

**IN SEARCH OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION: THE CASE OF BRAZIL**

by

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## *DEDICATION*

*This thesis is dedicated to:*

*Vianello and Ritinha (both “in memoriam”),  
representing a past of love and commitment to  
noble ideals; Helio, representing a happy,  
supportive and fruitful present; Grace, Jerzy,  
Isabela and Alana, Helio, Patricia, Hugo and  
Priscilla, Paulo, Mônica, Pedro and Gabriel,  
representing a bright future.*

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the inability of the Brazilian State to accomplish effectively its constitutional duty to deliver elementary education to all children of 7 to 14 years of age. The overall argument in this thesis is that there is a lack of “political will” on the part of the Brazilian State to resolve this problem. The concept of “lack of political will” is theorised as “lack of conditions existing in the State enabling it to be an actor in elementary education”. The thesis has six chapters. Chapter One introduces the problem, the arguments, and the structure of the thesis, and discusses the theoretical basis of the thesis. Chapter Two tests the arguments against data on the relationship of the State to elementary education in the Vargas Era (1930-1945). Chapter Three tests the arguments against data on the relationship of the State to elementary education during the Redemocratisation Period (1946-1964). Chapter Four compares the arguments with data on the State’s relationship to elementary education during the Military Regime (1964-1985). Chapter Five examines the arguments in relation to data on the relationship of the State with elementary education in the period of the New Republic and the Collor Government (1985-1992). Finally, Chapter Six presents the Conclusions and Recommendations of the thesis. The main conclusion of the thesis is that it is possible to create the necessary conditions for the State to function as an actor in elementary education.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM**

#### **1.1 - PURPOSE, ARGUMENT AND ORGANISATION**

Overall, this thesis analyses the problem of the inability of the Brazilian State to accomplish effectively its constitutional duty to deliver elementary education to all children. Thus, the purpose of the thesis is to develop an understanding of this complex problem. Chapter One includes a general survey of elementary education in Brazil for the past six decades. This survey identifies the inability of the State(1) to provide elementary education(2).

The chapter also identifies the main lines of the argument tested in this thesis, the chapter sequence, and the organisation of the time periods.

The chapter also identifies and examines selected theoretical perspectives from the literature on the State and uses this analysis to restate the problem of the thesis. This theoretical basis will then be a counterpoint of the analysis of the remaining chapters in the thesis.

To orient the reader it is useful to begin by outlining something of the Brazilian political and legal context for the construction of elementary education policy, and by clarifying the issue of time periods.

### **1.1.1 - The Time Frame of the Thesis: A Descriptive Overview**

This section presents a brief account of elementary education during the past six decades which are divided into four periods: the Vargas Era (1930-1945), the Redemocratisation Period (1946-1964), the Military Regime (1964-1985), and the last period which covers two governments, the New Republic (1985-1990) and the Collor Government (1990-1992). The principle guiding the choice of these time periods is that each represents a major change in the political orientation of the government from 1930 until the present day. Each of these periods had its own characteristics with respect to the urgency, clarity and direction of elementary education policy. Successive governments during these periods defined different aims and directions in educational policy, adopted different modes of implementation of this policy, and their achievements were also different. The next sub-sections discuss briefly each of the periods.

#### a) The Vargas Era (1930-1945)

This period<sup>(3)</sup> marked the beginning of the State's official concern with elementary education. In 1933, the government presented a diagnosis of elementary education which revealed the chaotic situation in the individual states<sup>(4)</sup>. On that occasion, the government affirmed its intention and commitment "to enrol 10 per cent of the population of school-age children in elementary education"<sup>(5)</sup>.

However, the definition of the duty of the State towards elementary education would not come until the 1934 Constitution(6), which prescribed that the individual states and municipalities should implement their systems of education within the guidelines laid down by the central State(7). This same legislation defined the percentages of financial resources that the central State, the individual states and municipalities should apply in elementary education(8).

Within these new aspirations and duties the government decided to initiate the building of schools in urban and rural areas, in spite of the fact that lack of human and financial resources in the educational system made it difficult for constitutional requirements to be carried out at local level(9). The lack of financial resources became a very serious problem when the definition of percentages from revenues of the central State, individual states, and municipalities was left out of the 1937 Constitution. The inclusion of those percentages in the 1934 Constitution had been an attempt to guarantee that the three administrative levels of the government would allocate the resources considered necessary for elementary education.

By the end of the Vargas Era, there had been some progress in the productivity of public elementary education in terms of children completing four years of schooling. While only three per cent of children completed elementary education in public schools in 1933, 16 per cent of children completed four years of schooling in 1945(10).

However, the government had not fulfilled its declared objectives regarding enrolment, since the percentage of children of school-age enrolled in elementary

education in 1945(11) was only slightly higher than in 1933(12). This situation would change markedly during the next government.

b) The Redemocratisation Period (1946-1964)

During this period, the chapter dedicated to education was reintroduced into the Constitution in 1946(13). In addition, the State recognised that the low productivity of elementary education, despite some progress in the Vargas Era, required attention.

The main effort of the new democratic government on elementary education continued to be directed towards building schools, while Congress debated “The Law on Guidelines and Bases of National Education”(14). This law was in accordance with the government’s expressed objectives of giving priority to mass education, and decentralising the administration of elementary education.

However, there were obstacles that hindered the State’s aspirations. Throughout this period, declarations by several governments revealed fundamental problems in elementary education, such as lack of financial resources to provide transportation, poor sanitary conditions, and inadequate school materials and teacher training.

In spite of these problems, the expansion of the educational system was notable: the population of children of elementary school-age increased by

approximately 150 per cent from 1945 to 1964, and enrolment also increased by about 150 per cent(15). However, completion rates in elementary education also continued to be low. National statistics show that only 24 per cent of children enrolled in 1961 finished elementary school in 1964(16). This represented some progress, but it was still a low rate of productivity. These poor productivity results would continue to characterise the expansion of elementary education, as can be seen in the next sections.

### c) The Military Regime (1964-1985)

This was a period in which central State intervention in elementary education increased. The government stated that there was a need to improve enrolment rates and to introduce scientific planning in elementary education(17). In line with these objectives, the government presented a new national law, the “Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education”, Law 5,692/71(18), and instituted the “Educational Salary” tax(19), a tax to be collected from firms, and intended to subsidise elementary education.

In spite of these initiatives, the State was unable to implement fully the innovations proposed by Law 5, 692/71(20). Basic obstacles to the State’s effective action were still present and unresolved. Complex requirements in the new law(21) could not be implemented because of a shortage of adequate financial and human resources, and also because the disorganisation in the individual states of the Brazilian Republic continued to affect the relationship of the central State to elementary education(22).

However, the government succeeded in reaching its targeted initial enrolment, 80 per cent, in 1974(23). In contrast to this achievement, the rate of productivity in elementary education continued to be low: only 35 per cent of the children enrolled in 1971 reached the 4<sup>th</sup> grade, and only 14 per cent finished elementary education in 1978(24). This pattern in elementary education remained resistant to change, in spite of the increased interventions of the central State during this period, and was to be a major challenge for democratic governments in the following period.

#### d) The New Republic and The Collor Government (1985-1992)

This period is sub-divided into two parts which represent two different political orientations. In the New Republic, the President was elected by an indirect election, that is, elected by the Congress. In the following period, Fernando Collor de Melo was elected directly by the people.

##### d.1) The New Republic (1985-1990)

In this period, education was declared to be one of the priorities in the State's social projects, and elementary education was declared to be the main priority in education. The new democratic government formulated an ambitious programme to change elementary education(25), and promoted a National Day of debates dedicated to analysing the issue in depth(26). Elementary education appeared in the programme entitled "Education for All-the Way to Change" and emerged from the National

Debate as an area in need of basic human and material resources. Even though these findings were hardly new for educators(27), a national debate on elementary education was an unprecedented form of political activity in Brazil(28).

Elementary education was once again the subject of social debate during the formulation of the 1988 Constitution(29). The issue became so sensitive that the number of children not in school was declared to be eight million. The government, the media, politicians and educators inadvertently, or perhaps deliberately, repeatedly referred to this number of children as not being in school. In fact, the number was close to four million children(30). However, these are national figures. Public elementary education also continued to differ regionally, since the North and Northeast regions consistently exhibited the lowest rates of both enrolment and productivity in the country(31).

Overall, even though at the end of the New Republic enrolment in public elementary education had increased to 84 per cent(32), productivity remained low, with only about 14 per cent of students finishing elementary education in 1986(33). The historical trend was unbroken, although hopes of change were renewed when the first President elected by direct vote was inaugurated in 1990.

#### d.2) The Collor Government (1990-1992)

During this brief period, elementary education did not receive any special attention in the Collor Plan(34). However, the relation of the State to elementary



education was marked by two commitments: the State's new promise to increase the enrolment rate to 100 per cent by 1998(35) and the building of the CIACS (Integrated Centres for Child Support)(36).

The State no longer acted as the primary provider of diagnoses concerning elementary education. Social awareness of elementary education, which had begun in the previous period, continued to increase. Elementary education became a major concern of academic analysts, politicians and, to a lesser degree, the media, especially over the issues of the lack of resources and the low qualifications of teachers(37). In the Ministry of Education, a group of officials developed a draft proposal for new roles for the central State, while other educators developed a study on the empowerment of schools at the local level(38).

The persistent problem of very low productivity in elementary education remained a challenge to the State. The rate of completion of elementary education in 1992 continued at more or less the same low level as in the previous period. However, the political crisis caused by the denouncement of bribery and corruption in the government, which culminated in Collor's resignation in 1992, meant that the promises and plans to change elementary education became a minor concern in the midst of the ensuing political turmoil.

Thus, after 60 years of intermittent and variously successful efforts, it is still possible to ask the question "Why does elementary education remain a major challenge in Brazil today?".

In the next section, an approach for formulating the arguments of the thesis will be discussed. The arguments represent an effort to arrive at a potential interpretation of the situation briefly outlined in this descriptive overview of elementary education in a number of different time periods in recent Brazilian history.

### **1.1.2 - The Arguments of the Thesis**

At the most general level, the argument of the thesis is that the condition of elementary education in Brazil over time can be understood as a consequence of lack of “political will”.

Unfortunately, this concept is not comprehensible everywhere, although this terminology is frequently used in Brazilian debates to mean the State’s lack of “determination to pursue an objective”(39). This meaning is seen, for instance, in the declarations of Anísio Teixeira(40) from the 1930s, in the views of Clemente Mariani(41) in the 1940s, in declarations of the “Pioneers of Education”(42) in the late 1950s, and also in the current work of academic analysts such as Paiva(43), Romanelli(44),and Piletti(45). There were other similar views .

The term has been also used to refer to forces in society which move the State to action(47); or, more precisely, which prevent State action. In discussions of education and elementary education, the term “political will” has also meant the need for political sensitivity among educators to generate, in the political classes and

institutions in society, a commitment to education(48). This approach was used mainly by Gadotti and other educators, as for example in Bordignon's statement that "political will in a democracy is fabricated by the citizens"(49).

Another meaning of the term is exemplified by Demo's current perspective that "Ministers of the State do not accept systematic pressure from society because they still understand that the State commands society and not the contrary"(50). Thus, in the Brazilian literature, the phrase "lack of political will" has at least the four above meanings. The concept, however, still remains too vague to be of use in careful analysis.

In this thesis, the general concept of political will is broken down and operationalised into more researchable and more concrete categories. The category of "political will" is operationalised initially by asking about the expressed intentions of the State to formulate elementary education policy, and by asking about the coherence and consistency of such policies, over time.

Each chapter takes up the theme of "The Construction of Elementary Education Policy", which is treated as one aspect of "political will". The theme is broken down into the following propositions:

Governments have regularly expressed the intention to reform elementary education, but the implementation of this objective has been irregular.

National educational policy has changed with great frequency. Each new government has launched a different programme aimed at changing elementary education.

Despite continuously expressed intentions to reform elementary education, the State's policies have been oriented to immediate problems in elementary education, distracting the State from seeing the longer-term problems that lie behind the short-term problems.

The three sub-propositions are suggestions about what has happened over time, that is, they are interpretations or arguments which will be tested against evidence in the individual chapters.

Each chapter also takes up the theme of "The Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy", the second operational dimension of "political will".

This theme is broken down into the following propositions:

The lack of legal and administrative co-ordination between the three administrative levels in the educational sector has been a permanent feature of the State in Brazil.

The lack of legal and administrative co-ordination between the three levels in the educational sector of the State has been characterised by the centralisation of resources and decisions at the federal level and mismanagement at the state and municipal levels.

Despite declarations about the priority of resources to reform elementary education, the central State, i. e., the federal level of the government, has given priority to major public projects within the economic infrastructure.

Again, the three sub-propositions are offered as arguments describing the nature of the failure to co-ordinate, and its duration. The sub-propositions are tested against evidence in the individual chapters.

The third operational category of "political will" is the theme of the "The Political Basis for Solutions". This theme is broken down into the following

propositions:

Debate on elementary education within civil society has been weak during almost the whole period. Mass debate on elementary education has been almost non-existent.

The demands of the educators for elementary education reform did not influence the State in the initial organisation of the national educational system, which was oriented by the needs of the new urban classes for enrolment in elementary education schools.

The debate on elementary education began to emerge late in Brazilian society. The key point is that until the New Republic the political parties had not consistently addressed the issue of elementary education.

The three sub-propositions identify the lack of mobilisation of a public or civic discourse about elementary education, and again the propositions (which are offered as arguments) are tested against the evidence in this thesis.

The last category operationalised to review “political will” is the category of “The Effectiveness of the State in Elementary Education”. This is an important category and, like the others, appears in every chapter. The test used for this category is numerical: according to the available figures on enrolment and completion, how did the State succeed in delivering elementary education? In other words, what was the cumulative effect of efforts towards policy formulation, difficulties in co-ordination within the levels of administration, and the impact of public discourse (or lack of it) on the access of young Brazilians over time to the elementary education sector? The numerical evidence on effectiveness is, in one sense, a “bottom line” analysis. This evidence has never before been systematically assembled in a thesis and it provides a powerful commentary and counterpoint in each chapter to the more interpretative and

theoretical dimensions of the analysis of “political will”.

Overall, these four categories (construction of policy; difficulties in implementation; political bases of public discourse; and effectiveness) constitute the operationalised argument of the phrase “political will”. This phrase will not be used in the rest of the thesis, except once more in the next section, and in the Conclusion, when the phrase occurs in the professional literature.

### **1.1.3 - Organisation of the Thesis**

The thesis is organised into six Chapters. After this Chapter, Chapter Two covers “The Vargas Era”. The actual testing of the argument begins in this chapter. Chapter Three tests the argument in the “Redemocratisation Period”, a time when Brazil returned to democracy after the Vargas’ dictatorship. Chapter Four deals with the “Military Regime”, when Brazil returned to autocratic government, and enrolment in elementary education continued to expand but with less intensity than in the preceding periods. Chapter Five covers the “New Republic” and the “Collor government”, a period when Brazil became once again a formal democracy, and elementary education continued its expansion, and also achieved social visibility. Chapter Six contains the Conclusion and Recommendations of the thesis.

All the Chapters, except the Introduction and the Conclusion and Recommendations, are divided into six sections arranged around the operational categories of political will which have just been specified. In each chapter, the first

section. Introduction, presents the purpose, argument, and organisation of the chapter.

In the second section, “The Construction of Elementary Education Policy”, the arguments of this category are tested against the position of the State as represented by legislation, policy, plans, and, especially, by Presidential declarations. In the third section, “The Difficulties of Implementation”, the arguments in this category are tested against the policies of the State and the comments of academic analysts and politicians. In the fourth section, “The Political Basis”, the arguments in the category are tested against educational debates and movements within the State and society, in the context of political and economic events involving elementary education. In the fifth section, “The Effectiveness of the State in Elementary Education”, the arguments are tested against qualitative data, such as comments and studies by academic analysts, and especially quantitative data on the enrolment and completion rates of elementary education. The sixth section presents the Conclusion of the chapter.

What remains unexplored at this point is the idea of State and its possibilities for effective action, a central concept of the thesis. This theme is the concern of the next section.

## **1.2 - NEW THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES**

This section discusses three theoretical perspectives which are centred on the State. The purpose of this section is to use them to clarify and refine the problem of the thesis. The purpose of this theoretical exploration is to make more complex the

idea of the State as an effective actor. The arguments outlined in the previous section are relatively specific, and potentially testable. However, in themselves, they leave under-theorised that nature of “a State”; and thus while it perhaps can be established that the arguments offered are more or less true, or more or less false, they provide no perspective on the complex ways in which a State is more or less effective.

Thus, the purpose of this section is to remove the slightly positivist motif of the arguments already offered, and to permit, subsequently, a greater sensitivity to the sources of confusion and conflict embedded in the notion of, and the practices of “the State”. It is argued that, even though these are three different perspectives on the State, they form a theoretical perspective which will be useful in illuminating the problematic relationship of the Brazilian State with elementary education.

The first theoretical perspective - “Bringing the State Back In”- by Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol(51) presents a general approach to the State. It is the most comprehensive of the three perspectives. It examines possibilities for effective action by the State, this being essential to the understanding of the problem of the thesis. The second theoretical perspective - “Educational Administration and the Challenge of Change: Politics, Power and Policy”- by Iannaccone(52), was selected because it presents a relational approach to the State. That is, this perspective examines the relationship of the State to the educational system, a central theme in this thesis. Finally, the third perspective - “Legalization, Expertise, and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy”- by Weiler(53), was selected because it is centred on strategies developed by the State in education, and it helps to



locate the educational policies in Brazil theoretically.

### **1.2.1 - The First Theoretical Perspective: Two Complementary Approaches on the State**

The theme of “Bringing the State Back In” was formulated in 1985 by a group of political scientists, sociologists, economists, and historians, both general theoreticians and area specialists, familiar with Europe, Latin America and East Asia(54). Their aim was to present a different and modern approach to the State. After reviewing both old and contemporary suppositions about the State, including the “assumptions of pluralism, structure-functionalist developmentalism and the various neo-Marxists”(55), they proposed concepts based on neo-Weberian assumptions about the State. They declared that, “although a refocusing of social scientific interests significantly informed by the Weber-Hintze understanding of States may be upon us, the real work of theoretical reorientation is only beginning to be done”(56).

Within this “theoretical reorientation” about the State, this thesis has selected concepts and assumptions that are important for illuminating aspects of the Brazilian case. The first concept to be examined is “the State”. It is defined as “a set of organisations invested with authority to make binding decisions for people and organisations judicially located in a particular territory and to implement these decisions, using force if necessary”(57). The understanding of how the State will be able to make “binding decisions” for people and to “implement these decisions”, in an effective way, demands the examination of two approaches to the State. These

approaches are: a) the State as actor, and b) the State as an entity capable of producing an impact on social-political dynamics.

a) The State as actor

According to this approach, the State has the possibility of achieving effective policy goals(58). This proposal opens up new avenues for the understanding of the inability of the State to accomplish effectively a constitutional objective, for example, delivering elementary education to all children of school-age. This possibility is determined by two conditions: the autonomy and the capacity of the State.

As stated by Skocpol, “State autonomy” is an essential condition for the realisation of “official goals that are not simply reflective of demands or interests of social groups, classes or society”(59). However, the same author posits that autonomy is a relative characteristic of States, that is, the State is never considered absolutely autonomous(60). In this proposal Skocpol agrees with the group of neo-Marxists who see the State as relatively autonomous(61).

Skocpol posits that the “capacities of States” is also essential for the “implementation of official goals, especially over the actual or potential opposition of powerful social groups or in the face of recalcitrant socio-economic circumstances”(62).

This proposal is useful for illuminating a case in which recalcitrant problems

defy solutions proposed by the State. It is also acknowledged in this first perspective that if the State is not able to conceive and implement a goal in an independent way, “there is little need to talk about States as important actors”(63). This proposal means that officials in the State should be able to formulate and implement policy that they discern as important for solving a problem in a given situation.

However, as posited in this perspective, autonomy and capacity are not fixed features of any government. These characteristics of the State are transitory, meaning that the possibilities for autonomous and capable actions may change over time as a result of crises, change in the administration, or changes in the “organisations of coercion of the State”(64). To the authors of this perspective, there are certain requirements for the autonomy and capacity of States that, if present, may guarantee more stability for these two conditions in the State.

The above proposal indicates that the autonomy and capacity for effective action of the State may be created. If certain requirements for the autonomy and/or capacity of the State are enhanced, the inability of the State to formulate and implement effective policy may be reversed. A first requirement for enhancing the autonomy and capacity of States is the existence of sufficient financial resources(65). Two features in this requirement are relevant to this thesis: the authority and organisational capacities a State has to deploy whatever financial resources it does command and the flexibility of the State to raise and use financial resources to strengthen State organisations and employ personnel(66). A legal prescription for the allocation of financial resources for elementary education, for example, does not

guarantee that resources will be adequately allocated; this will depend on the autonomy and capacity existing in the educational system.

A second requirement for enhancing the autonomy and capacity of States is their possibility to be relatively insulated from ties with currently dominant socio-economic interests(67). According to Skocpol, public officials may be able to elaborate public policies differently from those demanded by societal actors(68). This strategy may keep the State relatively free from ties, for example, with political parties, interest groups, particular ideologies and private interests. This perspective of Skocpol stresses the importance of an adequate personnel policy in the State(69). A third requirement for enhancing the autonomy and capacity of the State is related to the first two requirements. The third requirement is the existence of extensive, and internally coherent, bureaucratic machinery in the State(70).

However, it is recognised by Rueschemeyer and Evans that the creation of conditions of autonomy and capacity in the State, through the fulfillment of the above requirements, is a long term task which may encounter obstacles in the internal structure of the State, and even in society. These authors point to circumstances in which the State has to balance cohesiveness (a concept equivalent to *esprit de corps*) in the bureaucratic machinery with the need for decentralisation: “by giving autonomy for sub-units a State creates serious problems of corporate cohesion, especially when strong and divergent forces in civil society are bent on capturing parts of the State apparatus and using them to their purposes”(71). To allow the State to combine decentralisation of sub-units with effective cohesion within the State, Evans and

Rueschemeyer suggest as a "countervailing mechanism" the creation of esprit de corps in the internal structure of the State(72).

The circumstances of decentralisation may mean that forces within the State or in civil society, such as the special interests of groups within the State or political or economic interests, challenge the internal cohesion of the State. As indicated earlier, cohesiveness and corporate action in the bureaucratic machinery of the State is a requirement for the State's autonomy. Consequently, when internal or external forces, represented by interest groups within the State or in civil society, affect any point (or level) of the bureaucratic apparatus, they put at risk the autonomy of the State, and consequently its conditions for effective action. In this circumstance the State is diverted, by the action of particular groups within the State or in society which become an obstacle for objectives of the State. In this respect, Rueschemeyer and Evans claim that "organisations are geared to do certain things relatively well, and, as organisations, cannot easily switch to or expand into other fields of action"(73). Interference, for example, of politicians or powerful economic groups that divert the State organisation from its essential objective, may compromise the State's autonomy and hinder its potential for effective action.

The idea that the State in many circumstances has to initiate actions or policies that, by their nature and objectives, seem to contradict each other, thus affecting the internal cohesiveness of the State, is further explored in this perspective. This happens, for example, when the State formulates policies to introduce change in a given situation, but does not provide the resources necessary to the implementation of that

policy. Rueschenmeyer and Evans argue that conflict among roles (in the internal structure of States) compromises the necessary cohesion, or corporate action, that should exist and consequently, this lack of cohesion limits capacity for effective action(74). They also mention the “role of domination”, a role from which the State cannot escape. This role implies a second role, that of corporate actor, since “coherent State action will be a concern of State elites”(75). As stated by Cardoso, one “cannot see the State just as the expression of class interests, without recognising that such an expression requires an organisation which, since it cannot be other than a social network of people, exists in its own right and possesses interests of its own”(76).

In the interpretation of this thesis, the role of “domination” suggests the role of “corporate actor” because this role represents a unified position of the State against groups in society which try to capture part of the State for their own interests. When officials in the State, for example, form a cohesive and corporate group, it is more difficult for political groups to influence the objectives of the State policies. In extraordinary circumstances, however, as in the case of a totalitarian government, the role of domination may suppress the role of the State as an “arena of social conflict”(77). In normal circumstances, as in the case of democratic government, the State is continually at risk of being influenced by interest groups, but as indicated earlier, coherent and corporate action in the bureaucratic machinery of the State may counterbalance this risk(78).

At the same time, the State has to claim “to be the guardian of universal interests” in the society over which it has jurisdiction(79). This role contradicts the

State's role as an autonomous corporate actor, since it presumes that the goals of the State's policies are not generated inside the State apparatus but are defined by the general interests of civil society(80).

In these conceptualisations the “crucial underlying point is that the effectiveness of the State will always depend on the pattern in which the contradictory tendencies are combined, both in its internal structure, and in its relation to the social structure as a whole”(81). However, Rueschemeyer and Evans present ways by which conflict among State roles may be overcome. Their conclusion reinforces the two basic requirements for effective State action: a) the creation of a competent and cohesive bureaucratic apparatus; and b) the necessity for a certain degree of autonomy from the dominant interests in civil society. In respect of this point, Rueschemeyer and Evans add that “ increasing pressure from lower classes may enhance State autonomy”(82).

#### b) The State and political activity in society

The second theme in this first perspective is called the “Tocquevillian approach”(83). In the words of Skocpol, the State matters not simply because of the goal-oriented activities of State officials, but because of patterns of State's activities that influence political culture, encourage group formation and collective political actions, and make possible the raising of political issues(84). This approach suggests that the State may initiate a policy with the objective of stimulating society in general, or groups in society, to increase their concern with a particular issue, for example, elementary education.

Two central arguments in the “Tocquevillian approach” are relevant to this thesis: a) that the State may raise certain issues in society; and, b) that activities of the State may have a different outcome from that originally expected(85). For example, in the case of unsuccessful efforts of a group to raise an issue in society, the State may take up that role. However, as suggested by (b) above, it is risky to assume that these activities of the State in society will always be favourable to State stability. The point may be applied to education.

### **1.2.2 - The Second Theoretical Perspective: The State’s Relationship to Education**

This perspective was developed by Laurence Iannacone in the paper “Educational Administration and Challenge of Change: Politics, Power and Policy”, presented during the Second Congress of the Interamerican Society for Educational Administration held in Brazil, in 1984. Iannacone’s perspective was guided by E. E. Schattschneider(86). From this orientation came a perspective on changes in the relationship between education and politics(87), which is useful for the work of this thesis.

Iannacone began to develop the proposal by examining three levels of change in the relationship between education and politics. At the first level, change happens within the educational system. This change is brought about and managed by internal professional expertise. The system ignores outside forces, and education and its



policies are considered autonomous and apolitical(88).

At the second level, professional expertise in the educational system is challenged by external political forces. This change in relationship reflects conflicts between the politics of the educational system and the general politics of the State(89). In this case the professional group is not able to avoid the penetration of political conflict in the educational system. At the third level, conflicts about education fall within the general politics of the State(90). In this case, political conflict that was localised in the educational sector spreads to the political arena of the State.

The above conceptualisation may be interpreted in the light of the first theoretical perspective reviewed in this section. Iannacone's perspective suggests that the autonomy of the State is preserved when internal forces in the State can resist, by means of their expertise and cohesion, the invasion of political forces. This cohesion starts to break up at the second level and is irremediably broken at the third level, as conceptualised by Iannacone.

Also relevant to this thesis is Iannacone's idea of three different dimensions in the expansion of political conflicts (a concept he equates with politicisation): the expansion in the intensity of political conflict, the expansion in the scale of political conflicts, and the expansion in the scope of political conflicts.

The "intensity of politicisation" is conceptualised as "the increased commitment of resources which produce the politicisation of an issue"(91). The level of

commitment of teachers during the discussion of an educational issue, for example, may define its intensity of politicisation. The “scale of politicisation” is proposed as the increase in the number and types of different individuals, groups and organisations involved in the politicisation of an issue(92). In this idea, for example, the number and socio-economic, political or cultural status of individuals or group may influence the scale of politicisation of an issue. The “scope of politicisation” is conceived as situations when issues previously considered apolitical become redefined as proper material for governmental policy(93). For example, a problem in education considered obscure, until a certain time, is made visible and moves into educational policy. These three dimensions of politicisation help to clarify the concept and its possibilities of use in this thesis(94).

Equally important are Iannacone’s views on the public educational system as part of the bureaucratic apparatus of the State. In this perspective, Iannacone conceives an ideal educational system as decentralised, open to the influence of different groups and interests in society, and open to changes, but not overwhelmed by them. This is a view of the educational system in which it controls external forces impinging on education. The educational system exhibits a depoliticised condition(95). Iannacone remarks that this condition suggests a greater dependence of educational processes on general society norms and values than upon governmental intervention.

The above condition may be interpreted in the light of the idea of the “State as a cohesive actor”, the theoretical proposition reviewed earlier. In both perspectives, autonomy and capacity are conceived as basic requirements for a “system” to deal with

political conflict. The difference is that the first perspective addresses this condition in the State as a whole, and Iannacone conceptualises these conditions in the educational system as a part of the State.

Iannacone posits that a decentralised and stable educational system may be disturbed by two sources of educational politicisation: the inability of the educational system to contain its internal conflicts, thus allowing them to spill over into the realm of a nation's general politics; a second source is formed by these political processes of the State aimed at redefining the philosophy, goals and objectives of education(96). Both sources take educational conflicts into the ongoing politics of the nation's central government(97).

The above conceptualisation suggests that when conflicts of the educational system expand into the central State, this situation may put the legitimacy of the State at risk. A similar risk is involved when the central State decides to intervene in the educational system and its problems are exposed. This may highlight the general problem of the legitimation of the State itself.

In the light of the first theoretical perspective, these conceptualisations may be interpreted as cases in which the role of the State as an arena of political conflict contradicts the role of the State as cohesive corporate actor. The role of the State as a corporate actor is thus affected by the role of the State as an arena of political conflict, the expansion of conflict in this arena compelling the State to intervene in education, with educational problems becoming problems of the State as a whole. The "State as

an effective actor” is harmed by the politicisation of education, and, consequently, the legitimacy of the State is also jeopardised.

Iannacone summed up the above ideas by positing that when the educational agencies contain their political conflicts and still respond to the perceived needs of society, the educational system, as an apparatus of the State, enhances the legitimacy of the State. Conversely, when education’s internal government appears highly politicised or appears rigidly unresponsive to changing demands, the politics of the State cannot ignore educational problems. It has to “seize the provocation of educational politicisation within the general politics of the State, risking the legitimacy of the whole in the attempt to control education”(98).

This proposal is the central point in Iannacone’s perspective. In it, ideas of changes in the relationship of the State to the educational system find full expression when combined with the ideas of educational politicisation and the legitimacy of the State.

Since this thesis points to inadequacies in the relationship of the State with elementary education, these ideas are critically useful. They also indicate that the autonomy of the educational system within a State is possible and desirable. However, reaffirming what was said in Evans’, Rueschemeyer’s and Skocpol’s perspective, the educational system has to create conditions for its autonomy and capacity.

### 1.2.3 - The Third Theoretical Perspective: Strategies of the State in Education

This perspective was introduced by Hans N. Weiler in the article "Legalization, Expertise, and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", published in Comparative Education Review in June 1983. Weiler also presented this perspective during international conferences held in Washington, Geneva and California(99).

Weiler offers a series of arguments and analyses of strategies of the State in education(100). Based on Habermas, this perspective is centred on two fundamental arguments: that the State has been facing grave problems of "credibility and acceptability"(101), and that the increase of State activities is related to the corresponding yet disproportionate increase in the State's need for legitimation(102).

For Weiler, the increasing activities of the State in education are not aimed at expressing an increased genuine interest in education, but are aimed "at rebalancing the State's legitimacy"(103). This idea challenges the traditional perception that more emphasis on educational policies is a demonstration of increased concern by the State for education.

Weiler argues that education is a preferred area for the State's retrieval of legitimacy, and that "the retrieval of legitimacy becomes a matter of central concern for the State's authorities, this concern becoming a powerful determinant of the ways in which policies are designed and implemented"(104). Paradoxically, this raises the

question of the circumstances or periods in which other areas, other than education, have primacy as the “locus” for the State’s retrieval of legitimacy. In the perspective of Weiler, education is not only a preferred area for the State’s retrieval of legitimacy, but there is a pattern in this strategy. Weiler indicates that the most common strategies of the State in education are legislation, experimentation and participation. These strategies are conceptualised as “strategies of compensatory legitimation”(105).

Weiler’s analysis of the legalisation strategy points to the “tremendous increase in the role played by legal norms and judicial decision in shaping educational policy”(106). National laws for education, for instance, have the intrinsic power to raise hopes for change and highlight the reforming purposes of the State. On “experimentation”, Weiler argues that “the utilisation of research-based knowledge in the process of making policy provides one possible strategy for enhancing the legitimacy of the process”(107). Weiler’s argument is that the use of experimentation may have a delaying action in an “explosive political situation”. Trying out something new can satisfy both the advocates of the status quo and the advocates of change(108). Weiler indicates that planning is the most common strategy of experimentation used by the State. The statements indicate that experimentation is a potent strategy. This can be used when there is a great need of legitimation in the State: for example, in a situation where there is a high level of political conflict about education, as conceptualised by Iannacone.

On “participation”, Weiler argues that the State “may tolerate or actually institute various schemes for citizens’ participation”(109). This toleration and

encouragement by the State is seen as “a way of coping with the very crisis that the emergence of citizen’s[sic] initiatives reveals”(110). In both cases the State is in search of legitimacy but the strategy of participation transmits the impression that the State is really interested in hearing the ideas of citizens about the crisis in question. In addition, this strategy enhances democratic principles and this also contributes to enhancing the State’s legitimacy. Completing the analysis of strategies, Weiler discusses the idea that the modern State while rhetorically committed to change and reform, is structurally incapable of bringing about real reform(111).

Weiler’s final conclusions question the State’s position as the sole actor in strategies of compensatory legitimation(112). More significantly, Weiler questions the effectiveness of these strategies. In fact, Weiler states that there is increasing evidence of bottom-up movements in the three types of strategy(113). This conclusion suggests that the use of strategies of compensatory legitimation by the State is not a permanent way to defer change, nor to administer conflict, and not even to attain the objectives of legitimation sought by the State.

It remains to pull these relatively abstract ideas of the theoreticians together, in ways useful for the work of this thesis. This is the task of the next section.

### **1.3 - RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND ARGUMENTS OF THE THESIS**

It is argued in this section that the three theoretical perspectives reviewed

earlier allow of a more precise definition of the problem of this thesis. This will offer greater possibilities for the analysis of the relationship of the State with elementary education during the time periods indicated earlier.

The problem addressed in this thesis is the inability of the State in Brazil effectively to provide elementary education for all children, as mandated by the Constitution. The central concern is the inability of the State to perform its duty in an effective way. This theme directs the reinterpretation of the problem of “the State as an actor”, as introduced by Skocpol. In the light of this proposal, a major theme of this thesis can be understood as:

The lack of autonomy and capacity of the State to develop effective policy in elementary education.

In other words, borrowing from Skocpol, the central theme is the State as an ineffective actor. Secondly, following Weiler, in the category “The Construction of Elementary Education Policy”, the thesis will remain sensitive to the idea that:

Governments have continuously expressed the aspiration to be actors in elementary education but effective action was not as much their priority as the *image of actor* conveyed by the announcement of elementary education reform.

As argued, the State may announce an objective, as for example change or reform of a situation, to convey the image of the State as an actor. This may be a frequent strategy of the State when effective action is not possible. Weiler points out that the announcement of reform or change is a potent strategy to convey the idea of the strength of the State, this serving to enhance its legitimacy. Thus, the thesis will



remain sensitive to the idea that:

An increase in activities by the State in education may correspond to the State's need for legitimation.

This may occur at the same time as the State pursues short-term goals. Thus the thesis will remain sensitive to the idea that:

Despite the expressed objective of the State to develop an effective system of elementary education, the State as "guardian of universal interests" may develop strategies aimed at transitory problems in elementary education.

This area of sensitivity combines concepts present in the theoretical proposals reviewed earlier: Evans', Rueschemeyer's and Skocpol's conceptualisations about the State as actor, and the State as a "guardian of the universal interests", and Weiler's suggestions about the State as strategist. Promises of elementary education reform, as posited by Weiler, convey the image of the State as an actor. However as a strategist it develops short-term policies oriented to transitory problems of elementary education.

For the "The Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy", the thesis will consider the proposition - following Rueschemeyer and Evans - that

The lack of cohesive corporate action in the structure of the educational sector has been a permanent feature of the State in Brazil;

and that:

The lack of cohesive and corporate action in the educational sector has been characterised by the centralisation of resources and decisions in the State, and mismanagement in the educational system to develop elementary education.

Centralisation is an obvious obstacle to the existence of cohesive and corporate action in the State, as posited in the first theoretical perspective. As a consequence of this obstacle, the relative autonomy of the educational system, as an arm of the State, is impaired. Also, the capacity of the educational system to develop elementary education is harmed because adequate planning is impossible without the possibilities of decision-making and resources at the local level. In this case, it is not possible to visualise a stable and autonomous situation for the educational system as conceptualised by Iannacone.

As conceived by Rueschemeyer and Evans, these can be a contradiction between the State's role as corporate actor and the State's role as an arena of political conflict. In this case, the State promises to give priority to elementary education reform. This strategy reinforces the State's image as an actor and, consequently, the State's legitimacy, as conceived by Weiler. Contradicting this declaration, the State, to avoid stimulating conflict (as posited by Iannacone) in its political arena, gives priority to particular interests. Thus, the thesis will remain sensitive to the idea that:

Despite declarations of the State recognising the need to give priority to effective action in elementary education, the State has given priority to realising the interests of special groups

The survey of the theoretical literature also affects the category of the "Political Basis for Solution of Elementary Education Problems". Here the point is now not merely that during the major part of the period, debate on elementary education within civil society has been low in intensity, scale and scope. The more important point to be

sensitive to is that:

For much of the period covered by this thesis, educational debates were not politicised in society. The masses have been uninvolved spectators in this debate. Moreover, the important demands of educators for competent intervention of the State in elementary education did not move the State.

Thus, although educators demanded the intervention of the State to change the situation in elementary education, these pressures did not affect the implementation strategies of the State. The State opted for responding to the interests of groups representing potential social conflicts in the urban areas. As a consequence, the thesis will remain sensitive to the idea that:

Full politicisation of elementary education emerged late in society. The key point is that until the New Republic elementary education was not an issue for political forces representative of society.

The emergence of elementary education as an issue in society coincided with the re-emergence of political parties in Brazil. Iannacone's perspective potentially helps to analyse the relationship of the educational system to political forces, and the risks involved in this relationship.

