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The Institutional Dimension of Sustainable Development in Brazil

By Verônica Nascimento Brito Antunes, Valéria Gonçalves da Vinha & Jacilene dos Santos Silva

Federal University of Alagoas

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Keywords: *sustainable development, institutional dimension, brazil, governance, indicators.*

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The Institutional Dimension of Sustainable Development in Brazil

Verônica Nascimento Brito Antunes [α], Valéria Gonçalves da Vinha [σ] & Jacilene dos Santos Silva [ρ]

Abstract- This article aims to review the 'state of the art' of the institutional dimension of sustainable development, focusing on the portrayal of this dimension through indicators in Brazil. The research employs a theoretical-argumentative methodology for exploratory analysis of sustainable development in Brazil, from an institutional perspective. The procedures of bibliographic research and document analysis are used in the discussion. As a result, it is confirmed that the institutional dimension of sustainable development reveals a generic framework of institutional efforts and capacities. This dimension is poorly portrayed by sustainability indicators, due to its complexity and difficulty in collecting primary data. Accordingly, the strengthening of governance is suggested as a solution for the improvement of the institutional framework in the country.

Keywords: sustainable development, institutional dimension, brazil, governance, indicators.

I. Introduction

In the mid-twentieth century, faced with the global socio-environmental crisis and perception of the finitude of natural resources and their depletion, the notion of sustainability emerged in debates on development. The main causes of the global socio-environmental crisis can be understood from the following factors that put pressure on ecosystems and affect the climate: world population growth, inability to eliminate misery and poverty through economic growth and institutional inability to solve global problems (Sachs, 2008).

One of the first studies to highlight the danger of continuous and indiscriminate economic growth trajectories was produced by the Club of Rome in the report known worldwide as *The limits to growth* (Meadows, 1972). This report warned of a gradual increase in most problems related to the environment on a global scale. The absence of limits to the exploitation of natural resources is discussed, in clear opposition to the dominant conception of continuous growth of industrial society. Thus, the idea of *zero growth* became popular, given the impossibility of exploiting natural resources indefinitely for the continuous process of capitalist accumulation.

Author α: Professor of the Graduate Program of the Faculty of Economics, Administration and Accounting, Federal University of Alagoas, Maceió-AL, Brazil. e-mail: veronica.antunes@feac.ufal.br
Author σ: Professor of the Graduate Program of the Institute of Economics of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. e-mail: valeriagdavinha@gmail.com
Author ρ: Master in Applied Economics from the Federal University of Alagoas, Maceió-AL, Brazil. e-mail: ja_cilene@hotmail.com

At the Stockholm Conference (1974), Maurice Strong proposed the concept of 'Eco-development' that represented an alternative to polarization that placed on one side, the proposal of 'zero growth' and on the other side the developmentalist claims of third world countries, the 'right to growth' (Vieira, 2007). The main aspects of this proposal were articulated by Ignacy Sachs (1997). They took into account mainly the issues of education, participation of civil society, preservation of natural resources combined with the satisfaction of basic needs. The concept of eco-development was a great advance in the perception of the global environmental problem, as it highlighted the interdependence between economic development and the environment.

To reflect on the conciliation between environmental preservation and economic development and propose a global agenda, the World Commission for the Environment and Development (CMMAD), produced a report called "Our Future Common," also known as the *Brundtland report,* in 1987. This report sets out the classic and most widespread normative definition of the concept of sustainable development.

Despite all the efforts undertaken to understand and characterize the most diverse dimensions of sustainability, the tripod involving the environmental, social and economic dimensions has prevailed in studies on sustainable development. The institutional dimension of sustainable development started to be portrayed through indicators after the publication of the second edition of the popularly known 'Blue Book' in 2001, organized by the Commission for Sustainable Development (CDS) of the United Nations (UN)).

