

## THE PARTICIPATION OF MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN THE BRAZILIAN EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO<sup>1</sup>

### A PARTICIPAÇÃO DOS CONSELHOS MUNICIPAIS NO CENÁRIO EDUCACIONAL BRASILEIRO

### LA PARTICIPACIÓN DE LOS CONSEJOS MUNICIPALES EN EL ESCENARIO EDUCATIVO BRASILEÑO



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**ABSTRACT:** This study aims to foster debate about the social relevance of the participation of Municipal Education Councils in the Brazilian educational scenario. We align with the perspective that these Councils constitute a fundamental part of the State's superstructure and, being integrated into the Education System as instruments of collegiate management and serving as consultative, deliberative, and normative bodies, they should take the lead in the processes that permeate and guide the construction of municipal public education. Therefore, it is understood as the responsibility and commitment of Municipal Education Councils to promote socially referenced public education, as advocated by the Municipal Education Plan.

**KEYWORDS:** Education. Municipal Education Councils. Municipal Education Plan.

**RESUMO:** *Esse estudo objetiva fomentar o debate acerca da relevância social de participação dos Conselhos Municipais de Educação no cenário educacional brasileiro. Corroboramos com a perspectiva que tais Conselhos são parte constitutiva da superestrutura do Estado e estando inseridos no Sistema de Ensino, enquanto instrumentos de gestão colegiada e sendo órgãos consultivos, deliberativos e normativos, estes devem protagonizar os processos que permeiam e orientam a construção da educação pública municipal. Logo, entendemos ser de competência e compromisso dos Conselhos Municipais de Educação a promoção da educação pública socialmente referenciada, preconizada pelo Plano Municipal de Educação.*

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** *Educação. Conselhos Municipais de Educação. Plano Municipal de Educação.*

**RESUMEN:** *Este estudio tiene como objetivo fomentar el debate sobre la relevancia social de la participación de los Consejos Municipales de Educación en el escenario educativo brasileño. Corroboramos la perspectiva de que tales Consejos son parte constitutiva de la superestructura del Estado y, al estar insertos en el Sistema Educativo, como instrumentos de gestión colegiada y ser órganos consultivos, deliberativos y normativos, deben liderar los procesos que permean y orientan la construcción de educación pública municipal. Por lo tanto, entendemos que es responsabilidad y compromiso de los Consejos Municipales de Educación promover una educación pública socialmente referenciada, recomendada por el Plan Municipal de Educación.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Educación. Consejos Municipales de Educación. Plan Municipal de Educación.*

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## Introduction

This text addresses the social relevance of Municipal Education Councils (MECs) in the Brazilian educational scenario. The participation of these agencies in education management is highlighted in the implementation of the desired public education outlined in the Municipal Education Plans (MEPs).

According to Bordignon (2017), in Brazil, Education Councils (ECs) were officially institutionalized during the Republican Period. On April 5, 1911, the Higher Education Council was created, the first Education Council (EC) nationwide, exclusively for Higher Education. In 1925, the National Teaching Council was created, which covered national education. In 1931, the National Education Council (NEC) was established. In 1937, it was restructured, becoming the Federal Education Council, created by the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (*LDBEN*, Law No. 4.024 of 12/29/1961, established on 02/12/62). Currently, the NEC<sup>6</sup> is created by Provisional Measure No. 661/94 and regulated by Law No. 9.131/95.

The creation of the NEC came from a process of struggle, after the Federal Constitution - *Constituição Federal* (CF) of 1988, in defense of public schools. According to Gohn (2000, p. 37, our translation), the first proposal for a comprehensive national council was in 1994. “[...]. It began to have an eminently representative character, with a proposal for participation that gave it a great autonomy perspective. Therefore, it was quickly deactivated, and the old Federal Council was restored. [...]”. In 1996, the NEC was recreated, and during the presidential election process, and with the promulgation of the New *LDBEN* in 1996, the centralizing character of the agency was maintained.

