

## The Politically Motivated Decentralization of Program of Sports and Leisure of the City

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### Abstract

Municipal government, being implementation agents in several public policies, can mobilize their networking in order to potentialize their accession to the Program, as long as this may be a component of their priority roster, which depends on the political motivations, in its turn affected by its partisan interests. For that matter, this current study, which has a descriptive approach, pursued to evaluate the impact of the mayor's variable political party impact in PSLC decentralization (Program of Sports and Leisure of the City, PELC in Portuguese), contemplating three electoral cycles for the constitution of municipal governments (2000/04; 2005/08; 2009/2012). In general terms, the low level of the municipals' accession to PSLC, being either in national range or federal states, suggest that the incentive structure did not offer, to the municipal managers, a balance between the costs and benefits that could motivate them to politically access the Program, once this structure may have built a barrier to the Program's national expansion.

**Keywords:** public policies, political party, decentralization, sports, leisure.

### 1. Introduction

The Program of Sports and Leisure of the City (PSLC) of Sports Ministry has been arousing the attention of different researchers in public policies area, moreover because of the inclusion, among its actions, of a specific one geared to support the knowledge production about the Program, which has already been described in Amaral and Ribeiro (2014), Castro (2012), and Starepravo (2011)'s works. However, little has been produced in the sense of understanding which variables would better explain the level of decentralization of the program. Decentralization, as a strategy for the public policies' development is an ambiguous term (Almeida, 2005). It can mean both the offer of public policies formulated by subnational governing that embrace municipal administration in the limit provided by Brazilian federalism or only the offer for those governments of formulated and designed policies by the central government. In the first case decentralization would comprise the policy decision making and in the last case, more restrictedly, the policy making (Arretche, 2012).

Decentralization may also be disaggregated in distinct analytical dimensions that include policy decentralization, which refers to the autonomy to build rules, but also the decentralization and duties or administrative competences, and even, fitting or not, the fiscal or resources decentralization (Almeida, 1995; Soares, 1998). Decentralization was crucial to guide the definition of federal competences during the constitutional debate as a response for the centralization model imposed by military government, which aimed to guarantee a greater autonomy for the subnational entities (Arretche, 2005; Rodden, 2005; Souza, 1998; Melo, 1996).

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Back then, decentralization was understood as a necessary condition to the democratization (Arretche, 1996) and to the overcoming of the inaccessibility of power centrals to broad social segments (Borja, 1987), as well as it used to take part of the prescription to the State reforms which used to prescript decentralization as a strategy to use the efficiency of allocation and adjustment in the levels of public goods offer to the “consumer elector’s” preferences (Tiebout, 1956; Oates, 1999; Alves & Moreira, 2004), attending to the ideological expectations and distinct policies. However, to both of them, local government would be more responsive to the citizens. (Ribeiro, 2013)<sup>4</sup>.

In this research, the decentralization of PSLC represents a specific case that strictly covers the *policy making*, even if involving the political, administrative and fiscal dimensions in some measure, even with different intensities. It will be discussed about a political implementation planed by the central government through local institutional actors, the city halls, which simultaneously involves the mobilization of local political autonomy – to join or not the Program – involving the transfer of assignments, assumed by counties that adhere. Finally, the size of the revenue formation and the allocation of expenses in the Sports and Leisure sector. It is important to notice that since the second half of 1990, the Brazilian federalism went through a process of changes, supported by constitutional and legal alterations that restricted the fiscal freedom of states and counties, and specified their responsibilities and obligations with some of the main public policies. At the same time, the Federal Executive recovered its share of public revenues through social contributions and economic domain (Melo, 2005; Almeida, 2005; Arretche, 2012). On the one hand, if only some public policies, such as health and education, had constitutional binding from part of the revenues in the states and counties, on the other hand, the infraconstitutional legislation itself, for different sectors, constrained some public policies, as in the case of social assistance, to take part in those policies.