This specification of "areas of sensitivity" helps to close the gap between the operational arguments listed earlier, and concepts of the State. The combination of the two provides, via the formal arguments, specificity, and via the propositions about "areas of sensitivity" the possibility of keeping a complex and theorised notion of State action running through the analysis. Throughout the thesis both the formal arguments and the "areas of sensitivity" will be retained at different points in the

analysis. Both perspectives - the formal arguments and the “areas of sensitivity” - will guide the overall Conclusion to the thesis.

#### **1.4 - CONCLUSION**

This chapter presented an overview of the thesis. The chapter identified the problem of the inability of the Brazilian State to accomplish effectively its constitutional duty to deliver elementary education to all children. It was suggested that the condition of elementary education in Brazil over time can be understood as a consequence of a lack of “political will”. However this concept was considered too vague for useful analysis, and for this reason it was broken down in four more concrete categories.

These categories were the “The Construction of Elementary Education Policy”, “Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy”, “The Political Basis for Solution of Elementary Education Problems”, and “The Effectiveness of the State in Elementary Education”. Except for the last category, the categories, in turn, were broken down into propositions that constituted an overall set of argument and sensitivities about “political will”.

Another main task of the chapter was to identify and examine three selected theoretical perspectives from the literature on the State. These propositions were: Evan’s, Rueschemeyer’s and Skocpol’s “Bringing the State Back In”, Iannacone’s “Educational Administration and the Challenge of Change: Politics, Power and Policy”, and Weiler’s “Legalization, Expertise, and Participation: Strategies of

Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy". The analysis of this literature was used to restate the problem of this thesis.

The thesis will now proceed to test the arguments of Chapter One in Chapters Two to Five. The analysis has a surface structure of "narrative", that is, there is a considerable amount of descriptive material which outlines what happened in particular time-periods.

However, this narrative is organised in two ways:

First, as indicated, there is a formal sub-division of each chapter into sub-sections which follow four central themes: the construction of elementary education policy, difficulties in the implementation of elementary education policy, the political basis for solution of elementary education problems, and the effectiveness of the State.

Secondly, the narrative itself, the description of events, is guided by the arguments and sensitivities offered earlier. It would be cumbersome in the extreme, and destructive of the flow of the narrative to rehearse fully in each and every sub-section the detailed individual arguments. Nevertheless, the narrative needs to be seen as explicitly testing the ideas already put forward. Therefore, each argument has been simplified into a phrase.

The simplification is as follows:

a) Under the general theme of, and within the general narrative on “The construction of elementary education policy”, three ideas are being pursued:

- the creation by the State of an *image of action*
- *the search for legitimation* by the State
- and *the distractor of transitory problems*

b) Under the general theme of, and within the general narrative on “Difficulties in the implementation of elementary education policy”, three ideas are being pursued:

- incoherent corporate action
- local autonomy
- special group interests

c) Under the general theme of, and within the general narrative on “The political basis for the solution of elementary education problems”, three ideas are being pursued:

- scale of debate
- penetration of debate
- political articulation of the debate

The fourth general category of analysis in each chapter is “The effectiveness of the State in elementary education”. This section, as indicated earlier, measures the

“bottom line”: what were the measurable quantitative effects of the State action or inaction on the provision of elementary education. Three main measures are used: enrolment rate, non-completion rate, and where appropriate, regional variables are noted.

Thus, in the following chapters, through this technique, an effort is made to run the narrative and the arguments and “sensitivities” simultaneously.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

1. The term "State" is used in this thesis to refer to the totality of public authority in society, comprising national, state and local (or municipal) levels of government. See P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1985. In Brazil, Union, is also a normal term to refer to the State, the term Union appearing in some citations in the thesis.
2. The term elementary education is used in this thesis exclusively in reference to public elementary education.
3. This includes both the first and second consecutive terms (1930-1937 and 1937-1945) of Getúlio Vargas as President of Brazil.
4. The term "individual state(s)" is used in this thesis in reference to the sub-national (state) level of government. Brazil is a Federative Republic of 27 individual states and 1 Federal District.
5. See Brazil, A Educação nas Mensagens Presidenciais [Education in Presidential Messages], Vol. I, Ministry of Education, INEP: Brasilia, DF., 1987, p. 123.
6. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 24 DE FEVEREIRO DE 1934 [Constitution of the Republic of the United States of Brazil of 24 February 1934], in ALMEIDA, A. M. de (ed.), Constituições Brasileiras [Brazilian Constitutions], 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Art. 151, Edições Saraiva: São Paulo, Brazil, 1963.
7. The term "central State" is used in this thesis in reference to the federal (or national) level of administration.
8. See Title V, Chapter II, Art. 156. of the CONSTITUIÇÃO DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 24 DE FEVEREIRO DE 1934 [Constitution of the Republic of the United States of Brazil of 24 February 1934], in ALMEIDA, A. M. de (ed.), Constituições.....op. cit.
9. See this idea in Hermes Lima, Anísio Teixeira Estadista da Educação [Anísio Teixeira a Statesman of Education], Civilização Brasileira [Brazilian Civilization]: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 21978, p. 112.
10. For 1933 data about enrolment see BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens Presidenciais, V. I., MEC/INEP: Brasilia, 1987, p. 128. For data about enrolment in 1945 see BRASIL, Estatísticas da Educação Nacional [Statistics of National Education], Ministry of Education: Brasilia, D. F. 1972.
11. For data about enrolment in 1945, see Barbara Freitag, Escola, Estado e Sociedade [School, State and Society], Moraes: São Paulo, 1986, p. 52.



12. For data about enrolment in 1933, see BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.... V. I. op. cit., p. 128.
13. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 18 DE SETEMBRO DE 1946, Chapter II, in ALMEIDA, A. M. de, (ed.), Constituições ..... op. cit.
14. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., pp. 213-216.
15. For these data on population in 1946 see BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit. p. 157. For data on population and enrolment in 1964 see, *ibid.* V. II. p. 386. For data on enrolment in 1945, see Barbara Freitag, Escola, Estado....op. cit., p. 52.
16. See BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. II. op. cit., p. 428.
17. *ibid.* p. 385.
18. BRASIL, LEI Nº 5.692 DE 11 DE AGOSTO DE 1971 - ESTABELECE DIRETRIZES E BASES PARA A EDUCAÇÃO DE 1º e 2º GRAUS [Law Nº 5, 692 of 11 August 1971 - Establishes Guidelines and Bases for Elementary and Secondary Education], Leis Básicas do Ensino de 1º e 2º Graus. [Basic Laws of Elementary and Secondary Education], Ministry of Education: Brasília, DF., 1983, p. 17.
19. This tax was established by Law Nº 4,440, 27 October 1964. For an account of this law, see Fontoura Amaral, (ed.), Leis da Educação, Editora Aurora: Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, 1969.
20. For more information about the State's inability to act, see Teresinha Rosa Cruz, Educação e Organização Social, [Education and Social Organisation], Vozes: Petropolis, Brazil, 1984, p. 218.
21. *ibid.*
22. *ibid.*
23. See BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. II., op. cit. p. 428.
24. BRASIL, Ensino de 1º Grau- Taxa de Sucesso [Rate of Success in Elementary Education], Ministry of Education, SG/SEPLAN: Brasília, 1990. p. 2.
25. BRASIL, Programa Educação Para Todos: Caminho Para Mudança, [Programme of Education for All: The Path to Change], Ministério da Educação, [Ministry of Education], Brasília, DF., 1986.
26. This event, "D DAY", had enormous success when it was launched in 1987. The author of this thesis participated in its organisation. On September 17, a debate about elementary education was organised in all Brazilian states in schools and



many other institutions of civil society. People of diverse interests, in addition to teachers, school administrators, parents, students and politicians, participated in the debate.

27. Educators, both academic analysts and teachers, were aware of all these problems. Many studies revealing the problematic situation in elementary education were published in the first year of the New Republic.
28. This was the first time in Brazil that a debate had been initiated by the State on a national scale.
29. BRASIL, CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL, 5 DE OUTUBRO DE 1988, Título VIII, Seção I, Art. 205, Congresso Nacional [Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, 5 October 1988, Title VIII, Section I, Art. 205, National Congress]; Brasília, DF., 1988, p. 31.
30. As indicated, the statistic “8 million children outside elementary education” was repeatedly used by politicians. A 1986 study made in the Ministry of Education/Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education, showed that, in reality, there were around 4 million children not in elementary education in Brazil.
31. The analysis of elementary education in the North and Northeast regions is presented in Chapter Five in this thesis.
32. BRASIL. “Visão Panorâmica do Ensino de 1º Grau” [Panoramic View of Elementary Education], Estudos Estatísticos [Statistical Studies], Ministry of Education, SG/SEPLAN: Brasília, DF, 1990. p. 3.
33. BRASIL. Sinopse Estatística do Ensino Regular de 1º Grau, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989 [Statistical Synopsis of Elementary Education], Ministry of Education, Brasília, DF, 1990.
34. BRASIL. Programa Setorial de Ação do Governo Collor, 1991-1995 [The Collor Government’s Sectorial Programme of Action], Ministry of Education: Brasília, DF., 1991, pp. 16-19.
35. See this objective of the government in the document “Brasil: Alfabetizar é Libertar” [Brazil: Teaching Reading and Writing is teaching Liberation], Ministry of Education, mimeo: Brasília, 1990, p. 9.
36. The CIACS were part of Collor government’s policy on elementary education that later came in for criticism.
37. This educational movement will be discussed in Chapter Five in this thesis.
38. Officials in the Ministry of Education presented a draft proposal entitled “Technical Notes” which will be discussed in Chapter Five. Also, studies by the educator Guiomar Namó de Mello *et al* made important contributions to elementary education policy. References to these studies are included in Chapter Five.

39. The author of this thesis has interviewed a number of Brazilian educators, academic analysts and politicians about the meaning of “political will”. From the data collected, it was not possible to obtain a clear idea of the concept. The general idea was the “political desire or force in the State to pursue an objective”.
40. Anísio Teixeira from 1930 repeatedly referred to the indecision of the State about intervention in elementary education. See for example, Hermes Lima, Anísio Teixeira Estadista da Educação, [Anísio Teixeira Statesman of Education], Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1978.
41. Clemente Mariani referred to this idea in the “1948 Exposição de Motivos” [1948 Statements of Intentions], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos, [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], Vol. 68, Nº 160, Ministério da Educação: Brasília, Brazil, 1987, pp. 623-639.
42. This idea of a group of educators, known as the “Pioneers of Education”, is clearly stated in the 1959 “Manifesto dos Educadores mais uma vez Convocados. Manifesto ao povo e ao Governo” [Manifesto of the Educators Once More Summoned. Manifesto to the People and to the Government] in P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da Educação, [History of Education], Cortez: São Paulo, Brasil, 1990, pp. 140-145.
43. See references to the disregard by the State of elementary education in V. P. Paiva, Educação Popular e Educação de Adultos [Popular Education and Adult Education], 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Edições Loyola: São Paulo, Brazil, 1987.
44. See the reference to the lack of political will of the State in Romanelli O. de O., História da Educação no Brasil [History of Education in Brazil], Vozes: Petropolis, Brazil, 1988.
45. Nelson Piletti, Estrutura e Funcionamento do Ensino do Primeiro Grau [Structure and Functioning of Elementary Education], Atica: São Paulo, Brazil, 1989.
46. There are so many references, in the educational literature, to the lack of political will of the State to solve problems of elementary education in Brazil that it is impossible to cite them all.
47. This approach is mainly used in the educational literature which centres on the importance for educators to stimulate the participation of society in the debate about elementary education.
48. This idea is central in Moacir Gadotti’s work in the 1990s.
49. On the same lines as Gadotti, see for example, Genuino Bordignon, “Gestão Democrática” [Democratic Management], in Gadotti Moacir e José Eustáquio (eds.), Município e Educação, [Municipality and Education], Cortez: São Paulo, 1993, p. 171.

50. Pedro Demo, Pobreza Política, [Political Poverty], Cortez: São Paulo, 1988.
51. P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State Back In, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, UK, 1985.
52. Laurence Iannaccone, "Educational Administration and the Challenge of Change: Politics, Power and Policy", lecture presented in the Second "Congresso" of the Interamerican Society for Educational Administration, Brasilia, Brazil, 1982.
53. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise, and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative Education Review, June, Vol. 27, 1983.
54. P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, & Theda Skocpol, (eds.), Bringing the State.... op. cit., Preface.
55. Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research", in P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State....op. cit, p. 20.
56. *ibid.* p. 8.
57. Dietrich Rueschemeyer and P. B. Evans, "The State and Economic Transformation: Toward an Analysis of the Conditions Underlying Intervention", in P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State....op. cit. p. 47.
58. Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research", in P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State....op. cit., p. 9.
59. *ibid.*, p. 9. Skocpol explains that State actions may extend beyond societal demands: in essence, that the State may initiate actions originated in its interior and considered by the State to be important for reaching its declared goals in society.
60. *ibid.*
61. The different approaches of Marxist theorists to State autonomy are discussed by the Editors of Bringing the State....op. cit., p. 350.
62. Theda Skocpol, "Bringing the State Back In: Strategies of Analysis in Current Research" in P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State....op. cit., p. 9.
63. *ibid.*
64. *ibid.* p. 14.
65. *ibid.* p. 9.

66. *ibid.*
67. *ibid.*
68. *ibid.*
69. *ibid.* p. 16.
70. Dietrich Rueschemeyer and P. B. Evans, "The State and Economic Transformation: Toward an Analysis of the Conditions Underlying Effective Intervention", *in* P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State ....*op. cit.*, p. 50.
71. *ibid.*, p. 47.
72. *ibid.*, p. 56.
73. *ibid.*, p. 51.
74. *ibid.*
75. *ibid.*
76. F. H. Cardoso, "On the Characterization of Authoritarian Regimes in Latin America", *in* D. Collier (ed.), The New Authoritarianism in Latin America, Princeton University Press: Princeton, N. J., United States of America, 1979, p. 51.
77. Dietrich Rueschemeyer and P. B. Evans "The State and Economic Transformation: Toward an Analysis of the Conditions Underlying Effective Intervention", *in* P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State....*op. cit.*, p. 50.
78. *ibid.*
79. *ibid.*
80. *ibid.*
81. *ibid.*
82. *ibid.* p. 63.
83. This approach was developed by Alexis de Tocqueville, as discussed by Theda Skocpol, in "Strategies of Analysis in Current Research", *in* P. B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, & Theda Skocpol (eds.), Bringing the State ....*op. cit.*, p. 21.
84. *ibid.*

85. *ibid.*
86. Theoretical guidance for this model is found in the work of E. E. Schattschneider, The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America, Holt, Rinehart & Winston: New York, NY., 1960.
87. Laurence Iannacone, "Educational Administration and the Challenge of Change"....*op. cit.*, p. 1.
88. Laurence Iannacone, "Educational Administration and the Challenge of Change" ....*op. cit.*, p. 1. This author began to develop the construct "three levels of change in education and politics" in his work "Three Views of Change in Educational Politics" in J. D. Scribner (ed.), The Politics of Education, Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1977, pp. 255-286.
89. Laurence Iannacone, "Educational Administration and the Challenge of Change"....*op. cit.*, p. 1.
90. *ibid.*
91. *ibid.* pp. 2-3. The author declared that this concept was based on Schattschneider's idea. For more details, see E. E. Schattschneider, The Semisovereign People: A Realist's View of Democracy in America, Holt, Rinehart & Winston: New York, NY., 1960.
92. *ibid.*
93. *ibid.*
94. *ibid.*
95. *ibid.*, p. 5. Iannacone points to the similarity of these concepts to concepts of change developed in Sander's model. See Benno Sander, "Administração da Educação no Brasil: é hora da Relevância"[Administration of Education in Brazil: The Moment of Relevance], Revista Educação Brasileira [Brazilian Education Revue], CRUB: Brasília, Brazil, 1982, p. 14. *ibid.*
96. *ibid.* In these cases, the professional knowledge of the educational system is challenged by conflicts between the politics of the educational system and State politics.
97. *ibid.*
98. *ibid.*
99. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise, and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative....*op. cit.* p. 260.

100. *ibid.* The author declares that the theme of this model, the legitimacy of the modern state as a problem, is a recent phenomenon in the literature.
101. *ibid.* (quoting J. Habermas) Legitimacy Crisis, translated by McCarthy T., Heineman: London, 1976, p. 96).
102. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative....op. cit., p. 259.
103. *ibid.*
104. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative....op. cit., p. 261
105. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative....op. cit. p. 262.
106. *ibid.*, p. 263. On the use of the strategy of legalisation by the State, Weiler concludes that the increased role of the Courts is a symptom of the legitimacy deficit of the two other branches of the government.
107. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative....op. cit. p. 268. On this experimentation strategy, Weiler concludes that it offers to the State leadership a chance to demonstrate its concerns with guaranteeing reform during the time in which the experimental programme is being developed. He also concludes that this strategy is valuable when other programmes of change are not available, and when there is a need to defer for a long time further political decision concerning reform.
108. *ibid.*
107. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise and Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy, Comparative....op. cit., p. 273. Weiler adds that the toleration and encouragement of the strategy of participation by the State is seen as a "way of coping with the very crisis that the emergence of citizens' initiatives reveal". According to Neo-Marxist scholars, participation is ambivalent, since it can serve as an instrument for both the ruler and for the ruled.
110. *ibid.*, p. 272. (quoting Claus Offe), Strukturprobleme des kapitalistischen Staates, [Structural problems of Capitalist States), Suhrkamp: Frankfurt, 1972, pp. 124-125).
111. *ibid.*
112. H. N. Weiler, "Legalization, Expertise, Participation: Strategies of Compensatory Legitimation in Educational Policy", Comparative....op. cit., p. 276.
113. *ibid.*

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **THE VARGAS ERA (1930-1945): A MILESTONE IN THE SEARCH FOR ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

#### **2.1 - PURPOSE, ARGUMENT AND ORGANISATION**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the relationship of the State to elementary education during the Vargas Era.

It is argued overall in this chapter that the objective expressed by the State of inaugurating a public system of education in Brazil was not fulfilled. Educational policy was implemented by an administration divided by internal contradictions. The administration was unable to follow the ideas of the Pioneers of Education. However, in response to demands from the new urban classes in a time of urbanisation and industrialisation, the State was able to promote the expansion of school buildings, and to increase enrolment and the productivity of elementary education, even though the State began from a low base and the organisation of a system of public elementary education had not yet been firmly established.

Therefore, this chapter has been organised into six sections. After this first section, the second section, "The Construction of Elementary Education Policy", examines the initial process of the establishment of elementary education in Brazil: the creation of institutions, the initial formulation of planning, and the expansion of school building. The third section, "Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy",



appraises the central State's attempt to break the historical tradition of disregard (for elementary education) through policies designed to coordinate the efforts of individual states and municipalities to promote its expansion. The fourth section, "The Political Basis for the Solution of Elementary Education Problems", evaluates the influence of politics, urbanisation and industrialisation, and the educational movement of the Pioneers of Education on the formulation of solutions to problems in elementary education. The fifth section, "The Effectiveness of the State in Elementary Education" assesses the effectiveness of the State in establishing elementary education in this period. The sixth section presents the conclusion of the Chapter.

## **2.2 - THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

This section analyses the initial process of formulation of educational policy, reviewing the creation of institutions and the formulation and enactment of legislation for the initial expansion of elementary education during the Vargas Era.

Its is argued in this section that the government expressed the decision to intervene in education to organise an effective system of elementary education in Brazil. However, the State intervention was aimed at responding to the immediate necessity to build schools and to expand enrolment in elementary education.

The process of the formulation of educational policy began in 1930, when the "Old Republic" (1889-1930) ended and the "New Republic", also known as Second Republic (1930-1945)(1), was established with the government of Getúlio Dornelles Vargas(2). This

was the time when public education began to be organised in Brazil. There were expectations that the new government taking power in 1930 would lead Brazil to modernity. This signified a break with tradition and the introduction of change in various sectors of Brazil. A group of educators insisted that the new government should introduce a new era in which the State would take a more interventionist approach to education(3).

In the past, elementary education had been a minor concern of the central State. In 1827, the first law on elementary education had prescribed the creation of primary schools (then called “schools of first letters”) in towns and villages(4). In 1834, the Additional Act indicated that the provinces should be responsible for elementary education(5). During this time, the central State remained uncommitted to elementary education, in spite of ideas in favour of State intervention(6). In the late 1920s, as educational experiments, model schools were started in some individual states(7). However, the State in the Old Republic did not extend to other schools the changes introduced in those experimental schools(8).

After this period of *laissez faire* during the Old Republic, the decision of the government to intervene in elementary education became apparent, for the first time, though hesitantly, in a declaration by Vargas announcing the “beginning of a new era, a time in which the State would take care of the education of the popular classes”(9). This declaration represented a challenge taken up by the central State, and thus also marked the invention of an image of action. Public elementary education was declared one of the two major national problems (the other being labour organisation). The organisation of a national system of education involved a solution to the inheritance from previous governments: partial and disorganised elementary education initiatives in some individual

states(10).

Thus, the organisation of a national system of education, after a century of non-involvement with elementary education, implied the creation by the central State of an image of action in relation to the educational system. To the central State, this relationship meant two things: either the central State would help the individual states, or there would be a more forceful and direct central State policy. As stated by Vargas in 1930:

The capital question in education, demanding efforts corresponding to its importance, is undoubtedly elementary education. The State should not be indifferent to problems affecting this area. The State should fight the problems by intervening indirectly, and directly if necessary, in elementary education

(11).

Despite this forceful pronouncement of the State to convey an image of action, this objective, whether pursued by indirect or direct means, was delayed. First, to prepare the way for the new task of the central State, the government created the Ministry of Educational Affairs and Public Health in 1930(12). This institution would be responsible for providing guidelines to national education, including the supervision of elementary education in the individual states(13). However, this Ministry had to undergo various reforms before it was ready to confront its duties(14). Secondly, the 1930 Francisco Campos Reform, which redefined the organisation of the educational system did not include elementary education, discussing only secondary and higher education(15).

Three years after the announcement of the State's decision to intervene indirectly or directly in elementary education, the central State was still not involved. Elementary

educational policy continued to be implemented, if at all, with difficulty. The State recognised the problem and the poor situation in elementary education was acknowledged in the 1933 Presidential Address:

Until now we have not done anything to create a definite organisation (of education). There are partial initiatives in the states, but these are incomplete and unsystematic.

(16).

The various attempts of the individual states to organise elementary education served, at least, to call the attention of the central government to the poor situation of national elementary education. This situation was becoming critical as the individual states tried to expand elementary education(17). From the perspective of the central government “there were tremendous defects and disorganisation in elementary education”(18). These two problems were demanding the urgent attention of the central State. To reinforce the image of action, Vargas declared in 1933 that the State “could not postpone, indefinitely, the solution to these problems”(19).

The expansion of school buildings was considered the solution to the problems in elementary education, and was also a way for the State to obtain legitimacy. As declared by Vargas “it was not possible to teach without schools”(20). However, the expansion of elementary education demanded legislation and financial resources. The problem of legislation was solved with the establishment of the 1934 Constitution(21). For the first time, a chapter in a Constitution was devoted to education: elementary education was declared everybody’s right, compulsory, free, and extended to adults(22). The Constitution also prescribed the percentages of financial resources that the three administrative levels of

the State should allocate for elementary education(23). In addition, this legislation determined the formulation of a national plan of education to orient the implementation of these prescriptions(24).

The implementation of the prescription for elementary education funding needed time, but the decision to provide “free elementary education for all” also implied an immediate need for new buildings to be provided by the individual states and municipalities. There was also a need to formulate a national plan. Three years later, in 1936, the Year of Education as it was termed by the government(25), the national education plan began to be formulated by the National Board of Education.

At the beginning of 1937, this plan was almost ready and there were hopes that it “would be a decisive stage in producing the awaited results in elementary education”(26). At the same time, convinced that the problem in elementary education was not only a problem of numbers but also a problem of quality, the State was to create the National Institute for Pedagogic Studies, dedicated to educational research(27).

However, the democratic objectives of the State expressed in the constitutional prescriptions and the first policies to implement them were short-lived. With the Vargas’ *coup d’etat* in 1937, the authoritarian government changed the orientation of the educational system. A new constitution was enacted in 1937(28). It omitted the prescription for elementary education funding, and restricted the offer of “elementary education to all” by establishing a tax to be paid by “people who were not able to prove a shortage of financial resources”(29). In addition, the role of the State in the education of

children was not emphasised as much as in the 1934 Constitution. The emphasis was on the education of children as a “duty and natural right of parents”, with the State collaborating in “a major or subsidiary way to facilitate the execution of this duty”(30).

The 1937 Constitution signalled the diminished concern by the State to create an image of action in elementary education, even at a time of increased centralisation. Ferreira Costa, for example, noting this combination of disregard and centralisation, has argued that “the tradition that excused the State from any intervention in elementary education was so deeply rooted that it was not affected even at a time of centralised autocracy”(31). Actually, the central State’s emphasis on nationalist ideas led the educational system to adopt policies with political content, such as the compulsory singing of the national anthem and the cult of the national flag(32).

However, the building of schools continued, as demands for enrolment in elementary education increased, but there is contradictory information on the building of schools in the rural areas. While there are indications that Vargas was building schools in those areas to address the unrest among the peasants and reduce the risk of local communist propaganda(33), after the Vargas Era, the government alleged that “until 1945 there were no schools in the rural area”(34).

Educational policy at the beginning of the establishment of elementary education was characterised by clearly stated State objectives. Even though most of this policy was limited to its formulation, it did represent a change in comparison with the past(35). In the second part of the period, from 1937 until 1945 there was not even any expression by the

State of an image of action in any official declarations(36).

However, there were other serious obstacles which hindered the effective organisation of the public education system during both parts of the Vargas Era. These obstacles will be analysed in the next section.

### **2.3 - THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

This section analyses obstacles in the co-ordination between the central State, the individual states and the municipalities in the establishment and initial expansion of public elementary education during the Vargas Era.

It is argued that, despite the recognition by the State that the creation of co-ordination between the administrative levels of the State was necessary, the major difficulty in the expansion of elementary education in this period were the centralisation of decision-making and financial resources by the central State, and mismanagement and corruption in the individual states.

The State, after 1930, tried to reverse two of the characteristics of elementary education administration before 1930: the weak role of the central State, and the lack of financial resources for elementary education in the provinces. The attempt to reverse the first characteristic was analysed in the last section. With respect to the second characteristic, the government declared that the financial difficulty of the individual states in

organizing and maintaining the educational system was not an insoluble problem(37).

In order to reverse this situation in the individual states, the government proposed to develop a “spirit of co-ordination” between the federal, state and municipal levels of the State(38) This proposal represented a remarkable change in the attitude of the central State to elementary education. Since the 1834 Additional Act, the legislation that had exempted the central State from allocating financial resources to elementary education, the central State had not been involved with elementary education(39).

However, in introducing its proposal for co-ordination, the central government was aware of the difficulties present in the administration of elementary education by the individual states. The government was disturbed by the inability of the local levels to administer the large sum of money allocated to elementary education. The central government accused the individual states of mismanagement and corruption in dealing with financial resources allocated for elementary education. President Vargas pointed out that

Individual states were charged with elementary education. Almost all of them obtained large loans, above their financial capacity. As a result, large sums of money overloaded many states beyond their limits of credit. The answer to the question “how much was destined for the development of education?” is very sad. In reality, the states spent the money to build expensive public edifices, to organise pompous celebrations and in certain cases to maintain the police force. In so doing, the states ignored the notion that the use of capital in education is the most rewarding administrative activity.

(40).

These serious allegations by the central State indicate the characteristics of the incoherent corporate action developed within the State. The individual states and



municipalities were in a very weak position compared to the position of the central State. The fact that the central State questioned the capacity and honesty of the individual states to administer public elementary education suggests that the creation of coherent corporate action would be a very difficult task for the State. In addition, this declaration revealed the authoritarian position of the central State over the two other levels(41), and also the lack of autonomy of the local level.

Despite these difficulties, the decision of the government, in 1933, was to insist that the idea of “spirit of co-ordination” would solve problems in elementary education. There was, however, a clear proposal on the allocation of financial resources to elementary education:

We should develop a spirit of co-ordination between the Union, the states and municipalities. Also we should be able to abstain from idle and non-productive expenses and allocate a fixed percentage of our budgets to finance the costs of education. This will represent a large step in the solution of the nation’s fundamental problem: elementary education.

(42).

This strategic policy proposed by the State (to allocate fixed percentages to finance elementary education) suggests that the central State considered it necessary to force the individual states to invest in elementary education. It was an authoritarian action, since this policy had not originated from a discussion between the central State and the individual states. Piletti, for example, reviewing this subject, affirmed that “the central State initiated the building of a national system of education in the three levels of responsibility: municipal, state and federal, but, in practice, the building of this system was marked by an in-depth centralisation of the central State’s sphere of influence”(43).

Fixing funding percentages became the main issue in declarations of the State about elementary education. These declarations were increasingly forceful. To the central State, this was a demonstration of its concern for elementary education:

To prove the interest of the Government, the instruction is that the individual states shall apply a minimum of 10 per cent of their revenues to primary education. The individual states should also force the municipalities to use 15 per cent of their revenues for the provision of security, health and public education, when these services are exclusively developed by them.  
(44).

The inclusion of this proposal in the 1934 Constitution was a victory both for the educational system and the central State. For the educational system, the regular financial help from the central State was an opportunity for a more adequate organisation and maintenance of elementary education; for the central State, fixing the percentages would be a step towards solving the problems of mismanagement and corruption in the individual states. With some alterations in the percentages announced in the Vargas proposal, the 1934 Constitution prescribed that the central State and the municipalities should allocate not less than 10 per cent of their tax revenues to the educational system, and the individual states and the Federal District should allocate 20 per cent of their tax revenues(45).

However, coherent corporate action, as proposed by the State, between the three administrative levels was not created. The allocation of financial resources for elementary education continued to be irregular even after the prescription in the 1934 Constitution. As a result, there was a lack of autonomy in the individual states and municipalities, since despite a lack of financial resources they had to respond to demands for more schools and

increasing enrolment(46). The existence of incoherent corporate action within the State was demonstrated by the fact that while the central State was asking the individual states to make an effort to expand the educational system, the expected help from the Union to the individual states was not granted until the end of the Vargas Era(47).

Declarations by the central State, a few months before the 1937 Vargas' coup, did not mention the problems in individual states. They praised the initiatives of the federal government in elementary education, conveying the idea that the constitutional prescriptions of financial resources had promoted co-ordination within the educational sector of the State. Vargas declared that before his government "there was a lack of guidelines for facilitating the co-ordination between the Union (central State) and the individual states, but that after the 1934 Constitution, the prescription of fixed percentages guaranteed the necessary financial resources to reform elementary education"(48).

With the inauguration of Vargas dictatorship in 1937, the autonomy of the local level became still more restricted, since the allocation of financial resources to elementary education became more difficult. A new Constitution was formulated in 1937 and the prescription of financial resources for elementary education was left out. This meant that the central State, individual states, and municipalities were liberated from the financial responsibility assigned in the 1934 Constitution. This action by the new Vargas government indicates that authoritarianism, not overt during the first part of the Vargas Era, became evident during the dictatorial part of the period. As perceived by Chagas, "the indifference of the State that had persisted for more than a century turned into an extreme centralisation during the Vargas Era"(49).

Thus, centralisation, mismanagement, and corruption in the use of financial resources for elementary education demonstrate that the central State, during this period, was not able to move from its traditional disregard to create coherent corporate action between the three administrative levels of the State charged with the development of elementary education. However, events in the context of the Vargas Era also influenced State intervention in elementary education, as will be shown in the next section.

## **2.4 - THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR THE SOLUTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROBLEMS**

The purpose of this section is to examine the influence of political, economic and social change occurring in Brazil after 1930, and the influence of the Pioneers, which culminated in their 1932 educational movement, on the formulation of educational policy for the solution of problems in elementary education.

It is argued in this section that elementary education was not an issue in the political, social and economic debates occurring in Brazil. However, access to elementary education became an issue among the new urban classes. This affected the direction of elementary education policy. This direction was contrary to proposals by the Pioneers for elementary education.

In 1930, Brazil entered a new period in its history. The inauguration of the Vargas Era was also the beginning of major changes in society. The political scene was shifting, the power of the rural oligarchies began to decline, the processes of urbanisation and

industrialisation speeded up, and new social classes developed in towns and villages. In these circumstances, public elementary education began to expand(50).

#### **2.4.1 - The Convergence of Forces**

The year of 1930 was marked by the revolutionary movement that culminated in the new Provisional Government of Getúlio Dorneles Vargas. His immediate aim was to assemble forces from the various sectors of the country to promote the transition from an agrarian to an industrial structure. As mentioned by Thomas Skidmore, the period beginning in 1930 was characterised as “the beginning of an era when the State became an organisation invested in full authority in decision making”(51).

The revolution of 1930 was the result of a coalition between political and military groups. The central aim of these groups was to overthrow the agrarian bourgeoisie, weakened by problems in the coffee market(52). Vargas, however, emerged without a clear political party(53). He used this circumstance with singular political ability to establish alliances with groups of diverse political and ideological orientation(54). In the process, he centralised much of the action to the hands of the government(55). The decision was made to intervene directly and fully in various activities in society(56).

During this period, the elites, in the State and in society, remained undecided between rightist and leftist political tendencies. A central position was gradually adopted by them(57). By 1934, two events attested to the fact that these elites had liberal-democratic political inclinations: the establishment of a Constitution of a democratic kind(58), and the democratic election of Vargas as President(59).

A major issue beginning to emerge in this period was the diversification of the economy through the industrialisation of the country. This was considered a means of avoiding the effects of the agricultural crises and as a solution to many other problems, including unemployment in rural areas. Industrialisation was accompanied by urbanisation(60). Another major issue being discussed was the formation of an incipient middle class(61). As argued in this section, this new class was beginning to demand access to elementary education, a privilege until then reserved for the elites. Yet the participation of an emergent middle class in social and political activities remained severely restricted by the still powerful oligarchies(62).

However, the power of the oligarchies was beginning to be challenged by the ideological activity of the leftist party. This meant that the military (notably the group of lieutenants who had helped Vargas seize power), and rightist political groups such as the landlords, began to worry about the dangers of communist ideas among the new urban classes. The potential risks represented by the new urban classes, and the possibility of the overthrow of rural oligarchies, did not escape the attention of the Government. The new middle class expected to occupy social and political positions that in the past were the privilege of rural oligarchies(63).

In this context, the State expressed its intention of initiating new policies in elementary education. As mentioned earlier, the tone of the 1933 Address reflected the reforming sentiments that pervaded the State and society. In fact, as indicated in the last section, in the 1933 Address the State promised to solve the problems in elementary

education and make it available to all children.

However, there are indications that the solution of elementary education problems was not the main interest of the State, despite Vargas' public statements. Teixeira, for example, argued that "elementary education, the fundamental unity of the educational system, had its importance diluted, hidden by the concerns (of the State) with other social demands originating from the material development of Brazil"(64). Actually, what prevailed in the decision of the State was not the organisation of an effective elementary education system, but its expansion in the scale of demands of the new urban classes, the masses still being kept excluded from this expansion(65). Until 1930, elementary education had been a privilege of the elite, but, with urbanisation, the new middle classes began to see education as a way to prepare their children for better jobs, which fostered their demand for public elementary education(66).

In the political arena of the State, change was also imminent. After a critical period when conflict was controlled by the ability of Vargas, through a coup in 1937, he became dictator(67). The explanation Vargas used to justify the coup was the necessity of maintaining order and progress in the country. The adversaries of the government were removed from the political scene and no major reaction ensued(68).

As indicated earlier, the Vargas' coup of 1937 introduced a period when the democratic ideals of 1934 were silenced. During this dictatorship, political conciliation became increasingly difficult(69). As a result, the State in 1945 was transformed into an arena of political conflict. Eventually, the military "persuaded" Vargas to resign(70).

In the turbulent context surveyed in the following sub-section, a group of educators was initiating a movement for the establishment of public elementary education in Brazil.

#### **2.4.2 - The Educational Movement of the Pioneers of Education**

This sub-section will discuss the ideas put forward by the Pioneers of Education and their influence on the formulation of educational policy aimed at the solution of problems in elementary education.

It is argued that the debate of the Pioneers for effective intervention of the State on elementary education did not move the State to action, because the ideas of the Pioneers did not outweigh the interests of the traditional and the emergent political and economic classes in Brazil.

From the 1920s, the Pioneers of Education, had been making proposals for the organisation of a public education system in Brazil(71). Thus, the ideas of the Pioneers were not a result of changes occurring in the country after 1930. Rather, the genesis of their ideas goes back to the French Revolution and the reorganisation of society in France and the United States in the XIX century(72). This century was considered by the Pioneers as “the period when rational intelligence and the scientific spirit and method obtained their first triumphs”(73). The United States became the nearest source of liberal ideas that influenced the Proclamation of the Republic of Brazil in 1889, and the educational ideas coming from that country, through John Dewey, influenced the Pioneers’ ideology(74). In the 1920s,



when they initiated their intellectual work, ideas of democratic liberalism (and not the pure laissez faire liberalism that characterised State policies in the XVIII and XIX centuries) were at the core of Republican thought in Brazil. Their enthusiasm for public education originated in debates among intellectuals throughout the 1920s, and as indicated earlier, these ideas informed successful experiments in elementary education in several states. In these “pilot studies”, the Pioneers tested new educational methodologies and techniques(75).

When Getúlio Vargas came to power in 1930, the Pioneers expected that the vigorous change occurring in various sectors of Brazil would influence change in the deplorable provision of public elementary education. Until the 1930s, the public schools, although they were few and impoverished, were the only opportunity for education available to the masses(76). The Pioneers had seen elementary education being administered by provinces with poor resources, and its provision limited to the elites. They hoped the new leadership in the government signalled the possibility of elementary education being extended to the masses.

The hopes of the Pioneers were soon disappointed. When they demanded the intervention of the State in education, they did not have in mind centralised decisions at the federal level. On the contrary, they were asking for State intervention in order to coordinate the activities of the three administrative levels in elementary education; they indicated that “the organisation of education by the State should not mean the introduction of “sterile centralisation”(77).

In an attempt to create political articulation of the debate, while the central State denounced failures in the administration of elementary education by the individual states, the Pioneers of Education made public their disagreement with the way the State was conducting the construction of elementary education policy. Reacting to the inadequate education that the State offered to the population, Anísio Teixeira, one of the Pioneers, commented: “there is a scarcity of quantity and a scarcity of quality in elementary education, due to the lack of necessary elements for systematic and planned action, and to the conviction that any kind of education or any school is suitable to the needs of the masses”(78). This opposition, led by a group of twenty-six intellectuals, culminated in a 1932 Manifesto called “O Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova. A reconstrução educacional no Brasil - ao povo e ao governo” [The Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education. The educational reconstruction in Brazil - to the people and to the government](79). This document used ideas that the Pioneers had refined during educational debates and with which they had experimented, in practice, in elementary education.

