

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Associativity in the Bogotá metropolitan region: coordination challenges in a fragmented region

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ABSTRACT

The Bogotá Metropolitan Region represents a paradox as it is yet to establish a metropolitan entity. The official discourse on the integration of Colombia's capital city, Bogotá Capital District, with its surrounding municipalities is at odds with the reality of uncoordinated governance. This research addresses the local and provincial roles of public and private associations in peripheral municipalities, identifying a profound geographical differentiation between public action largely confined to a provincial scale due to the lack of local public governance capacity and the factors that inhibit effective provincial-scale public action and the way private associations have sought to address consequent gaps in service provision.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 12 January 2020; Accepted 5 November 2020

KEYWORDS

agglomeration, associativity, Colombia, governance capacity, metropolization, regional planning

JEL

O18, O21, O54, R11, R58, Z18

摘要

波哥大都市区域关联性：分散地区面临的协调挑战。 *Area Development and Policy*. 哥伦比亚首都波哥大都市区是一个悖论，因为它还没有建立一个都市实体。关于波哥大及其周边城市一体化的官方论述，却与治理不协调的现实相悖。本文研究探讨了波哥大周边城市的公共和私人组织在地方和省级中起到的作用。结果表明：一方面，由于缺乏地方公共治理能力，公共行动主要局限于省级范围内。另一方面，阻碍有效的在省级范围内进行公共行动的因素与地方私人组织设法解决服务提供方面差距的方式存在重大的地域差异。

关键词

聚集地, 关联性, 哥伦比亚, 治理能力, 大都市化, 局域规划

RESUMEN

Asociatividad en la región metropolitana de Bogotá: desafíos de la coordinación en una región fragmentada. *Area Development and Policy* La Región Metropolitana de Bogotá representa una paradoja ya que aún no se ha establecido una entidad metropolitana. El discurso oficial sobre la integración de la capital de Colombia, Bogotá Distrito Capital, con los municipios circundantes contradice la realidad de una descoordinada gobernanza. Esta investigación aborda los roles locales y provinciales de las asociaciones

públicas y privadas en los municipios periféricos, identificando una profunda diferenciación geográfica entre la acción pública en gran parte confinada a una escala provincial debido a la falta de capacidad de gobernanza pública local y a los factores que inhiben la eficacia de la acción de la gestión pública a escala provincial por un lado y la forma en que las asociaciones privadas han tratado de abordar las consiguientes deficiencias en la prestación de servicios.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Aglomeración Urbana, Asociatividad Público–Privada, Colombia, Gobernanza Local, Metropolización, Planeamiento Regional

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ассоциативность в метрополитенском регионе Боготы: проблемы координации в раздробленном регионе. *Area Development and Policy*. Метрополитенский регион Боготы представляет собой парадокс, поскольку регион как таковой еще предстоит создать. Официальный дискурс об интеграции столицы Колумбии, столичного округа Боготы, с окружающими его муниципалитетами противоречит реалиям несогласованного управления. В этом исследовании рассматриваются местные и провинциальные роли государственных и частных ассоциаций в периферийных муниципалитетах, выявляются глубокая географическая дифференциация управленческих решений, в основном ограниченных провинциальным масштабом из-за отсутствия потенциала местного самоуправления, а также факторы, препятствующие эффективному управлению на уровне провинции, с одной стороны, и тем, как частные ассоциации стремятся устранить вытекающие из этого пробелы в предоставлении услуг, с другой стороны.

КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА

агломерация, ассоциативность, Колумбия, управленческий потенциал, метрополизация, региональное планирование

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, metropolitan regions (MRs) in Latin America have undergone very rapid and extremely complex growth. The population density of Bogotá Capital District (BCD) is close to 24,000 people per km², which is one of the highest in the world, compromising the quality of life and public services (Wheeler, 2015). Moreover, growth was overwhelmingly concentrated in municipalities lying beyond the limits of the BCD and beyond the purview of an as-yet-not-thoroughly-constituted metropolitan authority.

In the absence of a metropolitan authority, private associations and their business leaders have played a decisive role in shaping the region. A key defining characteristic of the Central Savanna Province (CSP) and Western Savanna Province (WSP) that lie to the north and north-west of the BCD is the fraught interaction between businesses and mayors in the periphery of Colombia's capital city BCD, both of whom resist cooperating and integrating with it. A consequence is erratic and inconsistent public–private relations.

This study examines business (private) and municipal (public) associations that are poorly aligned but essential to the future regional planning of this rapidly growing MR. The MR is subject to severe and widespread informality, limited planning, and restricted and dysfunctional public–private coordination. Different actors have positioned themselves strategically through their private and public associations in a network of cities with its centre in Bogotá. Consequently, the region has undergone a superficial integration process,

but remains fragmented owing to the resistance of municipalities that continue to defend their constitutional autonomy. Currently, under the BCD's government, strong pressure is being exerted by a powerful coalition of business groups and think tanks to create the Bogotá MR.

The administrative structure that prevailed during the creation of the modern BCD in 1991 has defined the capital city's relationship with its provinces. Under this structure, the municipal mayor's offices on the periphery of Bogotá depend upon the provincial capitals (Zipaquirá for the CSP and Facatativá for the WSP), which in turn depend upon the BCD upholding the autonomy and cohesion of the hierarchical model. However, this provincial vision has been undermined by the growth of a network of cities beyond the city limits of Bogotá, as well as by the unfulfilled expectations surrounding the development and leadership of Zipaquirá and Facatativá. These two cities are provincial capitals with the highest levels of social and economic development in the Savanna region but have been unable to fully control and channel their municipalities' accelerated growth. Faced with this scenario, the Secretary of the BCD conceived of the MR of Bogotá as a network of cities, comprising a highly concentrated urban nucleus and a group of surrounding municipalities, which lie in an urban-rural fringe beyond the city limits, are influenced by the nucleus, and account for more than 85% of the economic activity of the Colombian state of Cundinamarca and about 55% of its population.

