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**Brazilian Higher Education in the 1960s and 1970s of the 20th Century: International Agreements and the Reform of the Brazilian University**

**L'enseignement supérieur Brésilien dans les années 60 et 70 du XXe siècle : accords internationaux et réforme de l'université Brésilienne**

**Educación superior Brasileña en los años 60 y 70 del siglo XX: acuerdos internacionales y la reforma de la universidad Brasileña**

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Article abstract

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# Brazilian Higher Education in the 1960s and 1970s of the 20th Century: International Agreements and the Reform of the Brazilian University

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## **Abstract**

After World War II, cooperation agreements in the educational area were signed between Brazil and the United States. However, from the 1960s, there was a closer relationship between the two countries, with new agreements signed between the Ministry of Education (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), known as the MEC-USAID Agreements. This study's objective is to analyze the influence of the MEC-USAID Agreements on the reform of the university approved by Law 5.540 / 1968, which established norms for the organization and functioning of higher education. Regarding the methodology, it is a documentary and bibliographic study. The results indicate that although there are criticisms of the agreements, there is no denying that they had influence on the 1968 reform, mainly regarding the cathedra extinction as well as the teaching career institution and the adoption of the departmental regime and credits in subjects. In addition, the university structure established by Law 5.540 / 68 remains virtually unchanged to this day.

Keywords: MEC-USAID Agreements, Brazilian university reform, higher education

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## **L'enseignement supérieur Brésilien dans les années 60 et 70 du XXe siècle : accords internationaux et réforme de l'université Brésilienne**

### **Résumé**

Après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, des accords de coopération dans le domaine de l'éducation ont été signés entre le Brésil et les États-Unis. Cependant, à partir des années 1960, il y avait une relation plus étroite entre les deux pays, avec de nouveaux accords signés entre le ministère de l'Éducation (MEC) et l'Agence des États-Unis pour le développement international (USAID), connus sous le nom d'accords MEC-USAID. La recherche vise à analyser l'influence des accords MEC-USAID dans la réforme de l'université approuvée par la loi 5.540 / 1968, qui a établi des règles pour l'organisation et le fonctionnement de l'enseignement supérieur. Quant à la méthodologie, il s'agit d'une étude documentaire et bibliographique. Les résultats indiquent que bien qu'il y ait des critiques à l'encontre des accords, il est difficile de nier qu'ils ont eu une influence sur la réforme de 1968, principalement en ce qui concerne l'extinction de la chaire et l'institution de carrière d'enseignant, et l'adoption du régime départemental et des crédits dans les matières. En outre, la structure universitaire établie par la loi 5.540 / 68 reste pratiquement inchangée à ce jour.

Mots-clés: Accords MEC-USAID, réforme universitaire Brésilienne, enseignement supérieur

## **Educación superior Brasileña en los años 60 y 70 del siglo XX: acuerdos internacionales y la reforma de la universidad Brasileña**

### **Resumen**

Después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial, se firmaron acuerdos de cooperación en el área educativa entre Brasil y Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, desde la década de 1960, hubo una relación más estrecha entre los dos países, y se firmaron nuevos acuerdos entre el Ministerio de Educación (MEC) y la Agencia de los Estados Unidos para el Desarrollo Internacional (USAID), conocidos como Acuerdos MEC-USAID. La investigación tiene como objetivo analizar la influencia de los Acuerdos MEC-USAID en la Reforma de la Universidad aprobada por la Ley n. 5.540 / 1968, que estableció reglas para la organización y el funcionamiento de la educación superior. En cuanto a la metodología, es un estudio documental y bibliográfico. Los resultados indican que, aunque existen críticas a los acuerdos, es difícil negar que tuvieron alguna influencia en la Reforma de 1968, principalmente en lo que respecta a la extinción de la cátedra y institución de la docencia universitaria, y para la adopción del régimen departamental y

de créditos en las asignaturas. Además, la estructura universitaria establecida por la Ley 5.540 / 68 permanece prácticamente sin cambios hasta el día de hoy.

Palabras clave: Acuerdos MEC-USAID, reforma universitaria Brasileña, educación superior

## Introduction

At the end of World War II, the economies of many of the countries involved had been completely devastated. However, the United States of America emerged from the war with great economic potential. Realizing that other countries involved in the war had also had their economies devastated and would not be able to recover without foreign aid, the United States injected huge sums of resources to rebuild the economy of several European countries as well as the Japanese economy.

The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics – USSR – despite the enormous human and material losses suffered, emerged from the war with great prestige (Vizentini, 2004). Its political and economic power was considerably increased with the incorporation of Eastern European countries into the socialist bloc, and thus it visualized its communist revolutionary ideology spreading to many countries. This new geopolitical reality, of a purely ideological nature, provided the necessary elements for the United States to start investing heavily in the development of its military potential and in its economic influence.

In fact, this was how the so-called Cold War was established, thus marking international politics and economics in the second half of the 20th century. Both the United States of America and the Soviet Union sought allies and vied for control and influence over developing countries. The American government, in turn, sought to develop a strategy to prevent the displacement of underdeveloped countries to the communist side, adopting mechanisms that would strengthen inter-American integration.

