

particular policies. Findings from my investigation corroborate this argument. The new design of the Federal Government technical and financial assistance policy incorporated a set of four strategic measures that allowed greater influence on the educational agenda of the sub-national governments:

- 1) Designing national programs that included diverse areas of content and resource transfer mechanisms.
- 2) Regulating the assistance beyond its technical and bureaucratic aspects by incorporating guidelines and political-pedagogical arrangements. This approach transformed programs from simple mechanisms of resource transfer to promoters of basic education policies.
- 3) Orienting the planning of the State and Municipal education systems (through the Articulated Actions Plan, PAR) and the monitoring of such plans through the Basic Education Development Index, IDEB.
- 4) Prioritizing groups of Municipalities as beneficiaries of specific policies elaborated by the Ministry of Education.

These strategies have increased the capacity of federal coordination of governmental actions because each strategy focuses on a specific level of the educational system, from the most macro (State and Municipality Planning of Education) to the most micro level (formatting actions to be implemented by schools).

The second mechanism used by the Federal Government to increase its influence on the educational agenda of sub-national governments involves three main strategies, all focused on developing approaches for negotiating and mediating policies, and reducing the influence of veto players.

The first strategy relates to legal and voluntary transfers regulated by federal normative acts. Such transfers constitute effective mechanisms for the implementation of educational policies because they restrain players with veto power prevalent in the federative regime. Such strategy corroborates notions proposed by Tsebelis [8] who explains that policy stability decreases when the size of the *yolk* of each of these actors with veto power increases. (*Yolk* is a concept defining the scope of action of all actors in a common policy, and can be both an area of congruence and divergence).

Accordingly, when the Federal Government conditions the transfers of assistance resources to the adoption of its own policy, it is able to implement the policies it wants, nullifying the influence of the veto players and therefore enhancing the stability of the policy. The strategy was then to regulate the transfers through the National Fund for Education Development (FNDE), without the participation of any representative of the State and Municipalities in the decision-

making process. This practice also has implications regarding true democratic principles where State and Municipal institutions would have the right to participate in the decision-making process.

The second strategy involves negotiating directly with Municipal governments, bypassing the influence of State representatives. Evidence shows that the Direct Money in Schools Program (*PDDE – Programa Dinheiro Direto na Escola*) has been the program that grew the most over the period studied. In this way, the Federal Government has been able to increase the chances that its policy will be implemented as it was designed.

The third strategy focused on reaching consensus amongst key actors regarding the acceptance by the Municipalities of the integrity of federal program. The use of this strategy has been justified by both Arretche [3, 4] and Tsebelis [8]. Arretche [3, 4] argues that although the design of the policy is influential on the promotion of acceptance, it is not sufficient because there is always the possibility that certain actors might not agree with the proposed design. In such situations, Tsebelis [8] suggests that consensus can be achieved more effectively by influencing a key institutional actor who could persuade other veto players to adhere to the proposed policy.

In our investigation, evidence showed that the Federal Government mobilized political resources to achieve the desired consensus among the two key actors in the educational system, i.e., the National Union of Municipal Education Managers (*UNDIME- União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação*) and the National Union of Municipal Councils of Education (*UNCME – União Nacional dos Conselheiros Municipais de Educação*). These entities, as representatives of managers of municipal education systems, have a great power of convincing and aligning the discourse of their bases. The consensus was obtained both through previous dialogues with both these entities, and through the transfer of free regulatory resources to them, which in the period studied summed up to R\$ 27.9 million.

So, in general, our investigation identified the existence of trends in the relationship between the Federal, and the State and Municipalities' governments in Brazil, all leading to a model that can be called "induced and dependent cooperation" amongst Federal, State and Municipal governments. The observed trends include (a) limited instances of shared decision making, (b) the use by the Federal Government of diverse mechanisms for inducing adoption of policies, (c) limited capabilities of the Municipalities to exercise its autonomy, and (d) the existence of limited capabilities in the Municipalities of the Northern and Northeastern regions of Brazil to administer financial resources and implement policies.

7. Conclusions

Our investigation demonstrated that the Federal Government assistance policy was an important area for the study of federative tensions between the Federal, and the State and Municipal Governments. The results show that from 2004 onward, a new assistance policy of the Federal Government took place in Brazil. This policy was based on national assistance programs with their actions formatted by Federal Government, without effective participation of State and Municipal governments. The findings of our investigation evidenced a tension in the Federal Government assistance policy. This tension involves on the one hand, the power of the Federal Government to elaborate educational policies to be implemented in the States and Municipalities, and, on the other hand, the limited capability of the States and Municipal governments to exercise their autonomy to implement such policies, mainly the Municipalities located in the Northern and Northeastern regions of the country.

The Federal Government assistance policy originally aimed at promoting equity among the regions of the country. However, this did not happen during the period under investigation. Reasons for barriers included the territorial inequalities in Brazil related to limited administrative capacity, the existence of clientelist practices, the low degree of the prevalent democratic culture and low capabilities in project management, specifically of the Municipalities. These barriers are the principal limitation for the allocation, and the efficient and effective utilization of available resources.

According to Elazar [2], the interdependence that characterizes the relationships among all levels of federations requires the employ of processes that promote the sharing of decision making about public policies. And, even though the Constitution establishes the basic directives for the education policies, the detailing of related policies depends on largely the dynamics of intergovernmental relations, the configuration of political institutions, the design of public policies and the administrative conditions of the federated units. Evidence of this inter-dependence was observed in the study of Federal assistance to sub-national federated units for the provision of basic education in Brazil between 2004 and 2014.

8. References

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