

Political interests in the creation process of the Metropolitan Region of Umuarama, State of Paraná

Os interesses políticos no processo de criação da Região Metropolitana de Umuarama, PR

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Abstract

In this work, an attempt was made to build an intelligibility about the political interests registered in the process of creating the Umuarama Metropolitan Region (UMR). To this end, the research mobilized the legislation in force, the Metropolitan Statute, legal basis for the metropolitan dynamics and which establishes criteria for the institution of new MRs. The theoretical course addressed the literature on the metropolitan issue in Brazil and on the public policy process. The methodology employed involved documental research and field research conducted through semi-structured interviews. As a result, the constructed narrative tells us that the decision to create the UMR was based on political interests, linked to the status of belonging to an MR, real estate and voters interests.

Keywords: Umuarama Metropolitan Region; interfederative governance; political interests; public policies.

Resumo

Neste trabalho, buscou-se construir uma inteligibilidade sobre os interesses políticos inscritos no processo de criação da Região Metropolitana de Umuarama (RMU). Para tanto, a pesquisa mobilizou a legislação vigente, o Estatuto da Metr pole, base jur dica para a din mica metropolitana e que estabelece crit rios para a institui o de novas RMs. O percurso te rico abordou a literatura referente   quest o metropolitana no Brasil e sobre o processo de pol ticas p blicas. A metodologia empregada envolveu pesquisa documental e pesquisa de campo realizadas por meio de entrevistas semi-estruturadas. Como resultado, a narrativa construída conta-nos que a decis o de cria o da RMU foi baseada em interesses pol ticos, vinculados ao status de pertencer a uma RM, interesses imobili rios e eleitores.

Palavras-chave: *Regi o Metropolitana de Umuarama; governan a interfederativa; Estatuto da Metr pole, interesses pol ticos.*



Introduction

Nowadays the metropolitan matter is one of the most challenging in the Brazilian urban agenda besides being strategic for the towns to face their passive history. (Marguti; Costa and Favarão, 2018). Expressive worldwide transformations since the 1970s showed notable changes, both in urban network and in the urban space (Sposito, 2001). According to IBGE (2010), the Brazilian urbanization rate is about 84.4% of the population, and a large part of that population lives in a Metropolitan Region (MR).

A Metropolitan Region (MR) is made of a metropolis or regional capital and a group of neighboring municipalities that integrate planning, organization and execution of Public Functions of Common Interest (PFCI). MRs represent a development factor, once the largest city has a major role in the integration and development process of the others that make up the Metropolitan Agglomeration (Bernardes et al., 1971). In addition, in the metropolitan context, municipalities that mean to be part of an MR expect receiving federal resources destined to MRs or getting benefits, such as integration of public transport (Borges, 2013).

When the federal law n. 13.089, of 2015, was promulgated, the Metropolitan Statute established the guidelines for the integration and articulation of public policies in MRs, Urban Agglomerations (UAs) and Micro-regions (Moura and Hoshino, 2015) and provided for metropolitan governance and PSCI. To define an MR, the Metropolitan Statute created criteria to measure the influence of the policy and established that the studies developed and

made available by IBGE were used. However, political interests have showed disrespect to some guidelines of the Metropolitan Statute, such as the PSCIs, which resulted in creating many MRs (Moura and Hoshino, 2015; Moraes, Guarda and Zacchi, 2018).

The State of Paraná holds 8 out of the 74 MRs formally made up in Brazil (IBGE, 2018). Umuarama Metropolitan Region (UMR) is one of them, estimating a population of 313,794 inhabitants (Ipardes, 2019). According to data in the publication Population Arrangements and Urban Concentrations in Brazil (IBGE, 2016), and in the study called "Urban and regional development policy for the State of Paraná (PDUR, 2017), the municipality of Umuarama does not qualify as regional capital of Level B, and its MR does not present minimum elements that show the interdependence between the municipalities, which according to the Metropolitan Statute, shows the absence of legitimacy to remain as a MR. Since the mentioned political interests have disregarded some guidelines of the Metropolitan Statute, this paper means to build an intelligibility about the political interests inscribed in the process of creation and implementation of the UMR in the Metropolitan Statute.

This article is divided in five sections, started by the introduction. In the second section the mobilization and composition of the theoretical aspects that justified the present paper can be found, being that a reading about the metropolitan issue in Brazil, the Metropolitan Statute, the characterization of an MR, the arbitrary creation of MRs in Brazil, the prevalence of political criteria in this area and the Public Policy cycle process – which means to theoretically support the dynamics

of creating and implementing an MR. In the third section, the methodological procedures used for the development of the research are presented, highlighting the records mobilized and produced in the field, and their treatment. The fourth section comprises the construction of an intelligibility about the political interests inscribed in the process of creation and implementation of the UMR. This study then leads to the last remarks.

The metropolitan issue in Brazil

The metropolitan issue in Brazil arises in the 1950s, in the process's context of an intensification of industrialization and urbanization in the country. In the 1970s, there was an inversion regarding the use and occupation of the national territory, when the Brazilian people could be found mostly in urban centers, mainly in the metropolises that were being made up (Barbosa, 2010). However, cities were not prepared for an enormous wave of migrants (Tavares, 2004). Many went beyond their political and administrative limits and “were incorporated into the pole cities, integrating what was conventionally called the metropolitan area”, resulting in large urban centers and several characteristic problems such as “insufficient basic equipment and housing network, deficiencies in the transport system and flow.” (Carrera-Freitas, 2017, p. 81).