One aspect of this program dealt with technical and financial assistance to developing countries, particularly in Latin America. From an educational point of view, the end of World War II gave rise to a complex network of international agreements. As a result, the circulation of ideas and the exchange of people was fostered and commitments were established between various countries and international organizations, resulting in the promotion of significant educational changes. The objective was to provoke, in several countries, educational policies aimed at modernization and economic growth.

In relation to Brazil, one of the fundamental points of this program was to bring to the fore the modernization of Brazilian education at all levels and modalities of education. As of 1945, several agreements had been signed between the Brazilian and

North American governments or with private foundations in Brazil, aiming at the modernization of education in Brazil, in particular concerning higher education.

Brazilian higher education, until then, had experienced very slow development. Despite the existence of higher education courses in Jesuit Colleges since the period of colonial Brazil, it was only at the very beginning of the 20th century that universities began to appear in some Brazilian states. However, most of the time, they were institutions that merely incorporated Schools of Law, Medicine and Engineering without any unifying principle. It was only in 1931, with the Francisco Campos Reform, that the Brazilian University Statute was instituted.

From that moment, some universities were created according to modern teaching standards, while others that already existed were restructured. The university model, proposed in 1931, went through some changes in 1946 and 1961, however the structure remained practically the same. Over time, this structure became archaic, out of step with the economic and social changes that were taking place and requiring reforms in the Brazilian university system.

The establishment of the civil–military regime in Brazil from the mid-1960s enabled a closer relationship with the United States, a fact that created conditions to implement the signing of several agreements between the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These were known as the MEC-USAID agreements, aimed at Brazil receiving technical and financial support to restructure the education system.

The foremost purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of the MEC-USAID agreements on the reform of the Brazilian university, approved by Law n. 5.540 / 1968. This documentary and bibliographic study is based mainly on the analysis of the Brazilian legislation on higher education, the MEC-USAID agreements, the North American Atcon-consultant report, published in 1966, the report of the advisory team regarding higher education planning, and the report of the University Reform Work Group.

## **Agreements with the US and the Influence on Brazilian Education**

After World War II ended, one of the fundamental points of the United States' technical and financial assistance program for developing countries was the modernization of education at all levels and modalities. With regard to Brazil, cooperation agreements were signed between the two countries. An exchange of professors was carried out, as well as internships for Brazilian administrators and professors at North American universities and also visits by North American consultants to diagnose the teaching situation in Brazil.

Shortly after the war ended, agreements were signed between the Brazilian Ministry of Education and US government agencies in the areas of rural education and

industrial education. For the Brazilian government, however, one of the priority areas was higher education. Brazil had an incipient aeronautical industry and needed qualified personnel and a research apparatus to develop it. Out of an agreement signed between the two countries, the Technological Institute of Aeronautics (ITA) was created in 1947, which would offer courses in Mechanics, Electronics and Aeronautics, and maintain a Research and Development Institute to serve the area of military and civil aviation in the country. ITA was structured according to the North American model, and therefore was a unique institution within higher education in Brazil (Cunha, 2007a, pp.128-130).

The 1950s were marked by a period of intense debates about the direction of Brazilian university education and attempts to modernize it. The acceleration of the industrialization process and the complexity of public administration brought to the fore the need to train personnel specialized in physics, chemistry, mathematics, engineering, finance and other areas. In order to meet national demands, the government created bodies to promote scientific and technological research that would help universities to fulfill their role.

Thus, Law n. 1.310, dated January 15, 1951, created the National Research Council (CNPQ), with the purpose of stimulating scientific and technological research in official or private institutions; granting them the necessary resources for acquisition of material, remuneration of personnel and meeting other needs; and promoting scientific and technological research on their own initiative, or in collaboration with other institutions in the country or abroad (Law n. 1.310, 1951). According to Cunha (2007a, pp.132-134), the assembly of an extra university device for scientific and technological research resulted from the attempt to make up for the deficiencies of universities – the proper place for carrying out research. The CNPQ played a leading role in the development of higher education in Brazil, granting hundreds of scholarships for university professors to take their masters and doctorates and other courses abroad, mainly in the United States.

Still in 1951, by Decree 29.741 of July 11, the National Ministry of Education created the National Campaign for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), which would guarantee the existence of specialized personnel “in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of public and private establishments,” in favour of the country’s development. In this decree, it was also foreseen that it would “offer the most capable individuals, without their own resources, access to all opportunities for improvement” (Decreto n. 29.741, 1951). In 1952, CAPES officially started its work, granting grants and scholarships for postgraduate studies and research in Brazil and abroad. Service to universities and higher education institutes has become CAPES’ main program.

In addition, MEC sought support from North American consultant Rudolph P. Atcon, a specialist in university planning, who advised the Council of Rectors at the Federal Republic of Germany and later was a consultant for university affairs in Latin

America. Atcon arrived in Brazil in 1951, and in 1952, he met Anísio Teixeira, then CAPES General Secretary, who invited him to be his advisor. He worked at CAPES until 1956, as Assistant Director in charge of the university's development program in Brazil (Atcon, 1966).

