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Civil Society and Public Education in Brazil: a study on the coalition of different players in the structuring and implementation of public policies in education¹.

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ABSTRACT

Our main purpose in this article is to analyze two Brazilian coalitions which are leading the efforts to enhance the quality of the public educational system, and to elucidate in which manners they relate to each other and to other players, especially governmental actors, in the formulation and implementation of current national public policies in education.

Nowadays, there are two coalitions focused on fighting for a public educational system of quality in Brazil: the *Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação* - National Campaign for the Right to Education and the *Todos pela Educação* - All for Education. These two alliances are very different in terms of their origins, composition and ways of action. When it comes to their ultimate and more general objective, however, they both pursue the common goal of developing a good-quality educational system for the Brazilian youth.

Although movements focused on educational issues have been present in Brazil since the 1930's, it was not until recently that two large movements happened to coexist, each representing different sectors of the society. This is evidence, for some analysts, of the maturing of the Brazilian Democracy and its ability to give its several actors an opportunity to link up and provide different answers to a common problem.

INTRODUCTION

¹ This article is the result of my Masters Degree dissertation in Public Management and Governance. The dissertation contemplated, besides the current coalitions, the history of the social movements which fought for the improvement of education in Brazil from the beginning of the 20th century. For further information, I am available at the e-mail address: lasimielli@yahoo.com.br.

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In order to improve Brazilian public education, important initiatives have been set in motion, both by government and civil society. Civil Society, particularly, has been increasingly active in recent years, by means of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), social movements, institutes of social responsibility linked to private initiative, besides entities and associations of the so-called Third Sector.

Among these many actions, however, two initiatives stand out, deserving to be highlighted for having a broader reach than others and for their role in linking actors from a variety of institutions, governmental and non-governmental, under a common flag: the fight for a good-quality public education. They are: the National Campaign for the Right to Education (*Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação*) and the All for Education (*Todos pela Educação*).

In this sense, we could say that these two initiatives are closest to the concept of advocacy coalition, presented by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993, p. 25) to designate the juxtaposition of “actors from a variety of public and private institutions at all levels of government who share a set of basic beliefs (policy goals plus causal and other perceptions) and who seek to manipulate the rules, budgets, and personnel of governmental institutions in order to achieve these goals over time”.

Despite the common cause, however, these two coalitions have completely different origins, compositions, sources of funding, goals and forms of action. Their relation to the government is one of the points that most differentiates them from each other – and one that has caused much discussion.

THE CONTEMPORARY COALITIONS

In order to understand the two alliances, this initial stage refers to data research from information available on both entities’ websites and in printed material distributed by them. This research was followed by a multiple case study, including twenty interviews, with internal and external actors to both coalitions – besides directors and members of both alliances, a number of key people from the educational area external to these groups were interviewed³.

Description of the current coalitions

1. Campanha Nacional pelo Direito à Educação - National Campaign for the Right to Education

The National Campaign for the Right to Education represents a number of Brazilian entities and non-governmental organizations and is linked to the Global Campaign for Education and the Latin-American and Caribbean Campaign for the Right to Education. It is financed mainly with resources from international non-governmental organizations and acts with the aim of carrying out the educational rights guaranteed by law so that everyone can have access to a good-quality public education.

Origin

The National Campaign for the Right to Education was created in 1999, linked to the Global Campaign for Education and the Latin-American and Caribbean Campaign for the Right to Education.

³ This article contains only the main conclusions of this research.

It emerged from the coalition of several entities and non-governmental organizations which for years had fought to guarantee the right to education, such as the Educational Action - *Ação Educativa*, the National Confederation of Workers in Education - *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação (CNTE)* and the Abrinq Foundation for the Rights of Children and Adolescents - *Fundação Abrinq pelo Direito da Criança e do Adolescente*.

Members and Internal Organization

The National Campaign for the Right to Education “is a social network which links over 200 entities from all over Brazil, including syndicates, social movements, non-governmental organizations, universities and student, youth and community groups, besides many others who believe that a citizen-country can only be created with a good-quality public education”.

It is made up of a national managing committee as well as regional committees in various locations in Brazil, making it “the most plural and broad coalition in the field of Basic Education”.