The first debates on the metropolitan issue started in the 1960s, during the military government, in the 1967 Federal Constitution (FC) and in the 1969

Constitutional Amendment. The Union alone had the responsibility to establish MRs. The first eight MRs were instituted in 1973 by complementary federal law n. 14, namely: the MRs of São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Porto Alegre, Recife, Salvador, Curitiba, Belém and Fortaleza (Azevedo and Mares Guia, 2000). In the following year, 1974, the Metropolitan Region of Rio de Janeiro was created by complementary law n. 20. This first moment is marked by an authoritarian and centralist model, with metropolitan management based on the states, but under powerful control of the federal government (Observatório das Metrôpoles, 2008).

The complementary law n. 14, of June 8, 1973, granted the states the management of metropolitan regions (Fernandes Jr., 2004). However, the Federal Constitution (FC) of 1988, art. 25, § 3, had the competence of establishing MRs in the states (Carrera-Freitas, 2017).

Regarding the metropolitan urban policy plan, the 1988 Constitution, art. 18, changes the status of municipalities to a federated entity and their role to that of protagonist in implementing urban policy, according to art. 182, aiming to “ordering the full development of the city's social functions and guaranteeing the well-being of its inhabitants” (Brazil, Federal Constitution, 1988).

The 1988 FC also requires that the construction of urban public policies must occur with the participation of all federated entities (Souza, 2003). Thus, it was still necessary to create a legislation that would regulate the coexistence of federated entities, a metropolitan management based on policies as an instrument of legal basis for the entire metropolitan dynamics.

The Metropolitan Statute

MRs can represent a locus of development, in which the polo cities play an important role to the process of regional integration and the concrete possibility to advance in the proposal of a democratic public management (Klink, 2009; Bernardes et al., 1971). Some specialists believe that the major problems of metropolitan management originate from the lack of well-defined legal-institutional order about MRs, UAs and micro-regions (Santos, 2018; CNPq, 2009, p. 526; Grau, 1974, p. 26; Fernandes Junior, 2003; Balbim et al., 2012).

One of the first laws and that signaled the need to plan MRs, was the federal law n. 10,257 (Brasil, 2001), the Statute of the City. According to that Statute all municipalities with over twenty thousand inhabitants that integrated an MR, or that made up themselves as a tourist location would need to prepare a Master Plan (Borges, 2013), which under the terms of article 40, § 1, of the Statute of the City, is the basic instrument of urban planning policy (Carvalho, 2001).

Only on January 12, 2015, the federal law n. 13,089 called Metropolitan Statute was promulgated. The sanction of this law brought normative content, general guidelines for MRs and UAs, serving as the major instrument of legal basis (Santos, 2018), such as inter-federative governance. Although the 1988 FC had already dealt with several principles to guide an MR, the inter-federative governance was only mentioned in the Statute of the City and later reaffirmed in the Metropolitan Statute (Carrera-Freitas, 2017).

An inter-federative governance occurs through a territorial pact signed between municipalities and the state in order to

conduct urban-regional plans and policies of different sectors, involving the three federative entities, with the purpose of finding and implementing solutions to common problems of the municipalities that integrate an MR (Borges, 2013).

The Metropolitan Statute also determines general rules for the elaboration of an Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP). The IUDP, according to article n. 2, item VI, is an “instrument that establishes economical and financial viability and management the guidelines for strategic territorial development and structuring projects at the metropolitan region and urban agglomeration based on a permanent process of planning” (Brasil, 2015). The IUPD must be instituted by a state law, guide urban-regional development, and establish the bases for joint action between states and municipalities (Carrera-Freitas, 2017).

The IUPD raises the challenge of reaching the highest potential strength in the arrangements for inter-federative governance. The initial deadline for the IUPDs to be ready would be January 2018. However, that was not what happened (Moraes, Guarda and Zacchi, 2018). The period was extended until the end of 2021 through the provisional measure no. 818, of January 11, 2018, which also approved the end of accountability for administrative improbity of governors who cannot approve the IUPDs.

It is pertinent to highlight that besides the fact that the governor of each state no longer incurs administrative improbity, if this government does not elaborate the IUPDs, there would not be any provision for funds for the financing of metropolitan policies, which dissipated the strength of the Metropolitan

Statute in an institutional gap (absence of metropolitan management and governance of inter-federative coordination) to deal with the metropolitan issue in Brazil, which has contributed to the fading of the meaning of metropolitan region.

The characterization of a metropolitan region

To understand what characterizes an MR, it is necessary to understand what a metropolis is. For Ascher (1995), a metropolis is an urban agglomeration (UA), with hundreds of thousands of inhabitants, which maintains economic relations with other UAs. Bernardes et al. (1971, p. 121) highlights other characteristics such as great concentration of people, high complexity, intense flow of people, equipment in the quantity and quality proportional to a national or regional center.

Something that also characterizes a metropolis, according to IBGE (2008), is its size. For that Institute, those urban centers have over one million inhabitants, with a strong socioeconomic relationship between the municipalities that compose it and which plays an important economic role in regional or national territorial management. Conurbation is also a common process in metropolises, the result of the meeting of urban centers that grew until they touch, merging into a single urban spot, even if the limits established politically are maintained (Souza, 2003). Besides proximity, it is necessary for the municipalities to establish social and economic bonds, the result of spatial interactions

between the municipalities (Santos and Peixinho, 2015). However, conurbation is not mandatory. There are metropolises that, even though not disturbed, exercise economic influence over other municipalities, such as Manaus, for instance (Borges, 2013).

Once understood what a metropolis is, it is necessary to conceptualize an MR and characterize it. For Grau (1975), besides intense urbanization and marked demographic density, MR needs to be a pole and community of socioeconomic activities and have its own structure that facilitates peculiar flows.