Against this background, public and private associations that are uneven in their achievements, and with different resources and strategies, have interacted positioning themselves and defending their interests, faced as they are with the difficulty of consolidating alliances between public and private actors and the non-existence of public-private projects.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. This research analyses the roles of private associations in the WSP and CSP and the public Association of Municipal Authorities in the CSP (Asocentro) founded in 1991 (Figures 1 and Figures 2 and Tables 1 and Tables 2). To this end, the next section considers the theoretical aspects of metropolitan associations and local governance. The third section deals with research design and methodology. Subsequent sections identify important differences in the local and provincial coordination factors, which have given rise to profound geographical differentiation between local governments and private sector initiatives. The final section concludes.

THE THEORY OF METROPOLITAN ASSOCIATIONS AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Metropolitan areas possess various local resources and operate under different institutional and economic constraints. These factors shape urban economic policies. The local dimension is essential to understanding the formulation of economic policies affecting localization and explaining the influence of private actors on urban governance arrangements. Power in metropolitan regimes is much more diffuse as decision-making about local economic development moves away from traditional patterns of authority. Business actors are strategic and look beyond the local specificities of economic development to influence the localization policy agenda (Kaufmann, 2018). The scope for local autonomy is limited in capital cities as they tend to be less autonomous than other cities in a nation's urban system. These types of city are distinguished by being the seats of power and the spaces in which decisions affecting the lives, government and future of the nation are made, in accordance with the characteristics of the place and the constitutional status of the capital city which can take the form of a capital district (Mayer et al., 2016).

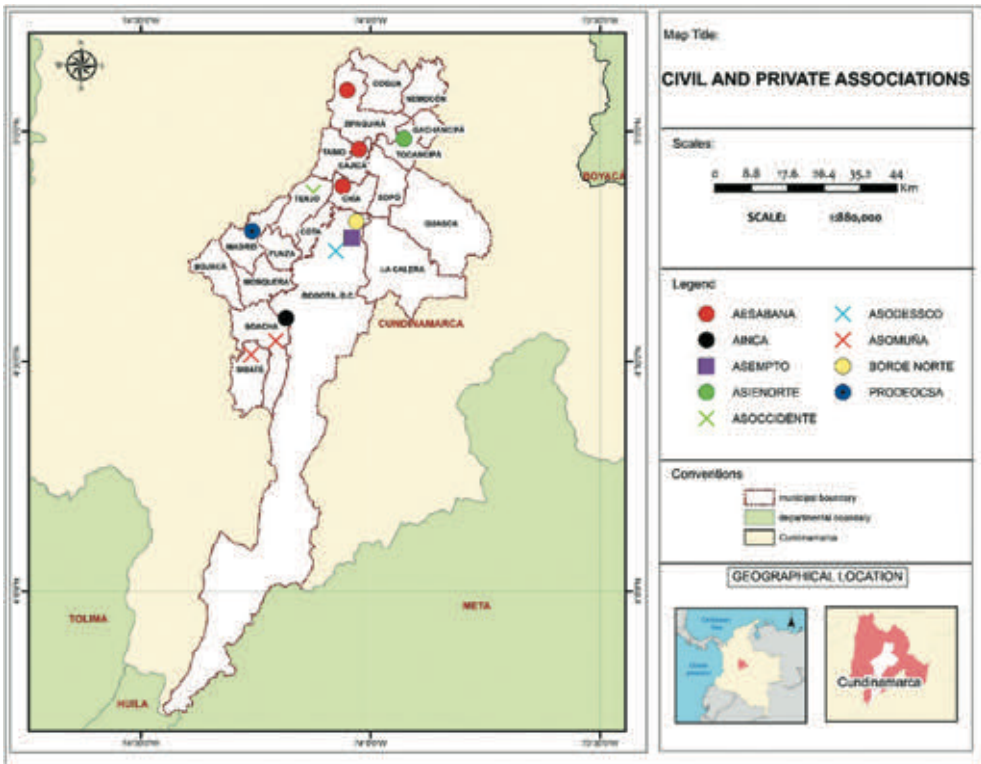


Figure 1. Civil and private associations.

In Latin America, broad national neoliberal market-based ideologies or policies advocated have been used to justify new interventions in the provision, or interruption, of public services such as water. Under the banner of water governance, a technical and regulatory adjustment has been introduced in recent decades. This trend coincided with a neoliberal reconfiguration of the nation-state since 1980 that has gone beyond changes in the spheres of money and production to consolidate itself as an environmental project (Ioris, 2012). Latin American governments, especially in Brazil and Colombia, have been necessary actors in some large urban public–private partnerships (PPPs). However, in many cases their participation has been insufficient to achieve the expected results in terms of durable public goods owing to the fact that private actors usually focus on obtaining profits to the point of renouncing their social responsibility. This is in addition to the resounding failures of industrial planning undertaken in MRs such as Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which were involved in the rise and fall of messianic projects that ended up as asphalt cemeteries (Dias da Silva & Irazábal-Zurita, 2019; Irazábal, 2016a).

Associativity in Latin America is framed by the process of democratization and decentralization of the late 1980s and early 1990s, when municipal autonomy was consolidated and metropolitan fragmentation tended to increase (Montero & Chapple, 2018). Thus, metropolitan studies have identified a lack of state capacity and a set of shortcomings in the coordination of the political system (Alfonso Roa, 2014; Grin et al., 2019; Rojas, 2008; Tecco, 2011). Among the limitations identified, the lack of experience, resources and management capacity of public officials have become more relevant (Hernández Bonivento, 2016).

