

## PROGRAM “SEGUNDO TEMPO” AND THE SOCIAL SERVICE VOID IN NORTHEASTERN BRAZIL

*PROGRAMA “SEGUNDO TEMPO” E O VAZIO ASSISTENCIAL NA REGIÃO NORDESTE*

*“PROGRAMA SEGUNDO TEMPO” Y EL VACÍO ASISTENCIAL EN LA REGIÓN NORESTE*

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**Keywords:**  
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**Abstract:** This study examined the participation of towns from Northeastern Brazil which, during the first ten years of implementation of Program “Segundo Tempo”, did not have access to it, resulting in a welfare void. The features analyzed were population class, municipal human development index, fiscal capacity, administrative structure and societal environment. In a program aiming to democratize educational sports and to assist mainly the vulnerable population, the very existence of a welfare void speaks against its own goals. However, the results are supported by the institutional limits of Brazil’s federalist model and the weight of sports in local decision-makers’ agenda.

**Palavras chave:**  
Políticas públicas.  
Esportes.  
Programas  
governamentais.

**Resumo:** Este estudo analisou a participação dos municípios da Região Nordeste que, ao longo dos dez primeiros anos de implementação do Programa Segundo Tempo, não tiveram acesso a esse programa, produzindo um vazio assistencial. As características selecionadas para análise foram: classe populacional, índice de desenvolvimento humano municipal (IDH-M), capacidade fiscal, estrutura administrativa e ambiente societal. Para um programa que se propõe a democratizar o esporte educacional e atender prioritariamente populações vulneráveis, a existência, por si só, do vazio assistencial depõe contra os objetivos do programa. Porém, é um resultado suportado pelos limites institucionais do modelo federalista e do peso da pauta esportiva na agenda dos decisores locais.

**Palabras clave:**  
Políticas públicas.  
Deportes.  
Programas de  
gobierno.

**Resumen:** El presente estudio analizó la participación de los municipios de la Región Nordeste de Brasil, que, a lo largo de los diez primeros años de la implementación del “Programa Segundo Tempo”, no han tenido acceso a dicho programa, generando un vacío asistencial. Las características seleccionadas para el análisis fueron: clase de población, índice de desarrollo humano municipal (IDH-M), capacidad fiscal, estructura administrativa y entorno social. Dado que se trata de un programa que se propone democratizar el deporte escolar y atender prioritariamente a la población vulnerable, la propia existencia de un vacío asistencial representa fallo en el cumplimiento de esos objetivos. Sin embargo, los resultados se explican por los límites institucionales del modelo federalista y por la agenda deportiva de los responsables locales.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

An institutional challenge in democratizing sports policies (whether they are focused on education, income or leisure<sup>1</sup>) lies in how to turn subjective foundations included in Brazil's Federal Constitution (FC) into effective actions. From the point of view of value, there is a set of appropriate principles guiding the State's *raison d'être*,<sup>2</sup> but not all areas have received regulatory treatment so as to define the obligations of each of the federal entities in implementing public policies. Constitutional drafters acted to ensure common competence to the three spheres with regard to sport. They all have duties to implement sports policies (including educational sport), but none is legally required to do so. That requirement must take place in the political environment, and accountability<sup>3</sup> is its greatest instrument of pressure.

We are the only federal republic made up of three federal entities, which greatly impacts implementation of public policies, since three institutions enjoy political autonomy to do so. Therefore, from an institutional point of view, it is perfectly understandable that government inaction represents contradiction with the foundations of the Law but not with the Law itself. The Law does not impose obligations or penalties on governments that do not implement sports policies. However, the people may bring or maintain a political group in power even if this group does not provide sport policies. Perhaps the idea of sport, especially educational sport, has not sensitized the government agenda or its time has not come in the terms proposed by Kingdon (2006).<sup>4</sup>

A careful reading of Article 21 of the Constitution shows that constitutional legislators did not place sport as exclusive competence of the Union. Assuming that it is common responsibility endorsed by the political practice of these institutions, two alternatives emerged. Each entity might act (1) voluntarily in executing sport policies (competitive aspect) or (2) cooperatively, either in a horizontal (still unusual for Brazilian reality under the consortium model) or vertically (higher entities will induce cooperation by lower entities). The latter particularly helps improving the performance of certain areas in order to reduce inequalities, thus inducing cooperation by more vulnerable municipalities.

