



ISTR is pleased to announce the winners of the first Civil Society Policy Impact Research Award (2020)

Two prizes are awarded for research documenting effective civil society action resulting in a demonstrable public policy change. The winners are:

Ines Pousadela

CIVICUS/Universidad ORT, Uruguay



Ines Pousadela

Movilización social y representación política. La lucha del movimiento de mujeres por el aborto legal en Uruguay. This is a compelling account of the country-wide effort of women's organizations and other civil society groups to overturn the criminalization of abortion in Uruguay. In a highly controversial policy area, Pousadela does an outstanding job of identifying the key political factors supporting and opposed to a change in the law.

She develops a narrative of the struggle to form a cohesive social movement and sustain it against all odds which holds the reader until the final achievement of legislative success. Documentation and analysis of the Uruguay experience played a role in the networking among women's groups and other civil society actors leading to further change in abortion laws in Latin America.



Aline Gonçalves de Souza



Eduardo Pannunzio

Aline Gonçalves de Souza & Eduardo Pannunzio

Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil

The Role of CSOs and Academy in Changing Public Policy: A Brief Case Study of Provisional Measure 870/2019

When there was a threat to civil society under a new government plan to introduce highly restrictive NGO legislation, one researcher wrote and circulated a detailed working paper. That document galvanized a national campaign and ultimately improved the provisions of the approved law of associations.

This is an excellent example of the potential power of policy research to stimulate effective advocacy. Strong writing is often undervalued or overshadowed by other achievements, both in academia and society more broadly. In this case, it catalyzed civic groups to work together toward a unified goal. Souza and Pannunzio have demonstrated how researchers can give voice to those in the civic sector who otherwise would lack access to media resources.

The Role of CSOS and Academics in Changing Brazilian Public Policy:

A Brief Case Study of Provisional Measure 870/2019

By Aline Gonçalves de Souza and Eduardo Pannunzio, Fundação Getulio Vargas (FGV), Brazil

Immediately after being sworn into office on January 1, 2019, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro imposed a new Provisional Measure (PM) on government oversight of domestic and international Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). PM 870/2019 empowered the Secretariat of Government (Brazilian Ministry of Interior) with the authority to "supervise, coordinate, monitor and accompany the activities and actions of international organisations and non-governmental organisations across national territory" (PM 870/2019, Art. 5, II). PM is a law that is enacted by the President and comes into force immediately, being subject to subsequent approval by National Congress within 120 days.

The objective of this vaguely-worded provision was to create a general rule permitting the supervision and monitoring of the operations and activities of CSOs and international organisations in Brazil by the Federal Government, moving us far away from our legal tradition. It thus raised significant concerns within Brazil's CSO community, particularly given Bolsonaro's public record of questioning the legitimacy of the CSO sector.

Within a few weeks, policy stakeholders and the CSO community articulated a plan of action to influence the national debate and to change the outcome for PM 870/2019. An important step was taken on February 21, 2019 when Aline Gonçalves de Souza, Eduardo Pannunzio and other researchers from FGV Law School hosted the 15th edition of the "São Paulo Dialogue between Compliance State Agencies and Civil Society Organisations." In partnership with the Association of São Paulo's Foundations and the National Council for Compliance (Conaci), the São Paulo



Dialogue brought together approximately 80 people, including representatives from CSOs, members of auditing state bodies, multilevel government officials, officials from the São Paulo State Public Defender's Office, and scholars. Senior members of the Federal Government – including the Special Secretary for Social Articulation of the Secretariat of Government – were also present.

After the event in São Paulo (which was broadcasted live by FGV in its portal), an alliance of CSOs began to work on advocacy strategies seeking the suppression of damaging clauses in the provisional measure (namely item II of article 5 of PM 870/2019) during its discussions in the Brazilian Congress. Many groups and CSOs involved in the case, such as Pact for Democracy, Platform for a New CSO Regulatory Framework, Conectas Human Rights, Criminal Justice Network, Tide Setubal Foundation, ACT Health Promotion, Institute for Defense of the Right to Defense (IDDD), Brazilian Institute of Consumer Defense (IDEC) and Group of Institutes, Foundations and Companies (GIFE) were among those that played important roles and got very involved in the debates.

The more advocacy efforts were made, the more CSOs realised that, in the case of PM 870/2019, the government and its supporters in the Congress were not willing to negotiate the content of the matter. In response, Eduardo Pannunzio, a researcher from FGV, developed a brief study to generate evidence that could better qualify the discussion and published a working paper entitled “Contributions to the Improvement of PM 870/2019 concerning the relations between the Federal Government and Civil Society Organisation.” Considering the contribution from other researchers and all the debate with CSOs and government officials, in the event in São Paulo, Pannunzio suggested an alternative wording for PM 870, with a particular focus on what was meant by the proposed monitoring of CSOs by federal authorities in Brazil. The coalition of CSOs decided to push for changes in the bill that would incorporate the rephrasing suggested by Pannunzio. In this

way, they reorganised and intensified their advocacy strategy for influencing the public policy development in the National Congress.

The massive collective efforts of stakeholders paid off as debate on the bill progressed. The new wording that was suggested by Pannunzio in his working paper was presented by the coalition of CSOs and incorporated into the PM 870 official text, voted on both houses of the Brazilian National Congress and finally approved. The Presidency, who could have vetoed passages or the whole document, decided not to act. PM was then converted into Law 13.901 on November 11, 2019 with this final text:

[it is the attribution of the Secretary of Government to] II - coordinate the Federal Government's dialogue with international organisations and civil society organisations operating in the national territory; monitor the actions and results of the Federal Government's partnerships with these organisations and promote good practices for the enforcement of applicable legislation.

It is thanks to a combination of several factors that a more collaborative view on the role of the State in its interaction with CSOs prevailed in the case of PM 870/2019. This process was influenced by (i) articles, campaigns and mobilisation in the media; (ii) Scholars that researched and generated evidence to support advocacy and policy influence by presenting practical solutions to the challenges CSOs encountered in their dialogue with the National Congress and its representatives; and (iii) CSO's mobilisation and advocacy in the Brazilian National Congress.

Given that the Brazilian Federal Government does not have in its structure a body that coordinates the government's interface with CSOs, the change in item II of article 5 of PM 870/2019 impacted over 700.000 Brazilian CSOs. These coordinated advocacy and policy-influencing efforts resulted in significant achievements not only for CSOs but also for those affected by their work and for the Brazilian society as a whole.