At first, the ECs assumed a technocratic character and were constituted as government agencies. After the promulgation of CF/1988, popular participation led citizens to become social actors in public management, which changed the role of the EC, which became a State agency. This change, according to Bordignon (2017, p. 25, our translation), took effect with Law No. 9.131/95, which, when establishing the new NEC, “[...] introduced the principle of parity between advisors appointed by the government and society in its composition, which led advisor Arthur Gianotti to [...] state that the new NEC was constituted as a State agency [...]”.

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<sup>6</sup> “Education councils gained special relevance in the Constitution of 1934, under the inspiration of some constituents who signed the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education. The 1934 Constitution, in the § paragraph of Article 152, established that the states and the District should create their education councils with functions like those of the NEC. The constitutional provision was only regulated by law on December 29, 1961. [...] From 1962 to 1965, education councils were created in all states and the Federal District. [...]. The trajectory of municipal education councils records some attempts before gaining legal status in Law 5.692/71, with functions delegated by the respective state councils (Art. 71). Its consolidation came with the 1988 constitutional provision, which established municipal education systems (Art. 211)” (BORDIGNON, 2017, p. 24, our translation).

It is essential to clarify that councils constitute government agencies when their constitution and functions express and legitimize, within society, the government's will. And they are State agencies when they are, according to Bordignon (2017, p. 25, our translation), “[...] forums that articulate social diversity to speak to the government on behalf of society, representing and expressing the will of society, strategically developing policies education, beyond the transience of the singular wishes of governments”.

However, when the Constitutional Precept establishes management councils from a democratic perspective, the configuration of the ECs changes, providing the opportunity for them to stop being technical government agencies and become State agencies based on the categories of belonging and participation. According to Bordignon (2017), these categories institutionalize another conception of a citizen, which allows ECs to constitute a privileged locus of the state's democratization.

Thus, the institutionalization and management of ECs occur in a context outlined by conflicts, contradictions, and social struggles between the State, capital, and civil society, constituting them as spaces for political and ideological disputes. Therefore, it is prudent to avoid mistakes, overestimating the role of councils and neglecting what Teixeira (2001, p. 104-105, our translation) states as “[...] the type of power structure in which councils are inserted and the limits of the current neoliberal policies being implemented”.

However, according to Bordignon (2017, p. 26, our translation), although ECs are part of the governmental structure, they are in a republican and democratic country. Consequently, they must serve society, and “[...] their position cannot be radicalized to an extreme. They should accept differences and work in and with contradictions, allowing both voices to flow. This is the meaning of equal composition between advisors appointed by the government and by society”.

In this way, councils, as public institutions, must seek to consolidate themselves as State agencies and not government agencies; they must be shared and institutionalized forums for social and political participation, according to Bordignon (2017).

The perspective of the ECs, as a State institution and forums for social and political participation, comes from the understanding that these Councils, according to Cury (2006, p. 41, our translation), are “[...] first and foremost, a body public aimed at guaranteeing, in its specificity, a constitutional right of citizenship [...]”. Furthermore, such a perspective is a *sine qua non*-condition for the existence of this agency, as predicted by its historical etymology:

Council comes from the Latin *Consilium*. *Consilium* comes from the verb *consulo/consulere*, meaning both to listen to someone and to submit something to someone's deliberation after a reflected, prudent, and common-sense consideration. It is, therefore, a verb whose meanings postulate a two-way street: listen and be heard. Reciprocal hearing involves seeing and being seen, and, therefore, when a Council participates in the destinies of a society or parts thereof, the verb *consulere* itself already contains a principle of publicity. (CURY, 2006, p. 47, our translation).

The councils have a public character, they are organizations of individuals, the plural voice of civil society, spaces for citizenship, collective defense, and a sense of belonging. Therefore, in this sense, the ECs constitute

[...] collegiate of educators (consuls or magistrates - in the sense that they are representatives, defenders of educational citizenship, endowed with the power of deliberation to do so), which speaks publicly to the government on behalf of society, through opinions or decisions, in defense of the educational rights of citizenship, based on “reflected, prudent and common-sense consideration”. (BRASIL, 2004a, p. 24, our translation).