Therefore, our federal arrangement ensures that sports policies are a result of better policy implemented by subnational governments (municipal and state governments) or coordinated action proposed by some higher entity (state government or Union). Only the Union does not have local institutions to implement educational sports policies;<sup>5</sup> therefore, it formulates rather than implement. It is easy to see the Union's action in this regard (see Ministry of Sports' policy portfolio<sup>6</sup>).

In the case of cooperation, agendas can only converge through political incentives that promote voluntary and interested adherence. Even though Brazil is the world's most decentralized federation (because of its municipalities' political autonomy), policies cannot be effective without a tax base. In this case, having overcome the political issue, this variable may impose limits on

1 According to the so-called Pelé Law (9.615/98).

2 Art. 3 and its section clearly point out important fundamentals.

3 Accountability refers to the type of institutional relationship between State and society. It involves a learning process that leads authorities to respond to citizens' needs, i. e. to operate political control of governments. That control or accountability can be made by fiscal bodies (horizontal accountability) or by the population (vertical accountability). In the latter, the competitive nature of the electoral process will adjust certain public policies to voters' interests. For more details, see Maria (2010), Meer and Edelenbson (2006), Baracho (2000) and O'Donnell (1998).

4 There is an important aspect of neo-institutionalist literature that places ideas as a vector of policymaking. In Brazilian literature, this topic was addressed in the work of Faria (2003).

5 *Segundo Tempo* (Second Half) is Brazil's main educational sports program. Created incrementally in 2003 (FERREIRA; CASSIOLATO; GONZALEZ, 2009), it sought to encourage other agents of implementation (sub-national governments, third sector) to join the program and carry out its decentralization. Currently, adherence to the program happens through public call. The official notice sets the criteria for selecting proposals. Afterwards, the Ministry of Sport signs the Instrument of Decentralized Implementation and transfers resources to implement it.

6 Programs Sport and Leisure in the City; Recreation at school; Sports Incentive Law; Athlete Grant; Athlete in school.

implementation of educational sports policies by municipalities. Due to a number of geo-economic factors, small municipalities, especially in the North and Northeast regions, have severe tax restrictions to implement public policies (SANTOS, 2012; PAES; SIQUEIRA, 2008; SILVA, 2007).

However, the Union’s mission to reduce inequality among federal agencies is a founding principle of the federation. Several studies show that Brazil is one of the most unequal countries in the world (CATTANI, 2007; BEDIN, 2006; TORRES *et al.*, 2003; KERSTENETZKY, 1999). The State’s major challenge is to ensure equitable levels of social wellbeing, and its presence is essential for its implementation, considering Brazilian inequalities (INSTITUTO BRASILEIRO DE GEOGRAFIA E ESTATÍSTICA, 2003).

We are facing a reality where inequalities require public intervention, while federal entities are not obliged to respond to this issue or include it in their decision-making agenda. No one has to formulate public policies for educational sport or cooperate with the federal government in implementing public policies. Without legal imposition, managers must believe that it is necessary to do something (KINGDON, 1984).

The extent of the central authority (the Union) is perceived in the institutional design of policies (ARRETCHE; MARQUES, 2007). Incentives to decentralize certain policies will guide coordination and adherence of subnational governments and civil society, and gains, especially political ones, have to be higher than costs.