The central argument in the Pioneer’s debate was that elementary education should include all children, independent of social class or race. Elementary education in the Manifesto was considered to be the fundamental problem of democracies and a correct aspiration for modern societies. The belief of the Pioneers was that the “common man” would acquire his social position through education. For them, elementary education was mass education. This idea inspired their proposal for a comprehensive school defined as “the school for all, as a biological[sic] right of each individual, and as a duty of the State”(80).

In the Manifesto, the Pioneers also proposed that schools should be related to regions and communities. This proposal contrasted with the inflexibility, the lack of concern with regional differences, and the separation from the social world that characterised schools in the Old Republic(81). In their vision, decentralisation was a political reform and evidence of rationality in the State(82). One of the Pioneers of Education, for example, stated that

The full reform of education is a political reform. It is a reform based on permanent decentralisation. This reform should stipulate the creation of adequate agencies in municipalities to administer educational funding and to motivate local initiatives aimed at the implementation of the educational system.

(83).

Even though the Manifesto of the Pioneers was not primarily oriented towards social transformations through education, this did not mean that they were not interested in the political articulation of their debate. One example was their claim that “the only fruitful revolutions were the ones forced or consolidated by education”(84). However, examination of the 1932 Manifesto makes it clear that the Pioneers’ proposals were not concerned with the “social questions”, the term then used to refer to the risk of unrest among the masses due to communist propaganda. The Pioneers rejected the systematic focus on class struggle of Marxist social analyses(85), and proposed education as “the main regulator, or the corrector of the major inequities of the social order”(86).

The similarity of ideas in the Pioneer’s 1932 Manifesto and in the 1933 Presidential Address is evidence that the Pioneers’ debate penetrated the State’s declarations. Both

documents stated that education was the fundamental problem of the nation, and that elementary education was the fundamental problem in democracies(87). Both documents also referred to the deplorable situation of public elementary education in the individual states(88).

However, the position of the central State in elementary education was the antithesis of the one proposed by the Pioneers. The propositions of the Pioneers for State intervention never suggested any authoritarian action by the State in elementary education. However, their proposals were interpreted by the State as the need for a “stronger hand” in the administration of elementary education(89).

Despite its visibility, the debate of the Pioneers did not penetrate society. The main interest of the new middle classes was to have their children enrolled in public elementary education. The quality of elementary education was not an issue in these classes. The government had no political reason to provide elementary education as recommended by the Pioneers, since the demand for quality in elementary education was restricted to that group. In fact, no popular movement followed the publication of the Manifesto(90). Moreover, some intellectuals criticised the “external influence” on the work of the Pioneers of Education. Their perception was that this external influence on the Brazilian intelligentsia was a factor in the alienation of education from the Brazilian context(91). The underlying critique is that the Pioneers “disseminated education to the masses from the top to the bottom, according to the hegemonic standards of dominant classes”(92).

Even though the Pioneers demanded a solution for the problems within the

educational sector of the State, the political, economic, and social changes occurring in Brazil were powerful forces that drove the State into concentrating only on the building of schools. In consequence, this action took priority over the need to overcome problems in the internal structure of the State. Even though the Pioneers raised this point in their Manifesto, their demands did not have the political articulation to move the State in the direction of addressing those problems. The results of this direction of the State in relation to elementary education will be examined in the next section.

## **2.5 - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

This section evaluates the effectiveness of the State in establishing and developing elementary education in the Vargas Era.

It is argued in this section that the State was able to increase the number of public schools, the enrolment, and the productivity of elementary education during this period, even though productivity still remained very low, but that these results have to be considered on the light of the knowledge of the State of requirements for elementary education reform and the need for a national “system” of public education.

In 1933, the government presented a diagnosis of the 1931 situation in elementary education. Vargas indicated that in 1931 about two million students had enrolled in elementary education(93). This meant that the educational system enrolled half of the students of school age (7 to 11 years old) in that year. With this declaration, the State

showed how far the reality was from the goal. The government also recognised that while two million children were enrolled in 1931, the majority of these children did not finish elementary education. The details of the situation were worse: out of a population of 1000 candidates for elementary education, 513 had not enrolled in school; from the remaining 487, 110 were enrolled but did not attend school, 178 attended school but were never able to learn how to read well, 85 attended school but only reached the second grade, learning to read very superficially, 84 went ahead but were not able to finish the course, and only 30 benefited from a four-year integral elementary education”(94).

That only three per cent of Brazilian children of school age completed elementary education was a startling revelation at a time when the State was promising to reform the economic and political life of the country. This extremely low productivity in elementary education indicated that the Provinces in the “Old Republic” had not been able to develop public elementary education, and that the new government of Vargas had not started to change the situation in its three first years.

In making this situation publicly known in 1933, the State was preparing the grounds to justify expanding its intervention in the educational system, since these results confirmed the inability of the individual states and municipalities to develop elementary education. As a goal for elementary education in 1933, Vargas argued that the educational system should offer elementary education to 10 per cent of the population(95). In absolute numbers this objective involved offering elementary education for a population of a little over four million children in school age(96).

Table 1 shows aspects of the situation of national elementary education in Brazil and in the states in 1930. As there was no census in 1930, the elementary school population for this year has been estimated in this thesis. This estimate is the geometric average of the years 1920 and 1940, using logarithmic interpolation of data published in Brazil. This kind of average takes care of the fact that population growth is not linear. The number of school age children 7 to 11 years old was estimated as 10 per cent of the total population. Although Table 1 concentrates on public schools, the analysis also includes data on private schools, as well as data on urban and rural enrolment.

Table 1 shows the distribution of elementary education provision among individual states. As demonstrated in the column "Expected Demand," the number of children of elementary school age in the Southern Region was 488,097. However, data for 1931 showed that approximately 50 per cent of the total number of children of elementary education age in Brazil were enrolled. Assuming that a similar percentage applied to the Southern Region(97), the demand would have been 244,048 children resulting in a ratio of 47 children per school. Using the same reasoning, the ratio would be 77 children per school for the Northern Region, 112 children per school for the North-eastern Region, 90 children per school for the South-eastern Region, and 125 children per school for the Central-West Region. These ratios might be adequate for the urban areas, where schools generally have two or three classrooms, but not for the rural areas where schools usually had only one classroom. Data for 1932 showed that 54 per cent of elementary education enrolment occurred in urban areas(98).

Table 1. Brazil: Expected demand, number of public schools, and ratio between number of children and schools, by region and states, 1930.

| Regions             | Demand    | Public schools | Ratio |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|
| North               | 145,069   | 941            | 154   |
| Amazonas            | 39,884    | 348            | 115   |
| Pará                | 6,398     | 593            | 234   |
| Northeast           | 1,274,236 | 5,695          | 224   |
| Maranhão            | 103,921   | 403            | 258   |
| Piauí               | 70,572    | 145            | 487   |
| Ceará               | 166,091   | 752            | 221   |
| Rio Grande do Norte | 64,228    | 264            | 243   |
| Paraíba             | 118,127   | 427            | 277   |
| Pernambuco          | 241,128   | 1,469          | 164   |
| Alagoas             | 94,493    | 377            | 256   |
| Sergipe             | 50,865    | 315            | 161   |
| Bahia               | 361,325   | 1,543          | 234   |
| Southeast           | 1,435,149 | 8,784          | 180   |
| Minas Gerais        | 631,063   | 2,607          | 242   |
| Espírito Santo      | 60,113    | 778            | 77    |
| Rio de Janeiro      | 169,750   | 1,536          | 111   |
| São Paulo           | 574,223   | 3,535          | 162   |
| Distrito Federal    | -         | 328            | -     |
| South               | 488,097   | 5,174          | 94    |
| Paraná              | 104,523   | 1,143          | 91    |
| Santa Catarina      | 88,562    | 958            | 92    |
| Rio Grande do Sul   | 269,223   | 3,073          | 88    |
| Center West         | 97,718    | 390            | 251   |
| Mato Grosso         | 32,634    | 186            | 175   |
| Goiás               | 65,115    | 204            | 319   |

Sources: *Anuário Estatístico, Censo Demográfico*, (Statistical Yearbook, Demographic Census), Fundação Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística: Rio de Janeiro, 1976, p. 62. Number of Public Schools, Brazil, 1933. Message of the Chief of Government, Getúlio Dornelles Vargas, to the Constituent Assembly, *A Educação nas Mensagens Presidenciais* (Education in the Presidential Addresses), MEC/INEP: Brasília, 1987, p. 128.

After 1933, the situation in public elementary education began to be a problem for the government, as can be seen in the following sub-section.



### 2.5.1 - Starting Expansion

The expansion of elementary education began in 1933. However, as indicated earlier, the government had been promising to reform elementary education since 1930. From 1930 until 1933 almost nothing was done to implement this objective. The government began to build schools in the urban areas only in 1933. Brazilian writers revealed, in their discussion of the expansion of elementary education, that it was promoted by the individual states practically without the legally required financial help of the central State(99). This is a further indication of the centralisation of financial resources in the federal level.

However, despite the lack of adequate financial resources in the individual states, they continued to build schools. Table 2 shows the numbers of that expansion.

Table 2. Brazil: Number of public and private elementary schools, 1933 and 1945.

| Years | Number of Schools<br>(index number)<br>(1933 = base 100) |                |                 |
|-------|--|----------------|-----------------|
|       | Public   | Private        | Total           |
| 1933  | 21,726<br>(100)  | 6,044<br>(100) | 27,770<br>(100) |
| 1945  | 33,423<br>(154)  | 5,908<br>(99)  | 39,331<br>(142) |

Source: Table constructed from data in Barbara Freitag, *Escola, Estado & Sociedade* (School, State & Society), p. 52, and data from *Sinopse Retrospectiva do Ensino no Brasil. Principais Aspectos Estatísticos* (Retrospective Synopsis of Education in Brazil. Main Statistical Aspects), MEC/SEEC, Rio de Janeiro, without date and page.

The 54 per cent growth in public elementary schools during the Vargas Era, as

shown in Table 2, suggests the dimension of the effort made by the individual states to build new schools. This growth in public schools reveals an increased presence of the State in education as compared with private initiative. As indicated earlier, before 1930 there were few public schools in the provinces. There are indications that the growth of schools in the rural area was the major factor in the total growth of public schools. "From the total number of 29,406 schools in 1937, 26,638 (90.58 per cent) are in the rural area"(100).

However, it is important to note that the larger number of schools in the rural area cannot be equated with a larger provision of education in that area in relation to the urban area. Schools in the rural areas had only one classroom, and a large number of them were not functioning because of a lack of students, whereas schools in the urban areas generally had three or more classrooms(101).

The government had expressed its concern with the need for schools in the rural areas since 1933. In the Presidential Message of that year Vargas declared that "through education the abandoned man in the hinterland would become more conscious of his rights and duties"(102). The response of the State was thus to build schools in rural areas. As indicated earlier, this fact was interpreted by a Brazilian analyst as a political manoeuvre by Vargas to deal with the "social question" in the rural areas(103).

As previously argued, the expansion of elementary education in the Vargas Era was a partial answer to pressures of urbanisation and industrialisation. The pattern of increase in the enrolment in elementary education as shown in Table 3 confirms this trend.

Table 3. Brazil: Expansion of enrolment in elementary education, public and private schools, 1933-1945.

| Years | Enrolment     |                |           |
|-------|---------------|----------------|-----------|
|       | Public School | Private School | Total     |
| 1933  | 1,739,613     | 368,006        | 2,107,619 |
| 1945  | 2,740,755     | 498,085        | 3,238,840 |

Source: Table constructed from data in Barbara Freitag, *Escola, Estado & Sociedade*, (School, State & Society), p.52, and data from *Sinopse Retrospectiva do Ensino No Brasil. Principais Aspectos Estatísticos*, (Retrospective Synopsis of Education in Brazil. Main Statistical Aspects), MEC/SEEC: Rio de Janeiro, without date and page.

Table 3 shows growth (58 per cent) in elementary education within public schools to be higher than in private schools (35 percent) during the Vargas Era. According to Table 2, the number of private schools had decreased in this period, but as shown in Table 3, enrolment increased. This confirms that the State responded to demands from the new urban populations for public schools. It also suggests that either some groups in the population could afford to send their children to private schools, or that children from the elites, who were previously attending the few public schools in towns and villages, went to private schools.

According to the government figures for 1933, the population of children in school age was approximately four million, of which two million were enrolled. In other words, 50 per cent of the children in school age were enrolled at that date. In 1945, the population of children between seven and eleven years old was approximately six million(104). Table 3 shows that a total of 3,238,840 children were enrolled, that is, approximately 54 per cent were enrolled in elementary education.

The data in Table 3 also suggest efforts by the Government to build schools at the

same rate as the expansion of the population. The enrolment figures in public schools show that the individual states were enrolling 46 per cent of school age children. This contribution by the individual states can be contrasted with the eight per cent attendance in the private sector. This pattern was consistent from 1933 to 1945. In 1933, the State was enrolling approximately 43 per cent of the population of school age and, in 1945, around 46 per cent. The analysis of Table 2 and Table 3 allows the following conclusions: a) there was a considerable expansion of the elementary education system during the Vargas Era; b) the individual states enrolled the major share of all students in elementary education; c) the proportion of students attending public schools in 1945 increased in relation to 1933.

In 1933, 94 per cent of the children who entered school failed to graduate. Thus, internal and external problems within the elementary education system were resulting in extremely low efficiency. This low efficiency in the elementary education system was more obvious in the poorer states. For example, in 1940 “in the state of Sergipe, in more than 200 municipal schools only three students completed the course”(105). This was extreme, even within a generally bad national situation: “from one thousand students enrolled in elementary education in 1942, only 404 reached the second grade, 274 the third grade, and 155 finished the course in 1946”(106).

When the Vargas Era ended in 1945, 46 per cent of the school age population were not enrolled in public elementary education. Out of one thousand children who entered the public system in 1942, 84 per cent did not complete elementary education(107). Data also show that only about 16 per cent of students completed elementary education, the critical point being the passage from the first to the second grade. Compared with 1933, when the

government indicated that only three per cent of the students completed elementary education, this was an improvement. However, these rates of enrolment and productivity were still very low, revealing a problematic situation on the eve of the Redemocratisation Period.

## **2.6 - CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined the initial establishment of public elementary education in Brazil. The narrative in this chapter permits the conclusion that despite the clear expressed objective of the State to organise a system of elementary education, this was not implemented until the urgent need for schools meant the State expanded the existing "system". This expansion was made difficult by centralisation of financial resources at the federal level and mismanagement and corruption at the state and municipal levels. These obstacles characterised the lack of co-ordination between the three administrative levels, and the consequent weakness of the educational system in relation to the stated intentions of the central State. The pressures from the new urban populations directed this expansion and gained priority over the demands for elementary education reform coming from the Pioneers of Education. Despite this, the State was able to increase enrolment, and productivity in elementary education, even though this continued to be very low.

The areas of sensitivity covered in this chapter allow the conclusions that the Vargas government invented an image of actor in elementary education during this period. Consistent with this image, the State made declarations, formulated legislation and created institutions aimed at orienting the establishment of elementary education.

Following Weiler, it can be suggested that the State was searching legitimacy through educational action partly because of the “populism” of the period, and partly to deal with aspects of the “social question”. At the level of implementation, the establishment of elementary education was delayed by administrative incoherence in the invention of new institutions.

The State demonstrated little capacity to be an actor (Evans, Rueschmer and Skocpol). Furthermore, there was a lack of coherent and corporate action in the internal structure of the State characterised by the centralisation of resources in the federal level, and mismanagement and corruption at the state and local levels. These were also indicators of the lack of autonomy of the educational system.

The State also had to deal with an increased scale of demands for elementary education from the new urban classes. These demands penetrated the State forcing the expansion of elementary education (Iannacone). The demands from the new urban classes hindered the State’s capacity and autonomy to be an autonomous actor in elementary education. Finally, the Pioneers of Education were not able to promote the political articulation of their debate. That is, they were unable to begin a civic debate - although they did assist the State by giving it some of the rhetoric needed for the image of actor.

However, the State was not totally without effect at the level of implementation. The State was able to increase the indices of national rates of enrolment and completion in elementary education. In 1945 the national rate of enrolment in elementary education reached 54 per cent, and the completion rate reached 16 per cent. This represented a gain in effectiveness of the State in comparison with 1933 when the national rate of enrolment was 50 per cent, and the completion rate was only 3 percent. This “progress” provides a new base for the issue of elementary education in the Redemocratisation Period - the topic of the new chapter.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

1. In 1889, a military movement overthrew the monarchy in Brazil. A republican regime began with the 1889 Proclamation of the Republic. This period was called First, or Old Republic (1889-1930). The period beginning in 1930 was called the Second Republic.
2. Vargas was the civil leader who, in November 1930, became the Provisional Chief of the Government, and in 1934 was elected President of Brazil.
3. The Pioneers of Education had been asking for State intervention in elementary education. Actually, the idea that the State should have a greater presence in public education became stronger in the period preceding the inauguration of the Republic in Brazil (1889). A famous document dealing with this subject was the “Pareceres of Ruy Barbosa” [Ruy Barbosa’s Reports] in 1882. For more information, see Rui Barbosa, Reforma do Ensino Primário e várias instituições complementares do ensino público [Elementary Education Reform and other complementary institutions of public education], Typ. Nacional, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1883.
4. The Law of 15 October 1827 was the first law addressing elementary education in Brazil. This law was prepared at the request of Januário da Cunha Barbosa (Minister of Don João VI, King of Portugal). For more information about this law and the conditions of primary schools at that time see Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira: O Ensino de 1º e 2º Graus [Brazilian Education: Elementary and Secondary Education], Edição Saraiva, São Paulo, Brazil, 1978, pp. 16-17.
5. LEI DE 12 DE AGOSTO DE 1834-ATO ADICIONAL, (Law of 12 August 1834-Additional Act), in Almeida, A. M. de (ed.), Constituições Brasileiras, [Brazilian Constitutions], 4th. edition, Edições Saraiva: São Paulo, Brazil, 1963.
6. The demands for State intervention had began in the period of the Empire. The famous Report of Paulino Jose de Souza was a classic example. On this subject, see Primitivo Moacyr, “A Instrução e o Império” [Education and the Empire], Companhia Editora Nacional: São Paulo, Vol. II, 1936-1938, pp. 112-114. In the First Republic, the 1920s was a decade of intellectual effervescence, a period anticipating changes in the 1930s, including the demands of intellectuals for public education reform. See J. R. Moreira, Educação e Desenvolvimento no Brasil, [Education and Development in Brazil], CLAPCS: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1960, p. 68-69.
7. In the 1920s, three educational experiments of the Pioneers were developed in the individual states of Bahia, Ceará, and the old Federal District (Rio de Janeiro). See Hermes Lima, Anísio Teixeira Estadista da Educação [Anísio Teixeira Stateman of Education], Civilização Brasileira: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1978, pgs. 54, 70.
8. For information about the ideology in the Old Republic in relation to education, see Raul Bittencourt, “A Educação Brasileira no Império e na República” [Brazilian Education in the Empire and in the Republic], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos, Nº 19, Ministry of Education/INEP: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1953, pp. 20-23.



9. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens Presidenciais, V. I., MEC/INEP: Brasília, DF, Brasil, p. 123.
10. *ibid.*
11. Vargas' speech is quoted in Clemente Mariani, "1948 Exposição de Motivos", [1948 Statement of Intentions], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogical Studies], Vol. 68, Nº 160, Ministry of Education/ INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1987, p. 624.
12. See BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens ....V. I. op. cit., p. 131.
13. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., p. 133.
14. *ibid.*
15. This reform was directed at secondary and higher education. See P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da Educação [History of Education], Cortez: São Paulo, Brazil, 1990, p. 41.
16. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., p. 123.
17. Hermes Lima, Anísio Teixeira Estadista da Educação [Anísio Teixeira a Statesman of Education], Civilização Brasileira: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1978, p. 112.
18. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., p. 126.
19. *ibid.*, p. 128.
20. *ibid.*
21. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 24 DE FEVEREIRO DE 1934, in Almeida, A. M. de (ed.), Constituições Brasileiras [Brazilian Constitutions], 4th edition, Art. 151, Edições Saraiva: São Paulo, Brazil, 1963. The 1934 Constitution was inspired by the democratic ideals of the 1889 Republic.
22. *ibid.* Title V, Chapter II, Only Paragraph, item a).
23. *ibid.* Art. 156.
24. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., p. 143. This was not the first attempt to formulate a plan for elementary education in Brazil. After Brazil became independent of Portugal, in 1822, a Constituent Assembly was installed in 1923. A commission in this Assembly was designated to formulate a plan for elementary education. However this objective was never fulfilled because the Constituent Assembly was dissolved in that same year. For additional information see Vanilda Paiva, Educação Popular.....op. cit., p. 61.
25. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.... V. I., op. cit., p. 143.

26. *ibid.*
27. *ibid.* p. 145.
28. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 10 DE NOVEMBRO DE 1937, in Almeida, A. M. de (ed.), Constituições .... op. cit.
29. *ibid.* Art. 130.
30. *ibid.* Art. 125.
31. L. C. B. Ferreira Costa, "A Educação no Brasil" [Education in Brazil], in P. N. P. de Souza and E. B. da Silva (eds.), Educação: Escola-Trabalho, [Education: School-Work], Biblioteca Pioneira de Ciências Sociais: São Paulo, Brazil, 1984, p. 136.
32. This subject was covered in a speech by Vargas' Minister of Education, Gustavo Capanema, in 1935. See Paulo Ghiraldelli Jr. História da.....op. cit. p. 51.
33. This idea is discussed in P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da Educação [History of Education], Cortez: São Paulo, Brazil, 1990, p. 44.
34. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.... V. I., op. cit., p. 186.
35. In the Old Republic there was no national policy for elementary education.
36. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens, V. I., op. cit., pp. 143-154.
37. *ibid.*, pp. 125-126.
38. *ibid.* p. 126.
39. As mentioned earlier, the 1834 Additional Act had liberated the State from any involvement with elementary education.
40. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V.I., op. cit., p. 123
41. For a discussion of the authoritarian position of the central State in this period, see M. Aparecida Ciavatta Franco, M. Celia de M. N. Simon, "Trabalho e educação: reordenação necessária no contexto da Revolução de 1930" [Labour and education: the necessary reordering in the context of the 1930 Revolution], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos, [Brazilian Review of Pedagogical Studies], Vol. 68, Nº 160, MEC/INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1987, p. 567.
42. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., p. 125.
43. Nelson Piletti, História da Educação no Brasil, [History of Education in Brazil], Editora Atica S. A.: São Paulo, Brazil, 1990, p. 75.
44. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. I., op. cit., p. 125.

45. See Title V, Chapter II, Article 156 in the 1934 Constitution note 21 above.
46. V. P. Paiva, Educação Popular e Educação de Adultos [Popular Education and Adult Education], 4th. edition, Edições Loyola: São Paulo, Brazil, 1987, pp. 83-87.
47. *ibid.*
48. See BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 144.
49. Valnir Chagas. Educação Brasileira: O Ensino de 1º e 2º Graus, [Brazilian Education: Elementary and Secondary Education] Saraiva: São Paulo, Brazil, 1978, p. 43.
50. O. de O. Romanelli, História da Educação no Brasil [History of Education in Brazil], Vozes: Petropolis, Brazil, 1988, p. 38.
51. For a view of the political context in the 1930s and 1940s, see Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Getúlio a Castelo, [Brazil: From Getúlio to Castelo], 9th edition, Paz e Terra: São Paulo, Brazil, 1988. This book is a translation by I. T. Dantas from the original title Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964. An experiment in Democracy, Oxford University Press, New York.
52. Paulo Ghiraldelli Jr. História da.....op. cit. p. 40.
53. *ibid.* p. 41
54. *ibid.*
55. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Getúlio a .....op. cit. pp. 21-24.
56. *ibid.*
57. *ibid.*
58. Paulo Ghiraldelli Jr., Brasil: De Getúlio a .....op. cit. p. 41.
59. *ibid.*
60. J. Roberto Moreira, Educação e Desenvolvimento.....op. cit., p. 78.
61. *ibid.*
62. *ibid.*
63. J. Roberto Moreira, Educação e Desenvolvimento.....op. cit. p. 78.
64. Anísio Teixeira, 'A escola Pública, universal e gratuita' [The universal and free Public School], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], 71, Nº 167, Ministry of Education/INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1990, p. 80.

65. Hermes Lima, Anisio Teixeira Estadista....op. cit., p. 112.
66. *ibid.*
67. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Getúlio a....op. cit. p. 21-24. In spite of the democratic election of Vargas in 1934, the new political activity resulted in the revolt of the "paulistas" (natives of São Paulo state) and other movements which culminated in Vargas' 1937 coup d'etat
68. *ibid.*
69. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Getúlio a....op. cit. p. 25.
70. *ibid.*
71. At that time, the Pioneers had been developing experiments on elementary education in individual states in Brazil.
72. Hermes Lima, Anisio Teixeira.....op. cit. p. 113
73. For discussion of the development of these ideas, see D. Trigueiro Mendes, "Anotações sobre o pensamento educacional no Brasil" [Notes on the educational thought in Brazil], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], Vol. 68, Nº 160, p. 500.
74. For a discussion about the influence of John Dewey on the educational work of the Pioneers, see Hermes Lima, Anisio Teixeira .....op. cit., p. 60, pp. 72-77.
75. For information about these educational experiments, see note 7 above.
74. Professor Paschoal Lemme is the only Pioneer of Education signatory of the 1932 Manifesto who is still alive. One of his declarations reveals the condition of public elementary education to the masses before 1930, in the First Republic. As he stated, "in the vast interior of Brazil there were precarious little public schools where the majority of the teachers were without any professional training. This was the elementary education offered to the masses dispersed over wide areas". See this declaration in P. Ghiraldelli Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 26-27 (quoting Paschoal Lemme, Estudos da, Editora Tupã: Rio de Janeiro, 1953).
77. Hermes Lima, Anisio Teixeira Estadista.....op. cit., p. 113.
78. *ibid.* p. 103.
79. The "1932 Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova. A Reconstrução educacional do Brasil- ao povo e ao governo" [Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education: to the people and to the government], in P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da....op. cit., pp. 54-78
80. *ibid.* p. 55.

81. P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da.....op. cit., p. 57.
82. *ibid.* pp. 64-65. The ideas of decentralisation and the autonomy of the educational system have a prominent place in the 1932 Manifesto of the Pioneers.
83. Hermes Lima, Anisio Teixeira Estadista.....op. cit. p. 110.
84. *ibid.*
85. *ibid.*
86. *ibid.*
87. P Ghiraldelli Jr., História da.....op. cit., p. 56.
88. *ibid.* The 1932 Manifesto revealed that the government was aware of the necessity of organizing public elementary education from the 1889 Republic onwards, but only in 1930 did the State express that concern. The masses remained unaware of their educational needs, a situation that favoured the preservation of education oriented to intellectual interests.
89. Declarations by the State during this period convey this impression, especially the ones addressing the individual states, as presented in section two in this chapter.
90. There are no records of popular movements for elementary education reform in the Vargas Era as a result of the Pioneers' manifesto.
91. D. Trigueiro Mendes, Anotações sobre o Pensamento Educacional no Brasil [Notes about educational thought in Brazil], Revista Brasileira de .....op. cit. p. 501.
92. *ibid.*
93. See BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens..... V. I. op. cit., p. 127. In the 1933 Presidential Address, Vargas presented statistics about the situation in elementary education. It is important to notice that there was no Census in 1930. The presentation of data in this Address suggests that there was a survey of the situation in elementary education done for the purposes of the Address.
94. *ibid.*
95. *ibid.*
96. *ibid.*
97. The average for Brazil is used as a parameter on which to base the calculations for regions in Brazil. This calculation may be underestimated or overestimated for those regions.

98. The total of children enrolled in public elementary education in Brazil was 2, 071,437. The number of children enrolled in the urban areas was 1, 109,640. Source: Revista de Estudos Pedagógicos [Review of Pedagogic Studies], N° 101. Ministry of Education/INEP Brasília, Brasil, p. 119.
99. BRASIL A Educação nas Mensagens ..... V. I. op. cit., p. 128
100. V. P. Paiva, Educação Popular.....op. cit., p. 116
101. In general, these schools in the urban areas were called “Grupos Escolares” [Groups of Schools].
102. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 124.
103. V. P. Paiva, Educação Popular.....op. cit., p. 117.
104. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 157.
105. V. P. Paiva, Educação Popular.....op. cit., p. 133.
106. BRASIL, Estatísticas da Educação Nacional 1960/1971, [Statistics of National Education 1960/1971], Ministry of Education: Brasília, 1972.
107. *ibid.*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE REDEMOCRATISATION PERIOD (1946-1964): EXPANSION OF PUBLIC ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

#### **3.1 - PURPOSE, ARGUMENT AND ORGANISATION**

The purpose of Chapter Three is to analyse the development of the relationship of the State to public elementary education during the Redemocratisation Period.

It is argued overall in this chapter that despite the democratic objectives in the 1946 Constitution, in the 1946 Organic Law, in the 1961 LDB, in official declarations, and despite the transformations in the political, economic, and social sectors of Brazil, and intensive debates about education in Congress and in the Pioneers's group, the State was still unable to promote the effective development of elementary education in this period.

This chapter is organised into six sections. After this first section, section two, "The Construction of Elementary Education Policy", examines the process of policy formulation used by the State in elementary education, such as legislation. The third section, "Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy", discusses difficulties involved in the expansion of elementary education. The fourth section, "The Political Basis for the Solution of Elementary Education Problems", analyses whether the political, social, economic, and educational movements in the nation created the political basis for formulating and implementing solutions to the problems in elementary education. The fifth section, "The Effectiveness of the State in Elementary Education", evaluates the

effectiveness of the State in developing elementary education. The sixth section is the Conclusion of the Chapter.

### **3.2 - THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

This section analyses the process of policy formulation by the State during the Redemocratisation Period.

It is argued in this section that, despite the democratic objectives stated in legislation and in the State's official declarations, its main policy in this period, the expansion of elementary education, was undertaken in a situation of disorganisation and unfulfilled needs for mass elementary education, both in urban and rural areas.

The Redemocratisation Period began with the restoration of civil rights, and the election of a new President in December 1945, after Vargas had been removed from power as related in the previous chapter. The activities of the State during this period were led by the following Presidents: Eurico Gaspar Dutra (1946-1951), Getúlio Dornelles Vargas (1951-1954), João F. C. Café Filho (1955), Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira (1956-1961), Janio da Silva Quadros (1961), and João Belchior M. Goulart (1961-1964)(1).

The creation of an image of action by the government in the Redemocratisation Period began in 1946 when the State formulated and enacted new legislation for education: the 1946 Constitution(2), and the 1946 Organic Law of Primary



Education(3). A third major piece of legislation was enacted in 1961, under the title of Law of Guidelines and Basis for National Education-LDB(4).

The 1946 Constitution placed education on an equal footing with other important subjects by dedicating one of its chapters to education(5). This increased the options of the State in the educational area, since this chapter had been omitted in the previous constitution(6). For elementary education, this chapter introduced the following principles: “education as the right of all, compulsory elementary education, social help to students, free official education for all at the elementary level, and at higher levels for students who had proved their lack of financial resources”(7). Thus, this chapter maintained the principle of free elementary education for all, and reintroduced the provision of percentages of financial resources to be allocated by the federal, state and municipal authorities to elementary education(8).

The 1946 Organic Law of Primary Education also rendered the State accountable in the educational area, this being important for the search of legitimation by the State. This law was the first specific national law for elementary education since 1827(9). The main contribution of this law was to determine the extension of the period of elementary education. It also regulated the continuation of the four-year course in elementary education, to be offered to children of seven to eleven years of age. In addition, it offered to “adolescents and adults of more than 13 years of age,” a complementary year(10). The Law of Guidelines and Basis of National Education-LDB was formulated in 1948 and enacted only in 1961. Due to this peculiarity, the LDB will be examined in the third section of this chapter.

In addition to legislation, the official declarations of the President to the National Congress were a contribution to the creation by the State of an image of actor. These official declarations also described the situation in elementary education, and presented a diagnosis of what was wrong in educational policy. In this sense, these official declarations made the State accountable for elementary education. They announced, as a fundamental policy, the expansion of elementary education.

Accounts of this expansion dominated the official declarations of all governments in this period. In reviewing these declarations, three main features of educational policy are considered relevant to the understanding of how the State promoted the expansion of elementary education during this period. These features are disorganisation in the process of expansion of elementary education, the poor quality of elementary education, and the principle of providing mass elementary education.

The first feature, the disorganisation of the expansion of elementary education, was related to the initial, and in the sense used by this thesis the “transitory” problem faced by the State: the building of schools in urban and rural areas. It was necessary to accelerate the building of schools. However, a lack of human, financial and material resources hindered elementary education expansion, as recognised by the government: “the disorganisation of elementary education in some municipalities resulted in lack of teachers, lack of school buildings, and lack of didactic materials, and in consequence, about 70 per cent of children of school age were not in school”(11).

The building of schools in rural areas had specific features which increased disorganisation. Even though the school buildings in the rural areas were in general one-classroom schools, there was a lack of financial resources at the local level to build sufficient schools to meet the needs of the population(12). What is more, the number of teachers in this area was not sufficient and the available teachers were not trained, as indicated by President Dutra in 1947:

The crisis of educational assistance is still more serious in rural areas. In addition to general and specific factors, resulting from low demographic density and low social and economic level, this situation is aggravated by the lack of school buildings, and insufficiency of trained teachers. (13).

Furthermore, during the whole period, every government expressed disagreement with the educational policy of previous governments. This practice helped the image of action of the government in office because, together with the expression of disagreement, each government promised to change the “deplorable” situation in elementary education. These declarations were usually made at the beginning of each government and demonstrate both the claim to be an actor and the inherited disorganisation. For example, President Kubitschek in his first year in office, 1956, stated:

Data from 1954 reveal that there were insufficient educational opportunities, this being contrary to the constitutional prescription of compulsory elementary education. In addition, its provision was not satisfactory due to low productivity ...It is imperative to have effective intervention by the federal government in elementary education. (14).

The disorganisation in the expansion of elementary education reached a high level in the final years of the period. In certain regions or localities there was a lack of schools,

while in others there were schools being used for other purposes. In some cases, according to President Goulart, “while only a little more than half of the population of school age was enrolled in elementary education, there were numerous school buildings, mainly in the rural areas, built by the central State, which were vacant or were never used”(15).

The second major feature addressed in educational policy was the poor quality of elementary education. Policies addressing this problem emerged late in this period, despite the fact that there had been an awareness of the importance of quality in elementary education in the State since the Vargas Era, as indicated in the previous chapter. Policies aimed at the quantitative aspects of elementary education continued to predominate in this period. As the expansion of elementary education continued, qualitative problems could no longer be ignored by the State. Perhaps as a claim on legitimacy as a reforming State, in the late 1950s, the State recognised that problems in elementary education had also increased in complexity. This was acknowledged by President Kubitschek himself: “The period of schooling of Brazilian children is one of the shortest in the world and is characterised by its precarious nature, with teachers with inadequate training; lack of instructional materials; curricula, teaching methods and programmes not adjusted to the conditions of our time and the characteristics of our culture”(16). This new concern with quality continued during the early 1960s.

The third major feature marking elementary education during this period, also demonstrating the search for legitimacy by the State, was related to the State’s declarations across this period. These declarations addressed issues that showed the concern of the State for the masses. At the beginning of the period, these declarations focused on the question of

the inclusion of the masses(17) in elementary education. In 1946, the government announced it was aware that the masses were excluded from elementary education and that this situation was incompatible with the new democratic government. In the view of President Dutra:

Until today, the ideal of the democratisation of elementary education does not have deep roots in Brazil. Education in our land still does not allow individuals, independent of their social background, to achieve the condition of citizens capable of fully participating in the economic life of the nation.

(18).

In the early 1950s, the government expressed its understanding of the fact that mass education was a social investment. From this perspective, mass elementary education would guarantee the progress of Brazil. For example, in 1951 President Vargas stated that “in a country with large social differences, mass education is one of the most relevant investments for the improvement of our living standards”(19). The State’s approach to mass elementary education began to change in the early 1960s. Declarations by the State still addressed social problems. However, the additional focus on education was a way to increase the retrieval of legitimation by the State.

At this time, the State expressed its concern about the learning difficulties of children in elementary education. The difficulties of children in school began to be related to their previous opportunities for formal learning. This awareness of the problem was a result of educational research, a policy reactivated during the government of President Kubitschek in the late 1950s(20). The new orientation in the declarations of the State in the 1960s created a challenge for the educational system - the theme of Iannaconne - because it had

become necessary to review its contents. The concern of the State with this subject was expressed in 1961 by President Quadros: "It is important to enrich the substance of schooling, particularly when it has to compensate for the deficiencies suffered by socially and economically deprived children(21).

During the government of President Goulart, the last government in this period, declarations of the State were more clearly geared to mass education, an issue that, at that time, (due to circumstances in the context), had a strong effect on the search for legitimation by the State and which began to accept education into the national State political frame - Iannacone's theme. What was new was the concern of the State with the quality of mass elementary education in the rural areas. In 1963, President Goulart stated: "in addition to quantitative goals, the government will be concerned with qualitative goals aimed at improving elementary education, particularly in the rural areas but also in the urban areas where elementary education is provided in precarious conditions"(22).

Despite the rhetorical progress in the content of declarations of the State in the last years of this period, the policy of expanding quality elementary education for the masses was neither sufficiently explained nor implemented during the Redemocratisation Period. As already indicated, President Quadros voiced the idea of quality education for children of poor families, and President Goulart expressed the idea of quality education for children in the rural areas. However, these ideas were related to "compensatory education", i. e., education oriented towards compensating for the deficiencies in learning caused by the children's poor cultural social and

economic background(23). That this interpretation of mass education prevailed in the State in the final year of the period is exemplified by the following statement by President Goulart in 1963, which also reaffirms Iannaconne's themes:

There is a deep lack of cultural adjustment in the masses, caused by structural transformations related to the economic growth of Brazil. The masses left the countryside and invaded the cities, but could not be integrated into the new environment. The impossibility of the educational system meeting demands arising from these social transformations compel the government to initiate an extraordinary effort to revise the objectives of national education and to reform the basis of education.

(24).

The above declaration implied two main challenges for the educational system: firstly, the State accepting a fresh challenge to create an image of action by responding to the increasing demand for elementary education in the urban areas; secondly, and a more complex challenge, the need to deal with the difficulties of children coming from the rural areas into the urban area.

As anticipated by Iannaconne, the educational system was not prepared for these two tasks. Even though the government promoted an urgent expansion of school buildings, and expressed its concern with the quality of mass elementary education, there were serious obstacles for the implementation of these policies by the educational system, which is the theme of the following section.