In the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s, Brazil was going through an accelerated process of urbanization and industrialization and adopted an economic policy associated with international capital. These phenomena boosted the demand for education at all levels, but in a priority way, from higher education to the training of people who could meet the new demands of the market and the desire for modernization in the country. For some wings of society, education, especially in the fields of science and technology, was seen as the dominant factor of socioeconomic development.

The National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN) approved by Law n. 4.024 of December 20, 1961, despite creating a Federal Education Council (CFE) that, among its powers, would decide on higher education establishments and the recognition of universities, was very superficial as to the treatment given to the issue of university modernization (Lei n. 4.024, 1961).

At the same time that the first LDBEN in Brazil was being voted on, the University of Brasília was created in the country's new capital, aiming to develop science and technology and be a paradigm of modernity intended for higher education in Brazil. According to Cunha (2007b, p.73), in the same way as ITA, the University of Brasília followed the organizational standards of North American universities. The University of Brasília, ITA, and the University of São Paulo constituted a front of modernity, largely due to the various agreements signed by Brazil with the US government or with private foundations of the country (Cunha, 2007a).

## **The MEC-USAID Agreements and the Reform of the Brazilian University**

The emergency of the discussion on education reform in Brazil, linked to the need for economic development in the country, was not an isolated phenomenon; on the contrary, it was part of the problems experienced by most Latin American countries.

The United States of America, concerned about the recovery of European countries, left in second place the support that should be given to Latin America in solving economic and social problems. However, the Cuban Revolution of 1959 revived the fear that the "expansion of communism" would extend throughout the continent, which was already experiencing social, political-ideological problems and the growth of anti-American sentiment.

This situation led the United States to make a change in foreign policy for Latin America with the creation, in 1961, of the "Alliance for Progress" by President John F.

Kennedy (1960-1963). This was a multilateral program brought by US aid to Latin America through the financing of infrastructure projects, since the economic collapse of developing countries would be disastrous for the security of the United States.

In this context, promoted by the Organization of American States (OAS), an extraordinary meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council of Ministerial Level was held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, in August 1961, which approved the Charter of Punta del Este, through a referendum on the “Alliance for Progress.” Among the various resolutions supporting the economic and social development of Latin America, the attention that should be given to education as a decisive factor for the economic and social development of peoples was highlighted (Ministério da Educação e Cultura [MEC] & Instituto Nacional de Estudos Pedagógicos [INEP], 1965).

In relation to higher education, the Charter of Punta del Este proposed goals to be achieved in ten years, giving priority to certain points: promote teaching in the field of science, scientific and technological research, and intensify the exchange of students, teachers and researchers in order to stimulate mutual cooperation and the maximum use of the means of training and research (MEC & INEP, 1965).

Several other meetings were held, convened by the OAS, to address the issue of education and economic and social development in Latin America, including that of Santiago de Chile in 1962, Punta del Este in 1962 and Bogotá in 1963.

USAID, linked to the US Department of State, was created in November 1961 to operationalize all US foreign assistance, of which the Alliance for Progress was a part. Since 1964, USAID has integrated and controlled all promotion development agencies operating in Latin America (Pereira, 2017).

Brazilian society, in the early 1960s, was experiencing a time of great economic and political-ideological effervescence. Society became polarized among those who, on the left, sought to adjust the economic model to political ideology, and those who, on the right, sought to adapt political ideology to the economic model. Thus, if on the one hand, the forces of the left defended the nationalization of foreign companies, control of the remittance of profits, royalties, and dividends and the basic reforms (tax, financial, banking, agrarian, educational), on the other, the mobilization of a right wing orientation began, aligned with the business class to combat populism and communism.

There was also an articulation of this group with the Superior School of War (ESG), which defended the theory of interdependence. This articulation between businessmen, wings of the Catholic Church and the military ended on March 31, 1964, when President João Goulart’s government, aligned with the left, was overthrown. According to Saviani (2008), a political rupture was consummated, considered necessary to preserve the current socioeconomic order, resulting in a radical political change with the implementation of the so-called civil–military regime that was in power from 1964 to 1985.



The implementation of this new regime established a greater political and economic alignment with the United States, which had been taking place since the 1940s. However, it had been shaken in recent years, especially since the VIII Consultation Meeting of Foreign Affairs Ministers, convened by the OAS, held in Punta del Este, Uruguay, from June 22 to 31, 1962. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of President João Goulart's parliamentary cabinet, San Tiago Dantas, abstained from voting to expel Cuba from the OAS and, in his speeches, defended the so-called independent foreign policy (IFP), established by the government of Jânio Quadros, which, in addition to rejecting automatic alignment with US positions, advocated closer diplomatic and commercial ties with the countries of the socialist bloc (Manzur, 2014).

