



# Challenges of interstate dissemination of educational policies in the Brazilian Federation

## *Desafíos de la difusión interestatal de políticas educativas en la Federación Brasileña*

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**Received on:** 2024-05-25 / **Revised on:** 2024-12-13 / **Accepted on:** 2024-12-16 / **Published on:** 2025-01-01

### Abstract

Based on the scenario of a low degree of national coordination in the educational policy of the Brazilian federation, the article aims to identify and discuss the challenges, mechanisms and contexts that motivated, in 2016, the decision by the government of Espírito Santo to adopt and institutionalize the Pact for Learning (PAES) inspired by the collaborative regime program of the state of Ceará. To achieve the proposed objective, this case study was based on exploratory research with qualitative bibliographic and documentary studies, linked to the concept of public policy diffusion. The results showed that the adoption of the program was consolidated through cooperation and learning mechanisms and that the policy adopted had, in its conception, a certain structural rigidity that disregarded local contexts and factors. The discussions emphasized the central role played by the National Council of Education Secretaries and third sector institutions in fostering a network of horizontal interaction that encouraged the spread of ideas and successful public policy models. It was concluded that the adoption of the program was an isolated government decision and that social protagonism was not taken into account in the policy formulation and construction stages. Finally, it was inferred that the lack of a National Education System compromises articulation and cooperation between education systems.

**Keywords:** federalism, educational policy, articulation of education, educational innovation, educational cooperation, education coordination.

### Resumen

Partiendo del escenario de un bajo grado de coordinación nacional en la política educativa de la federación brasileña, el artículo tiene como objetivo identificar y discutir los desafíos, mecanismos y contextos que motivaron, en 2016, la decisión del gobierno de Espírito Santo de adoptar e institucionalizar el Pacto por el Aprendizaje (PAES) inspirado en el programa esquema de colaboración en el estado de Ceará. Para lograr el objetivo propuesto, este estudio de caso se basó en una investigación exploratoria con estudios bibliográficos y documentales cualitativos, vinculados al concepto de difusión de políticas públicas. Los resultados mostraron que la adopción del programa se consolidó a través de mecanismos de cooperación y aprendizaje y que la política adoptada tuvo, en su concepción, cierta rigidez estructural que desconocía los contextos y factores locales. Las discusiones enfatizaron el papel central desempeñado por el Consejo Nacional de Secretarios de Educación y las instituciones del tercer sector en el fomento de una red de interacción horizontal que estimuló la propagación de ideas y modelos exitosos de políticas públicas. Se concluyó que la adopción del programa fue una decisión gubernamental aislada y que el protagonismo social no fue considerado en las etapas de formulación y construcción de políticas y, finalmente, se infirió que la falta de un Sistema Educativo Nacional compromete la articulación y cooperación entre la educación. sistemas.

**Palabras clave:** federalismo, política educativa, articulación de la educación, innovación educativa, cooperación educativa, coordinación de educación.

## 1. Introduction

Cooperation between federated entities is considered challenging for National States that are structured according to the federative model, since it requires highly complex political-institutional engineering to promote integration between the federal government and subnational entities and between subnational governments among themselves, which takes into account the fundamental constitutional principles of democracy and autonomy. In addition, in the case of Brazilian education, this complexity increases due to the active and accentuated involvement of non-state actors in the conception, implementation and structuring phases of public policies in recent years.

As for Brazil's federative system and the responsibilities of each level of government, the 1988 Federal Constitution of the Citizen presented important novelties. Among the main features are the strong decentralizing guidelines in favor of municipal governments and the overlap of common powers and competences (Araujo, 2010) requiring effective coordination to achieve common objectives (Abrucio & Segatto, 2016). This joint action is detailed in Article 23, which deals with the common competences of the federated entities, in Article 211 which prescribes the regime of collaboration between educational systems and in Article 214, which deals with the creation of the National Education System (SNE) through the implementation of the National Education Plan (PNE). However, the common competences in education, the collaboration regime and the SNE are not constitutionally regulated and the PNE (2014-2024) saw most of its objectives breached, due to budgetary restrictions resulting from the approval of the Constitutional Amendment 95, in 2016, limiting public spending for 20 years.