In 1969, at the 1st National Conference on Geography and Cartography, some argued the metropolitan area in Brazil should obey three criteria: population, activity and integration. Integration between the municipalities must be measured, according to IBGE, through the analysis of commuting movements. The latest study on Population Arrangements and Urban Concentrations in Brazil (APCUB), published in 2016, by IBGE, brings an analysis of commuting movements in all urban agglomerations in Brazil. The more intense the commuting between the municipalities, the greater the chances of high levels of interdependence between the municipalities (Carrera-Freitas, 2017).

However, the main legal basis for the characterization of an MR is the Metropolitan Statute which requires that new MRs can only be instituted if the criteria defined and made available by IBGE are observed, including the pendular movements, and that the metropolis must have national influence or over a region and that is configured, at least, as a regional capital level B, as provided in the sole paragraph of art. 2nd of law n. 13,089, 2015.

Another basic principle that characterizes an MR is the Public Service of Common Interest (PSCI), the essence or justification for the institutionalization of these territorial units (Santos, 2018). According to art. 2nd, II, a PSCI is the concrete existence of public policy or the action inserted in it, which implementation by a municipality in isolation is not workable or affects neighboring municipalities. Through PSCIs, the Metropolitan Statute intends to operationalize the duty of cooperation between federative entities in the management's face of common problems (ibid.). According to the Statute, the complementary state laws that institute MRs and UAs must provide for the member municipalities and the PSCIs, the structure of inter-federative governance, the means of social control of the organization, the planning and the execution of the PSCIs (ibid.).

Despite of what has been said so far, the requirements and justifications for the institution of MRs, it is observed that the creation of MRs since the FC of 1988, has occurred arbitrarily, according to the next subsection.

The arbitrary creation of metropolitan regions in Brazil: prevalence of political criteria

Even though the Metropolitan Statute establishes a characterization for MRs, presenting minimum criteria for their constitution, specialists argue these requirements could be even more restrictive (Moura and Hoshino, 2015), because

according to studies carried out by using IBGE criteria, out of population cuts of medium and large urban concentrations, 26 large urban concentrations with over 750,000 inhabitants were identified, while only 12 are legitimized as metropolises, different from the 74 existing MRs today (Moraes, Guarda and Zacchi, 2018). It is pertinent to point out that IBGE legitimizes the existence of 15 metropolises in Brazil, by updating the Regic (Regions of Influence of Cities) in 2020, namely: Manaus, Belém, Fortaleza, Recife, Salvador, Brasília, Goiânia, Belo Horizonte, Vitória, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Campinas, Curitiba, Florianópolis and Porto Alegre.

For Moura and Firkowski (2001, p. 107), the “desire for status” is what seems to prevail, and that “more than creating regions, metropolises are instituted, associated with the symbolic weight that relates them to progress and modernity”. This “Metropolitan Fetish” movement reflects a thought that being or belonging to an MR “provides benefits, usually public funds” (Machado et al., 2016, p. 37). Many municipalities yearn to be part of an MR, in the expectation of access to federal resources through the Ministry of Cities, aimed at MRs, and to get benefits, such as integration of public transport, greater political representation in the fight for budgetary increases with the Union, and integrating the telephone system (Borges, 2013). In recent years, one of the few public policies that has given MRs a different treatment is the “Minha Casa Minha Vida Program” (MCMVP), for raising the subsidy and the maximum value of the property to the municipalities that integrate these territories (Cunha, 2014).

Regarding resources and financing for MRs, previous legislation provided for federal and state resources such as complementary law n. 14/1973 and federal decree n. 73,600, of February 1974 (Santos, 2018, p. 463). However, currently, in Brazil, there are no financial resources, at the federal level, for metropolitan policies. There is still a belief that financing programs like those that existed in the 1970s can be resumed (Cunha, 2014; Borges, 2013).

Observing the recent history of the creation of metropolitan regions by the states, after the 1988 Constitution, most do not meet the technical requirements of the current legislation (Fernandes and Araújo, 2015) and do not express integrated territorial dynamics. Besides that, most of its municipalities do not share Public Functions of Common Interest, incurring only a regional fragmentation, weakening the possibility of constituting effective metropolitan governance and management (Santos, 2018).

Metropolitan Regions in the State of Paraná

In recent history, the state of Paraná has also led to the creation of MRs without more precise and consistent criteria, as defined by the Metropolitan Statute. There are eight MRs in the state, involving 194 of the 399 municipalities in Paraná (PDUR, 2017): MR of Apucarana, MR of Campo Mourão, MR of Cascavel, MR of Curitiba, MR of Londrina, MR of Maringá, MR of Toledo and MR of Umuarama. According to PDUR (2017),

other eight MRs are being processed by the Legislative Assembly of Paraná, namely: Cianorte, Cornélio Procópio, Dois Vizinhos, Francisco Beltrão, Foz do Iguaçu, Paranavaí, Pato Branco and União da Vitória.

Considering eight MRs formally made up in the state of Paraná, three stand out: MRs of Curitiba, Londrina and Maringá (Cunha, 2014), but only the MR of Curitiba started the preparation of the IUDP (FNEM, 2018). According to the Urban and Regional Development Policy for Paraná (URDP, 2017; 2018), the scenario in Paraná is not different from the rest of the country, characterized by the widespread proliferation of MRs, the lack of unique criteria and the inadequacy of the new precepts established by the Metropolitan Statute.

Among the MRs in Paraná, there is the Umuarama Metropolitan Region (UMR), object of the present study. Created by the state complementary law n. 149, as of August 2012, it has 24 municipalities registered (Paraná, 2012) and a population of 313,794 inhabitants (Ipardes, 2019). UMR will be covered in a later subsection.

It is pertinent to highlight that an MR represents an integrated intercity territory, the basis for structuring plans and actions for territorial, urban and social development (Abrucio, 2010; Bernardes et al., 1971). In this sense, it is necessary to develop public policies that are also integrated, especially for metropolitan territory.

