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Multiple roles of state governments in the Brazilian education policy: the cases of Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo and Pará

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The literature on federalism shows that the coordination of the Brazilian federal government is central to guarantee more consistency in social policies of subnational governments. This article aims to understand the role of intergovernmental relations in municipal education policies. Despite the constitutional determinations of collaboration among federal entities, there are different relationship models between states and municipalities in the education policy. This study is based on the comparison of four states — Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo, and Pará — with different models of relationship seeking to identify the results in municipal policies. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were conducted and the analysis shows that the type of cooperation has implications in institutional and financial capacities, in the coordination of municipal policies, and in the implementation of federal policies.

Keywords: federalism; intergovernmental relations; social policies; education; subnational governments.

Os múltiplos papéis dos governos estaduais na política educacional brasileira: os casos do Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo e Pará

A literatura sobre federalismo aponta que a coordenação do governo federal tem papel central para garantir maior consistência às políticas sociais dos governos subnacionais. Este artigo buscou compreender o papel das relações intergovernamentais nas políticas municipais de educação. Apesar de a Constituição Federal determinar a colaboração entre os entes federados, há diferentes modelos de relacionamento entre estados e municípios na política educacional. Esta pesquisa comparou quatro estados — Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo e Pará — com modelos distintos de relacionamento com o objetivo de identificar seus resultados nas políticas municipais. A análise de questionários e entrevistas semiestruturadas mostra que o tipo de cooperação tem implicações na capacidade institucional e financeira, na coordenação das políticas municipais e na implementação de políticas federais.

Palavras-chave: federalismo; relações intergovernamentais; políticas sociais; Educação; governos subnacionais.

Los múltiples papeles de los gobiernos subnacionales en la política educacional brasileña: los casos del Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo e Pará

La literatura sobre federalismo muestra que la coordinación del gobierno federal es central para garantizar mayor consistencia en las políticas sociales en gobiernos subnacionales. Este artículo busca comprender el rol de las relaciones intergubernamentales en las políticas educacionales locales. La Constitución Federal determinó la colaboración entre los entes, pero hay diferentes modelos de relaciones entre estados y municipios en esta política. Esta investigación se basó en la comparación de cuatro estados — Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, São Paulo y Pará — con diferentes modelos de relaciones buscando identificar sus resultados en las políticas municipales. La análisis de cuestionarios y entrevistas semi-estructuradas muestra que la cooperación tiene implicaciones en la capacidad institucional y financiera, en la coordinación de las políticas municipales y en la implementación de políticas federales.

Palabras clave: federalismo; relaciones intergubernamentales; políticas sociales; educación; gobiernos subnacionales.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The relations of federalism and public policies have been the focus in the discussion on social policies. One of the highlighted issues in this debate is the compatibility of diversity, characteristic of federalism, with the guarantee of universal social policies (Obinger, Leibfried and Castles, 2005). This is particularly relevant in the discussion on social policies in federations characterized by territorial heterogeneities in socio-economic and institutional aspects, like Brazil. Based on this discussion, this paper seeks to understand the influence of inter-governmental relations in Brazilian social policies.

The analysis of social policies in federations shows that the coordination of the federal government can reduce heterogeneity in the implementation made by subnational governments. This coordination involves two elements. The first concerns mechanisms of induction, for example, of resource redistribution, approval of national regulation, and establishment of national standards (Banting, 2005, 2006; Greer, 2006; Obinger, Leibfried and Castles, 2005; Scharpf, 2011; Simeon, 2006; Stepan and Linz, 2000; Watts, 2006). The second is related to the joint actions among levels of government, by means of cooperation. The literature, however, was more focused on the role of the federal government in the federative coordination, disregarding relations among subnational governments. In order to fill this gap, the present paper discusses the role of the Brazilian state governments in the relations with municipalities in the educational field. More specifically, it seeks to understand the results of relations among Brazilian states and municipalities in municipal educational policies.

The choice for the analysis of states is grounded, first, in the fact that there is no expressive literature, as already mentioned, on their relations with municipalities in Brazil, as they count on a high level of autonomy in social policies, even though have competences shared with the states, and low institutional and fiscal capacities characterize most of them.