### **3.3 - THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

This section will examine the obstacles that the central State, the states, and the municipalities had in implementing elementary educational policy during the Redemocratisation Period.

It is argued in this section that a lack of co-ordination between the three administrative levels of the State, marked by a lack of financial resources and consequently a lack of local autonomy, continued to be major obstacles in the effective implementation of elementary education policy.

The idea of financial co-ordination between the three levels of the State was given concrete expression in the 1946 Constitution(25). As indicated in the last chapter, the invention by the State of an image of action began when the 1934 Constitution included a provision for a fixed percentage of financial resources to be allocated by the federal, state and municipal levels to elementary education. However, as also indicated in the last chapter, the idea of coherent corporate action was weak in practice. President Dutra, in 1946, flatly stated that “co-ordination in the Vargas Era was a timid attempt”(26).

During the Redemocratisation Period, the need to create co-ordination between the three administrative levels of the State was explicitly stated by the first government. However, as had happened in the past and in flat contradiction to this aspiration, the federal government justified its “direct intervention” in elementary education to supplement the



deficiencies of the individual states and municipalities. This practice contradicted the idea of coherent corporate action i. e. the participation of the three administrative levels in decisions on the formulation and implementation of elementary education policy. The “direct intervention” of the central State discouraged efforts to create this coherent action and marked the supremacy of the central State over the other two levels. The first government in this period, that of President Dutra, criticised the previous government because it had not created a “system of co-ordination” between the three administrative levels, but “instead had developed an authoritarian relationship” between the central State and the other two levels(27).

However, the same practice of paternalism by the central State in limiting the autonomy and responsibility of the two other levels by well-meant declarations on the need for “direct intervention” continued in the Redemocratisation Period. The lack of capacity of individual states and municipalities to provide elementary education was declared to be the reason for the direct intervention of the central State. A 1949 statement by President Dutra exemplifies this point:

It is not possible for all individual states to provide adequate elementary education. The intervention of the central State is necessary and it cannot be indifferent to this problem.

(28).

At the same time that the central government pointed to its need to intervene in elementary education, the central government expressed its wish to create co-ordination between the three administrative levels. President Dutra in a 1949 statement, in reference to elementary education, summarised this last orientation: “I want the policy of

intergovernmental co-ordination to be considered the authentic expression of the will of the present government”(29). However, since the central State had been absent from elementary education for more than a century, it can be suggested that the process of co-ordination between the levels was, at best, new and unclear.

A major problem marking the lack of coherent corporate action between the three levels was the inadequate allocation of financial resources for elementary education. There were two predominant features in this problem. The first emphasised the centralisation of financial resources. This feature reinforced the contradictory nature of the educational policy of the State: while the government declared the need for intervention in elementary education, at the same time the central State was not concerned with the need to finance elementary education at the other two levels. Ribeiro, for example, affirmed that “the central State never considered the provision of elementary education as a central State task”(30). Actually, the National Fund for Elementary Education, created in 1942, still had not been implemented in 1946(31).

The second feature, the inadequacy of resources for elementary education, was related to mismanagement and/or corruption in the administration of elementary education at the local level(32). Successive governments in this period indicated that the central government had allocated financial resources to elementary education, but that it continued to show the same deficiencies. This suggested that the resources had not been used (due to mismanagement or even corruption) to correct the problems in elementary education. President Dutra stated, in 1949, “never before in the budget of the Union (the central State), had such generous amounts of financial resources been allocated to the individual

states for the development of elementary education....but some individual states were not providing elementary education for 75 per cent of children of the school age”(33). A similar allegation was made by President Goulart at the end of the period(34).

A different perspective on the problem of incoherent corporate action appeared at the end of this period. It was an authoritarian perspective, but at the same time a position which demanded new standards of performance from individual states and municipalities. The central State, for the first time in this period, was requiring that the other two levels be accountable for their policies in elementary education. This perspective was expressed in 1961 by President Quadros:

A new policy of the State will require a change of mentality and attitude about financial resources for elementary education. The allocation, by the federal government, of more financial resources for elementary education demands new efforts from the individual states and municipalities to increase the productivity of elementary education. It demands also a clear awareness that education is a long-term investment, similar to the expenditure of resources on basic industry, production of goods, energy, and transportation.

(35).

This new orientation suggests that, despite its authoritarian tone, the government was contemplating the creation of a new pattern for coherent and corporate action between the three administrative levels of the State. The implementation of this objective demanded a revision of the administrative practices used by the states and municipalities in the administration of financial resources for elementary education. This government attitude, at the end of the period, represented a considerable change on the approach to local autonomy when compared with the previous inclination of the State, at the beginning of the period, to intervene directly in elementary education.

However, the central State did not succeed in its attempt to create a new pattern of coherent corporate action between the states and municipalities as suggested by President Quadros in the statement mentioned above. External events determined a major change in the orientation of educational policy in the final year of this period. The development of events and their influence on elementary education will be examined in the next section.

### **3.4 - THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR THE SOLUTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROBLEMS**

The purpose of this section is to examine the social, political, economic and educational movements occurring in the context of elementary education, and the contribution of these movements to the formation of a political base for the solution of problems in elementary education.

It is argued in this section that the demands of the masses, and the educational debate in Congress constituted “political arenas” involving elementary education in this period. However, among these movements and the demands of the Pioneers for change in the situation of elementary education, it was mainly the demands of the masses which propelled the State towards expanding elementary education.

The return to democracy brought about a series of transformations within the context of elementary education. After fifteen years of dictatorship, the period beginning in 1946 represented a return to the political objectives of the early 1930s(36). However, in the

late 1940s. Brazil had a more complex economy and social structure. This brought with it new and diversified demands on the State. These demands were coming from three distinct “political arenas”: the masses, the Congress, and the Pioneers.

### **3.4.1 - The New Political, Economic, and Social Structures**

This sub-section examines the new political, economic and social structures being formed in Brazil during this period in order to evaluate the importance of these transformations for political mobilisation and civic debate.

It is argued that due to the increasing speed of the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation, the scale of demands from the masses for elementary education also increased and pressured the State to intensify the expansion of elementary education.

The Redemocratisation Period marked the end of an authoritarian period, and the beginning of the social evolution initiated in the liberal period of the Vargas Era. The end of World War II at 1946, a time in which authoritarianism had been repudiated in the world, influenced redemocratisation in Brazil.

A relevant aspect in the social evolution beginning during this period was the new position of the masses in the social structure. In 1946, Brazil already had extreme problems of economic imbalance among social classes and among regions(37). The pattern of a dichotomous class structure (elites and masses) that had characterised the period before 1930, and which began to be questioned in the Vargas’ Era, was finally

altered with urbanisation(38).

The first change implemented by the democratic government was in the economic structure. The process of economic change occurred in an accelerated rhythm: the industrialisation which had been initiated in the 1930s was consolidated, becoming a primary concern of the State especially in the late 1950s. In consequence, the process of urbanisation continued and was marked by the increasing internal migration of poor rural populations to towns and cities. This meant that new needs were created in towns and cities, including the need for education for these new populations. There was a significant increase in the urban population in the years of the Redemocratisation Period. By 1940, the urban population was 31 per cent of total population; by 1950, it was 36 per cent; and by 1960 it was 46 per cent(39).

The new socio-economic structure, according to the Brazilian literature, was as follows: the elite or higher class(40), constituted about 2 per cent of the population; the upper middle-class, a group of “people that had reached that status through their own efforts”, constituted about 3 per cent of the population(41); the lower-middle class, formed by people with small businesses, civil servants, bank employees, etc.,” was about 12 per cent of the population(42); the rest of the population, “the masses”, were also called the “popular classes”.

The masses constituted 83 per cent of the population in 1950, and included the upper working class workers in the new industries located in cities and towns, about 33 per cent of the population. The lower working class was formed by people working in farms or

towns or cities, without specific qualifications except the traditional ones learned in their families. This class constituted about 50 per cent of the population(43).

Not only had the composition of the social structure changed, but the economic power of the new urban classes had also altered. As a consequence of urbanisation and industrialisation, there was an increase in per capita income. In 1920 it was US\$90.00, increasing to US\$180.00 in 1940, and to US\$285.00 in 1956(44). In this process, the urban workers in factories improved their standard of living “compared to their parents, although remaining in the status of working class”(45).

The middle classes and “the masses” were a new forceful presence in the urban areas(46). Until then, these groups had been in rural areas, or had been present in small numbers in towns and cities. However, as a result of the process of urbanisation their number could no longer be ignored by the State. The scale of their demands for services increased and penetrated the State. This forced the State to organise new services for these new urban populations, among them education. Actually, the masses themselves were beginning to value elementary education, as shown in the 1950 comment of Teixeira that the “consciousness of the need for education, so difficult to create in the past, appeared unexpectedly in the masses, who avidly started to demand elementary education”(47). This scale of demand was one of the factors encouraging the State to promote the expansion of elementary education.

As a result of the processes of urbanisation and industrialisation, the middle classes and the masses began to acquire political power in this period. The attempts of the masses

to establish unions in the cities represented potential risks of political articulation of their demands and consequent increased social conflict in the urban areas(48). As anticipated by Iannacone, the response of the State to the demands of the masses for elementary education was one way to accommodate these rising tensions(49). The second reason for the increasing political power of the masses was that, as they began to have access to education, they would be able to vote and to influence political elections. In the past, political participation had been a privilege of the elites, especially in the rural areas where the masses were largely illiterate(50). It became politically important to the government that the demands of the large contingent of workers in the urban areas be satisfied by the State, following Iannacone, the “scale of politicisation’ was increasing. .

However, there were in practice different views of the demand of the popular classes for elementary education. One view was that education was not meaningful to the masses in the rural areas, as indicated by the low numbers of children in elementary education in those areas. This view is represented by President Dutra’s affirmation that “difficulties of a geographic, social and economic nature caused the Brazilian elementary education system, a system with few qualitative and technical differences in either small or large cities, in the countryside or in the littoral areas, to be almost innocuous and arouse very little interest in the rural masses”(51). This same position was shared by President Vargas in 1952. His view was that the masses in the rural areas were not really attracted to education, since “they did not search for schools, and if they did, they would find schools in which there was no place for them”(52). In other words the scale of politicisation was limited by social structures.



After the 1950s, the prevailing view was that the masses were interested in elementary education. In 1960, the government declared that “elementary education was demanded by the masses who aspired to social and cultural elevation; this change of attitude in the masses had resulted from transformations in the general situation of the country”(53). This was also the view at the end of the period and marked the penetration of the demands and tensions of the masses in the pronouncements of the State on education. This idea - the scale of politicisation of Iannacone - is explicit in the statement by President Goulart that “never before has Brazil manifested such a degree of discordance with the educational system, and never before has education represented to the masses the aspiration it now represents”(54)

Among educators, the dissatisfaction with the state of elementary education continued. The remarkable expansion in enrolment in elementary education occurring in Brazil did not change this dissatisfaction(55). On the contrary, the inadequate way in which this expansion was accomplished stimulated discussions among educators.

#### **3.4.2 - The Debate on the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB)**

The debate on this law, which, supposedly, was to be focused on fundamental aspects of education, was politically articulated. The debate became a “political arena” for disputes between groups favouring public education and groups favouring private education.

It is argued that the debate on the project of Law of Guidelines and Basis of

Elementary Education, despite its long duration and its relevance to national education, did not achieve full politicisation, but that there was an increase in the scale and scope of politicisation.

It was expected that important issues, such as the role of the three administrative levels responsible for elementary education, would provoke an increase in the scale of the debate. This was perceptible in the speech by Clemente Mariani, Minister of Education and Health, who had established, in 1948, a Commission to prepare the project of the LDB(56). On that occasion, the Minister of Education, pointing to the risk of State domination in its relationship with the educational system, proposed the rejection of centralisation and authoritarianism in education. These words reflected the position defended by the Pioneers of Education (Mariani being one of them)(57). This position was opposed to the internal domination of the federal level (the central State) over the state and municipal levels in the administration of elementary education. The Minister of Education, Clemente Mariani, defining this republican view of the project, remarked that “the great conquest (in the formulation of this project) was the unity of the Brazilian educational system(58).

Mariani also proposed the participation of society in education. He said that schools “should not be instruments of the State’s domination, but organs, par excellence, of society”(59). This was a new attitude in declarations by a member of the government and an idea completely new in 1948, a time when the new social classes were still beginning to experience democratic ways of living, after the years of dictatorship. These progressive proposals of Minister Mariani signalled profound changes in the administration of education to be introduced with the new LDB.

In spite of the enthusiasm in the inaugural speech of the Minister of Education, and expectations that the first basic national law would be strictly inspired by democratic principles, the passage of the LDB project through Congress was the longest in history. The debate on fundamental questions on elementary education during the formulation of the LDB remained alive in Congress from 1948 to 1961. However, these questions were not sufficiently clarified in the last version of the LDB, as initially expected.

This was the period when the Commission of Education of the legislative body became an arena of political conflict - an Iannaconne theme. From 1948 to 1961, the LDB project was exposed to interruptions, proposals for change, and discussions, both useful and sterile. Questions about education, dormant since the 1930s, were revived during these discussions. According to Chagas, “everything was discussed with ardour: the intervention of the State in education, local autonomy, the unity of education amid the diversity of regional conditions, compulsory elementary education, and the most provoking of all subjects, freedom of teaching”(60).

However, this debate also did not penetrate society. Both the scope and scale of politicisation were limited. The debate was limited to groups of politicians and academics, like the Pioneers of Education. The Pioneers were a strong presence in the debate. They were responsible for the emphasis on ideas about decentralisation, such as local autonomy and the flexibility of the educational system(61), and the risks involved in local autonomy(62), among others. In the vision of one of these Pioneers, the State “should defend education from the immediate influences of governments or from the radical

influence of party ideologies”(63).

This, and other important ideas about elementary education, was soon forgotten. Political parties diverted the debate from these educational concerns. The possible impact of educational proposals to be included in the proposed law was lost, because the focus of the debate changed. Special interest groups moved the discussion towards public education versus private education. This subject became very sensitive and completely dominated the debate(64). The State became a political arena - a theme of Rueschemeyer and Evans.

In the final stage of the LDB formulation, there was increased political articulation of the debate. Actually, the legislative part of the State was literally transformed into an arena of political conflict. As stated by one Pioneer, the commotion arising from the debate over “freedom of teaching” hid struggles between lay and religious education, and between leftist and rightist political parties(65). The faction receiving support from rightist political parties defended private religious education; the faction receiving support from leftist political parties defended public lay education.

When this law was enacted in 1961, it had lost much of its original orientation. Its proposals for decentralisation were not as forceful as in the initial project(66). However, there were some important gains for public education. The first was that, after thirteen years of debate, a final version of the 1961 LDB was presented. In its basic principles, this law established that education should continue to be offered by the State as a right, and that the development and maintenance of the public educational system should be given priority in the allocation of public resources. This law also declared education open to private

initiatives, with public funding for private education depending on the fulfilment of specific requirements(67).

At the end of the period, the Pioneers became once more the main voice in defence of public education. Their ability to argue the case for public education convincingly influenced politicians to join the cause, while capable adversaries argued the opposite case(68). The masses did not participate in the debate(69): the scale of participation, following Iannacone, remained limited. Full politicisation did not occur, though educational politics, following Iannacone, had tipped into general politics.

However, while the Pioneers were participating in this debate, they were also able to launch a landmark document on public elementary education. This document, addressed to the State and to the popular classes, will be examined in the next section.

### **3.4.3 - The 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers**

This sub-section examines the “1959 Manifesto to the State and to the People”(70), from the Pioneers of Education. The importance of this manifesto was that it contained the ideas of a group of major analysts of the Brazilian education system.

It is argued that the Pioneers expected that their ideas in the 1959 Manifesto would generate political articulation in the State and in society, i. e. political mobilisation over education. However, despite its force, the message in the Manifesto penetrated only declarations and legislation of the State, and did not penetrate society as a whole. This was a political weakness of this debate and a measure of its inability to propel the State into promoting the effective expansion of elementary education. The Iannacone themes are clear.

In the Manifesto the Pioneers pointed to problems in elementary education and to the failure of the State in establishing elementary education. The main message in this document points to “the undeniable process of elementary education disintegration”(71). At the same time the Pioneers stated that the “young generations.... were seduced by the consciousness of their right to education and by the feeling of revolt against the lack of schools and the abandonment of the existing schools- schools not for all children, but for the privileged....”(72).

The Manifesto also questioned the ability of the State to intervene in elementary education. One of the main topics of the Pioneers was the definition of the State’s responsibility to formulate an adequate elementary education policy. The Pioneers revealed that they “waited, to no effect, throughout a 25-year-period, for the implementation of their practical proposals...”(73), (i.e., the proposals in their 1932 Manifesto, reviewed in the last chapter).

Despite of the inability of the Pioneers to promote political articulation of their

debate, the Pioneers had a political objective in presenting their Manifesto. This is illustrated by the timing of the publication of the document: it was published during the critical debate between the partisans of public schools and the partisans of private schools. The 1959 Manifesto, signed by 189 educators, advanced by its forceful analyses the cause of public education in this debate. The impact generated by this document stemmed from the fact that it contained a less doctrinaire and more realistic tone than the 1932 document.

The Pioneers's purpose of provoking political reaction was also demonstrated by the fact that their dissatisfaction with the State was stronger in the 1959 Manifesto than in the 1932 Manifesto. They reaffirmed in the Manifesto that they had never defended a State monopoly of education. According to them, "the State monopoly would only exist in the case of education functioning as a political and ideological instrument of the State, or as an instrument of domination(74)". The Pioneers, in this statement, were referring to State totalitarianism during the "New State" in the Vargas' Era. Then there had been a complete suppression of popular demonstrations in society.

The attempt of the Pioneers to provoke an increase of the scale of politicisation on elementary education was shown in the way it was addressed. The 1959 Manifesto was also addressed to the masses, as the Manifesto indicates in its title. As early as the 1930s, the Pioneers tried unsuccessfully to include the masses in the debate on elementary education. To them, the masses were the *raison d'etre* of public elementary education(75). In the 1940s and 1950s they continued this emphasis, as shown in Mariani's statement that "the organisation of a public educational system was the opportunity to plan education for the masses on a large scale"(76). The philosophy behind this goal was that, through

elementary education, a capable individual, even without financial resources, would be able to reach higher education and ascend to the status of those who form the leading classes in Brazil(77).

The fact that the Pioneers at the end of the 1950s declared that for more than twenty-five years they had not succeeded in their demands for elementary education reform, confirms that this group of educators lacked the ability to promote political articulation of their debate to influence the implementation of their demands for elementary education. In spite of their 1932 Manifesto, they could not penetrate either the educational sector or politically - organised groups in society and convince them to join the cause of elementary education (78). Actually, in 1932, education was not perceived as being important within the politics of rural society in Brazil. This lack of political base explains the lack of impact of their demands on the State.

In the last year of the 1950s, the Manifesto of the Pioneers was mainly a demonstration that the State had failed to organise a system of public education in Brazil, despite the extraordinary expansion of elementary education during the Redemocratisation Period. Expansion had occurred; an increase in political scope had not, though there had been a moderate increase in the political scale, in the vocabulary of Iannacone. The next section will examine both positive and negative aspects of the educational expansion promoted by the State.



### 3.5 - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

This section uses quantitative and qualitative data to analyse the effectiveness of State policy in elementary education.

It is argued in this section that the improvements in elementary education demonstrated that the State was able to promote significant expansion in the number of schools, but that individual states and municipalities were unable to manage elementary education due to the very rapid increase of the population of elementary school age. This left quantitative and qualitative problems exposing the ineffective development of public elementary education.

Public elementary education showed two main characteristics: very rapid expansion, and a continuation of its fundamental problems. A fundamental problem was the lack of co-ordination between the three levels of the State, characterised by centralised administration in the federal level, as recognised by the government in 1960: "The debates in Congress about the Law of Guidelines and Basis of Education, which have been suffering successive modifications, revealed that problems in Brazilian education originate from an obsolete system aggravated by an excess of administrative centralisation"(79). This problem is further illustrated by the precarious conditions of school buildings, the large number of *leigo* teachers (teachers without the legally required training), and their extremely low salaries, during the expansion of elementary education(80).

This situation in elementary education became more problematic as the uncoordinated levels in the State had to respond to increasing demands for elementary education coming from the new popular classes. The Pioneers gave the following description of this process:

The growth of public education has been spontaneous and disorganised. In this process, the co-ordination between the federal and state levels, instead of increasing is reduced. At these levels there is not the decision-making to dominate and analyse the social and the political forces released by transformations occurring in the economic and industrial structures. The extraordinary quantitative expansion provoking the degradation of quality in all levels of education, the extreme deficiency of financial resources allocated to education (and as stated by one among us “there is no cheap education, just as there is no cheap war”), the excessive centralisation in the State, the neglect by and, sometimes the disturbing intervention of politics, the lack of public spirit, the dilettantism, and the improvisation, all combined to create the current deplorable situation in public education.

(81).

Another facet in this process was the inability of the local level to manage practical problems in schooling. Children were enrolled in public elementary education, but their school day was reduced to a few hours: the time for teaching and learning was reduced. Other aspects related to the quality of elementary education continued to deteriorate: in the majority of the states, two-thirds, or in certain individual states, three-quarters of the teachers themselves lacked basic training in elementary education. Adding to these problems, the school buildings remained in poor condition(82).

Quantitative problems challenged the State’s uncoordinated administration. With the population of school age increasing rapidly, the State was compelled to accelerate the building of schools. During the years covered by this period, the population of elementary

school age increased from approximately 5.8 million in 1946 to 14.0 million in 1964, representing a growth of more than 140 percent(83). As a result, total enrolment in elementary education grew from 3.2 million in 1945(84) to 8,3 million in 1964(85), an increase of more than 150 per cent.

The evolution of enrolment during the Redemocratisation Period suggested effective action by the State. Elementary education was now being offered to a significantly larger proportion of children than in 1930. The magnitude of this expansion is shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Brazil: Evolution of total enrolment in elementary education, 1950-1960.

| Year | Enrolment | % Growth |
|------|-----------|----------|
| 1950 | 4,330,157 | -        |
| 1960 | 7,448,217 | 72       |

Source: SEEC/MEC, Brazil, 1985.

The 72 per cent rate of growth in enrolment in elementary education from 1950 to 1960, during the Redemocratisation Period, as presented in Table 4, is a considerable increase when compared with the previous period. As indicated earlier, enrolment growth in the Vargas Era was 54 per cent.

This increased rate of growth in enrolment hid two problematic realities. First, the completion rate in public elementary education was low during this period. For example, in the final year (1950) of President Dutra's government, of the 100 children that entered

elementary education, only 16 reached the 4th grade in 1953, and, of these, only nine entered secondary education in 1954(86). The proportion underwent a slight improvement from 1954 to 1958: from 100 children enrolled in the first grade, 18 per cent reached the 4th grade in 1958. Statistics for 1960 reveal that only 15 per cent of children enrolled four years before reached the fourth grade (even in the large cities), and, of 2.9 million children enrolled in elementary education in 1957 only 1.2 million reached the second grade, meaning that 44 per cent left school. In addition, of 100 children who entered elementary education in 1961, 24 reached the 4th grade in 1964, and, of these, only 15 entered secondary education(87). However, the government in 1960 revealed that “children from poor social classes or children recently arrived in the large cities rarely reached the second grade”(88).

The second point relating to the elusiveness of the rate of growth in enrolment was the completion rates in public elementary education in certain individual states, especially in the North and Northeast regions of Brazil, although this problem was not an issue in the national educational debate. The expansion of enrolment continued to be the main concern.

Table 5 shows the discrepancy among regions concerning productivity of elementary education.

Table 5. Brazil: Enrolment and completion rates in public elementary education in two groups of states, 1955-1958.

| States            | Enrolment in 1st grade in 1955 | Students enrolled in 1st grade in 1955 which reached 4th grade in 1958 |      |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|--|------|
|                   |                                | Number   | %    |
| North/Northeast   |                                |  |      |
| Pará              | 84,563                         | 8,804  | 10.4 |
| Piauí             | 51,047                         | 3,554  | 6.9  |
| Pernambuco        | 184,805                        | 18,561   | 10.0 |
| Ceará             | 181,502                        | 9,738  | 5.4  |
| South/Southeast   |                                |  |      |
| Rio de Janeiro    | 298,577                        | 73,203   | 24.5 |
| Rio Grande do Sul | 287,371                        | 78,852   | 27.3 |
| Santa Catarina    | 139,304                        | 24,763   | 17.8 |
| São Paulo         | 561,065                        | 185,630  | 33.1 |

Source: Organised from data of "Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso" (Elementary Education Success Rates), Estudos Estatísticos (Statistical Studies), Ministério da Educação, 1990.

The economically poor northern and north-eastern states show completion rates in elementary education lower than the richer southern and south-eastern states. The variation within the indices of completion rates of the first group ranged from seven to ten per cent, while, within the second group, the variation was between eighteen and thirty-three per cent. This variation indicates that homogeneity in completion rates among individual states of the first group is higher than homogeneity in completion rates among individual states of the second group.

However, a southern state, Santa Catarina, presented an index of completion rates that was below the average of Brazil. National statistics indicate that from 3,160,211 students enrolled in elementary education in 1955, only 589,911 reached the 4th grade in

1958. This means an index of completion of 18.7 per cent as the average for Brazil. The index of completion for São Paulo, on the other hand, was higher than the average for Brazil. Thus, the spectrum of variation between the indices of completion of the two groups goes from five to thirty three per cent.

There was striking differences among states and regions of Brazil at the end of the Redemocratisation Period. The dimension of “non-completion rates” was very high in both groups, but, in the first, it showed the extremely poor condition of elementary education in the Northern and North-eastern regions of Brazil. The truth was that, in the middle of this century, less than one in ten children of school age in those north-eastern states reached the fourth grade, overlapping with high rates of illiteracy in this period. By 1959, fifty per cent of the general population was still illiterate(89). In the second group, the “non-completion rate” in the state of Santa Catarina was slightly below the average for Brazil: 81 per cent. The rest of the states, except São Paulo, were close to the average.

### **3.6 - CONCLUSION**

The narrative presented in this chapter allows the conclusion that, in this period, the State set itself the urgent objectives of increasing the speed of elementary education expansion, including the masses in elementary education, improving its quality and legislating on decentralisation. These goals were emphasised by the State in its declarations. However, in the formulation of the 1961 LDB, the objective of decentralisation of the educational system was not as clear as in the first project of the law.

The State was able to reach part of its most urgent objective: the expansion of elementary education. However, this expansion was marked by a lack of co-ordination between the administrative levels of the State. Despite the democratic government, centralisation by the federal level and mismanagement and corruption by the individual states were still present. These continued to be the main obstacles for that co-ordination.

There was significant change in the political context during this period. Elementary education became a political issue in Congress during the final phase of the debate on the 1961 LDB, and increasing demands for elementary education raised political tensions that forced the State to speed the expansion of elementary education. However, the 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers of Education in which they outlined for the State and for the people the deplorable situation of elementary education, had no political power to influence the implementation of elementary education policy.

Behind the notable expansion of elementary education during this period, the number of children who were not in school continued to be very high and presented striking differences among the various states and regions in Brazil. Despite the change from dictatorship to democratic government, the State continued to be unable to solve fundamental qualitative problems in elementary education.

The “areas of sensitivity” presented in Chapter One permit the conclusion that the objectives of the government to include the masses in elementary education, improve its quality and decentralise elementary education were strategies used by the State in search for legitimacy through educational action, a proposition of Weiler. The State was not merely

concerned with the construction of an “image of action“, but throughout the period sought legitimacy as a reforming and reformist government.

However, there was a contradiction between these objectives and the State’s bureaucratic apparatus. The non-existence of coherent corporate action in this apparatus hindered any effective action by the State, since the local level continued to lack capacity and autonomy - following the ideas of Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol. - to deal with problems in elementary education.

Local autonomy was not always encouraged in practice, as the State oscillated between centralisation and decentralisation , with finance remaining as a central issue. Thus, legally, administratively and financially there was considerable incoherence in the articulation of the central, regional and local State apparatus in Brazil. Local autonomy did not develop.

The scale of demands of the popular classes for elementary education forced the State to speed the expansion of elementary education - a point raised in the thinking of Iannacone. However, the issue of decentralisation of elementary education did not penetrate the 1961 LDB as much as previously expected, due to the political power of special interest groups in the final phase of the debate. The forceful contribution of the Pioneers had no wider political impact in influencing the State to develop effective action in elementary education. The scope and scale of politicisation, following the ideas of Iannacone, did however, increase, and there were more political actors. However, full participation did not occur.



In this context, the State was nevertheless able to promote an expansion of elementary education. In 1964 the rate of enrolment reached 72 percent. However, qualitative problems reached a peak during this expansion. As a result, non completion rates remained very high, around 86 percent. This indicates that the stated objective of the State to include the masses in elementary education was not fulfilled, because children from the masses that had come to the urban areas rarely reached the second grade in elementary education. Also, there were striking differences of elementary education provision between regions of Brazil. Enrolment rates in the rich Southern region was higher than in the poor Northern region, while non-completion rates were higher in the Northern region than in the Southern region.

In sum, the democratic regime, the strategies by the State with democratic objectives for elementary education - in search of legitimacy through educational action in the analysis of Weiler, and the attempts during the debate in Congress and in the Manifesto of the Pioneers to politicise fundamental issues in elementary education - following Iannacone - did not in the end produce the emergence of the State as an effective actor in elementary education. State democratic goals were still dramatically underachieved. In the next period, covered in the following chapter, democracy disappeared in Brazil.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens Presidenciais [Education in Presidential Addresses], V. I., V.II., MEC/INEP: Brasília, Brasil, 1987, pp.155-377.
2. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 18 DE SETEMBRO DE 1946, in Almeida, A. M. de, (ed.), Constituições Brasileiras [Brazilian Constitutions], 4th edition, Edições Saraiva: São Paulo, Brasil, 1963.
3. DECRETO LEI Nº 8.529, DE 2 DE JANEIRO DE 1946 - “LEI ORGÂNICA DO ENSINO PRIMARIO” [Organic Law of Elementary Education], Ministério de Educação e Cultura: Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, 1946.
4. BRASIL. “LEI Nº 4.024 DE 21 DE DEZEMBRO DE 1961 - ESTABELECE DIRETRIZES E BASES DA EDUCAÇÃO NACIONAL” [Law Nº 4,024 of 21 December - Establishes Guidelines and Bases of National Education], Leis Básicas de Ensino do 1º e 2º Graus [Basic Laws of Elementary and Secondary Education], Ministry of Education: Brasília, Brasil, 1983, p. 9.
5. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 18 DE SETEMBRO DE 1946....op. cit., Chapter II.
6. ibid. See Title VI, Chapter II “Da Educação e da Cultura” [On Education and on Culture], ibid. The dedication of a chapter to education was considered a victory for education since the 1937 Constitution, unlike the 1934 Constitution, had not done so.
7. Ibid. Articles 166 and 168.
8. ibid. Articles 168 and 169. The provision of percentages for elementary education was introduced by the 1934 Constitution, was omitted in the 1937 Constitution, as indicated in the last chapter, and reintroduced in the 1946 Constitution.
9. The “Law of 15 October, 1827” was formulated at the request of Januário da Cunha Barbosa, Minister of Don João VI (King of Portugal) who was governing Brazil at that time. This law introduced a series of improvised solutions in elementary education. For more information, see Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira [Brazilian Education: Elementary and Secondary Education], Saraiva: São Paulo, Brasil, 1978, ps. 22, 52.
10. See ibid., p. 52 for a discussion of this regulation in the “1946 Organic Law”.
11. As shown in President’s Dutra declaration. See BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens .... V.I., op. cit., pgs. 169, 176.
12. ibid. p., 186.
13. ibid.
14. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens....op. cit., p. 355. President Goulart referred to this situation as a “paradoxical situation”, since in some regions of Brazil there was a

shortage of school buildings.

15. See BRASIL, *A Educação nas Mensagens....*V. II., op. cit., p. 264. President Kubitschek was referring to 1954 (the last year of Vargas' government and the transitory government of President Café Filho) showing his disagreement with the educational policy of previous governments.
16. *ibid.*
17. The term "the masses" is used in this thesis to indicate the ordinary people, as people from the lower economic classes in society. The term is used in the thesis interchangeably with "popular classes".
18. BRASIL, *A Educação nas Mensagens....*V. I., op. cit., p. 169. This declaration of President Dutra was made in his first year in government and emphasised the democratic ideas of the new government, for the democratisation of education.
19. *ibid.*, p. 199.
20. *ibid.* President Kubitschek declared that his government would stimulate the analysis of educational problems and that the Institute of Pedagogic Research INEP would be in charge of a survey of the situation of education in Brazil.
21. *ibid.*, p. 349. In this declaration, President Quadros was comparing quantitative and qualitative aspects in the expansion of elementary education.
22. See BRASIL, *A Educação nas Mensagens....* V. II., op. cit., p. 368.
23. "Inequality" in education was a dominant idea at the time.
24. BRASIL, *A Educação nas Mensagens....*V. II., op. cit., p. 366.
25. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA DOS ESTADOS UNIDOS DO BRASIL DE 18 DE SETEMBRO DE 1946, op. cit. The idea of "financial co-ordination" between the central State with the individual states is present in the Paragraph of the Article 171.
26. See BRASIL, *A Educação nas Mensagens ....*V.I., op. cit., p. 174. President Dutra referred to the supplementary action of the central State, in the Vargas' Era, for the development of elementary education by the individual states and municipalities.
27. *ibid.*, p. 170.
28. *ibid.*, p. 176.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 169.
30. *ibid.*, p. 175. See this declaration of Darcy Ribeiro in BRASIL, COMISSÃO DE EDUCAÇÃO E CULTURA, *Projeto Educação* [Project Education], Tomo II, Senado Federal: Brasília, Brasil, 1978, p. 809.

31. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens... V, I, op. cit., p. 188. A declaration by President Dutra, in 1950, revealed that the Fund for Elementary Education was finally functioning in his administration. On this same occasion he explained that this objective was reached “without any rigid system of central control.”.
32. This idea is discussed by P. Ghiraldelli Junior, História da Educação, [History of Education], Cortez: São Paulo, Brasil, 1990, p. 65.
33. *ibid.*, p. 176.
34. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II. op. cit., p. 357.
35. *ibid.*, p. 351. With this proposition the government indicated that the activity of the Union (the central State) would be exerted through indirect intervention.
36. This meant the return to democratic ideals expressed in the first years of Vargas’ government and in the Redemocratisation Period. For an example of the similarity of ideals in both periods, see the 1934 Constitution and the 1946 Constitution in Almeida, A. M. de, (ed.), Constituições...op. cit.
37. J. Roberto Moreira, Educação e Desenvolvimento no Brasil, [Education and Development in Brazil], CLAPCS, Rio de Janeiro, 1960, p. 86.
38. *ibid.*
39. BRASIL. Sinopse Estatística do Brasil [Statistical Synopsis of Brazil], Ministério do Planejamento e Coordenação Geral, IBGE: Brasília, 1971.
40. This term “elite” is used in this thesis with the meaning of a selected dominant class of powerful people. Their power may come from one or a combinations of factors such as birth or money or political, intellectual or religious or professional status in society.
41. *ibid.*
42. *ibid.*
43. J. Roberto Moreira, Educação e Desenvolvimento...op. cit., p. 87.
44. *ibid.*
45. *ibid.*
46. R. J. Havighurst, R. J. Moreira, Society and Education...op. cit.
47. Anísio Teixeira, “Educação não é Privilégio” [Education is not a Privilege], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], Vol. 70, Nº 166, Ministry of Education/INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1989, p. 451.

48. The masses gained political visibility in the election of Janio Quadros. In João Goulart's government the masses began to be organised in a political party, the PTB [Brazilian Working Party]. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Getúlio a Castelo [Brazil: From Getúlio to Castelo], Editora Paz e Terra: São Paulo, Brazil, 1988, ps. 254, 263.
49. J. Roberto Moreira, Educação e Desenvolvimento....op. cit., p. 87.
50. For illiteracy rates see, "O Analfabetismo no Brasil e no Mundo" [Illiteracy in Brazil and in the World], Estudos Estatísticos [Statistical Studies] Ministry of Education: Brasília, Brazil, 1990, p. 2.
51. See A Educação nas Mensagens.... V. I., op. cit., p. 186.
52. *ibid.*, p. 213.
53. See A Educação nas Mensagens.... V. II., Op. cit., p. 328
54. *ibid.*, p. 357.
55. The main document in the Redemocratisation Period summarising the dissatisfaction of several educators with the organisation of public elementary education was the 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers. See P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da....op. cit., p. 140-145.
56. Clemente Mariani, "1948 Exposição de Motivos" [1948 Statement of Intentions], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], Vol. 68., Nº 160, Ministry of Education/INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1987, p. 632.
57. *ibid.* Clemente Mariani invited Anísio Teixeira to occupy a position in the Ministry of Education. In a letter from Paris, Teixeira refused the invitation, regretting that he was not able to work with Mariani. He indicated that, regarding education, he and the Minister had ideas in common. The common point between them was the defence of elementary education decentralisation. See Hermes Lima. Anísio Teixeira Estadista.....op. cit., p. 174.
58. Clemente Mariani. "1948 Exposição de Motivos"[1948 Statement of Intentions] Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies]...op. cit., p. 632.
59. *ibid.*
60. Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira....op. cit., p. 58.
61. Hermes Lima, Anísio Teixeira Estadista da Educação [Anísio Teixeira a Statesman of Education], Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, 1978, 175-179.
62. *ibid.*
63. Hermes Lima, Anísio Teixeira Estadista .....op. cit., pp. 173-174.

64. *ibid.*
65. P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da.....op. cit., p. 146.
66. *ibid.* In a discussion about this subject, held in the University of Brasilia, Brazil, in 1976, the conclusion was that decentralisation was a central idea in the project presented by Mariani in 1948. However, with the dispute between the defenders of public education (the Pioneers) and the advocates of private education (the best known being Carlos Lacerda), not only was the development of the law delayed but also the debate on the content of decentralisation lost its intensity.
67. About resources to public education see Law N° 4,024/61, Title XII, Article 93. For conditions for the allocation of public resources to private education see Title XII, Article 94, paragraph 2nd.
68. For the debate between Anisio Teixeira (defending the interests of public education) and Congressman Carlos Lacerda (defending the interests of private education), see Dermeval Saviani, Política e Educação no Brasil [Politics and Education in Brazil], Cortez Editora: São Paulo, Brasil, 1988, pp. 62-63.
69. In the literature, references to this debate mention politicians, intellectuals, bureaucrats and leaders of private schools. There is no reference to the masses as participants in this debate. See, for example, Ghiraldelli Jr., História da .....op. cit., pp. 139-160.
70. See the 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers in P. Ghiraldelli Jr. História da.....op. cit., p. 140-145. In this document, the Pioneers of Education presented a diagnosis of elementary education situation, analysed its problems and, in a more forceful way than in the 1932 Manifesto, proposed solutions for them.
71. *ibid.*
72. *ibid.*
73. *ibid.*
74. *ibid.*
75. The defence of public education for the masses had, since the 1920s, been the reason for all educational movements initiated by the Pioneers. To them, public education for the masses was synonymous with democracy. This idea pervades the literature written about the Pioneers in Brazil. However, some critics of the Pioneers' propositions mention their high social status in society to infer that they disseminated their ideas from the top to the bottom. See, for example, D. Trigueiro Mendes, "Anotações sobre o pensamento educacional no Brasil"[Notations about the educational thought in Brazil], Revista Brasileira de.....op. cit. p. 500.
76. Clemente Mariani, "1948 Exposição de Motivos" [Statement of Intentions], Revista Brasileira.....op. cit., p. 626.