The managing committee is made up of ten institutions: a) Educational Action - *Ação Educativa*; b) ActionAid Brasil; c) Center for the Defense of Children and Adolescents of Ceará - *Centro de Defesa da Criança e do Adolescente do Ceará (Cedeca – CE)*; d) Luiz Freire Cultural Center - *Centro de Cultura Luiz Freire*: located in Olinda (PE); e) National Confederation of Workers in Education - *Confederação Nacional dos Trabalhadores em Educação (CNTE)*; f) Abrinq Foundation for the Rights of Children and Adolescents - *Fundação Abrinq pelo Direito da Criança e do Adolescente*; g) Inter-Forum Movement of Infant Education of Brazil - *Movimento Interfóruns de Educação Infantil do Brasil (Mieib)*; h) Brazil’s Landless Workers Movement - *Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST)*; i) National Union of Municipal Education Managers - *União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação (Undime)*; j) National Union of the Municipal Educational Councils - *União Nacional dos Conselhos Municipais de Educação (Uncme)*.

The regional committees are present in 18 Brazilian states, functioning within entities or organizations which participate in the National Campaign for the Right to Education. It is important to point out that “due to local peculiarities, each Committee has a different structure and acts in a determined manner”, within a broad diversity of forms of action, a diversity seen as “one of the Campaign’s biggest strengths”.

Besides the members of the National Campaign for the Right to Education, there are a number of collaborators, many linked to Universities and Research Centers, “with a great wealth of knowledge in the area of Education and who contribute with the Campaign in different ways” through studies, production of articles and by carrying our seminars and workshops.

Resources, financing and partnerships

The National Campaign for the Right to Education is currently financed by four international organizations: ActionAid Brazil, Global Campaign for Education, Plan Brazil and Save the Children United Kingdom. For a number of years, it also received resources from Oxfam and Novib.

Goals

The National Campaign for the Right to Education fights to make effective the educational rights which are established by law but not carried out. “The Campaign wants to make effective the educational rights guaranteed by law, by means of a broad social mobilization, so that every Brazilian citizen has access to a good-quality public school”.

This mission sets goals such as the end of vetoes to the National Education Plan (PNE). This objective was established because the PNE, which sets directives, objectives and goals for education in Brazil up to 2010, was sanctioned in 2001 with nine vetoes, linked mainly to the financing of education, one of the cornerstones of the Campaign. As they affirm, “without the commitment of more resources for Education, it is impossible to reach the goals of the PNE. That is why the National Campaign for the Right to Education wants to end these vetoes”. The movement is giving particular attention to the proposal which prevents investment in education from being raised to 7% of the GDP.

To summarize, as stated in the Campaign’s dissemination material, the Campaign’s main challenge is “the right to a good-quality public education”. For this, their main lines of action are: a) to value education professionals; b) higher public financial investment in education; and c) a democratic management involving students, education professionals, families, community organizations and several segments of civil society.

Lines of action

The National Campaign for the Right to Education has five lines of action: institutional links, pressure on the authorities, popular mobilization, production and dissemination of knowledge and communication.

By building institutional links, the Campaign forges alliances and partnerships with different organizations and with national and international movements, with the challenge of becoming present throughout the entire country. Besides the link with national movements, the National Campaign for the Right to Education is part of the Global Campaign for Education and the Latin-American and Caribbean Campaign for the Right to Education.

Pressure on the authorities takes place with basis on actions chosen with the aim of pressuring governments, parliamentary members and the Judiciary for public policy changes. “Ending the vetoes to the PNE, carrying out the Fundef law, defining student-quality cost and civil society participation in educational plans are among these actions”, affirms the Campaign.

The Campaign also seeks to involve students, education professionals, families and citizens in local and national actions, such as the Week of Global Action and the Educational *Cirandas* (tours).

Besides these, the entity also carries out public opinion research as well as consulting and systemizing information on educational themes, in partnership with other institutions. Booklets and material available on the website are produced by the Campaign, comprising the research line.

Lastly, the Campaign promotes meetings and exchange between members, disseminating knowledge and strategic information. Weekly, an electronic bulletin is sent to thousands of schools. According to the entity, “if research is important in getting to know the national reality, it is communication which allows us to disseminate not just the acquired knowledge, but all the actions developed by the Campaign.

Communication also allows the several actors of the Campaign to get to know each other, exchanging experiences, proposals, ideas and thoughts”.

