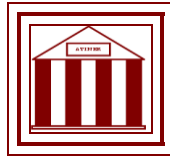


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**Analysis of the Performance of Public
Schools in Brazil: The Case of Public
Policy Rural Education**

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Analysis of the Performance of Public Schools in Brazil: The Case of Public Policy Rural Education

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Abstract

This paper aims to provide a historical retrospective of the public policy for rural education in Brazil. The advances which in Brazil have happened, mostly from the 1988 Constitution, allowed the emersion and evolution of public policy and management in the rural education of the country. In this context, despite the significant growth of popular and governmental interests in the rural education, there is a gap of academic research in the development of public management models that analyze such movement. This research organized a systematic framework of ongoing policies and provided some guidelines for improving future interventions in this specific area of governmental action. In the second part, the article describes the public policies for rural education and compares the relationship between the socio-economic profile, dropout rates and academic performance of students in urban schools and municipalities classified as rural in Minas Gerais (a regional state of Brazil). The analyses were made based on the data of Prova Brasil / Saeb, Censo Escolar and IDEB, conducted by Brazilian National Education Observatory (INEP/MEC/CAPES) in the context of rural development in Brazil, using descriptive statistical techniques and mean difference between groups (t-test and ANOVA).

Keywords: Social Policies, Rural Education, Public Management

Introduction

Among the social rights guaranteed by the Brazilian Constitution (Brazil, 1988), education occupies a prominent role to be core component of the exercise of citizenship and thus it is necessary that the state offer good educational conditions for all Brazilians. However, that obligation is often overlooked, resulting in millions of Brazilians with precarious access to these rights, among which stands out large portion of the rural population (Baptista, 2003).

Throughout the twentieth century, most of the Brazilian investments were directed to the urban area, which resulted in the marginalization of the rural population. Urban culture has become overvalued in relation to the country culture and led to the creation of stereotypes of the rural population as naive, lazy, sick, rustic, delayed (Barreiro, 2010; Calazans, Castro & Silva, 1981; Passador, 2006).

But in the late 90s, appears in Brazil the movement "For the Rural Education", whose epistemological bases support the view that the rural world is different from the urban world. The pressure from social movements active in the field made the State, together with the Ministry of Agrarian Development, begin to finance programs of rural education (Bezerra Neto, 2010).

The legal basis highlighted the need to support the rural areas and also to adapt the form of education for such public. Based on this principle, the Ministry of Education created the Secretary of Continuing Education, Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion (SECADI) (Brazil, 2011), which started to plan projects in order to solve such deficiencies.

In this scenario, this work was aimed to present a bibliographic search on the education of public policies in Brazil. In the second part, the article describes the public policies for rural education and compares the relationship between the socio-economic profile, dropout rates and academic performance of students in urban schools and municipalities classified as rural in Minas Gerais (a regional state of Brazil).

Education Public Policy on Field in Brazil

The conception of rural education in Brazil, as discussed Baptista (2003), was founded with knowledge previously developed, adopting the same methodologies used in urban areas, and presenting to the rural population without making adjustments.

In the context of implementing educational policies of rural education, the creation of new educational activities takes place in the late 1980s, when the incipient social movements lead the new project of society and education, promoting new values, identities and awareness for the people of the field (Paraná, 2009).

Such behavior reflected the consolidation of industrialization model that linked development to the urban area and restricted the activities of the field to agricultural production, which served the precepts of the capitalist mode of production, thus limiting the development of agribusiness and maintenance of plantations. In this scenario, the rural population linked to family farming was lacking policies that seek to please their interests (Calazans, Castro & Silva, 1981).

However, with the creation of the Constitution of 1988 (Brazil, 1988), education became a right of all people and the State's duty. In the 1990s, discussions about the LDB already included specific rules for the Rural Education. With this law, rural education was detached from urban school and became more appropriate to the reality of the field, adopting own school calendar, reducing the number of hours of instruction and promoting education according to agricultural seasonality.