Thus, ECs inserted in education systems become instruments of collegiate management and represent the will of civil society in the development of public policies, educational legislation, and government decisions.

Each council has its duties but generally performs the following functions, according to Brazil (2004a): *Deliberative* - the commission has decision-making power on issues of executive action; *Consultative* - advises the government and society through opinions, interpreting legislation and proposing measures and standards, concerning improving education; *Fiscal* - has legal competence to monitor compliance with standards and legitimacy in approving or not approving government actions, and proposing changes; *Mobilizing* - mediating movement between government and society, which should encourage strategies of social participation and practical commitment by everyone to the quality of education.

Finally, it is pertinent to highlight the nature and historical phases of CEs, as they make it possible to understand their meaning in the management of Brazilian education. According to Brazil (2004a), from 1842 until the first decade of the 20th century, there were Public Instruction Councils, made up of public employees and directors of educational organizations, whose competence was to define subjects and teaching methods, the development of school standards, monitoring the attitude of educators, among others.

For Bordignon (2017), the ECs were gradually configured as State agencies, but their technical, historical basis presented resistance to this configuration and affected their role as social representatives in dialogues with State governments. The author highlights that the

MECs, in turn, were born from a new theoretical configuration between the State and society, the democratic bias arising from CF/1988, by enabling social participation through the decentralization of power and by apprehending the municipality as a federative entity, providing the opportunity for these Councils to constitute themselves as a locus for the exercise of citizenship, with a theoretical basis of a republican and democratic nature.

However, despite MECs being created based on this new social configuration, they are part of the liberal macrosocial context. In this framework, Brazilian public institutions are implemented by a corporatist and patrimonial political culture that endorses singular and private intentions to the detriment of social and collective preferences. These councils are not free from this culture and can, in practice, be influenced. This warning, according to Bordignon (2017, p. 26, our translation), permeates the understanding that “[...] a culture does not change through laws, but through a slow process of political maturation, changing consciousness, the character of people. Any change in values will only be possible if it first occurs in people’s consciousness.”

It is clear, when analyzing the historical path from the constitution of the ECs to the current days, that these Councils, at a given moment, are located in defense of the interests of the elites because, according to Bordignon (2009, our translation), they protect “[... ] society and its educational institutions, now, [...] in current times, seeking the co-management of public policies and constituting channels of popular participation in the realization of the public interest”.

However, it confirms Gohn’s (2011, p. 110, our translation) assertion that the requirement for a “[...] participatory democracy must combine social struggles with institutional struggles, and the area of education is a great space for these actions, via participation in councils”. Furthermore, the author understands councils as space and instruments “[...] operative in favor of democracy and exercising citizenship in any socio-political context. They can become potential and strategic allies in the democratization of social policy management.”

Furthermore, although the Brazilian social context is historically marked by conflicts and social struggles of all kinds, nowadays, social injustices are worsened by the significantly accentuated withdrawal of social rights previously achieved. Therefore, resistance to the dominant ultraconservative hegemonic representation, which advocates in favor of the market and against the intervening social State, is necessary. Resistance can only be built by organized civil society through different movements and social institutions that defend democratic principles and seek to exercise social control over State actions.

In this construction, in the educational sphere, CEs are fundamental mechanisms for managing and controlling education, particularly in the social control of Ten-Year Education Plans. Considering the relevance of these plans in ensuring the social quality of Brazilian education, the authority to be exercised must permeate all processes that embody the construction and materialization of this educational policy for it to be successful.

We reinforce that the re-democratization of the Brazilian State, recommended in CF/1988, by ensuring social participation through representative agencies in government actions, makes it possible to think and build paths that can lead to the constitution of participatory democracy in public institutions. The construction of this form of democracy becomes necessary because it encourages the full participation of society in decision-making regarding State social projects.