According to Rezende (1997), the overlapping of competences and tax collection restrictions may lead to allocative distortions. Instead of reducing inequalities, they might end up keeping or amplifying them (ARRETCHE; MARQUES, 2007). In environments of competitive intergovernmental relations such as Brazil, guaranteeing public policies is harder (SOUZA, 2005). Some historical elements of specific policies cannot be overlooked in this analysis (ARRETCHE, 2004). Back to the Constitution, the weaknesses of the sports area can be seen in the low, almost formal attention given to the issue during the drafting of the Constitution that limited the State’s ability to provide more effective response. Regardless of merit (of articles, paragraphs and sections), in the effort to cover the interests at stake, that is the shortest section of social rights in terms of articles. Sport seems to have little influence on the agenda of society and politicians. Coupled with institutional constraints (common competence), this factor can produce, despite the goals of public policy, social service voids<sup>7</sup> – areas that have not received attention from state and municipal governments and civil society organizations because of their inaction.

Given that resources for expanding social and human capital are still low in the Northeastern region compared to average Brazilian standards, poor distribution of public goods may increase inequality, which is produced when the State fails to implement policies to reduce vulnerability in certain communities. Over time, policies that were focused on the poor ended up weakening those whose access to education, health and income were below the national average.<sup>8</sup>

Brazil’s Northeast is the region with the highest number of towns with low Human Development Index (HDI).<sup>9</sup> It has 1,095 vulnerable municipalities with the two levels of higher

<sup>7</sup> Social service voids: areas not covered by specific public policies. This case includes areas not served by the PST over the first ten years of its implementation. That does not mean that there can be no local programs providing public policies for educational sport, since subnational entities are entitled to autonomy.

<sup>8</sup> Athayde and Mascarenhas (2011) point out that decentralization is influenced by the precariousness of administrative and human resources that hinder fulfillment of criteria. Such highly precarious scenario is found especially in Northern and Northeastern Brazil.

<sup>9</sup> Here we organize the HDI into five levels: Very Low HDI (HDI-VL), 0.000-0.499; Low HDI (HDI-L), 0.500-0.599; Medium HDI (HDI-M), 0.600-0.699; High HDI (HDI-H), 0.700-0.799; and Very High HDI (HDI-VH), above 0.800.

vulnerability (HDI between 0 and 0,500 [Very Low, VL] and 0.501 and 0.600 [Low, L]). In percentage terms, that means that 61.03% of municipalities in the region are rated as vulnerable. They also represent 77.99% of vulnerable municipalities in Brazil.

Currently, the main educational sports policy is Program Segundo Tempo (PST, Second Half). It is the incremental result of merger of two previous programs: Sport at School and Solidarity Sport (FERREIRA; CASSIOLATO; GONZALES, 2009). The former was concerned with educational sports, while the latter focused on children under social vulnerability. The program's design, incentives, benefits and forms of cooperation are set by the Ministry of Sports while it is implemented by subnational entities (state and local governments), third sector (at least until 2010<sup>10</sup>) and more generally by certain federal agencies. The program aims to "democratize access to sports practice and culture in order to promote the whole development of children, adolescents and young people as a factor to build citizenship and improve quality of life, primarily in socially vulnerable areas" (MINISTÉRIO do ESPORTE, 2015).

While this is a policy aimed at serving vulnerable children, adolescents and young people, it is important to verify its institutional ability to reach municipalities in the most vulnerable region. The complexity of the institutional arrangement (norms, political institutions, culture and importance of certain ideas in the social agenda) poses a major challenge to democratizing educational sports policies via the PST. That democratization presupposes serving the most vulnerable regions. However, poor performance, especially in the Northeast, leads us to ask what the characteristics of the municipalities under PST's assistential void are – which is the focus of this work.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

This descriptive study sought to understand the characteristics of municipalities that did not receive a PST unit over the first ten years of its implementation, thus creating a social service void. Therefore, we built a database including only the municipalities (our unit of analysis) in Northeastern Brazil that did not receive such a unit in 2003-2012.