Following CDS/UN guidelines, with some adjustments to the national reality, the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics in Brazil (IBGE) has published a series of Sustainable Development Indicators (IDS), since 2002, which are organized into four dimensions (economic , social, environmental and institutional) and divided into themes and subthemes. The institutional dimension indicators are subdivided into *Institutional Framework* and *Institutional Capacity*.

Environmental governance can be characterized as a thematic delimitation, extended to the sphere of sustainable development and environmental policies (Fonseca & Bursztyn, 2009). Reflecting on the framework of norms and institutions that characterize environmental governance in Brazil, Cavalcanti (2003)

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admits the influence of advanced legislation on the environment. However, the application of the rules in the real world illustrates the conflicts between the economy and the environment and ecology observed in the country.

In this context, this article intends to examine the '*state of the art*' of the institutional dimension of sustainable development, focusing on the efforts to portray this dimension through indicators in Brazil. It aims to broaden the debate around strengthening governance, proposing it as a solution that improves the institutional framework in the country.

In methodological terms, the research fulfills exploratory and descriptive purposes through a theoretical-argumentative analysis of the institutional architecture of sustainable development. In terms of the technical procedures adopted for data collection and analysis, bibliographic and document research and content analysis were used. The following stages of research are presented: bibliographic survey of the dimensions of sustainable development, and documental research of guides and reports produced by the UN and IBGE. These sources help understand the institutional dimension of sustainability and elaborate on the implementation of its indicators and degree of reach.

II. The Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

In the words of Sachs (1997), *Ecodevelopment* means an endogenous development that depends on its own forces, with the objective of responding to the problem of harmonizing the social and economic objectives of development with an ecologically prudent management of resources and the environment.

This definition highlights a concern with economic aspects, without neglecting the social and environmental aspects. It also addresses a concern related to the quality of life and the commitment toward preserving the environment for future generations (Montibeller-Filho, 1993), revealing characteristic regulations that have been gradually improved.

International Union for Conservation Nature (IUCN) World Conference on Conservation and Development, was held in Canada in 1986. In this conference, the concept of Sustainable and Equitable Development was presented as a new model, based on the following principles: development, satisfaction of fundamental human needs, achievement of equity and social justice, pursuit for social self-determination and cultural diversity, and conservation of ecological integrity.

In 1987, the year after the IUCN Conference, with the mission of reflecting on the conciliation between environmental preservation and economic development and proposing a global agenda to change certain paradigms, the CMMAD produced the report called "Our Common Future," which defines the concept of sustainable development as follows: "*sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the possibilities of future generations to meet their own needs*" (CMMAD, 1991). In this way, the perception of the relationship between environmental problems and the development process is legitimized through the emergence of the concept of sustainable development (Guimarães, 1997).

The Brundtland report broadens and primes the academic debate on the meaning of sustainable development. According to Nascimento (2012), the vague formula unifies the strengths and weakness of the definition, as it does not explain the current human needs and those of future generations. However, it introduces the notion of intergenerationality in the concept of sustainability, associating it with the notion of social justice, reduction in social inequalities, and right of accessing the necessary goods for a dignified life, and ethical values, as a commitment to future generations.

Reinforcing the dynamism of sustainability, Bossel (1998) stresses that society and environment are continuously changing, along with technologies, culture, values and aspirations. Everything is constantly changing, which is why society must allow and sustain such changes.

It is pertinent to consider the notion of sustainability. It is an issue that decisively influences the conception and dissemination of the meaning of sustainability, and the worldview of those involved (Raccichini & Vinha, 2017), given that the sustainability approach is explored in various fields of knowledge. Thus, another source of influence for the formation of the concept of sustainability is the institutional visions and conceptions.