The Pact for Learning in Espírito Santo (PAES) was institutionalized, as a public policy, in March 2017, through Law No. 10.637, with the objective of developing, in collaboration with municipal networks, strategies to increase the learning indicators of students of basic education, initial years, in Espírito Santo, with emphasis on reading, writing and numbering. To this end, the program provides municipalities with technical, pedagogical, structural, administrative-financial and management support (Espírito Santo, 2017). The program that inspired

and triggered the process of creating the PAES was the Right Age Literacy Program (PAIC), a public policy of educational collaboration established in 2007 by the government of Ceará.

Through this case study, we seek to understand how the low degree of national coordination in educational policy opened opportunities for the dissemination of policies between Ceará and Espírito Santo and to what extent the confluence of these factors led, from the interactions to the implementation of the Espírito Santo Pact Proposal.

From this scenario, we believe that the studies on the challenges in the process of diffusion of models in Brazilian federalism are relevant and, using the theoretical contributions of Farah (2006 and 2008), Abrucio et al. (2016) and Segatto et al. (2023), this article describes and analyzes the set of factors and dimensions that led, in 2016, to the decision to institutionalize the Pact for Learning, and promoted changes in the policy of collaboration in the State of Espírito Santo, going from specific and limited actions to a more institutionalized and systematized coordination.

Farah (2008) argues that the dynamics of diffusion or propagation of policies initially requires a discussion on the definition of best practices and innovation, which are fundamental elements of diffusion process theory. Unlike replication, which suggests a mere reproduction of models, diffusion implies a horizontality that entails an active choice and the adoption of innovative ideas and practices by the recipient entity. Segatto et al. (2023) record a peculiarity inherent to education policy in the context of Brazilian federalism. In education, compared to social assistance and health policies, there is a low degree of national coordination, consolidating it as a decentralized policy, giving states and municipalities reasonable autonomy in decision-making, providing space for the dissemination of policies. The truth is that the federative units are characterized by having autonomy in decision-making and this implies that they can both implement innovative policies and also promote the dissemination of these initiatives, as "recipients" or "providers" of educational programs and actions in their territories.

Considering that the PAES was the result of a policy dissemination process between Ceará and Espírito Santo, the article will cover the current factors and challenges of horizontal dissemination,

between states, addressing not only aspects of federalism and institutional factors, but also deepening the discussion on the role of actors and ideas in this process and to what extent the low degree of national coordination in educational policy affected this interstate dissemination process.

In addition to this introduction, the article is divided into four sections. The first addresses the organization of Brazil and the state of Espírito Santo in its political-administrative, geographical and educational aspects to situate the analyzed context. The second is about the methodology used to carry out the research that gave rise to this article. In the third part, the results were presented on the identification of the factors and dimensions present in the interstate dissemination of the collaboration program in literacy between Ceará and Espírito Santo and, finally, the discussions and conclusions exposed the various elements, facilitators and obstacles present in this process of adopting horizontal policies.

## 1.1 Political-administrative, geographical and educational organization of Brazil and Espírito Santo

Brazil is characterized by having an ethnically and culturally diverse population. With a land area of approximately 8.5 million km<sup>2</sup>, the country is the largest in South America and the fifth largest in the world. Administratively, Brazil is divided into five macro-regions: North, Northeast, Southeast, South and Center-West. The political-administrative organization of the Brazilian state adopts the federative system, where power is shared and distributed among autonomous and interdependent political entities. The country, sovereign and independent, consists of 26 states and the Federal District, which houses the capital. The 1988 Constitution extended the competences of member states and gave a prominent role to the 5568 municipalities, which were elevated to the category of federated entities with their own legislation, although subordinate to federal laws. Figure 1 illustrates the political-administrative division of Brazil.

**Figure 1.** Political-administrative division of Brazil



One of the essential characteristics of the Brazilian state, protected in article 1 of the Federal Constitution of 1988, is its indissolubility. This implies that the unity between the Union, the States, the Federal District and the Municipalities sealed by the federative pact is immutable and cannot be undone by a unilateral decision. This guarantee promotes the stability and legal security of both the population and the entities of the federation, while guaranteeing the autonomy and representativeness of each political unit in the Brazilian State.