In the educational field, the two countries made a commitment to implement reforms at all levels of Brazilian education, being that, in the period from 1964 to 1968, 12 agreements were signed for this purpose. At stake was the search for modernization, not only in education but also in the country. The government of the new regime realized, among other reasons, "due to the influence of technical assistance provided by USAID, the need to adopt, in short, the measures to adapt the educational system to the model of economic development that then intensified in Brazil" (Romanelli, 1978, p. 196).

In this respect, the perspective shows that one of the most sensitive areas of education in Brazil was higher education. Despite the existence of this level of education, officially organized for more than a century, it was only by Decree n. 9851 of April 11, 1931 that the university regime and the Statute of Brazilian Universities were established. Among the purposes of university education were to raise the level of general culture, stimulate scientific research in any domain of knowledge and enable the exercise of professional activities.

More specifically, the document also established a system for lifetime Cathedra, the creation of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters as an integrating unit of the university and the possibility of creating postgraduate courses (Decreto n.19.581, 1931). Nonetheless, not everything that was recommended was implemented until the beginning of the 1960s. Notwithstanding the recommendations, up to the early 1960s, there were relatively few changes.

Not without reasons, since the mid-1950s, the National Union of Students (UNE) in several congresses that were held had pointed out the obsolete and elitist character of universities. After the approval of the LDBEN in 1961, which practically maintained the status quo in universities, they started to fight, mainly for more vacancies in higher education to resolve the issue of *surpluses* (those who reached the minimum grade for entering a certain course, but were unable to enter due to lack of vacancies) and required several changes. Students attributed this fact to the archaic structure of the university with its Cathedra system and the vitality of the position, maintenance of rigid curricula, and absolute lack of a career for university professors, as well as the lack of resources and conditions for the development of research (Fávero, 1991, pp. 150-151).

The necessary modernization of the university, the coincidence regarding the conception of development to be considered, and the international political situation converged on the conclusion of several agreements between the Ministry of Education and Culture of Brazil and USAID. In general, the aim was to provide technical and financial support for the reform of Brazilian university institutions. This is evident in the first agreement, dated June 23, 1965, which was signed between MEC, represented by the Minister of Education and Culture Flavio Suplicy de Lacerda, and USAID, represented by its director Stuart Van Dyke. The agreement aimed to support the US agency in the expansion and restructuring of higher education in Brazil (Alves, 1968).

For the execution of this agreement, to be carried out subsequently through the Directorate of Higher Education of MEC, it was determined that a Higher Education Planning Team (EPES) would be created. This team would be composed of at least five *Brazilian high-level educators*, designated by the Division of Higher Education and five North American educational advisers, from a *competent technical institution*, under a contract promoted by USAID.

In summary, EPES had the purpose of diagnosing the situation of universities and proposing *an ideal system of higher education for Brazil*, defining the direction of transformation according to the country's development needs. The composition of this team, on the Brazilian side, was hampered by the Federal Council of Education (CFE), which was a fact that hindered the execution of the agreement (CUNHA, 2007 b, pp. 165-166).

Under the impulse of the ideas of modernization and the technocratic ideology of planning in search of changes that could *solve all the problems of education*, at the same time an agreement was signed with USAID, the Directorate of Higher Education of MEC hired Rudolph Atcon as a special consultant with the objective of proposing structural changes for Brazilian universities. In the context of the Alliance for Progress implementation, Atcon has stood out as a consultant specializing in higher education in Latin America. In 1962, the OAS Task Force, along with other experts, invited him to assist in the formulation of educational development principles for Latin American countries (Pereira, 2017).

Returning to Brazil between July and September 1965, Atcon visited 12 Brazilian universities and analyzed their structures. From the data collected, he elaborated a detailed diagnosis about their administration and structure (Atcon, 1966). His study resulted in the report entitled *Towards Structural Reformulation of the Brazilian University*, published in 1966 by the Directorate of Higher Education of MEC. In that document, Atcon made suggestions and recommendations that, in his opinion, would make it possible to adapt higher education and university institutions to the needs of Brazil.

Among the numerous proposals of the so-called Atcon Plan, the defense of the principles of university autonomy and authority stands out above the others, as well as the technical and administrative dimension of the process of restructuring higher

education. Furthermore, there was an emphasis on the principles of efficiency and also productivity, the need for a full-time regime for teachers and the creation of a center for basic studies.

Among the proposals made by Atcon was the creation of a Council of Rectors of Brazilian Universities (CRUB) (Atcon, 1966). This proposal was immediately accepted and CRUB was founded in April 1966. According to Cunha (2007a, p. 163), CRUB served as a direct link between USAID and universities, eliminating the need for MEC intermediation.

A new agreement entitled *Advisory for Modernization of University Administration*, signed on June 30, 1966, involved the MEC's Directorate of Higher Education and USAID. It emphasized that the demand for higher education had grown dramatically since the mid-1940s, due to the accelerated social and economic development experienced in the country (Alves, 1968). Alves also stressed that the number of universities had increased significantly; however, there had been no focus placed on updating their administration, namely regarding the situation of entrance exams, financial administration, academic planning, or the physical space of these institutions. That is why it became necessary to modernize university administration, adopting new concepts, methods, and practices of administration (Alves, 1968).