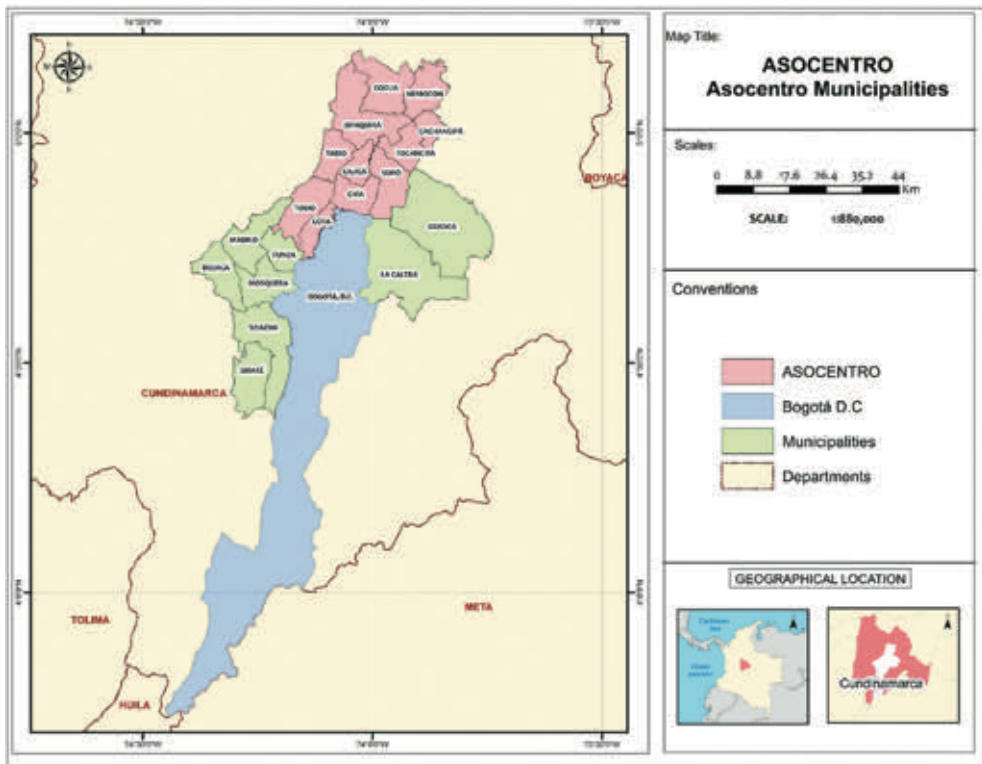


Figure 2. Public Association of Municipal Authorities of the Central Savanna Province (CSP) (Asocentro).

Bogotá, like other large metropolises in Latin America, has not been able to contain its growth within its existing boundaries, spilling over into small cities and adjacent settlements, despite the restrictions of its own jurisdiction. Here, the socio-spatial segregation of the Bogotá MR not only has immediate social and economic consequences but also has long-term political repercussions. This scenario implies changes in the distribution of power, and the strengthening of inequalities in the distribution of public investment, infrastructure and access to urban functions. Against the background of marked economic and regional inequalities, intense population growth and urbanization stimulate interregional migration transforming former towns and municipalities into new cities and consolidating the metropolization of large cities, thereby exacerbating educational inequalities, traffic congestion, insecurity and the quality of public service delivery (Diniz & Vieira, 2016). The model of urban administration in Colombia is closely related to the administrative experience of the decentralization process in the country and to the definition of an institutional framework that has focused on the municipalities. This process has generated a planning system strongly dependent upon the location of power and, to a large extent, on the privatization of public goods and services (Guzman et al., 2017; Salazar-Ferro, 2007).

In a region lacking a metropolitan authority, local political conditions and business initiatives are essential for an efficient form of local governance. This research involves a comparative analysis of a set of related factors: coordination, good government, social investment and social capital. Moreover, local coordination, as conceived of, is based on the analysis of the flexible coordination of territorial development, implemented under an association of

Table 1. Mann–Whitney *U*-test

Wilcoxon scores (rank sums) for variable F1 Classified by variable p_04					
p_04	N	Sum of scores	Expected under H0	Standard deviation under H0	Mean score
Private	190	18,499.50	19,095.0	178.216714	97.365789
Public	10	1600.50	1005.0	178.216714	160.050000
<i>Normal approximation</i>					
Z				3.3386	
One-sided probability > Z				0.0004	
Two-sided probability > Z				0.0008	
<i>t Approximation</i>					
One-sided probability > Z				0.0005	
Two-sided probability > Z				0.0010	

Note: Z includes a continuity correction of 0.5.

Table 2. Private, civil and public associations

Association^a	Nature of the association			Sociospatial scale		
	Private	Civil	Public	Local	Provincial	Regional
Asomuña	Yes			Yes		
Asooccidente	Yes			Yes		
Aesabana	Yes			Yes		
Asienorte	Yes			Yes		
Ainca	Yes			Yes		
Asempito	Yes			Yes		
Prodensa	Yes			Yes		
Prodeocsa	Yes			Yes		
Asodessco		Yes		Yes		
Bordenorte		Yes		Yes		
Asocentro			Yes		Yes	

Note: ^aAsomuña: Asociación de Empresarios de Sibaté, Soacha y el Sur de Bogotá; Asooccidente: Asociación de Industriales y Residentes del Occidente de la Sabana; Aesabana: Asociación de Empresarios de La Sabana; Asienorte: Asociación de Industriales y Empresarios de la Sabana Norte; Asodessco: Asociación de vecinos de la zona de influencia de la vía Suba Cota; Bordenorte: Asociación Red de Apoyo Bordenorte; Ainca: Asociación de Industriales del Cazuca; Asempito: Asociación de Empresas de Toberín; Asienorte: Asociación de Industriales y Empresarios de la Sabana Norte; Prodensa: Corporación Pro Desarrollo del Norte de la Sabana; Prodeocsa: La fundación Prodesarrollo del Occidente de la Sabana; Federesa: Federación de Asociaciones de Empresarios del Desarrollo de la Sabana; Asocentro: Asociación de Municipios de Sabana Centro.

local actors in provinces with low or intermediate levels of socioeconomic development and characterized by flexible local systems, autonomous development processes and citizen participation (Garmise & Rees, 1997; Goss, 2001; Skelcher, 2004; Stoker, 2004). Coordination is important to ensure policy coherence within a functional region. Regional coordination of actors and policies is conditioned by the conflicts between functional regions and territorial jurisdictions. This is especially true given that reforms of jurisdictional boundaries are unable to keep up with the rapid pace of urban expansion. Effective coordination is rarely achieved through amalgamations or top-down institutional consolidations. Rather, it is achieved through ad hoc and sometimes institutionalized cooperative arrangements that stabilize networks of politically relevant actors (Kaufmann & Sager, 2018).