The aspects to be analyzed in order to characterize the social service void include: (a) population category: data were collected directly from the IBGE's website, based on the population estimated for 2008; (b) Human Development Index of Brazilian municipalities, collected in the United Nations Development Program's website: vulnerable municipalities are those in the two lowest levels of the Human Development Index: Very Low (VL) and Low (L); (c) municipal administrative structure: for this analysis we randomly selected 20% of the municipalities that make up the social service void and found the sports administrative structure directly on the local government's website; (d) municipalities' tax performance: percentage of municipalities' own revenues (property tax, service tax and ITBI) in constitutional transfers made by states (sales tax quota) and the Union (Municipal Participation Fund). The tax category is divided into four levels. Municipal taxes are up to 3% of constitutional transfers at the first level – that of greater dependency; between 3.01% and 5% at the second level; between 5.01% and 10% at the third level, and, finally, above 10.01%; (e) societal environment: the average number of third sector organizations in the municipality.<sup>11</sup> In this section we seek to assess the

<sup>10</sup> An embezzlement scandal involving the third sector in the program made the Ministry of Sports to withdraw it from list of partners implementing the PST.

<sup>11</sup> Until 2010, the third sector used to be a PST implementing agent. Its function was to complement access to educational sports, especially where the government was absent. We have no accurate data on how many institutions are able to develop actions in the educational sports field, but the number of organizations in each municipality allows us to identify its associative capacity.

number of civil society organizations that are active in the towns of the social service void. This information was collected directly from IBGE’s website.

### 3 ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The first aspect to be analyzed was the intra-regional dimension of the social service void. Different elements make Brazil’s Northeast region heterogeneous and create differences in the social service void. The first observation in Table 1 is that only Ceará did not create a social service void when implementing the PST. No other state managed to mobilize State and societal actors in ensuring educational sports through the program. This result may reveal the federal government’s inability to implement a co-operative agenda for educational sport or to offset institutional constraints of an area in which competences of federal entities overlap and may result in paralysis, because of expectations of action by other actors.

**Table 1** – Municipalities that make up the PST’s social service void by Northeastern state

States	Number of municipalities	Social service void (no.)	%
PI	222	76	34.23
SE	75	34	45.33
BA	417	207	49.64
AL	102	52	50.98
PE	185	98	52.97
RN	165	137	83.03
PB	223	212	95.07
MA	217	213	98.16
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.790</b>	<b>1.029</b>	<b>57.49</b>

Source: Ministério do Esporte: Programa Segundo Tempo/ME. Prepared by the authors (2015).

Since we are discussing the program’s inability to reach certain municipalities, a reason for concern is that, in the program’s ten years, implementing actors (state and municipal governments, and third sector) have not provided access to it to children in 1,029 Northeastern municipalities. This shows that there are serious constraints regarding coordination and cooperation among federal entities and that incentives may not be enough to ensure this convergence of action.

The social service void includes almost 60% of municipalities in the region (not counting those in the state of Ceará). Three states had performances below the regional average: Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba and Maranhão. In this case, there is no regional dynamic in the program distribution, since each state has its own. The vast majority of Northeastern States are over 50% under social service void – exceptions are Piauí, Sergipe and Bahia, the latter being very close to the cutting line.

This result raises doubts about incentives to decentralize the program – whether or not they are enough to mobilize the attention of state and local governments. In a heterogeneous society with different levels of complexity, it is not easy to reconcile the interests of public action (MENDES, 2012).

Given federal entities' decision-making autonomy (ARRETCHE, 2003) and the absence of constitutional provision for competences associated with sport, the program faces institutional obstacles that hamper its equitable distribution. This means that the federal government has no tools to prevent the creation of social service voids as that seen in the Northeast. Therefore, it is unable to achieve its goals, that is, to focus on serving vulnerable populations of the municipalities of that region.