Besides that, federal bureaucracies trained in the formulation of national programs, in view of the increasing fiscal dependence on states and counties, found favorable conditions to induce the decentralization of assignments to the latter in the different public policies, especially with the use of conditional intergovernmental transfers (Machado & Palotti, 2014). For the consent of programs with conditional transfers, local managers evaluate not only the gains in terms of accessing sources for new regularly transferred resources, but also the political, financial and administrative costs of the implementation would be overcome. It will structure a *calculation* that also includes a level of uncertainty regarding the regularity in the receipt of resources and permanence of programs (Arretche, 1999). Good part of the intergovernmental transfers assumed a universal characteristic, not only through its generalized diffusion (Arretche, 2012), but also in view of the tolerance character of adhesion norms of the subnational governments, being not subject to bilateral negotiations between entities of these levels and the Federal Executive (Machado, 2014). The last aspect would explain, for example, why studies such as those of Lubambo (2006) failed to confirm the hypothesis that political parties influence the performance of municipal management. Rodrigues (2007) also found no significant relation between the ideological political preferences of the municipal managers and expenses levels, respectively, by expenses function, which led him to conclude that budgeting and fiscal constraints cause everyone to “act in a similar way” (p. 298). In the same direction, Ribeiro (2013) found a low impact of the party's ideology or composition of the local coalition of government in the provision and local expenses with social policies of health, education and social assistance, understanding that “the social policy decisions defined in the federal plan are what really matters” (p. 173).

The same way, as the opposite of what happens in other social policies due to the low constitutional and legal constraint for allocation of local revenues in sports and leisure, it is interesting to analyze the explanatory factors of the adhesion to the PSLC by the municipalities and if in this case, the partisan political alignment between local manager and the Federal Executive would be one of them. Concerning the PSLC, important parts of the studies seek to analyze the internal components of the program's implementation, highlighting the projects of teacher's formation and PSLC managers (Suassuna, 2009; Figueiredo, 2009). Few are the works that have studied the evaluation of the global performance of the program, such as the work of Sousa et al. (2010), which aimed to analyze the PSLC in order to create a program evaluation system.

In that point, it is worth remembering Vieira et al. (2010), who sought to investigate the performance of the agreements having as an analysis variable the application of financial resources, whereas Starepravo and

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<sup>4</sup> Arretche (2003, p. 334) makes an important warning: “There is no intrinsic guarantee to the local government's autonomy that made them responsible and committed to the citizen's needs and also determined to govern with efficiency”. To Rezende (1997), it can create strong distortions in allocations.

Marchi Jr. (2013) analyzed the implementation process of the program. However, in all of them, political variables have been little explored. Municipal governments, such as agents of implementations of various public policies, can mobilize their networks in a way to potentialize access to the Program, as long as compose its priority framework, what depends on political motivations, in its turn affected by its supporters interests. However, the decision of accession or not accession to the Program is, as stated above, mediated by a *calculus* referring to costs and benefits from incentives structure embedded in the Program design. It is important to remember, in this sense, that the fact that PSLC is managed in a first moment by voluntary accessions and, later, by established covenants from the selection of proposes elaborated by the towns are models of intragovernmental transfers with precarious guarantees that the monthly fund to fund modalities adopted in other public policies like health care and social assistance. These PSLC characteristics could make the political motivations, switching between towns, be a decisive element in the accession program. In this sense, the present work tried to evaluate the impact of the variable from the major's political party in the PSLC's decentralization, evaluating three electoral cycles for municipal governments constitutions (2000/04; 2005/08; 2009/2012).

## 2. PSLC'S Decentralization

PSLC was created in 2003 by an initiative of the Sports and Recreation Development Secretary from the Ministry of Sport. The main goal of the program is to democratize the access to recreation and leisure sport - RLS (ERL, in Portuguese). The program is structured by cores – PSLC, Nacional Program of Security with Citizenship of PSLC (PRONASCI/PELC, in Portuguese) and PSLC Health Life – financed by voluntary accession (2003 and 2007) and, later to 2008, by means of public notice, establishing their rules of functioning and agreement<sup>5</sup>. The covenant finances the remuneration of the professionals involved in the cores, as well as a share of the costs of the permanent and sports material, among others, and the towns have provide he professional social charges contracted and other financed items.

Decentralizing the implementation of a program presupposes the existence of institutional mechanisms to reach this goal, in the evaluation's case that the access to the RLS is not constituted as an effective social right, because there are people secluded of this experience. Elected as one of the agents of its implementation, the municipal power can suffer political interferences that lead to the accession or promote a refuse. In thesis, it is expected that the towns where the local public power is politically aligned with the Federal Executive have more incentive to the presentation of projects aiming the accession to the Program, what requires them to assemble qualified technical capacity to reach the exigencies. Incentives can be presumed too, as Matias (2014) stated, in the case of the Federal District, in order to administrations belonging to central government's opposition do not present any proposes.