Furthermore, sound government and transparency are studied from the perspective of a consensual system of governance, following guidelines for public and private actors and interests under a shared and transparent vision (Cooke & Morgan, 1998). Finally, social investment in the community and local social interaction are studied in the light of the extensive literature on social capital and its concerns with personal and functional networks and a system of shared values and rules relying upon cooperative behaviour, trusting relationships and institutional synergy (Cooke & Morgan, 1998; Farr, 2004).

Most comparative analyses of local and regional governance face methodological challenges in operationalizing concepts. Some research predominantly focuses upon the analysis of municipal institutional capacity, while research on the role of companies and business associativity identifies as determining factors the national institutional context or local governance design (Navarro Yáñez et al., 2008; Pierre, 2005). However, these approaches cannot be replicated in this research owing to the fragmentation between public and private actors. Research on public–private associativity needs to take into account the limited public power to shape the region, the weight of private associativity in regional socioeconomic development, and the noticeable authority of local mayoral offices in the context of the absence of a metropolitan planning authority.

The theory-driven expectations that seek to guide the analysis of private associations and their role in metropolitan coordination instead involve (1) identifying public–private institutional arrangements of private partnerships as pressure groups shaping business strategies; (2) establishing the limits of institutional capacities of local governments; (3) analysing the metropolitan governance structures that go beyond the boundaries of political jurisdictions; (4) mapping the characteristics of flexible systems of coordination and autonomous development processes; and (5) specifying patterns of public–private administration and management.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This research analyses private and public associations as agents of local and provincial governance. Initially, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the directors of the region's private associations and the Director of Asocentro to identify common problems that could be addressed based on the literature on regional development and public policy. Consequently, four dimensions of analysis were defined to build an instrument composed of 32 questions on a five-point Likert scale, eight for each category identified. The survey was validated by experts to refine its wording, coherence and structure, and a pilot test was conducted with five entrepreneurs and five municipal secretaries to help clarify and adapt the relevance of the questions.

As a result of this refinement and clarification process, the survey was structured around four categories: (1) local and provincial coordination; (2) good governance and transparency; (3) community investment; and (4) local social interaction (see the supplemental data online). It consisted of eight questions per identified category and was answered by 190 business people and non-business association members. The respondents form part of a group of 310

actors, mainly business people, some civil associations, schools and higher education institutions, as well as the 11 secretaries of economic development and some former secretaries who are part of the provincial association Asocentro and directly involved in its projects and initiatives.

A Mann–Whitney non-parametric *U*-test permitted a comparison of the averages of the four evaluated categories. At the 5% level, significant differences were found between private and public associations in factor 1 (local and provincial coordination).

This descriptive data permitted a more focused quantitative comparison of public and private partnerships and examination of the underlying problem of fragmentation between local and provincial scales. These results served to guide the interview questions and to triangulate sources in order to identify contrasts and expand the information. Interviews with 15 public officials and 30 entrepreneurs were conducted with the secretaries of economic development, current and former directors of the public association Asocentro, current and former directors of the associations, and well-known entrepreneurs.

THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ASSOCIATIVITY IN THE BOGOTÁ METROPOLITAN REGION

Over the last 30 years, Bogotá's population has increased by 61% to 7.4 million inhabitants. At the same time, the population around the city has grown by about 84%, coinciding with the development and consolidation of urban planning practices. Nevertheless, the lack of appropriate and coordinated policies among local, regional and national authorities has led to almost unintentional and provisional metropolitan development (Guzman et al., 2020).

In 1954, during the military dictatorship of General Rojas Pinilla (1953–57), Bogotá experienced its first institutional process of absorption of its municipal neighbours, which became part of the current structure of the city. This process sought to respond to growing pressure for more efficient administrative processes in the territory of Bogotá and its surroundings due to rapid demographic and physical growth and the limited capacity of local governments and their municipalities in a region without electrical connectivity, water networks and other public infrastructure services. Differences in power and wealth among municipalities continue to play an important role in the region. Owing to the constitutional reforms of 1991, local political actors enjoyed increased decision-making and investment autonomy, which can be challenged by the introduction of a new authority at the subnational level (Guzman et al., 2017).

Based on work carried out by the Comisión Regional de Competitividad Bogotá–Cundinamarca (Bogotá–Cundinamarca Regional Competitiveness Commission) (2010), since 2001 different areas of joint planning have been identified between Bogotá and some of the neighbouring municipalities in the Cundinamarca department that form part of the urban ring of influence that make up the capital region, but none has managed to define a regional metropolitan authority. These initiatives were responses to the accelerated urban growth in the municipalities outside Bogotá city limits of resulting environmental, mobility and quality-of-life problems of its inhabitants, and a heavy administrative burden for the Bogotá district administration and the authorities in neighbouring municipalities. Through an inter-administrative agreement signed by the Mayor of Bogotá and the Governor of the Colombian state of Cundinamarca, in 2008 the Capital Region was created with the objective of guaranteeing the execution of integrated development plans and programmes and the timely and efficient provision of the services under its responsibility.

Among the structural challenges that have arisen in the Capital Region is that of a fragmented tax structure, a characteristic peculiar to the BCD and which distinguishes it from other metropolitan areas in Colombia. As a case in point, in the region the high