In this perspective, groups that influenced the construction and dissemination of the concept of sustainability can be identified, such as the *World Commission on Environment and Development* (WCED, 1987) – Our Common Future Report; *International Institute of Environment* and *Development* (IIED, 2001); *World Business Council for Sustainable Development* (WBCSD), (Mebratu, 1998). In general, the definition of sustainable development given by the Brundtland Commission and concept of "satisfaction of needs, comprise the central elements of institutional visions. However, there are differences in interpretation, resulting from the influences of the institutions' objectives. For now, we follow the notion of sustainability provided in the Report.

III. The Dimensions of Sustainability

In the Brundtland Report, the following three essential aspects of sustainable development are

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highlighted: environmental protection, economic growth and social equity (CMMAD, 1991). However, it is necessary to consider that sustainability is multidimensional, has interdependent relationships between dimensions, and is composed of a complex system in which the human being is inserted.

Therefore, it should be noted that it encompasses more dimensions than the economic, social and environmental ones, which are frequently mentioned in studies on the subject.

By treating the concepts of "Ecodevelopment" and "Sustainable Development" as synonyms [1], Ignacy Sachs (1993) assumes that all development-oriented planning needs to simultaneously consider the following five dimensions of sustainability:

a) *social* (fighting poverty and building a civilization with greater equity in income distribution, to reduce the gap between the living standards of the rich and poor)

b) *economic (economic* efficiency must be evaluated in macro-social terms through the criterion of corporate profitability, aiming to promote structural changes that stimulate human development without compromising the environment)

c) *ecological* (related to the preservation of natural resources as a basis for biodiversity, this dimension proposes a more efficient production system with ecologically correct and economically viable solutions through the use of clean technologies and alternative renewable energy sources. It also defines the norms for adequate environmental protection)

d) *spatial or Geographic* (focused on a balanced rural-urban configuration, better territorial distribution of urban settlements and economic activities)

e) *cultural* (highlights respect for cultural specificities, identities and traditions of local communities, valuing the continuity of traditions and plurality of peoples).

Years later, Sachs themselves (2002) expand the approach to the scope of sustainable development by introducing the following three different dimensions which can be analyzed relatively:

f) environmental *(*includes respect for the self-purification capacity of natural ecosystems)

g) national policy (involves democracy, a reasonable level of social cohesion, human rights and the development of the State's capacity to implement the National project in partnership with all entrepreneurs)

h) international policy (based on the promotion of peace and international cooperation, international financial control, application of the Precautionary Principle in the management of environmental and natural resources, protection of biological and cultural diversity and scientific and technological cooperation).

Lage and Barbieri (2001) introduce the following two dimensions: the political dimension, which refers to the creation of conditions that allow civil citizens to effectively participate in the planning and social control of public policies; and the technological dimension, which refers to the promotion of local scientific and technological development.

Covering the psychological, social and cultural dimensions, Marrul Filho (2000) and Jacobi (2003) emphasized the practice of environmental education based on the need to understand the culture and achieve individual well-being, as constituent elements of sustainable development.

Despite all the efforts undertaken to understand and characterize the most diverse dimensions of sustainability, the tripod involving the environmental, social and economic dimensions has prevailed in studies on sustainable development.

Based on these three fundamental components, Elkington's (1998) *triple bottom line emerges* [2], in which society seeks a balance between the aspects that are "*socially desirable, economically viable and ecologically sustainable.*" The dynamic balance between the economic, social and environmental dimensions is most important in approaching corporate sustainability.

It is worth considering that the concept of sustainable development contemplates that multi-dimensionality includes more than the economic, social and environmental dimensions, which are often mentioned in studies on the subject. Based on this orientation, the importance of incorporating the institutional dimension is effectively perceptible, because Silva and Cheaz (2001, p.5) proposed *t*hat, there is no sustainable development without sustainable development organizations. Accordingly, the institutional dimension of sustainability includes:

> [...] the set of all formal and informal 'rules' that shape the nature of its identity, influence the intensity and quality of its dynamics and direct the commitments associated with its purpose. Among these 'rules of the game' are laws, policies,

[1] Ignacy Sachs in their discussion of the Conceptual Framework (1993, p. 19 and 24), agrees with the criticisms of the Brundtland Report's concept of Sustainable Development. They consider that the commonalities between it and Ecodevelopment are sufficient to be able to treat them as synonyms.