Such effects could be presumed from two distinct mechanisms. On one hand, the concession could be related to pressures exerted by the Federal Executive on the municipal administrations aligned for accession to the programs, reinforcing the offer of goods to its electorate, but it could also occur by pressures exerted by local managers looking for the expansion of their resources, finding better access to that, given the political party alignment (Schabbach, 2014).

This way, it is still relevant to analyze how the political variable can or cannot explain the decentralization of the program. There is an extensive debate in the Political Science about the role of the parties as important actors in the offer of public policies (Silva, 2007; Burstein & Linton, 2003; Ferreira & Bugarin, 1996; Blais, Blake & Dion, 1993), being relevant in these analysis specially their political and ideological profile. However, in the field of public policies turned to the RLS, there are few studies analyzing this kind of variable, being relevant Santos' (2012), that identified the electoral coalitions and left parties had differenced capacities in the accession to the Program *Second Half* of Ministry of Sport.

Therefore, regarding the case of PSLC, there are reasons to suspect that partisan filiation of the mayors may influence in the adhesion to the programme. Either in the case of the party being linked directly to the federal government management, by the possibility to strengthen the local political agenda with national resources, making a broader packet of services available to the population, or by the desire of the Federal Government to strengthen their local support network, encouraging adherence to their programmes, mainly in cities governed by the party of the President and the party of the Ministry of Sport.

Cities governed by opposition parties would not find the pressure from the Federal Executive to adhere to the program, they could also take the position of blocking the agenda of the latter, guided by the

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<sup>5</sup> Further information available on <http://www.esporte.gov.br/index.php/institucional/esporte-educacao-lazer-e-inclusao-social/esporte-e-lazer-da-cidade>

national interests of their parties. However, it cannot be ignored that, as Ribeiro (2013) points out, the lack of resources to the implementation of policies can open the possibility that, in order to demonstrate administrative efficiency and capacity to “seek resources to the city” to the electorate, the adherence to programs of political opponents may also be likely.

### 3. Materials & Met

The current study of descriptive nature seeks, as a general aim, to analyse if partisan filiation of mayors affected the adherence to the PSLC between 2003 and 2012, interfering in its decentralization process. The hypotheses of work formulated were:

Hypotheses 1: cities governed by mayors linked to parties of the President (Labour Party, *PT*, in Portuguese) and the Minister of Sport (Communist party, *PC do B*, in Portuguese) show superior levels of adherence to the PSLC to the ones presented by the three main opposition parties, namely Democrats (*DEM*, in Portuguese), Social Democrats (*PSDB*, in Portuguese) and popular socialist (*PPS*, in Portuguese).

Hypotheses 2: cities governed by mayors linked to the party of the Ministry of Sport (*PC do B*) shows superior levels of adherence to those presented by the President’s party (*PT*).

The second hypothesis, of complementary character, would be justified by the partner of the governing coalition, *PC do B*, being in a position of greater dependence on the initiatives of the Ministry of Sport to the electoral strengthening of the local managers network through the implementation of programs that *PT* itself could do by mobilizing political channels in other ministerial portfolios.

Also in a complementary way, this study included as specific aim to trace the profile of *PT* municipal administrations which adhered to the PSLC, given their greater quantitative expression, based on the regional and population variables, which were based on the regional distribution according to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*IBGE*, in Portuguese). The population ranges, however, were divided into the same three groups constituted to establish modalities of support of the PSLC to the municipalities: up to 50 thousand inhabitants; between 50,001 and 100 thousand inhabitants; and above 100,001 thousand inhabitants.

In order to operationalize the variable party bond of the mayor, it was verified the party affiliation of the mayors who had their proposals of adhesion to the PSLC approved, disregarding state organs and private entities. In addition, the data, captured directly on the website of the Superior Electoral Tribunal, included the results of the first and second rounds of the 2000 elections (1<sup>st</sup> Electoral Cycle - 2000 to 2004), 2004 (2<sup>nd</sup> Electoral Cycle - 2005 to 2008) and 2008 (3<sup>rd</sup> Electoral Cycle - 2009 to 2012). Modifications of the municipal political frame after the election, either by decisions of the Electoral Justice, partisan change of the mayor, or removal from office were not considered. For operational reasons, the partisan filiation of vice-mayors or the parties included in the coalition of local government were not considered in the scope of this study. The data regarding the adhesion to the PSLC were identified through reports forwarded by the Ministry of Sport.