growth in some municipalities, such as Chía and Cota, was due to the lowest rates of taxation with respect to neighbouring municipalities and tax exemption for local industries. There are several reasons to rethink the current scheme governing the BCD's participation in the tax income of the state of Cundinamarca. The BCD's spending responsibilities have become much greater over the past two decades, partly because various businesses have left the capital to set up operations in neighbouring municipalities (ProBogotá (Fundación para el progreso de la Región Capital) [Foundation for the Progress of the Capital Region], 2019). Bogotá maintained a real growth rate above the national rate until 2006. From 2007 it declined due to difficulties in the construction sector and lower industrial growth compared with the rest of the country, in part because many industries had moved to neighbouring municipalities. Against this background, one could set out the possibility of overcoming a rigid tax scheme limiting itself to a zero-sum race to the bottom by means of a tax-sharing system of the kind employed in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis–St. Paul and others in the United States.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the private sector in the region began to create mutual links in order to progress without the backing of the state with the provision of the basic investment for functioning industrial zones. Private associations have implemented and innovated associative-type initiatives, focusing upon defending their statutory objectives and the interests of their corporate membership. Led by Asomuña, Asooccidente, Aesabana, Asempito, Ainca and Asienorte (Table 2), they have worked to different degrees on the competitiveness of their industrial areas. Other types of association – of a civil nature – comprising schools, shopping centres, higher education institutions or neighbourhood groups, through initiatives such as Asodessco and Bordenorte, have sought to speak up for their interests and their members' well-being in relation to infrastructure, transport, lighting or security issues. Finally, a significant number of business foundations in the region, such as Prodensa and Prodeocsa, engage in social work with the local governments of their corresponding jurisdictions, limiting themselves to fulfilling their corporate social responsibility functions. Against the background of this paradoxical situation, where the central node (the BCD) of the network of cities does not play a determining role as an axis of regional planning and coordination, public–private associations bring together a fragmented region without acknowledging the decisive role of Bogotá.

GEOGRAPHICAL CONTRASTS IN TERRITORIAL COORDINATION

As the aforementioned statistical analysis showed, significant differences in the factor related to local and territorial (provincial) coordination existed only between public and private associations. The first limitation that the analysis indicated is geographical, arising from the divergence between the predominantly local jurisdictions where private associations develop versus the provincial jurisdiction (CSP) where Asocentro has concentrated its efforts. On the one hand, at the local level private associations have consolidated themselves as actors of business development and representatives for different private demands made of public entities. On the other, at the provincial level the municipalities have sought to promote their particular development and presented themselves through Asocentro as a united province.

The difficulties that private associations have experienced in gaining independence from the BCD and engaging in industrial planning originated from the inappropriate application of the regulations on value capture. According to the first director of Asooccidente (Asociación de Industriales y Residentes del Occidente de la Sabana) [Association of Industrialists and Residents of the West of the Savanna] (2019a), which groups together some of the 100 largest companies in the area:

The issue of public services is very sensitive for industrial zones that are set up outside Bogotá, particularly because the concept of capital gains has never been practiced. The change of agricultural land to industrial use did result in public works for the adaptation of the industrial zones. The large landowners of the region, allied with some corrupt councillors or officials, appropriated the difference in land value and the municipalities were left without the financial muscle to develop the service infrastructure.

Another difficulty faced by the companies that were established in the municipalities of the first ring of the BCD was an extreme dependence upon the human capital and services provided by Bogotá. Insurmountable difficulties associated with the recruitment of local labour have caused local political tensions due to pressure from mayors to ameliorate the chronic unemployment in many municipalities. In relation to this issue, the current director of Asooccidente (2019b) pointed out: ‘The association has 40,200 contributors, 40,000 come from Bogotá and only 200 come from the municipality of Cota. The association does not know how to respond when mayors claim they have 4,500 resúmenes.’

According to survey findings, 58% of private entities ‘never’ and ‘almost never’ present themselves as a business and administrative centre independent of the BCD. Private associations located in the urban ring of the Capital District are characterized by a high degree of dependence upon the Capital District and limited local roots. The inability of local administrations to provide public goods, administer basic services and train human capital reinforces this dependence on the urban core.

PUBLIC–PRIVATE COORDINATION IN REGIONAL PLANNING

Private associations’ perceptions of Bogotá can be explained by their high economic interdependence with the BCD and their inescapable interaction with the national and BCD governments. Thus, the district, and predominantly some central government agencies, appear as strategic private sector allies, unlike the local governments, with which there is sometimes no relationship whatsoever. This public–private disarticulation at the local level is determined by the empowerment and leadership of the private sector, which has assumed many of the state’s functions, such as infrastructure and security. Some of the region’s pioneering associations, Asomuña and Asooccidente, have been drivers of territorial development through utilities planning and management, providing security and financing entities and providing many public goods in industrial zones, which are, however, built in a highly dysfunctional manner. This state of affairs is evident in the case of Asomuña, located in the industrial area of the municipality of Sibaté, whose foundation in 1967 originates with the arrival of the company Eternit in a completely unpopulated area in 1942.

This impaired scenario of privatization and neoliberalization of traditional public societal functions, coupled with chronic state weakness and various forms of violence and insecurity in private property rights has led to the empowerment of the private sector. Hence, entrepreneurs have assumed many of the functions of the state, especially in the areas of infrastructure and security. According to the first director of Asooccidente (2019a), one of the pioneering associations in the region:

In the 1990s, Asooccidente, Aguas de Bogotá (later Aguas de la Sabana) and a business alliance provided water to the municipality. Against this background, the public environmental protection agency (Corporación Autónoma Regional) began to develop an interest in the disposal and extraction of water, because due to rapid growth the resource was being depleted. Finally, the sewage system was built after adjustments to the model, and the service is provided based on a rate according to the number of square metres of a plot of land.

In the case of Asomuña, which is located in a geographically isolated and complex area, in the 1990s businessmen faced increasing kidnapping and extortion. Faced with this situation, they decided to contribute to the financing of viable security initiatives. According to the current director of Asomuña (Asociación de Empresarios de Sibaté, Soacha y el Sur de Bogotá) [Association of Entrepreneurs of Sibaté, Soacha and the South of Bogotá] (2019):

The first Neighbourhood Police Station in Colombia was in the area, and the businessmen from the area very close to the non-commissioned officer school in Sibaté financed all kinds of equipment: vehicles, radios and administrative equipment. Subsequently, the association financed and structured, together with the Chamber of Commerce, the project 'Safe Roads', which was proposed to the Ministry of Defence to guarantee the security of the road corridors in the industrial zones in the Savanna Region.

In a country marked by paternalism and a hierarchical entrepreneurial structure, the effects of these private sector investments generate tensions and tend to define the long-term local and public spheres of society. In the absence of the state and the empowerment of private associations, companies shape their territories and become actors of a rather unique nature, making the typical development of metropolitan governance and any simplified public-private associativity approach difficult. Hence, the presence and interests of the private sector has undermined and shaken up the public sphere. However, the challenges faced by public actors are even greater and their administrative burdens are quite heavy.