More than research and inform, however, the Campaign understands that “a Campaign within a national sphere will only be successful if capable of joining different sectors in the fight for common goals”, highlighting the importance of institutional mobilization and social mobilization.

The Campaign also points out the importance of citizen participation in the process. One leaflet suggests the following forms of action: group or organization meetings to debate themes of interest; signing and help in collecting signatures for petitions; talking and pressuring the state Federal parliamentary members; participating in pressuring the state Governor; participating in mobilization; sending virtual pressure cards to Congress, among others.

2. Todos pela Educação (TPE) - All for Education

The All for Education, or TPE, defines itself as an alliance of the efforts of civil society, private initiative and public management, with the final goal of “mobilizing and committing Brazil so that by 2022 all children and youths have a good-quality basic education”, seeing itself, in this sense, as a movement which brings a “nation’s project, with participation of the entire Brazilian society”.

Its mission is to “make effective the right to a good-quality public education, so that in 2022, bicentenary of the Independence of Brazil, all children and youths have access to good-quality basic schooling, which will prepare them for the challenges of the 21st century”.

In the TPE, “the belief prevails that either Brazil elects education as its most important public policy, assuring conditions for access, permanence, conclusion and success of students, or it will irrevocably compromise the future of new generations and its own social and economic development”.

According to them, the great difference between the TPE and other projects and movements aimed at improving the quality of education can be addressed by three points. First, the project differentiates itself by its “breadth, reach and long term scope”, considering this is a national project, organized by the “most representative forces of civil society (not by a company, a foundation or a government)”, open to participation by all who are interested, responsible for setting a 16-year horizon to goal-fulfillment. In second place, the project points out, this is a “permanent action” and not an isolated or momentary movement, intending to act alongside the government and civil society. Last, there is the establishment of five simple and attainable goals, focused “on the result and not the process”, consistent and monitored by means of “systematic data collection and analysis of historical series”, with the possibility for part of the population to accompany progress.

Origin

The TPE was officially launched on September 6th, 2006, at the Ipiranga Museum in São Paulo, chosen for having been the site of the proclamation of Independence in 1822. The date and location were chosen with basis on the idea that real independence will only come when all citizens have access to a good-quality education.

Members and Internal Organization

Currently the movement counts on an Assembly of 80 members, who elect the Governing Council, formed by Jorge Gerda, Ana Maria Diniz, Antonio Matias, Beatriz Johannpeter, Daniel Feffer, Denise Aguiar, Danilo Miranda, Fábio Barbosa, Gustavo Ioschpe, José Paulo Soares Martins, José Roberto Marinho, Luis Norberto Pascoal, Maria Lucia Meirelles Reis, Milú Villela, Ricardo Young and Viviane Senna.

The Governing Council is aided by four thematic committees. These are: Networks; Technical; Communications; and Institutional Relations.

From the start, the TPE counts on support by governmental actors linked to MEC, to CONSED and to UNDIME, bringing “a rare alignment of purposes, above class, corporate or political party interests”.

For the coalition, the alliance formed by the State, the business world and the Third Sector organizations is important as each can contribute in a specific manner. The State “has the duty and obligation of attending universal purpose”, reaching all citizens. The business world “stands out for its capacity of making things happen (means logistics) with efficiency, efficacy and effectiveness”. Last, the social organizations or entities linked to the Third Sector “are characterized by their sensibility, creativity and fighting spirit”.

The fact that the Ministry of Education has participated since the founding of the TPE is very important. As mentioned in the movement’s site, the PDE had as its “main action” the Objectives Plan - Commitment All for Education, “named thus in recognition of the existing harmony between the 5 Goals defended by the movement and the objectives of the Plan proposed by MEC”. For them, “just as the TPE believes that only with clear aims and the untiring search for results it is possible to improve the quality of education in Brazil, MEC has introduced, among other measures, in an unprecedented manner, a policy of goals and quality indicators as a condition for passing on resources to states and municipalities”. The coincidence in names between a measure of the PDE and this coalition, however, led to this entity, founded under the name of Commitment All for Education, began to name itself simply All for Education - *Todos pela Educação* (TPE).

Resources, financing and partners

The TPE is funded by quotas, sponsored by companies and entrepreneurial institutes: Gerda (Diamond Quota); ABN AMRO Real Bank, Itaú Bank, the Bradesco Foundation, the Itaú Social Foundation, the Roberto Marinho Foundation, Suzano Papel e Celulose and the Educar DPaschoal Foundation (Gold Quota); Santander Banespa Bank, Grupo REDE, Ayrton Senna Institute (Bronze Quota). Besides the sponsors, the TPE counts on support and strategic partners.