In Brazil, education is a fundamental social right and is governed by the precepts contained in the Federal Constitution (articles 205 to 214).

Education in Brazil is compulsory and free for children and young people between 4 and 17 years old. The Education Guidelines and Bases Act (LDB) guarantees a structure for the Brazilian education system, dividing it into basic education and higher education. Basic education includes early childhood education (nursery and pre-school), primary education and secondary education. In terms of responsibilities, municipalities are primarily responsible for early childhood education and primary education. States are responsible for providing primary and secondary education, while the Union is responsible for higher education.

**Figure 2.** Political-administrative division of the State of Espírito Santo



Note. <https://bit.ly/4goK6dI>

The state of Espírito Santo has an area of approximately 46.5 thousand km<sup>2</sup> and a population of approximately 4.1 million inhabitants. Geographically it is located in the Southeast Region of the country. Administratively, the state is composed of 78 municipalities, as illustrated in Figure 2. The capital of Espírito Santo is the city of Vitória. The length of the coast is 400 km and the climate is humid tropical. The economy is based mainly on industry and agriculture, with coffee production standing out. The government of Espírito Santo, aligned with the federal structure, is composed of the Executive Branch, headed by the governor, the Legislative Branch, made up of 30 state deputies, and the Judicial Branch, with its various organizational instances of justice.

In relation to the educational organization of Espírito Santo, the School Census (2023) indicated that the State has 3019 schools of Basic Education, of which 2659 are public (QEdu, 2023). These schools, distributed in 78 municipalities, offer Early Childhood Education, Primary Education in the initial and final years, Baccalaureate, as well as Professional Education, Youth and Adult Education and Special Education. The Census yielded a total of 870,274 Basic Education enrollments, of which 86.47 % are on the public network. Early childhood education is basically guaranteed by municipal networks (91.6 %) and partly by private networks (8.4 %). The Census showed that only 37.7 per cent of children aged 0-3 have access to day care. With regard to preschool, it was observed that 96.1 per cent of children aged 4-5 years are enrolled in municipal public schools. Of primary school enrollments, ages 6 to 14, the Census revealed that 18.5 % are in state networks, 68.7 % in municipal networks and 13.4 % in private networks. In secondary education, the state-owned public network accounts for 82.3 % of

enrollment, the federal network for 7 %, and the private network for 11 % on average.

## 2. Methodology

An essentially qualitative approach was adopted, considered the most appropriate to understand the educational contexts involved in the Covenant for Learning. This is exploratory research, and the research technique was the case study. This research can also be defined as descriptive analytics (Gil, 2002), including the observation, analysis and recording of the determining elements in the dissemination process and in the construction of educational policy in the State of Espírito Santo.

As data collection procedures, in order to meet the objective of this study, a bibliographic research was adopted that involved a set of written materials, secondary sources, with information elaborated and published by other authors in scientific articles, theses and dissertations (Rosa et al., 2018); based on primary sources derived from information extracted from official documents such as management reports, legislation and regulations that allowed capturing different perspectives on the collaboration program.

The structuring of content and information processing were carried out in the light of Bardin's proposal (1970). In the material research phase, the contents were categorized, which were organized in two lines that structure the article: 1) documents and texts that addressed the process of dissemination of the policy in Espírito Santo; 2) documents that described the initial phase of implementation of the program. The next step involved a more detailed reading of the documentation to identify the presence of challenging contexts in the interstate dissemination process. The following table shows the legislation analyzed.