It is important to notice, on the other hand that this Ministry, during the whole analyzed period, was occupied by the same party, the Communist Party of Brazil (*PC do B*), together with the Labor Party (*PT*), which were considered the main parties directly interested in the decentralization, so other parties of the coalition were not introduced into the analysis. According to the ideological scale proposed by Melo and Santos (2012), both are left-wing parties. During the period analyzed, the opposition also maintained unity, with its central nucleus being the Democratic Party (*DEM*), the Brazilian Social Democratic Party (*PSDB*) and the Popular Socialist Party (*PPS*)<sup>6</sup>, except for a short period in which the latter party of the coalition of President Lula's first term until 2005. According to the same scale of Melo and Santos (2012), respectively, parties of right, center right and center left.

### 4. Results and Discussion

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<sup>6</sup> Other parties do not clearly signal their position vis-à-vis the government, even making up the ministerial portfolio. Parties that occupy peripheral spaces in the administrative structure guarantee punctual support. *PMDB*, despite being part of the ministerial portfolio throughout the analyzed period, does not have national unity and responds in a little disciplined way.

Before analyzing what the information gathered show us about the hypotheses listed, it is important to check some general aspects of the decentralization of the Program throughout the three electoral cycles considered.

In the analyzed period, only 214 (3.84%) of the Brazilian municipalities agreed with the federal government to decentralize the PSLC, celebrating 232 agreements. For any criterion used to judge one of the central objectives of the program, the diffusion of the RLS, having reached only 3.84% of the municipalities in those ten years is not something that can escape the scrutiny. In this scenario, Matias's (2014) criticisms of the program budgetary capacity could justify poor performance, although the attractiveness of adherence to the program incentive structure can also be considered. Aspects such as the temporal limitation of the covenant form, uncertainties as to the regularity of the onlendings and explicit counterparts are characteristics that are absent in the fund-to-fund transfers conditional on programs in other public policies, such as health and welfare, by the way, successful cases in terms of dissemination.

The national distribution of the prefectures that agreed with the federal government to join the PSLC was established, for each unit of the federation, according to table 1. At first sight, in terms of coverage among states, the PSLC had a good capacity for decentralization since only one of the 26 states, Amapá, had no municipalities with membership in the Program. It should be noted that this state is one of the most deprived regions, from the socioeconomic point of view, which suggests the need for strong investments in social policies.

**Table 1: Regional and state distribution of PSLC from 2008 to 2012.**

Region	State	N° Municipalities	Membership PELC	% Membership PECL
North	Amazonas	62	3	4.84
	Acre	22	3	13.64
	Amapá	16	-	0
	Pará	144	8	5.56
	Rondônia	52	6	11.54
	Tocantins	139	2	1.44
	Roraima	15	2	13.33
Northeast	Alagoas	102	1	0.98
	Bahia	417	12	2.88
	Ceará	184	3	1.63
	Maranhão	217	5	2.30
	Paraíba	223	3	1.35
	Pernambuco	185	9	4.86
	Piauí	224	1	0.45
	Rio Grande do Norte	167	7	4.19
Southeast	Sergipe	75	1	1.33
	Espírito Santo	78	3	3.85
	Minas Gerais	853	26	3.05
	Rio de Janeiro	92	14	15.22
	São Paulo	645	35	5.43
South	Paraná	399	12	3.01
	Rio Grande do Sul	497	29	5.84
	Santa Catarina	295	15	5.08
Midwest	Goiás	246	8	3.25
	Mato Grosso do Sul	79	3	3.80
	Mato Grosso	141	3	2.13
Total		5569	214	3.84

Source: IBGE for data from states and municipalities and PSLC.

A distinction is made from the information in Table 1: they provide the proportion of municipalities that have joined the Program, but do not allow the degree of interest of the municipalities to be assessed by the PSLC, as there are a number of obstacles and problems that may occur until the signature of the agreement, delaying or preventing adherence. Anyway, it is possible to affirm that, for a program that envisages the diffusion of sports and leisure activities, the result achieved points to important limitations.

The state of Rio de Janeiro was the one with the highest degree of adherence to the Program, reaching 15.22% of the municipalities, with the state of Acre (13.64%) in second place, the third state of Roraima (13.33%) and fourth Rondônia (11.54%). As it can be noticed, the northern states represent 75% of the states that broke the 10% marks of the municipalities assisted by the Program, the same region that includes the only state without any adhesion to the PSLC (Amapá).

It is worth noting that the Program implementation was below the national average, of 3.84%, in 53.84% ( $n = 14$ ) of the states. This is also a worrying mark for a Program that aims to diffuse local public sports and leisure policies, suggesting problems in the design of the Program or obstacles to its nationalization.