The Constitution of 1988 determined the creation of a Collaboration Regime in Education, which would establish forms of coordination and cooperation among the levels of government. However, the absence of more detailed regulation of this model, like the Systems of Public Policies created for Health or Social Assistance, resulted in fragility and even lack of cooperation between states and municipalities. In fact, with the absence of a national standard, there are different relationship models among them.

This variety of models made possible the comparison of their results in municipal education policies. The empirical research included the map and categorization of forms of inter-government relationship in all Brazilian states, which guided the choice of the following states for in-depth comparative analysis: Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará, and São Paulo. Then, two municipalities in each state were chosen, according to the educational results of municipal students controlled by given socioeconomic variables in order to compare how the models influence municipalities with different educational results.

The paper presents, in the first section, a systematization of the literature on the relation between federalism, intergovernmental relations, and social policies. In the second section, a systematization of federative coordination in education is presented from a historical perspective, including the analysis of the content and actors that were involved in the coordination over time. In the third section, the research design and methodology are described, followed by the results of the state-municipal cooperation in municipal education policies in the four states analyzed. This research's

findings reinforced the argument that there are high diversity and fragility in the cooperation among subnational governments.

2. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AND SOCIAL POLICIES IN FEDERATIONS

Federalism combines autonomy and interdependence. On the one hand, autonomy is necessary as guarantees the maintenance of unity among heterogeneous regions, acknowledging that these heterogeneities are fundamental for national stability, governance, legitimacy, and, in some cases, to avoid a potential secession.¹ Heterogeneities may be: 1) political-cultural and ethnical, which includes not only national minorities like indigenous populations; 2) territorial, which includes: center/outskirts and urban/rural relations; 3) socioeconomic, referring to the allocation of goods and redistribution of resources across territories, common in most African and Latin American federalist countries; and 5) demographic, where, for example, certain states or provinces concentrate large part of the population of a country (Agranoff, 1999; Burgess and Gress, 1999; Moreno and Colino, 2010).

Different from most federations, the Brazilian federalism is not anchored in ethnical, linguistic or religious diversities, but rather on the following types: territorial, demographic, regional or regionalisms, socioeconomic, and institutional (Abrucio and Segatto, 2014; Souza, 2004). They result in asymmetries across the five regions of the country, within the same region, within the same state, that is, they are inter-regional, inter-state and intra-state, with the two last particularly important in the variation of quality of educational policies and, consequently, in the variety of education results.²

The reinforcement of diversity in federal countries is considered incompatible with the guarantee of social and universal policies. Federalism and social welfare, therefore, would hold extreme positions in a continuum between diversity and uniformity (Greer, 2007; Simeon, 2006; Watts, 1999). Moreover, some authors indicate that federal systems are enemies of high levels of social expenses. In the case of the countries from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), federalism is the strongest factor for the variation in social expenses. Finally, most federations are characterized by points of veto of minorities in national decision arenas, which challenge the creation of national strategies (Obinger, Leibfried and Castles, 2005; Stepan, 1999).

Nevertheless, scholars state that the federal government can guarantee minimum standards and reduce inequalities among regions. Some of the mechanisms mentioned by them include, among others, redistribution of resources for poorer units, establishment of national standards, guidelines, and regulations (Banting, 2005, 2006; Greer, 2006; Obinger, Leibfried and Castles, 2005; Scharpf, 2011; Simeon, 2006; Stepan and Linz, 2000; Watts, 2006). These mechanisms involve changes in intergovernmental relations and varying degrees of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration.

Coordination involves systems for national equalization and regulation, for example. Several federal countries count on systems for equalization among regions, provinces or states. In Germany, at the beginning of the post-war period, inequalities between the rich and the poor *Länder* gave rise

¹ The international literature uses the term 'diversity' that was translated by the authors as 'heterogeneity'.

² Brazilian federalism is not anchored in ethnical heterogeneities, as they were not object of conflicts and search for more autonomy by subnational governments. It doesn't mean that there are not ethnical diversities, they exist, but are spread across the Brazilian territory and not concentrated, as occurs in other federalist countries like Canada and Belgium.

to a system for horizontal and vertical tax equalization and extra-constitutional programs in areas like housing and subsidies for agriculture and industry in certain regions. In addition to these mechanisms for transfer of resources, other joint efforts involving the federal government and the *Länder* were adopted, including national regulations in education, transport, industrialization, and agriculture, for example (Obinger, Leibfried and Castles, 2005; Scharpf, 2011). Even the most de-centralized federations, like the Canadian, count on equalization systems. “[...] The Canadian system of fiscal equalization among provinces, embedded in the constitution, allows Canada to combine provincial autonomy with a high degree of provincial capacity to provide “comparable levels of public services at comparable levels of taxation.” (Simeon, 2006:28).