A common argument criticizes the actions of governments that propose civil society participation through the third sector as an alternative to government restrictions to solve problems. The third sector appears as a strategic partner in implementing policies. It is in better conditions to offer certain social policies efficiently and effectively. The social service void shown in Table 1 also reflects civil society's inability to ensure educational sports policies to 1,029 municipalities and strengthens the discourse about private agents' superiority to promote wellbeing, as if they were more efficient than the State. And, if we consider that the third sector actions are funded by the federal government, its inability is even worse because it says it is able to do what the State is not for leniency or incompetence, but it uses public resources.

It is not reasonable that a ten-year experience has produced such a major social service void in one of the regions with the highest policy deficit in Brazil. That shows that the cooperative federal arrangement is limited for decentralized implementation of supply-regulated programs,<sup>12</sup> such as Program Segundo Tempo. But the result is suited to federalist literature's views (ARRETCHE; MARQUES, 2007).

Brazil's Northeastern Region, especially its hinterland, is made up of many small municipalities with greater difficulties in implementing public policies. As can be seen in Table 2, the demographic profile of the social service void shows a region that features many municipalities below 20,000 inhabitants (79.69%).

**Table 2** – Demographic profile of the social service void

Populacion category and size	Number of municipalities	%
Up to 5,000	164	15.94
5,001- 20,000	656	63.75
20,001-50,000	207	20.12
50,001-100,000	2	0.19
100,001-500,000	-	-
Over 500,000	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,029</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. Prepared by the authors (2015).

Towns with under 50,000 inhabitants are more vulnerable to dependence on the Municipalities Participation Fund (SANTOS, 2012), do not have tax instruments to formulate – and possibly face difficulties of several types to emulate – federal programs that require counterpart contributions. This makes them twice as dependent on politics and funding. Small municipalities' restrictions are clear in

<sup>12</sup> Supply-regulated public policies are offered only in the program market, and implementing agents have to identify their convenience, opportunity, need and technical capacity in order to approve their projects. They do not impose adherence obligations.

the makeup of the social service void: 99.81% have up to 50,000 inhabitants. For those towns of the Northeast, policy design has significant flaws in democratizing educational sport.

These features include poor performance in the Human Development Index. Considering VL and L HDI levels, Table 3 shows that that they are the majority for all population category: 65.24% is their lowest performance in the category up to 5,000 inhabitants. In the second category, vulnerable municipalities are 71.95% of the population; from 20,001 to 50,000, the void falls to 62.32%; and from 50 to 100,000, it is 100%.

**Table 3** – Profile of the social service void by HDI level

Population size category	HDI-VL		HDI-L		HDI-M		HDI-H		HDI-VH	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Up to 5,000	-	-	107	65.24	55	33.54	2	1.22	-	-
5,001- 20,000	9	1.37	463	70.58	178	27.13	6	0.91	-	-
20,001-50,000	1	0.48	128	61.84	75	36.23	3	1.45	-	-
50,001-100,000	-	-	2	100	-	-	-	-	-	-
100,001-500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Over 500,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>700</b>		<b>308</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>0</b>	

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. Prepared by the authors (2015).

Unlike municipalities with HDI-L, HDI-H and HDI-VH, which are in better conditions to provide public policies, decentralization give smaller and more vulnerable municipalities an opportunity to offer educational sport policies. That means that the program design does not meet the needs of a group of municipalities that lowers the region’s average development indicators. Perhaps the lack of municipal agencies able to implement sports policy (at first level) points to the program’s many weaknesses. In this case, vulnerable municipalities – the majority in the social service void – amplify conditions that depreciate the wellbeing of school populations not participating in the program.

A reasonable theory for this analysis is the absence of sports bureaucratic structure at municipal level to understand the program’s importance and consequently join it. For this analysis, we randomly selected 20% of towns ( $n = 205$ ) to identify the value of the sports agenda in their political structure, shown in Table 4. This theory suggests that lack of municipal managers focused on sport in the municipality may compromise the program’s performance.