Recently, two political processes have been developed for education and have implications for the Rural Education. The first is the National Education Plan (PNE), approved by Congress in 2001. This plan was an initiative of the Ministry of Education and was developed and presented without accepting influence of civil society, among them, the Rural Education Movement (Munarim, 2008).

The second political process was the development of the Operational Guidelines. Different from the National Plan of Education of Brazil, (PNE), it consists of a space for the participation of organizations and social movements. A point to be noted in the context of the Operational Guidelines is relative to the current governance model at the time they were prepared and approved. The election of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, in 2002, resulted in a government that gave more importance to social movements, including the Rural Education Movement.

During this period, the National Education Program in Agrarian Reform (Pronea) was established, which ensures the commitment of future governments with the creation of specific pedagogy and specialization courses for teachers of rural schools.

Consequently, Martins (2010) and Munarim (2008) highlighted the emersion, from the 1990s of a social movement called "For the Rural Education". The movement objective is the creation of public policies to renew the so called rural education, giving it quality levels and banning the ideas of exclusion and domestication of the population living in the countryside.

Thus, the New Law of Education Guidelines and Bases (LDBEN) became active, shortly after the establishment of the 1988 Constitution (Brazil, 1988), focusing, among other things, early childhood education and education in the field.

The disclosure of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Early Childhood Education CNE / CEB (National Council of Education and House of Basic Education) approved the needs that had already been established by LDBEN, but this time, for early childhood education in populations considered minority in society: as the children of extratives, artisanal fishermen, coastal fishers,

people from settlements or in camps of agrarian reform, quilombolas, caiçaras, forest people and farmers.

The research and academic production, however, are still lacking systems for the formulation of specific policies and organizational models and their management apparatuses. At the same time, we see the need to discuss the issue of education related to the context of what is meant by “campo” or rural area in the country.

Methodology

The research conducted a bibliographic review to identify studies undertaken on the subject and discussed the issues involved in these studies, besides performing exploratory research on secondary bases, which verified as the applicability of policies. In addition, at this stage, data from the National Institute of Educational Studies Teixeira (INEP) was analyzed as well as the socioeconomic profiles of the students, the school performance factors, and the evasion in elementary school. From this analysis, we defined the variables that were used in the application of statistical techniques in the last stage of the study.

In exploratory research, we selected the variables available by performing a structured collection of data in the database provided by INEP / MEC forming the database with emphasis on 5th grade and 9th grade (former 4th grade and 8th grade), quantifying with descriptive statistics and the average difference between groups, allowing the analysis of results.

The variables considered in the descriptive analysis were dropout rate and average scores of schools in public Proof Brazil / SAEB (2007 and 2009) and IDEB (2007 and 2009), and the student's place of residence from the School Census (2007 and 2009), in order to support different analysis characteristics that justify specific public policies for each area.

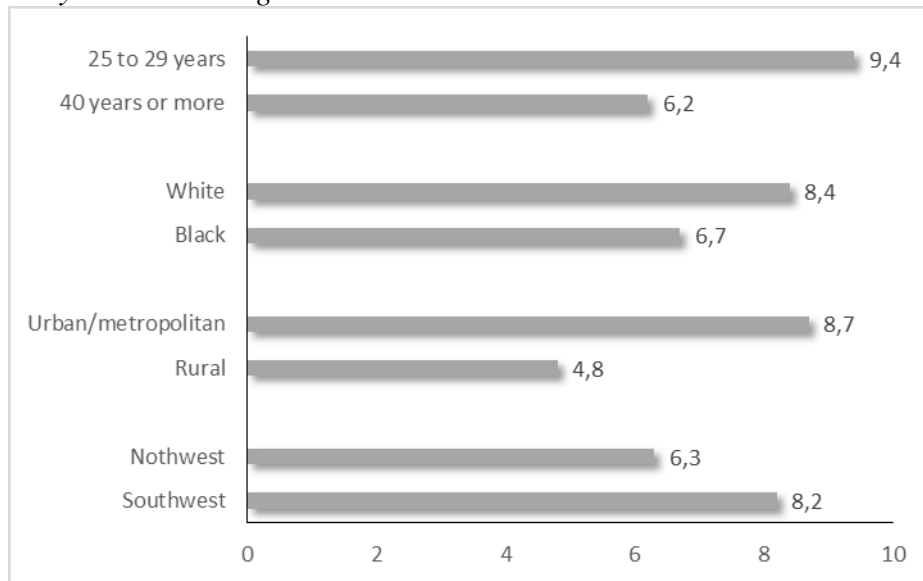
According to INEP (2010), every year the School Census collects data of the Brazilian basic education in different stages and types, such as regular education, special education and adult and youth education in pre-Elementary Education, Elementary Education and Highschool.