Other regulatory mechanisms can produce higher equality in conditions and results of social policies. Greer (2006) shows that there are mechanisms that facilitate for the federal government to regulate the activities of regional governments, like national norms and regulations, and there are others that tie the reception of resources to specific demands or implementation of federal programs. The author illustrates this last type of mechanism stating the North-American states, while accepting federal fund for their highways, are obliged to define that the minimum age for consumption of alcoholic beverages is 21 years.

These mechanisms can be more vertical or more horizontal, involve different degrees of coordination and be characterized as more cooperative or collaborative processes. Watts (2006) shows these variations in five models: independent policies, consultation, coordination, joint decision, and conflict resolution. In the first, governments act independently without consulting other governments. In the second, governments acknowledge that their actions affect other governments and, therefore, exchange information with them before acting. However, the actions are still independent. In the third, governments develop policies and objectives mutually agreed upon with other governments. In the fourth, governments work together, making commitments to certain courses of action and patterns of conduct, like shared-cost programs, joint agencies and matching legislation. In the fifth, there is an intra-government negotiation to solve common problems.

In this sense, some models vary in their efforts of coordination, that is, the use of incentives and induction and the construction of consensus and joint strategies towards more integration of the policy (Bouckaert et al., 2010). There are also models that require cooperation, that is, partnerships among jurisdictions (Agranoff, 2001, 2007; Banting, 2005). Models can be more collaborative, as well, including multi-organizational arrangements to solve common problems that cannot be solved by one single organization, thus involving a shared understanding of the problems (Brysin et al., 2015; O’Leary and Vij, 2012). For O’Leary and Vij (2012), collaboration refers to a more advanced state of entanglement. However, there is no consensus in the literature about the differences between cooperation and collaboration. In this sense, we understand that coordination can induce cooperation, but there are different models and degrees of cooperation.

Besides, inter-government relations also vary in the level of institutionalization. They can include actions that link individuals within governments, actions that connect policies or programs and the interaction among individuals within broader policies (Agranoff, 2001, 2007; Banting, 2005).

Some of these models involve, as presented by the literature, a stronger coordination role by the federal government, which may contribute to the reduction of asymmetries in subnational policies

and to ensure minimum standards across countries. However, as previously mentioned, the debate is more focused on the vertical relations between the federal government and subnational governments. This paper seeks, therefore, to advance in the understanding of the relationships between state and municipal governments and their results in social policies.

3. FEDERATIVE COORDINATION IN THE BRAZILIAN EDUCATION POLICY

The trajectory of Education before the Federal Constitution of 1988 was characterized by a high level of decentralization in the provision of this policy, a duplicity in education systems involving the offer of enrolments by states and municipalities, weak coordination of the federal government and institutional inequalities, and difference in expenses across Brazilian regions (Cury, 2008; Oliveira and Souza, 2010; Souza, 2005), which, according to Cury (2008:1199, our translation), “[...] gradually created and sedimented a culture associated to the autonomy of federative entities, particularly states, in the ambit of school education”.

Before the promulgation of the Constitution, in 1983, the Calmon Amendment was approved, determining minimum spending in education. The amendment established minimum spending for the Union, states, and municipalities (Brazil, 1983).

However, the most significant changes came with the Federal Constitution of 1988, which determined the universalization of policy for children from seven to 14 years and the decentralization of its offer to subnational governments. Municipalities would be responsible for offering childhood and elementary education, while states would be responsible for elementary and secondary education, and the Union would be responsible for the financial and technical coordination, aiming at reducing inequalities across subnational governments (Brazil, 1988).

The Federal Constitution of 1988 also established the cooperation among the three entities, particularly in elementary education. The sharing of competences between states and municipalities in elementary education aimed at guaranteeing its offer and, consequently, its universalization. However it came linked to the cooperation and articulation among them, which, in the constitutional text, was translated as “collaboration regime.”