It is pertinent to mobilize the theoretical contribution on the public policy cycle, mainly to understand the formulation and implementation process, in order to support the reading on the UMR.

The public policy cycle: formulation of public policy in the constitution's context of the agenda and its implementation

Before addressing the public policy cycle, it is necessary to mobilize what they understand as public policy. For Secchi (2010) and Frey (2000), the field of public policy appears when different actors, interests and resources, constrained by the political system (polity), establish themselves in the political arena (politics), even from different understandings about the public problem, and act to plan alternatives and decide. Public policy is when public decisions with a view to “preventive or corrective actions or omissions, aimed at maintaining or changing the reality of one or several sectors of social life, through the definition of objectives and performance strategies and allocation resources needed to achieve the established objectives” (Saravia, 2006, pp. 28-29).

The 1988 Constitution established that public urban policies should be built with the participation of all federated entities, that is, in an integrated manner. In opposition to the idea of centralism that happened before the 1988 FC, there is an organizational principle called federalism (Baldi, 1999) that presupposes the territorial distribution of power (Elazar, 1987). It is a kind of multilevel or inter-federative governance, in which each entity has a guaranteed portion of power and which cannot be withdrawn by other entities (Baldi, 1999). Metropolitan governance is directly linked to the discussion on federalism, since it is, precisely, the “institutional arrangement

that enables the exercise of the powers of over one entity, in a space that goes beyond the political-administrative and territorial limits” of a municipality (Santos, 2018, p. 473).

Several authors, such as Jones (1970), Meny and Thoenig (1992), Dye (1984) and Frey (2000), call the complex process of building public policies as the Public Policy Cycle. Saravia and Ferrarezi (2007) propose a cycle for building public policies, comprising the formalization of an agenda, elaboration, formulation, implementation, execution, monitoring and evaluation of a policy.

It is important to highlight, at this moment, that conceiving and narrating the cycle of public policy, drawing attention to its stages or phases, is a purely didactic approach, as the public policy process is not established by fulfilling an order or linearity.

The agenda is made up when social facts are recognized with the status of “public problem” (Kingdon, 2006; Fuks, 2000; Saravia, 2006; and Cobb and Elder, 1995). The first step in establishing that the public agenda is the social recognition that is given to an issue, to a public issue by influential actors (Fuks, 2000). According to Kingdon (2006, pp. 227-228), the definition of agendas involves three elements: problems, political issues, and the participation of visible actors. The political issue occurs with changes in governments, new party or ideological configurations, through political negotiations and through the use of indicators, which can identify and justify the problems. Visible actors are those that hold considerable attention from the press and the public, such as, for example, the president of the republic, members of the National Congress, the media and political parties (Kingdon, 2006).

There are also those who do not have the power to influence what goes on the agenda. They are the invisible actors, who can be academics and public agents of the State bureaucracy, and social movements and non-governmental organizations that are part of the public policy process (Fuks, 2000; Borges, 2013).

As for the agenda, this paper addresses the perspective of Cobb and Elder (1995), authors who adopt the existence of two types of political agendas: the systemic and the institutional agenda. According to these authors, the systemic agenda originates in occasions of political controversies and these controversies involve issues of the local systemic agendas, surrounded by norms, values and ideologies, and in a “shared concern” and in “common perception”, supporting the creation of the agenda. The governmental or institutional agenda highlights the structural and institutional biases within the system and is characterized as a set of issues defined as most important by those who decide.

After the formulation of public policies, through the constitution of an agenda, implementing these policies happens. The budget to do so, according to Pressman and Wildavsky (1984), comes from carrying out something, accomplishing, fulfilling, executing. For the authors, since the beginning, this term refers to an action and needs to have a public policy as its object.

For Ohlweiler (2007), implementation of public policies is related to the effectiveness of government action to make the plans happen. However, for Cline (2000), there is the “implementation problem”, when public policies cannot be successfully implemented. The solution to the implementation problems is linked to the cooperation of the participants

in the process which will be possible through the construction of mechanisms that create a context of cooperation between the participants.

The implementation corresponds to “the execution of activities [...] to get goals defined in the policy formulation process” (Silva and Melo, 2000, p. 4). Once the policy is created, a technical implementation process is assumed, which must be preceded by a plan for implementing public policy (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1984). However, the entire public policy cycle must be the subject of dialogue and cooperation between the different actors involved, which is essential for the implementation process (Ramos, 1989; Cline, 2000).

For implementing any public policy, a state capacity is required, constituted with technical staff, regulations and instruments. In an MR, this structure is also necessary (Borges, 2013). The lack of a metropolitan management structure in the MR may cause this arrangement not being able to place itself as a planning body. Resources, own physical space, career technical staff, and a specific budget for these MRs are necessary in order to meet the demands of territorial planning (Cunha, 2016).

Methodological procedures

After giving attention to the research aim, it was developed the present work, epistemologically, through social constructionism, composing stories based on dialogues with different actors in this public policy arena and mobilizing different narratives

circumscribed to it, about what was lived and practiced, and the literature on the topic addressed, placing research in the movement of social construction of realities (Spink, 2003; Borges, 2013).

Social constructionism can be associated with a way of telling and producing the world, and shows the importance of narrative in the construction of the scientific process (Spink, 2003, Ibañez, 2001), and seeks, through storytelling, to conceive a narrative as production of meanings (Spink, 2013; Gergen, 1997). In the research conceived by this epistemological basis, it is up to the researcher to retell or re-create socially constructed stories and give visibility to the meaning(s) hidden in the record(s) (Borges, 2013). Social constructionism is based on the dimension that there is no truth or a single way of explaining reality, nothing is natural in society, everything is socially constructed.

