



VEILED TRANSPARENCIES: THE ECONOMIC USES OF LEARNING ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS IN EDUCATION POLICIES

TRANSPARÊNCIAS VELADAS: OS USOS ECONÔMICOS DOS SISTEMAS DE AVALIAÇÃO DE APRENDIZAGEM NAS POLÍTICAS DE EDUCAÇÃO

TRANSPARENCIAS VELADAS: LOS USOS ECONÓMICOS DE LOS SISTEMAS DE EVALUACIÓN DEL APRENDIZAJE EN LAS POLÍTICAS EDUCATIVAS

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ABSTRACT: This qualitative study developed from bibliographical research aims to analyze, in the light of Kingdon's Flow Multiples theory, the case of agenda formation and formulation of national curricular policy that gave rise to the BNCC. In a controversial political scenario and, identifying a range of opportunities, groups linked to the business world, form coalitions and alliances with the aim of influencing the public agenda and presenting their ideas in the arena of debates on educational policies, disputing the content of Brazil education. In this context, we analyze the role of accountability and two indicators, argued by some coalitions, that justify the need for reform based on the results of large-scale evaluations, which support the argument of the lack of quality in education. Such an improvement would come from reforms such as the one that originated the BNCC and put into dispute state, education and society projects. The accountability mechanisms have their results interpreted by the interest groups, fundamental ways of sustaining the reform process and an important tool to influence the formation of the agenda and the formation of policies aligned with the perspectives of a managerial management of the Condition. I concluded that the State has its functions redesigned, the limits between the public and the private are blurred. The educational policy under discussion identifies or promotes the participation of actors and institutions from the business world that affect the content of the educational policy.

KEYWORDS: Educational policies. Indicators. Accountability. BNCC. State reforms.

RESUMO: Este estudo qualitativo desenvolvido a partir de pesquisa bibliográfica propõe-se a analisar, a luz da teoria dos Múltiplos Fluxos de Kingdon, o caso de formação de agenda e formulação da política nacional de currículo que dá origem a BNCC. Sob um cenário político controverso e, identificando uma janela de oportunidades, grupos vinculados ao mundo empresarial formam coalizões e alianças de modo a influenciar a agenda pública e apresentar suas ideias à arena de debates das políticas educacionais de educação, disputando o conteúdo da educação brasileira. Nesse contexto, analisamos o papel do accountability e dos indicadores, argumento empregado por determinadas coalizões, que justificavam a necessidade de reforma pelos resultados de avaliações de larga escala, que sustentam o argumento de uma ausência de qualidade da educação. Tal melhoria ocorreria a partir de reformas como a que originou a BNCC e colocou em disputa projetos de estado, educação e sociedade. Os mecanismos de accountability, tendo seus resultados interpretados por grupos

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de interesse, foram fundamentais para a sustentação do processo reformista e importante ferramenta para influenciar a formação de agenda e a formação de políticas alinhadas às perspectivas de uma gestão gerencialista do Estado. Conclui-se que o Estado tem suas funções redesenhadas, e que as fronteiras entre o público e privada tornam-se difusas. Na política educacional em discussão, identifica-se o avanço da participação de atores e instituições do mundo corporativo influenciando o conteúdo da política educacional.

PALAVRAS-CHAVES: Políticas educacionais. Indicadores. Accountability. BNCC. Reformas de Estado.

RESUMEN: *Este estudio cualitativo desarrollado a partir de la investigación bibliográfica propone analizar, a la luz de la teoría del flujo múltiple de Kingdon, el caso de la formación de la agenda y la formulación de la política curricular nacional que originó la BNCC. Bajo un escenario político controvertido y, identificando una ventana de oportunidad, grupos vinculados al mundo empresarial, forman coaliciones y alianzas con el fin de influir en la agenda pública y presentar sus ideas a la arena de debates de políticas educativas, disputando el contenido de la educación brasileña. En este contexto, analizamos el papel de la rendición de cuentas y los indicadores, un argumento empleado por ciertas coaliciones, que justificaban la necesidad de reforma por los resultados de las evaluaciones a gran escala, que apoyan el argumento de una ausencia de calidad de la educación. Esta mejora se produciría a partir de reformas como la que originó el BNCC y puso en disputa proyectos estatales, educativos y sociales. Los mecanismos de rendición de cuentas que tienen sus resultados interpretados por los grupos de interés fueron fundamentales para apoyar el proceso reformista y, herramienta importante para influir en la formación de la agenda y la formación de políticas, alinea las perspectivas de una gestión gerencial del Estado. Se concluye que el Estado tiene sus funciones rediseñadas, los límites entre lo público y lo privado se vuelven difusos. En la política educativa en discusión, se identifica el avance de la participación de actores e instituciones del mundo corporativo influye en el contenido de la política educativa.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Políticas educativas. Indicadores. Responsabilidad. BNCC. Reformas del Estado.

Introduction

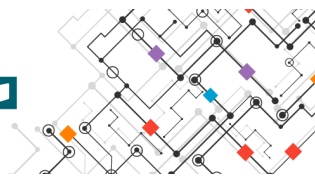
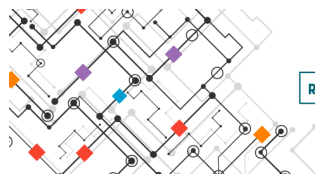
The field of education has received prominence in the mainstream media and aroused concerns in school communities, especially after the approval of the National High School Base and with expectations of high school reform, one of the stages that most promoted debates and problematizations in relation to the reformist movement. There are, therefore, a series of studies that propose to problematize and discuss the BNCC, especially from the faculties and graduate programs in education of the country. The present work consists of a differentiated approach to the problem under debate, it is proposed to analyze the formulation of the policy that gave rise to BNCC, from the theory of multiple flows of John Kingdon – a political scientist who mapped public policies and the processes inherent to their formation, ranging from the identification of





the public problem, the formation of the agenda and the process of policy formulation. The on-screen case identifies the Kingdon model (1994) as an analysis resource and goes beyond: it *discusses the concept of accountability* and its prominent role, appropriated by the actors and institutions that influenced the BNCC. The concept of *accountability*, discussed by Afonso Janela, in addition to the concepts of New Public Management and New Public Management, are related to Kingdon's theory and assist in the discussions that this work proposes. The hypothesis studied, based on a set of bibliographies and references that pass in the field of social sciences and education, lead us to the idea that the reforms that originated the BNCC, are a product of a continuous process of discourses that point to the failure of education, which requires an answer: then arise, new actors influencing educational policies. They are successful entrepreneurs and with the possession of economic capital and, through this, contribute with packages of solutions to policies, fitting into the State, influencing policies and redefining functions and borders between the public and the private. Thus, indicators, accountability mechanisms are the engine of major reforms, because they subsidize discourses and opportunist new actors to the State, defining content and image of educational policies.

