaries of Housing and Urban Licensing	Municipalities	2015
National Forum of Municipal Labor Secretaries (FONSEMT)	Municipalities	2022
National Forum of Secretaries of Labor (FONSET)	Municipalities	*
National Forum of Secretaries of Agriculture (FNSA)	Municipalities	*
National Forum of Housing Secretaries	Municipalities	*
National Council of State Secretaries of Justice, Human IGRhts and Penitentiary Administration (CONSEJ)	Municipalities	*
National Forum of State Secretaries of Environmental Sanitation	Municipalities	*
National Forum of Secretaries of State of Transportation	Municipalities	*

Source: Abrucio, Sano, and Sydow (2010). Complemented by the author.

These councils have influenced federal decisions in different ways in each policy. As a rule, the federal government does not formulate policies without formally or informally consulting these bodies. Many councils are not dependent on the political will of the national government, and they can work more autonomously because their members are only states or municipalities. The subnational units can, based on their constitutional autonomy, decide to organize this type of forum without federal approval.

The importance of these forums grew as more federation-coordinated policies were adopted by the central government. For example, CONSAD expanded its ability to formulate policies and present demands to the federal government (Sano and Abrucio, 2011). CONSAD performs “federative advocacy” and aligns the interests of the Brazilian states regarding public administration issues. In 2008, it proposed a National Public Management Agenda to modernize the Brazilian State. CONSED was important to press for legal changes in favor of decentralization measures, which occurred after the 1988 Constitution. For instance, in 1996 with the implementation of the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Elementary Education and Valorization of Teaching. Also in 2006, when the fund was transformed into the Maintenance Fund for Education Professionals by including basic education for all children up to 17 years of age. More recently, in the debate to change the National Curriculum of High School. The FONSEAS and COGEMAS and CONASS and CONASEMS are too influent regarding, respectively, in social assistance and health policies. The COMSEFAZ has been working to strengthen the fiscal and tax management of the states and in the intergovernmental sphere in the debate on the tax reform model that faces problems of the “fiscal war”. Within municipalities ABRASF has a similar role. In effect, horizontal and sectoral cooperation is a reality in the Brazilian federalism and extant in many IGRs arrangements.

The 29 forums and councils (7 involving municipalities and 22 the states) above listed can possibly be complemented by other sectoral and horizontal arrangements of IGRs but all allow a view of the dissemination of this format of cooperation in Brazilian federalism. Above all, the space they occupy to agree on policies that influence state and municipal public administration in each field of action.

The second format for IGRs of this type are inter-municipal consortia. Consortia exist in Brazil since the 1960s but there was a significant growth after the Law of Consortia established the possibility of creating public consortia. The new legal rules are part of an advance generated by FC 88 that redefined the notion of public services by stating that they can be offered collectively by two or more federal units which also can include national and state spheres. The Law of Public Consortia consolidated the legal bases of this type of federative cooperation with the municipalities.

Consortia can be configured as public law associations ratified by law by the municipal

Executive and Legislative powers of all participant municipalities. Public consortia consist of federative articulation structures that enable intergovernmental cooperation actions and shared management of public responsibilities, strengthening the administration of local governments. In other words, public consortia are nothing more than a group of governments that come together to provide a certain service together. Despite a heterogeneous advance in territorial terms and by public policies, the inductions generated by the new legislation continue to impact the decisions of municipalities in favor of consortia. By creating more regularity and predictability in inter-municipal associations, legislation assumed a key role as an explanatory variable (Grin, 2021). Table 2 shows the sectoral evolution of consortia between 2005 and 2019.

Table 2 - Evolution of intermunicipal consortia by public policy sector (2005-2019)

Public policies	Years				Variation in 14 years (%)
	2005	2011	2015	2019	
Education	248	280	352	441	+77,8
Health	1906	2288	2800	3216	+68,7
Social Assistance	222	232	453	499	+224
Tourism	351	456	477	509	+45
Culture	161	248	353	385	+239
Housing	106	241	262	292	+275
Environment	387	704	910	950	+245
Transportation	295	211	344	344	+16,6
Urban Development	255	402	715	827	+324
Sanitation	343	426	667	754	+220
Waste management	--	--	1299	1209	- 7
Water	--	--	426	427	+2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4274</b>	<b>5488</b>	<b>9058</b>	<b>9853</b>	<b>+230</b>