**Table 1.** *Legal frameworks of the PAES*

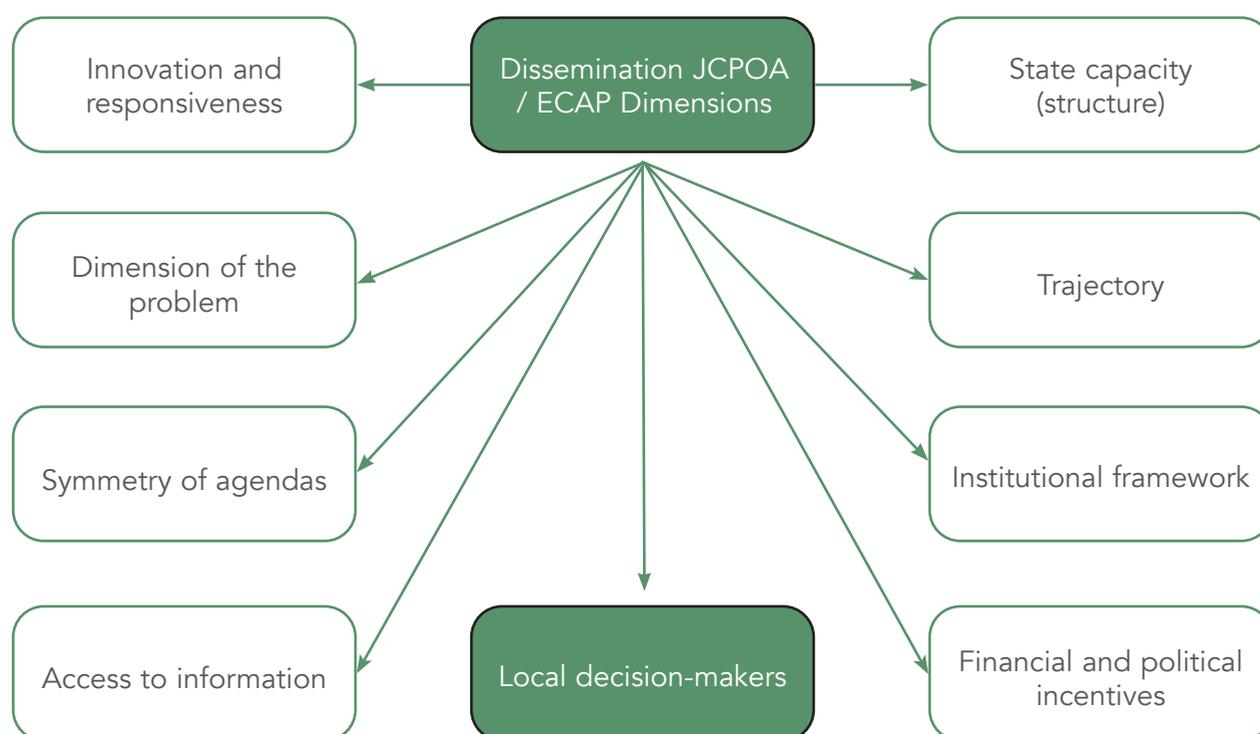
Legal device	Objective
Law No. 10.631/2017 of 28/03/2017	It establishes the Covenant for the Learning of Espírito Santo.
Ordinance No. 152-R/2017 of 01/11/2017	It constitutes the Executive Committee of the PAES.
Law No. 10.787/2017 of 19/12/2017	FUNPAES – State Fund to Support the Expansion and Improvement of the Conditions of Offering Early Childhood Education and Primary Education in Espírito Santo.
Decree n°4.217-R of 08/02/2017	It regulates FUNPAES.
Law No. 10.880/2018 of 19/07/2018	It establishes the Municipal Coordinator of Actions of the PAES, the Collaborating School Award and the Granting of Scholarships.

Legal device	Objective
Decree No. 4.346-R/2018 of 31/12/2018	It regulates the Scholarship Program.
Decree No. 4.347-R/2018 of 28/12/2018	It creates the Advisory Board of the PAES.
Ordinance No. 090-R of 11/10/2019	It restructures the functioning of SREs.
Law No. 11.227/2020 of 30/12/2020	It establishes the educational ICMS.
Law nº 11.257 of 30/04/2021	It amends Law No. 10,787 FUNPAES.
Decree No. 4.907-R of 16/06/2021	It regulates the new legislation of FUNPAES.
Law No. 11.378/2021 of 31/08/2021	It introduces amendments to Law No. 11.227 relating to the New ICMS.
Decree No. 5.410-R/2023	It regulates the Collaborating School Award.
Ordinance No. 121-R/2022 of 31/05/2022	It establishes the Regional Centers of the Pact for Learning in Espírito Santo – NUPAES.
Law No 5.474/1996	It establishes the State Municipalization Program.
Ordinance No. 090-R/2022 of 14/04/2022	It restructures the functioning of SREs.
Decree No. 5.332-R of 13/03/2023	It changes the organizational structure of the SEDU.