There is support on three fronts: 1) for website development; 2) for publicity campaigns; and 3) for infrastructure.

Last, the strategic partners comprise: the Congressional Education and Culture Committee; the National Education Council (CNE); UNDIME; CONSED; MEC; the Federal Public Ministry; UNESCO and UNICEF.

This partnership and support structure guarantees the TPE a low operational cost.

Goals

The TPE works with five goals, established with basis on the understanding that “an effective commitment for a good-quality Education requires clear goals, to be reached within a determined timeframe”.

For them, it is crucial to establish goals in order to differentiate the TPE from historic attempts to fight for education by affirming that “plans and documents of intention have multiplied throughout the history of Brazilian education, often without clarifying the objectives to be pursued or the timeframe for fulfillment”. Also, the TPE believes that it is essential for goals to be attainable: “equally crucial is for the goals to bring concrete results from the student’s perspective, being verifiable, measurable and easily understood by the public in general”.

The goals must be plainly understood by the population because, for the TPE, Brazilian education will only improve “when Brazilians become as demanding in this sense as with regards, for example, to the economy and to soccer”. It is taken for granted that the majority of fathers and mothers of students are satisfied by the supply of places in schools and distribution of school meals and uniforms, with few knowing much about the quality of schooling offered to their children and “even fewer demanding good-quality teaching from schools and educational authorities”.

Goal 1 – Every child and youth between 4 and 17 years of age at school.
“By 2022, 98% or more children and youths between 4 and 17 years should be enrolled and frequenting school”.
Goal 2 – Every child fully literate by the age of 8.
“By 2010, 80% or more, and by 2022, 100% of children should have basic reading and writing skills by the end of the 2 nd grade (now 3 rd year) of Elementary School”.
Goal 3 – Every pupil with learning skills adequate to his/her grade level.
“By 2022, 70% or more pupils will have learnt the essential for their grade level”. It was defined, thus, that 70% of pupils from the 4 th and 8 th grades (now 5 th and 9 th year) of Elementary/Middle School and from the 3 rd grade of High School from both public and private networks should have performances over respectively 200, 275 and 300 points on the SAEB Portuguese language scale, and over 225, 300 and 350 points on the Mathematics scale.
Goal 4 – Every youth with High School completed by the age of 19.
“By 2022, 95% or more of 16 year-old Brazilian youths should have completed Middle School and 90% or more of 19 years should have completed High School”.
Goal 5 – Investment in a broader and well managed Education.
“By 2010, maintaining the number until 2022, public investment in Basic Education must be 5% or more of the GDP”.

Goals of the TPE

Source: TODOS PELA EDUCAÇÃO, 2008.

Lines of Action

To reach these goals, three lines of strategic action were created: a) influence on demand, by means of communication; b) influence on offer, by means of working with

other entities and with governmental spheres; and c) influence on quality and quantity of information about the theme, by means of following and disseminating data, research and information related to Education and the five Goals.

The TPE has no intention of intervening directly within the schools. Its objective is to “permanently mobilize, guide and stimulate parents, educators, community leaders, school councils, government members and business entrepreneurs, among others, so they understand what is a good-quality education and begin to follow the issue and demand an adequate offer at the schools in their community”.

Dissemination Material was prepared, such as folders, posters, banners and book markers, so that “by constantly communicating the Goals, they may serve as a North for all Brazilians to accompany and seek improvements in public schooling”.

Informing the population and, in consequence, improving demands for education, is of crucial importance for the TPE, which understands that “without the direct involvement of families in their children’s school life, there will be little progress at the level of learning. After all, it is known that family is the external factor to school that most strongly influences school performance”.

Use of radio, television and the movement’s website are the main forms of communication. For them, “it is hard to imagine any successful transformation in Brazil without direct and relevant participation by radio stations”. Also, the messages received through the “talk to us” option available on the movement’s site are seen as an important form of interaction with society. During the first year, approximately five thousand messages were sent to the movement. There is also a website named “An Eye on Education - *De Olho na Educação*”, elaborated in partnership with Rapp Collins, which offers simple and clear forms of understanding the indicators of Brazilian Education.