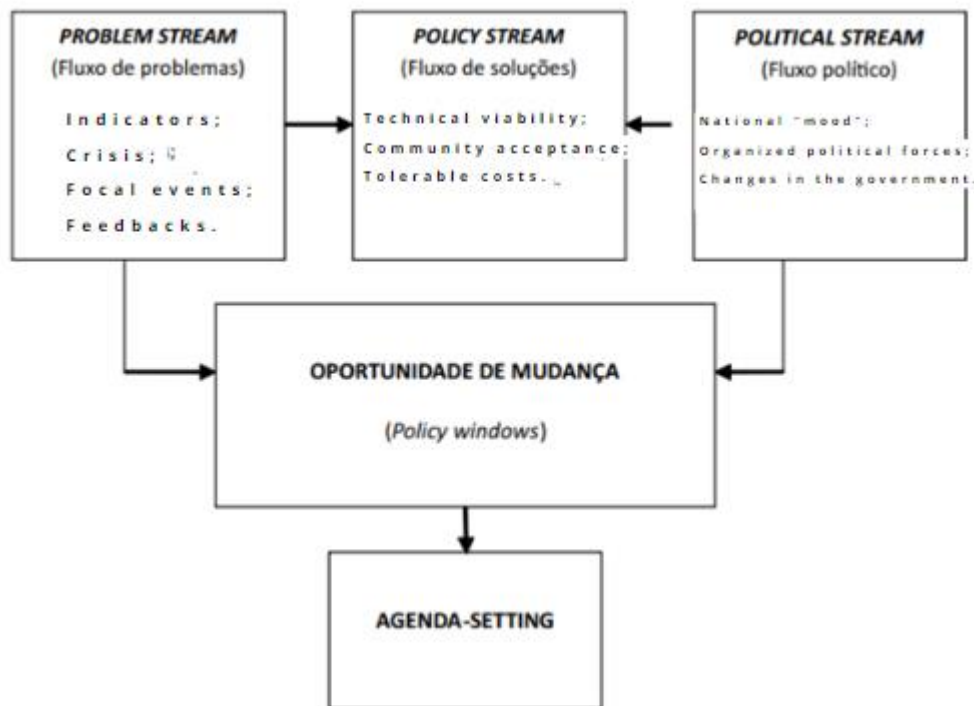
For this discussion, we propose the division of this essay into three sections: In the first one, we discuss and deepen Kingdon's readings, used as an analytical resource of the national curriculum policy – BNCC, under discussion in this essay. In the second section, we discuss the concept of *accountability*, based on the theories of Almerindo Janela Afonso and the role of these instruments as a mobilizer of the reform. In the following section, we discuss the impacts of indicators on the formulation of the national curriculum policy – BNCC, in addition to relating the accountability category to the theory of "fittings" advocated by political scientist Theda Skocpol (1992), which presents interactions of "strangers" to the market and possibilities of these to fit into the structures of the State and, thus, influence the design of public policies. Finally, we present our final considerations, weaving an analysis that discusses with the different concepts and categories addressed in the work.



John Kingdon's theory as an analytical resource for agenda formation: the BNCC on the agenda

Kingdon suggests, in his analysis model, three interdependent flows through which public policy passes: (i) the problem, (ii) alternatives and solutions and (iii) politics. In the table below, Capella (2018, p. 45) presents the Kingdon model:

Figure 3 – The Kingdon model



Source: Capella (2007, p. 98)

The first flow stands out for its ability to recognize a public problem. Raising a social issue to a problem requires the interpretation of the phenomenon and its classification as a problem that requires solutions. That is, the problem exists from the moment it is recognized by policymakers or decision makers. There is a universe of problems and a practical inability to solve them all. Therefore, the author lists three mechanisms that support the need for decision-making by policymakers. The three mechanisms that attract public attention and collaborate in the composition of the policy agenda are (i) indicators, (ii) events and crises and (iii) *feedback* from government actions. Such indicators are of interest to the present analysis precisely because they collaborated in the construction of arguments, transforming a diagnosis elaborated by a delimited community of problem specialists with *public* status.



Deepening the model: a possibility of public policy analysis

With the progress of state reforms and the expansion of the idea of *New Public Management*, including on education policies (AFONSO, 2001; PACHECO, 2019), there is increasing adoption of management and marketing management logics, transposed from the corporate-business world. Although authors such as Laval (2004), Freitas (2018) and Pacheco (2019) have already signaled for different purposes, there is a strong alignment of State policies with large-scale evaluation mechanisms and instruments. These policies are promoted by multilateral agencies that finance evaluation programs with significant impact on actions in the educational field. Among them, (i) the recent reform of the curriculum, motivated by large-scale external evaluations, which impacts the content object of the teaching and learning process; (ii) the didactic publications industry, which moves significant resources with funding from the National Textbook Program; (iii) educational programs and policies, which focus on results management, reducing the school's ² function to a performance-certifying bureaucratic institution, based on a technical pedagogy and committed to the results of large-scale evaluations. The neoliberal logic of ranking expands, favoring schools with better positions and disregarding contexts of inequality, which would require more attention and investments. Afonso (2001, p. 26) describes the Evaluating State, in which there is "a predominance of an instrumental and mercantile rationality that tends to overvalue quantifiable and measurable indicators and results without taking into account the specificities of educational contexts and processes".