[2] The concept that defines the three guiding pillars of decisions and actions related to organizational management, brings the concept of corporate social responsibility closer to the concept of sustainability (Elkington, 2006). It emphasizes the need to integrate the economic and social dimensions to achieve environmental progress, expressing the fact that an organization can add or destroy value, simultaneously based on its performance, and the economic, social and environmental pillars (Elkington, 2006).

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premises, approaches, plans, priorities, strategies, norms, institutional mechanisms, etc. (Silva & Cheaz, 2001, p.6).

Among other aspects, institutional sustainability corresponds to the existence of an institutional framework that deals with strategic planning, and specific actions for management and governance to guarantee environmental quality.

IV. Strengthening the Institutional Framework: Improving Governance as a Solution

The evident fragility of multilateral governance organizations in the face of cross-border externalities with global implications, highlights the paradox of the inexistence of coordinating tasks, especially when the world becoming increasingly interdependent (May, 2007).

This paradox is reproduced on other scales, where there are no proposals for integrating policies, and the articulation between sectors and cross-sectional actions is rare. For example, in Brazil, there is no" Strategy or National Plan for Sustainable Development." To assess progress and existing gaps, renew the commitment of countries, and discuss the new challenges in attaining sustainable development, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD), better known as Rio+20, emphasized the following two themes: *green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication, and the institutional framework for sustainable development*.

"Objective and themes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" was published in 2010 by the UN. It proposed to raise questions regarding how a focus on green economy and institutional framework can boost the countries' sustainable development agenda.

Regarding the institutional framework, the Report highlights the growth in the participation of informal and voluntary agreements, and networks and civil society arrangements, established by non-governmental actors under various circumstances. Accordingly, it expands the traditional framework that unifies the formal entities and the organizations involved in creating policies and carrying out activities. However, despite these advances, the mechanisms of articulation and integration are insufficient to guarantee coherence and coordination of policies, programs and actions aimed at sustainable development.

In this context, strengthening the institutional framework requires the commitment of all countries, sub-national levels of government, and civil society. They are required to implement policies and programs that integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions, to strengthen mechanisms of empowerment, coordination and articulation between the actors. For this purpose, according to the UN, the following objectives must be contemplated (United Nations, 2010)

a) *Ensuring policy coherence and integration* (consists of integrating economic, environmental and social objectives in the formulation of legal frameworks, implementing policies and management instruments in an integrated manner, vertical integration between different levels of government and horizontal integration between sectoral institutions).

b) *Improved design analyses, assessments and scientific opinions* on natural hazards and human well-being (many assessments have been carried out at the international level, and their influences on policy formulation are diverse. Accordingly, it is necessary to improve the articulation between science and policy based on the improvement of databases, facilitating access to information for decision makers and citizens).

c) *Strengthen implementation, monitoring and accountability* (considering the apparent disconnect between regulatory and executive bodies in relation to the commitment assumed at a global level, it is necessary to strengthen the institutions and processes involved, and enhance accountability)

d) *Limit overlapping or duplication of activities* (establishment of coordination mechanisms to enable cooperation and information sharing between entities).

e) *Increase participation* (considers the high-priority objective of increasing the participation of groups, especially the poor and marginalized groups, in decision-making, and helps in the integration of dimensions in the formulation and execution of policies. It also promotes access to information for the poor, by giving voice to marginalized groups in decision-making, as a means of *'empowerment* ').

f) *Strengthen national and local capacities for sustainable development* (ultimately, the success or failure of sustainable development depends on its implementation at the national and local levels. The implementation, in turn, depends on the strength of institutional mechanisms that attempt to overcome strictly sectoral approaches using processes that integrate different sectors and levels of government. They should also encourage greater participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process and intensify efforts towards capacity building for new patterns of sustainable production and consumption).