The method used for this study is established as the qualitative approach. Creswell (2010, p. 44) highlights: "qualitative research is exploratory and convenient when the researcher does not know the important variables to be examined", deepening the understanding of social phenomena. The qualitative approach has as its object of study "the level of meanings, motives, aspirations, attitudes, beliefs and values, which are expressed through common language and in everyday life" (Minayo and Sanches, 1993, p. 245). In this sense, it is producing meanings and not an environment (reality) in which the researcher is inserted and only decodes.

The literature review was made intending to tell the reader the story of the metropolitan issue in Brazil and creating MRs. The collecting

of theoretical-empirical data took place in two stages. First, with a bibliographic and documentary research, for the construction of the historical-legal evolution of MRs in Brazil. The mobilization of the main doctrinal references on the subject and documentary research included documents and legislation referring to the inter-federative governance used in this research as secondary data, such as the Metropolitan Statute.

The second step was made of semi-structured interviews with actors representing public organizations that are linked to the research theme, namely: 1) Helena Pereira,¹ member of the Observatório das Metrôpoles – Núcleo Maringá; 2) José da Silva, former state deputy, creator of the project that created UMR; 3) João Bento, Attorney of the Public Ministry of Paraná, who addressed his participation in the Metropolitan Forums promoted in October and November 2015 by the Metropolitan Affairs Committee of the Legislative Assembly of Paraná, which sought to discuss the Metropolitan Statute and also the need for Paraná MRs adapt to said Statute for its permanence or extinction, and dealing with preparing Integrated Urban Development Plans (IUDP); 4) Alcides Ferreira, from Paranacidade/Sedu; 5) Antônio Oliveira, the then mayor of the municipality of Umuarama, in 2012, when the UMR was instituted; 6) Francisco Souza, the current mayor of Umuarama; 7) Afonso Santos, the mayor of municipality A, one municipality close to Umuarama; and 8) Luiz Franco, mayor of municipality B, the furthest from the hub city.

The interviews were recorded on audio, after authorization, and later transcribed for presentation and treatment of the data as a

narrative constructed in a relational way. The construction of the narrative in which the history of the creation and implementation process of UMR is based was based on all the narratives produced with the interviews, documents, records and technical studies, and mobilized norms. For the production of this intelligibility, the writings of Laurence Bardin (1977), on content analysis, and Peter Spink (2003), on field-theme reference.

For the analysis of the results, some categories were conceived from the empirical study, which are: interest in access to resources, interest in status; legacy interest and political curriculum; electoral interest; real estate interest; and interest in exchanging favors.

Before the article advances the political interests inscribed in creating and implementing the UMR, it is vital to first characterize the metropolitan region in question, highlighting its misalignment in relation to the norms that

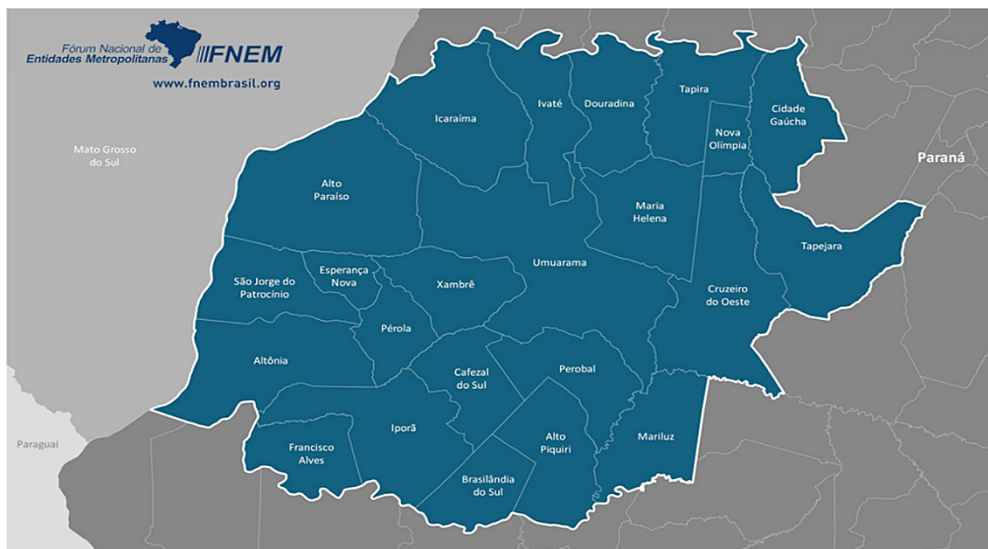
guide and legitimize the constitution of the metropolitan territory in Brazil.

Characterizing the Umuarama Metropolitan Region

Before responding directly to the aim of this study, it is essential to know the characterization of UMR, starting with the municipality-pole, Umuarama.

Approximately 560km away from the state capital and an estimated population of 111,557 inhabitants, Umuarama is the 18th most populous municipality in the state and its major activities are agriculture and beef cattle and the provision of services (IBGE, 2018). The Figure 1 locates the municipality of Umuarama and the other municipalities enrolled in the UMR, conceiving the metropolitan area.

Figure 1 – Umuarama Metropolitan Region



Source: FNEM (2018).

UMR was created by the state supplementary law n. 149, of August 2012, and its founder was the former mayor of Umuarama and former state deputy, José da Silva (Paraná, 2012). The estimated population for the UMR in 2019 is, according to the IBGE, of 313,794 inhabitants. According to Ipardes (2019), the UMR has a territorial area of 12,099.936km², which represents about 6% of the entire state territory.