Thus, one of the first tasks of the North American consultants was to visit certain institutions to ascertain the interest of administrators in promoting administrative reform within their institution. For those institutions that showed an interest in modernizing their administration, the consultants offered various forms of performance enhancement, for example, providing specific technical consultancy, promoting seminars to discuss issues of university administration, and promoting short courses in Brazil and the United States for the administrative staff of the universities involved. Brazil would be responsible for coordinating the participation of selected Brazilian universities, and would provide staff (interpreters, secretaries), cover travel expenses in the Brazilian territory related to the services of USAID consultants, and also ensure that the salaries of the personnel selected for courses abroad were maintained during the period of their training (Alves, 1968).

USAID/Brazil would be responsible for supplying the necessary consultants to provide technical assistance to selected universities, and would conduct seminars on administrative issues established by the agreement. In fact, it predicted that about 20 consultants would be required to perform these activities for 18 months between July 1966 and January 1968. USAID would allocate the amount of US\$ 75.000.00 for this purpose; it would also finance the training, in the United States, of 40 scholarship holders occupying key administrative positions and working in the sectors of general administration, in entrance exam systems, cost control accounting, faculty salaries, centralization of files, distribution costs, and the physical planning of university cities and their maintenance (Alves, 1968).

On May 9, 1967, despite major political-ideological controversies surrounding these agreements, a Higher Education Planning Advisory Agreement was signed, reformulating and replacing the MEC-USAID Agreement of July 23, 1965. While the 1965 Agreement aimed to support consultants in restructuring higher education, this new agreement was only intended to “advise” the Higher Education Board of Directors on matters related to the expansion and improvement of higher education in Brazil (Alves, 1968, p. 51).

Under pressure by a portion of public opinion, in contrast to what they called the *intervention of the North American consultants* and the Federal Education Council, the Higher Education Planning Team was replaced by EAPES – the Team Higher Education Planning Advisory Board. The EAPES would be composed of only four high-level Brazilian educators who were members of MEC’s Directorate of Higher Education and four or more American consultants specialized in educational planning. It was also stipulated that it would be the responsibility of the competent Brazilian authorities to determine the educational policies and to approve or oppose the plans prepared by EAPES (Alves, 1968, pp. 50-55).

EAPES members visited and analyzed 14 public and private universities in different regions of the country. This research allowed them to elaborate a diagnosis of university education in Brazil and to present suggestions for future university reform (Ministério da Educação e Cultura [MEC], 1969). Results of this work were released to the government in 1968 and published in 1969 by the Ministry of Education and Culture, under the title *Report of the Higher Education Planning Advisory Team* (MEC, 1969). In summary, the EAPES report highlighted what was needed in the Brazilian university system. The suggestions were to: rationalize costs; extinguish the cathedra system and adopt the departmental regime; implement a teaching career with full-time and exclusive, dedicated teachers; replace the annual discipline regime with a semi-annual regime and the implementation of the credit system; and adopt the unified entrance exam for greater use of vacancies and implement postgraduate courses aiming at the development of advanced research, which was indispensable for the scientific and technological progress of the country (MEC, 1969, pp. 116, 121, 129, 369).

At the beginning of 1968, students continued to promote heated debates and intensified the holding of large street demonstrations asking for a solution to the crisis in universities. In possession of the EAPES report and other studies, the government instituted, on July 2, 1968, by Decree n. 62.937, a University Reform Working Group (GTRU) to urgently study the reform of the Brazilian university, aiming at its efficiency, modernization, administrative flexibility and training of high level human resources. The GTRU involved members of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Finance and Planning and members of the Federal Council of Education (CFE).

In response to the request for urgency, the GTRU submitted, in just over 30 days, its report containing a proposal for reforming higher education. In the initial

considerations, the report highlighted that the Brazilian university, despite a certain amount of progress, was lagging in relation to the economic and social development verified since the 1950s in the country, and therefore was unable to meet the changes that had been taking place ever since. Understood as one of the essential factors of the country's development process, "it was up to the university to create the knowledge essential to the expansion of the national industry," by offering diversified courses capable of satisfying the demands of an increasingly differentiated labour market (Ministério da Educação e Cultura [MEC], 1968, p. 19).

The university reform project presented by the GTRU was based on the Atcon report of 1966 and the report of the Higher Education Planning Advisory Team (EAPES) published in 1969, and contemplated, almost in their entirety, the proposals and recommendations presented in those documents. This project, with minor changes, was assumed as a project of the Executive branch that sent it to the National Congress. The National Congress had to assess the report as a matter of urgency, and approved it without any substantial changes, since not even the opposition party to the government proposed any significant changes (Germano, 1992). The project was transformed into law by the National Congress and sanctioned by the President of the Republic in November 1968. The approval took place in a period of great political tension. Soon after, the Additional Act n.5 was enacted, which strengthened civil-military dictatorship in Brazil. Despite the climate of tension, the reform was well received by most of the students and the population.