Despite the determination of minimum spending and the coordination and technical and financial assistance of the federal government, there was no significant change in institutional inequality and spending across regions, since the transfer of resources among entities was not profoundly changed (Oliveira and Souza, 2010). Only in Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2003) government, significant changes were made with the purpose of effectively implementing the determinations from the Federal Constitution of 1988.

Fernando Henrique Cardoso government promoted changes in the model of intergovernmental relations due to the adoption of measures for economic stabilization which included the privatization of state banks and the approval of the *Lei de Responsabilidade Fiscal* that restrung expenses of subnational governments. This strengthening of the coordination role of the federal government also occurred in education with the creation and strengthening of mechanisms for federative coordination. Among them, there are: tools for policy planning, guidelines and national regulations, as the *Lei de Diretrizes e Base da Educação* (LDB), *Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais* and *Plano Nacional da Educação* (PNE); systems for information and assessment, like the *Sistema de Avaliação da Educação Básica* (Saeb) and

Censo Escolar; guidelines for transfers to states and municipalities and redistribution of resources from funds, *Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Fundamental e de Valorização do Magistério* (Fundef), *Dinheiro Direto na Escola*, and *Bolsa Escola Federal*.

It is worth mentioning that Fundef played an important role in the relation between states and municipalities. The redistribution of resources according to the number of enrolments, combined with state programs, promoted the municipalization of enrollments in elementary education, particularly in the first years (Gomes, 2009). Municipalization comprised two processes: transfer of enrolments from state schools to municipal schools, and expansion of enrolments by municipal education systems. The process of transfer of enrolments led to the approximation of states and municipalities in education, since it involved the transfer or concessions of teachers, buildings, and equipment. In some cases, this approximation was responsible for starting initiatives of cooperation among them in other dimensions of the educational policy. Besides, Fundef promoted a reduction in inequality of intra-state spending, that is, between state and municipal education systems (Vazquez, 2012).

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2011) government continued the changes made, particularly by strengthening the redistribution of resources and national assessment systems. The redistribution of resources according to enrolments was extended including childhood and secondary education with the creation of the *Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação* (Fundeb). The creation of the *Índice de Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica* (Ideb), in addition to providing more publicization of educational results, made possible the implementation of programs according to schools' performance and control of results by the federal government.

Furthermore, this government strengthened, even more, the Ministry of Education as coordinator of this policy by linking the transfer of resources to the implementation of certain guidelines and federal programs. The *Plano de Desenvolvimento da Educação* (PDE) transformed some guidelines of PNE policy and goals in federal programs. This was linked to the *Plano de Ações Articuladas* (PAR), which started to guide transfers to states and municipalities. The PAR is a planning tool for State and Municipal Departments of Education, which directs the transfer of resources according to the adoption of federal programs. Therefore, it induces the implementation of specific programs in state and municipal education systems, intended to reduce diversity in the policy.

Even though there were advances in the last 20 years in the strengthening of the federative coordination, no intergovernmental forums were created, like the *Comitês Tripartites e Bipartites* existing in the *Sistema Único de Saúde* (SUS) and the *Sistema Único de Assistência Social* (Suas). There is only one committee linked to Fundeb that includes the participation of representatives from the Ministry of Education and State and Municipal Departments of Education that defines the minimum values per students per year.

The absence of these spaces weakened the development of national consensuses regarding, for example, the national curriculum, teacher education, and the collaboration regime. With regard to the last example, the constitutional determination that established cooperation between states and municipalities was not sufficient to institutionalize it in the subnational level. Some federal programs incentivized the strengthening of the relationship among them as required that states acted like

regional coordinators. However, there was no regulation of the collaboration regime, which produced different models of cooperation in this policy.

We conclude that there was a strengthening of the federative coordination, particularly through the redistribution of resources and the establishment of minimum standards. Nevertheless, the relations between states and municipalities are still heterogeneous. Grounded in these findings, this paper seeks to understand the results of the different models of relationships between states and municipalities in municipal education policies.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The empirical research relied on a compared analysis of four cases to better grasp the federative coordination in subnational level in Brazil. The methodology used combined quantitative and qualitative methods according to the mixed methods model. The choice of cases was guided according to quantitative and qualitative methods, while data collection and analysis was based on qualitative methods.