At this point, Asocentro's role is quite problematic, given its natural tendency to defend its political autonomy, which is reinforced by budgetary strengths derived from its proximity to Bogotá. The above insights and discussion on public-private coordination clarify the results of the surveys in which the mayors of Asocentro in 70% of cases are 'always' and 'almost always' perceived as a centre of administration and planning independent of the BCD. This result should be understood as a plea for independence by powerful local administrations that claim control or privileged access to local bureaucracies and seek to maintain the administrative autonomy gained under the 1991 Constitution.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITIES OF PUBLIC ACTORS

In the midst of this fragmentation, the local socio-spatial scales employed in the territorial planning statutes remain the only axes with administrative planning capacities. However, in the face of fragmentation, integral planning has collapsed, as demonstrated by the Bogotá Department of City Planning (Secretaría Distrital de Planeación de Bogotá) (2018) and public and private entities are disarticulated. This situation reflects a low degree of public institutional capacity. The survey data showed that 76% of members of private associations consider that public actors 'sometimes' and 'almost never' have high administrative capacities. In comparison, 90% of provincial public officials based in the mayor's offices consider their counterparts as having 'high administrative capacities.'

The negative perception that directors of private associations has formed are based on their experience. From reactive positions towards local leaders or attempts to collaborate with local administrations, this perception persists. According to the first director of Asooccidente (2019a):

Very quickly these municipalities became crucially important political strongholds. A municipality like Cota had a significant annual budget, it was predominantly rural with a population of 15,000 inhabitants. All of a sudden, hundreds of factories started to be built in the area, which began to pay corporate taxes so that the budget shot up exponentially and political factions began co-opting

these municipalities and ill-prepared individuals arrived on the scene to manage these immense planning challenges.

In the case of Asomuña, due to the municipality's lack of water, work has been carried out in close collaboration with the municipality. According to the director of Asomuña (2019):

This problem is quite disconcerting since we are talking about a mountain municipality, where intervention is very high and deforestation is severe, aggravated by mining activities. We found ourselves in a scenario where there is a total lack of coordination between public policy and business activity. Thus Asomuña decided to join forces with the municipalities of Sibaté and Soacha and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to formulate a municipal public policy focused on youth and the elderly, zoning and land use, and the educational plan 2011–2019. Yet one can imagine the difficulties we had due to extreme politicization, and administrative shortcomings and inefficiencies.

This gap between public and private entities deepens one of the most structural fissures in the region, strengthening the balkanization of municipalities, as well as further undermining their weak relationship with BCD. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (2008) has a track record of dealing with the spatial dimension of urban governance, but very limited public–private relationships discourage local organic development, the building of trust between actors, the signing of intermunicipal and regional agreements, and metropolitan authority enforcement. In the face of this paradox, the lack of consensus about relations between the local, provincial and regional socio-spatial scales generates much confusion, as does the very limited agreement on strategic approaches, sectoral priorities and common development.

THE VAGUE LIMITS OF METROPOLITAN GOVERNANCE

The public association Asocentro in the CSP has not managed to consolidate the province politically. Furthermore, the provincial level is considered politically irrelevant by business actors and the private associations in the region. Consequently, the effort to monitor provincial socioeconomic behaviour does not reflect a real need perceived by private actors.

A direct consequence of the lack of local, provincial and regional coordination and the absence of a metropolitan authority is the limited and irrelevant monitoring of provincial socioeconomic development. Public actors have a relatively favourable perception of the monitoring and observation systems, and the CSP has made some progress on this front. However, 60% of the economic development secretaries in the mayor's offices consider that these mechanisms are 'almost never' or 'sometimes' relevant to their work. Despite the ability of different high-profile observatories Observatorio Regional de Mercado de Trabajo [Regional Labour Market Observatory] (ORMET), Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje [National Apprenticeship Service] (SENA), (Sabana Centro Cómo Vamos) to monitor socioeconomic development of the CSP to support planning and decision-making processes, the practical relevance of the available information is not entirely clear and acts as an institutional constraint on the provision of more structured and strategic assessments. Moreover, 69% of businesses consider that these platforms are 'never' and 'almost never' relevant to their work.

With the exception of Aesabana, observatories do not show any particular interest in tracking the province's socioeconomic information for their strategic development plans. This limited interest in provincial planning and regional development was evident in the failure of the Federation of Associations of Entrepreneurs for the Development of the Savanna (Federesa). This initiative, which sought to bring together all the private and civil associations

of the CSP and WSP into a regional development federation, was initiated in 2017 but it failed in 2019 due to lack of political agreement and financial problems.

This federative initiative managed to bring together all private associations in the CSP and WSP with more than 900 companies located in the area seeking a regional association that would permit regional and territorial planning. The participation by all CSP associations and the financing of important socioeconomic diagnostic studies on the quality of life, led by the Sabana Centro Cómo Vamos (Central Savanna How Are We Doing) (2017), were indicative of a possibility of counteracting fragmentation and promoting coordination. However, the very irrelevance of the provincial scale and its social problems for entrepreneurs, sometimes located outside the province, with little attachment to neighbouring municipalities and exclusively interested in local problems, made consolidation difficult.

FLEXIBLE SYSTEMS AND AUTONOMOUS DEVELOPMENT

Despite significant private economic investment in infrastructure, capital and public goods, as well as growing public works and investment financed with public funds, the involvement of civil society and organized groups of citizens is weak and often non-existent. There are, however, some notable exceptions in con-urban localities where there was a greater degree of civic integration thanks to the management of private associations. This situation is clearly apparent in localities that years ago were part of the rural area of the BCD, such as Toberín, and today are part of the northern entrance to the city, as well as in completely autonomous and independent municipalities such as Soacha (Ainca), which today are part of the continuous built-up area of the BCD. In these localities, early established private associations with a marked business character have managed to generate levels of interdependence with their communities and promoted initiatives to recover the social fabric in areas that have been transformed by the growth of businesses. In this regard, the Toberín Business Association (Asempto), located in a locality that was part of the old plots of the Toberín Hacienda, today comprises more than 250 factories, generating more than 600 direct jobs. Currently, according to the territorial planning statute, the locality has an industrial, residential and commercial nature. The private association Asempto has undertaken a mixed local agenda requiring deep involvement in the planning and development of the area, concentrating efforts on community and neighbourhood work with a very low degree of participation of the local mayoral office.