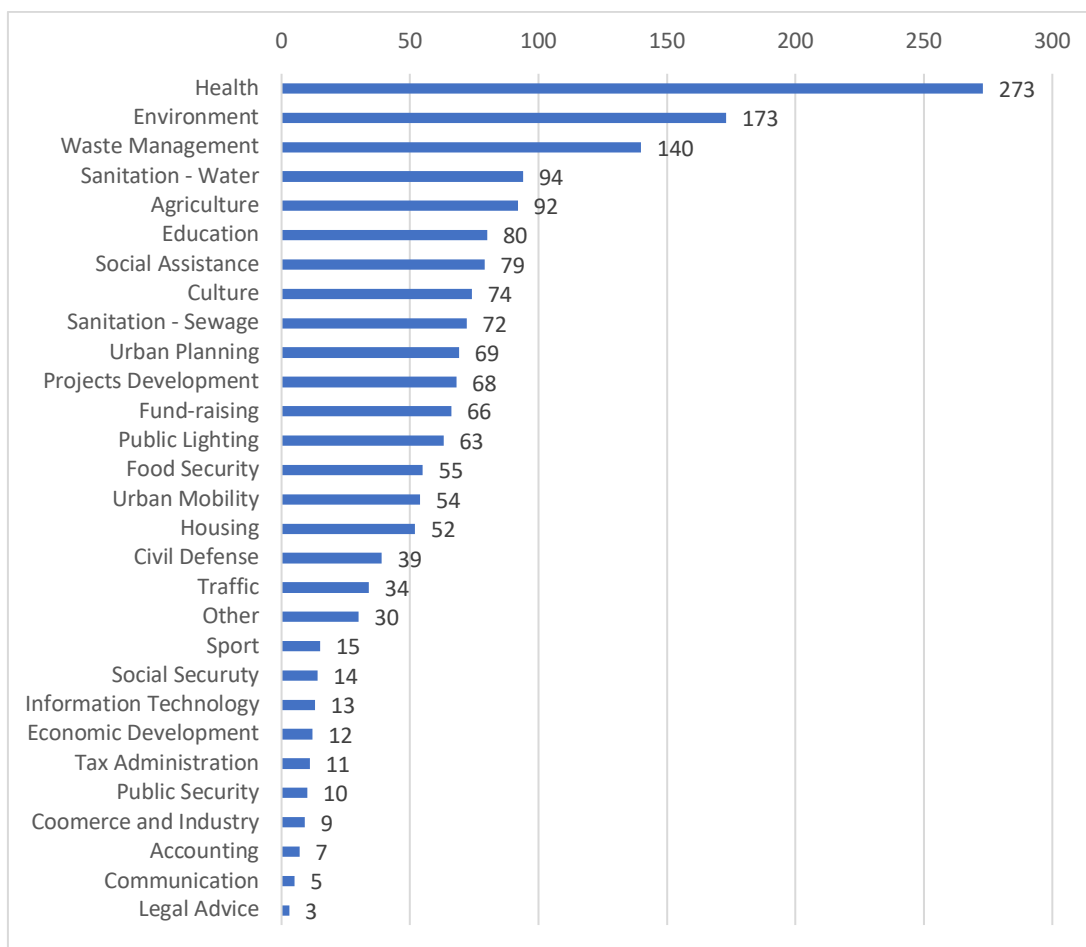
Source: own elaboration based on Munic IBGE 2005, 2011, 2015, and 2019.

According to the Consortium Observatory of the National Confederation of Municipalities, in 2019, 4074 locations were associated in Brazil in the public consortium modality (73% of the 5570 Brazilian municipalities). On the national average, each consortium served 145,5410 inhabitants, which is positive considering that 70% of the cities have up to 20,000 inhabitants and 90% have up to 50,000 inhabitants. If consortia are formed to generate economies of scale and organizational gains, the numbers of this phenomenon in Brazil are a good initial clue (Grin, 2021).

The distribution of consortia by public policy shows the predominance of health in the total of 1706 public policy options included in the 488 public consortia (graph 1). There are priority sectors for consortia with emphasis on welfare policies (health, education, social assistance, culture and food security), sustainability and environment (solid waste, sanitation and environment) and urban development (planning, housing and public lighting), mobility (transport and traffic). Management areas are less representative, except project development and fundraising, and to a lesser extent information technology. Also, the topic of local development and industry and commerce is not significant.

The most representative areas are those in which municipal responsibility became more defined in the decentralization initiated after 1988 and with the subsequent legislation that was directing more responsibilities to the cities. There is nothing new so far other than finding that the option for consortia follows the symmetrical logic of policy decentralization and is influenced by the picket-fence model of federalism (Wright, 1988) with its sectoral dynamics overcoming jurisdictional logics. The influence of federal policies is most evident in the areas of health, environment, sanitation, solid waste, and food security.