The SAEB (National System of Basic Education Evaluation) is an initiative to know the Brazilian basic education system in depth. The data collected relate to the quality of education because not only evaluates the content, but also the skills and competences. The rating is census for students from 5th grade and 9th grade of public elementary school, both in urban and rural areas, in schools that have 20 or more students in the grade to be evaluated. When applied to this layer, it is called Proof Brazil. In other cases, it is applied in the form of sampling.

Data Analysis

The illiteracy rate among the rural population in Brazil is almost 23% in contrast to the urban / metropolitan population, which is 4.4%. Data from the IBGE (2009) also indicate that the Northeast has almost two years less schooling than the Southeast; the countryside, nearly four years less schooling than the urban sites; black people have 1.7 years less schooling than the white; and the under-30s have 3.2 more years of schooling than the people above that age, as Figure 1, which follows:

Graph 1. *Average Years of Schooling of the Population 15 Years of Age or Older by Selected Categories*



Source: IBGE (2009). Preparation by author.

As for the complete schooling of youth and adults, the educational system serves 4,661,332 people, of which 88.45% study in the urban area of the IBGE classification (2009), and, of the total, 66% attend primary school and, 34% high school.

In the State of Minas Gerais, despite the concentration of population in the metropolitan area, this is smaller than the other States of the Southeast region. About one third of the population lives in large cities, another third in medium-sized cities, and the other, in small towns. The network of Minas Gerais has great diversity and a wide range of connections between cities and other regions and states.

Part of the population (32.84%) lives in small cities located in municipalities with populations of less than 26,446 inhabitants. About 34% live in municipalities with a population ranging from 26,446 to 151,462 inhabitants, other 10.79% live in six major cities, while 22.81% live in the metropolitan area of Belo Horizonte, in the classification of the IBGE (2009).

Based on this classification and the data available in Proof Brazil 2007 and 2009 and IDEB 2007 and 2009, when we compare the performance of rural and urban schools, it is observed that urban public schools outperformed rural schools, both in Mathematics and Portuguese Language, in 5th and 9th grade (including using the average difference). When comparing public to municipal schools, the performance of municipal are always inferior in the 5th grade. The data also contradict the idea that a smaller school has a better performance. Generally, the bigger schools in the state system classified as urban or rural, have better performance than the municipal schools. All differences were statistically significant.

In table 1, it is observed that the performance in Portuguese language of students from state schools in municipalities classified as rural is inferior than the performance of students from urban schools. However, in mathematics such differences attenuate.

Table 1. *State Schools in Minas Gerais*

Exam/grade	Location	Amount of schools	Average grade on the test	Standard Deviation	t	df	Sig.
Portuguese - 4	Urban	1028	200,1289	0,59589	5,635	1852,000	0,000
	Rural	826	195,1036	0,66608			
Mathematics - 4	Urban	1028	224,0438	0,68317	2,106	1852,000	0,035
	Rural	826	221,8297	0,80784			
Portuguese - 8	Urban	1227	250,0939	0,48164	4,599	2433,000	0,000
	Rural	1208	246,9594	0,48211			
Mathematics - 8	Urban	1227	256,0237	0,52739	1,821	2433,000	0,069
	Rural	1208	254,6375	0,54896			

Source: Brazil Support, 2009 (INEP, 2009c). Developed by the author.