The University Reform Law – n. 5.540 of November 28, 1968 – in its first articles, emphasized that higher education had as its main objective research, development of sciences, letters, arts, and the training of university-level professionals. Also, an inseparability between teaching, research, and didactic-scientific, administrative and financial autonomy should be exercised in accordance with the law and the statutes.

The aforementioned law established structural reforms that substantially changed the model of the university that had existed until then, among them, the extinction of the Cathedra regime and the implementation of the departmental system. The Cathedra regime dates back to the time of the Brazilian Empire, being considered the *alma mater* of higher education institutions. In 1931, with the approval of the Statute of Brazilian Universities, the professorship regime became the *main pillar* of the university's structure. The cathedra professor was kept at the top of the hierarchy of the teaching staff, which in its general structure was composed of auxiliary or assistant professors. However, the number of vacancies offered was restricted to the capacity of attendance of the cathedra professor. Thus, through the aforementioned reform of 1968, the Cathedra regime of Brazilian higher education was extinguished and the departmental system was established, one of the most recurrent recommendations of North American consultants (MEC, 1969, pp. 462, 542, 543). According to the consultants:

[...] the *Cathedra*, stripped of the privilege of its holders' vitality, ceases to be, in the university structure, the basic unit of teaching and research and in its place must emerge and consolidate itself the department, a collegiate teaching and research unit, which integrates the various categories of teaching career, hierarchically established (MEC, 1969, p. 161).

In line with the recommendations, Law n. 5.540 / 1968, in its article 12, established the *department* as the smallest fraction of the university structure for all purposes of the administrative and didactic-scientific organization that would comprise related disciplines and bring together professors and researchers for common teaching and research objectives (Lei n. 5.540, 1968).

In this way, the departmental regime would meet the recommendations of the consultants: the rationalization of material and human resources. The departments would have the function of grouping professors, classrooms and laboratories that would serve the entire university and not just for a specific course. This would increase productivity and promote an increase in the number of vacancies (Atcon, 1966, pp. 4, 5, 18; MEC, 1969, pp. 11, 436).

The implementation of the departmental regime, however, was only possible with the approval of complementary laws. Law n. 5.539 of November 27, 1968 approved the Higher Teaching Statute, establishing that there would be only one teaching career obeying the integration between teaching and research. Decree-Law n. 465, of February 11, 1969, established that the teaching career would have three categories of teachers: assistant, adjunct and full professor; further, the teaching assistant must obtain the necessary qualifications to participate in the competition for the teacher assistant position (Decreto-Lei n. 465, 1969).

Also, according to the provisions of article 34 of Law n. 5540/1968, universities should, to the extent of their financial availability, extend the full-time and Exclusive Dedication (DE) regime to teachers, and a compatible remuneration, so that they could dedicate themselves exclusively to teaching and research activities. According to the consultants, it was difficult to imagine that the functioning of a university system aimed at scientific development could succeed without a full-time faculty entirely dedicated to its tasks at the university (Atcon, 1966; MEC, 1969, pp. 329, 567, 576).

Another substantial reform at the Brazilian university at the time to be highlighted was the dismemberment of the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters (FFCL). The conception of the FFCL as an integrating unit of the university had been adopted in the Teaching Reform of 1931; however, this conception had come to be questioned since the passage of the first LDBEN in 1961. Indeed, article 79 of the aforementioned law removed the obligation for universities to have the FFCL as the integrating unit. Over the years, the FFCL began to exercise, almost exclusively, the function of training high school teachers, failing to properly fulfill one of the basic purposes of the university – research. The University of Brasília, created in 1961, became an example

of a university organization that did not need the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters. Organized according to the standards of North American universities, its pedagogical sector was allocated to a unit of applied studies – the Faculty of Education (Cunha, 2007, pp. 73, 74).

In August 1966, the Minister of Education asked the CFE for an opinion on the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters. According to him, the faculty had lost its *foundational narrative thread, failing to fulfill the function for which it had been created*, i.e., rather than pursue research and training for secondary school teachers, research had been abandoned. The technical report prepared by the CFE was transformed into Decree-Law n. 53 of November 8, 1966, which considered the university structure obsolete and ended the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters, determining the creation of a unit aimed at the training of teachers for high school and specialists in education – the Faculty of Education (Decreto-Lei n. 53, 1966).

Newton Sucupira, member of the CFE, at the III Seminar on University Affairs held by the aforementioned Council in August 1968, argued that the sections that traditionally comprised an FFCL – physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, geography, history, philosophy, social sciences, psychology and others – started to constitute the institutes, as happened at the University of Brasília. The pedagogy section should grow to the stature of a college, according to the model of North American teachers' colleges adopted at the university (Cunha, 2007b, pp. 77–78).

Even the adviser Valnir Chagas – an enthusiastic defender of the principle that the FFCL was *the heart of the university* – without abandoning his philosophical positions regarding the unity of knowledge, started to defend that the Faculty of Education assumed the basic function of the university (Cunha, 2007b, p. 77). For Chagas (1968), with the creation of the Faculty of Education, education was institutionalized as a professional activity at a higher level.