**Table 4** - Administrative structure at department level

Structure	N	%	Total
No structure	89	43.41	-
With other departments	79	38.54	38.54
Dedicated department	37	18.05	18.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>56.59</b>

Source: Municipal governments’ websites. Prepared by the authors (2015).

As can be seen, the sample was intended to understand the diversity of administrative

arrangements: municipalities without a department dedicated to sport policies; municipalities with a department, but not a dedicated one. This means that such agendas depend on each theme's value within the administrative structure. It is reasonable to think that the sporting agenda shares attention with other topics in a tourism and sports department. It is reasonable to think that heads of dedicated departments are under more pressure to respond to the demands of the area.

Even though the region has 43.41% of towns with no first-level administrative sports structure, most have some kind of exclusive or non-exclusive structure. And since almost 20% of municipalities have a dedicated department, the problem is more complex. In this case, the void may be the result of educational sports policies with their own funds – which is unlikely given small municipalities' tax weaknesses, lack of commitment to or lack of interest in promoting educational sport.

Municipalities with low tax collection capacity have more trouble to implement social policies (SANTOS, 2012, PAES; SIQUEIRA, 2008; SILVA, 2008). They generally receive more constitutional resources transferred from state (share of the ICMS) and federal governments (Municipalities Participation Fund – FPM). In this case, higher reliance on transfers makes them weaker to produce their own social policies, and disputes over resources compromise the educational sports agenda.

**Table 5** – Dependence of the municipalities of constitutional transfers by tax collection capacity (FC)

FC	AL		MA		BA		PB	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	41	87.23	125	96.15	82	51.57	175	84.95
2	3	6.38	3	2.31	40	25.16	15	7.28
3	3	6.38	2	1.54	22	13.84	11	5.34
4	0	0.00	0	0.00	15	9.43	5	2.43
FC	PE		PI		RN		SE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	62	72.09	44	89.80	83	71.55	21	65.63
2	15	17.44	3	6.12	9	7.76	2	6.25
3	5	5.81	0	0.00	13	11.21	1	3.13
4	4	4.65	2	4.08	11	9.48	8	25.00

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. Prepared by the authors (2015).

As we can see in Table 5, in all states, most municipalities where none of the qualified entities joined the PST during the first ten years are in tax category 1 (highest dependence level). This shows the weaknesses of those municipalities and the importance that decentralized programs reach them. The states of Alagoas, Maranhão, Piauí and Paraíba make up a scenario where the average in category 1 is over 80%. The most dramatic case is Maranhão, with 96.15%. The other range includes Bahia, Rio Grande do Norte, Pernambuco and Sergipe. Bahia has the lowest distribution of municipalities in category 1, which indicates that non-adherence is strongly concentrated on municipalities with higher capacity to fund public policies (compared to category 1).

Although municipalities with higher tax capacity in constitutional transfers are the majority ( $n = 633$ ; 76.73%), the design presented points out that the program needs to find

selective stimuli to prevent lack of access to the program from producing more inequality in the Northeast region. The fact that some municipalities are classified as tax capacity 4 ( $n = 45$ ) indicates that municipalities' low tax performance does not explain completely the social service void. Together with municipalities' tax performance there seems to be lack of interest from local authorities on educational sport or lack of specialized bureaucracy.

Among Northeastern state capitals, which have different tax profiles, only the capital of Maranhão performs poorly in local tax collection. In this case, it represents only 8% of transfers. Maceió has the second worst performance, with 29.98% while João Pessoa comes third with 33.69%. The two best results are Salvador (74.55%) and Recife (55.57%). Unlike state capitals, smaller municipalities have fewer incentives for better tax performance.<sup>13</sup> This variable has a direct impact on municipalities' ability to formulate and implement public policies with their own resources. That makes them dependent on decentralization (voluntary transfers, such as the PST) of state and federal government policies.