Despite the Constitutional prerogative to expand social participation and represent a first step toward overcoming the patrimonial culture that pervades public institutions, it alone is not enough. It is necessary to build a collective culture that comes from forming a natural, broad political consciousness of civil society. Consciousness is constructed by individuals, historical beings, who, through the cathartic process, in other words, moments of reflection, elevate their consciousness from common sense to critical sense.

Critical consciousness is the basis for apprehending and understanding the social contradictions inherent in capitalist society. It provokes a break from the conception of class in itself to the class for itself, going beyond the merely unionist and corporatist consciousness, and reaches the political-universal consciousness (movement from the singular and particular to the collective).

This political-universal consciousness, by subsidizing dialogues that guide collective actions aimed at the democratization of the State, provides opportunities for the construction of collective and ethical-political interests to the detriment of corporatist economic interests, which maintain the ideas of the dominant class.

This is not a “sacralization” of social participation or participatory democracy. These are not utopian defenses in relation to the constitution of self-governing social institutions, segregated from the State, holding a power capable of controlling capital and the totality of public social policies that emanate from the Nation-State.

What is envisioned, through the consolidation of democratic public *locus* in the current context, is the possibility of building the most participatory democracy possible within the neoliberal State. In other words, it is understood that it is necessary to create a democracy that

provides everyone with equal conditions to participate in decision-making with the State concerning social projects. Furthermore, it is necessary to establish democratic public institutions that democratize public social policies through the exercise of social control. In this sense, the constitution of a State of the people, and not for the people, is defended. Decentralization of State power, not a deconcentration of social responsibilities. And the constitution of public institutions as a *locus* of reflection, formation of political awareness, and mobilization of participation in the social control of public policies.

The defense is for social control beyond supervisory bias. Power as popular sovereignty provides the opportunity for subordinate classes to establish a hegemonic culture of monitoring, verifying, and evaluating the State's actions. A social control that gives new meaning to State decentralization, with a neoliberal, technical, and economic nature, proposes the fiscal adjustment of public social policies and not their democratization. The contemporary social context requires democratic management councils, effectively participatory in elaborating, implementing, and controlling Nation-State projects.

In this sense, ECs at the federal, State, and municipal levels occupy a privileged position, as they can ensure socially referenced education when they assume, according to Bordignon (2017, p. 23, our translation), the condition of “[...] articulating and mobilizing forums for social participation, through public hearings, conferences and other mechanisms for pedagogical listening to the interests and aspirations of society”.

Furthermore, we align with the conception of Gohn (2011), in which the implementation of participatory democracy comes from the convergence of social struggles with institutional struggles, and the educational field is a significant and purposeful space for these actions via social participation in ECs. We highlight that the institutionalization of these Councils in Brazil results from processes of correlation of forces, disputes, and negotiations between political and civil society. In these processes, different perspectives of participation in the materialization of educational policies are implicit.

A political society intends to endorse representative social participation, which delegates powers to others and makes the individuals mere supporting actors in ongoing projects. This society seeks to legitimize the State's colonial control, advocates for an educational policy based on economic and market logic, and conceives of ECs as government institutions, deliberative and standardizing agencies for the conception of education from the Executive Branch.



Civil society seeks to legitimize social participation based on participatory democracy, in which individuals participate in social projects. This society aims to exercise social control over the State's actions, seeks to consolidate an education with social quality for everyone, and conceives councils as social bodies and democratic *locus* that represent the plural voice of society in implementing education as a social practice and political act.

Starting from this context and envisioning the ECs, including the MECs, as social instances of mediation between civil society and political society in a permanent dialogue between the constituted powers, understanding their participation in the processes inherent to the Educational Plans makes it possible to highlight them as a democratic *locus*, democratizing instruments of educational policies or mere spaces of democratic rhetoric and control of public education. Next, there is a dialogue about these pieces of advice in the Brazilian social and educational scenario.