First, states were chosen according to variations in the models of relationship with municipalities. For such, we mapped the models of relationship between states and municipalities in this policy based on data collected in questionnaires answered by the 26 State Departments of Education.³ This questionnaire was intended to understand the trajectory of municipalization and cooperation and their content in each state. It was observed that experiences varied in a continuum with higher and lower institutionalization and is more vertical or horizontal. They also involve different types of cooperation, like initial education and/or professional development, redistribution of resources, distribution of textbooks, exchange of bureaucrats and cession of public buildings (usually linked to municipalization processes), joint enrolment, agreements, particularly associated to school lunch and transport, technical and pedagogical assistance and intergovernmental negotiation.

Four states were selected based on their variation in the above mentioned aspects. They are: Ceará, Mato Grosso do Sul, Pará and São Paulo. On the one hand, Ceará presents more institutionalized cooperation among states and municipalities, in addition to the redistribution of financial, material and human resources. On the other hand, in Pará, there is little or no cooperation at all among states and municipalities. Between these two extremes is Mato Grosso do Sul and São Paulo, which present intermediary models. The first counts on programs with redistribution of material and human resources, while the second presents more punctual actions to promote cooperation, therefore being little institutionalized. In addition to the variation in cooperation, the choice of cases considered the diversity of institutional, socioeconomic, and political contexts, so that, for example, states were not chosen from one single Brazilian region.

In each of the states chosen, two municipalities were selected according to the educational results of students controlled by socioeconomic variables. The idea was to analyze cooperation results in different educational contexts. The choice of municipalities was based on the performance of students of municipal education systems from the 5th year of the elementary education in *Prova Brasil* in

³ The Federal District was excluded since, for being the capital of the country, does not have relation with municipalities.

Portuguese and Mathematics in years 2009 and 2011, controlled by the following socioeconomic variables: household income per capita, percentage of women aged 15 years or more who completed elementary education, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita, urban population, population log and Region (North, Northeast, Mid-West, South, and Southeast). These variables were intended to control socioeconomic influence in educational results: the first was introduced in the model as function of family background influence in students' performance, and the last, the population characteristics of municipalities in results — for example, in urban areas, access and quality of education are better than those in rural areas. It is important to mention that GDP per capita was used in order to control the municipal budget, because municipal taxes are strongly tied to the economic activity of municipalities.⁴

We made multiple regressions between the results and these variables, ordinary least squares, with robust error to correct heteroscedasticity. The model proposed is:

$$y = a + b_1.\text{household income per capita} + b_2.\text{percentage of women aged 15 years or more who completed elementary school} + b_3.\text{GDP per capita} + b_4.\text{urban population} + b_5.\text{population log} + b_6.\text{region}$$

The prediction of values of results was made when these variables were constant. With that, the difference between real values and predictive values was calculated and, based on that, two municipalities that vary in this differences were selected, that is, municipalities that were among those with higher negative difference, which means that institutional variables “worsen” students' results — Ibaretama (Ceará), Miranda (Mato Grosso do Sul), Santana de Parnaíba (São Paulo) and Canaã dos Carajás (Pará) — and municipalities among those with higher positive difference, because in these cases, institutional variables “improve” students' results — Groaíras (Ceará), Costa Rica (Mato Grosso do Sul), Novo Horizonte (São Paulo) and Ourilândia do Norte (Pará). It is important to mention that we choose municipalities that presented a similar population size to avoid comparison of territorial extremes.

The compared analysis of cases relied on secondary data collection through documental research and previous researches and primary data based on the semi-structured interviews made in 2014 with one or two managers of each one of the four State Education Departments and in each of the eight Municipal Education Departments and with representatives of the state divisions of the *União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação* (Undime), which represents municipal education secretaries in each state. It is important to highlight that the interviews with representatives of State Education Departments aimed at deepening the analysis of formal and informal cooperation in the states selected; the trajectory of relations between State and Municipal Education Departments, including the municipalization processes in these states; negotiation arenas for these entities; the influence

⁴ It is worth mentioning that the 9th year of Elementary School results were not included, because, based on Portela (2012), it was verified that municipal school networks are concentrated, in most states, on the offer of enrolments in the first cycle of Elementary School. There is great diversity in the offer of enrolments to the second cycle and, in most states, this cycle is still concentrated in the state network. Results of Prova Brasil 2015 were not presented because, in the choice of municipalities, results were controlled by variables from the Population Census of 2010.

of the Undime and regional coordination offices in this relation; and, in cases with cooperation, its results in municipal education policies.