77. *ibid.*
78. Even though the group of academic analysts who signed the 1959 Manifesto was much larger than the group who signed the 1932 Manifesto, the movement of the Pioneers did not involve teachers and other professionals in the educational system nor professionals working in the Ministry of Education, nor students in elementary or secondary education.
79. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens....op. cit., pp. 329-330.
80. See this statement of the 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers in P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da Educação.....op. cit., pp. 140-141.
81. This statement was central in the Manifesto. See *ibid.*, p. 141.
82. See this declaration of the 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers in P. Ghiraldelli Jr., História da Educação.....op. cit., p. 140.
83. See Brazil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 157.
84. For data on enrolment in 1945 see Barbara Freitag, Escola, Estado e Sociedade [School, State and Society], Moraes: São Paulo, Brazil, 1986, p. 52.
85. For data in 1964, see Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 386.
86. *ibid.*
87. BRASIL. Estatísticas da Educação Nacional [Statistics on National Education], Brasília, Brazil, 1960-1971.
88. BRASIL. A Educação nas Mensagens....V. II., op. cit., p. 331
89. For illiteracy rates see “ O Analfabetismo no Brasil e no Mundo [Illiteracy in Brazil and in the World], op. cit., p. 2.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION UNDER THE MILITARY REGIME (1964-1985)**

#### **4.1 - PURPOSE, ARGUMENT AND ORGANISATION**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the relationship of the State to public elementary education during the Military Regime, in order to find out if it was affected by the emergence of an authoritarian government.

It is argued overall in this chapter that in this period the State developed with determination a remarkable number of new sophisticated policies in elementary education. However, the State developed an authoritarian relationship with elementary education by centralising decision making without consideration of the practical possibilities at the local level for the implementation of the numerous and complex policies. As political debate was suppressed, and the recognition for the State's achievements in the economic sector guaranteed the acceptability of the State during the major part of the period, only at its end did educators begin to reveal the scale of problems existing in elementary education.

This chapter is organised into six sections. After this first section, section two, "The Construction of elementary education policy", examines the nature of State policies during two decades, with the emphasis on legislation, plans and projects. Section three, "Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy", analyses the circumstances of the period which hindered this implementation. Section four, "The



Political Basis for the Solution of Elementary Education Problems”, evaluates the political position of elementary education in relation to other powerful State activities of the period; and section five assesses the “Effectiveness” of elementary educational policies and their implementation in elementary education.

## **4.2 - THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

This section examines the activities of the State in elementary education during the military period. This period will be divided into two sub-periods. The first sub-period corresponds to the years of strong autocracy and political repression. The second sub-period corresponds to the years when political relaxation began and led the way to the “abertura” [opening] of the political system.

It is argued in this section that, during the Military Regime, the State demonstrated authority in its decisions about elementary education policy. Their number, diversity and sophistication marked a difference with previous policy. However, this intense activity of the State served more to fulfil the needs of legitimacy by the State than to fulfil the expressed objectives of elementary education.

### **4.2.1 - The Construction of Policy in the First Decade (1964-1974)**

To allow for a better understanding of elementary education policy in the beginning of the Military Regime, it is necessary to review the situation of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education(1) in the last years of the Redemocratisation Period. This

legislation directed educational policy in the first decade of the Military Regime. At the end of the Redemocratisation Period, the debate on this law had lost its momentum and the initial enthusiasm for it had waned.

As indicated in the last chapter, this law, also known as Law Nº 4.024/61, was passed in 1961 and was the result of a long debate initiated in 1948. During the late 1950s, the debate was diverted from elementary education, focusing on other political interests. Finally, during the Military Regime, this law caused discouragement in the educational sector. Garcia for example, said that this law “that could have given a revolutionary connotation to education, emerged as marginal in the system existing in 1964”(2).

There was hope among educators in the late 1940s that Law 4,024 would promote the reform of public education in Brazil, but this sentiment had changed to doubt when this law was first enforced in 1962. Chagas, for example, stated that “for the first time a single document regulated all the levels of education... but when the law emerged in 1961, it was already inconsistent with the demands of reality”(3). This law had already been weakened before 1964, and the idea of decentralisation had been watered down. In spite of its inadequacies, the 1961 LDB did regulate the constitutional right to compulsory elementary education for children of seven years of age and above, and served to demonstrate the creation by the State of an image of action, and its reformist concerns.

However, inconsistencies in the law gave rise to a wrong interpretation of the State’s duty to provide elementary education for all. There was a contradiction between this regulation and another Article of the Law(4) This was a loophole that could exempt the

State from expanding elementary education in some circumstances, in contradiction with the constitutional principle. Chagas and also Romanelli, for example, have judged that Article 30 invalidated the prescription of compulsory elementary education, allowing public authority to ignore its responsibility to offer education to all(5).

The 1961 LDB was not the main regulator of the State's educational activities after 1964. The first government in the Military Period, under President Humberto Castelo Branco(1964-1967) was concerned with being decisive. The State's understanding was that prompt action was needed to face the situation in elementary education. One of the first moves of the new government was to express its decision to combat a fundamental problem in education: illiteracy(6).

The government could not ignore illiteracy in its declarations, since the revelation that as many as 40 per cent of the population of fifteen years and older were illiterate was a shock to society(7). This was a demonstration that the educational system in the past had failed to include those youngsters in elementary education or even if some of them had passed through school they had not learned basic reading. The solution chosen by previous governments was to fight this problem through transitory policies such as the literacy campaigns and movements(8). There were comments that these movements, with their high social visibility, had involved financial resources that should have been allocated to regular education. Chagas, for instance, claimed that substantial funds that should have been spent on elementary education were channelled into adult education(9).

Like earlier populist governments, President Castelo Branco blamed the previous

government for the situation encountered in elementary education. He explained that “public power had sinned not only by omission but also by compliance, and sometimes by deleterious action”(10). The habit of blaming a “previous government” was carried on by most governments in this period(11). The government’s knowledge of conditions in elementary education was updated by the 1964 School Census, and the presence of technical expertise in the State(12). The results of educational research revealed high indices of absenteeism and failure in the first grades.

The expansion in enrolment was no longer the main and only strategy to be pursued by the State. To a greater degree than in previous governments, the leaders of the Military Regime increased and diversified their strategies in elementary education in search for legitimization. In its Presidential Address in 1967, the government announced the development of policies of assistance to students. They were the “School Food Programme,” and the “National Campaign for School Materials”(13). Other important policies were directed at the formation of human resources, specifically in educational administration(14). The productivity of schooling also became an important goal in declarations of the State.

In its declarations on public elementary education, the State tried to take a strong stance on the reform of elementary education. However, there was a difference between Presidential Addresses in this part of the Military Period and those from the Vargas Era and the Redemocratisation Period. The declarations of the State on the scale and nature of problems in elementary education during the Military Regime were cautious. The State was more concerned to create an image of action by showing that it was ready to present new

programmes than to discuss problems in public elementary education(15). In his 1968 Address to Congress, for example, the second President, Artur da Costa e Silva (1967-1969), concentrated his attention on announcing administrative reform in the Ministry of Education, and mentioned the continuation of policies to train teachers and school administrators(16). In addition, there was the information that international agencies would contribute with loans to finance elementary education(17). Only in the 1970 government of General Emilio Garrastazu Medici (1969-1974), did the State, backed up by its achievements in the economic sector, declare the dimensions of deficiencies in elementary education:

Analysis of the educational system shows serious deficiencies of organisation and functioning. There is urgent need to neutralise this situation: i. e, alarming dropout and repetition rates in elementary education, lack of planning, antidemocratic selectivity, lack of trained teachers, low salaries, and unrealistic curricula contents.

(18).

However, in Medici's government, as in the past, the State was always presenting new ideas and proposing new policies. One new idea that influenced education at that time was the notion of education as an investment. The State declared that, in this new concept of education, there was no place for the superficial verbal learning cherished by the old oligarchies. In accordance with this idea and inspired by the theory of human capital, which was being introduced to mainstream educational economic thought at that time, the State's educational policy aimed at training skilled technicians, and this included elementary education(19). The diagnosis of education presented in the 1970 Presidential Address revealed this purpose(20). "Productivity" was emphasised in this declaration.

The diagnosis also revealed increasing rates of enrolment in elementary education. However, as indicated above, this Address showed that seemingly insurmountable problems continued to challenge the educational system, such as: the alarming drop-out and repetition rates in elementary education, the lack of planning in the provision of education; and the low salaries and lack of training of a major part of the teaching force, among other things(21).

Despite these difficulties, another State proposal was the extension of elementary education from four to eight years. This was idealistic. There was no doubt that in this period, as never before, the State had consistently increased the programmes aimed at public elementary education. This objective was also consistent with pronouncements in the 1967 Constitutional reform, supported by the 1969 Constitutional Amendment N° 1. In these documents, the proposal was that “elementary education (be) compulsory for all, from seven to fourteen years of age, and free in the official establishments”(22). However, this objective was impractical in the short run because of the conditions of co-ordination between the central State and the individual states, as will be discussed later.

Thus, here was a continuing discrepancy between the State’s educational policy and the situation in elementary education. At this time, legislation and planning strategies were activated, and the State’s objective was the attainment of a new enrolment goal in elementary education. In spite of the fact that 40 per cent of teachers were *leigos* (teachers in elementary education who lack the legally required training)(23), the State emphatically announced its objective of increasing the index of schooling (from the then current 67 per cent) to “reach 80 per cent by the end of 1974”(24). This strategy improved the confidence

that people had in the power of the Military Regime to execute reforms, this helping the search for legitimacy by the State.

a) The 1971 legal reform of national education

This piece of national legislation raised everybody's hopes for a successful reform of the educational system. The formulation of this law was an opportunity for the creation by the State of an image of action. Law N° 5,692/71 was formulated by a group of competent educators who described their task as a challenge: the formulation of modern legislation that would introduce remarkable innovation into the educational system(25). However, despite these high expectations, Law N° 5,692/71 was almost a complete failure in practice(26).

Unlike the legislative bottleneck which had occurred ten years earlier with the 1961 LDB, the 1971 proposal passed rapidly through Congress. Comparing Congress' behaviour with regard to the two laws, Dermerval Saviani said that "regarding Law 4,024/61, the function of Congress was to deform the coherence of the original project, while with Law N° 5,692/71, the function of Congress was to preserve the coherence of the original project"(27). There were also indications that the speedy passage of this law through Congress was due to "the majority of Congressmen belonging to the ARENA (Alianza Renovadora Nacional), the party of the government(28). This law did not create the same dissension among Congressmen as had occurred with Law 4,024/61(29).

The passage of Law N° 5,692/71 through Congress was in line with the influence of the Executive on the Legislative power. The central State was autocratic with regard to

what was considered the best for elementary education. The will of the Executive prevailed. In the year in which law N° 5,692/71 was enacted, President Medici, in his Address to Congress, stated that the “new structure of fundamental education, according to the proposed law to be sent to Congress, will mark the definitive rupture with education as a mere general preparation”(30). The promise was “break with the past,” just as in Vargas’ time with respect to the “break with oligarchic culture”.

The fact that this promise was being repeated in 1971 suggests that the “culture” still existed. Actually, the approval of the Law of Guidelines and Basis of the First and Second Degree Education”, or Law N° 5,692/71(31), had created expectations of a new era in education(32). This new piece of legislation was received with enthusiasm by the Executive Power. The duration of elementary education was extended to eight years and it was named “First Degree” education(33).

A new element in Law N° 5,692/71 was the organisation of the curriculum, with the integration of academic and practical subjects. Actually, the 1971 LDB maintained the same philosophical principles as those of the 1961 LDB. These principles included freedom, solidarity, scientific and technical grounding, respect for the individual, national unity, international solidarity, and the preservation and the expansion of the cultural heritage(34). In addition, the formulation of the 1971 LDB included the principle of “development of potentialities,” meaning the student’s preparation for the labour market, and for the conscious exercise of citizenship(35). These new objectives of Law N° 5,692/71 generated enthusiasm among educators. Scientific and technical innovations in the law also raised expectations for change, as did the theme of national unity and education for regional



differences(36). The new law also maintained the idea of education as investment, as introduced by the Pioneers of Education.

However, implementing this law was a very difficult job for the State. During the whole period of the Military Regime, there was more debate about the objectives of laws, than about how to reach those objectives, hinting that educational policy served in the search for legitimacy by the State rather than to promote effective change in elementary education.

#### **4.2.2 - The Construction of Policy in the Second Decade (1975-1985)**

However, a new strategy, pointed out in the work of Weiler, was created to help the search for legitimacy by the State: sophisticated methods of planning. These were superimposed on the problematic reality of elementary education. A major plan presented by the government was the 1972-1974 Sectoral Plan of Education and Culture(37). In it, the government of President Medici offered a summary of ideas about elementary education. The central objective was to respect and develop humanistic education while, at the same time, also giving students skills for work in the new context of the fast developing economy. To implement this philosophy, the State relied on planning practices that had been used systematically since the government of President Kubitschek. These practices gained in sophistication during the Military Regime. They became a characteristic activity of the “new military professionals”, or “career military officers who passed through training schools that taught techniques and ideas of national economic planning”(38).

In many circumstances, planning was used as an end in itself(39). Despite this, these projects were a source of continuous enhancement for the State's image. In 1972, for example, a total of 36 projects, 33 considered as priorities, formed the 1972-1974 Education Sectoral Plan. Among these projects, the first group was composed of eight projects directly related to elementary education while the second group was composed of three projects that were indirectly related to elementary education. Priorities in the projects of the first group were the construction and reform of school buildings, teacher training, the regularisation of teachers' salaries, curricular reform, assistance to the states in planning techniques, mapping school zones, and textbook editing(40). In the projects of the second group the focus was on social assistance to students (such as free lunches, discounts on school materials), physical education, and the special provision of elementary education for the disabled(41). Many other minor projects were launched at this time.

Another related State policy was the promoting of an expansion in elementary education. As in the past, this continued to be a major strategy in the search for legitimacy by the State. President Ernesto Geisel's 1975 Address to Congress was evidence of the State's enthusiasm for the attainment of a major educational goal: student enrolment had reached 80 per cent in elementary education(42). That same year the State announced a new goal: to reach 90 per cent enrolment in elementary education by 1979(43). Programmes and projects developed in Geisel's time were part of the "Plano Setorial de Educação" [Sectoral Plan of Education]. This in turn was part of the Second National Development Plan 1975-1979(44).

The formulation and development of programmes continued at an accelerated

pace. Some of these programmes followed earlier objectives, such as the construction of school buildings, and curricular reform. Others had as the objectives the “raising of the system’s productivity,” teacher training, and the regulation of teachers’ careers in the individual states(45). Other projects were experiments, such as the development of new methodologies for teaching, particularly the “PREMEN - Programa de Expansão e Melhoria do Ensino” (Programme of Expansion and Improvement of Teaching)(46). In this category there were also policies aimed at improving food programmes, school material and scholarships for students, and experiments like SEPREM “Sistema Especial para Promoção Educacional da Criança” [Special System for Educational Promotion of the Child](47), whose aim was to enrol children who were not in school.

By the end of the Military Regime, there was a change in the orientation of elementary education policy. During the period of the “economic miracle” (1968-1973), the State was firmly rooted in its economic success, the primary source for the retrieval of legitimacy by the State during this period. In the late 1970s, this comfortable situation began to erode. At this time the State reintroduced diagnoses into its declarations on education. This reflected the new era of “abertura” [opening] of the political system. In this sense, diagnoses of elementary education reinforced the “democratic” image sought by the State. By 1979, the economy had faltered and the State was reviewing the problematic situation in elementary education. One example, of the new mood in the State, was the reference in the 1979 Presidential Address to “economic difficulties that are afflicting the major part of the population in school, mainly in the initial years, causing deficiencies of all sorts and requiring the support of the government”(48).

This strategy of diagnosis was not emphasised in President João Batista Figueiredo's 1980 Address to Congress(49). Here, again, the accent was strongly on programmes and projects, and the use of sophisticated planning. President Figueiredo, in this same year, announced programmes for teacher training and large assistance programmes, centred on school materials, food and health services.

By 1981, another plan, the "III Plano Setorial de Educação, Cultura e Desporto" [Third Sectoral Plan of Education, Culture and Sport], as part of the III "Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento"-PND), [National Development Plan], announced the State's objectives for education(50). There were five main objectives in this plan, of which "emphasis on basic education" was the first. Two specific objectives were identified as priorities: education in rural areas, and education in peripheral urban areas. A special line of action, called "Educação-Integração" [Education-Integration] was created to promote the integration of elementary education with the local culture of rural areas, part of the broader "Programa de Ações Sócio-Educativas e Culturais para o Meio Rural" (PRODASEC/RURAL) [Socio-Educational Actions for the Rural Environment Programme](51), developed in the North-eastern Region of Brazil(52).

At the same time, the "Programa de Ações Sócio-Educativas e Culturais para Populações Urbanas Carentes" (PRODASEC URBANO), [Socio-Educational and Cultural Actions for Needy Urban Populations Programme] was created. In this programme, attention was directed towards elementary education and pre-school in the peripheral urban areas of some specific states(53). There were scattered central State policies at the end of this period, indicating the State's effects to start a gradual transfer of responsibilities for

elementary education to the municipal (local) level, as, for example, the programme “Pró-Município”(54). In addition, in line with the political “abertura” [opening], in 1984 the State announced the creation of administrative bases in municipalities(55).

However, this upsurge of projects brought with it problems of implementation. This point will be examined in the following section.

### **4.3 - THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

This section discusses the co-ordination between the central State, the states and municipalities in the formulation and implementation of elementary education policy during the Military Regime.

It is argued in this section that the State recognised the urgent need to solve the problem of mismanagement of financial resources by the local level . However, the central State developed an authoritarian relationship with the educational system. Despite the expressed objective of the government to start a process of decentralisation of the educational system, the federal level centralised decisions without attention to the possibilities of implementation by the local level (including the mismanagement of financial resources). The State also responded to demands of interest groups detrimental to elementary education. Only at the end of the period did the State try to solve the financial problem of the educational system, through new legislation.

In 1964, the State created a mechanism to develop elementary education: the “Educational Salary”(56), a subsidy to elementary education to be collected from industry. President Castelo Branco, in the arguing for this “special contribution”(57), was inspired by the idea of community participation in the solution of problems in elementary education(58).

The “Educational Salary” was not the only source of finance for elementary education during this period. A declaration by President Castelo Branco, in 1967, indicated that the National Fund for Elementary Education, FNEP, was functioning at that time. In addition to the “Educational Salary”, another source of income for elementary education was the National Fund for Social Investment, FINSOCIAL(59). The existence of these State financial policies suggests that there were plenty of resources allocated for elementary education.

However, the administration of the financial resources continued to be problematic. A 1965 declaration by President Castelo Branco indicated the need for a “cleansing campaign in education” to “re-establish normality in the management of public money”(60). This proposal shows that mismanagement, and possibly corruption, were still present at the local level, indicating the presence of incoherent corporate action within the State . This represented a major obstacle for the implementation of policies formulated by the government. The government reacted by following the recommendation of Law N° 4.024/61 and proposing a “centralised planning with decentralised execution”(61).

Despite the intention of the government to start a process of decentralisation, the

federal level continued to develop incoherent action by taking decisions without considering the possibilities of implementation by the local level. The case of the 1967 constitutional reform is an example. The aim of this reform was to extend from four to eight years the duration of elementary education(62). There were serious difficulties in the implementation of this policy. Schools in the rural area often only provided two or three years of elementary education(63). Children “beyond the official age”(64) were a common problem in four-year elementary education(65). A realistic extension of elementary education would also demand a prior process of gradual preparation.

The incoherence between the decisions of the central State and the possibilities for their implementation by the individual states and municipalities became obvious in 1971, after the new LDB was passed. As indicated earlier, this law introduced sophisticated proposals for the reform of elementary and secondary education. However, the implementation of these was a very difficult task for the educational system, marked by a lack of autonomy. There was a shortage of personnel with the training required to incorporate the new ideas into teaching traditional routines. This forced schools to ask for guidance from the Federal Board of Education on the implementation of the 1971 LDB(66). In fact, few individual states possessed adequate human and financial resources to introduce the necessary changes without the help of the federal State. Cruz, for example, stated that “the truth is that the law was not even implemented”(67).

It is suggested that problems in the implementation of Law N° 5692/71 were the consequence of the way the educational system had been organised. The implementation of a complex law, such as the 5692/71, required adequate financial resources, and coherent

corporate action in all three levels of the administration of elementary education. However, since the 1930s, the main concern of the State had been the expansion of school buildings. The training of a capable team of staff to guarantee adequate administration and provision of elementary education had always been a minor concern of the State.

The State did not mention these difficulties, and continued its search for legitimacy through the various projects initiated in elementary education, as discussed in the second section. . This situation remained unaltered until 1976. In that year a debate led by Senator João Calmon was decisive in disclosing problems in the relationship of the State to elementary education(68). At that time, 1976, the first signs of “abertura” [opening] in the political system could be perceived during the government of President Geisel. In the debate in the Senate, members of the Commission of Education reached the consensus opinion that the prescription of minimum fixed percentages of financial resources to be allocated by the central State, the individual states and the municipalities for elementary education, should be reintroduced into the Constitution. As indicated earlier, this prescription, inaugurated in the 1934 Constitution, omitted from the 1937 Constitution and reintroduced in the 1946 Constitution, had been left out yet again in the 1967 Constitution(69), an omission which remained in the Constitutional Amendment N° 1 of 1969(70).

A picture of the critical condition of elementary education emerged from this debate. Senator Calmon attributed this condition to “the lack of financial resources, since the 1967 Constitution did not contain a provision defining the amounts and nature of resources applicable to education”(71). The lack of money for elementary education



revealed by Senator Calmon contrasts with the State's image of action (discussed in the last section) in announcing the various projects (mainly extra-budget financing) and legislation to reform elementary education.

The aim of the debate was not to analyse this contradiction, but to force the State to reintroduce the above mentioned prescription into the Constitution. However, the announcement of a shortage of financial resources for elementary education does suggest that the budgeted and extra-budget financial resources allocated to elementary education had not reached their goal. This means that obstacles still existed.

One pertinent feature of the debate was the revelation that the influence of special interests groups was reflected in the lack of financial resources for elementary education. For example, a participant in the debate, the Minister of Economics, M. H. Simonsen, understood that the crisis in elementary education was "due to the preference of the State for higher education", arguing that the State's emphasis on higher education stemmed from "the extraordinary vocal power of youth that goes to the streets promoting demonstrations and loudly demanding higher enrolment in universities"(72). In the discussion, Senator Calmon asked: "What vocal power have the 4 million children out of elementary education?"(73). Another suggestion of the influence of special interests groups was the State preference for infrastructure projects, since these projects had greater political visibility than projects for elementary education. Senator Calmon declared that "the natural inclination of the State was to give priority, not to a large-scale educational programme, but to the construction of roads, avenues, and bridges, since these undertakings generated electoral dividends to their authors before the end of their terms in office, while initiatives in

the educational area could only show results in the long run”(74).

These disclosures fill out the picture of difficulties in the implementation of elementary education policy. These difficulties were both of an internal and external nature. Centralisation and mismanagement were administrative obstacles marking the lack of coherent corporate action within the State. The preference of the State for higher education and for infrastructure projects were obstacles external to elementary education, marking the influence of special interests groups on the State. These obstacles had, however, two points in common: firstly, they resulted in a lack of financial resources for elementary education; secondly, they indicated a fracture in the administration and a lack of autonomy of the educational system; themes of Iannacone.

However, at the end of the period, one State action signalled new possibilities for the reform of elementary education, and this again served for the creation by the State of an image of action. In 1983, the movement initiated by Senator Calmon was finally victorious. That year marked the approval of the Constitutional Amendment defining the State’s compulsory obligation to apply a minimum of 13 per cent of its tax revenues to elementary education(75). This Amendment also stipulated that individual states, municipalities and the Federal District should apply no less than 25 per cent of their revenues to the maintenance and development of education. The effect of this legislation on the financial difficulties of elementary education will be examined in the next chapter.

However, this discussion was part of a broader political context during the Military Regime and this context and elementary education will be discussed in the following

section.

#### **4.4 - THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR THE SOLUTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROBLEMS**

It is argued in this section that, during this period the State was mainly concerned with recognition for its achievements in the economic sector, as this was a crucial requirement for the stability and legitimacy in this period. Elementary education debate was limited to a group of educators and emerged only at the end of the period when the State decided to initiate the political “abertura “ [opening]. The domination of the central State during this period not only affected the political organisation of society in general but also stressed internal divisions (marked by the lack of coherent corporate action) within the State.

For a better understanding of the social climate at the beginning of the Military Regime, it is relevant to review the last months of President Goulart Government at the end of the Redemocratisation Period. At that time, 1963, the social climate was marked by conflicts: political elites were disorganised, the leftist group was divided, and ordinary citizens were disenchanted with politicians(76).

In that period of increasing scale of political conflict, elementary education was an issue that finally reached the mass of industrial workers in the cities- the ideas of Iannaconne become especially relevant. The government of President Goulart had promised to include the workers in the social benefits of progress(77). However, though being

included in elementary education had become an aspiration of the mass of industrial workers, their main concern was the satisfaction of basic material needs(78).

The imminent conflict between the industrial workers and the elites was contained by the so-called 1964 revolution. Industrial workers in large cities became active participants in political demonstrations. As in the 1930s, this “revolution” had the support of the middle and upper classes of society. To these classes, the military’s mission was to “put things in order” and then promote the election of a new President. Military presidents had been only a few and constitutional, during the First and Second Republics(79). The accepted idea in 1964 was that the revolutionary movement would bring in a transitional military regime. There was no suspicion that this regime would last for more than two decades.

For the major part of the Military Regime, the State’s more visible actions concerned security and the economy. From the first government in this period, that of President Humberto Alencar Castelo Branco (1964-1967), and continuing throughout the period in decreasing intensity, political repression took the form of severe persecution of communist activists and sympathisers. These were primarily students and intellectuals(80). The State security service became very powerful.

To counterbalance its repressive actions and to maintain the appearance of a “guardian of the universal interests” (as proposed by Rueschemeyer and Evans), governments in this period sought to rule on a constitutional basis. However, society at large remained content with little or no political activity. The legislature and the judiciary

continued to function(81) while political parties were reduced to two main representations(82). Sectors of society that had been politically active in Goulart's time, like university students, the press, and groups of radical leftists, were either inoperative or only functioned in secret(83). The suppression of political opposition took place mainly during the governments of President Castelo Branco and his successor, President Artur da Costa e Silva (1967-1969).

The State also took a firm grip of the economic sector and the reorganisation of the State's bureaucratic machinery (for the economic sector but not for the educational sector). The ministries in charge of economic affairs were granted greater powers than other ministries in the executive branch of government. The better-trained economists were recruited to lead the State economic sector. Requesting services from intellectuals was an old practice of the State. After 1964, however, there was a new generation of economists. Those technocrats in higher positions were generally not affiliated with political parties. Technocrats of the so-called "economic miracle" were primarily graduates from Brazilian universities who belonged to the middle class.

During most of the Military Regime, the economic area was the main factor enhancing the image of the State (or enhancing "the State's image of action"). From 1968 to 1974, the "gross national product (GNP) increased at an average annual rate of 10.9 per cent"(84). In addition to this "economic miracle", many circumstances contributed to the popularity of the government. For example, the victory of Brazil in the World's Football Cup in 1970, during the government of President Emilio Garrastazu Medici (1969-1974)(85).

However, deterioration of the economic situation in Brazil during the government of President Ernesto Geisel (1974-1979) forced the Military Regime to develop other actions for gaining approval by society (the creation by the State of an image of action in elementary education. The State chose to begin a process of political liberalisation, “abertura” (the opening of the political system established in 1964). The “abertura” of the country was not a linear process: the State committed itself to the “abertura”, but at the same time, reverted to repressive practices(86).

With this initial process of “gradual and highly controlled abertura”, the government expected to re-establish democracy in the country. However, during this time, acts of violent political repression continued, some of them with national visibility(87). As a result of these events, the long-suppressed political conflict began to surface(88). In the economic area, the acceleration of growth raised hopes of improved income distribution. This hope, was not realised, however, and this affected government prestige.

In 1977, for the second time in the Military Regime (the first occurred in December 1968), Congress was closed(89). There were immediate reaction from important and active civil institutions like the Catholic Church and the “Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil - OAB [Bar Association of Brazil](90). Civil society was sending signals that there was an increase in the scale of political conflict. The closure of Congress and other exceptional measures adopted by the State showed that liberalisation was still a long way off.

As the conflict penetrated society, the State decided to lead the movement for

democratisation. Yet again, the State insisted on being the main actor. According to Thomas Skidmore:

The government of Geisel would not be pressured into adopting a rigid schedule of political reforms. Their rhythm would be defined by the "Planalto" (the President's office) and not by the opposition.

(91).

At the end of 1978, Geisel finally decided to deactivate the basic elements of the authoritarian structure(92). The organisation of industrial workers was growing in society and this would present a challenge to the strong presence of the State. Ironically, the worker's organisation was an indirect result of the State's actions to strengthen industry in the economically developed area of São Paulo state(93). The economic situation at the end of Geisel government was not bright. Inflation was accelerating and the foreign debt at the end of 1978 reached US\$ 43.5 billion, more than twice the foreign debt three years before(94).

During the government of President João Batista Figueiredo (1979-1985), the main task of the State was the advancement of Geisel's objective to return the country to democracy. This required the reorganisation of political parties, the provision of amnesty to those who had been imprisoned and expatriated for political reasons, the management of conflicts occasioned by strikes and union activities, and the prevention of extreme right-wing terrorism. Because of these changes, the State began to give way to political forces in society. In the economic area, external events generated difficulties for the balance of payments, leading Brazil into a serious recession in 1983.

The position of elementary education in the socio-political context of the Military Regime was mainly defined by the central State. It was the State's federal level, the Ministry of Education, that conceived national policies to be implemented by the states and municipalities. Thus, the main actions concerning elementary education were discussed in the federal sphere of the State. At this level, technocrats had been important in furthering the development of planning - a Weiler theme of compensatory legitimation. .

As the government began its commitment to the political "abertura", State actions in elementary education were experiments demonstrating concern with social questions and decentralisation, i.e., the State was developing strategies in search of legitimacy. These actions indicated that, by the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the State could no longer rely on the economic sector as the main source of legitimacy. The State's interventions in elementary education during the Geisel Government, and especially in the Figueiredo's Government, had a strong social character and were directed to problems afflicting the poorest areas of the country. Education gained in importance as it became a source of legitimacy for the State.

In the early phase of the political "abertura", once more the elementary education debate was advanced by a group of educators who began to reveal its critical situation. Major problems surfaced, and the subject of the reform of elementary education was raised, together with other critical concerns, and became a national issue(95) - a theme of Iannaccone. Studies revealing the situation in elementary education (mentioned in the next chapter) were important, given the fact that the State, during the Military Regime, enthusiastically declared that it had accomplished enrolment objectives, apparently not



recognising the problems(96).

In sum, compared with previous periods, the Military Regime lasted longer, saw years of exceptional economic growth, and had highly trained human resources in the leadership of education. However, the political orientation of the government during most of the period had a strong influence on the relationship of the State to elementary education. Despite the formulation of several projects, and competent legislation for elementary education, the strong domination of the central State over the two other administrative levels represented an internal division (or a lack of coherent corporation action within the State, with serious consequences for the effective reform of elementary education). This will be examined in the following section

#### **4.5 - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

This section analyses the situation of elementary education during the Military Period to show the results of the numerous and varied policies developed by the State in elementary education.

It is argued in this section that the intense activity of the State in elementary education was successful in increasing its rates of enrolment to meet goals targeted by the State, but the educational system was not able to prevent a significant loss of productivity in elementary education.

The expansion of elementary education was a major objective announced by the State in this period. From 1964 to 1968, during the government of Castelo Branco, enrolment growth was about 45 per cent(97), due to financial resources coming from the “Fundo Nacional de Educação” (National Fund of Education) FNEP(98). By 1970 the index of enrolment was 67.23 per cent of the school age population(99). In absolute numbers this percentage implied that from a total population of 19,331,100 children and adolescents between seven and fourteen to years of age, (the scale of the constitutional obligation incurred by the State), 13,190,315 students were enrolled in elementary education(100).

The expansion of elementary education was obvious but there was a high rate of student loss throughout the elementary education trajectory. This had low visibility in society. The State also failed in its constitutional duty to an elementary education for all. In 1970, 6,140,785 children in the compulsory school age were not in school, and differences in schooling conditions among the regions remained striking.

The differences in the index of schooling between the urban and rural areas are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that a large proportion of school-age children in rural areas were out of school. These children did not benefit from the objectives of Law 5,691/71.

Table 6. Brazil: Population from 7 to 14 years of age with respective schooling rates, by zone, 1970.

| Zone  | School Age Population | Attending School | Out of School | % Out of School/Total |
|-------|-----------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Rural | 9,268,800             | 4,341,744        | 4,927,056     | 47                    |
| Urban | 10,057,300            | 8,848,571        | 1,208,729     | 88                    |
| Total | 19,326,100            | 13,190,315       | 6,135,785     | 68                    |

Source: Otaiza de O Romanelli, *História da Educação no Brasil* (History of Education in Brazil), op. cit, p. 84. Data from *Estatísticas da Educação Nacional 1960-1971* (Statistics of National Education), MEC, Brazil.

Overall, the completion rates in elementary education, revealed a situation that was in stark contrast to the efficiency in economic matters during the Military Regime. From a total of 6,035,369 children enrolled in the first grade in 1971, 2,103,856 reached the 4th grade in 1974, (or 35 per cent) and 856,172 finished 1st Degree education in 1978 (or 14.19 per cent)(101). This indicates that the “non-completion rate”, (taking the practice still prevailing in many localities of providing four years of schooling) was about 65 per cent. Taking it as eight years of elementary education, as prescribed by the new Law 5,692/71, the “non-completion rate” was about 86 per cent.

Only 14 out of the 100 adolescents enrolled were able to finish elementary education. This indicates that the State’s educational policy had not produced any significant change. The greatest number of losses was represented by children who had dropped out of school during the first four years of elementary education. These children had not received “integral education”, which implied that their schooling lacked the general and specific educational contents prescribed in Law 5, 692/71. The non-fulfillment of the law’s new objectives made the failure of the State in providing elementary education even more serious.

The immediate objective of the State education policy was to obtain statistics that could show a government success. The State needed this to enhance its legitimacy. The attainment of the goal of 80 per cent of enrolment in 1974, which offered to the State an image of competence, was a real success. The index of elementary education enrolment was over 81 per cent(102). However, in absolute numbers there were about four million children and adolescents not in school (the total population in school age was 21,617,700, of which 17,558,427 were enrolled)(103). Some 19 per cent of school-age children did not attend school. However, the State was receiving the approval of society, for its successes in the economic area, and its activity in various areas including education.

The main fact which did not surface at that time was the continuation of very low completion rates in elementary education. The failure of the State to fulfil its constitutional duty to ensure equal opportunities for public elementary education for all was also exposed by regional differences in the productivity of elementary education, as shown in Tables 7 and 8.

Completion rates in Table 7 show the difference between elementary education offered in rich and poor regions in Brazil. The Federal District is included in Table 7 because it represented the federal unity with the highest rates of completion in elementary education in the country, mainly due to the fact that its administrative situation was distinct from that of the states(104).

Table 7. Brazil: Enrolment and completion rates in public elementary education in two groups of states, 1971-1978.

| States                 | Enrolment<br>in 1st grade<br>(A) | Students reaching the 4th and 8th grade |    |                             |    |
|------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----|-----------------------------|----|
|                        |                                  | 4th grade in<br>1974<br>(B)             | %  | 8th grade in<br>1978<br>(C) | %  |
| <b>NORTH/NORTHEAST</b> |                                  |   |    |                             |    |
| Pará                   | 168,948                          | 41,070                                  | 24 | 14,148                      | 8  |
| Piauí                  | 158,775                          | 22,917                                  | 14 | 7,101                       | 4  |
| Pernambuco             | 330,574                          | 111,274                                 | 34 | 38,427                      | 12 |
| Ceará                  | 329,141                          | 57,590                                  | 18 | 25,909                      | 8  |
| <b>SOUTH/SOUTHEAST</b> |                                  |   |    |                             |    |
| Rio de Janeiro         | 491,505                          | 212,662                                 | 43 | 91,326                      | 19 |
| Rio Grande do Sul      | 394,947                          | 228,436                                 | 58 | 74,978                      | 19 |
| Santa Catarina         | 168,162                          | 119,383                                 | 71 | 39,354                      | 23 |
| São Paulo              | 734,393                          | 451,265                                 | 62 | 232,014                     | 32 |
| Distrito Federal       | 33,894                           | 20,068                                  | 60 | 13,474                      | 40 |

Source: Data organised from "Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso" (Elementary Education Success Rates), Estudos Estatísticos, Ministério da Educação, Secretaria de Administração Geral, Brasília, Brazil, 1990.

Table 8 is derived from Table 7 and shows the regional diversity in the situation of elementary education.

Indices chosen to represent non-completion rates in elementary education reveal that, in the first group, "non-completion rates" were greater than in the second group, both at the end of the 4th. grade (the former elementary education) and of the 8th. grade (the duration of elementary education after 1971). Furthermore, those indices reveal that the smallest range of "non-completion rates" at the end of the eight grade was in the Federal District. The "non-completion rate" at the end of the 4th. grade was lowest in the state of Santa Catarina.