Based on the objectives mentioned above, Mello (2013) sought to verify the relevant institutional aspects addressed in the Preparation Report for Rio +20, by conducting research on indicators of the institutional dimension of sustainable development.

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Accordingly, they identified 13 articles relevant to the subject and carried out analyses by comparing the indicators used in the respective articles. Their objectives are mentioned in the report. In conclusion, research on indicators of the institutional dimension partially describe the objectives addressed in the UN report. Moreover, the article draws attention to the existence of a gap in the deeper discussion about the institutional dimension of sustainable development, especially with regard to governance.

It should be noted that Rio +20 cannot be counted as progress towards creating a global environmental governance mechanism or the strengthening of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), as proposed in its objectives (Viola & Franchini, 2012).

V. Indicators of the Institutional Dimension of Sustainable Development

One of the main results of ECO 92, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, was the recognition of the commitments of nations. It addresses the important role played by indicators in helping to create public policies that promote sustainable development.

In Global Agenda 21, the following considerations regarding sustainable development indicators were presented:

i) It is necessary to develop sustainable development indicators that serve as a solid basis for decision-making at all levels and contribute to the self-regulated sustainability of integrated systems.
ii) Countries at the national level, and governmental and non-governmental organizations at the international level should, develop the concept of sustainable development indicators to identify these indicators.
iii) Countries and international organizations should review and strengthen information systems and services in sectors related to sustainable development at local, provincial, national and international levels.

Indicators can be grouped into several categories considering the economic, social, institutional and environmental issues with the following characteristics: the indicator should relevant to the main objective to measure progress towards sustainable development; it should be understandable, clear and unambiguous; it should be achievable within the capacity of governments, with respect to their logistical, technical capacity and other limitations; it should be theoretically well-founded and adaptable to the future.

The initiative of the United Nations (UN) Commission for Sustainable Development (CDS) began in 1995, with the creation of the Work Plan for the Development of Sustainable Development Indicators. The plan gave rise to the first edition of a guide, called "*Indicators of sustainable development: guidelines and methodologies,"* popularly known as the "Blue Book." It established a set of 134 indicators to assess progress towards sustainable development, considering the social, economic and environmental dimensions. Its main function is to guide nations in the identification and implementation of indicators that favor the understanding of multiple interactions underlying sustainable development. Therefore, it is not rigid in determining the set of indicators that should be used and considers the diversities and country specificities (United Nations, 1996).

The institutional dimension of sustainable development started to be portrayed using indicators after the publication of the second edition of the Guide, in 2001. This official document resulted from meetings, discussions and tests that took place in the mid-1990s and aggregated 59 indicators of the four dimensions (United Nations, 2001).

Structurally, the CSD work program is guided by the selection of sustainable development indicators evolved from the *driving force–state-response* (DSR) model, indicating a variation of the pressure-state-response (PSR) model.

The concept of pressures (understood as negative impacts) has been replaced by the driving force (which can describe negative and positive impacts).

The CDS divided the chapters of Agenda 21 into five primary dimensions of sustainable, social, economic, environmental and institutional development. Within these categories, indicators were subclassified according to their driving force, state characteristics, and response. Therefore, the driving force represents the factors underlying the pressures, namely, human activities, processes and patterns that impact the environment (Carvalho & Barcellos, 2010).

The state indicators provide a reading on the condition, while response indicators represent social actions aimed at achieving sustainable development. This organizational structure was an important starting point for the identification and selection of indicators. It was used to present a preliminary list of sustainable development indicators in the publication.

The following important themes were suggested by the CDS for the institutional dimension: integration among decision makers; building capacity; science and technology; awareness about society and information; government and the role of civil society; international cooperation and conventions; civil defense capability; legislative and institutional programs; civil society participation. Based on the tests carried out across 22 countries, including Brazil, a structure with 15 themes and 38 sub-themes was defined and divided into four

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dimensions. It provided a guideline for the formulation of indicators to the countries.