There are 24 municipalities registered with the UMR: Alto Paraíso, Alto Piquiri, Altônia, Brasilândia do Sul, Cafezal do Sul, Cidade Gaúcha, Cruzeiro do Oeste, Douradina, Esperança Nova, Francisco Alves, Icaraíma, Iporã, Ivaté, Maria Helena, Mariluz, Nova Olímpia, Perobal, Pérola, São Jorge do Patrocínio, Tapejara, Tapira, Tuneiras do Oeste, Umuarama and Xambê. A first observation is that 13, of the 24 municipalities registered in the UMR, are over 50 km from the hub city, Umuarama.

A tension that was created in building a clear comprehension proposed by this article involving trying to understand whether the UMR meets the requirements demanded by the Metropolitan Statute, although it was made up in 2012, the date prior to the said regulation. It is known that by the current regulations, for a region to be characterized as MR it is necessary that the policy is influenced by a metropolis or a regional center, meaning it has national influence or over a region, or that it configures at least as a regional capital level B, according to the sole paragraph of art. 2nd of law n. 13,089, of 2015.

Studies carried out by IBGE were mobilized APCUB (2016) and Regic (IBGE, 2008 and 2020); and by Sedu: PDUR (2017 and

2018); for the analysis of the urban interaction of UMR in the present research.

Considering the Regics, of 2008 and 2020, the level of centrality or influence of the municipality of Umuarama is in the dimension of a Sub-regional Center A (IBGE, 2008 and 2020). In this first requirement, it is observed that the UMR does not qualify as MR. According to IBGE (2016), the only two municipalities in the UMR that appear in that study are Umuarama, a city-pole, and the municipality of Maria Helena, which presented a more significant level of integration, composing a population arrangement.

According to IBGE (ibid.), in order to configure a strong intensity related to the commuting movements for work and study, it is necessary that the integration index is equal to or higher than 0.17 for all the municipalities that make up the MR. It was observed in the IBGE study that the municipality of Maria Helena reached the minimum value that identifies pendular movements between that municipality and Umuarama. However, the other municipalities enrolled in the UMR are not included in the IBGE study, because, according to the IBGE (ibid.), all municipalities that did not reach the minimum integration index were not listed in the data presentation.

A second requirement, still according to IBGE (ibid.), is that there must be a strong absolute intensity of commuting movements for work and study – when the absolute volume of people moving to work and study, between A and B, is 10,000 people or more. According to the study carried out by IBGE, only 1,484 people work and study in other municipalities in the population arrangement of Umuarama.

Based on the data collected, it is observed that the municipalities that make up the UMR do not have the integration required by the Metropolitan Statute, for an MR. Although the municipalities of Umuarama and Maria Helena have commuting movements, there are no high levels of interdependence between these two municipalities in relation to the others enrolled in the UMR. There was no high urban concentration, according to IBGE criteria, and, finally, the hub city, Umuarama, does not qualify as regional capital B.

According to Iparides (2017, p. 9), Sedu expressed its opposition to the maintenance of all MRs established in the state of Paraná, starting in 2012. Except for the MR of Cascavel, based on the Metropolitan Statute, these MRs do not meet their criteria.

Regarding the fact that the UMR was instituted before the Metropolitan Statute, Cunha (2016, p. 6) stated that the lack of criteria in the 1988 Constitution, regarding the definition of what is or is not metropolitan, and that having given states the prerogative to institute their MRs opened up “a range of possibilities for institutionalizing Metropolitan Region in which the process of metropolization is often not present, just like Umuarama, institutionalized in 2012”. Therefore, it is also a task of the state legislatures to approve, through a complementary bill, the extinction of an MR. Thus, Sedu sent to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Paraná a “proposal for a complementary state law for the extinction of the four metropolitan regions that would no longer be understood”, which included the UMR (PDUR, 2017, p. 161).

Therefore, after presenting these considerations, this article answers the

crucial question of the research: what were the motivations and interests that led to the creation and maintenance of the UMR, since the technical criteria had not been met?

Political interests included in creating and implementing the UMR

Once chosen the epistemological basis of social constructionism for the development of the research, we have as a result the construction of an understanding as the main narrative, which expresses the results of the research. It is a story that has authorship, and it would not be the same story if it were told by someone else. In telling the story, there is a built process. What would it be? It was told this story in a non-linear way, based on a choice of themes and arguments as they were accessed in different narratives.

It all starts with public policy, which, as discussed, is the set of government actions that produce specific effects, which influence the lives of citizens and aim to solve problems of public interest. According to the narratives accessed, the creation of the UMR was not aimed at solving problems of public interest. It is not possible to identify that it fits as a legitimate public policy, because although some actors manifest it would be an advance for the municipalities, the political party interests, of status and real estate were identified in the various narratives as justification for the creation of the UMR and not the actual public interests, constituted as a public problem and social meanings.

According to the narratives, UMR enters the agenda at the initiative of a deputy, José da Silva, responsible for the bill that would create the aforementioned metropolitan region. It is a visible actor of the agenda setting process. The speech was to promote the development of the region: *“It was thinking about this regional development that I created the Umuarama Metropolitan Region, because all the benefits that go to the capitals would come to Umuarama [...] incentives in infrastructure, in basic sanitation”* (José da Silva, former state deputy). *“The creation of the Umuarama Metropolitan Region was justified because it was the weakest region in the State, and without support from the state government [...] it would be the redemption of that region”* (Antônio Oliveira, former mayor of Umuarama).

In the present study, the agenda advocated by Cobb and Elder (1995) were chosen: the systemic agenda and the institutional agenda. According to the narratives, the question of the creation of the UMR enters the institutional agenda when its creation project is formalized in the Legislative Assembly of Paraná. According to Alcides Ferreira and Ipardes (2017), even though Sedu gave a negative opinion for the creation of UMR, the former deputy José da Silva supported the referred project against Sedu's secretary Cesar Silvestre at the legislative assembly and did not give in to the pressure, arguing that the secretary did not pressure Sedu's technical committees to change the opinion to favorable, demonstrating a political controversy (Alcides Ferreira, Sedu).