In this way, the analysis understood not only the institutional factors and contexts, but also the ideas that were articulated and validated from the interactions between them. The factors considered and addressed in the analysis of the JCPOA diffusion process involved: a) the elements of innovation and their potential to provide answers, b) the nature of the problem to be overcome, c) the convergence

with the agenda of different contexts, d) access to information, e) the choice of innovations by the agents of the decision-making bodies in the receiving places, f) the political and financial incentives, g) the national and local institutional framework, h) the dependence of the trajectory and i) the structural characteristics of the receiving locality, as shown in the following diagram.

**Figure 3.** Dimensions analyzed in the dissemination process of the JCPOA/SEAP



### 3. Results

The results were organized considering the factors and dimensions that contributed, or not, to the viability and implementation of the dissemination of the Cearan educational collaboration policy with a focus on the literacy cycle of children at the appropriate age. The avant-garde character of the Ceará program and the good results achieved made the JCPOA a successful alternative to mitigate the challenges of literacy learning, so its adoption was considered by the Government of Espírito Santo, as it also faced similar challenges related to learning indicators and educational level.

#### 3.1 Ability to provide answers

In discussing the intrinsic characteristics of innovation, Farah (2006) highlights that the characteristics of an innovative policy, in terms of its responsiveness and its effectiveness in mitigating management challenges, contribute significantly to its diffusion and adoption by other entities.

The pioneering nature of the Cearan program is explained by the fact that it is, in the country, the first institutionalized program of collaboration between States and municipalities, Law No. 14.026, of 17/12/07 (Ceará, 2007). The focus of the JCPOA/Ceará is literacy for all children up to the second year through systemic actions coordinated with municipalities. Improving educational indicators in Primary Education is a common challenge for all states. One of the aspects that characterized the Cearan collaboration regime was the structuring of participatory governance with actors and forms of integration between the State and the municipalities.

The positive results achieved by JCPOA/Ceará made it an alternative to be considered by other states. According to data from the Permanent System for the Evaluation of Basic Education (SPAECE) in Ceará in 2017, 88.2 % of students in the second year of Primary Education reached the desirable level of literacy, a significant increase compared to 39.9 % in 2007. Corroborating these data, in 2017, the National Institute of Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) highlighted that 77 Cearan public schools were among the 100 best in Brazil (Faheina, 2018).

#### 3.2 Problems and challenges of the same nature

Another relevant dimension relates to the nature of the challenge that innovation must overcome. If common elsewhere, innovation becomes potentially considered (Paulics, 2003; Farah, 2006). Ceará lived with low learning indicators (Brazil, 2005) and a lack of more structured collaboration between the State and municipalities. Historically, Ceará has always been below the national average in the indexes that measure the quality of education (Faheina, 2018).

Espírito Santo's challenge in 2017, similar to Ceará's in 2007, was to raise education levels fairly, improving competition rates, and eradicating illiteracy. The modest performance of the public education network of Espírito Santo in 2015 can be seen when analyzing the national results: tenth place in the country in primary 1; 12th place among the states of the federation in Fundamental 2, with 0.6 points below the established goal; the approval flow at the appropriate age in Primary School was 79 % and attendance at day care from 0 to 3 years was 32 % of children, a percentage lower than the target set by the National Education Plan of 50 % (PNAD/IBGE, 2015).

Regarding the degree of collaboration between the State and the municipalities, education in Espírito Santo was among the states that developed specific "joint actions", without institutionalization and with weak assistance (Segatto, 2015). As in Ceará, the lack of institutionalization of the policy of collaboration between the state and the municipalities and the low indicators of educational learning motivated the creation of the PAES in Espírito Santo.