5. THE TRAJECTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATES AND MUNICIPALITIES IN THE EDUCATION POLICY⁵

The analysis of the four cases shows that variations in content and institutionalization of cooperation are linked to previous trajectories of cooperation between states and municipalities in education. The municipalization processes and the existence of state programs to incentive it were present in the four states analyzed. However, in Ceará and São Paulo, there was a trajectory of state incentives to municipalization previous to the approval of Fundef. In Ceará there was also the adoption of a program similar to Fundef before it was nationally approved in partnership with the federal government.

The decentralization in Ceará induced by programs and incentives of the state government was called “orchestrated decentralization” by Padilha and Batista (2013). In this case, decentralization was planned by the state government, which did not occur in most Brazilian states. In these cases, states transferred their enrolments to municipalities that wanted to expand their networks, resulting in large heterogeneity in the offer of enrolments within the state. In other words, there is a clear division of which years of elementary education are the state’s responsibility and which are the municipality’s.

Moreover, in Ceará, previous experiences implemented in municipalities inspired the creation of PAIC. In 2005 and 2006, a pilot project for literacy was implemented in 56 municipalities by the Associação dos Municípios do Estado do Ceará (Aprece), Undime and the United Nations Children’s Fund (Unicef). In this same period, Cid Gomes, then mayor of Sobral, implemented a literacy program in this municipality. When he started his mandate in the state government in 2007, he brought the team of the Municipal Education Department to implement a similar program in the State Department and also invited the pilot program coordinator to be part of the team.

Another variable that influenced the trajectory and institutionalization of the cooperation among the states analyzed and their municipalities is the participation of civil society organizations, mainly Undime. It represents the Municipal Departments and, therefore, did not bring new players to the debate on education in the states, however, articulated them regionally and facilitated the communication of the Ministry of Education and State Departments with municipalities. Despite its presence in all states, there is a large variation in the role of the Undime in them. In some of them, it effectively organized and represented the municipal education secretaries and provided support to cooperation, while in others it was not active. In the two experiences with more cooperation, there was an important articulation between Undime and State Departments, particularly in Ceará. In these cases, it mediated the relations between state and municipalities, mainly by means of intergovernmental negotiation, representation in instances of deliberation, and dissemination of information.

The constitutional determination of the collaboration regime and its provision in later national legislations were not enough to induce states to adopt this model. One can observe, therefore, that the

⁵ Some of the data presented in this Section was originally presented in Segatto (2015).

trajectory of municipalization and the existence of previous experiences of cooperation influenced the institutionalization and content of the current model of cooperation in the states analyzed. In Ceará, incentives to cooperation were fundamental for the adhesion of all municipalities to the state programs and for their continuation. In the most recent cases, Mato Grosso do Sul and Pará, federal programs were also important mechanisms to induce cooperation.

A. DIFFERENT MODELS OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN STATES AND MUNICIPALITIES

The four cases analyzed are characterized by distinct models of relationships between states and municipalities as their degree of institutionalization and content varied. In Ceará and Mato Grosso do Sul, there are specific departments within the State Education Departments that are responsible for the relation with municipalities. In Pará and São Paulo, on the other hand, there are departments responsible for municipalization in the state, which are also responsible for the relationship with municipalities. Moreover, there are bureaucrats responsible for the state coordination of federal programs, which is characterized as relations among individuals, as shown in the literature on intergovernmental relations.

Variation also occurs in cooperation content. In Ceará, cooperation involved, at first, a literacy program and then assistance to Municipal Departments in the adoption and implementation of federal programs and management of school transport and lunch. The Program *Alfabetização na Idade Certa* (Paic) was resulted of the articulation of several actors and organizations, including Municipal Education Departments, and involves the distribution of textbooks, training, awards, building of Centers for Childhood Education, among other actions.