The responsibility for poor performance in evaluations falls on the subject implementing policies, such as teachers and managers. For Afonso (2001), the "pragmatic strategy with symbolic effects" of evaluating learning to assign responsibilities to these actors "promotes a new representation on the role of the State, which is increasingly distant from the functions of social welfare and the obligations it had assumed when it was the main provider and supplier of educational goods and services" (AFONSO, 2001, p. 27).

Thus, the State articulates strategies that ensure "skills and competencies" expected of students. It includes, for example, the standardization of the curriculum and the standardization of knowledge. After all, there is only the possibility of measurement if there are mechanisms of control over what is being addressed in the classrooms.

² Cf. Hypolith and Jorge (2020). The authors discuss international organizations, including the OECD, and highlight the role of large-scale evaluations such as PISA.





Such comparability parameters, replicated in indicators about each school unit, refer to *accountability* and accountability. If the statistical data of these evaluations are analyzed, it is quickly concluded that Brazil has not had satisfactory results. Moreover, we are among the countries with the lowest income in these assessment instruments.

The role of indicators for the formulation of public policies is essential. However, like any political movement, it is necessary to be used to the interests and actors that mobilize themselves in favor of a process of interpreting the data, resulting from evaluation processes. The use of indicators, from Kingdon's perspective, is an important mechanism for the construction of a reading of reality. It is the interpretation of these data that "help to demonstrate the existence of a question" (CAPELLA, 2005, p. 5). It was these indicators, interpreted by interest-oriented social groups, such as business foundations, that placed reform at the center of the discussion. Here, three aspects should be contextualized, namely: (i) the business foundations mentioned articulated a coalition, a non-profit organization called Movimento pela Base (MpB)³, which brings together institutions such as Fundação Lemann, Itaú Unibanco, Fundação Vivo-Telefônica, Instituto Natura, Fundação Roberto Marinho, founders of the Globo de Comunicação group, etc.; (ii) the articulation of this movement around PISA data,⁴ which insisted on the relevance of a reform in national education, precisely at a time of strong political tension; and (iii) the formulation of the BNCC, provided for in the National Education Plan, promulgated in 2014, and already in the Federal Constitution of 1988.

The interpretation of the indicators reinforced a narrative about the crisis in Brazilian education. In this sense, different actors agree. Disagreements appear in the following aspects: the role of large-scale evaluations; "softening" and "urgency" of approval; the silencing of some voices, the annulment of previous versions of the document, the anti-democratic character pointed out by different institutions linked to academia such as ANPEd, ANPOCS and scholars such as Dourado (2020), Macedo (2016) and Aguiar (2018), the latter that comprised the National Council of Education in that period and which narrates the "controversial" and "accelerated" process of approval.

The fact is that the institutions that founded the MpB invested economic capital to broadcast, for example, advertisements on open television to raise awareness about the reform. In one of the commercials, two children, separated one on each side of the TV, representing

³ Available: <https://movimentopelabase.org.br/>. Furthermore, on the composition of this Movement, we suggest the reading of Michetti (2020) and Peroni and Caetano (2015)

⁴ The Movement for the Basis (free translation) in its principles highlights the role of PISA, as an external evaluation. More information available in: <https://movimentopelabase.org.br/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/mpb-5visoes-principios-doc-principal-interativo.pdf>. Access: 07 July 2021



respectively students from public and private schools, appear wearing identical uniform. Next, the classroom picture of both is represented with exactly the same content, transmitting the idea of equivalence and equivalence of knowledge, reinforcing the understanding around the pertinence of education reform in the country. They also created an electronic website and offered states and municipalities technical advice, in addition to promoting meetings with political actors, state secretaries associated with the National Council of Secretaries of Education (CONSED) and members of the technical management of municipal departments of education, through the Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME). Using *accountability mechanisms*, they evidenced the opportunity of the reform, arguing from the results obtained in external evaluations and in internal evaluations such as the Basic Education Development Index (IDEB).

The second mechanism punctuated by Kingdon refers to events, crises and symbols (CAPELLA, 2018, p. 40). Brazil, after the 2014 elections, has aggravated a political crisis that gains strength with the *acceptance of the impeachment request* of the then President of the Republic Dilma Rousseff, which generated the replacement of specialists who held strategic positions. An example of this is the replacement in the staff of the Executive Secretariat of Basic Education of the MEC, responsible for the formulation of the policy, through the entry of new actors, including the MpB, who start to participate with greater intensity in the discussions that preceded the formulation of the BNCC (CORRÊA; MORGADO, 2020; FERREIRA; SANTOS, 2020; FREIRE; NETTO, 2020).

The last aspect we return to this first flow, identifying the problem, is what Kingdon (1984) names as *feedbacks* (CAPELLA, 2018, p. 40). Anchored in the discourse of inefficiency of public education and the need for a new *modus operandi*, we observe, again, the argument of "non-fulfillment of goals", which is supported by accountability mechanisms. Large-scale evaluations have their results explored in order to build a convergence for possible reforms.

According to Capella (2018, p. 97), the second flow is called policy stream and consists of searching for alternative solutions to a previously identified problem. As already explained, the reference author's model is based on the garbage can model (COHEN; MARCH; OLSEN, 1972), that is, solutions are not created specifically for a given problem. On the contrary, they already exist, because they have been previously delineated. When there is identification of a problem that requires the action of bureaucrats, the garbage can is used, which has solutions and alternatives on standby. According to Capella (2018, p. 97), there would then be a policy primeval soup, where alternatives of different contents "fluctuate", which mix, confront each other and stop. From this broth of possible solutions, the ideas that are more viable are put into



discussion and evidenced in order to sensitize not only bureaucrats, but also public opinion. According to Capella (2018, p. 97, our translation)

individuals who advocate an idea seek to take it to different forums, in an attempt to sensitize not only decision makers, but also the general public, accustoming the audience to proposals and progressively building their acceptance. Thus, ideas are basically disseminated through persuasion mechanisms.