The case of Asempto is striking because, strictly speaking, it belongs to the BCD, but it is not part of the CSP. In this context, the Director of Asempto (Asociación de Empresas de Toberín) (2019) has, with difficulty, had to collaborate with the local mayoral office and the BCD:

The association, through intermediation with different entities, has achieved the paving of roads, maintenance of parks, parking bays, specification of platforms and facades. Also, we are working on the issue of garbage with a company allied with Asooccidente and we are interested in participating in the garbage collection system. We worked closely with the community, with the Community Action Boards, with grandparents, children, and adolescents who have not been able to enter university. In general, there is a very solid relationship between business people and the community, but the relationship with the local mayoral office is not good.

As for the provincial-level public organization Asocentro, 95% of respondent members indicated that it has ‘never’ or ‘almost never’ met the expectations of private actors. This limited form of provincial governance, involving both civil society and private enterprise, along with the fragmentation of governance, results in limited control and management capacity of the mayor’s offices over the region’s social and business fabric, largely confining their work to

provincial infrastructure projects, which Asocentro then executes. Asocentro has not been able to achieve substantial progress in managing regional projects centring upon employment, waste disposal and tourism, nor has the association benefitted from the consistent participation of private companies and associations. This situation leaves the municipalities disjointed and dependent upon the public resources that the mayoral offices spend in the light of their investment plans, which have improved most of the quality-of-life indicators, but do not leverage other provincial and regional-scale projects and investments even though it is the *raison d'être* of the association and a key requirement for an MR.

PUBLIC–PRIVATE PATTERNS

The municipalities that form part of Asocentro do not share a common position on the benefits of Asocentro membership and on the advantages that coordination with private associations could yield. First, there are municipalities that have benefitted much from business and real estate investment. The attempt of these actors to position themselves in the region is perceived by Asocentro as a counterweight to the BCD and its metropolitan initiatives. Second, there are municipalities with a much more limited relationship with the private sector, which does not exceed functional topics such as employment and taxes, that do not see Asocentro as an amplifier of their regional interests, and do not conceive of participating in any metropolitan-type initiative. In both cases, public–private coordination is neither mediated by the role of Asocentro, since it has occurred spontaneously and informally according to geographical growth dynamics around Bogotá, nor by the role of private associations that do not align themselves with municipalities in an organic way. A single exception to these two processes occurs in the municipalities that have achieved consistent alignment with private associations in their localities, as in the case of Tocancipá municipality and the private association Asienorte.

Moreover, the isolation of the two provincial capitals (Zipaquirá in the CSP and Facatativá in the WSP) from the business and associativity fabric of the provinces is exacerbated by the limited capacities of municipal administrations to transcend their jurisdictional boundaries and channel provincial investments that promote the development of strategic public goods. In the absence of this type of investment, companies with high levels of associativity located in territories that they themselves have contributed to, and often consolidated themselves on the fringes of the municipalities, face difficulties in reaching consensus on provincial and metropolitan integration.

The main limitation delaying the consolidation of these regional initiatives originates in the multiple collaborative dilemmas affecting each municipal jurisdiction, where amid the tension between technical and political aspects local political interests make collective agreements difficult. These dilemmas tend to occur when the fragmentation of regional authority generates decisions affecting third parties or local governments that are too small to produce the services they wish to provide (Feiock, 2013). Each local authority pursues its own restricted interests and is faced with an inefficient collective result (Feiock, 2013). Against this background, one of the institutional weaknesses of the public association Asocentro is its lack of a sole executive authority with administrative capacity. Thus, Asocentro suffers from excessive dependence upon unanimity among the 11 mayors. Notwithstanding the consequent administrative ineffectiveness and the impossibility of reinventing a leaderless association such as Asocentro, the option of establishing a vertical authority for the MR faces multiple forms of political resistance.

The fractures preventing the resolution of dilemmas of collective action in a disparate association such as Asocentro originate in contrasting municipality sizes, economic income levels, degrees of administrative autonomy, economic sectors and long-term planning. Thus,

more prosperous municipalities envisage projects among equally wealthy peers or seek state-level and national funding. The poorest municipalities are unable to finance regional projects. At the same time, the municipalities that receive new investment increase their tax take. Moreover, municipalities with a strong agricultural sector resist economic diversification, leaving their workforce to seek employment opportunities in neighbouring municipalities. Finally, municipalities that have achieved an efficient mode of local governance such as Tocancipá tend to avoid associativity, and paradoxically these municipalities alone support the MR project.

In essence, as the only public association in the region, Asocentro is bereft of enforcement power, and is unable to implement its regional initiatives. Its existence is reduced to managing infrastructure agreements, maintaining expectations of future projects and attempting to break the political gridlock of a fragmented region. Hence, the association becomes a valuable strategic negotiating asset for the wealthiest municipalities of the province that seek to position themselves advantageously with regard to the BCD. Furthermore, Asocentro channels important economic and political resources within a heterogeneous association providing benefits and creating expectations with respect to cooperation.

The possibilities of re-inventing Asocentro should be thought through more rigorously and studied in the light of future scenarios that may be envisaged for the region. Within any possible scenario, private associations should be included given their central contribution to the configuration of metropolitan affairs and the structural conceptualization and modelling of different local governance agreements. Both their contributions, and the implications that have been derived from their enlarged presence and influence, demand a new agreement between all actors, which will most likely require a forceful intervention by the BCD to propose a new pact and order. Thus, inspired by the case of France, ProBogotá (2019) proposes a statutory pact whereby municipalities are legally obliged to transfer a series of previously defined competences over transport, the environment and public services to the BCD. Based on this model, a metropolitan strategy for territorial planning would constitute a norm based on a hierarchy to determine zoning and land use, as well as development plans.