In Ceará, the state government tied several incentives to cooperation, distinguishing it from the others. According to the persons interviewed, financial incentives were fundamental for the implementation of state programs in municipal networks. Those interviewed also emphasized the importance of the acknowledgement of the improvement in education results in public events promoted by the state government. Finally, the literacy program established a regional support network, approximating and establishing bonds among regional organs of the state government and Municipal Education Secretariats, which did not exist before.

Mato Grosso do Sul's State Department, as adopted in other states, including Ceará, provides assistance to Municipal Secretariats in the preparation of the PAR and the adhesion to federal programs, mediating, therefore, the relationship between the federal government and municipalities. In cases with less cooperation, on the other hand, it occurs through the possibility of municipalities adhering to state programs (formulated to the state network), like the *Programa Ler e Escrever* in São Paulo.

In all cases, there is sharing of buildings, equipment, and servants, a result of municipalization, and joint-management of schools in remote rural areas. Besides, the relations among them in school lunch and transport is common, as states transfer federal resources to municipalities (in some cases they complement these resources) to execute these services for students of state schools. This is a reason for significant conflict among these entities, because, according to interviewed persons from Municipal Education Departments, resources passed on are not sufficient to pay for these services.

B. INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS IN MUNICIPAL EDUCATION POLICIES

In most municipalities analyzed, the PAR induced Municipal Departments to organize information on their school networks and prepare more systematic plans and projects; which, as mentioned, started to guide the reception of resources by means of federal programs. In the municipalities analyzed, federal programs are implemented and, in some of them, represent the core of municipal education policies. All those interviewed mentioned the *Programa Nacional do Livro Didático* (PNLD), the *Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola* (PDDE), the *Pacto Nacional de Alfabetização na Idade Certa* (Pnaic) and the *Programa Mais Educação*. It means that municipalities implement an equal “package” of federal programs, even though other programs vary across municipal education systems, which establishes minimum institutional conditions in the education policy in all Brazilian municipalities.

According to those interviewed, the PNLD and the Pnaic are the most important for that. The PNLD provides textbooks in most municipal systems analyzed. In some of them, training is also restricted to those offered by the Pnaic and the PDDE ensures supplementary resources to schools. Despite that, the *Programa Mais Educação* does not play this role. Even though it was mentioned by all interviewees as a program implemented in the municipal systems, it is, in most cases, implemented only in some schools within these systems.

We categorized the municipalities analyzed in two groups. In the first group, Municipal Departments depend on resources transferred by the Fundeb, because they are the largest part of Municipal Departments’ budget. Thus, they strongly depend on federal programs, which constitute almost the whole municipal education policy. Municipal Departments only promote their own actions in the pedagogical assistance of schools made by their coordinators. In the second group, Municipal Departments count on a larger budget and therefore implement their own programs and projects, as assessment systems and training. In this group, most municipal systems are considered as Municipal Education Systems or have already approved their Municipal Education Plans and count on active Municipal Boards of Education.

Two movements influenced the actions of State Education Departments as mediators of the PAR and federal programs at the regional level. On the one hand, they noticed great difficulty for Municipal Departments in the process of preparation of the PAR, adhesion, follow-up, assessment, and accountability of federal programs, creating departments responsible for assisting municipalities in these activities. On the other hand, some federal programs induced State Departments to assume a role in the regional coordination. School lunch and transport programs led to more approximation between states and municipalities as states transfer resources for municipalities to perform these services. In addition to these, other programs, like the Pnaic, required the State Department to adopt this program so that Municipal Departments could adopt it as well and established states as coordinators of these programs.

In the states analyzed, one can observe variation in the institutionalization of this state coordination. Ceará and Mato Grosso do Sul created specific coordination offices inside their State Departments to assist municipalities with the PAR and federal programs, mediating, therefore, the relationship between federal government and municipalities; while Pará and São Paulo count on employees responsible for that, which are also in charge of other functions in Departments.

This assistance may result in the increased professionalization of municipal bureaucracies, because technicians from State Departments qualify, almost informally, those from Municipal Departments. However, as mentioned by the interviewees, the high turnover of appointed positions and the lack of a more professionalized bureaucracy in Municipal Departments hinder the incorporation of this assistance.