To foster an environment of acceptance of possible choices, we invest in persuasion in order to multiply the awareness of different actors in favor of an alternative, so that it is recognized as viable and legitimate among the set available in the policy soup. Although there is no consensus at the time of choosing between alternatives, the consultation is favored by the "convincing of the legitimacy of the proposal".

In the multi-flow model, the role of the actors in decision-making processes is evidenced. Kingdon points out the visible actors, who, according to Capella (2018, p. 46), "because they receive considerable attention from the press and the public, are pointed out as central to changes in the agenda", citing as an example the head of the executive branch and members of the legislature who, if there is interest, can influence the formulation of the agenda. In addition to the visible actors, there are the so-called invisibles that

have a predominant influence on the generation of alternatives and solutions. This group is composed of public servants, analysts of interest groups, parliamentary advisors, academics, researchers and consultants. Therefore, visible actors have a more influential role in defining the agenda, intensely participating in the flows of problems and politics, which, as we have seen, are responsible for creating opportunities for access to the governmental agenda. Invisible participants, on the other hand, are determinant in the choice of alternatives, acting mainly on the decision agenda (CAPELLA, 2018, p. 46, our translation).

In this group, we highlight public servants, academics, bureaucrats and interest groups. The latter, when cohesive, acts by gathering and representing ideas of people and institutions, which facilitates the articulation and dissemination of their ideas, the power of transit in decision spaces, the adoption of strategies to convince other groups and actors. Of this set of actors, we highlight the public policy entrepreneurs who, in the words of Capella (2018, p. 50, our translation), play a role of articulation between the flows:

One of the main tasks of entrepreneurs is to defend ideas about problems and solutions related to a policy, and much of this activity develops with communities. Entrepreneurs act in structuring the internal debate of communities about possible changes to be introduced in a policy, advocating causation relations between problems and solutions, highlighting aspects of





proposals that are appropriate to their members. In addition, the entrepreneur acts in the connections between a community and other groups, through the establishment of contact with different audiences, the dissemination and experimentation of ideas.

Entrepreneurs invest resources (time, economic capital, legitimacy and symbolic capital) in anticipation of a return. A set of reasons can mobilize the policy entrepreneur, such as individual interests, the continuity or maintenance of a *status quo*, or even the change of a reality from public policy that, as we have already mentioned, involves a set of interpretations about the State (such as the discussion of Minimum State *versus* Strong State). The actors fit into the state structures from state opening pores (SKOCPOL, 1992), that is, through interaction repertoires, strategies and access points available. Thus, they establish relationships, since as an institution the State exercises relative autonomy, not immune to external influences. The groups are organized from the sharing of values and symbols among the members, which are legitimized and are in a constant process of reaffirmation, based on the strategic occupation of spaces.

Bringing this background, from the contribution of the Theory of Multiple Flows, it is worth mentioning that there is research that was concerned with mapping the actors and their respective interests in the formulation of national policy. There are indications, although not yet verified, about the sharing of a vision, a set of interpretations about the State, which is broadly related to neoliberalism linked to a conception of State aligned with perspectives of *New Public Management* (NPM).

It should be mentioned that Rocha (2018, 2020), as well as Miquetti (2020), mapped the actors that influenced the BNCC formulation processes at the national level. The research observes institutions linked to Brazilian entrepreneurs who have invested resources and a certain prestige, giving them the legitimacy of action to undertake with the State, in defense of educational policies that corroborate the assumptions of the World Bank and meet market expectations, according to Tisatto and Bento (2021a). In addition, Tisatto and Bento (2021b) deal with bibliographic and documentary reviews, the actors and antagonisms observed in the political conflict that permeated the construction of the BNCC. These findings corroborate the argument that there was an investment in the formation of a coalition capable of penetrating the Brazilian State, from a movement of political tension and, thus, propose as a solution the implementation of a Reform of the National Curriculum, based on interests and visions shared by interest groups. Moreover, the non-profit foundations linked to business institutions mobilized, forming the aforementioned Movimento pela Base (TARLAU; MOELLER, 2020). The light of Kingdon's theory, the visible actors (CAPELLA, 2018, p. 46), who even disputed



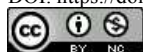
spaces and visions in the formulation of the BNCC, entered the State, fitting into it. Articulated in a political community (CAPELLA, 2018, p. 41) formed by specialists, technical advisors and analysts, they began to articulate, as policy entrepreneurs, their knowledge for reform. Another aspect is the formation of a coalition that articulated with the Union of Municipal Education Leaders (UNDIME) and the National Council of Secretaries of Education (CONSED), investing in meetings and training with educational managers, being at the forefront of these processes the Lemann Foundation. Although Kingdon flagged the media as a not-so-powerful actor, there has been an investment in materials and programs that have contributed to shaping public opinion, as well as teacher training from the so-called D-Day of the Movimento pela Base. In this event, educational networks throughout the country mobilized to train their managers and teachers, through material produced and shared by the Movimento pela Base (MpB).

To illustrate the argument, a former executive secretary of the Ministry of Education pointed out to us in an interview that the Base originally started from debates that brought together different institutions, whose formulation process was representative, in a joint way, of more than 170 institutions, in effective *bottom-up organization*. However, the third version, as even discussed by authors and associations such as ANPEd, was fully revised and adequate to the expectations of those actors who began to gain space in the Ministry, aligning themselves with a policy of results. The interviewee explains that, from the movement of political tension, there was a possibility of openness, under the pretext of a program committed to goals and results,⁵ in order to change the dynamics of policy formulation, including BNCC, which was not yet in evidence on the public agenda.

The third and final flow, called "*political stream*", *presupposes the approach* of the political context: the acceptance of the solution and the feasibility of accepting the proposal, from the diffusion movements carried out in the second stream, the coalitions and political forces articulated in the arena of conflicts, in addition to the national humor. Unlike the second flow, what characterizes this is the need for bargains and negotiations.