The TPE seeks adhesion of individuals and entities. For them, the several forms of participation are part of attempting to implement the recommendations found in the “do your part” section, of contributing to forming regional and sector committees, of disseminating the cause of Education and of forging a formal link between the movement and the improvement of Education in Brazil.

Critical evaluation of the two coalitions

In specific relation to the two coalitions, it became clear, based on the interviews carried out, that, despite the common cause, there are enormous differences in origin, forms of action, internal setup, forms of financing and establishment of partnerships, media relations, relation to the government and goals, to name a few.

Regarding origin, both initiatives were created in very different contexts. The National Campaign for the Right to Education was created eight years ago (1999), as a national movement linked to the Global Campaign for Education and the Latin-American and Caribbean Campaign for the Right to Education, representing the linking of several non-governmental organizations which had fought for years for the fulfillment of the rights established by the 1988 Constitution, within a context of contesting and criticizing the government and of fighting the PNE vetoes. The TPE, on the other hand, was created just over a year ago (2006), in a collaborative manner with the government, which has participated, from the start, in its conception and elaboration. It was born from linking business entrepreneurs (especially those working with social entities) with social leaderships, seeking to fight for improvements in

education by means of establishing goals and based on a very close relationship with the government.

Despite the different contexts, however, we see in the discourse of both coalitions one great similarity: in both cases, there was a care in pointing to the emergence of the coalition as an attempt to unite the several initiatives which were being carried out, but not working together. In the Campaign's case, Elizabete Ramos cited the fact that the Campaign had the role of bringing together the participants of the FNDEP and the CONEDs which were very disconnected at the end of the 90's, especially the NGOs, which had little space in these arenas and needed a new space for debate and action; in the case of the TPE, Priscila Cruz stressed the importance of the several private initiatives in education, but the lack of networking and synergy among them, a synergy which was found by means of the creation of the TPE. In other words, although the actors in each alliance are very diverse, there has been the same care in linking them into a single movement, capable of combining efforts in search of a common goal, both in the Campaign and in the TPE.

The members from each coalition, as we have seen, are very diverse. One great difference lies in the fact that the National Campaign for the Right to Education counts of the presence of several entities that have been fighting for years for education, for the rights of children and adolescents; different from the TPE, which counts mainly on the presence of people from businesses or linked to private social investment, with successful trajectories (business, for the most part, and social, in some cases) and political networks. It is worth pointing out that, despite not having been a part of the historic struggle and of previous movements, many of these social leaders, such as Viviane Senna, have been carrying out important work in the educational and social area for many years.

Another factor which sets the two coalitions apart is that the Campaign has, on its Managing Committee, ten very diverse institutions, such as the Ação Educativa, the UNDIME and the MST, while the TPE has in its Governing Council 16 individuals, representing mainly private social institutions, giving the TPE a more individualistic and homogenous character, against the more collective and heterogeneous character of the Campaign, a fact that has been highly criticized by members of the Campaign. These individuals are, for the most part, linked to companies and business institutions which sponsor the TPE through quotas.

The absence of teachers and syndicates in the TPE structure has also been much criticized, both by members of the Campaign as by actors outside of both coalitions. There is the feeling that those who are most responsible for change have not been included in the management and council of the movement, or in elaborating the goals, and will be called upon only to adhere to and implement these goals.

In relation to resources and establishment of partnerships, both coalitions have been adamant in pointing out the fact that they have not received public resources in order to carry out their projects, a question raised by some external actors. Financing of the National Campaign for the Right to Education comes mainly from international organizations, evidence of its legitimacy in the international scenario, which stems from, among other factors, its link to the Latin-American Campaign and to the Global Campaign for Education. In this sense, despite the difficulty in receiving resources from national companies, pointed out by Daniel Cara, the existence of this international legitimacy guarantees the permanence of this coalition. The TPE, on the other hand, due to a stronger relation with the business world, has managed to establish a successful system of entrepreneurial quotas, partnerships and supporters, guaranteeing that some initiatives can be set in motion at a low cost, due to the voluntary work of actors,

publicity agencies and television networks, among others, guaranteeing more autonomy for their actions.