The creation of the Education Faculties was not specifically included in Law n. 5.540, however, it had been created by Decree-Law n. 53 of 1966, and its content was somehow incorporated by the law of 1968. According to Cunha (2007b, p. 80), the implantation of these faculties after 1968, was not due to any law or decree, but to mere normative acts from the CFE and the universities themselves.

The third major reform in the university structure was the implementation of strictly postgraduate courses. The first attempts to create postgraduate courses in Brazil go back to the 1930s, when Decree n. 19.851 of April 1931 institutionalized the university as the institution that offered higher education and that should also offer courses to deepen professional and scientific knowledge (Decreto n. 19.851, 1931).

At the inauguration of courses at the University of the Federal District in 1935, the celebrated educator Anísio Teixeira emphasized in his speech the need for postgraduate courses, because, for him, *the university's mission was to research*, to study deeply. Through such research, it would be possible to build Brazilian culture and move human knowledge forward. He also emphasized that:

[...] it is not just a matter of saying that the University needs to dedicate itself to research. It has to formulate the knowledge she is going to teach, which does not yet exist. The University will only be in research when it starts to formulate the culture it will teach. Human culture has to be developed to be taught (Teixeira, 1968, p. 29).

In the following decades, the problem continued to attract attention. In 1946, the Statute of the University of Brazil provided for the creation of postgraduate courses for professional specialization (Decreto n. 21.321, 1946). In this context, the President of the Republic sent a bill to the National Congress proposing the creation of bodies that would assist in the promotion of scientific and technological research and in the formation and improvement of researchers and technicians.

The approach to the North American postgraduate model also began in the early 1950s. Cury (2005, p. 9) highlights that, in 1952, Brazil signed an agreement with the United States and agreements were signed between several universities, making it possible for Brazilian students to travel to the United States to pursue a master's or doctorate. These agreements also provided for the arrival of North American professors in Brazil in order to help develop graduate programs. However, the development of a national postgraduate system at the master's and doctoral levels began especially in the mid-1960s and with greater emphasis in the following decade, in a context in which the modernization of universities was intended to support the economic policy being implemented (Cury, 2005, p. 10; Moreira, 1990).

As part of this policy, Decree n. 54.356 in 1964 established as one of the objectives the now-called Higher Education Personnel Coordination (CAPES), the granting of scholarships for those who wanted to take postgraduate courses at home or abroad. In the same year, the then Minister of Education and Culture asked the Federal Council of Education to commit to the development of a postgraduate regime to be implemented in higher education in the country.

In response to this request, the CFE approved, on December 3, 1965, an opinion identified as number 977/65, signed by the rapporteur Newton Sucupira and other members of the Higher Education Chamber (CES), which dealt with the concept of postgraduate studies and their levels and purposes. The referred opinion defined post-graduation, strictly speaking, as "the cycle of regular courses in the undergraduate segment, systematically organized, aiming to develop and deepen the training acquired within the scope of the graduation and leading to the achievement of an academic degree" (Parecer CFE n. 977/65, p. 166). In this way, it regulated postgraduate studies aiming at forming a body of competent higher education teachers to meet the expansion of teaching, encourage the development of scientific research through the training of researchers, and ensure the effective training of technicians and intellectual workers at the highest standard to meet the needs of national development in all sectors (Parecer CFE n. 977/65, p. 165).



The Chamber of Higher Education of the CFE, in the preliminary considerations, explained that, in compliance with the ministerial warning, the North American graduate program was taken as a model, as a system already proven by a long-term experience that had served as inspiration for other countries. He also stated that in the United States, graduate school constituted the system of courses that followed the bachelor's degree awarded by the college, normally coordinated by the graduate school or graduate faculty, with the power to confer master's degrees (*M. A.* or *M. S.*) and doctorates (*Ph. D.*, *philosophiae doctor*) (Parecer CFE n. 977/65, p. 166). Indeed, the opinion made reference to the fundamental characteristics of the North American graduate program.

Both Atcon's report *Towards Structural Reformulation of the Brazilian University* and the *Report of the Higher Education Planning Advisory Team* had repeatedly pointed out the need to implement postgraduate courses at Brazilian universities. USAID consultants recommended the creation of postgraduate, master's and doctorate level courses, with a system of scholarships and incentives that favoured the most capable and stimulated specialization in the most important areas for the country (Atcon, 1966, p. 119; MEC, 1969, pp. 97, 98, 116, 177).

The report of the working group that elaborated the proposal for the reform of the university began to include postgraduate studies as a prerequisite and co-requisite of the modern university, whose studies and research would help both in the formation of staff and in the increase of high-level research. The doctrinal and normative basis of graduate studies proposed in the GTRU report was based on the opinion of CFE 977/65, as pointed out by Cury (2005, pp. 10, 14). However, in order to be able to implement postgraduate studies at federal universities, it was necessary to pass complementary legislation. The Decree-Law n. 464 of February 11, 1969 established additional rules to that law and specifically dealt with postgraduate studies in its article 36, which designated competent bodies to establish a national postgraduate policy.