But it is necessary to look for an answer to the biggest concerns of the present study,

which concerns the political interests inscribed in the process that influenced the creation and implementation of the UMR present in the systemic agenda. From the narratives got, there is a movement to build the interests of political leaders, given the glimpse of the gains that “their municipalities” would have with the UMR. João Bento, a public prosecutor, argued: *“People think that, by creating an MR, they will actually generate gains, they will bring resources to their region”*.

In this process of construction of the bill, it is clear, through the narratives the expectation of benefits for the municipalities, and that even by the creator of the referred project, an increase in jobs was expected, because of the displacement of companies to the municipalities to join the UMR. In addition, for the former mayor of Umuarama, Antônio Oliveira, since it is an MR, the municipalities could integrate public transportation and telephone call charges.

During the interviews, a point of divergence was observed, when the interlocutors were asked about the conceptual aspect: what is an MR and what defines it? The former mayor of Umuarama, Antônio Oliveira, and the current mayor of Umuarama, Francisco Souza, have more information and knowledge about some technical terms, regarding the metropolitan theme, because of their position as UMR city-pole managers; the other accessed mayors showed little or no knowledge on the subject. This denotes that the metropolitan issue is not discussed by the municipalities that make up the UMR. There is a void in terms of metropolitan alignment, as there is no integrated thinking and planning of the territory.

When asked if the UMR had the characteristics to be an MR, both the current and the previous manager of the city-pole stated that the Umuarama region did not have them. Helena Pereira, from the Metropolis Observatory, João Bento, from the Public Ministry, and Alcides Ferreira, from Sedu, also agrees that the UMR does not have the characteristics of an MR.

In relation to interests, this is a process that begins to be constructed through the former state deputy José da Silva, with a need or a desire to leave a legacy, to leave a record on his resume and sell a status, possibilities to the municipalities, regarding the yearnings for resources. *“It was a great emotion to have a project of this size being approved in the state of Paraná [...] that was the great achievement of this project, which I have already accomplished as a deputy”* (José da Silva, former state deputy). Helena Pereira states that an MR would provide both the deputy and the mayor with including the feat in their resumes. For Francisco Souza, mayor of Umuarama, UMR “it was a political issue”, aiming to increase the curricula of parliamentarians.

Other interests identified in the narratives were of a political-electoral nature. José da Silva said: *“You know that governments, both state and federal, invest in large agglomerations, where there is many ‘voters’ [...] that is the politician’s currency! It’s a vote, it’s a vote!”*. For Helena Pereira, *“the main issue is electoral”*. According to her, the interests are motivated by the construction of an electoral platform in the municipalities; in addition to campaigning for the deputy in subsequent elections, mayors also have “electoral interest”.

Another reason for being interested in taking part of an MR was to access resources: “the interests are for the federal government to send more resources, mainly in non-refundable funds”. According to José da Silva, and three more of the four mayors interviewed, it is imagined that as part of an MR the municipality will have access to better conditions to carry out investment from Union and state resources. However, as discussed in the literature review, there is no metropolitan funding. According to Helena Pereira, this shows the managers’ ignorance in imagining that the municipalities, because they belong to an MR, would have rights to access resources.

Besides these interests discussed so far, one of the main reasons for the creation of UMR was the real estate interest. Francisco Souza mentioned the interest in creating the UMR aimed at the housing program of the federal government: *“they saw this discount at Minha Casa Minha Vida, because it would have a boom, even Umuarama benefited from it ... it has already been calculated here in millions”*. For Sedu’s executive, Alcides Ferreira, the interest in creating new MRs was, first, real estate. According to him, the municipality, when belonging to an MR, would receive a subsidy of extra R\$45,000.00 per property, for its acquisition, through the housing program of the federal government – MCMVP. According to the Sedu executive, the mayors ended up mobilizing due to pressure from local entrepreneurs who wanted to make new subdivisions and houses. And, according to ex-deputy José da Silva, there were over 800 million Reais in subsidies to citizens who contracted housing financing for the MCMVP, and these values could remain in UMR, thus moving the local economy.

Another motivator for the creation of MRs, also contacted by the literature review, refers to status. In the narratives, this desire was also captured. For Helena Pereira, from the Observatório das Metrópoles, *“as nobody knows what it means to be included in an MR, the narrative of inclusion in the MR guarantees status, because the mayor ‘beats his chest’ and says ‘I was the one who included our municipality in the UMR’”*. According to João Bento, it would not be a billboard that would guarantee the operation of the MR. For the prosecutor, there was a “glamorization” or “metropolitan fetish”, which raised the interest and the increase in the number of MRs.

And for closure of this construction of intelligibility about “political interests”, the exchange of favors was another reason accessed in the narratives. Helena Pereira describes that the mayors who established an agreement with the proponent of the MR's bill *“remained as debtors to campaign in the next election for this deputy in their municipalities”*. In relation to this practice, there is a political commitment made between the then governor of the state with former deputy José da Silva, when sanctioning the complementary bill of the UMR: *“And then Governor Beto Richa sanctioned this law for having a commitment to me, that if I could pass the law in the assembly, he would sanction it. And that's what happened”* (José da Silva).

Regarding favors exchange, Alcides Ferreira clarifies that the then governor Beto Richa, at first, accepted Sedu's unfavorable technical opinion, which included the creation of UMR, but later, since he needed support from mayors, he sanctioned the laws that approved the creation of the last five MRs in Paraná. According to Alcides Ferreira, the

governor approved the MRs because “political interest spoke louder”.