As pointed by Melo (1996), unexpected effects along the implementation can reduce the reach of decentralization, which may mean, in some cases, even the increase of inequality in the supply of a social good (Arretche, Vasquez & Gomes, 2012). Therefore, this result is intelligible under the literature that addresses the decentralization of federal programs in a federalist state. In the absence of impositions or obligations, the political environment can influence levels of adherence to central government programs, from which it could be assumed that the policy has been unattractive to local political managers.

Table 2. Distribution of city halls that joined the PSLC by electoral period.

Electoral Period	2003/04	2005/08	2009/12
City Halls	22	144	115

Source: Research data.

Other important aspect verified in Table 2 is the level of municipal adherence in the three electoral periods considered. In the first cycle, only 0.39% ( $n = 22$ ) of the municipalities joined the Program, which may be explained by the fact that it was a new program in that period, but also because this period is smaller than the others, covering only two years compared to the four-year length of the other two periods. The second cycle shows a significant expansion of the Program, reaching 144 new municipalities (2.59%), by the third cycle, the PSLC lost strength and the new municipalities that joined added up only 115 (2.06%). Even considering the expansion in the second period, when compared to the results achieved in 2003 and 2004, it is important to notice that it did not generate an "imitation" effect for those who had not yet joined, so the adherent municipalities were not strategic vehicles of dissemination of this policy. Table 3 allows an examination of the two hypotheses listed above regarding the party affiliation.

Table 3. Distribution of PSLC by period and between parties *PT*, *PC do B*, *PSDB*, *DEM* and *PPS*.

Party	2003/04			2005/8			2009/12		
	Number of City Halls	PSLC Adherence	%	Number of City Halls	PSLC Adherence	%	Number of City Halls	PSLC Adherence	%
PT	192	14	7.29	419	52	12.41	558	22	3.94
PC do B	1	0	0	10	1	10	41	3	7.31
PSDB	986	2	0.20	877	14	1.60	877	10	1.14
DEM	1023	0	0	792	14	1.76	792	6	0.76
PPS	165	0	0	310	7	2.33	310	2	0.65

Source: Research data.

As it can be seen, being a municipality administered by *PT* and *PC do B* did not constitute sufficient incentive for the decentralization of the PSLC in all electoral periods, even though the parties had the highest levels of adherence to the Program, respectively with 7.29%, 12.41%, 3.94%, and with 0.0%, 10.0%, 7.31%.

Among the opposition parties, there was also a significant change in the three acronyms, and in the first period only *PSDB* showed adherence, although low, with 0.20%. *PSDB*, the main opposition party, maintained the low adherence of its City Halls in the following cycles (1.60% and 1.14%), the same occurred with *DEM* (1.76% and 0.76%) and *PPS* (2.33% and 0.65%). In this case, the data confirms the hypothesis that municipalities ran by the coalition parties - *PT* and *PC do B*, with averages of adherence in the three periods respectively 7.88% and 5.77% - show higher adherence than the three main opposition parties (*DEM*, *PSDB* and *PPS*) with averages of respectively 0.84%, 0.98%, and 0.99%. It is important to say that on the other hand the low levels of accession reached in *PT* and *PC do B* municipality suggest a low effect of party affiliation when disseminating the PSLC as a program made by Federal Executive, even though it may have led to slightly higher accession levels comparing to the opposition parties. Furthermore, it suggests that the incentive structure of this Program is the most relevant factor to explain its low national dissemination.

However, the information did not sustain the second hypothesis, still, in a minimal statistic difference, municipalities governed by *PT* reached higher accession levels than the ones governed by *PC do B*. Another aspect is that due to the low rate of accession, a small number of cases are generated, it does not seem safe to affirm that *PT* would be the one most interested in decentralizing PSLC. Other possibilities are an option, although they are not analyzed in this paper, they may have had caused occasional variations which may have given a higher accession level than the one verified to *PC do B*. It is important to add, anyway, that both parties are the ones who are able to mobilize their bases towards to the Program the best. Something else that is needed is to recognize that the city halls administrated by *PT* were the main beneficiary from the Program, reaching accession number up to 88 municipalities. This quantitative is superior to the sum of the accession result reached in all city halls governed by opposition parties ( $n = 55$ ). In face of the non-confirmation of hypothesis 2, it is worth to explore more the participation of *PT* in the Program, we have analyzed its distribution considering the population size of the cities and of its insertion region.