Graph 1 – Public consortia – total areas of activity in the set of 488 public consortia



Source: Observatório do Consórcio (CNM).

In this line of argument, in health there are many arenas of vertical federative cooperation (CIT and CIBs) and the Regional Health Collegiates bring together municipalities by regions in the states (Julião, 2020). The institutional design of this policy is prone to cooperative logic. In 2019, 3216 municipalities (57.7% of the total) participated in health consortia (IBGE).

In the environment, in 2019, 950 municipalities (17% of the total) were in a consortium (IBGE). After 2008, the growth of consortia in the environment, sanitation and solid waste was possibly influenced by two national laws. In 2007, the National Sanitation Policy set deadlines for cities to prepare their Municipal Plans. The National Solid Waste Policy, in 2010, defined that cities would only be contemplated with voluntary transfers if they were in a consortium. The growth of consortia in both areas was quite expressive after the enactment of these laws. These two areas are chosen by 234 out of 488 public consortia extant in Brazil which shows how relevant federal policies are.

In food security, even with the lack of information to compare its evolution, it is possible that the implementation of the federal program called *Fome Zero* (Zero Hunger) in 2004 served as an incentive. Moreover, in the fight against poverty, constitutional devices defined rules for States and municipalities to create and finance their policies. The National School Feeding Program also determines that 30% of municipal purchases come from family farming, which increases the importance of alleviating poverty in the territories through consortium policies. In the agriculture sector, the number of consortia is not small, even if federal incentives are fewer. This is a predominant economic activity in small towns and lack of state capacity operates as triggers for consortia to compensate for local deficiencies. In the case of education,

culture and social assistance, although there are federal support schemes for municipalities, the number of consortiums is smaller.

In a decentralized federalism such as Brazil's it would be expected that sectoral horizontal cooperation would be consolidated, added to the autonomy of states and municipalities to decide participating in IGRs arrangements. It is also important to emphasize the importance of federal legislation that generated more legal stability for the dissemination of public consortia and rules that created additional incentives for the expansion of consortia in some areas. No less important, the dissemination of results obtained by consortia is another aspect that reinforces their diffusion to other municipalities. In the case of sectoral councils and forums, whether municipal or state, both reinforce the capacity for collective action of the constituent units as well as the intergovernmental lobby with the federal government.

In the two forms of sectoral horizontal cooperation there are differences in terms of the results generated for the subnational public administration. Councils and forums, being arenas for articulation, agreement and dissemination of information, influence the process of formulating public policies. Intermunicipal consortia produce effects in the implementation of public policies, since their usual logic is to compensate, via instruments of economy of scale, the administrative, technical and financial deficiencies of the municipalities.

## **Conclusion**

Brazilian federalism contains a paradox that could create difficulties for the implementation of IGR arrangements. On the one hand, the national government holds many constitutional, regulatory and financial powers prerogatives that affect constituent units. On the other hand, the decentralization that reinforced the autonomy of states and municipalities had to a centrifugal process and difficult intergovernmental cooperation. Both aspects would be hallmarks of Brazilian federalism, after 1988, even though there are constitutional devices that emphasize the existence of common responsibilities between the three spheres of government and that refer to the need for intergovernmental cooperation. This chapter showed that the paths of formal IGRs into Brazilian federation and how they are, by different routes, are an inescapable reality directly linked to the way public administration formulates and implements public policies. However, if there have been advances in the format of IGRs, there are gaps and open questions for further research on the subject.

Considering the four types of IGR existing in Brazil, it is possible to conclude what follows. As for the level of institutionalization, IGRs arrangements can be classified of three ways: a) stronger in horizontal forums formed by generalist and sectoral public policies under the so-called federal "Law of Public Consortia" and the vertical sectoral CONFAZ; b) weaker in the case horizontal forums formed by generalist (Forum of Governors) and sectoral bodies (councils formed by state and municipals bodies; c) an intermediate level of formalization and based on decrees or similar rules (Council of Federation and CIT and CIBs in health and social assistance). The existence of secretariat is a general characteristic of all IGRs models, although organized in different ways (e.g. divided or not in work groups or internal committees). The level of bindingness also is variable, at least formally speaking; a) stronger in the cases of vertical sectoral forums in health, social assistance, and finance and horizontal generalist forums (interstate and intermunicipal consortia) by force of law, since constituent units participate through accepting the collective decisions defined in contract. The bindingness is weaker in the case of horizontal (Forum of Governors), vertical (Council of Federation) generalist bodies, and sectoral horizontal forum (councils formed by state and municipal bodies). The dominance of federal government is stronger in vertical sectoral forums in health, social assistance, and finances as well as in the Council of Federation as a vertical generalist forum. This dominance does not exist in ay horizontal forum whether generalist or sectoral.