#### 3.3 Convergence of public policy agendas in different territories

Simply identifying similar challenges is not enough for policy diffusion to occur. Innovation will make more sense if the challenges it addresses are truly relevant and require an effective solution and innovative response (Fuks, 2000). The characteristics of innovations must converge with the agendas and contexts of the localities receiving the innovative policy, since the mismatch between them causes their diffusion to lose interest, does not respond

to a social and political priority of the local entity and mobilizes resources without compensation of the expected result. Ultimately, innovation must be linked to priority needs, considered as an object of the government's agenda and action (Farah, 2008). Ceará's innovative policy responds to the context and agenda of the Espírito Santo government: reduced institutionalization of cooperative actions and challenging learning outcomes. Law No. 13,005 of 2014 (Brazil, 2014) strengthened collaboration between the federal entities as a central strategy for the achievement of educational objectives. This discussion was strengthened in the states and municipalities when their respective state and municipal plans were approved and contributed to the inclusion of the Pact for Learning in the decision-making agenda of government actors in Espírito Santo.

### 3.4 Access to information

According to Segatto et al. (2023), knowledge through events and publications leads to the creation of interconnected networks of entrepreneurs that operate in the proposal and dissemination of certain innovative actions and programs. Shipan and Volden (2012), in explaining diffusion processes, point to different factors, in particular the role of ideas and networks and their respective intersections. The wide range of scientific studies on Sobral's experience, the JCPOA and its influence on the creation of the National Program for Literacy in the Right Age (PNAIC), contributed to the dissemination of important information and data about the program. (Brazil, 2005; Costa & Carnoy, 2015; Costa, 2016; Cruz et al., 2020; Marques et al., 2009; Sumiya, 2015; Fonseca, 2013; Sumiya et al., 2017; Ribeiro, 2011).

In this context, the space of the National Council of Secretaries of State for Education (CONSED), as a network for the circulation of multiple actors, was fundamental to the process of appropriation of information on the collaboration policy of the JCPOA by the political actors of Espírito Santo. Regarding the role of Consed, Segatto et al. (2023) draw attention to this articulating and mobilizing position, which has allowed the horizontal dissemination of public policies considered successful among states, such as the institutionalization of collaboration programs between state and municipal governments. The Secretary of Education

of Espírito Santo had a wide presence in the community of public educational policies, either for his position and performance in the Secretariat of Education of the State (SEDU) or for his leading role as vice president of the Consed.

It is worth noting that in the process of horizontal dissemination of policies among states, following the example of the successful experience of Ceará, the third sector played a central role: either as a lobby group, producing knowledge and promoting complex issues, or as support for the implementation of innovations, as in the case of PAES, which led to the formalization of a Technical Cooperation Agreement between the SEDU and the Natura, Lemann and Associação Bem Comum institutes. The Collaborating Movement, the Inter-American Development Bank and Espírito Santo em Ação, an institution representing the business fabric of Espírito Santo that has education as a priority, were also present in this decision-making and implementation process.

### 3.5 Action by local social actors and internal politicians

In addition to the conditions mentioned above, the process of disseminating innovations in the public sphere highlights the activism and action of social and political actors. They act influencing, in the recipient places, the diffusion process aimed at the incorporation of a certain innovation or its rejection (Kingdon, 2011; Evans, 2009). It is necessary to take into account the position of the citizen when planning his territory. This is a legitimate right and not just a political desire (Buele Nugra & Vidueira Mera, 2018).

In this regard, it is noted that the process of conception and institutionalization of the PAES did not present the unique elements observed in the process of creation of the Ceará program in 2007. The conception of the JCPOA resulted from extensive debate, including seminars and public meetings, hearings, conducted by the Legislative Assembly through a multi-representative committee focused on the eradication of illiteracy in Ceará. This process, initiated in 2004, involved several institutions, such as the United Nations Children's Fund, the Association of Municipalities of Ceará, the Union of Municipal Directors of Education of Ceará, the State University of Ceará, the Federal University of

Ceará, the University of Vale do Acaraú, the Regional University of Cariri and the University of Fortaleza (Costa, 2016).