Although the DSR model has been useful in organizing the indicators and testing the process, the focus of the analytics framework has been redirected to emphasize key policies or themes, highlight the value of using the indicator and encourage the involvement of governments and civil society in the use and testing of indicators (United Nations, 2001).

Table 1 presents the themes and sub-themes suggested by the CDS/UN for the construction of indicators of the institutional dimension of sustainable development.

Table 1: Themes, sub-themes and sustainability indicators for the institutional dimension

Theme	Sub-theme	Indicator
Institutional Programs	Implementation of Sustainable Development Strategy	Sustainable national development strategy
	International cooperation	Implementation of ratified global agreements
Institutional Capacity	Access to information	Number of Internet users per 1,000 inhabitants
	Communication Infrastructure	Number of telephone lines per 1,000 inhabitants
	science and technology	Percentage of GDP invested in science and technology
	Civil defense	Economic and human losses in the face of catastrophes

Note: Prepared by the authors – Adapted from UNITED NATIONS, 2001.

In its third edition, published in 2007, the CDS/UN guide presented a basic set of 50 indicators including 46 accessories that helped establish relationships with Agenda 21, Plan Implementation Plan, and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The core set of indicators satisfies the following three criteria: a) they address issues that are relevant to sustainable development in most countries, b) provide critical information not made available by other core indicators, and c) can be easily calculated by most countries (data are already available or can be collected in a reasonable time and at a low cost). However, the accessory indicators can provide complementary information that is not relevant or easily available for certain or most countries, respectively.

The set of indicators of the new publication is structured using themes and sub-themes, like the 2001 version. However, it does not present the same division of indicators in four dimensions (social, economic, environmental and institutional).

According to CDS, this change emphasizes the multidimensional nature of sustainable development and reflects the importance of integrating its dimensions. Consequently, new cross-cutting themes such as poverty and natural hazards, were introduced, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: New arrangement of themes suggested by the CDS/UN

Themes of the Sustainable Development CDS Indicators			
Poverty	Governance	Health	Demography
Natural Hazards	Environment	Earth	Education
Biodiversity	Economic development	Consumption and production patterns	World Economic Partnership
Oceans, seas, coastal and freshwater areas			

Note: United Nations, 2007.

Observing the new themes proposed in the third edition of the CDS/UN Indicators, we found that the topic of Governance is closest to the themes of institutional dimension (institutional framework and capacity), discussed in the previous edition. The Governance theme only presents the following two indicators from the basic set: i) Percentage of the population that paid bribes and ii) Number of intentional homicides per 100,000 inhabitants. This theme does not discuss indicators from the accessories group.

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How is the institutional dimension of sustainable development portrayed in Brazil¿

Following the guidelines of the CDS/UN, with certain adjustments to the national reality, the IBGE, has published a series of Sustainable Development Indicators (IDS), since 2002. These indicators are structured in four dimensions and divided into themes and sub-themes. Regarding the institutional dimension, the following two themes are presented: *Institutional Framework and Institutional Capacity.*

In the first series published by the IBGE, four indicators were presented for the institutional dimension. In 2004, the indicator *Existence of municipal councils* was included in the institutional framework theme, and the indicator *Internet access* indicator was included in the capacity theme. This structure was maintained in the 2008 edition.

In the 2010 series, there was a lack of updated data. Therefore, the indicator for the existence of municipal councils was modified, being limited to *municipal environmental councils,* and the indicator *public spending on environmental protection* was eliminated.

The fifth publication of the IDS/IBGE (2012) presented 16 themes, and 62 indicators, including nine indicators that represented the institutional dimension. There were advances in the sense of governance assessment, as suggested by the CDS/UN.