Understanding the national mood implies identifying the terrain: a mapping on the feasibility of the proposal, its approval, the available resources and its execution. In addition, Kingdon highlights the political forces and coalitions, emphasizing that when there are interest groups in consensus, mobilizing actors and defending ideas, there is a greater possibility of the proposal being realized, since the interest group presupposes the sharing of visions, ideas and

⁵ Available: <https://www.anped.org.br/news/nota-da-anped-sobre-entrega-da-terceira-versao-da-base-nacional-comum-curricular-bncc-ao>. Access: 12 Jul. 2021

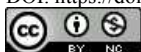




readings of reality. This understanding of the relevance of coalitions explains the association of different institutions founding the Movimento pela Base (MpB). The transit in the spaces of power and the gathering of economic resources, together with the prestige that some of these groups hold, give legitimacy of these great entrepreneurs to the merit and success of their enterprises. Finally, Kingdon still refers to the periodic movements of government alternation and the strategic changes that eventually occur unpredictably. The rupture caused by the political crisis was also observed in the period of formation of the reform agenda under analysis in the Brazilian case, especially leveraged and *accelerated by the political movements of impeachment and exchanges* in ministries.

However, it is observed that the State does not perform its functions autonomously: it is a relative autonomy. In data moments of the course of history open opportunities, especially when the three flows converge, mobilizing the public agenda and ensuring a *window of opportunity (policy windows)*, which arises when the problem is recognized as such, requiring the action of bureaucrats and mobilizing different actors in order to influence and put *solutions on the agendas until then stand by*. Solutions and alternatives to an identified problem are searched in the trash can.

The flow proposed by Kingdon contributes to the elucidation of the process of agenda formation of the case in evidence, the BNCC, whose reform was guided not only by *accountability mechanisms* but also by the entry of other actors and other demands in state discussions. Afonso (2001, 2009), Fernandes and Gremaud (2020) and Schneider (2019) argue that *the accountability process* was one of the argumentative resources employed, responsible for sustaining the mobilization for reforms, used to empirically highlight the supposed need for a new national curriculum policy. Furthermore, the reflection contributes to reinforce that the State is permeable to the demands of segments of civil society, especially when organized and articulated, exerting a certain capacity for pressure and interference in public policies. Another aspect is the fact that there is a discussion to be deepened: the participation of non-state actors, the hybridism of actors (public and private) acting in favor of certain policies and how much the boundaries between public and private are less and less strengthened.





Accountability mechanisms as mobilizers of the reform of the national curriculum policy

Studies on the State have highlighted the universe of interactions on the interactions between society and the State, historically conceived or as a solution, or as an obstacle to economic development. According to the historical reconstitution elaborated by Evans (1993), three major waves mark the state's understanding of society.

The first wave, in the 1950s and 1960s, deals with the failure of the State to promote development, for which the institution understood itself competent. In the 1970s and 1980s, in turn, failures in the fulfillment of agendas fostered the idea of an inefficient, bureaucratic and slow state. Therefore, from the 1980s, Evans proposes a reflection on the new challenges of the State institution, understanding it as a possible articulator of development. The author classifies the States into three models, using real examples for his demonstration. The Brazilian case, of our interest, does not receive "fitting" in any classification. In this period observed by Evans in his analysis of the Brazilian State, identifies the lack of a stable bureaucracy and committed to national organizational and administrative processes. With the need to reduce state spending in the 1980s, the need for policies for adjustments and spending containment arises. This is seen as a window of opportunity for actors interested in the adoption of austerity policies to propose a new state management, centered on policies that have been called "*New Public Management*", or "*New Public Management*", which presupposes the adoption of a *modus operandi* based on management logics developed in the private sector. Thus, the proposal is to transpose management models used in business administration, based on efficiency, effectiveness and effectiveness, to the public context. The challenge was to implement policies with fewer resources (BENTO, 2018; BRESSER PEREIRA, 1998, 2010). According to Bresser Pereira (2010, p. 114, our translation), managerial reforms and the neoliberal state had their emergence in

[...] Great Britain, in the second half of the 1980s, the Managerial Reform of the State - the second major reform of the modern state apparatus, also called the Reform of Public Management. He was inspired by the management strategies of private companies, and his theory was called New Public Management; that is, a series of ideas developed from the late 1980s that sought to make public administrators more autonomous and responsible, and the agencies executing the most decentralized social services.

Bresser Pereira (2010), explains that managerial reform is a consequence of the consolidation of a State in reconstitution in the post-War Period, when social reforms advanced, with an increase in the cost of the State, which eventually led to the need for a managerial reform.





The Management Reform emerges as an administrative consequence of the consolidation of the Social State and at the same time as an instrument and fundamental factor of its legitimacy. The Social State could only be thought of and then established because the bureaucratic public administration provided a minimum of efficiency that made it economically viable. However, as social reforms progress, it became clear that this minimum was insufficient. The increase in the cost of state services imposed the adoption of the Management Reform. This imposition, however, was not only fiscal, but also political. In order for the Social State to remain legitimized in the face of the neoliberal offensive, it was necessary to make its actions substantially more efficient. It was necessary to carry out the Management Reform (BRESSER PEREIRA, 2010, p. 114, our translation).

These reform movements evidenced and aroused discussions about the participation of society in the instances of social participation and control, characteristic of the constitutions of Democratic States, according to Bresser Pereira (1998, 2010). This new interpretation of the State leads to the possibility of managing it from a governance model.⁶ From this new management model from the advancement of democracy as a regime of government of the National States, mechanisms of accountability arise, originally called *accountability*.

Medeiros *et al.* (2013) analyze more than 50 articles produced on *accountability* in Brazil indexed in Scielo. They present the different applications of the concept from the areas of Administration, Public Administration, Social Sciences and Political Science. They identify that, although the concept has received academic attention in Brazil, there is still no consensus in defining it. So much so that a category capable of translating the term into Portuguese was not identified, due to the complexity of processes it covers and includes. In most of the analyzed productions, it translates as accountability and relates to the idea of accountability of the subjects of public administration.