In Espírito Santo, the rapid process between the decision to include it on the agenda in December 2016 and the approval of the bill by the Legislative Assembly in March 2017 (Tete & Borgo, 2017) illustrates the reduced mobilization of social organizations and political actors in the process of formulating and building Espírito Santo's policy of collaboration. The project was voted on in extraordinary session and under emergency regime.

The non-inclusion of civil society actors and the lack of a broad debate led to critical analyzes on the adopted policy model, as observed in the studies of Schwartz et al. (2021) and Rosa et al. (2018).

### 3.6 The influence of political incentives and financial motivation

Political incentives, according to Farah (2008), can influence the diffusion of a given innovation due to the possible political benefits derived from the adoption process. The author says innovation tends to be adopted if it increases the chances of re-election.

It is a fact that the JCPOA in Ceará is full of examples of how the success of this initiative projected exponents for local and national policy, either for the executive or for the legislative: Cid Gomes was Governor in 2007, the year JCPOA was created, was re-elected in 2010 and is currently a senator of the republic (Brazil, 2024); Professor Izolda Cela was Secretary of State for Education (2007-2014), but before she was Secretary of Education of the municipality of Sobral (2005-2006), then she was vice-governor (2015-2022), Governor (2022) and served (2023/2024) as Executive Secretary of the MEC; Camilo Santana was elected Governor, with Izolda Cela as Deputy Governor and subsequently re-elected (2015-2022). In 2023, he assumed the position of Minister of Education with Professor Izolda as Executive Secretary (Brazil, 2024). These data show nuances of linking these increases with the good results of innovative education policy and its great impact.

Espírito Santo's adoption of the policy of collaboration and its development in the period 2017-2024 does not provide direct examples of projection and political electoral return specifically linked to

the PAES. However, when thinking about political return as a strengthening of federative principles, consolidation of the institutional support base and as a municipal management anchored in the republican relations between local administrations, it is undeniable that the set of financial actions and structural support to municipalities has strengthened governance and political stability in Espírito Santo.

Farah (2008) writes that the presence of financial resources and incentives for the implementation of innovation, whether from the Federal Government or multilateral agencies or non-governmental organizations, drastically influence the decision to adopt the policy.

### 3.7 Dependence on the path and capacity of the state

The context of trajectory dependence is supported by Abruzzo et al. (2016). The results obtained are attributed to the continuity of policies over time, i.e., to the maintenance of a continuous program of actions that gradually paves the way for new changes and improvements. The long history of cooperation between the state government and the municipal governments of Espírito Santo, whether technical support or financial resources, was fundamental to the institutionalization of PAES. Freitas (2019) highlighted in its study that since 1974, the SEDU had developed mechanisms for the gradual transfer of responsibilities from rural education to municipalities. It highlights the creation of a specific organizational unit, the "Department of Guidance for Municipalities and Private Entities", designed to coordinate and execute actions with municipalities. In addition, it highlighted initiatives such as the Technical and Financial Cooperation Project in the 1980s and the Program for the Municipalization of Early Childhood and Primary Education. This list also includes the Espírito Santo Basic Education Assessment Program, established in 2000, the signing of agreements, regulated by Decree No. 2.737-R/2011 and the Rural School Transport Program, created in 2013.

The adoption of a new policy is conditional on the existence by the recipient of that policy of structural, administrative and financial capacity, which are decisive for its implementation and its adaptation to local conditions. The absence of this capacity limits the entity to accept innovative policies (Farah,

2008). In the process of policy integration, the institutional framework, both in the country and in the place, exerts a relevant influence, facilitating or hindering the choice of the program, since the presence of a multilevel governance agreement is decisive in this process, because it facilitates the transit of information and solutions between local political actors.

The state government of Espírito Santo demonstrated that it has the state capacity to adopt and implement the program of collaboration with municipalities. After its implementation, in 2017, the Espírito Santo Collaboration Unit for Learning was created, led by the PAES Coordination integrated into the State Secretariat of Education. The presence of a governance structure in the educational regions of the SEDU and the institution of a Program Coordination in each municipality favored and optimized the organization, articulation and participation of municipal entities around the axes and structuring actions of the program. Since its implementation, the Espírito Santo collaboration regime has made investments in continuing education, in the printing and distribution of complementary teaching materials for all students and teachers from the 1st to the 4th year of EF, in school transport, in the payment of technical scholarships, in school awards and the granting of resources for the construction, remodeling and expansion of school units and the acquisition of capital goods.