### **Municipal Education Councils: social participation in the educational scenario**

In the materialization of democratic management of education, MECs<sup>7</sup> are, according to Bordignon (2009), bodies that represent society in plural decisions to the detriment of singular decisions of the Executive Branch, mainly about the direction of educational policies. Although these Councils have a technical origin and advise governments, they seek to assume a political character in the social and educational context.

Brazilian legislation, after 1988, seeking to expand social participation in local public administration, incorporates MECs in the processes of decentralization and participation in municipal (co)management and ensures their deliberative power and representative parity. However, placing them within the structure of the Executive Branch, gave them a certain status as a collaborative agency of municipal management.

Considering this status, in municipalities where civil society does not have an organizational conception, the councils represent only a legal system, when they often do not become, according to Gohn (2008, p. 103, our translation), “[...] an additional instrument in the hands of mayors and elites, speaking on behalf of the community as its official representatives, not at all meeting the objectives of being control and oversight mechanisms for public affairs”.

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<sup>7</sup> “Recognizing the autonomy of federated entities (States, DF, and Municipalities), LDBEN provides in its Article 8º, § 2º, that education systems will have freedom of organization under the terms of this Law, without determining the existence of councils as normative agencies in the system’s structure. At the same time, throughout its text, the Law refers in two moments (Articles 60 and 90) to normative agencies of the education systems and provides in its Article 9º, § 1º the existence of the National Education Council, with normative functions, supervision and permanent activity in the educational structure, created by Law. On the other hand, the FUNDEF Law, in its Article 4º, IV, § 3º, mentions representatives of the Municipal Education Councils among the members of this Council in the Municipality” (BRASIL, 2004b, p. 15, our translation).

Bordignon (2009) highlights that the CF/1988, in his Article 211, when establishing the Municipal Education Systems, provides the opportunity to create MECs with their functions since they were previously subordinate to the ECs. However, the author emphasizes that there were some proposals for MECs before the Constitution, as mentioned earlier. In 1925, the creation of MECs in Bahia was proposed, but they were not implemented. In 1936, the municipality *Candelária*, in the State of *Rio Grande do Sul* (RS), through Decree No. August 1st, 5th, establishes its Municipal Council, of an advisory nature in relation to municipal public education issues. On May 5, 1958, *Nova Hamburgo* (RS) also established its council. However, the actual institutionalization of MECs only occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, based on Law No. 5.692/71, Art. 71, is concentrated mainly in the State of RS.

It is worth noting that Federal Legislation does not deliberate on creating MECs. This decision is the responsibility of the municipalities. However, it is salutary to assert that the institutionalization of a council must come from the political will of civil society and is not a mere legal formality. In this sense, Bordignon (2009, p. 72) indicates that the process of creating the council is more important than the final quality of the law. The profile of the council, its organization, composition, functions, and responsibilities must result from a broad discussion with the community.”

As we know, Brazilian municipalities present significant socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, and historical differences, making it impossible to establish rules for the institutionalization of MECs. Faced with this diverse social context, there is no one advice format to follow.

However, Bordignon (2009) understands that municipalities, based on their unique realities and their Education Systems, can institutionalize MECs and structure their competencies and actions to serve best the society they represent. Since many MECs were established in a scenario of democratic management and citizen participation, Bordignon (2009) advocates in favor of proposing deliberative, consultative councils active in the mobilization and social control of educational policies. CF/1988 and LDBEN/1996 expanded and legitimized this proposition.

The Ministry of Education (MEC) for the development of the *Programa de Apoio aos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação* (Support Program for Municipal Education Directors - PRADIME)<sup>8</sup>, according to Brazil (2006a), prepared the document *Caderno de Textos v. 1*, which

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<sup>8</sup> “The Support Program for Municipal Education Directors (PRADIME) is an initiative of the Ministry of Education (MEC), in partnership with the Union of Municipal Education Directors (UNDIME), intending to strengthen the performance of directors in the RPGE – Política e Gestão Educacional, Araraquara, v. 27, n. 00, e023061, 2023. e-ISSN: 1519-9029  
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draws a parallel between traditional MECs and those established after 1988, aiming to elucidate the principle of democratic management of public education, Art. 206/VI/CF and Art. 3º/VIII/LDBEN, and its materialization of the main aspects of your organization.