In democratic Brazil, the term *accountability* gains prominence in academic debates, including discussing the function of Regulatory State, generating a set of possible interpretations about it. Thus, the authors sought, in the literature review, to situate the use of

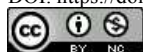
⁶ According to Bento (2017, p. 202, our translation), to qualify this decisive transformation of the modes of action and the role of state agents, it was proposed to replace the term government with the term "governance". It designates a number of processes that are not always logically related, including: reduction of policy control capacities by governments; multiplication and dispersion of decision-making centers on an international, national and local scale; the emergence of norms and rules, drawn up "from below"; permeability of borders between the public and the private; and loss of legitimacy of political actors. In addition, the high cost of measures to be taken and the staff to hire and train, encourages governments to "outsource expenditures", using the staff of associations and the financial resources of municipalities and private agents: praise for volunteering, glorification of initiatives of "civil society", valorization of partnerships, tending to legitimize the reduction of public power in matters in which it should remain active. Thus, the new conception of criteria of excellence in politics, translation of their own professional skills, legitimizes a new style of action and government, more modern and more effective, and more democratic in their eyes.



the concept and its interpretations, consequences of the lack of consensus and the difficulty of translation (CAMPOS, 1990). More informally, any social actor can request accountability, in addition to legitimately constituted institutions that are assumed to perform supervisory functions (MEDEIROS *et al.*, 2013). Abrucio and Loureiro (2004) mention that the theme of *accountability* gains greater prominence in state reforms, in order to organize instruments and mechanisms for accountability and accountability. This reinforces the evaluation processes and the use of indicators on the efficiency of services offered to citizens by the State, according to Medeiros *et al.* (2013, p. 748, our translation):

The public administrator is seen as an entrepreneur, *being accountable* in terms of efficiency, costs and responsiveness to market forces. It is in the New Public Service that the concept of *accountability takes up* the realms of citizenship and public interest.

Given this context of state with other functions, it is necessary, for our discussion, to seek to conceptualize and clarify the *concept of accountability*, since we made an effort to present, even in a brief way, the context in which it was discussed and in which it has greater applicability. For a conceptual clarification, Arantes *et al.* (2010, p. 111), understands that *accountability* refers to "different types of institutional controls that can be triggered during the exercise of mandates, through which accountability or political accountability of the rulers are sought." Abrucio and Loureiro (2004) believe that they are institutional mechanisms by which "rulers are constrained to respond". O'Donnell (1989, p. 28), presents another concept, defining as "actions carried out, individually or by some kind of organized and collective action, with reference to those who occupy positions in state institutions, elected or not". Thus, what we propose to discuss in this section is how the mechanisms of "*accountability*" or *accountability*, designed especially for monitoring the impact of public policies, also have the function of mobilizing new policies, based on what Kingdon categorized as indicators and evaluation of public policies. In the case of educational policies, large-scale assessments are proposed by certain organizations, based on data collection and indicators, based on standardized evaluation, such as PISA, which assesses knowledge in language, mathematics and natural sciences. In the 2017-2018 reforms that discussed the national curriculum and proposed a new policy, the use of indicators products from external evaluations, in a way mobilized the debate and reached public opinion. After all, based on the data presented by the indicators resulting from evaluations, public education in Brazil would need to be reformed. There was consensus on the need for change. However, antagonisms and tensions were established seeking to discuss this reform, produced with strong intervention by actors of interest groups. Large-scale evaluations,

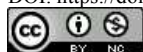




in a way, were relevant in the construction of discourses and in the mobilization of public opinion, including the Movimento pela Base, which disseminated the idea of reform based on the results of evaluations and indicators. Reported without any contextualization (times, inequalities, regional variations, conditions of access and quality of the education offered), sustaining the creation of a public problem, occupying the window of opportunity and mobilizing reforms from their ideologies, deserve to deepen in the next section.

The impact of indicators - *accountability* in policy formulation: BNCC and the plugins

The concept of *accountability* has gained the educational field. In scientific and association meetings such as the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Public Administration (ANPAD) and the National Association of Policy and School Administration (ANPAE), which deal with educational policies, discussions about the centrality of the *concept of accountability in the formulation of policies* in the area have had greater evidence, allied to a policy of accountability of implementing or working subjects at the street level, such as teachers, school managers and specialists in the field. The economic logic and the new public management, seeking for efficiency, effectiveness and effectiveness, incorporating logics of business administration to the State, has contributed to the emergence of new instances of control of public education. In the case of BNCC, which had the leading role of institutions of private interest, the logic of corporate governance has stood out even more. The large-scale evaluation, observance of the indicators that supposedly translate the "educational quality", meet what Marinho (2019) and Sahlberg (2018) call as the infectious "*Germ*" that enters the field of education. The authors refer to the *Global Education Movement Reform*, a global educational reform movement that is widely advocated by International Organizations such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, World Bank (OECD), establishing global education policies that dictate, including, the formation of curricula, committed to the "good results of management". Pacheco (2019) has also been discussing *global reforms and the accountability process*, employing the category to explain the processes and how they impact not only on policies, but on the daily lives of teachers and schools, since one of the assumptions is that of **accountability**, both for failures and for successes, attributed from goals and based on ranking from the mechanisms of classification and hierarchization of networks and their schools. Freitas (2018) also deals with the "business reforms of public education", discussing management processes based on concrete examples such as the case of Chile and the *implementation of vouchers*, concomitant with the weakening





of the public education system. The authors mentioned show how much the logic of competition, defended by interest groups such as the Movimento pela Base, has been established in public education.

The expansion of evaluation systems, implemented in 1990 as a result of the state reform movement, implies the standardization of educational processes and policies to measure results. Replicating a global agenda, this reform presupposes the homogeneity and concurrency of policies, from then committed to goals (BALL, 2004; CORAGGIO, 2007). The standardization of tests and the advancement of ranking programs allied to the accountability of the subjects are strategies of this new *modus operandi*. Pacheco (2019, n.p.) warns about a management and policy-making model focused on results, with effects on the existence of a culture of evaluation and accountability and accountability, which he calls a "global governance" process, which seeks "a high degree of uniformity". According to the author, the school becomes "marked by competition". The author uses the studies of Michel Foucault by exposing that

Governmentality is a process of control of individuals whose procedures guarantee the State the mission of intervening in education as a way of valuing human capital, to the extent that *homo economicus* is a businessman, a businessman of his kind (PACHECO, 2019, n.p., our translation).