The sixth publication of the IDS/IBGE (2015) maintained the purpose of the previous editions. It allowed access to an information system for the supervision of sustainability in the Brazilian development pattern. Additionally, it introduced new indicators, and updated the already published indicators. The edition presented 63 indicators, most of which were published in the 2012 edition. Among these indicators, 12 comprised the institutional dimension. There was a change in *the Internet* Access indicator (to follow the UN's suggestions), because information regarding the number of Internet users per 1000 inhabitants, became available. The new indicators of this dimension intend to aggregate the framework of the governance structure for sustainable development (IDS/IBGE, 2015).

The *Cultural Heritage* indicator represents cultural and environmental diversity (natural, material and immaterial) recognized in the country and worldwide. Currently, in Brazil, 11 cultural and eight natural properties are recognized as world heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Environmental legislation indicator reveals the number of cities that have adopted legislation to deal with the environmental issue. The *Municipal Environment Fund* identifies the number of cities that have the financial resources necessary for the development of environmental policy actions.

In the latest publication, IDS/IBGE (2017), the number of indicators that portray the four dimensions of sustainability increased to 64, 11 of which belong to the institutional dimension, with an intention to eliminate the "Local Agenda 21" indicator.

Next, Table 3 presents the evolution of the indicators of institutional dimension, over the years 2002, 2012 and 2015, according to the editions published by IBGE.

Table 3: Indicators of the institutional dimension constructed by the IBGE

Theme	Indicators		
	2002	2012	2015 -2017
Institutional Framework		Ratification of global agreements	Ratification of global agreements
		Municipal Environmental Councils	**Environmental legislation**
	Ratification of global agreements	River Basin Committees	Municipal Environmental Councils
		Civil society organizations	River Basin Committees
			Civil society organizations
Capacity institutional	Research and Development (R&D) Expenses	Research and Development (R&D) Expenses	Research and Development (R&D) Expenses
	Access to telephony services	Access to telephony services	**Municipal Environmental Fund**

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		Internet access	Access to telephony services
		Local Agenda 21	Internet access
		Inter-institutional articulations of the Municipalities	Local Agenda 21
			Cultural heritage
			Inter-institutional articulations of the Municipalities

Note: Prepared by the authors - Adapted from IDS/IBGE 2002, 2012 and 2015.

In Table 3, the main advances attempted to verify the presence of governance mechanisms for sustainable development based on the participation of civil society. The processes of articulation and cooperation between social and political actors (interinstitutional articulations of the municipalities) and their effects on institutional arrangements were included. These arrangements are participatory mechanisms for perceiving the demands of the population and monitoring government actions

Because of the complexity of the subject, we do not have extensive statistical production, which hampers data availability and creates pertinent gaps, including better management and governance diagnoses aimed at sustainable development.

VI. Final Considerations

The intensification and multidimensionality of conflicts that involve economic, social and ecological aspects, were verified not only in Brazil, but throughout the world. They remind us that we need to consider other aspects associated with the governance of natural resources.

Among other aspects, institutional sustainability corresponds to the existence of an institutional framework that deals with strategic planning and specific actions for management and governance, to guarantee environmental quality.

The panorama presented on the institutional dimension of sustainable development reveals a generic picture of institutional efforts and capacities. These factors remain underexplored by the indicators, because of their complexity and insufficiency of data and information in Brazil.

Future research should be developed to better assess this dimension, including the proposition of new indicators. However, the UN itself suggests that the institutional dimension needs to be improved by strengthening the governance of sustainable development.

In this aspect, to break with the political, institutional and administrative isolation that has characterized the performance of organizations and actors operating in the country, a cooperative structure of incentives that creates institutional conditions for coordination, becomes necessary.

Digging deeper into the role of governance as a coordination instrument and considering that interactions are multidimensional, it is necessary to contemplate a notion of governance that deals with the transposition of the role of regulating/coordinating State and political-administrative limits of actions.

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