After CF/1988, the nature of the MEC, by contemplating the participation of civil society within it and raising the prospect of financial and administrative autonomy for the agency, appears much more democratic than bureaucratic, which certainly affects their functions. There were expansions in the parts of this agency from a propositional, mobilizing, normative, and supervisory perspective, which, at the same time, legitimizes its democratic nature, which allows the council to exercise social control over State actions in the educational sphere.

We observed that such functions legitimize the autonomy of MECs as public instances of power and provide municipal councilors with the opportunity to participate in the social control of all processes that substantiate educational policies, such as definition, elaboration, evaluation, and materialization, thus enabling the implementation of socially referenced education.

Furthermore, constitutional democratic precepts provide MECs with a pluralistic composition and expand spaces for social participation by ensuring the representation of different segments of civil society in discussions, debates, and propositions about municipal public education. Moreover, adding new functions (normative, supervisory, mobilizing, and social control) also enables MECs to implement citizenship and democratize educational policies.

Authors such as Cury and Bordignon assert this understanding. Cury (2006) conceives the relevance of the normative function as it allows the council to interpret and apply the law in guaranteeing the right to citizenship. Bordignon (2017), in turn, understands that the practices of these new functions allow councils to be propositional in their approaches to controlling the provision of public education.

In this sense, the MEC (Ministry of Education) document entitled *Caderno de Textos v. 3* indicates that MECs are spaces for building participatory democracy and guide the practice of normative, supervisory, mobilizing, and social control functions, arguing that:

[...] The struggle of social movements in education inaugurated an important tradition in Brazil: social participation and social control. Numerous spaces were created, others had their functions redefined or added, and the form of

the constitution was changed to incorporate the representations of society, the spaces became privileged places for the exercise and learning of participatory democracy, which contributed to the democratization of society. Brazilian society. Spaces such as national, state, and municipal education councils, school councils, participatory budgeting, [...] are some examples of the wealth of new relationships established and crystallized every day throughout the national territory. (BRASIL, 2006b, p. 32, our translation).

The document also highlights the need for autonomy for MECs to exercise social control over government actions effectively. To this end, it lists new responsibilities and roles to be developed by these councils after LDBEN/96. Among them, according to Brazil (2006b, p. 41, our translation), are: “monitoring and evaluating the execution of the municipality’s educational plans; deliberate on policies, plans, and programs relating to educational policy; establish the guidelines to be observed in the preparation of educational plans and programs at the municipal level”.

The new responsibilities delegated to the MECs, such as monitoring, evaluation, proposition, and deliberation, give rise to the performance of a unique role in the educational scenario, in other words, the councils are called to participate in the control of educational policies. This new role played by MECs and their new responsibilities ensures their legitimacy in controlling municipal public education, thereby providing opportunities for the democratization of educational policies.

Although social participation is inherent to the construction of democratic relationships, for Lima (2010, p. 30, our translation), since “[...] there is no democracy without people getting involved in transformative projects, in a substantive way, acting in decision-making fields, which refers to the field of social control”. However, not all forms of participation provide individuals with opportunities for such involvement. Expanded and conscious participation in civil society can reveal social contradictions and trigger democratic practices in the capitalist context. Social individuals, according to Gramsci (1999, p. 94, our translation), must “[...] actively participate in the production of world history, be their guide and no longer accept from the outside, passively and slavishly, the mark of their personality [...]”, as they need to lead their actions and build social resistance through public institutions.

In the educational sphere, such protagonism can occur through social participation in MECs. To achieve this, counselors need an ethical-political stance based on the philosophy of praxis and social commitment to public education. Furthermore, to exercise control over municipal education, councilors need to enjoy, for Valle (2008, p. 72, our translation), full “[...]”

political autonomy to disagree with or approve government actions, independently of the mayor [...] and the political party to which he or she belongs.”