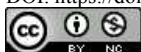
Pacheco (2019) writes agreeing with the alerts of Almerindo Janela, which associates *accountability* and the new management of education with three items: evaluation, accountability and accountability. Educational reforms are the result of these processes. The BNCC presupposes a policy criticized for weakening teacher autonomy, constituting the evaluation by measurement: this objective, however, is only made possible by the standardization of political-pedagogical processes. Another aspect is that the political opportunity around the BNCC is intensified with the adoption of a discourse of "school failure" based on the indicators of external evaluations. And also, accountability: after all, who will be held responsible for the unsatisfactory results of non-learning? Therefore, building reforms that standardize, standardize and aim at meeting goals and codes that translate learning is emblematic of a technical-bureaucrat state. This model reduces the teaching function to the exercise of bureaucracy, based on a reproductive and instructional idea of education (PACHECO, 2019). Thus, the interests of the business community, who bet on a training committed to human capital since Basic Education, presuppose the adoption of these new paradigms of education management and mobilize themselves in order to influence the national curriculum. Afonso (2009) points out that, in education, not everything is measurable, even if we should not disregard the evaluation processes. The author warns that the evaluation needs





to be about feedback, gather and articulate appropriate solution proposals and that consider the context in which the data were produced and the action of the State, in order to revisit the educational processes that lead to this scenario. When we deal with accountability or culpability, the State adopts management strategies to omit itself, attributing to street-level bureaucrats the responsibility for the results, building a purely regulatory state idea. Behind some political projects, the discussion that is in the background is the unaccountability of the State, which "outsources" its commitment to join collective efforts in favor of quality public education beyond the numbers and indicators.

This set of strategies, resulting from a new public management, imposes on the educational agenda aspects of governance, through principles of management administration. This perspective associates some assumptions such as the accountability of the subjects and the responsibility of the State, allied to management processes anchored in the technique, seeking to delegitimize politics as the center of conflict and the possibility of participation, building a technocracy, a government of specialists and those legitimized by capital, to the detriment of the vote or mechanisms of participation that elect representatives. This is, in some way, what was named as "good governance" by Bento (2018), emphasizing The NPM as a management model, which is based on the theory of human capital, betting on education as an instrument at the service of increasing economic productivity. In the process of expanding this logic of governance, the public agenda is influenced by multilateral organizations. These, in turn, build an agenda and a conception of educational policies committed and evaluated from optimization of results, with fewer resources, reducing the effectiveness of the school to a single evaluation mechanism. This discussion evokes the problem of the autonomy of national states in relation to these multilateral agencies, which has financial resources to subsidize credits to be applied in the different segments of public administration. The States, especially those most dependent on the conditioning and "suggestions" of policies offered by these organizations, ensuring the possibility of requesting credit from these agencies, generating a relationship of dependence on these mechanisms that formulate international guidelines, which end up dictating, for example, reforms and other policies, always based on NGP models. Hence, it becomes almost an obligation of economically dependent countries to adopt and *provide accountability*, based on evaluation mechanisms such as PISA, adopting policies aligned with the OECD, the World Bank and various multilateral bodies (SCHNEIDER, 2019). In the specific case of BNCC, private actors, as demonstrated by different studies (CORRÊA; MORGADO, 2019; MICHETTI, 2020; PERONI, 2020; PERONI; CAETANO, 2020; ROCHA; PEREIRA, 2018) believe in the need for a lean and less bureaucratic state. As Bernardi *et al.* (2018, p. 361, our





translation), "the argument of state inefficiency has been used to justify the need for entrepreneurs to intervene in social issues and at the same time to give visibility to the 'saving proposals' recommended by the private sector". Thus, the search for a state more efficient and capable of valuing human capital is committed to policies based on the discourse that investment in education from policies proposed by international organizations will revert to economic development. This presupposes the control and management of the systems, having the evaluation – the product, as a surveillance mechanism. The idea of cost *versus* benefit is highlighted, especially by interest groups. Magalhães Lima (2014, p. 07, our translation) highlights that:

In the Latin American context there is evidence that educational reforms focused on performance evaluation, match-making, ranking, and accountability were inspired by the pioneering reforms undertaken by Margaret Thatcher in England and Ronald Reagan in the United States. Both, widely disseminated by international organizations and included in their agendas were implemented in the 1980s with the aim of restructuring the State and its apparatus, improving school results and the quality of education in those countries

When interest groups enter the space of the State, as we demonstrate from Kingdon, identifying window of opportunity, it is remarkable that there is a confluence and a sharing of values, symbols and ideologies. In the case of the BNCC, the Movimento pela Base demonstrated articulation capable of occupying decision spaces and seeking to build in the field, from webs and relationships, a political agenda according to the interests they defend, under the argument of improving the quality of education. The actors of the business world transpose the ideas of business management and bet on depoliticization and technical rationality, in addition to success and success in their enterprises, which guarantees them transit and a certain legitimacy, supposedly promoting good policy. In a context of stigmatization of politics, being attributed to it the stigma of "archaic and pathological" (BENTO, 2018), there is a reinforcement in the accreditation of new subjects, previously invisible, but articulated in groups, recognized by other attributes, hitherto external to political logic, as legitimate subjects to present better solutions to the crisis of public administrations (BENTO, 2018).

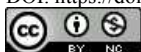
There is a research movement, to which I include myself, on the interests of these groups and agents in the State and, therefore, in public policies. Since their interests may sometimes not correspond to the public interest acting under the discourse that politics is "disqualified and delayed" (BENTO, 2018, p. 110), even if they confuse, what has always marked the country, the borders between the public and the private.