Finally, Irazábal's (2016b) comparative contribution studying the cities of Curitiba (Brazil) and Portland (USA), which are apparently dissimilar yet successful MRs, affords foundational experiences not only for the implementation of viable sustainable models, but also for the identification of common patterns and differentiating traits. A common pattern in both cases has been the capacity of cities to agree upon institutionally robust planning agreements with their respective federal states: Paraná and Oregon. The technical, political and institutional consultation processes were key to guaranteeing a hegemonic urban planning project in Curitiba, and a planning programme that was both concerted and useful to different interests in Portland. These two diametrically different institutional and participatory contexts range from technical, elitist and dictatorial planning to an unusual degree of citizen participation. The latter has occasioned a fruitful synergy of leadership, plans and policies for urban development, highlighting the central importance of state, metropolitan and local consultation. Alternately, differentiating features between the cases of Curitiba and Portland are the democratic deficits and the biased mediatization in the case of the former, and an empowered and participatory citizenry achieving decisive consensus at the expense of the instability and fragility of urban policies in the case of the latter (Irazábal, 2016b).

In sum, with respect to a future MR in Bogotá, the analysis advanced in this paper highlights the potentially meaningful convergence of contrasts inherent in both the above cases in terms of centralized, technical and authoritarian planning processes along with renewed limited and balanced democratic participation, so that the necessary bureaucratic and planning processes which the region calls for are not delayed.

CONCLUSIONS

A disparate network of individual bureaucratic strongholds, each fighting for its own, narrow political interests, characterizes the CSP. Both public and private associativity have unquestionably shaped the regional development path. Moreover, against a background of the inability of municipalities to assume a strategic path towards consolidating local and provincial governance, private and public associations become an integral part of a future metropolitan agreement. Such a scenario would in theory guarantee more centralized management, provide regional public goods and develop areas of strategic cooperation and integration. In practice, it would most likely face fierce challenges in identifying problematic PPPs and restructuring the privileges of the current status quo from which the BCD, the government of the state of Cundinamarca and many wealthy municipalities in the region benefit.

However, given the weight of local political conditions in shaping funding and interests, jurisdictional boundaries hamper efforts at local and provincial governance. These bureaucratic domains have found it difficult to generate flexible systems of public–private coordination, define autonomous and non-rentier development models, as well as organically link civil society to local projects and institutions. This deep local institutional inertia, accompanied in most cases by substantial benefits and improving economic indicators, has been transferred to the provincial level and prevented an association with a long-time horizon such as Asocentro from realizing its potential.

Furthermore, transformation of the region has taken place in a spontaneous and informal way through multiple private and civil investments that have shaped a leaderless and fragmented region. Various private and civil associations have strategically positioned themselves in a disjointed network to defend the interests of their members, but they have not achieved institutional convergence with local or provincial public actors and have faced profound collaborative dilemmas. The private associative model also has severe limitations and has not been able to respond to the area's needs. The winding up of a novel initiative such as Federesa, on which many expectations of feasible and functional integration and strategic development of the CSP and WSP were placed, amply demonstrates these limitations.

In the face of deep local fragmentation, limited public–private coordination and a lack of concrete regional investments, the only feasible pattern of integration thus far consists of public and private associations. These associations have not managed to define an administrative centre, given the persistent and chaotic alignment of both private and public local patrimonial interests. They faced the decline of provincial capitals, difficulties in defining an administrative centre, the role of the BCD and recognition of the unquestionable fact of the MR. Private associations perceive the BCD more favourably than do public associations. Against this background, Asocentro acts as a counterweight to the gravitational forces of the BCD.

Envisaging the future metropolitan scenario, Asocentro faces a significant challenge to rethink its economic and institutional assets in order to turn the CSP into a new MR. This endeavour is central to thinking about a new metropolitan socio-spatial scale. Recognition of the provincial sociospatial scale does not appear viable under any scenario of integration with the BCD. The province lacks an administrative centre and also a geographical, functional and productive interrelationship as the basis for an endogenous development model unifying the 11 municipalities of the CSP. Nor does the province have a place in the logic of the private sector, which heavily depends on Bogotá.

The challenge of private associations is equally demanding, since in the face of Federesa's failure to come into being, there is a great risk of worsening the balkanization that has affected public actors and the region in general. The institutional trajectory and the active role of private

associations is undeniable, having played a very positive role in the transformation of their areas of influence and in the economic integration of the region. However, the task of defining a regional centre is becoming increasingly pressing in the face of disorderly growth, the failure of decentralized, private initiatives that did not bear fruit, and the existence of successful local cases of governance which resist cooperation. Only with a defined centre or a functional polycentric network will it be possible to carry out strategic regional initiatives that the region requires to consolidate local, provincial and regional governance integrating the BCD with the business network, the municipal capitals and civil society.

A noteworthy development in the region over recent months consists at long last in the first steps taken towards approval of the Bogotá MR by the Colombian Department of Cundinamarca and the Capital District. In late June 2020, the Colombian Senate passed the corresponding legislation in a historic decision. Pending passage of an organic law, which will specify the role municipalities will play, Cundinamarca and the Capital District will be able to cooperate and adopt policies on the environment, transport, budgetary affairs and public services. The precise features of the organic law will also depend upon the goodwill of the region's mayors and the particulars of their willingness to participate in the MR. A future Regional Council will be composed of the Mayor of Bogotá, the mayors of the participating municipalities, and the Governor of Cundinamarca, with joint decisions having a higher legal status than the Capital District regulations and provisions. These achievements have yet to be developed and consolidated, but the MR is already a formal reality that reflects the complexities of the region, which differs from other Colombian metropolitan areas such as Valle de Aburrá (Medellín) or Bucaramanga due to the participation of the government of Cundinamarca department.

These developments largely reflect intuitions and hypotheses discussed in this paper and thereby confirm the need for a polycentric and hierarchical network that finally manages to break the inert status quo that the region has suffered from. Future research should analyse the implementation processes and the necessary participation of private associations, which thus far is not envisaged in the existing legislation.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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