The experience of the CAF, a unique case in comparative federalism of vertical cooperation on jurisdictional bases because it does not include the States, shows that the format

was not fully successful in building a federative arena. In a complex and unequal federation like the Brazilian one, expecting the central sphere to implement policies at the municipal level without the coordination role of the States proved to be impractical, considering the experiences of Australia, Switzerland and South Africa. In these three federations, the three levels of government are represented in the arrangement of IGRs. Secondly, a forum only focused on an articulating and consultative role, but without power resources to implement its decisions and lacking in administrative structure and technical support, reduces its ability to be a relevant federative actor, since it did not have enough political power to remove internal governmental barriers. The fate of CAF, which ran out of operations after 2011, reveals these limits.

The new design of a Federation Council was defined by the current Lula government initiate in January 2023, and now includes the presence of states (represented by the Forum of Governors and interstate consortia) as well as associations of municipalities. In view of the international experience, this seems to be a promising path, which opens up a new research agenda on IGRs in Brazil and in a comparative perspective. For example, the future Federation Council considers the participation of interstate consortia, which is a novelty in comparative literature. However, as the Federation Council was recently installed is not possible to assess its results and functioning.

Horizontal cooperation on jurisdictional bases is very recent (the FG has existed for less than six years, and interstate consortia began its implementation in 2015). It is necessary to deepen academic investigation into this incipient trajectory of IGR in Brazilian federalism. In Brazil, the research agenda on the role of states in the federation has only recently gained traction after almost three decades of prioritizing studies in public administration and political science on the role of municipalities. Analyzing interstate cooperation will be an area of expansion of academic research and with practical effects on state public administration in various public policies.

In vertical and sectoral cooperation, the successful model stands out, including in the comparative literature, of national public policy systems in health and social assistance. There are three relevant issues in this format of IGRs. First, in health and social assistance, the CIT and the CIBs are inter-agency forums whose agreement depends on the deliberation of the respective National Councils formed by government leaders from each sector and society. Little is known about the relationship between the two institutions, which would be very revealing of the role that the IGRs play in the definition of rules that impact the public administration of health and social assistance, especially for states and municipalities. Second, we need a better understanding of why the mimicry of national policy systems was unsuccessful in other public policies, which also impacts the functioning of public administration. Thirdly, it is necessary to deepen the research agenda, in the field of fiscal federalism, of the role of CONFAZ in the face of the persistence of the fiscal war and the unilateralism that characterizes the action of the states in the tax sphere typical of race to the bottom models.

In sectoral horizontal cooperation, intermunicipal consortia are well established and generate direct effects for public administration. The results in economy of scale and scope, dissemination of good practices, expansion in the provision of services and territorial planning are robust. However, little is known about the outcomes generated for local populations and how municipalities use consortia to qualify their management in the sectors in which they form a consortium. This is a welcome research agenda. As for public policy councils and forums, two areas deserve further study: a) how they are organized administratively and technically, as the existing structure is pivotal for the support offered to states and municipalities; b) their level of organization is essential for the intergovernmental lobby with the federal government.

Within the dimensions of this chapter, it was not possible to address other lesser-known forms of IGRs such as: a) the 13 Education Development Arrangements that bring together something like 170 cities (horizontal sectoral cooperation); b) the Integrated Urban

Development Plans (PDUI) which are a requirement of the 2015 Metropolis Statute for Metropolitan Regions (MRs) to formalize arrangements of horizontal IGRs on jurisdictional basis. In Brazil, there are 84 MRs where the vast majority of the population lives, which shows the importance of PDUIs for public administration. Because it is recent, and also because of the Covid-19 pandemic that delayed its preparation, this is an ongoing process that will open a relevant front of comparative research; c) 3 Integrated Economic Development Regions (vertical and jurisdiction-based IGRs) are analogous to an MR, bring together municipalities from more than one state and involve the Federal Government, states and municipalities to boost the economy of low-development territories.

In an unequal and asymmetrical federation such as Brazil, it would be unthinkable that different IGR routes would not develop to bring the three spheres of government closer together, aiming to qualify the functioning of public administration (Grin and Abrucio, 2018c). The four institutional designs of IGRs in force in Brazil show that, in this case, the end matters more than the means, as intergovernmental cooperation has acted in different ways as a key instrument in the provision of services and public policies.

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