Table 8. Brazil: "Non-completion rates" in public elementary education in two groups of states, 1971-1978.

| States            | "Non-Completion Rates" |                   |
|-------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
|                   | %                      |                   |
|                   | 4th grade<br>1974      | 8th grade<br>1978 |
| NORTH/NORTHEAST   |                        |                   |
| Pará              | 76                     | 92                |
| Piauí             | 86                     | 96                |
| Pernambuco        | 66                     | 88                |
| Ceará             | 83                     | 92                |
| SOUTH/SOUTHEAST   |                        |                   |
| Rio de Janeiro    | 57                     | 81                |
| Rio Grande do Sul | 42                     | 81                |
| Santa Catarina    | 29                     | 77                |
| São Paulo         | 38                     | 68                |
| Distrito Federal  | 40                     | 60                |

Source: Data organised from "Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso" (Elementary education Success Rates), Estudos Estatísticos, Ministério da Educação, Secretaria de Administração Geral, Brasília, Brazil, 1990.

Table 8 also shows that non-completion rates in the states of the first group had a smaller variation, both for the 4th and 8th grades. The variation in the non-completion rate was greater in the second group, both for the 4th and 8th grades. All the indices of the first group were higher than the average index of the non-completion rate for Brazil, while the indices of the second group were lower. The average non-completion rate for Brazil was 65 per cent at the end of the 4th grade and 86 per cent at the end of the 8th grade.

These data also show that, from the 1950s to the 1970s, any changes in the non-completion rate in the poorest states of the country were small. The non-completion rate went from approximately 90 per cent (as shown in Table 5) to approximately 80 per cent during the twenty-year period. In the second group, the reduction was larger compared with the first group, yet still minimal when considering the "Brazilian miracle" in the

economic area in the 1970s.

The above analysis indicates that children in the poorest states had a larger probability of remaining without elementary education than did children in richer regions and in the Federal District. This shows that the distance between the declared objectives of the State and the reality in poorer states was great. In sum, the above data indicate that non-completion rates mark a continuing gap between objectives stated in legislation and planning and the actual situation in elementary education. This situation existed for many decades and continued from 1974 to 1979 during the government of President Ernesto Geisel.

Studies appearing in the late 1970s were crucial in highlighting the phenomena of drop-outs and repetitions in elementary education. Among them, a study conducted by Nise Pires(105) pointed out internal and external factors as causes. The study indicates that these phenomena were related to poverty, a general scarcity of opportunities for social participation that afflicted the majority of the students in public elementary education, and the general inability of the educational system to perform its duty in extending elementary education to all children.

The problems mentioned by Pires reveal a situation that had been present for several years, occasionally surfacing in the State's announcements or in statements by politicians. Pires' merit was in providing a picture of the 1970s that contrasted unmistakably with the enthusiastic expectations resulting from the 1971 educational reform and the realisation of 80 per cent enrolment in 1974.

The most important contribution of studies like the one indicated above was the fact that it revealed that the enrolment rate alone did not define success for the educational system. In view of these statistics, the State's achievements were shown to be much less important than had been previously publicly acknowledged. Compared to the problems of ensuring the progress of children in school, the problems of access lost much of their former urgency. Although the solution to quantitative problems was still a targeted objective, qualitative aspects gradually became a mainstream focus of the educational debate.

By 1979, the number of children and adolescents enrolled in elementary education indicated that the 90 per cent objective declared by President Geisel had not been reached. The schooling index had fallen since 1974. In 1979, out of a population of 23,258,953 children and adolescents of seven to fourteen years of age, 17,935,348 were enrolled in elementary education, a schooling rate of 77 per cent, while 23 per cent of children of school-age were not in school, i. e. 5,323,605 children(106).

The non-completion rate continued to be high: from 6,135,540 students enrolling in elementary education in 1972, only 2,127,473 reached the 4th grade in 1975 (35 per cent), and only 1,007,610 (16 per cent) completed the 8th grade of elementary education in 1979(107). The non-completion rate in the final year of the Geisel Government and the first year of President João Batista Figueiredo Government was 84 per cent.

From 1981 until 1985 enrolment continued at approximately 80 per cent. In line with this tendency, enrolment in 1985, at the end of the Military Regime and through the



beginning of the new Republic, was the following: out of 24,250,617 children and adolescents aged seven to fourteen years, 19,609,311 were enrolled in elementary education. These figures indicated a rate of schooling of 81 per cent(108). However, the constitutional duty of the State was to guarantee complete elementary education to all, from seven to fourteen years of age, and not merely access to elementary education.

The elementary education completion rate situation in Brazil and in two groups of individual states allows an examination of enrolment from this perspective. Data show that a total of 6,886,667 of Brazilian children and adolescents entered elementary education in 1979 (the first year of Figueiredo's government). Of this figure, 2,520,832 (37 per cent) reached the 4th. grade in 1982 and 906,000 (13 per cent) finished elementary education in 1986. The dimension of the real neglect of the State of its constitutional duty was represented by the index of non-finished: 87 per cent(109).

The last government in the Military Regime developed special policies directed towards poor areas in impoverished regions. The target was the poorest of the poor. The PRONASEC/RURAL programme was directed at nine states of the Northern region and the PRODASEC/URBANO programme was directed at Para, Pernambuco, Ceará, Bahia, Espírito Santo and the Federal District(110). Tables 9 and 10 allow a comparison of the level of the non-completion rate in some of these states, compared with other wealthy states.

Table 9. Brazil: Enrolment and completion rates in public elementary education in two groups of states, 1979-1986.

| States            | Enrolment<br>in 1st. grade in<br>1979 | Absolute and relative number of students<br>enrolled in the 1st grade in 1979 which<br>completed 4th grade and 8th grade |    |                       |    |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----|-----------------------|----|
|                   |                                       | 4th grade in<br>1982   | %  | 8th. grade<br>in 1986 | %  |
| First Group       |                                       |  |    |                       |    |
| Pará              | 277,775                               | 70,242   | 25 | 18,776                | 7  |
| Piauí             | 253,132                               | 43,629   | 17 | 10,778                | 4  |
| Pernambuco        | 407,082                               | 120,660  | 30 | 42,960                | 11 |
| Ceará             | 513,426                               | 88,881   | 17 | 32,266                | 6  |
| Bahia             | 778,693                               | 140,522  | 18 | 58,043                | 7  |
| Espírito Santo    | 114,994                               | 46,860   | 41 | 15,198                | 13 |
| Second Group      |                                       |  |    |                       |    |
| Rio de Janeiro    | 474,952                               | 254,972  | 54 | 82,372                | 17 |
| São Paulo         | 808,273                               | 526,779  | 65 | 236,941               | 29 |
| Santa Catarina    | 156,334                               | 102,192  | 65 | 33,917                | 22 |
| Rio Grande do Sul | 313,559                               | 178,997  | 57 | 61,207                | 20 |
| Paraná            | 405,598                               | 182,316  | 45 | 57,639                | 14 |
| Distrito Federal  | 46,581                                | 31,162   | 67 | 14,588                | 31 |

Source: Organised from data of "Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso (Elementary Education Success Rates). Estudos Estatísticos, Secretaria de Administração Geral, Ministério da Educação, Brasília, Brazil, 1990).

Table 9 shows differences in completion rates in elementary education between two groups of states. The states of the first group, Pará in the Northern region, Piauí, Ceará, and Pernambuco in the North-eastern region, and Bahia and Espírito Santo in the Eastern region were states chosen to participate in the special programmes during Figueiredo Government because of the state of their elementary education. A programme was developed in the rural areas of Piauí and Ceará, but as indicated in the Table, their completion rates continued to be extremely low.

The other states of the first group, included in the programme directed to urban peripheries, Bahia and Espírito Santo, had a rate of completion that still was below the

average for Brazil and well below the upper rates in the second group. The states in the second group represented the richer states in the country and, with the exception of the Distrito Federal, none of them participated in the special programmes.

The Distrito Federal was included in the second group in spite of having participated in the programme of the urban peripheries. The majority of that system's schools were situated in the peripheral zone of the "Plano Piloto"(111). Even though that zone had developed many economic activities, the population, mainly immigrants from the North-eastern region, was largely poor and uneducated. Table 10 shows the non-completion rates.

Table 10. Brazil: "Non-completion rates" in public elementary education in two groups of states, 1979-1986.

| States            | "Non-completion rates" (%) |                |
|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|                   | 1st grade 1979             | 8th grade 1986 |
| First Group       |                            |                |
| Pará              | 75                         | 93             |
| Piauí             | 83                         | 96             |
| Pernambuco        | 70                         | 89             |
| Ceará             | 83                         | 94             |
| Bahia             | 82                         | 93             |
| Espírito Santo    | 59                         | 87             |
| Second Group      |                            |                |
| Rio de Janeiro    | 46                         | 83             |
| São Paulo         | 35                         | 71             |
| Santa Catarina    | 35                         | 78             |
| Rio Grande do Sul | 43                         | 80             |
| Paraná            | 55                         | 86             |
| Distrito Federal  | 33                         | 69             |

Source: Organized from "Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso" (Elementary Education Success Rates), Estudos Estatísticos, Secretaria de Administração Geral, Ministério da Educação, Brasília, Brazil, 1990.

Table 10 illustrates non-completion rates during the Figueiredo Government and in the first year of the New Republic, the year of transition. After five and half decades of the central State actions, the situation in the first group was not so different. The non-responsiveness of the system was alarming, particularly in the states of the northern and north-eastern regions, Pará, Piauí, Pernambuco and Ceará, where specific programmes were developed in the rural areas. The situation in the individual states was about the same in 1986 as it was in 1978 (Table 8) and 1958 (Table 5), as far as non-completion rates in elementary education was concerned.

In spite of the State's special programmes, completion rates in elementary education in the North-eastern region remained unchanged. The levels of elementary education completion rates presented in 1986 in that region were similar to the national levels of 1934.

Of the states in the first group to participate in the programme directed to their urban peripheries, non-completion rates continued to be below the Brazilian average in 1986. Data concerning the performance of four states, Pará, Pernambuco, and Bahia, in 1986, reveal that non-completion rates did not change significantly from 1978 to 1986. According to data not shown in the preceding Tables, in 1978 in Bahia, only 8 per cent of the students enrolled in 1971 reached the 8th grade in 1978(112).

The data also reveal that the situation was the same with the state of Espírito Santo: only 13 per cent of the students enrolled in 1971 reached the 8th grade in 1978. This meant a non-completion rate of 87 per cent(113). However, reductions in non-completion rates at

the 4th grade level were discernible in the four states. For instance, the non-completion rates for Pará decreased from 90 per cent in 1958 (Table 5) to 76 per cent in 1974 (Table 8). For Pernambuco, it decreased from 90 per cent to 66 per cent. For Bahia, it decreased from 87 per cent to 79 per cent(114). For Espírito Santo, it decreased from 86 per cent to 67 per cent(115).

The states of the North-eastern region were unaffected by the special programmes developed by the central State. The states that participated in these programmes in other regions were minimally affected as the productivity of elementary education was concerned.

In the richer states, where no special programme was developed during the Figueiredo Government, except in the Federal District, non-completion rates in 1986, in the 8th grade, were similar to 1978. Non-completion rates in the Distrito Federal [Federal District] were lower in 1978 (Table 8) than in 1986.

Non-completion rates at the 4th grade level fell in all states, especially from 1958 (Table 5) to 1974 (Table 8); but they continued to fall more slowly towards 1986. For instance, in the state of Rio de Janeiro the rate fell from 75 per cent in 1958 (Table 5), to 57 per cent in 1978 (Table 8), and to 46 per cent in 1986 (Table 10). After a large drop between 1958 (Table 5) and 1978 (Table 8), only Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina continued to have similar if slightly improved indices in 1986 (Table 10).

The above analysis shows that in the richer states the general policies developed by the central State affected elementary education completion rates primarily at the 4th grade

level. The analysis in Table 10 indicated that, for several decades the State managed to reduce non-completion rates in the richer states; yet, even in here, the reduction was greater at the 4th grade level than at the 8th grade level. Data in this analysis also demonstrate that the State had been active in the period. This increased activity was responsible for the significant expansion in enrolment and allowed the State to reach its objective during the Medici government.

The data also demonstrate that the indices of enrolment and completion rates in the individual states did not improve in spite of the programmes developed to change the situation. Thus, increasing action by the central State, in its search for effectiveness, the higher visibility of elementary education, and the climate of enthusiasm, did not produce major change in the difficult situation in elementary education, especially in those regions of the country where change was most needed, despite an expansion in enrolment.

#### **4.6 - CONCLUSION**

The narrative in this chapter allows the conclusion that the State was remarkably active in increasing and diversifying the formulation of elementary education policies in this period. Planning was one of the main policies of the State, through scattered projects which were oriented to urgent problems in elementary education: themes in both Weiler and Iannacone. Legislation was the State's second main policy. However, as sketched by Weiler, State declarations were centred on its own actions rather than on the problems of elementary education. The State also attempted to intervene directly in the municipalities to initiate the decentralisation of elementary education.

The State had difficulty in implementing its innovative policies, since there was still a lack of co-ordination within the educational sector of the State. The goals of the central State contrasted with the continuing inadequacy of financial resources in the educational system, caused by strong centralisation by the federal level and mismanagement and corruption in the local levels.

Unlike previous periods, these difficulties remained out of sight due the non-existence of elementary education debate in society in general during the major part of the period. The scope and scale of politicisation, following themes of Iannaconne, were deliberately restricted. Only in the late 1970s the State was confronted with the problems of elementary education during a debate restricted to the Senate. Even though the number of elementary education policies had increased remarkably, elementary education was not a central concern of the State during this period. The State sought legitimacy through the redirection of economic development, and clearly reflected special interest groups while claiming the role of "guardian of the universal interests". At the end of the period, the economy began to falter, forcing the State to look for other sources of social approval. This factor influenced the increase in educational policies of a social nature and the initiation of decentralisation policies. With the abertura of the political system in the last years of the period, elementary education debate was reactivated by educators. However, it was only at the very end of the period that the scale of politicisation, following the theories of Iannaconne, began to broaden.

During this period, enrolment rates in elementary education reached the goals

targeted by the State. However, the State was not able to prevent significant losses in the productivity of elementary education, especially in poor regions where opportunities for “integral education”, as proposed by the legislation, were most needed. In fact, the difference between the kind of elementary education offered in the rich and poor areas of Brazil continued. Even though there were about 4 million children not in school, this failure of the State remained hidden from society in general. Despite the notable increase in educational policy making, and the expansion of elementary education, the State was not effective in solving fundamental problems persisting in elementary education.

Overall, then, the “areas of sensitivity” permit the conclusion that the State made various attempts to create an image of actor in elementary education. The military government valued efficiency and technical capacity in the construction of policy, which are conditions for the emergence of the State as an actor, on the ideas of Skocpol. However, along with the benefits for elementary educational policy, they were also strategies by which the State searched for legitimacy through educational action, in Weiler’s terms.

The military government was not able to fulfil the requirements for effective action in elementary education. Among these requirements was the need to create coherent corporate action in the bureaucratic machinery of the educational sector. As might be expected in the politics of the time, local autonomy was low. In Skocpol’s terms the necessary autonomy was missing. Decisions continued to be from the top to the bottom and mismanagement persisted at the local levels. These obstacles to coherent corporate action between the three administrative levels of the State affected the capacity of the State to implement its major policies.



Only in the late 1970s there was a limited and small scale debate about financial problems of elementary education. However, elementary education debate was revived at the end of the period, when the military government, in order to avoid the risk of conflict and under pressure from a faltering economy, developed the powerful strategy of political “abertura” [opening]. Clearly, however, the politics of the period blocked - and were intended to block - the possibilities of full politicisation of the educational debate.

Even though the State was successful in enrolling 81 per cent of children from 7 to 14 years of age in elementary at the end of the period, behind this success lay the unsolved problems in elementary education: its non-completion rates continued to be very high at 86 per cent. This meant about four million children were still outside elementary education; and the continuation of striking differences of productivity between the Northern and Southern states (the Northern states having low rates of enrolment and high non-completion rates). The indices of enrolment and non-completion had not improved in spite of the numerous programmes developed by the State in the regions of the country where change was most needed. The saga of providing elementary education in Brazil was still unfolding.

## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. BRASIL. “LEI N° 4.024 DE 21 DE DEZEMBRO 1961- ESTABELECE DIRETRIZES E BASES DA EDUCAÇÃO NACIONAL” [Law N° 4,024 of 21 December 1961- Establishes Directions and Bases of National Education], Leis Básicas de Ensino do 1° e 2° Graus [Basic Laws of Elementary and Secondary Education], Ministry of Education: Brasília, 1983, p. 9.
2. Valter Garcia (ed.), Inovação Educacional no Brasil [Educational Innovation in Brazil], Cortez: São Paulo, Brazil, 1989, p. 220.
3. Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira: O Ensino de 1° e 2° Graus, [Brazilian Education: Elementary and Secondary Education] Saraiva: São Paulo, Brazil, 1978, p. 60.
4. In Law N° 4. 024/61, Art. 30 presents clauses contradicting Art. 27 of the same law. This inconsistency in the law caused different interpretations regarding the enforcement of the compulsory provision of elementary education.
5. For additional information, see O. de O. Romanelli, História da Educação no Brasil [History of Education in Brazil], Vozes: Petropolis, Brazil, 1988 p. 180., and Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira.....op. cit., p. 62.
6. For illiteracy rates, see “O Analfabetismo no Brasil e no Mundo”, [Illiteracy in Brazil and in the World], Estudos Estatísticos, Ministry of Education: Brasília, Brazil, 1990, p. 2.
7. Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira .....op. cit., p. 108.
8. For information on “Campaigns” and “Movements” to combat adult illiteracy, from the 1930s until the 1960s, see V. P. Paiva, Educação Popular.....op. cit., pp. 159-305.
9. See Valnir Chagas, Educação Brasileira.....op. cit. p. 108.
10. See BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.... V. II., op. cit. p. 405.
11. This had been a common practice since the Vargas Era. See the declarations of the State blaming previous governments, and discussion of this subject on Chapter Three in this thesis.
12. Technical expertise in the formulation of State policies was a characteristic of this period.
13. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens..... V. II., op. cit., p. 387.
14. *ibid.*
15. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens..... V. II., op. cit., p. 394. The State at this time and for the major part of the period preferred to announce actions rather than provide diagnoses.

16. *ibid.*, p. 396.
17. *ibid.*, p. 394.
18. *ibid.*, p. 405.
19. At this time the theory of human capital of Theodore Shultz was influential in Brazil.
20. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. II., *op. cit.*, p. 405.
21. *ibid.*
22. EMENDA CONSTITUCIONAL Nº 1 DE 17 DE OUTUBRO DE 1969,[1969 Constitutional Amendment Nº 1 of 17 October 1969], paragraph 3rd., Item II. See in BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II., *op. cit.*, ps. 560.
23. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II. *op. cit.* p. 428.
24. *ibid.*, p. 406.
25. The author of this thesis knows the majority of members of this group.
26. The possibility of failure became apparent in the first months after the law's inauguration. The educational system was having difficulties in meeting the requirements of the new law.
27. Dermeval Saviani, Política e Educação no Brasil [Politics and Education in Brazil], Cortez: São Paulo, Brasil, 1988 pp. 118-119.
28. Nelson Piletti, História da Educação no Brasil, [History of Education in Brazil], Atica S. A.: São Paulo, Brazil, 1990, p.120.
29. The democratic political climate during the formulation of Law Nº 4024/61 was conducive to debate. During the formulation of Law Nº 5, 692/71 the party of the government dominated the political arena of the State.
30. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II., *op. cit.*, p. 411.
31. BRASIL, LEI 5.692 DE 11 DE AGOSTO DE 1971- Estabelece Diretrizes e Bases para a Educação de 1º e 2º Graus, (Law 5,692 11 August 1971- Establishes Directions and Bases to Elementary and Secondary education), Brazil, Leis Básicas ....*op. cit.*, p. 17.
32. This hope was based on the fact that the law had been formulated by a group of educators of recognised competence.
33. See, for example the discussion about this subject developed by O. de O. Romanelli, História da Educação.....op. cit. p.

34. These laws have the same principles. These were expressed in Title I of Law N° 4.024/61 and this Title remained in force when Law N° 5.692/71 was enacted.
35. This principle was the most complex and the most difficult to operationalise. It was also the principle that became the most controversial in the law.
36. BRASIL, “Parecer do Conselho Federal de Educação N° 853/71” [Federal Board of Education Report], explains the curriculum doctrine of Law N° 5,692/71, in Brasil, Do ensino de 1º Grau - Legislação e Pareceres [From Elementary Education - Legislation and Reports], Ministry of education/DEF: Brasília, 1979, pp. 39-58.
37. BRASIL, “Plano Setorial de Educação e Cultura 1972-1974”, [Sectoral Plan of Education and Culture], Ministry of Education/ SG: Brasília, 1971.
38. Theda Skocpol, “Bringing the State Back In: Current Research”, in Evans, P. B., Rueschemeyer, D., and Skocpol, T. (eds.), Bringing the State.....op. cit., p. 10, (quoting Alfred Stepan, “The new professionalism of Internal Warfare and Military Role Expansion”, in Authoritarian Brazil, Alfred Stepan (ed.), Yale University Press: New Haven, 1973, pp. 47-65).
39. The activity of planning became so intense in this period that it started to lose its intrinsic character of a tool to facilitate the reaching of an objective. In many circumstances the activity of planning became more important than reaching the objective.
40. BRASIL, A educação nas Mensagens.....V. II., op. cit., ps. 447, 445.
41. *ibid.*
42. *ibid.* p. 447.
43. *ibid.*
44. BRASIL, “Plano Setorial de Educação 75-79”, [Sectoral Plan of Education 1975-1979], Ministry of Education-SG: Brasília, 1975.
45. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II., op. cit., p. 438.
46. *ibid.*
47. *ibid.*, p. 476.
48. *ibid.*
49. *ibid.* p. 497.
50. BRASIL, “III Plano Nacional de Desenvolvimento 1980-1985” [III National Plan of Development 1980-1985], Ministry of Planning: Brasília, 1980.

51. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens...V. II.,op. cit. p. 514
52. *ibid.*
53. *ibid.* p. 494.
54. Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 466
55. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens...V. II. op. cit., p. 494.
56. LEI Nº 4.440. de 27 de OUTUBRO DE 1964. Institui o Salario-Educação” [Law No. 4,440 of 27 October 1964. Institutes the Educational Salary], *in*, Amaral Fountoura (ed.), Leis da Educação [Education Laws], Ed. Aurora: Rio de Janeiro, Brasil, 1969. An important aspect of the “Salario Educação” [Educational Salary] was the participation of business in elementary education.
57. See this expression in the official Proposition Nº R001 of 3 August 1984, presented by the General Adviser of the Republic, Dr. Ronaldo R. de Brito Poletti, about the “Calmon Amendment”, in BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens...V. I., op. cit., p. 583.
58. For the declaration by President Castelo Branco, see BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens..... V. II., op. cit., p. 381.
59. See reference to this fund in the official proposition Nº R001 of 03 August 1984 in BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens...V. II., op. cit., p. 583.
60. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II., op. cit., p. 386.
61. *ibid.*, pp. 405-408.
62. See Titulo VI [Title VI] of the CONSTITUIÇÃO DO BRASIL 24 de Janeiro de 1967 [Constitution of Brazil 24 January 1967] in BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens...V. II., op. cit., p. 558.
63. In the hinterland, frequently only three or sometimes four years of elementary education were provided.
64. A considerable number of students entered the first grade of elementary education at a high age than that prescribed by law (7 years of age). For a statistical study of this phenomenon, see Mauricio Goldemberg, “Ensino de Primeiro Grau A Distorção Idade/Serie Na Primeira Serie” [Elementary Education The Distortion Age/Grade in the First Grade], Estudos Estatísticos [Statistical Studies], Ministry of Education, Brasília, Brazil, 1990.
65. On this subject, see R. Neubauer da Silva, “O que foi feito e o que ainda resta fazer para alfabetizar a população Brasileira” [What was done and what still has to be done to educate the Brazilian population]. Lecture presented to the International Conference

on Literacy Alternatives, OREALC, mimeo, Brasília, Brasil, 1987, pp. 41-42.

66. The Federal Board of Education, “Conselho Federal de Educação”, CFE, was the agency at the top of the organisational structure of the Ministry of Education. This Board was composed of intellectuals in education, and was the agency in charge of the interpretation of educational laws. In the case of Law N° 5692/71, this agency was constantly receiving demands for explanations about the law’s principles. The position of the CFE on these consultations is registered in “Pareceres” [Reports], i. e. CFE documents of 1971 and the following years.
67. See the discussion about difficulties in the implementation of this law in Teresinha Rosa Cruz, Educação e Organização Social, [Education and Social Organisation], Vozes: Petropolis, Brazil, 1984, p. 218.
68. A forum of debate on public elementary education was organised in the Senate by a group of politicians and academic analysts, headed by Senator João Calmon. For a report of this event see João Calmon, História de uma Proposta de Emenda a Constituição, [History of a Proposal of Amendment to the Constitution], Senado Federal: Brasília, Brazil, 1977, p. 95
69. See Titulo IV [Title IV] of the CONSTITUIÇÃO DO BRASIL (24 de Janeiro de 1967 [Constitution of Brazil, 24 January 1967], in BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. II., op., cit. p. 558.
70. See references to this constitutional amendment in notes 22 and 59 above.
71. João Calmon, História de uma Proposta de Emenda a Constituição..... op. cit., p. 147
72. *ibid.*
73. *ibid.*
74. *ibid.*
75. BRASIL, EMENDA CONSTITUCIONAL N° 24 DE 1° DE DEZEMBRO DE 1983, paragraph 4th [Constitutional Amendment No, 24 First December 1983], in Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens....op. cit. p. 562.
76. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Getúlio.....op. cit., pp. 308-388.
77. President Goulart 1963 Address to Congress in Brazil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 357.
78. See comments about elementary education and the masses in BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens....V. II., op. cit., p. 368.
79. Traditionally, the military have been presidents or have played important roles in elections of presidents. 1964, however, was the first time when the Military promoted a “revolution” and took power with the support of society at large.

80. Thomas Skidmore. Brasil: de Castelo a Tancredo, [Brazil: from Castelo to Tancredo], Paz e Terra: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1988, pp. 45-100.
81. The Congress was permitted to function in order to give the appearance of democracy to the Military Regime.
82. The “Aliança Renovadora Nacional”- ARENA [Alliance of National Renovation] was the party supporting the government, and Movimento Democrático Brasileiro- MDB [Brazilian Democratic Movement] was the party of opposition.
83. For more details, see Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: de Castelo .....op. cit., pp. 55-62.
84. Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 495.
85. A victory in the World Football Cup represented, and still represents, a political asset for the government, since this sport is, by far, the most popular in Brazil.
86. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Castelo.....op. cit., p. 233.
87. *ibid*, p. 276.
88. *ibid.*, p. 349.
89. *ibid.*, p. 373.
90. *ibid.*, pp. 363-367.
91. *ibid.*, p. 335.
92. *ibid.*
93. *ibid.*
94. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Castelo.....op. cit., p. 408.
95. *ibid.*
96. *ibid.*, p. 487.
97. BRASIL, A Educação nas Mensagens.....V. II., op. cit., p. 428.
98. *ibid.*
99. Brasil, “Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso” [Rate of Success in Elementary Education], Estudos Estatísticos[Statistical Studies], Ministry of Education/SG/Seplan: Brasília, 1990, p. 2.
100. Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., p. 428.

101. *ibid.*
102. *ibid.*
103. *ibid.*
104. The Federal District had a modern educational system, planned in the 1960s (together with the planning of Brasília). This system was created under the influence of the Pioneers' ideas. For social indicators of education in the Federal District, see Governo do Distrito Federal, Educação- Indicadores Sociais Area de Educação do Distrito Federal, [Education- Social Indicators of the Federal District Educational Sector], Secretaria de Governo/ Secretaria de Educação: Brasília, Brazil, 1987.
105. Nise Pires, "Evasão e Repetência no Ensino de 1º Grau: Doenças ou Sintomas?" [Drop-out and Repetition in Elementary Education: Diseases or Symptoms?], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], INEP: Rio de Janeiro, 1976, p. 231.
106. Brasil, "Ensino de 1º Grau Taxa de Sucesso" Estudos Estatísticos .....op. cit., p. 2.
107. Brasil, "Visão Panorâmica do Ensino de 1º Grau" [Panoramic View on Elementary Education], Estudos Estatísticos, Ministry of Education/SG/SEPLAN: Brasília, 1990, p. 3.
108. *ibid.*
109. Brasil, "Ensino de 1º Grau - Taxa de Sucesso", Estudos Estatísticos.....op. cit., p. 2.
110. See Endnotes 68 and 69.
111. This term refers to the area of Brasília, not including the satellite towns.
112. Brasil, "Ensino de Primeiro Grau Taxa de Sucesso", Estudos Estatísticos.....op. cit., p. 16.
113. *ibid.*, p. 18.
114. *ibid.*, p. 16.
115. *ibid.*, p. 18.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN THE NEW TRANSITION TO DEMOCRACY: THE NEW REPUBLIC AND THE COLLOR GOVERNMENT (1985-1992).**

#### **5.1 - PURPOSE, ARGUMENT AND ORGANISATION**

This chapter examines the development of elementary education during the New Republic (1985-1990) and during Collor Government(1990-1992).

It is argued overall in this chapter that during the New Republic and the Collor Government, elementary education emerged as an issue in society. Both governments promised to give priority to elementary education, and initiated strategic projects around this objective, especially in the New Republic. However, in both governments the central State was not concerned with establishing adequate co-ordination with the other two administrative levels. Even though efforts in this direction were made during Collor's term, and despite the debate on elementary education by society in general, the two governments could not promote effective change in elementary education.

This chapter is organised into six sections for each of the two governments covered. The second section, "The Construction of Elementary Education Policy", examines the nature and objectives of strategic policies formulated by the State in this period of political "abertura" [opening]. The third section, "The Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy", evaluates these difficulties with the help

of information provided by educators and academic analysts. The fourth section, “The Political Basis for the Solution of Elementary Education Problems”, analyses the participatory context in which elementary education emerged as an issue in society. The fifth section, “The Effectiveness of the State in Elementary Education”, assesses the results of the actions of the State to show how effective the State was in introducing change into elementary education. The sixth section is the Conclusion of the Chapter.

## **5.2 - PUBLIC ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN THE NEW REPUBLIC (1985-1990) AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

The purpose of this section is to examine the orientation of elementary education policy developed by the government in the New Republic.

It argued in this section that, despite the decision of the government to give priority to elementary education in accordance with the State’s orientation towards social concerns, elementary education policy consisted of strategies with high social visibility which were not implemented in elementary education during this period.

At the onset of the New Republic, elementary education was perceived as being an area in the need of action by the State. In his first Presidential Address, President Sarney clearly stated that elementary education would be the priority of priorities, or “priority zero”, in the vocabulary of some officials in the Ministry of Education(1). This represented an attempt by the State to create an image of action in the educational area. The perception

of educators and officials in the educational bureaucracy was that the situation of elementary education continued to present problems. Views on the subject were also recorded publicly by educators in universities and other educational institutions(2). Capanema, for example, analysing elementary education in the 1980s, asked: “Why do we keep talking about the educational crisis, playing the same tune for decades?...have we not reached a degree of saturation and intolerance with the same persistent and recurrent problems?”(3).

The government in the New Republic decided to change this situation by adopting a decisive image of action. Never before had the State made such a far-reaching commitment to solve two fundamental problems in elementary education: its universalisation, and its poor quality. The 1986 Presidential Address by President Sarney made the State’s position clear regarding elementary education:

The commitment of the government is to the universalisation of high-quality basic education. This will guarantee to all children, from seven to fourteen years of age, access to and completion of elementary education. The fulfilment of this objective requires an increase in elementary education provision. It is also necessary to establish a more efficient educational system, to reduce the phenomena of dropping out and repeating classes.

(4).

By creating this image of action, the State extended its responsibility for the provision of elementary education. As discussed earlier, the State’s obligation to universalise elementary education had been established by the 1934 Constitution(5). In spite of the efforts to expand elementary education since the Vargas Era, the State had not been able to accomplish this. The main new challenge for State action in education was, however, the provision of high-quality elementary education. As has been shown in this

thesis, the State, had repeatedly used rhetoric when addressing the first objective, and not fully addressed the second.

Traditional obstacles were still present in 1985, but the State was still making promises of reform. With these promises of reform, the State enhanced the image of action associated with the New Republic. A concrete move in this direction was the First National Plan of Development of the New Republic 1986-1989. This document maintained as its foremost principle “the reactivation of economic growth with clear social orientation”(6). This formulation showed the difference between economic development in the Military Regime and the proposals of the New Republic.

One main goal of the New Republic for the creation by the State of an image of action was linking economic growth with social development. According to the National Plan of Development, the previous administration had developed social programmes “with high levels of decision centralisation” and “inflexibility in the allocation of resources”(7). The objective in the New Republic was to re-evaluate the social programmes and “adjust them to the new political orientation”(8). The main idea in the central planning of the New Republic was to reduce the emphasis on technical approaches to administrative problems (an attitude identified with the Military Regime). Elementary education in the National Plan was called “fundamental education”. The State’s aim in its universalisation was to enrol twenty-five million children from seven to fourteen years of age by 1989(9).

In accordance with this position, translated by the maxim adopted by the government, “concern with the social”, a position that would enhance the search of

legitimacy by the State, it formulated a programme entitled “Education for All - the Way to Change”. This programme restated the objective (in the Presidential Address), “the universalisation of basic education with a primary focus on the quality of teaching and the mobilisation and participation of society”(10). Specifically, the main immediate objectives of the programme were the: “stimulation of the national conscience regarding the political and social importance of education; improvement of productivity in basic education; improvement in the position of the teacher; regularisation of the flow of financial resources to basic education; enlargement of opportunities for access and return to elementary education”(11). The existing social programmes for assistance to students in elementary education(12) and projects resulting from agreements with international agencies were also to be continued. These projects were geared to elementary education in economically poor areas(13).

The willingness by the State to create an image of action, legitimacy, and potentially an increase in the scope and scale of politicisation in elementary education was reaffirmed nationally in September 1986: the State would promote a debate about elementary education with the participation of all sectors of society. The strategy by the central State was to declare that it wanted to achieve “transparency” in all its dealings with education, especially elementary education. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education launched a National Day for a debate on elementary education, called “D day”(14). The idea was to motivate discussion about the reform of elementary educational reform. The results of the debate were to be sent to the Ministry of Education.

“D day” aroused the interest of the public. It generated a wealth of information.

Elementary education was discussed in public and private schools, in Congress, in churches, in the media, and in clubs and other social organisations of civil society. During that week the results of the debate continued to come in by mail or were even brought in person. A group of officials in the Ministry of Education drew up a document summing up the main points of the various opinions(15). These highlighted the problems noted by educators and analysts throughout the decades.

The national debate on public elementary education inspired by the central State was an strategy from the top. The search by the State for legitimacy through educational action was successful, and initially the scale and scope of politicisation was increased. However, after the first few months in which the Ministry of Education encouraged the individual states to take into account the results of the debate, enthusiasm began to wane. There were indications that the results of the debate were not used by the individual states and, in consequence, almost nothing resulted from the debate in terms of changing the situation of elementary education, as will be show later. Considering that the qualitative problems of the system were the points most often raised during the debate, this was understandable(16).

Nonetheless, the State decided to make another move to create an image of action and legitimacy in the educational area: the debate on and the inauguration of the 1988 Constitution(17). Various social organisations participated in this debate. For the first time in history, interest groups, educators representing public and private schools, religious groups, teachers' associations and the general public presented their suggestions and demands to the group in charge of the formulation of the constitutional project(18). Full

politicisation was beginning .

The new Constitution established a higher percentage for the contribution of the central State to elementary education, while the contribution of the individual states remained the same. The 1988 Constitution limited public financial assistance to private education(19). This strategy of the State through legislation prefigured a more comfortable financial situation for elementary education, this enhancing the search of legitimacy by the State.

However, the State was aware that the fundamental problems in elementary education were still awaiting solution. The 1988 Constitution contained three objectives to be included in the new national education plan. The objectives were: the eradication of illiteracy, the universalisation of school attendance, and the improvement of the quality of schooling(20). These objectives of the National Plan and those of the programme “Education for All”, were to be one of the tasks of the next government.

The presentation of the programme “Education for All”, the experiment of “D day”, and the public debate during the formulation of the new Constitution, had been strategies through which the State had created an image of action in elementary education, begun politicisation of education, and thus retrieved legitimacy. However, the implementation of the policies resulting from the State programmes was not an easy task for the educational system, as will be shown in the following section.

### 5.3 - THE DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY

The purpose of this section is to examine the difficulties the State had in implementing the programme “Education for All” and the suggestions arising from the debate on elementary education.

It is argued in this section that, even though the action by the central State to stimulate the participation of the general public in the discussion of elementary education problems was successful, a notable difficulty in the implementation of elementary education policy was the lack of co-ordination between the three levels of the State.

For the officials in the educational sector of the Ministry of Education, the unprecedented policies formulated by the State represented a considerable change in orientation. It was frustrating for officials who had participated in the formulation of those policies to see that the creation of coherent corporate action for their implementation was of minor concern to the central State, which continued its involvement in new elementary education projects with high social and political visibility; Thus, there was a tension between anticipated technical competence and coherence, the beginning of an administrative *esprit de corps* (themes of Evans, Rueshemeyer and Skocpol in full) and the political project as the State using Weiler’s other themes of compensatory legitimation. For example, after the results of the “D day” debate were collected by the central State, there was no joint analysis of the data and no programme was formulated. The individual states were instructed to include the results of the national debate in their plans of action. This



was an impossible task, as the states were not prepared to change administrative routines and pedagogical practices without long term planning. Also, given the lack of local autonomy, the majority of the individual states found this a hopeless enterprise, since they did not have the extra resources to initiate reform(21).

The central State had initiated the strategy, but the educational system was unprepared for setting in motion the necessary reforms suggested in the debate. This problem was due to the traditional centralisation of resources and decision-making in the Ministry of Education, and the resultant lack of autonomy of the local levels. Araujo Filho, for example, stated that the progressive deterioration of elementary education in the individual states and municipalities was due to the centralised administrative structure(22). Because of this centralisation, the educational sector of the State became also an easy target for special interest groups, since politicians in search of top administrative requested positions for their protégés(23).

Problems in the administration of elementary education reached a peak at the end of 1987. The educational system was having serious difficulties in responding to increasing obligations, dictated by the central State, which neither made up part of the curriculum nor contributed to its improvement. In fact, it was a problem of lack of local capacity and autonomy, since the educational system was burdened with responsibilities which were the fruit of disorganisation and lack of integrated planning. This situation became publicly known when a high-ranking official in the Ministry of Education, the Under-Secretary of Educational Development, gave an interview to an educational magazine in which he described a public elementary educational system burdened by the addition of various extra-

curricular activities(24). The Under-Secretary stated that the “time dedicated to teaching was restricted to one hour and forty five minutes per day because of interruptions due to lunch, the reception of the supervisor, or the singing of the national anthem”(25). His key declaration was as follows: “elementary education still presents a challenge to the capacity of the Ministry of Education”(26).