However, Gohn (2008) highlights that MECs are incipient educational agencies and have not yet been appropriately absorbed as spaces for social participation. The author warns that this appropriation is necessary because the councils represent the presence of civil society in the decision-making arena regarding the destinations and priorities of municipal education and are spaces that echo the voices of this society since:

In the space of participation, the Municipal Education Council (MEC) is inserted into the Municipal Education System (MES) structure as a collegiate and democratic management mechanism to express society's will present in the formulation of policies and the decisions of leaders. The Council does not speak for the government, but it speaks to the government on behalf of society since its nature is that of a State agency. The State is the permanent institutionality of the community, while governments are transitory. (BRASIL, 2006b, p. 97, our translation).

Including Goal 19 of the National Education Plan (NEP 2014-2024) by ensuring the implementation of democratic management<sup>9</sup>, and its Strategy 19.5, by promoting, according to Brazil (2014, p. 60, our translation), “[...] the constitution and the strengthening of school councils and education councils, ensuring the training of their counselors [...]”, provide opportunities for social mediation in State dynamics, bearing in mind that they favor the constitution of democratic channels that can enable civil society to build its hegemony, its leading role in social and political action in the State, because:

[...] the participation of civil society in public management introduces a qualitative change in that it incorporates other levels of power beyond the State, and this is configured as a right to self-development that can be achieved in a participatory society that contributes to the formation of citizenship qualified [...]. (JACOBI, 2008, p. 118, our translation).

Assuming the existence of an organic social relationship in which social control permeates the social classes and its achievement consists of legitimizing the counter-hegemony of civil society in the State, social instances need to constitute a democratic locus, which privileges the practice of participation in the social control of government plans, programs, and projects. MECs must and can contribute to exercising the social power of Educational Plans.

<sup>9</sup> It is recalled that the democratic management of education in educational institutions and education systems is one of the constitutional principles guaranteed to public education, according to Art. 206 of CF/1988. In turn, LDBEN, confirming this principle and recognizing the federative organization, in the case of basic education, passed on to the education systems the definition of democratic management standards, explaining two other principles to be considered: “the participation of education professionals in the elaboration of the school's political-pedagogical project and the participation of school and local communities in school councils or equivalent”. (BRASIL, 2014, p. 59, our translation).

## **Final considerations**

It is confirmed that the ECs, including the MECs, are a constitutive part of the State's superstructure and are being inserted into the Education System as collegiate management instruments, according to Lima, Raimann, and Santos (2018, p. 323, our translation), a "[...] primary function, the implementation of social control of quality education for all and the formulation of educational policies" [...].

Therefore, in contemporary society, which is permeated by countless processes of social exclusion, MECs are, according to Gohn (2006, p. 10, our translation), "[...] concrete possibilities for developing a public space that cannot be summarized or confused with the governmental/state space" [...]. Given that civil society, by performing social mediation in public management, guarantees the "[...] establishment of a new pattern of interaction between government and society; new intermediation arenas and new decision-making mechanisms implemented may have the capacity to incorporate a large plurality of actors and different interests", and in this way, such councils would be fulfilling their role as social mediation agencies.

However, it is emphasized that considering the ECs as a revolutionary stronghold of the established capitalist society is not a question. It is shared only from the perspective that organized civil society has the conditions, according to Teixeira (2001, p. 52, our translation), to "[...] capture and thematize problems and to exercise a critical and propositional role concerning other spheres and to it, despite the restrictions and barriers imposed by the systems (political and economic) and the limitations of the political culture in force in society as a whole". Likewise, such councils as deliberative and normative agencies must lead the processes that permeate and guide the construction of municipal public education.

Therefore, these councils are responsible for promoting social control of educational policy, intending to ensure the implementation of the socially desired education recommended by MEPs. To this end, one of the possible paths is for the councils to develop actions propositional, continuous, and systematic monitoring, assistance, and evaluation of all constitutive processes that permeate this policy.

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