Initially, it has been registered that the sum of city halls administrated by *PT* during the three cycles was 1,169. Concerning the population size, it is worth to notice the cities up to 50 thousand inhabitants represented 79.38% ( $n = 928$ ) of the ones which decentralized the PSLC, typically towns that have more difficulties, technical and financial ones, to produce and implement social policies in general. Nonetheless, by observing the profile of municipalities administered by *PT* that have implemented the program, we have verified that only 39.77% ( $n = 35$ ) were cities up to 50 thousand inhabitants, and that the majority, 60.23% ( $n = 53$ ) of the cities were above 100 thousand inhabitants. These data numbers suggest that the city halls administered by *PT* that joined the PSLC were those with different capabilities to establish agreements with the Ministry of Sports. Therefore, other important variables, such as the population size, can produce a bias that would explain the different accession levels obtained by *PT* municipal governments, something that should be better explored in future studies.

Concerning the distribution by region, municipals governed by *PT* showed the following distribution: North region ( $n = 145$ ; 12.40%), Northeast region ( $n = 222$ ; 18.99%), Southeast region ( $n = 419$ ; 35.84%), South region ( $n = 291$ ; 24.89%) and Central-west region ( $n = 92$ ; 7.88%). Concerning the PSLC distribution, the result was: North region ( $n = 16$ ; 18.18%), Northeast region ( $n = 12$ ; 13.63%), Southeast region ( $n = 41$ ; 46.59%), South region ( $n = 18$ ; 20.45%) and Central-west region ( $n = 1$ ; 1.14%). It is possible to estimate that a homogeneous distribution through both dimensions would mean that the percentage reached in the general distribution would reproduce itself during the regional PSLC distribution, although variations to smaller or bigger PSLC distribution would mean that some regions had lost or won representation related to accession to this Program. For that matter it is worth to notice that the North region had a gain, even though it was small (from 12.40% to 18.81%), as it happened to the Southeast region (from 35.84% to 46.59%). The other regions lost representation, but because the bigger gain occurred in the Southeast region (10.75 pp) it is safe to say that it absorbed the biggest part of the Northeast, South and Centre-west losses. In other words, it is possible that a regional bias may as well explain the bigger accession proportion between municipalities governed by *PT*, assuming a higher potential of municipalities from the richest region of the country to overcome the obstacles to take part in the Program.

## 5. Conclusions

In general terms, either in the national total or for each federative state, the low levels of adherence of municipalities to PSLC suggest that the structure of incentives did not grant a positive cost-benefit balance to municipal administrators which would motivate them to subscribe to the Program. Perhaps this structure was perceived as a barrier to the expansion of PSLC in a national frame.

Admitting a deficiency in sport and leisure policies in Brazilian municipalities<sup>7</sup>, even if the level of adherence was adequate to the budget from the Ministry of Sport, it is impossible to think of decentralization of national policies unless they have sufficient tools for effectuation.

Regarding hypothesis 1, despite seeing a small difference between the levels of adherence favouring municipalities administrated by political parties in the national coalition - *PT*, the same party as the Brazilian President, and *PC do B*, the same party as the Minister of Sport - and those administered by opposition parties - *DEM*, *PSDB*, and *PPS* -, political allegiance between federal and municipal governments did not yield the results expected by a section of political literature. Thus, having a mayor affiliated to the party of either the President or the Minister of Sport did not translate into sufficient motivation for the municipal administrations to subscribe to the decentralization of PSLC. Regarding hypothesis 2, in the contrary of what was expected, there were no higher adherence levels stemming from the allegiance of mayors to the Minister's party.

Finally, in view of the low levels of municipal administration adherence to the Program, with differences of few percentage points, or even tenths of percentage points, the variable political party did not present much importance in our results. What attracts attention, however, is that municipal administrations did not play a major role in implementation, in spite of the pro-decentralization environment from which PSLC emerged. As a result, our findings do not allow us to state that politically motivated decentralization has produced relevant results, which includes *PT* participation, which was the driving force of the largest number of agreements with the Ministry of Sport. Regarding such agreements, it is possible that the concentration of subscriptions from *PT*-administered municipal governments among medium- and large-sized cities, as well as in the Southeastern Region, it is due to the variables population size and regional integration, not necessarily associated with political environment, which may also be elements to better explain the reach of the Program. These are, however, topics for future research.

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<sup>7</sup> Brazilian Cities Profile, Sport (IBGE, 2006).



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