Notice that in the group of rural schools, it's common to see schools with 600 students maximum, both at the municipal level and in the state level. That is, schools classified in rural towns are smaller.

Therefore, it can be seen that there is a concentration of smaller schools in rural areas and larger schools in the urban areas, both in state schools in municipal levels. In the state system, the largest urban school has around 6 thousand students and among those classified as rural most has about 2 thousand students. In the municipal network, the largest urban school has around 3 thousand students and the largest school classified as rural has around 2 thousand students.

House of the Local Student: Rural and Urban Areas

From this point, we used another classification for schools. Schools were classified as having a tendency to be rural due to the proportion of students living in rural areas compared to the number of students residing in urban areas.

By proceeding the comparison of the performance difference between groups by ANOVA ($p < 0.05$), there was significant statistical difference between all groups, except for the 2007 and 2009 IDEB, the 9th year for the municipal network and the 2009 IDEB, to regional network. It is observed that, as you increase the concentration of students residing in rural areas, school performance decreases.

One can see, clearly, that the best performances of students of the state system in the 5th year in the Mathematics test are residents of the urban area. Similar performance is verified in the 5th year students living in the urban area in the Portuguese test in both 2007 and 2009. It is also possible to identify the improvement of the 2007 student's performance for 2009, but the best performance of the resident students in urban areas comes to repeat.

Although it is less accentuated, you can still see that the best performances in the state system of 9th grade in the Mathematics test are from students living in urban areas. Similar performance is verified in 9th graders living in the urban area in the Portuguese test in both 2007 and 2009. It is also possible to identify the performance improvement in IDEB of 2007 students for 2009, but the best performances remain with the students living in urban areas, with the exception of IDEB 2009, when the difference does not appear statistically significant.

It is observable the best performance of students in the 5th year residents of the urban area in both 2007 and 2009 in Portuguese and Mathematics. You can also identify performance improvement in the 2007 students of IDEB 2009, but the best performance of students living in urban areas remains.

It is also noticeable the best performance of 9th graders living in the urban area in both 2007 and 2009 in Portuguese and Mathematics. However, in IDEB 2007 and 2009, the difference does not appear statistically significant.

As observed earlier, among the 853 towns in Minas Gerais, 704 were considered rural, most with less than 5 thousand inhabitants living of rural activities. However, for providing public policy of basic education for most cities in the State, as if the vast majority were very urbanized cities, the MEC and the IBGE ignore the reality of the student, their place of residence, customs, culture and behavior. And despite all the recent and commendable effort from MEC and INEP, in the twenty-first century, for trying to understand and improve the quality of public education in Brazil, the Brazilian government has been offering a public policy of basic education that does not in fact exist.

Conclusion

The Rural Education Movement is not just a political movement or pedagogical renewal movement, but a movement to build an epistemology that gives basis for what came to be called rural education, with new theoretical perspectives, including in the Brazilian universities. However, it appears that both in INEP as the MEC, the public policy of rural education offered to rural areas is still connected to the old rural education and is evolving slowly. That

is, in most Brazilian cities the rural education in INEP and MEC remains the same offered outside urban perimeters.

Therefore, one can see that there was a relation between low performances of the students living in rural areas (where there aren't proper rural schools) compared to the students residents of the urban areas that frequent an urban elementary school. That is, when they are not in a school best suited to their way of life, performances from students residents of rural towns in rural areas are compromised.

As noted Caio Prado Júnior (1979), who is one of the greatest researchers of Brazilian society, rethinking development means acting in building a popular farming project that values family farming; scrolling themes, such as the territory distribution question, the economic formation of Brazil, the agrarian question, the formation of the Brazilian people, labor relations and the sovereignty of nature; overcoming the opposition between town and country and the prevailing view that the modern and advanced is always urban, and that evolution of a country is measured by the declining of the rural population; going opposite direction of the conditioned rural vision to slave cultural matrices, and landowning oligarchy, coupled with the design of conservative modernization of the countryside, taking into account the strengths and weaknesses of our colonial past of contradictory character, restricted and conservative.

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