The goals set by the coalitions are also very different. While the Campaign basically works with the fight for rights and for changes and fulfillment of legislation, with special attention on the issue of finance, the TPE has established five goals to be reached by the year 2022. In sum, while the Campaign's goals are focused mainly on increased financing, the goals of the TPE focus more on quantifiable results at the end of the process.

This difference in objectives can be interpreted in a broader context, related to the beliefs and the system of values of each coalition, involving the debate between final result and the process needed to arrive there. While the TPE has made clear its position of focusing on the final product, without discussing the necessary means to reach it, the Campaign has highlighted the importance of a democratic process of debate and that mobilizing people is central to reaching these aims. An ideal set of goals, in our opinion, should include both aspects, in other words, the process and the results, because if on one hand it is of little use to point out the final goal without determining the means to reach it, on the other hand to focus on the process without determining and measuring the final objectives is also far from ideal. To outline the desired results, drawing up a process for reaching these and for evaluation throughout the trajectory would be, therefore, an attempt to join both proposals. It is essential to establish goals as well as an educational process, linking both in the search for the educational quality desired by both coalitions.

Great debate was caused, specifically, by the process used to define the goals of the TPE. On one side, the TPE members argued that this process was able to bring together dozens of people and that elaboration of the goals was consensual and legitimate; on the other, Campaign members and other external actors strongly questioned this process, for including few people and, mainly, for the lack of teaching professionals and their representatives during this stage.

As for the goals, it is worth noting that, despite the claims of the TPE, they are not consensual between the coalitions and among the movements who fight for Education; in other words, these five goals are not priorities for all entities acting within this field. For this reason, although there may be a possibility of adhesion to the goals - a fact pointed out as an attempt in finding an opening -, if the remaining actors do not see them as legitimate, and if they are not unanimous in setting them as priorities, this opening is questioned.

The lines of action chosen by each coalition are also very different. While the TPE chose a triple base formed by demand (influence the population's demand for education), offer (influence offer by networking with other entities and governmental spheres) and information (influence the quality and quantity of information, by following up and disseminating data, research and information relating to Education and the five goals), the Campaign chose five lines of action: institutional networking, pressure on the authorities, popular mobilization, research and communication. In the case of the TPE, media use has special importance, highlighted by several members as a crucial strategic point, especially when it comes to qualifying demand.

With regards to the TPE, despite agreeing with the importance of informing the population about the current state of education in this country, we understand, as do some of those interviewed, that simply informing the population is not enough to, alone, make people mobilize and fight for a better education, considering the difference between information and participation. Knowledge of the goals will not make parents participate more in education and fight for the goals, despite being a good starting point.

Another issue, the posture of both coalitions with regards to the government, is distinct due to differences relating to the moment they were created and their member setup. Neither of the alliances, however, actually questions the structure of this relationship, even though the Campaign is opposed to a few government proposals and adopts a more critical posture than the TPE.

The launch of the PDE, specifically, generated a wide debate. There is a strong feeling among Campaign members that they were excluded from the process of elaboration of the plan, despite having the same ideological posture as the government, which decided to hear only the members of the TPE. For the TPE, however, the fact that the Ministry has participated in the movement's meetings from the start made the adoption of the name a natural consequence of the alignment of efforts and the joint quest for fulfillment of the goals. The use of the same name, however, caused great discomfort, both among Campaign members and members of the TPE, generating the change in name of the All for Education, originally named Commitment All for Education. For some academics, however, this similarity in names does not carry such weight, considering that this name was not established by the government or the coalition, but by international meetings organized by the UN.

The launch of the PDE was, in our view, wrong in not including all actors in its definition, seeking to include them only in implementation of the measures. There was, in this sense, a reversion of a process that should have guaranteed presence of all civil society during its elaboration, as took place with the PNE. The moment during which Ministry posts were being changed, however, was decisive for the government to launch this plan without previously holding a National Education Conference, seeking later to revert this process after the plan had been announced, debating it throughout the year 2007.

The impressions on the coalitions were divided into two topics: the fight between financing and management and the debates on the role of education, two points which were heatedly defended by members of the alliances and analyzed at depth by external interviewees. In the first case, the two coalitions have an almost extreme position, with the Campaign defending a raised budget and the TPE defending an improved management. Some members, however, strive to point out the importance of the other side, discussing the damage that this division brings to both coalitions – a point we agree with strongly. Another discussion point is the role of education for each coalition: the Campaign, on one hand, defending education in its broadest sense, of forming citizens and developing critical thought, and the TPE, on the other hand, being criticized by some actors for simply defending the improved training of labor, a position which has not been confirmed by members of the coalition.