C. COOPERATION OUTCOMES IN THE MUNICIPAL EDUCATION POLICIES

Characteristics similar to the coordinating action of Ceará's state government in education were also found in other areas, like health, environment, and economic development. In education, there is a coordination model that is similar to the model of federal coordination presented by the scholarly literature. This case comprises the coordination of municipal policies based on the use of mechanisms for incentive and induction and the establishment of minimum institutional conditions and standards in all municipalities. It involves, among other actions, redistribution of financial resources, building of schools, preparations of curriculum, distribution of textbooks, and training of bureaucrats. The State Education Department distributes quota-portion of *Imposto sobre Circulação de Mercadorias e Serviços* (ICMS) according to the performance of municipal students. The Department also awards the municipal schools with the best performance, which should assist in the improvement of the performance of other schools to receive the full prize.

The empirical research made in Ceará's municipalities showed that the adoption of a common curriculum was particularly important to the interviewees, because it influences the agenda of municipal policies and, therefore, better coordination among them. Another outcome of the Paic in Municipal Departments concerns the bureaucracy professionalization. In addition to training in system management and school management, the State Department transfers resources for scholarships to bureaucrats responsible for this program in Municipal Departments, ensuring the implementation of the state program, but also reducing asymmetries in their institutional and financial capacities.

It is worth mentioning, however, that there is variation in implementation of the Paic among municipalities. The difference in educational outcomes between the two municipalities analyzed seems to be associated with the adherence of municipalities to the program and the way it is coordinated with their own programs and the federal programs. The municipality with worst results does not count on its own programs, as reported, due to the lack of financial resources for that.

Moreover, another fragility of this model is related to the reduction of inter-municipal inequalities in education. The redistribution of resources through ICMS does not aim at reducing inter-municipal educational inequalities. This redistribution benefitted smaller municipalities, because, before the change, resources were destined according to the number of enrolments and, therefore, Fortaleza received most part of resources. However, its distribution occurs according to students' performance. Besides, interviewees affirmed that ICMS does not represent a great incentive to Municipal Departments' teams for improvement of performance; in municipalities visited, the prize mobilizes more the teams.

Other cases have focused their efforts on increasing the adhesion to federal programs and improvements in their implementation through their advisories. The comparison among Mato Grosso do Sul's municipalities, an example of this model, shows that results do not involve reduction

of asymmetries in institutional and financial capacities across municipalities. Moreover, in the other states, cooperation is limited to isolated actions, like the *Programa Ler e Escrever* in São Paulo and the offer of enrolments in remote areas, like in Pará. It means that Ceará is an isolated case.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The federative coordination was strengthened in the education policy since the Federal Constitution of 1988. Despite that, it was since the second half of the decade of 1990 that the federal government gained centrality in the federative coordination of this policy, as occurred in other federal countries, as shows the international literature. In this context, mechanisms were adopted for the redistribution of resources and national regulation, like the Fundef, later on, the Fundeb, the PAR, and other federal programs.

Even with the strengthening of the federal government's role, relationships between states and municipalities are still diverse and most state governments did not assume the role of regional coordination. Only one case can be characterized as state coordination, Ceará, since it coordinates municipal policies towards a common policy seeking to establish equal institutional conditions in all municipalities. Even while the other states do not present this level of coordination, it is important to notice that many advanced in the development of policies in cooperation with municipalities.

The comparison of cases shows that cooperation between states and municipalities reduced the asymmetry across institutional and financial capacities of Municipal Education Departments, increased the coordination of municipal policies, and strengthened the implementation of federal policies. However, the actions of state governments in the other states presented limited results when compared to Ceará. The absence of stronger cooperation with states produces more variations in programs implemented by municipal systems, which may reinforce pre-existing inequalities, and “pushes” municipalities towards more dependency on federal programs.

This study showed, therefore, that the institutional models of federative coordination performed by states can directly affect the way local governments structure their management and the way they relate to other levels of government. Given the heterogeneity of situations and state capacities in municipalities, it is fundamental to find out how state coordination can help reduce this asymmetry and strengthen the structure that supports municipal education policies. The case presenting more entanglement of actions involving state and municipalities, Ceará, was precisely the one that produced more transformation in the quality of local educational actions. It may show how institutional changes can affect results, which should be more explored in future studies.

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