The interview demonstrated the continuing incoherent corporate action between the Ministry of Education and the educational system. In fact, the educational system had an excessively broad role, which was reducing the time available for instruction, and its autonomy to formulate the curriculum. Namo de Mello, for example, reported that extra-curricular activities were promoted by the State in elementary education “at the expense of the structure and functioning of the system, and of the daily routine of the public school”(27). These activities also hindered the development of educational policy as conceived by the central State.

Underlying these difficulties was the fact that the Ministry of Education had not established a two-way channel of communication. The central State expected that the individual states and municipalities would find solutions for problems in elementary education and would develop the policies conceived by the central administration. The individual states and municipalities expected supervision from the central State, and support from its expertise and (especially) its financial resources. The idea in the central State, the individual states and the municipalities at the end of the New Republic was that an increase in financial resources for elementary education would alleviate the problems.

Actually, the central State was being accused of disregarding its constitutional duty. Velloso, for example, stated that the State's contribution to public education was below the constitutional prescription of 13 per cent(28). For this reason, the 1988 Constitution laid down that the State's financial contribution to elementary education should be increased to a minimum of 18 per cent of State tax revenues, while the contribution of the individual states and municipalities remained at 25 per cent(29). The basis for this idea was the expectation that more resources would be allocated to municipalities (this had been debated in the 1970s in the campaign led by Senator Calmon)(30). The Constitution also significantly limited, but did not entirely abolish, public financial assistance to private education. The reason for this prescription for restricting funds exclusively to public education was the assumption that, with more money, the problematique in public elementary education would be reduced.

However, some aspects of these provisions remained questionable. First, as argued in this thesis, an increase of resources may alleviate problems in elementary education, but this would only happen if it could be guaranteed that the financial resources would be adequately managed. This would require that the formulation of policy and initiatives for its implementation be adequately co-ordinated to enable the appropriate use of financial resources (provided corruption was not a problem). Second, the existence of this constitutional provision was no guarantee that special interest groups would not be an obstacle for the allocation of financial resources to elementary education. Gomes, for example, stated that the central State failed to accomplish its duties to elementary education because "the State became the captive of

lobbyists for higher education”(31). This tendency, denounced by Simonsen in reference to the Military Regime, had continued into the New Republic.

However, there was some significant change in the socio-political context of the New Republic. The following section will examine the impact of the new democratic context on elementary education.

#### **5.4 - THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR THE SOLUTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROBLEMS**

It is argued in this section that the political context in the New Republic influenced the debate of academic analysts and experiments on elementary education sponsored by political parties, but that these initiatives remained localised and did not achieve full political articulation to push the State into a national project for the reform of elementary education.

However, following Iannacone, it can be noted that the transition from the Military Regime to the New Republic was marked by a significant increase in the scale of educational debate in society. The process of “*abertura política*” [political opening], that had been initiated during Geisel Government and developed under Figueiredo, allowed people to demonstrate in large numbers on the streets to demand direct elections(32). The educational system was also affected by this new political debate of society, though the penetration of this debate was initially limited to activities of groups of educators. After many years of silence, they began to publicise their views in forums and seminars. By 1982, a seminar promoted by the Commission of Education in Congress brought together

educators who carried out an evaluation of “Law 5, 692/71, 11 years later”(33). The results of this debate suggested that the Law was not responsible for the problems occurring in elementary education. The difficulties of carrying out this Law were attributed to the authoritarianism and inflexibility of the previous regime.

Education also gradually became an issue in the debate of political parties, a significant novelty in Brazil. There was also much more leeway for educational experiments conducted by educators. For instance, Guiomar Namó de Mello and Neidson Rodrigues, both from the PMDB “Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro” [Party of the Democratic Brazilian Movement], initiated experiments while participating in their state government(34). In addition, other political parties presented further educational diagnoses and offered suggestions on elementary education. At the end of 1984, a Manifesto of the “III Conferencia Brasileira de Educação” [Third Brazilian Conference on Education] was one of several attempts to bring education into the political arena. It stated that “elementary education deserved more attention after 1985”(35). In that same Manifesto, the following explanation was offered: “The loss of quality in elementary education derives from the shortage of financial resources, and from the catastrophic educational policies practised in the last decades”(36).

These movements in education were precursors of a new era during the New Republic. In January, the Electoral College elected Tancredo Neves and José Sarney, as respectively, President and Vice-President of Brazil. They were supposed to lead the country back to democracy. Vice-President Elect Jose Sarney was inaugurated as President because of the death of Tancredo Neves, but his government started its term of office in the

midst of debates about its legitimacy(37). The new President had been the leader of the government party during the recent Figueiredo period. Thus, his image did not carry the same idea of change as Tancredo, and according to Skidmore, “many people questioned openly if Sarney was legitimately entitled to assume the leadership of the government”(38). This suggests the importance of opportunities for retrieval of legitimacy by the State during the New Republic, including the opportunities in elementary education.

However, the New Republic inaugurated a new phase of political stability in the nation. During the Military Regime, stability was achieved by means of the suppression of conflict, the creation of economic capacity, and by the favourable international economic climate. The challenge to the State after 1985 was to learn how to deal with political articulation of debates in society in general, and a difficult international economic situation. Another challenge faced by the State was the domestic economic situation. Inflation was becoming the major problem(39).

In the educational sector, academic analysts opened up new avenues of discussion. This intellectual movement on the subject of elementary education had its inception in a publication of the Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais-INEP [National Institute of Educational Studies and Research], issued in the first months of 1985. One of the central propositions of the academic analysts was the need for elementary education to move away from past trends and find a new direction during the New Republic(40). These ideas were included in discussions about elementary education reform held in the Ministry of Education.

However, there was a significant decrease in the scale of this initial debate organised by educators, in a context where, by 1986, a troubled economy was the main concern of the State and of society. After many attempts at unsuccessful “shock plans”, the economy still had persistently high inflation. There was also a lack of direction from the State. In sharp contrast to the Military Regime, the State was perceived, in this period, as not providing firm guidance.

In the last years of Sarney Government, people’s faith in the initial promises of the State had been weakened. In the educational area, expectations for change, based on the new debate by educators, the State’s optimistic objectives, and the State’s initial desire for “transparency” turned into apathy(41). There was even a decrease in the scale of enthusiastic debate about elementary education in some areas of the educational system caused by the failure of the State to achieve its objectives for elementary education(42). The Minister of Education was replaced (for political reasons), and the programme “Education-for-All” declined in importance(43). At the end of the period, the prevailing mood in education was one of deep discouragement, resembling that of other areas of society. The beginnings of full politicisation of elementary education were only that - beginnings.

The following section will examine whether the situation of elementary education in this period was consistent with the disappointment prevailing in the education sector of the State.

## 5.5 - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

The purpose of this section is to assess the effectiveness of the State in providing elementary education during the New Republic.

It is argued in this section that, despite its promise to give priority to elementary education, the State was only partially effective in dealing with the problems of elementary education.

Elementary education displayed three main characteristics during the New Republic: extra-curricular activities burdening the educational system, children of school age not in school, and children who were illiterate, despite being (or having been) in school. The first characteristic was new in elementary education: schools had to include extra-curricular tasks in their daily activities to deal with the external problems which underprivileged children brought to school. This trend was initiated by an educational experiment known as “integral time” schools, which the “Centro Integrado de Educação Pública”, CIEP, set up in Rio de Janeiro. These experimental schools were under the educational leadership of Darcy Ribeiro, a signatory of the 1959 Manifesto of the Pioneers(44).

The fundamental orientation of this experiment was correct, since it aimed at providing high-quality schooling to poor children (an idea of the Pioneers). However, the introduction of diverse extra curricular activities for students in elementary education



affected the pedagogical activities(45). This same phenomenon began to be observed in regular elementary education during the New Republic. The sheer number of extra-curricular activities began to impede the school's pedagogical task. Many publications by academic analysts in INEP were centred on this new problem(46).

However, one major (and long-standing) feature of elementary education re-emerged with some force and started to gain social and political visibility in this period: the number of school age children not in school(47). The eight million children not in school became the most common indicator of the critical situation in elementary education. As indicated in Chapter One, this statistic was overestimated, since according to statistics from the Ministry of Education, the number of children not in school in 1985 was 4,641,306(48).

Another old feature of elementary education that re-emerged in this period was the link between illiteracy and elementary education. Data in 1983 revealed that, of a population of 23,417,889 children from seven to fourteen years of age, about 7,350,000 (31 per cent) were illiterate(49). The index of enrolment was approximately 85 per cent in 1983, and consequently 15 per cent of children were not in school. This meant that about 3,750,000 children in school (16 per cent) were illiterate. An examination of statistics in 1987 revealed that the number of illiterate children aged seven to fourteen years was 7,235,287, or practically the same as four years earlier(50).

In 1987, when 21,787,757 children were enrolled in elementary education, the rate of enrolment was 82 per cent(51). Consequently, 18 per cent of children of the targeted age group were not in school. This meant that, in 1987, approximately 9 per

cent of the illiterate children (about 2,390) were in school. In spite of these high numbers, they represented a decrease when compared with 1983. Also, many illiterate children of elementary school age, both in 1983 and 1987, resided in rural areas. In these years, the number of illiterate children (in the group from 10 to 14 years old) in rural areas was three times larger than the number of illiterate children in urban areas(52). The part of Brazil that had the highest index of illiterate children from seven to fourteen years of age in 1987 was the North-eastern region(55 per cent). The regions with the lowest index of illiterate children were the Southern and South-eastern regions (both approximately 16 per cent)(53).

The existence of large numbers of illiterate children in rural areas of the Northeast was understandable as, in rural areas, elementary education was generally only offered for four years. Therefore, the rate of enrolment there continued to be lower than the rate of enrolment in the Northeast urban area. This is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 confirms the suggested relationship between illiteracy and elementary education. The regions that had the lowest indices of non-completion rates (Southeast and South) were the same regions that had the lowest numbers of illiterate children from seven to fourteen years of age. Statistics in Table 11 allow for the inference that the “productivity loss” in the New Republic among the regions continued with the same distortions as in the previous decades.

Table 11. Brazil: 1979 Enrolment and “non-completion” rates in 1982 and 1986 in public elementary education, by region.

| Region      | Enrolment 1979 | “Non-completion Rates” (%) |                            |
|-------------|----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
|             |                | 4th grade 1982             | 8 <sup>th</sup> grade 1986 |
| North       | 6,886,667      | 63                         | 91                         |
| Northeast   | 2,888,707      | 79                         | 92                         |
| Center West | 514,842        | 62                         | 87                         |
| Southeast   | 2,164,703      | 47                         | 80                         |
| South       | 857,491        | 47                         | 83                         |

Source: Organised from data in “Estudos Estatísticos, Visão Panorâmica do Ensino Regular de 1º Grau : (Statistical Studies, Panoramic View of Regular 1st. Degree Education), Secretaria de Administração Geral, Ministério da Educação, Brazil, 1990.

At the end of the Sarney Government’s term of office in 1989, the rate of enrolment in public elementary education was 84 per cent. The remaining 16 per cent represented 4,388,997 children and adolescents not in school(54). With reference to the “non-completion rates” in Brazil, of the 6,895,475 children who were enrolled in public elementary education in 1981(55), only 950,000 finished elementary education in 1989(56). This signified a completion rate in elementary education of approximately 14 per cent, and consequently a “non-completion rate” of 86 per cent.

A new government was elected in 1990 and, with it, came the expectations of a change of this situation, as will be discussed in the following sections.

## **5.6 - PUBLIC ELEMENTARY EDUCATION UNDER THE COLLOR GOVERNMENT (1990-1992) AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

In this period Fernando Collor de Mello was elected President. It had been 30 years since the last President was directly elected by the people. This section examines policies that the new government, directly elected by the people, formulated to elementary education.

It is argued in this section that even though education had not been a major issue in Collor's programme when he was only a candidate, during this short period, the government formulated the challenging objectives to universalise elementary education, eradicate illiteracy, and expand the schools of "integral time" to the whole of Brazil. However, these objectives were not compatible with the capacity or the autonomy of the educational system to implement them.

When the new government was installed in 1990, the State did not attempt to initiate any action relating to elementary education, unlike the Sarney Government. Under the Collor Plan, education was discussed together with health and social security sectors, the so-called social area. There was no sign that the government was wishing to create an image of action in elementary education

However, illiteracy became a problem on the Ministry of Education's agenda. This issue became important because of international pressure from two interrelated sources: the

first was the 1985 recommendation by the “Organização das Nações Unidas-ONU [United Nations Organisation]) that proclaimed 1990 as the “International Year of Literacy”(57). The second event was the “1990 World Conference on Education for All” held in Jomtien, Thailand, which examined the basic learning needs of children, young people, and adults, as related to both external and internal aspects of basic education(58).

In a document with the title “Alfabetizar é Libertar”[To Teach People to Read and Write is to Liberate](59), the Ministry of Education introduced the objective of eliminating illiteracy in Brazil, and universalising elementary education within the first ten years after the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution(60). The Ministry of Education document presented a diagnosis of what was called the “perverse context” of elementary education(61). The diagnosis expressed shock at the statistics which revealed the poor state of elementary education. In addition, in a repetition of the strategy initiated during the Military Regime, and continued under the Sarney Government, the main objective for elementary education was taken as reaching 100 per cent enrolment by 1998.

The presentation of this diagnosis was the opportunity for the creation of an image of actor. In this occasion, Collor’s words were “we need to fight the essential problem of education in Brazil, the problem of elementary education”(62). To correct the “perverse” situation in elementary education revealed in the diagnosis, the Ministry of Education conceived the “Programa Nacional de Alfabetização e Cidadania” [National Programme of Literacy and Citizenship] to be developed in three phases during 1990: at the municipal level, the level of the individual states, and the national level(63). In the presence of President Collor, who made a speech, the programme was solemnly launched. The

President promised to universalise elementary education by 1995. Reinforcing this idea, Collor also emphasised the theme of legitimation and guardian of the universal interests, especially with regarding to education and other social areas, with the following statement:

I am leading an effort aimed at making the State fulfil its fundamental obligations to society. We will streamline and improve our presence in areas of health and education. We are taking steps to inculcate in our citizens the idea that they are entitled to the support of the State, and that they owe no favours to the State, to its employees or to its presumed intermediaries

(64).

The State at this stage indicated its willingness to “improve its presence in education”, and made promises directed at areas considered to have been neglected by successive governments, in this way delineating the orientation of the new government - just like the first Vargas government in 1930. Then, and also in the Collor Government, the challenge was to create an image of action by the central State in the educational system, and to reinforce legitimacy by a reformist stance.

The theme of coherence was also addressed. In 1990, a group of officials in the planning area of the Ministry of Education produced a document entitled “Technical Notes” which examined the central State’s relationship with the educational system(65). The concern with this subject had been debated by officials in the Ministry of Education since the mid-1980s. Pedro Demo, an academic analyst then Director of the “Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisa em Educação-INEP” [National Institute of Studies and Research in Education], perceived the Ministry of Education as “a useless, mummified, and archaic institution”(66). The 1990 “Notes” stated that “the Ministry of Education continued

to act as if Brazilian society was the same as it was twenty or thirty years ago”(67). This was a perceptive vision of the new interest for education problems emerging in society during the late 1980s and early 1990s, as will be discussed later.

The definition of the State’s responsibility in education, this long- standing challenge to Brazil, was also the subject of proposed legislation being submitted to Congress. This proposed legislation was about a new “Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional- LDB” [Law of Guidelines and Basis of National Education](68). A central idea in this proposal was the decentralisation of elementary education, and the emphasis on the “return to the basics”, i. e., that elementary education should promote the learning of reading, writing, and mathematics. The overall purpose was to develop children’s capacities to criticise and to reflect(69).

By 1991, the government had formulated specific plans for education. The “Programa Setorial do Governo Collor para a Area Educacional 1991-1995” [Sectorial Programme of Action by the Collor Government in the Educational Area], presented the new policies for education. These had new titles: “education with equity and efficiency”, “education with quality”, and “education for modernity”(70). The Sectorial Programme, besides defining the education of children and adolescents from seven to fourteen years of age as a State obligation, included the education of everyone who had not received elementary education at the proper age(71). The main proposal of the State was to offer “public education of quality to 100 per cent of the population from seven to fourteen years of age”(72). Another innovation proposed by the Programme was the creation of “Escolas Ecologicas [Ecological Schools](73).

The formulation of the new LDB and the Sectorial Programme showed a renewed use of legislation and planning as strategies in the search for legitimacy by the State . Every time a new government was installed, people in the educational area thought that these two strategies might produce elementary education reform(74). President Collor revitalised these hopes with the proposed “sócio-liberal” reform of the State. In newspaper articles, Collor defined this reform as the “qualitative modification of the State’s relationship with society”(75). His strategy to retrieve legitimacy through the proposed reform was enlarging the State’s activities in the social area and reducing its direct intervention in productive activities(76). One main objective was the reform of the State’s bureaucratic apparatus, which was characterised by “an absurd volume of regulations limiting free initiative”(77).

Raising hopes for a new future for elementary education in Brazil, the President published a new article called “A Revolução Educacional” [The Educational Revolution]. It proposed “reaching political democracy through mass education”(78). A core statement in the article was: “without education, the Brazilian masses will never be able to achieve mature citizenship, this implying their knowledge of the value of free institutions, and the possibility of following, as they deserve, the dynamics of modernity”(79).

The social scientist Helio Jaguaribe, referring to President Collor’s proposals, remarked: “there is a distance between Government ideas and practice, a problem that I attribute to the low level of competence of the Presidents’ advisers and the State’s civil servants”(80). The government proposal to reorganise the bureaucracy of the State was a sign that the State was going in the right direction. Nonetheless, these plans for renovation



were put on one side. In the final year of the Collor Government, the main State action in elementary education concerned the “schools of integral time”, which, as previously mentioned, was an experiment initiated in the 1980s, in Rio de Janeiro. The “Centro Integrado de Apoio a Crianca” CIACS [Integrated Center of Child Support] was a project meant to be extended to all the states in Brazil. The question remained whether this experiment would bring about permanent results in elementary education, or whether it was a way of attracting political dividends to the State(81). Thus, the period was marked by a variety of initiatives. Among the most interesting were the administrative proposals for coherence, to make the State an effective actor. The new policies, enshrined in declarations, were also visionary. How far did they work?

The following section will focus on the implementation of these challenging policies formulated in this period.

## **5.7 - THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION POLICY**

The purpose of this section is to analyse the obstacles faced by the individual states and municipalities in implementing the objectives of elementary education policy during the Collor Government.

It is argued in this section that the problem of lack of co-ordination between the administrative levels of the State gained relevance and began to be analysed in the Ministry of Education, even though the problem itself continued to exist in the State during this

period.

The “Technical Notes”, mentioned in the last section, proposed the creation of new form of co-ordination between the Ministry of Education and the local levels, may be interpreted as a perception of the need to create coherent corporate action in those parts of the internal bureaucracy of the State responsible for the administration of elementary education. The “Notes” proposed a new model for the role of the Ministry of Education, as interpreter of society, negotiator, co-ordinator, and supplier of financial assistance to the individual states(82). The “Notes” also presented the following administrative conditions for the development of these roles: flexibility, the existence of hardware, organisation, information, and new functions for the planning group(83).

As indicated earlier, at the beginning in the 1930s, the government referred to co-ordination between the administrative levels. This idea was never explored further. During the Dutra government, “co-operation” between the central State and some individual states was also tried. However, the lack of co-ordination continued, and the State did not promote any discussion about the subject.

The officials of the Ministry of Education proposed in the “Notes” the creation of a new relationship between the State and elementary education. The proposal was that State activities should not “be characterised as direct interventions of the Union (or State) in the individual states and municipalities”(84). The “Notes” proposed that the Ministry of Education should have the “primordial role of negotiator”(85) and suggested new functions for the Ministry of Education. This would have the responsibility for correcting educational

inequalities, promoting community involvement, guaranteeing the quality and universalisation of elementary education, and developing a transparent policy of obtaining and allocating financial resources(86). The final idea was the necessity of integrating planning and budget. It was believed that only then could the Ministry of Education play its "role of co-ordinator of the educational policy in the country, establishing a new partnership with the states and municipalities"(87).

However, despite efforts to formulate these ideas in the "Notes", there were no directions on how the State would perform its new roles. The obstacle was the lack of continuity in the administration of the Ministry of Education. The task was interrupted when the group which had formulated the "Notes" was dissolved and other concerns emerged in the Ministry of Education(88).

Another initiative in this period was the proposal for a new LDB. This was a step towards decentralisation of the educational system. The main characteristic of this proposal, in contrast with the previous Law of Guidelines and Basis of National Education, was the much larger degree of autonomy granted to school systems. In the proposal, local autonomy would mean the possibility for the local level in the educational system to be able to organise elementary education according to their own criteria. This indicated that the question which had been discussed since the formulation of the first LDB in 1948 had not been solved. Decentralisation continued to be an objective to be reached in the future.

However, there was another effort made by the Ministry of Education to bring about the integration between the three administrative levels of the State. Among the

policies described in the Sectorial Programme, the “Política Nacional de Alocação de Recursos para o Ensino de Primeiro Grau” [National Policy of Resource Allocation to Elementary Education] aimed at the co-ordination of the Ministry of Education with the states and municipalities(89). This policy suggested that the existence of incoherent corporate action was recognised by the State. But with the discontinuity in the administration, the programme was deactivated.

The challenging objectives of elementary education policies in this period and the interruption of their development reflected the events which took place within the context of the Collor government, as will be shown in the following section.

## **5.8 - THE POLITICAL BASIS FOR SOLUTION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION PROBLEMS**

This section reviews political, economic and educational events occurring during the Collor Government, and their influence on elementary education.

It is argued in this section that, even if the State was not primarily concerned with elementary education, there was nevertheless significant change in the expansion of elementary education debate among members of the educational system and among institutions in society in general. For the first time society and the media provided political support for the demands from the educational system for effective approaches to problems in elementary education. Full politicisation was underway.

As indicated earlier, education was not a paramount issue in the Collor Plan. The most attractive element of Collor's platform was his plan for the economy. This was justified by the fact that, after three unsuccessful stabilisation plans undertaken between 1986 and 1989, the previous administration had left the country in a dismal economic situation: "increasing inflation, a large fiscal deficit, and an accommodating expansionary monetary policy"(90).

In the run-up to the Collor government, all sectors of Brazilian society were hoping for change, including the educational sector. When Collor was inaugurated, in March 15, 1990, the nation was surprised by the launching of an economic stabilisation plan called "New Brazil", which became known as "Plano Collor" [Collor Plan]. Provisional Measure 186 in the Plan proposed a monetary reform that included a drastic reduction of liquidity and the elimination of the large budgetary deficit. The freezing of savings deposits (approximately US\$ 90 billions) of annexed currency for a duration of 18 months was at the core of the reduction of liquidity(91). Collor's critics called this measure an unconstitutional assault on private property(92). Despite the strong intervention of the State in the economy, political conflict remained at moderate levels in specific groups of society(93).

Collor's inaugural address, in a break with previous administrations, concentrated on one principal economic issue: inflation. In an Address, Collor stated: "The immediate purpose of my government, objective number one in the first year, is not to contain inflation, but to liquidate it"(94). This was the State's interpretation of its main responsibility as defender of the universal interests of society. By September of the same

year, at 11 per cent a month, inflation still remained obstinately high. In a poll taken at the time, 58 per cent of those taking part said they believed that the President was ending inflation(95).

In the educational area, a new programme to combat illiteracy and to universalise elementary education was aggressively launched. In spite of this programme, the reaction in the educational sector was that the State was still not interested in elementary education(96). This reaction is understandable. The expectations in the educational sector, after the discussions of “D Day” and the formulation of the 1988 Constitution during the Sarney period, has been that reform in elementary education was “priority zero” and could not be delayed any more(97).

However, the first year of the new government was dedicated to economic problems. The State gave its total attention to problems related to inflation. By this time, the issue in the educational community debate was whether or not education was being seriously treated by the State. The following statement by the Rio de Janeiro Secretary of Education, Fatima Cunha Ferreira Pinto, in December 1990, for example, demonstrates the dissatisfaction of the educational sector:

The educational crisis in the nation has been the consequence of the nefarious results of all other social crises. The revision of any of those crises is only possible with the help of education. However, the educational sector is absent from the negotiating table of the “social pact”.

(98).

This statement conveyed the idea that the educational sector, in spite of its potential value,

was being ignored by the State. The public reaction of the Secretary of Education of one of the most important states in Brazil, which indicated that the educational sector was expecting to participate in the central State's decisions on education, signalled a change in the previously passive attitude of the leadership of the educational system(99). It also marks a shift understandable within the ideas of Iannacone.

In September, there was a reaction in the press to the State's illiteracy programme: "After the experience of the fight against illiteracy in the 1970s, the tendency was to receive with a certain dose of scepticism governmental programmes in that area: the needs of Brazilian society and the administrative difficulties of such strategies were undoubtedly powerful obstacles to the accomplishment of objectives many times proclaimed with inadequate pomp"(100). In referring to "administrative difficulties of such strategies as powerful obstacles to the accomplishment of objectives", the comment showed that the educational community debate on the effectiveness of educational policy had penetrated the media.

The demand for effective change began to spread from educational circles to other areas. However, the first months of 1991 indicated that inflation was a reality. The government announced modifications in the Collor's Plan to adjust it to the return of high inflation. In the middle of the turmoil caused by these economic events, an editorialist for a national newspaper commented that "public education has reached an absolutely hopeless situation in Brazil, in particular, the first grades of elementary education(101).

Confident declarations at the start of Collor Government had raised hopes for

reform in the economy. However, with increasing inflation, optimism waned. The index of 21.9 per cent in prices in February, the highest since the new government had taken office, immediately affected Collor's credibility. Collor's loss of public favour was illustrated by the fact that his approval rating dropped from 63 per cent in April 1990 to 20 per cent in January of 1991(102). As the economy had shrunk about 4.5 per cent, Brazil faced a serious recession(103).

Another statement by the Secretary of Education of the Rio de Janeiro State, Fatima C. Ferreira Pinto, revealed that the new climate of economic instability had also reached the educational area. When 500 public school teachers decided to leave teaching, she commented: "To renounce an initial monthly salary of CR\$ 27,000.00 (about 90 dollars at that time) is a proof of intelligence"(104). This comment showed that the State could not seriously promise to universalise elementary education without correcting the historical problems affecting its productivity. It also, again, links with the ideas of Iannacone, with the educational sector explicitly exporting its problems on to the agenda of the State.

Financial problems in elementary education were also a central issue of debate in a World Bank study on Brazil. The study proposed diverting resources from free public higher education to elementary education. This proposal encountered opposition in the educational area. The international agency's argument was that, since the government spent US\$ 3.5 billions a year maintaining higher education, these resources would allow the government to double its investments in basic education (infant, elementary and secondary education)(105). Educators who opposed this proposition argued that the recovery of basic education would not be possible without the co-operation of higher education, asking:



“who is going to pay the bill?”(106). Thus, the idea of using higher education money to finance elementary educational reform remained an issue for debate; another example of the significance of special interest groups.

The coherence of the State as an actor was also brought back into the discussion in the first months of 1992. Two documents discussed these ideas: the “Projeto Educação para Cidadania” [Education for Citizenship Project](107), and the text “Autonomia da Escola: Possibilidades, Limites e Condições” [School Autonomy: Possibilities, Limits, Conditions](108). These documents advanced concepts about decentralisation as a process in which the State, considered as central State, had a definite role. In addition, the documents dealt with the internal organisation of the State’s bureaucracy as a basic requirement for decentralisation. Both documents proposed a change in the State’s interventionist pattern of behaviour in education.

Finally, the other elements in the theoretical puzzle outlined in Chapter One, come together in reality. In the first months of 1992, new ideas concerning elementary education were debated despite the fact that instability reigned in other vital areas. In an historical breakthrough, the press began to focus attention on elementary education. The trajectory of elementary education debate during these two years of the Collor Government indicated that if changes in its situation had not been implemented, at least in 1992 elementary education debate had been politically articulated by the public and the media. Full politicisation had occurred.

The following section will discuss the result of this politicisation of elementary

education in society and of the State's policies on elementary education.

## **5.9 - THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION**

The purpose of this section is to see whether State policies and the fact that elementary education had become a political issue contributed towards changing the reality of elementary education.

This section argues that, despite the optimistic objectives of elementary educational policy, the increasing concern with elementary education expressed by the educational system and by society in general, the media inclusive, the situation in elementary education continued to present particular problems.

Statistics in 1990 indicated that the national rate of enrolment in elementary education continued at the same levels as with the Sarney government, i. e. 84 per cent(109). Statistics of 1990 also showed 7,213,626 children enrolled in 1982(110) in elementary education in Brazil only 960.000 finished the 8th grade in 1990(111), giving a completion rate of 14 per cent, and consequently a non-completion rate of 86 per cent. This was the same as at the end of the Sarney Government. However, it is important to stress there had been no time in the Collor Government for achieving results: many policies formulated in this period did not have time to be implemented.

The central problems determining the high non-completion rate during the Collor

Government continued to be the phenomena of repetition and dropping out. Research indicated that 800.000 children in Brazil “did not study, work, or help with housework” but constituted “children who lived in marginalised conditions on the streets”(112). The problem of “street children” in Brazil gained international attention during this period. Another practical problem in elementary education was the extremely inadequate working condition of teachers as well as their salaries and career incentives(113). Furthermore, teachers’ qualifications in elementary education remained poor, as shown in Table 12:

Table 12. Brazil: “Leigos” teachers in public elementary education, by administrative level, 1987.

| Total   | Federal | States | Municipal | Private |
|---------|---------|--------|-----------|---------|
| 242,696 | 1,117   | 71,628 | 144,446   | 25,505  |
| (22%)   | (20%)   | (11%)  | (44%)     | (17%)   |

Source: Adapted from “Ensino Regular de 1º Grau Professores não Habilitados” (Regular Elementary Education Non-Qualified Teachers), Estudos Estatísticos, Ministério da Educação, 1990, p. 3.

As defined earlier, *leigo* is a teacher who teaches in a degree or grade for which he/she is not legally qualified. As demonstrated in Table 14, in 1987 there were 242,696 teachers in Brazil teaching in elementary education without legal qualifications. The Northern region was the region with the highest percentages of such teachers (20.44 urban and 79.57 rural), while the South-eastern region presented the lowest percentage (7.99 urban and 32.03 rural) of *leigos*.

The teaching qualification problem had spanned decades without any notable solution being found. There is no direct way to measure the specific impact of a *leigo*

teacher on the rates of “productivity loss” in this thesis. However, it is probable that a strong relationship exists between the following three factors: the presence of *leigo* teachers, rates of “productivity loss” and differences in the quality of elementary education among regions: the regions of Brazil with the lowest percentages of elementary education completion, the Northeast and North, were also the regions with the highest percentages of *leigo* teachers. Many of these teachers had not completed elementary education(114).

In sum, the problems in elementary education during the Collor Government show how resistant to change are problems such as repetition and drop out, and the *leigo* teachers and their extremely low salaries in the North and Northeast regions of Brazil. However, one of the essential properties of the “the State as an actor”, indicated in Chapter One, is precisely the State’s autonomy and capacity to implement objectives in the face of “recalcitrant circumstances”. The continuation of problems such as those mentioned above is a “recalcitrant circumstance” in elementary education that was still defying the Brazilian State in the 1990s

## **5.10 - CONCLUSION**

The narrative in this chapter permits the conclusion that, in the New Republic, the government urgently formulated policy addressing areas like education, health, social security, in agreement with the adopted motto “priority to the social area”. In this sense, the policy of the Government to get society in general to participate in a national debate on elementary education was successful. This movement, and the programme “Education for All - Way to Change”, launched in the same occasion, enhanced the image of the State as

an actor and a reformist agent in the educational sector and in society in general.

However, despite the accomplishment of this goal by the central State, the educational system could not implement either the suggestions made in the debate or the objectives of the programme “Education for All”. The educational system was burdened by extra-curricular activities. This failure by the State indicates that a lack of co-ordination remained in the administration of the educational sector. What was stressed in implementation was the fact that the State had raised the percentages of financial resources to be allocated to elementary education. However, the lack of co-ordination within the State continued. Legislation by itself was not enough to bring about adequate co-ordination in the bureaucracy of the educational sector. In the same way, studies, articles and experiments by educators, that had begun in the run-up to the New Republic and continued during the period, remained localised and, even though some of the experiments were linked to political parties, this has not yet influenced the implementation of elementary education policy.

As a result of the internal disorganisation within the educational sector of the State and the lack of political influence of the movements by educators, the historical problems of repetition and dropping-out, the differences in productivity of elementary education between several states, and the presence of *leigo* teachers continue to challenge the State. As a new measure of the State’s ineffectiveness in elementary education, a significant number of children were still considered illiterate after attending school.

Based on the “areas of sensitivity” presented in Chapter One, it is possible to

conclude that, during the New Republic the strategy of participation (Weiler), was a potent substitute device to use when traditional mechanisms for increasing the State's legitimacy, by their repeated use, had lost much of their impact. Actually, strategies of legalisation and experimentation had been frequently used by previous governments, especially legalisation(Weiler). Even though these two strategies were used in the New Republic, the new element of participation represented a much more potent strategy for legitimising the State than the other two. In addition, this strategy reinforced the purpose of the State in showing "concern with the social", a concern that characterises the role of the State, as a "guardian of the universal interests of society"(Rueshemeyer and Evans). The State also made possible the raising of elementary education as an issue in society (the "Tocquevillian approach", in the idea of Skocpol). The scale of elementary education debate also increased during the New Republic. However, this politicisation, the scope, scale and intensity of debate about elementary education stimulated by political parties and educators, has thus far not had major effectiveness.

In the period, the State was above all, a strategist and not an effective actor, since the bureaucratic apparatus of the State continued to lack conditions of autonomy and capacity essential for effective action. The incoherent corporate action within the State, and administrative disorganisation in the educational system were the main difficulties in the implementation of elementary education policy.

In the period, there was no major change in the situation of the elementary education. The central State developed strategies of high visibility, but it was not able to effectively reform elementary education: repetition and dropping-out continued to produce

the national rate of 86 per cent of non-completion in elementary education. The rate of enrolment remained stabilised around 84 per cent, and the differences between regions continued with the same distortions as in the previous decades. The regions that had the lowest indices of non-completion rates (Southeast and South) were the same regions that had the lowest numbers of illiterate children from seven to fourteen years of age.

The promising developments are straightforward. The Collor government recognised the urgent need to eradicate illiteracy, to formulate new national legislation for education, to universalise elementary education, to create schools of “integral time” in all the states of Brazil, and to decentralise elementary education. The Ministry of Education took the initiative of analysing the difficulties of co-ordination between the administrative levels of the State, and the educational system expressed its dissatisfaction with the disregard of the central State for problems in elementary education. In society at large, the interest in elementary education, which had begun in the New Republic, provided initial support for reform. The criticism of the educational system and the social movements were reproduced by the media and demands for change in elementary education began to spread from educational circles to other areas, including the international arena. Unlike the previous period, debates and projects of educators on elementary education continued despite the political and economic problems in the country which reached a peak when Collor was removed from government. The old problems persisted: low productivity of elementary education, especially in some regions, repetition, dropping-out, and the poor qualification of teachers, especially in the Northeast of Brazil. This situation in elementary education at the end of the century contrasts with Brazil’s ranking as one of the ten largest economies in the world.

The correction of the persistently low productivity of elementary education, with non-completion rates of 86 per cent and enrolment rates stagnated at 84 per cent, caused by the continuation of its fundamental problems, would once again be a task for the next government. The intractability of the problem is indeed dramatic. However, the time frame since Collor has been short, and perhaps, some elements of the problem are now more visible after the long analysis undertaken so far. Perhaps there are some possibilities which permit a more optimistic perspective to be drawn together.



## ENDNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Personal observation confirms that this term became commonplace among those officials.
2. Personal experience supports the affirmation that officials working with elementary education in the Ministry of Education had mixed feelings about what to expect from the new government. Though they recognised the State's pledge to elementary education, they were sceptical about the possibilities for reform.
3. See Clelia de Freitas Capanema, "Uma Visão da Educação na Perspectiva de Uma Experiência Profissional Repensada" [A Vision of the Problem of Education through the Perspective of a Rethought Professional Experience], mimeo: Brasília, Brazil, 1987, p.3.
4. Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens Presidenciais [Education in Presidential Addresses], Vol. II, Ministry of Education/INEP: Brasília, 1987, p. 525.
5. See ENDNOTE 29 in Chapter Three.
6. BRASIL. "PLANO NACIONAL DE DESENVOLVIMENTO DA NOVA REPÚBLICA-1986-1989" [National Plan of Development of the New Republic], SEPLAN: Brasília, 1985, p. 9.
7. *ibid.*
8. *ibid.*, p. 15.
9. See the discussion of this pledge of the State by G. Namo de Mello, Magistério de 1º Grau: da Competência Técnica ao Compromisso Político [Elementary Education Professorship: from Technical Competence to Political Commitment], Cortez: São Paulo, 1984., and Educação Crise e Mudança, [Education, Crisis and Change], Anais do II Seminário Regional da Sociedade Brasileira de Educação Comparada- Região Sudeste [Annals of the II Regional Conference of the Brazilian Society of Comparative Education-South-eastern Region], USP/FE: São Paulo, 1987, pp. 15-26.
10. Brasil, "Programa Educação para Todos- Caminho para Mudança" [Programme for Education for All-The Way to Change], Ministry of Education/SEPS, 1986.
11. *ibid.*
12. Brasil, A Educação nas Mensagens.....op. cit., pp. 526, 527.
13. *ibid.*
14. The "D day" was organised in September 1986 by the Secretaria de Ensino de 1º e Segundo Graus"- SEPS [Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education], Ministry of Education, Brasília, Brazil.