#### 4. Discussion and conclusions

This study helped to identify, on the one hand, the reasons why the Cearan collaboration policy was disseminated and, on the other, the motivations that led the State of Espírito Santo to adopt it. The State of Ceará stood out when implementing an innovative initiative whose effectiveness can be proven by the increase in learning outcomes in the last 17 years, having the best literacy rate in the country. Espírito Santo, by adopting Ceará's collaborative solution, sought to improve literacy outcomes and the educational management of municipal networks. The current results of public education in Espírito Santo point to significant, not ideal, but promising advances. In 2024, the Ministry of Education (MEC) published the literacy rate of Brazilian states. Espírito Santo was among the three states with the highest literacy rates. The result confirmed that 68

% of students in the public school system in Espírito Santo were fully literate in the second year of primary school, an indicator higher than the national average of 56 %. The publication of the SAEB results in 2024 gave Espírito Santo the 5th national position in Primary Education I, a priority stage of the collaboration regime. Also in 2024, the State of Espírito Santo was recognized by the MEC with the Gold Seal for States that present institutionalized actions and advances in child literacy in their territory. Here, we observe the influence of outcome rankings on policy-making processes for "inter-state competition" (Baybeck et al., 2011).

The process of dissemination can be understood by the trajectories followed by policies and by the articulation of ideas and people among sub-national entities. The learning mechanism that led to the dissemination of public policies from Ceará to Espírito Santo was provided through the use of a Consed-led network of interaction and through negotiated and consensual dialog with third sector partners. Segatto et al. (2023) explain that the learning mechanism is based on the principle that a government's decision to adopt a new policy permeates rationality in which it is necessary to assess the potential benefits and harms of adoption, in addition to making a comparison with the success (or failure) of other governments' experiences, i.e., we learn from what others have already done.

This study confirmed the active role played by the "receiving" locality, in this case Espírito Santo, in the process of adopting the Ceará program. The influence of internal actors in the decision-making process was confirmed, driven by the innovative features of the JCPOA, especially the understanding that the policy of collaboration would help the state and municipalities achieve the goals set in the standardized tests.

Another verified aspect refers to the influence of external business actors and institutions, such as Consed and the Movimento Colabora, which played the role of inducers and disseminators of information (cognitive process), making the topic of the collaboration regime relevant and composing the political agenda of the government of Espírito Santo.

It was observed that in Brazil, where education policy is marked by a very low national coordination and the absence of institutionalized instances of federative articulation and interconnection, there are

episodes of diffusion of policies as a result of political pressures depending on economic and social conditions, ideological aspects, institutional capacity and the circulation of information and ideas through formal and informal networks and instances. In the case of the PAES, it was also found that geographical proximity was not an influential factor in the adoption of the policy by Espírito Santo, considering that these are states of different regions, separated by more than 2000 kilometers. PAE reveals as an important episode of horizontal adoption between States by the elements that were present in the context of the “supplying” State, origin of the policy, and the “receiving” State, destination of the policy.

Analyzing how different explanatory contexts intersect in policy diffusion events is highly relevant to understanding current dynamics and their variations based on the specificities of the territories that “provide” and “receive” the innovative policy. Although they are close, the dissemination processes differ depending on the profile of the internal and external actors involved, the way and intensity with which information and ideas circulate, the relational nuances between the parties involved, the presence of spaces and forums for discussion and agreement, interests and political alignments present, among others. However, the prevalence of Republican relations and social interests and the conviction that a certain “adoption” is essential to qualify and expand the deliveries to society can guarantee the necessary arrangements to make this diffusion viable. Understanding the possible effects of local contexts and factors is relevant for decision makers when defining ideas and public policies that can enter the political agenda. In this sense, the findings of this article aim to stimulate discussions on the dimensions that permeate the issue of interstate diffusion and that favor, limit or even make its implementation unfeasible.

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