Lastly, the perceptions about education at the present moment include the feeling that there have been great advances in the area, despite the innumerable problems still in existence. Feelings towards the government, equally, also reveal the opinion that despite improvements in relation to previous governments, there is still a lot of room for developing channels of debate between civil society and the government, and a need for better use of these discussions by the government at the time of implementing policies.

Considering that both claim to fight for the same end goal, we could say that this division tends to damage both, making them competitors. Thus, instead of creating a single field, we see the creation of two opposite camps that do not include each other in the debate, despite their rhetoric of inclusion. Neither one considers the other to be legitimate, so that, even if both talk of openness and inclusion, there is no real joint effort. This division emerges due to differences in viewpoint and in system of values of

the members of both coalitions – which will be hard to change. Despite this, many actors spoke of the need to seek synergy and a joint effort between both camps.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We understand that both the National Campaign for the Right to Education and the TPE are coalitions acting within the same field: defense of a good-quality public education, with the Campaign closer to the concept of advocacy coalition. They are coalitions because they were capable of gathering a great number of actors, with similar values and beliefs, around a common objective.

This current scenario, formed by the two coalitions, confirms the proposal of Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) that there are, in general, among two to four important coalitions acting in a determined sector. The presence of these two coalitions, however, does not mean that all people and entities acting in this sector are necessarily inserted in one coalition or another, as stated by the authors and verified by us in practice. There are important institutions linked to the educational sector that do not belong either to the National Campaign for the Right to Education or the TPE.

Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1993) understand that the definition of the agenda of problems to be debated, the possible solutions to be considered, the choice of a determined alternative and its implementation, are understood, within this scenario, as a result of the choices of a dominant coalition. Furthermore, the authors point to the need for substituting one dominant coalition for another to bring about deeper changes in a specific public policy, which happens as a result of the combination of external disturbance to the system and of use of these external changes by the previously minority coalitions of the subsystem. In other words, even if external events bring about opportunity for change, these opportunities must be used adequately by the coalitions for change to come about.

Many interviewees, especially the actors belonging to the Campaign, saw the similarity of names between the PDE and the TPE movement as a choice, by the government, in hearing only one part of civil society. In this sense, we could understand this situation as the result of one coalition's dominance, in this case the TPE, over the National Campaign for the Right to Education. In our opinion, however, despite this being the impression, we understand that, due to the fact that the Minister of Education, Fernando Haddad, participated from the start in the discussions about this new alliance, the choice of the name emerged as a result of the natural development of a project which was elaborated in a collective manner. A choice, however, was made in highlighting one of the actors, a situation which is being reverted as the process takes place, with the inclusion of Campaign members in debates on improvement of the PDE.

There was an expectation, on behalf of Campaign members, that, considering they contributed in forming the Workers Party - *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT), they should be the actors who are privileged in the process, or in other words, their coalition should have higher bargaining power. We agree, however, with what some of the interviewees said; that the best solution for this situation would have been to carry out a National Education Conference, in which all actors, belonging or not to these coalitions, could have their suggestions heard and included in a new government plan, without giving emphasis to any particular one.

On the future

It is too early, however, to analyze the impacts of these coalitions in the implementation of a new system of public education, if this implementation ever takes

place. We are looking at a new scenario being formed, marked by a new educational plan, the PDE, and its first impacts, but we have no way of measuring the mid and long term results. Although the PDE was only recently launched, the TPE can still be considered a coalition under construction, which makes future analyses even more difficult.

We do not know if the two coalitions will manage to act in a complementary manner or if they will adopt a posture of opposition and confrontation over the next years. We do not know if a new coalition will emerge, bringing new actors to the fight. We do not know if Education will, at last, stop being a great problem in debates and be effectively solved.

Thus, we are left with hope. Hope, therefore, that this work may help the several actors, internal and external to the coalitions, to have a better understanding of this present moment, of the work carried out by the two coalitions, of the perception of the different actors and, with this, manage to alter some of their practices and strategies, with a view to effectively improving the quality of Education in the country. Hope, lastly, that this desire for change may actually become a reality, transforming Brazilian Education into a good-quality education for all, a truly public policy of which all of us, Brazilians, may be proud.

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