It applies to highlight that no study that justified the institution of the referred UMR, addressing the PSCIs, for example, was made in advance. However, according to José da Silva, behind-the-scenes work of the Legislative Assembly of Paraná was intense. According to the former congressional representative, he sometimes had to change the rapporteurs in the commissions to whom his project went. And according to Alcides Ferreira, Sedu denied the opinion for the creation of the UMR, as already discussed.

After the creation of the UMR, according to Alcides Ferreira and Francisco Souza, some municipalities registered in the Umuarama Metropolitan Region questioned the impossibility of accessing the resources of the National Health Foundation (Funasa).² For Alcides Ferreira, many mayors, when learning of the eligibility criteria for Funasa's resources, pleaded for the withdrawal from the MR. For the executive secretary of Sedu, the same that justified the creation of the UMR, a “casuistry”, will also justify its extinction, because of the impossibility of accessing Funasa's resources, on a non-refundable basis, for investment in sanitation.

João Bento and José da Silva also explain another lack of interest from the municipalities in UMR. The interviewees argued about the loss of autonomy of the territory management by the municipalities, as each municipality, because of being enrolled in the UMR, would now need to submit to the collegiate body. *“For MR's decisions, I will have to give up space for my autonomy... the decision will come from governance”*, pondered João Bento. The former deputy said three times, at different

times, that losing autonomy or, as he called it, "loss of power" over the subdivisions was one fear of the mayors.

It was found, in all narratives (documents and interviews), that the UMR was not implemented. However, some government programs became viable in Umuarama region because of the creation of the UMR, such as the MCMVP. There were several projects of that housing program dispersed in the UMR, which were only established because this MR was made up, which allowed access to the financing of properties with higher values and subsidies, as already mentioned before.

From the stories told, regarding metropolitan governance and government management, none of that happens at UMR. The metropolitan government would be established based on the coordination of the Metropolitan Region. Management would be established through metropolitan public policies implemented in the UMR. Governance would be made up by the decision-making spaces exercised by actors from the government, the State and civil society, involving councils, technical chambers and epistemic communities, for example. As none of these practices are implemented, this strengthens the dimension of having only interests in the creation and not in implementing the UMR.

João Bento, public prosecutor, commented on something that was totally disregarded during creating the UMR. He argued: *"the Metropolitan Region is not geopolitical, it is 'factual'. It either happens or it doesn't happen"*. In order of a complementary bill to go all the way to being sanctioned, an MR in fact already exists even before its institution.

As told in this story, political interests influenced the process that led to the creation of the UMR. Would it now be up to these same visible political actors the decision to correct the conceptual mistake; or, as Alcides Ferreira said, the "semantic mistake" that occurred when the UMR was created? Parliamentarians will only do this when they approve a complementary state bill that promotes the extinction of the UMR and other MRs that do not meet the criteria defined by the Metropolitan Statute.

Final considerations

The decision to create the UMR was based on political, electoral, real estate and desire for status, and not based on technical and conceptual elements, much less regarding legitimate public problems in a systemic agenda. It is observed that the UMR implementation did not occur because the aim was not the implementation, it was only the creation to, for example, access the resources of the federal government of the MCMVP, being condition of MR status.

In one narrative, it is observed that one justification for the creation of the UMR was to meet a popular demand, such as a social agenda, with access to the housing program *Minha Casa Minha Vida* (My House, My Life). But what was behind that was an economic elite, economic/real estate interests, using a territorial configuration to access resources, considering that the MCMVP dimensioned the policy of access to resources, segmenting by municipalities and regions.

Creating the UMR did not start from invisible actors, from marginalized social movements, trying to draw the attention of the public authorities or to mobilize the media for better and more integrated transport, or even for a better condition of access to housing. The process started from visible actors, politically interested in the results.

In theory, public policies are created from the need to solve a public problem. However, there is no public problem that legitimizes the creation of that UMR. The thinking of UMR existed precisely in order to leave a political legacy, for the congressional representative and for the mayors, and as a way of accessing resources. There is an inversion of the thinking logic about public policies, including from the perspective of the Metropolitan Statute.

What can be seen is that the UMR is not characterized as an MR, it does not meet the Metropolitan Statute. Although it was instituted before the said Statute was sanctioned, there were already other requirements in the legislation, such as the PSCIs that were already in the 1988 Constitution. There are no PSCIs that sustain the creation of that UMR, not even a proper study to deal with the legitimacy of creating the MR.

Based on these research results, it is essential to highlight that there is no metropolitan development fund, either

in Brazil or in Paraná, an elementary issue to implement the policy sought by the Metropolitan Statute. Besides the Statute not specifically providing for metropolitan financing, releasing the Federal Government from providing financial support to MRs, in the specific case of Paraná, the state legislation also did not provide for the mandatory creation of a metropolitan fund for MRs.

Another type of arrangement, with the purpose of carrying out actions of common interest, is public consortia. These are voluntary institutional arrangements, formed by the association of over one member of the federation. The exclusive search for a Metropolitan Region title has led many regions to disregard other regional arrangements that could be more efficient in serving the public interest. Could these institutional arrangements, such as consortia for example, serve public interests for the Region of Umuarama? This question is established as a suggestion for future studies, which involves thinking about consortia as an instrument of intermunicipal and inter-federative cooperation and serving the municipalities that integrate the metropolitan regions, especially those that do not meet the criteria established by the Metropolitan Statute.

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Notes

- (1) The names of all the actors interviewed were changed in order to preserve the privacy of the people involved.
- (2) Funasa is a public foundation, linked to the Ministry of Health, which provides resources in the area of basic sanitation for municipalities with up to 50 thousand inhabitants. According to ordinance n. 1,035, of August 8, 2017, from the Ministry of Health, the municipalities that are part of metropolitan regions, even those that have up to 50 thousand inhabitants, cannot benefit from the resources provided by Funasa (Brazil, 2017).

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