The notes presented corroborate the association of business movements acting in educational policies, with the management established by *New Public Management*, rescuing a Management State, which credits new actors with legitimacy to act, using the capital available to formulate policies. The question still to be answered, about how these actors and groups enter the State and influence the formation of the agenda, requires us to rescue the contribution of Skocpol (1992), about how they fit into the structure of the State. In addition, Clemens (2010), referring to the multiple models of organization appropriate to certain purposes, collaborates in the understanding that articulated groups of social actors interfere in the autonomy of the State, contributing from interactions that allow their values and ideas to permeate the action of the State. From the contribution of Theda Skocpol (1992), the intention needs to be directed to the interest groups: the Movimento pela Base, when identifying the convergence of flows (KINGDON, 1984) bets on the access points to enter the state structure, resembling a Swiss cheese, now open to some and now closed, depending on who occupies the State. The autonomy of this, then, is measured from the openness to some groups and alliances that operate according to the program of government and its ideologies. The actors and groups access the State from the mechanisms and opportunities that the institutions offer, according to the time and the interactions built. We observed that, in the history of the Brazilian State, social movements began to occupy strategic spaces from the Lula Government (PT, which stands for Workers' Party). However, recent actions to restructure the participatory bodies caused the Social Movements to lose space in councils and other docking structures.

Skocpol (1992), in his analysis of the U.S. case, clarifies that well-resourced and organized groups such as companies have greater power of influence to delay the agenda. The same occurs in order to placate new problems to be discussed. In a way, this explains the alliances between great entrepreneurs who have gathered around a Movement for the Base. The MpB invested in different ways, spreading its interests by *modus operandi* itself, building a public problem from indicators in order to articulate a flow of solutions. The organizational movement, the result of alliances and the formation of a coalition (SIMIELLI, 2013) acted in education based on strategies and alliances (FERREIRA; SANTOS, 2020), already having solutions to the problem announced, acting with "discipline and consistent purposes" (SKOCPOL, 1992, p. 12, our translation).

Bernardi *et al.* (2018) present the repertoires and interactions to unsee how education entrepreneurs act, from a study on Todos Pela Educação, which composes the MpB. Alert the authors to the project of society under dispute in which the greatest concern is with the production of a new sociability, more appropriate to the private interests of large national and





international capitals. The authors point out about the confusion already punctuated by José Murilo de Carvalho, that there is no distinction between public and private interests throughout the country's history. Thus the "entrepreneurs [...] they guide the governmental agenda: reaffirm the role of the State, redefining its functions and, however, the meaning and meaning of public education" (BERNARDI *et al.*, 2018, p. 359, our translation).

Final considerations

The aim of this article was to analyze the formation of the reform agenda that culminated in the approval of BNCC, the new national curriculum policy. Under a controversial context and permeated by evident disputes, we sought to frame some aspects of how the BNCC enters the public agenda, from the indicators of educational policies, interpreted by interest groups that, observing a window of opportunity, intended to influence the formulation, in order to highlight its values and objectives, articulating resources and sewing alliances that allowed the formation of a coalition that, in a way, played a relevant and decisive role in policies. There is a set of works that illustrate the interests, tangles of woven yarns and networks of actors that proposed to discuss the country's curriculum, among them academic associations, groups of private institutions, which, with their resources and a certain legitimacy conferred by the idea of merit, ended up placating and occupying important spaces of decision. Thus, the role of *accountability* had other meanings: it goes from an evaluation criterion to a position that composes arguments for the formulation of new policies, having a relevant role in the formation of the public agenda in the educational field. Unlike some more simplistic perspectives, *accountability involves an ethical dimension of managing*, which refers to the set of procedures and the culture of accountability, developing transparency and contributing to the consolidation of the democratic regime.

Understanding these processes is relevant to the extent that, with the advance of the *Neoliberal State and new public management*, it is increasingly observed the advancement of institutions linked to entrepreneurs, occupying decision spaces and proposing policies based on the values that guide their actions. The challenge for democracy is that the State is able to mediate interests, given what is expected of it, based on constitutional mechanisms.

Thus, public policy theories can contribute, since a lack of analysis of policies that consider the state and the framework constructed in the Social Sciences was identified by the literature review, which would provide opportunities for other analytical approaches and resources. Kingdon's theory and the process of conceptual definition of *accountability* still



expanding in the context of state reforms are of paramount importance to understand the nuances and crossings in the formation of public policy agenda.

It is observed that new agents have occupied the arena and influenced the actions of the Brazilian State, from the formation of coalitions and alliances that change the image of policies and seek to establish disputes around public policies. The State has relative autonomy and, therefore, suffers the influences of interest groups, having as a challenge to reconcile so that the collective overlaps and public policies stand out in relation to private interests. State and capital are redefining their roles, rebalancing forces to ensure constitutional assumptions. Moreover, we emphasize that there is also a tangle of “tissue” to be revealed from the mapping of interests and values disputed by the country's business elites, who have been raising debates about education as a public good and its content being at the service of the common, as presupposes a republic. Thus, the boundaries between the public and the private are still blurred; therefore, we lack reflections on force relations, definition of spaces and the mapping of interactions between society, state and market. Finally, an analysis of established social networks that were of vital importance for intervention in the agenda by interest groups still deserves to be developed.

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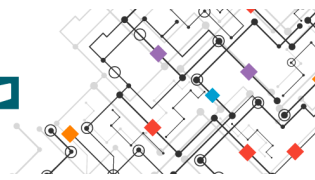
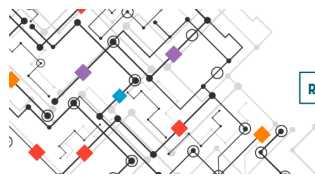
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How to reference this article

TISATTO, C. A. Veiled transparencies: The economic uses of learning assessment systems in education policies. **Revista @mbienteeducaçãO**, São Paulo, v. 14, n. 00, e022006, 2022. e-ISSN: 1982-8632. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26843/ae.v15i00.1080>

Submitted: 13/10/2021

Revisions required: 02/04/2022

Approved: 26/05/2022

Published: 01/06/2022

Processing and publication by the Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.

Correction, formatting, standardization and translation.