15. Opinions about elementary education coming from parents, teachers, students, politicians and people in general reached the Ministry of Education on that day. Valuable written information was gathered in reunions held in schools and many different places throughout the country, as experienced by the author.
16. Qualitative problems require complex long-term solutions
17. BRASIL. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL, 5 Outubro 1988, Congresso Nacional, [National Congress], Brasília, 1988, Título VIII, Capítulo III, Seção I, Art. 205, p. 31.
18. This movement was observed by the author of this thesis.
19. BRASIL. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL, 5 de Outubro 1988 .....op. cit. p. 32.
20. *ibid.*
21. Problems related to the quality of elementary education were frequently mentioned in the national debate held on “D” day. This was registered in a document for internal use in SEPS. This organ is called today “Secretaria Nacional de Ensino Básico- SENEb” [National Secretary of Basic Education].
22. See Luis Soares de A. Filho, “Rumos da Educação” [Directions of Education], Em Aberto, [Open Debate], year 4, N° 25, MEC/INEP: Brasília, Brasil, p. 13.
23. See the interview with the Vice-Governor of the State of Minas Gerais in Brazil, Walfrido dos Mares Guia Neto, in which he describes situations that exemplify this point. Revista “VEJA”, Editora Abril: São Paulo, Brasil, & August 1996, Yellow Pages, pp. 7-8.
24. Luiz Soares de A. Filho, “O 1º Grau Ainda Desafia a Capacidade do MEC” [Elementary Education Still Challenges the Capacity of the Ministry of Education-MEC], interview with I. Martins, Revista Nova Escola, Brasília, Brazil, 1987, pp. 48-58.
25. *ibid.* pp. 48-49.
26. *ibid.*
27. Guiomar Namó de Mello, “Ensino de 1o Grau: As Estratégias da Transição Democrática” [Elementary Education: Strategies of the Democratic Transition], Em Aberto, [Open Debate], Year 4, N° 25, MEC/INEP, Brasília, Brasil, 1985, p. 18.
28. Jacques R. Velloso, “O Financiamento da Educação na Transição Democrática” [Education Funding in the Democratic Transition], Em Aberto, [Open Debate], year 4, N° 25, MEC/INEP: Brasília, Brasil, 1985, p. 30.

29. BRASIL. CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL, 5 de Outubro 1988.... op. cit., p.32.
30. João Calmon, História de Uma Proposta de Emenda a Constituição [History of a Proposal for a Constitutional Amendment], Senado Federal: Brasília, Brasil, 1977, p. 29.
31. Candido A. Gomes, “Os Quatro Anos da Emenda Calmon: Qual o seu Impacto?” [Four Years of the Calmon Amendment: What is its Impact?], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos, Vol. 69, Nº 162, Ministry of Education/INEP, Brasília, Brasil, 1988, p. 249.
32. This was a national movement, the first public manifestation of such a size after the Military Regime.
33. This 1982 Seminar was organised in Congress by the Commission of Education. The objective was to discuss the 11 years of Law 5,592/71. The conclusion was that the law was not bad, but its execution had encountered strong obstacles.
34. See additional comments on those experiences in Paulo Ghiraldelli Jr., História da Educação [History of Education], Cortez: São Paulo, Brazil, 1990, p. 214.
35. *ibid.*
36. *ibid.*
37. Thomas Skidmore. Brasil: De Castelo a Tancredo [Brazil: from Castelo to Tancredo], Paz e Terra: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1989, p. 489.
38. *ibid.*
39. Thomas Skidmore, Brasil: De Castelo a...op. cit., 488-489
40. See the publication Em Aberto, [In the Open], year 4, Nº 25, MEC/INEP, Brasília, Brasil, 1985.
41. This climate of apathy was a theme of discussion among officials in the area of elementary education in the Ministry of Education. (Personal observation).
42. Teachers and administrators from various individual states expressed disappointment when they felt that they were not prepared for implementing policies originating from “D day. (Personal observation).
43. At this time there was overt intervention of politics in the educational sector, specially concerning the appointment of officials for the top positions. (Personal observation).
44. The CIEP was a controversial experiment in education created in Rio de Janeiro during the administration of Darcy Ribeiro, who had worked in the past with Anísio Teixeira.

45. To some academic analysts, the experience of the CIEP, in spite of its innovative social reach, served political purposes and lacked some basic pedagogical requirements. For a comprehensive analysis of the experience, see A. C. Venancio Mignot, "CIEP- Centro Integrado de Educação Pública- Alternativa para a Qualidade do Ensino ou Nova Investida do Populismo na Educação?" [CIEP- Integrated Center of Public Education- Alternative for Quality Education or a New Populist Assault in Education?], Em aberto, [Open (to debate)], Year 8, N° 44, Ministry of Education/INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1989, pp. 45-63.
46. See these declarations in the articles published in Em Aberto....year 4, N° 25, op. cit.
47. Philip R. Fletcher and Sergio C. Ribeiro have argued that "many myths persist embedded in diagnoses of elementary education, conveying wrong interpretations of the reality" Among the myths that conveyed a wrong interpretation of the reality, they mentioned the estimate of enrolment in elementary education, a feature also analysed in this thesis. See Philip R. Fletcher and Sergio Costa Ribeiro, "O ensino de Primeiro Grau no Brasil de Hoje", [Elementary Education Today in Brazil], Em Aberto [Open (to debate)], ano 6, N° 33, Ministry of Education/ INEP: Brasília, Brazil, 1987, p. 1.
48. As indicated earlier in the thesis, the statistic "8 million children out of elementary education" was repeatedly used by politicians. A 1986 study done by Linda Ganej de Andrade, adviser to the Ministry of Education/ Secretary of Elementary and Secondary Education, showed that there were around 4 million of children out of elementary education in Brazil.
49. S. A. da Silva Leite, "O Fracasso Escolar no Ensino de Primeiro Grau", [School Failure in Elementary Education], Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos, [Brazilian Review of Pedagogic Studies], Vol. 69, N° 163, Ministry of Education/INEP: Brasília, Brazil, p. 510.
50. Brasil, "Estudos Estatísticos- O Analfabetismo no Brasil e no Mundo", [Illiteracy in Brazil and in the World], Ministry of Education/SG/SEPLAN: Brasília, 1990, p. 5.
51. *ibid.*
52. These data were organised from two sources: for data of 1987, see, *ibid.* For data of 1983, see S. A. da Silva Leite. "O Fracasso Escolar no Ensino de Primeiro Grau", [Failure in Elementary Education], Revista Brasileira.....op. cit., p. 510.
53. S. A. da Silva Leite, "O Fracasso Escolar no Ensino de Primeiro Grau", Revista Brasileira.....op. cit., p. 510.
54. Brasil, "Visão Panorâmica do Ensino de 1º Grau" [Panoramic View of Elementary Education], Estudos Estatísticos, Ministry of Education/SG/SEPLAN: Brasília, 1990, p. 3.
55. Brasil, "Sinopse Estatística da Educação Básica-1981, 1982, 1983" [Statistical Synopsis of Elementary and Secondary Education], Ministry of Education: Brasília, 1984.

56. Brasil. "Sinopse Estatística do Ensino Regular de 1º Grau-1886, 1987, 1988, 1989" [Statistical Synopsis of Elementary Education], Ministry of Education: Brasília, 1990.
57. The year 1990 was proclaimed "International Year of Literacy" by the United Nations in Resolution 42/104.
58. WORLD CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR ALL, Meeting Basic Learning Needs, Jomtien, Thailand, 5-9 March 1990, Inter Agency Commission UNDP/UNESCO/UNICEF/WORLD BANK: New York, U.S.A, pp. 1-15.
59. Brasil. "Alfabetizar é Libertar", [To Teach to Read and Write is to Liberate], Ministry of Education, mimeo: Brasília, 1990, p.9.
60. BRASIL, CONSTITUIÇÃO DA REPÚBLICA FEDERATIVA DO BRASIL, promulgated in October 5, 1988. See a special publication of the magazine Isto é Senhor ["This is it" Sir], Nº 995, S.Paulo, Brazil, 1989.
61. Brasil, "Alfabetizar é Libertar" [To Teach to Read and Write is to Liberate], Ministry of Education .....op. cit. p. 9.
62. BRASIL, PROGRAMA DE ALFABETIZAÇÃO E CIDADANIA, [Literacy and Citizenship Programme], Discurso do Presidente Fernando Collor de Mello, [President Fernando Collor de Mello Speech], Ministry of Education, Brasília, 1990, p.5.
63. *ibid.*
64. *ibid.*
65. BRASIL, COORDENADORIA DE PLANEJAMENTO SETORIAL, "Nota Técnica", [Technical Note], Nº 1, 30/04/90, Ministry of Education, mimeo: Brasília, 1990, p. 1.
66. This comment was made in an interview to the author of this thesis and is included in I. M. Tollini, "O Pensamento Pedagógico de Educadores Brasileiros Contemporâneos," [Pedagogic Thought of Contemporary Brazilian Educators], mimeo, Brasília, Brazil, 1987, p. 44.
67. Brasil, "Nota Técnica", Nº 1. ....op. cit., p. 1.
68. BRASIL, CAMARA DOS DEPUTADOS, [House of Representatives], "Projeto de Lei Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional", [Project of Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education], Segundo Substitutivo do Relatório Jorge Hage" [The Jorge Hage Second Substitutive Report], mimeo: Brasília, Brazil, 1990."
69. *ibid.*, p. 33.
70. BRASIL, PROGRAMA SETORIAL DE AÇÃO DO GOVERNO COLLOR, 1991-1995, [Sectorial Programme of Action of Collor Government], Ministry of Education,

mimeo: Brasília, 1991, pp. 16-19.

71. *ibid.*

72. *ibid.*

73. *ibid.*

74. Each new administration renewed its promises of change and new plans were developed.

75. See this proposal by President Collor in Correio Braziliense, Brasília, Brazil, 5. January, 1992, p. 3.

76. *ibid.*

77. *ibid.*

78. See this proposal for “educational revolution” in Correio Braziliense, Brasília, Brazil, 9, January, 1992, p. 7.

79. *ibid.*

80. See Helio Jaguaribe’s statements, in Correio Braziliense, Brasília, Brasil, 12, January, 1992, p. 3.

81. The setting up of the “Centro Integrado de Apoio a Crianca- CIACS” [Integrated Center of Child Support] all over Brazil was declared a priority of Collor’s government.

82 BRASIL. COORDENADORIA DE PLANEJAMENTO SETORIAL, “Nota Técnica”, [Technical Note], Nº 2, 07/05/90”, Ministry of Education, mimeo: Brasília, 1990. pp 3-5

83. BRASIL. COORDENADORIA DE PLANEJAMENTO SETORIAL, “Nota Técnica” [Technical Note] Nº 10, 24/05/90”, Ministry of Education, mimeo: Brasília, 1990, pp. 1-2.

84. *ibid.*

85. *ibid.*

86. *ibid.*

87. *ibid.*

88. In reference to successive administrations in the Ministry of Education appointed by political parties.

89. See the project “Política Nacional de Alocação de Recursos para o Ensino de Primeiro

- Grau" [National Policy of Resource Allocation to Elementary Education] in BRASIL, PROGRAMA SETORIAL DE AÇÃO DO GOVERNO COLLOR, 1991-1995 [Sectorial Programme of Action of Collor Government]. Ministry of Education, mimeo: Brasília, 1991, pp. 16-19.
90. "Collor's Camelot", in CE International Strategies Incorporating International Development Review, Volume III, Number I, International Media Partners Inc.: Canada, 1990, p. 120.
  91. "Brazil's Economic Black Hole Swallows Collor's Credibility", in The Washington Times, March 15, 1991. For an evaluation of the "Plano Collor," see: Clovis de Faro (ed.), Plano Collor Avaliações e Perspectivas, [Evaluations and Perspectives on Collor's Plan], Livros Técnicos Científicos Editora: Rio de Janeiro, 1990.
  92. "Apertem os Cintos: O Dinheiro Sumiu de Circulação" [Fasten your Belts: The Money Disappeared from Circulation], Revista Exame, Editora Abril: S. Paulo, Brasil, 1990, p. 17.
  93. The main reaction came from people of the middle class. (Personal observation).
  94. "Apertem os Cintos: O Dinheiro Sumiu de Circulação" [Fasten your Belts: The Money Disappeared from Circulation], Revista Exame....op. cit., p. 17.
  95. "Brazil's President Drops in Public Favor", The Washington Post, March 16, 1991, p. A 20.
  96. The State's actions did not convey to educators the idea that the State was seriously attempting to reform elementary education.
  97. As observed by the author of this thesis, there was impatience in the educational sector for effective action by the State in elementary education. Expectations of reform had been significantly raised after the State declared elementary education to be "priority zero". As the Sarney Government had not been able to intervene in elementary education to initiate effective reform, all the expectations were concentrated on Collor's government.
  98. F. C. Ferreira Pinto, "Educação: Rito de Passagem", [Education: Rite of Passage], Jornal do Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, December 4, 1990, p. 111
  99. As shown in this thesis the educational system was not able of initiating any public movement in favour of elementary education reform.
  100. See "Editorial", [Editorial], Folha de São Paulo, S. Paulo, Brazil, September, 12, 1990, p. 2.
  101. See "Editorial", [Editorial], O Globo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, February 4, 1991, p. 6.
  102. See "Brazil's President Drops in Public Favor", The Washington Post, Washington, U. S., A., March 16, 1991, p. A 20.
  103. *ibid.*

104. F. C. Ferreira Pinto, "Educação: Rito de Passagem" [Education: Rite of Passage], Jornal do.....op. cit., p. 111.
105. See the article of R. L. L. e Silva Filho, "Ensino Pago", [Paid Schooling], Folha de S. Paulo, April 3, 1991, p. 3.
106. *ibid.*
107. Guiomar N. de Mello "et. al.", "Projeto: Educação para Cidadania Estudos sobre Políticas Públicas. [Education for Citizenship Studies on Public Policies], Instituto de Estudos Avançados, USP, mimeo: São Paulo, Brazil, October/ November, 1991.
108. Guiomar N. de Mello, "Autonomia da Escola: Possibilidades, Limites, Condições"[School Autonomy: Possibilities, Limitations and Conditions], presented in the "Seminário sobre Qualidade, Eficiência e Equidade na Educação Básica", [Conference on Quality, Efficiency and Equity in Elementary Education], mimeo, IPEA, Pirenópolis, Goiás, Brazil, 17-19 november, 1991.
109. Brasil, "Visão Panorâmica do Ensino Regular de 1º Grau" [A Panoramic View of Elementary Education], Ministry of Education/ SG/SEPLAN: Brasília, 1990, p. 5.
110. *Ibid.*
111. Sinopse Estatística da Educação Básica-1981, 1982, 1983" [Statistical Synopsis of Elementary and Secondary Education], Ministry of Education, Brasília, 1984.
112. BRASIL, COORDENAÇÃO DE INFORMÁTICA E PLANEJAMENTO EDUCACIONAL-CIPE, Ministry of Education, 1992.
113. See these comments and data from "Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística-IBGE", [Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics], in "Abandonados a propria Sorte" [Abandoned to their own Fate], in Revista Veja, 93. "Brazil's Economic Black Hole Swallows Collor's Credibility", in The Washington Times, March 15, 1991. For an evaluation of the "Plano Collor," see: Clovis de Faro (ed.), Plano Collor Avaliações e Perspectivas, [Evaluations and Perspectives of Collor's Plan], Livros Técnicos Científicos Editora: Rio de Janeiro, 1990.
114. Personal contact with some of these teachers.



## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE THESIS**

This chapter presents conclusions about the inability of the State to be an effective actor in the use of its invested authority to provide adequate elementary education for all children in Brazil, and also adds recommendations for possible courses of action to address this situation.

The chapter is organised into two sections. The first section is the Conclusions. The first part of the Conclusions presents quantitative measures that indicate the State's lack of "political will", and stresses the differences between the time periods in terms of how the quantitative measures change. An overall summary of why this was so is introduced by the ideas of urgency, clarity and direction in elementary education policy, using the categories of the chapters "The Construction of Elementary Education Policy", "The Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy", and "The Political Basis for the Solution of Elementary Education Policy".

The second section of the chapter is the Recommendations. It presents a list of concrete and practical recommendations, and brief comments or explanations about them.

## **6.1 - CONCLUSIONS**

The first part of this section presents conclusions about quantitative effects of the State actions, or inaction, in the provision of elementary education. The measurements of enrolment rates, non-completion rates, and regional variation rates are considered here as the evidence of the State's "lack of political will" to provide effective elementary education.

### **6.1.1 - Conclusions about quantitative measures**

The contemporary national measures of enrolment indicate that the expansion of public elementary education has improved markedly in Brazil. The rate of around 84 per cent in the 1980s and early 1990s is the evidence for this conclusion. This expansion of enrolment has been the most intense and more successful action of the State in elementary education since 1930. The higher rates of expansion occurred during the Redemocratisation Period, when enrolment rates jumped from 45 per cent in 1945 to 72 per cent in 1960. There has been no significant change in the rates of enrolment from 1974 until the present day. During the last two decades, the national rate of enrolment in Brazil has remained around 84 percent.

Rates of non-completion of elementary education show that a significant percentage of children enrolled in elementary education is not actually in school. This situation persisted during the whole period examined in this thesis (and still continues in 1997 as suggested by data currently discussed in the media in Brazil). Non-

completion rates are the main evidence of the Brazilian State's lack of "political will" to provide adequate elementary education to all children. However, actions of the State in elementary education during the 1930s and early 1940s had an effect on reducing non-completion rates. These changed from 94 per cent in 1931 to 84 percent in 1945. After the Vargas Era, the non-completion rate did not respond to State efforts. From 1945 until the present, the national non-completion rate in elementary education has remained stable at around 84 percent.

The differences in the provision of elementary education among regions in Brazil construct a differential pattern of the State's failure to provide adequate elementary education to all children. Evidence of a discrepancy between rates of enrolment and non-completion between rich and poor regions in Brazil dates from 1931. There have been persistent differences between elementary education provision in the Northern and Southern regions, and between provision in the rural and urban areas. These differences have been characterised by lower enrolment rates and higher non-completion rates in the Northern region and relatively higher rates of enrolment and lower non-completion in the Southern region.

Paradoxically, the North and Northeast have had more federal government programmes than any other regions, especially after 1964. However, in these regions, the failure of the educational system to respond was the same in 1986 as it was in 1978 and 1958. In fact, the levels of non-completion rates in these regions, in 1986, were similar to the national levels in 1934. Also, non-completion rates in the rural areas in 1986 were still lower than the Brazilian average.

In the richer states of the South of Brazil the State managed to reduce the non-completion rates in elementary education. All other indicators of the State's failure in elementary education, for example, *leigo* teachers, and illiteracy, were also more concentrated in the Northern areas than in the South. Thus, the State's "lack of political will" to provide elementary education was more pronounced in the poorer regions, as for example, the North and North-east regions and the rural areas of Brazil.

Overall, then, it is a gloomy picture, nationally, and over time.

The narrative of Chapters Two to Four helps to explain these quantitative indicators of the State's inability to provide elementary education. The ideas of urgency, clarity and directions will be used as starting points for the discussion. The idea of urgency helps to focus conclusions about the centrality of elementary education in the State's agenda. The idea of clarity helps to develop conclusions on the degree of specificity of goals in education policies. And the idea of directions is a way of looking at what was stressed in the implementation of education policy.

#### a) The Construction of Elementary Educational Policy

The urgency of establishing public elementary education emerged late in Brazil. Before 1930, the State was not concerned with this problem. After this date and up to the present day, the State has tried to respond to various demands, but, so far, the

urgency of organizing a national system that effectively responds to the need for elementary education for all children in Brazil has not had a central place on the agenda of the State.

During the Vargas Era, the urgency of the need to respond to particular demands for elementary education distracted the State from the organisation of a “system” of education. During the Military Regime, the State’s increased need to demonstrate efficiency determined the formulation of a large number of projects, sophisticated legislation, and the attainment of the targeted rate of enrolment. In the Redemocratisation Period, the urgency of the need to respond to increasing demands for elementary education marked the apex of the disorganisation in the existing “system”. After the New Republic, the urgency of the need to respond to social projects was blocked by disorganisation in the educational system; and education was only one of the social projects.

These real - life needs contrasted with the emphasis and centrality that elementary education was increasingly given in State pronouncements throughout the period. From 1930, during the Vargas Era, elementary education was declared a State priority. Since then, governments have expressed recognition that problems of elementary education had to be solved quickly. In general, this recognition by governments was less in relation to problems appearing during their own period of office than in relation to problems left by previous governments. During the Vargas dictatorship, State declarations did not mention elementary education, and during the Military Regime, the government did not express its recognition of elementary

education problems as frequently as in other periods.

The goals of State policies for elementary education were explicit for the major part of the period, and, in this sense, made the State accountable for elementary education. Policy goals during the Vargas Era were too general. Goals during the Redemocratisation Period also lacked specificity. Technical expressions affected the public clarity of goals during the Military Regime. During the New Republic goals gained specificity. The Vargas Era was the period in which contradictions between the goals of the State for elementary education oscillated most dramatically.

In all periods the directions of educational policy was defined by law. Laws were useful for giving the impression that the State was active and concerned with elementary education. In the Vargas Era, and in the Redemocratisation Period, the impression was that with legislation elementary education would be adequately established. In the Military Regime, the government enacted a national law of education, the 1971 LDB, and the impression was that the innovative propositions in that law would guarantee real change in elementary education. During the New Republic, the government organised a national debate about elementary education and the impression was that this initiative would guarantee the solution of problems in elementary education. However, in all cases there were blockages, notably administrative ones.

## b) Difficulties in the Implementation of Elementary Education Policy

The inability to solve problems in the implementation of elementary education policy was a permanent trait during the whole period. There was no solution to the two main difficulties in the implementation of educational policy in Brazil: the financial and administrative difficulties of the educational system, and the lack of co-ordination between the three levels of the State.

The lack of elementary education funding was a difficulty which began in the 1930s and still has not been solved today. This difficulty explains the precarious condition of expanded elementary education. The permanent lack of financial resources in the educational system did not result from the non-existence of funds for elementary education, but from a lack of co-ordination within the State.

The educational system has blamed the permanent lack of financial resources on the State's disregard to elementary education, or on the centralisation of decisions and financial resources. The central State continually blamed the lack of financial resources delivered to elementary education on mismanagement and corruption by the local levels. These conflicting interpretations reduced the urgency and determination of the State to solve the problem of lack of financial resources for elementary education. However, the fundamental blockage to adequate elementary education funding - the lack of co-ordination within the State - did not change throughout the period.

There was no solution for the lack of co-ordination within the educational

sector of the State from the Vargas Era to the Collor Government. The fact that the State addressed this problem during the Vargas Era, the Redemocratisation Period, and the Collor Government, and did not address this problem during the Military Regime, and only indirectly addressed this problem during the New Republic made no difference to the improvement of co-ordination within the educational sector of the State during the whole period. However, there were efforts to find a solution for this problem .

The Constitutions of 1934, 1946 and 1988 fixed percentages of revenues to be applied in elementary education by the central State, the state and the municipal levels. The government during these time-periods declared that legislation would be a guarantee of financial resources to elementary education and would establish a pattern of co-ordination between the three administrative levels.

However, the implementation of these goals were not grounded in the reality. Firstly, the legislation itself did not change the patterns of relationship between the administrative levels. Secondly, the decisions about the percentages to be allocated to elementary education in 1934 and in 1946 were made by the central State without the involvement of the educational system. Only in 1988, did the educational system become involved in that decision. The involvement of society in general in the debate about elementary education was also a late event in Brazil.



### c) The Political Basis for Solution of Elementary Education Problems

The influence of society in general on decisions about elementary education policy was weak during the whole period. There were, however, moments in which the State was sensitive to demands of particular groups and special interests in society.

The urgency of school buildings, for example, was a problem recognised by the State and emphasised in its declarations, mainly during the 1930s, the 1940s, and during the early 1950s. After this date, this problem began to lose emphasis in State declarations. The expansion of elementary education was the most urgent policy of the government during the 1930s, the 1940s, and 1950s.

There were no clear goals nor specificity of details in this crucial policy of the State. There was a response by the State to demands from the new urban classes for elementary education, and this response was not a result of a national stated project of the State. Thus, transformations in the economic area, as a result of the industrialisation of Brazil, had the power to motivate the State to formulate some specific goals in elementary education policy, mainly during the Redemocratization Period. During this period, policy was addressed specifically to the industrial masses, education in the rural areas, and the quality of elementary education.

The Pioneers of Education also influenced goals in elementary education policy during the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. After this date, the group became smaller, but the influence of their ideas is still felt in elementary education policy up to the

present. Their influence was seen mainly in State declarations and legislation. Ideas present in the two manifestos, the 1932 Manifesto and the 1959 Manifesto probably affected ideas in the Presidential Messages of those years and afterwards.

However, the directions - the actual implementation of elementary education policy - were not influenced by the ideas of the Pioneers. The implementation of policy during the whole period was influenced by political, social or economic needs and by special interest groups. This was the case during the Military Regime, when the interests of higher education groups had precedence over priorities for elementary education, and during the Redemocratization period when the need for financial resources in adult education had precedence over the financial needs of elementary education. Despite the continual efforts of the Pioneers, their ideas did not have the same power to influence educational policy.

In their Manifesto, and in many other publications throughout the whole period, the Pioneers introduced important suggestions for elementary education policy. However, they lacked the political power to influence the State to recognise the urgency of organising an effective system of elementary education. The understanding of this reaction by the State is facilitated by the theoretical perspectives examined earlier.

## **6.1.2 - Conclusions about the arguments and “areas of sensitivity” introduced in**

### **Chapter One**

The invention of the State’s image of action in elementary education began during the Vargas Era. Until then, the image of State inaction had prevailed. The image of action was reaffirmed through strong and frequently authoritarian declarations by the State during the Vargas Era, the Redemocratisation Period. And the Military Regime. During the Vargas Era and the Redemocratisation Period, declarations conveying the image of action addressed the urgent need for the intervention by the central State in elementary education. In the Military Regime, the image of action was conveyed by the strong stance of the State on the reform of elementary education.

However, the creation of an image of action was not always done by means of forceful declarations. During the Redemocratisation Period the image of action was also created through a marked expansion of elementary education. During the Military Regime, the image of action was reaffirmed by an increase of State actions in elementary education. During the New Republic, the State tried to create an image of action devoid of any authoritarian characteristics by increasing declarations and policies aimed at social issues. During the Collor government, the State tried to create a reformist image of action through its concern with a social agenda, but the period was of a short duration

The search for legitimacy by the State was closely related with the creation of an image of action by the State. The majority of policies formulated or announced by

the State were not implemented or only partially implemented. They were merely strategies by which the State enhanced its image of actor, and sought legitimacy. The search for legitimacy was needed by the Military Regime in particular. The State in this period developed intensive and diversified (Weiler) strategies, especially through legislation and planning. The search for legitimacy in this period was through national legislation by competent educators. In contrast, during the Vargas Era, the search for legitimacy was by means of declarations promising change in elementary education. Legislation was the strategy during the Redemocratisation Period. During the New Republic the search for legitimacy was carried out by a new technique: (Weiler's) strategy of participation.

The distracting factor of perennial "transitory" problems was linked with the fact that, throughout the entire period, the State did not formulate long-term plans addressing elementary education, even though this objective was suggested to the State in 1930. The State's constant need for legitimacy during the whole period drove it to formulate policy to solve immediate problems in elementary education, such as literacy campaigns, adult education, the social question, the rural focus on school buildings, the project for the extension of elementary education from four to eight years in 1970, and the debate about the complex objectives in Law 5, 692/71.

In summary, these and other similar strategies helped the state to delay change, avoid conflict and enhance its legitimacy. The State during the whole period searched for legitimacy through educational action, used rhetoric in official declarations (Weiler), and created an image of action through strategies which conveyed the

impression of capacity and autonomy - the minimal for the State as effective actor - (Rueschemeyer, Evans and Skocpol).

The lack of coherent action within the State was something that the State did not feel the urgency to correct any time during the entire period. This problem remained hidden from public view during the major part of the period and was inadequately addressed until the 1990s, although the State had been aware of this problem since 1930, as shown in declarations during the Redemocratisation Period and the Vargas Era.

However, this objective was mishandled during these periods. The central State treated the question by addressing problems of mismanagement and corruption in the local levels. And, in contradiction with its own purpose of creating coherent action, the federal government centralised decision making and financial resources. These specific difficulties in the central State and at the local level, produced incoherent corporate action of the State for the entire period. As a result of these difficulties, the educational system had permanent financial problems. This difficulty was crucial during the Vargas Era and the Redemocratisation Period. These difficulties explain the precarious conditions in which the educational system was expanded. During the brief period of the Collor Government, the effort by the Ministry of Education was important for clarifying incoherent action within the State. However, the effort did not have any continuity.

In Brazil, throughout the period there were weak patterns of local autonomy.

The educational system in the individual states and municipalities had a weak position in relation to the central State. Legislation and other State strategies did not help this situation during the Vargas Era. The allocation of resources for elementary education continued to be irregular even after the constitutional prescription of 1934. The paternalism of the central State limited the freedom and responsibility of the two other levels during the Redemocratisation Period. During the Military Regime, the central State continued to take decisions without considering the possibilities of implementation at the local level.

This situation where weakness and lack of autonomy were rife at the local level, was never clearly explained by the central State. It approached the problem either by authoritarian pronouncements or paternalism. In the first case, the local level was considered guilty for mismanaging its resources. In the second case, the local level was considered to be a victim of its own unpreparedness for administering elementary education.

Centralisation at the federal level was the corollary of the lack of autonomy at the local level. Because of centralisation, problems of mismanagement in the educational system were never corrected. Also because of centralisation, problems of corruption were not solved. Corruption is of course just one version of being a “special interest group”.

Special groups influenced the decisions of the State to the detriment of the interests of elementary education. During the Redemocratisation Period, for example,

the State was accused of using financial resources, which should have been allocated to elementary education, and giving it to adult education. Similarly, a debate about elementary education, held in the Senate, revealed the preference of the Military Regime for higher education. During this same debate it was also disclosed that the State favoured powerful economic interests, by developing infrastructure projects of high visibility to the detriment of the interests of elementary education. Also during the New Republic, the educational sector in the State was accused of being an easy target for politicians in search of top administrative positions for their protégés.

In summary, these difficulties compromised the ability of the State to be an actor in elementary education. Plenty of financial resources, corporate action within the State, and freedom from ties with interests groups, are requirements for autonomy and capacity of the State, two essential conditions for the State as effective actor (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol). These requirements were not present in the educational sector of the State during the period reviewed in this thesis.

The political basis for the solution of elementary education problems - weak for most of the period, meant that elementary education was not an issue in society in general over the time period of the thesis. Only recently, has an interest in an elementary education debate emerged. However, across the time-periods, different moments and circumstances affected the scale of debate or tensions about elementary education.

The new economic and social needs of the popular classes, and their increasing

political empowerment, during the Vargas Era and the Redemocratisation Period, provoked an increase in the scale of demands for elementary education. These demands created some urgency for the State to expand elementary education. At the end of the Redemocratisation Period, the intervention of political interests in the debate on the future 1961 LDB, provoked an increase in the scale of debate and indirectly affected objectives for elementary education being discussed during the formulation of the future law.

During the Military Regime, the debate in the Senate, led by Senator Calmon, had a limited number of participants. During the New Republic, the State was successful in organising a debate on a large scale about elementary education; the beginning of full politicisation. During the Collor government, and increasingly at the present time, elementary education is becoming an issue of debate in the media. Thus, it was only in the Collor Government that elementary education debate fully penetrated society, even though the movement for elementary education politicisation began during the Vargas Era and the Redemocratisation Period, when urban populations began to be politically articulated. Thus, the politicisation of elementary education in society moved, in most of the period, from , in Iannacone's vocabulary, to (at most) a moderate level.

Overall, Iannacone proved surprisingly useful in constructing "areas of sensitivity" highlighted by the narrative. It is Iannacone's thinking in particular which frames the significance of the deliberate closure of the scope, scale and intensity of political debate in the Military Regime. It is Iannacone who highlights the



significance of the full politicisation of educational debate in the contemporary period from Collor's day. The Iannaconne's themes also locate the sad case of the Pioneers boxed into an educational debate without a political base, and the importance of the rise of the new urban and industrial classes who did affect educational policy. Indirectly it is Iannaconne - an American apparently insensitive to class structures - who locates the social class and economic stratifications which freeze so much of Brazilian elementary education policy.

Weiler was at his most powerful in highlighting "areas of sensitivity" in two themes: the perennial use throughout the period of elementary education as a claim on legitimacy through legislation, and constitutional revision. Weiler also allows us to see the significance of the occasional effort to permit the intervention of technocrats, eg. in the Military Regime, and in the Collor Period. It is also Weiler who reinforces the perspective of Iannaconne in the area of participation.

Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol are most useful in the area of identifying "coherent corporate action". They permit the understanding that there was no cohesion and corporate action between the three administrative levels of the educational sector of the Brazilian State. These theoreticians help to demonstrate how an educational sector of the State, marked by mutual accusations, the centralisation of decisions and financial resources, mismanagement, corruption, lack of financial resources, and top down communication, could not develop coherent action and thus, had no capacity and autonomy for effective action in elementary education.

Thus, it is against these perspectives- that do provide a more complex understanding of the permanent problem of elementary education- that recommendations can be made. The recommendations are simple but they are made against these assumptions, these “areas of sensitivity”:

- the scale, scope, and intensity of the elementary education issue must be expanded - people must be involved.
- legitimization by expertise is important and all measures should be taken to build and increase competence in administration and teaching.
- .and the core problem of Brazilian education is its unstable jerks into excessive centralisation.

## **6.2 - RECOMMENDATIONS**

The conclusions on the formal arguments and the “areas of sensitivity” allow the presentation of recommendations for potential effective action to be developed by the Brazilian State. The first recommendation addresses the fundamental problem of lack of co-ordination , or lack of cohesive and corporate action, in the education sector of the Brazilian State. The recommendation reads as follows:

- **Responsibility for elementary education must be with the local level**

This is a proposal for relative autonomy of the educational system.. as a solution for the persistent problem of blockages to effective action by the State in elementary education. It is essential that responsibility for elementary education can be created at local level as the only way to generate coherence and corporate action within the education sector of the State, or across its bureaucratic machinery. Since the state and municipal levels of the educational system have to develop elementary education, they should also have the capacity to make decisions and manage the resources concerning this task, without sudden interference of the federal level.

This requires that interventions of the Ministry of Education in elementary education be restricted to the statement of strategic goals and to technical assistance, when necessary, to the states and municipal levels. All the planning and local budgeting would be independent of the federal level. The federal government, however, may have to help financially the poorest states and communities, but local resources would be the main source of financing for elementary education. This will also require changes in the national constitution.

This will also require a new partnership of elementary education with the wider national and local political society, which should supervise the accountability of the educational system regarding its administrative and instructional capacity. This includes, as essential points, the evaluation and monitoring of the management of financial resources by the local levels. Thus, the second recommendation reads as

follows:

- **The states should promote public debate on the problems of elementary education**

Furthermore, this will demand that the State uses the media systematically to inform the population about progress in solving problems at the local level. This should be also an opportunity to inform school administrators about successful experiences in the other schools.

As a consequence of the open communication within the education sector of the State, and with the wider society, especially with the local communities, a new way to formulate education programmes should be made possible. Hence:

- **A common programme of action should be developed**

A common programme of action would be the clearest evidence of coherence within the education sector of the State. This will require the development and acceptance of joint efforts by all involved in elementary education in a given state. At the state and municipal levels the creation of *esprit de corps* necessary for the formulation of a common programme of action means that objectives and priorities for elementary education should be clarified and fully accepted by the two levels. It is the only way to generate their necessary commitment to elementary education. Hence, the following recommendation:

- **Define national policies for elementary education in a fully participatory mode**

This will demand giving local levels the opportunity to define objectives, and avoiding plans developed by a group of central agencies of the State. It is necessary to build decisions to bottom-up. The local, or municipal level, is the point in the State which is closest to elementary education. It is there that elementary education really happens. It is also the local level that collects most of the information on the needs of elementary education. Thus, the present situation that has remained throughout this century in the educational sector of the Brazilian State should be reversed. Leadership to develop elementary education should be with the local level, not with the federal level. However, this will require continuity of purposes for elementary education. Hence, the recommendation that

- **Subsequent administrations should be committed to continuous implementation of a generally accepted plan**

This will require that the citizens and the education administrators know the objectives and means used to develop elementary education. This knowledge is essential to allow them to demand the continuation of plans and programmes that have responded well to the needs of elementary education in a given state or municipality, and to evaluate the merit of eventual innovations proposed by subsequent administrations. Another essential point that will require the vigilance of citizens and education administrators

to guarantee adequate autonomy of the educational system is the following:

- **Free the educational system from obvious political and economic influences of special groups**

This will demand that administrators be chosen on the basis of their competence, and not indicated for positions in the educational system through the interference of party politics, nepotism, or appointed through the crude influence of economic groups. A way to reach this objective would be to guarantee that a professional career structure should be created for State educational administrators. This will involve standardising entry criteria for the whole country, a task to be developed by the Ministry of the Education, or other agency at the federal level. At the very least, this should be done state by state. This policy would also be important to make possible the implementation of the next recommendation:

- **The administrative levels should reduce misuse of resources**

It is always desirable to reduce misuse of resources. This thesis has shown this to be a serious problem in the educational sector of the Brazilian State. This will require setting up administrative and financial procedures and controls at every educational agency involved with elementary education. It will also require setting up monitoring and evaluation of budget applications and programmes implemented. The operationalisation of this recommendation (or the possibilities to make it a real-life policy) depends on the recommendations for constant vigilance of the citizens in

society in general, especially in the municipalities, administrative ombudsmen, and the guarantee that administrators are selected by criteria of competence and freedom from ties from political, economic, and family groups. This will be facilitated by the following recommendation:

- **Opportunities for professional improvement of administrators and teachers should be developed and linked to the wage scale**

It is necessary to build a system of incentives for improved quality by supporting professional development of administrators and teachers and linking professional progress with wages. Financial constraints should not be allowed to affect this aspect, because it is essential that teachers receive a salary that is adequate to their professional development. Financial constraints may affect the acquisition of sophisticated materials for schools without serious loss of quality in the educational process. The lack of these materials can be attenuated by inventing strategies that replace the use of those materials. However, the continuation of a situation of *leigo* teachers and the continuation of extremely low salaries reinforces the continuation of an unacceptable quality of elementary education in Brazil. A further recommendation to alleviate this problem is that

- **Teachers should be prepared according to the different regional realities**

This will require that teaching methods and contents be coherent with the experiences of life in each region. This different approach should aim at transmitting a basic

common set of skills and knowledge. The curriculum of schools of education should contain opportunities for the analysis of contents that are specific to the region and methods for the teaching of those contents. In this way teachers would be prepared to address situations that are familiar to children of the region and thus facilitate their understanding of practical and conceptual matters. Related with this is the following recommendation:

- **Teachers should be prepared to deal with the specific needs of low income children**

This will require that the curriculum for the formation of elementary education teachers includes the analysis of the most common difficulties of learning and the formulation of practical strategies to help the children. This recommendation is crucial to Brazil as a whole. The lack of this preparation of teachers has been a decisive factor for the persistent high levels of non-completion rates in elementary education during this century.

These recommendations are simple. It is unlikely they will solve the problem analysed in this thesis - the problem is “intractable”. However, that also means it requires continuous and sustained attention. The suggestions for improvement made above would be first, small, steps - but steps made within the increasing full politicisation of the problem of elementary education in Brazil. And it may be that education is the central problem of Brazilian society as it enters the twenty - first century.



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