The constitutional framework places civil society as a strategic partner to guarantee rights. That participation has happened through third sector organizations. The social service void requires us to better understand participation of such organizations in those municipalities. The scenario presented in Table 6 indicates that there is plenty of civil society actors working in the municipalities included in the PST social service void.

**Table 6** – Civil society organizations according to municipalities in the social service void of the Northeast states.

3 <sup>rd</sup> sector	AL		MA		BA		PB	
	n	Average	n	Average	N	Average	n	Average
All	4,594	45.04	10,774	49.65	31,341	75.34	10,704	48
Void	1,003	19.29	10,331	48.50	7,524	36.35	7,199	33.96
3 <sup>rd</sup> sector	PE		PI		RN		SE	
	n	Average	n	Average	n	Average	n	Average
All	17,643	45.37	7,262	32.57	7,210	43.17	4,581	61.08
Void	2,998	30.59	995	13.45	3,460	25.26	754	22.17

Source: Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics. Prepared by the authors (2015).

The weakest state is Piauí, where the social service void has only 13.45 organizations per municipality, indicating that there is no associative void, but rather lack of interest by or inadequacy of organizations towards the PST. By isolating only category 1 municipalities in the social service void, we find that the average is higher than that of the states of Alagoas, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte and Sergipe – 26.71 ( $n = 16\ 909$ ). But since all municipalities that make up the social service void have some kind of civil society mobilization, the result reinforces the idea that the sports agenda is not able to guarantee participation in implementing the PST.

## 4 CONCLUSION

For a program that aims to democratize educational sport and focus on vulnerable populations, the existence of a social service void in itself speaks against its objectives.

<sup>13</sup> Literature suggests that the administrative structure does not have the technical capability to improve tax collection procedures. Another argument concerns rural structure: municipalities with rural characteristics collect less urban taxes, such as the Urban Building and Land Tax. Finally, some arguments point out dependence on local elites' interests.

However, the result is supported by the institutional limits of the federal model and the weight of sports on local decision makers' agendas.

This descriptive analysis sought to understand the characteristics of municipalities that comprise the program's social service void. As for the spatial distribution of municipalities over Northeastern states, no pattern is found. However, in the program's ten years of operation, the states of Paraíba and Maranhão have a social service void above 90%, which ends up producing an allocative distortion that compromises the program.

The demographic profile revealed that small towns of up to 20,000 inhabitants make up the majority of the social service void (79.60%). The void is overrepresented in the first two population classes when compared to the total percentage of the towns in Northeastern Brazil. This indicates that smaller municipalities face greater difficulty in joining the program. For all population classes, HDI-VL and HDI-L indicate that vulnerable municipalities are the majority and reveal contradiction with the program goals. Another important fact is that the vast majority of municipalities depend on constitutional transfers, which reduces their autonomy to produce their own public policies and limits, hinders or constrains adherence to programs that require counterpart contributions. But we cannot point out only one factor responsible for non-compliance.

The existence of administrative structure at local level to accommodate demands of the sports area and third-sector organizations shows that there is a shortfall in demand that is associated with the sports agenda's value in society, especially in smaller towns, which are more vulnerable and have lower tax collection capacity. In this case, a program that reaches vulnerable municipalities cannot do without this information to produce selective incentives that induce adherence.

In a scenario where there is no institution in charge of offering educational sports policies, the federal government plays a key role in coordinating and providing incentives for cooperation. However, the sports agenda seems to get little attention, which hampers better performance by the program. This implies reviewing incentives, especially for small municipalities, and program management. Otherwise, we may continue producing results that hinder reduction of inequality of supply in educational sport.

This result does contradict what is pointed out by federalist literature. Overlapping responsibility and political autonomy of federal entities reduce the federal government's coordination ability. As shown above, the program's management model has limits to reduce of inequality in PST supply, which compromises a program that proposes decentralizing educational sport. Therefore, the social service void is a product of institutional constraints when centralized programs are decentralized.

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