According Fávero (1977, p. 81), in that same year, opinion n. 77/69 of the CFE was approved. In order to preserve the high level required by postgraduate studies, it determined standards for the accreditation of courses, considering that the master's and doctoral degrees would only be valid nationally and that graduates would only enjoy the related prerogatives granted to them if the post-graduate courses were accredited by the CFE under the terms of that law.

Due to the depth of the approved changes, the implementation of the 1968 university reform in federal universities was an extremely time-consuming process. The university restructuring plans, in many cases, were approved between 1971 and 1973. Furthermore, it was only in 1974 that some postgraduate courses at the master's level were authorized. The accreditation of these courses with CAPES took place, in most cases, between 1976 and 1977. From then, it is possible to consider that the restructuring of the university was concluded, having been designed to support the modernization process (Moreira, 1990).

The purpose of the university reform was to meet the demands for expanding the number of vacancies. Both Atcon and the USAID consultants advocated a reform based on the principle of rationalization of resources. To this end, they proposed that the university be properly planned in order to achieve the maximum return with the lowest possible expenditure (Atcon, 1966, pp. 4, 5, 18; MEC, 1969, pp. 111, 436). Then, with the reform, a controlled expansion of vacancies was sought to reduce student dissatisfaction, a root of political manifestations contrary to the civil–military regime (Cunha, 2007b). On the other hand, the expansion would result in better use of existing resources, as it avoided duplication of means with the creation of a departmental regime and the credit system, and also by directing students to less sought after courses (Cunha, 2007b, p. 438). The adoption of the departmental regime, combined with the approval of teaching of higher education as a career, which allowed there to be more than one teacher at the same level and in the same discipline, were decisive in providing a significant expansion of the number of available positions in each course, largely due to the demands of the student movement.

As a matter of fact, it was a university reform as bold as it was pragmatic. It broke with the Brazilian university tradition, however, and followed a path based on a well-defined and internationally accepted development model.

## Conclusion

The reform of the Brazilian University in the 1960s was carried out according to national developmental political conditions in an international political context, and was undoubtedly marked by the influence of the United States. The reform brought structure and was important in the modernization process of higher education and of the country. It constitutes, above all, the formalization of an educational policy dynamic that sought to respond to the economic, social, scientific and technological demands placed on Brazilian society and within the framework of international political disputes.

In general, universities had invested little in scientific research and remained attached to the system of the *Cathedra*, maintained as the *girdle* of the university structure in the Statute of Brazilian Universities approved in 1931. In the 1960s, the situation was shown to be completely maladjusted from the intended development of the country. This was why university reform was required in Brazil, but it would only occur in the last years of the 1960s. However, the reform of the university that we dealt with in this study must be understood beyond the strict limits of Law n. 5540 / 68. It is necessary to analyze it within a broader scope of initiatives and reforms, since it enshrined both previous and complementary laws necessary to enable its implementation.

Although the influence of North American consultants in this process of modernization of Brazilian higher education is evident, it is difficult to determine the

exact dimension of the influence of the MEC-USAID Agreements in the university reform represented by Law n. 5.540 / 1968. This is because Brazil and the US had maintained agreements in the field of education since the 1940s, and there were currents of thought about the state of higher education in Brazil that did not depend directly on ideas from North American consultants.

There is no denying the seduction of higher education in the US elicited in countless Brazilian intellectuals. Many Brazilian educators have taken postgraduate courses in the US and North American consultants have been to Brazil on several occasions. It can even be said that the educational thinking of most educators was impregnated with American educational ideas carried out previously, which were reflected in partial reforms in higher education.

In this sense, it is not surprising that renowned Brazilian authors disagree about the dimension of the influence and intentionality of the MEC-USAID Agreements in the reform of the Brazilian university. Romanelli (1999, p. 225), after presenting a detailed analysis of the process that culminated in the approval of Law 5,540/68, concluded by saying the following:

It is not, therefore, fearful to assert that the documents that defined the Brazilian educational policy had its framework and its guiding beams in the MEC-USAID agreements, which thus ceased to act provisionally, as it was explicit in the texts, to permanently act, by laying the foundations of the organization of our education system.

The idea of the importance of these agreements in defining Brazilian higher education policy is quite widespread. Some authors like Tavares (1980) and Arapiraca (1982), as well as the renowned sociologist Florestan Fernandes, simultaneously recognize the great influence of the US in this process and severely criticize the policy related to the MEC-USAID Agreements. From the perspective of Florestan Fernandes, it was fundamentally about submission to an imperialist logic. According to him:

This model, which corresponds in essence to what the university should be today, was based on North American recipes, absorbed by a mixed and partisan mission of Brazilian and North American specialists. I mean, it is the University of a Colony, which the metropolis advises to exist in the colony! It was very serious that Brazilian teachers had accepted this dialogue and even more serious that a military government had adopted the objective of imitating imperial power. This is a specific process of cultural denationalization, by which we dance according to the music played in the center and the centers decide what we should do, and we do it. (Fernandes, 1989, p. 181).

As clearly perceived, we are faced with a position that is aligned with hypercriticalism of the North American model and that is especially critical of the

Brazilian educational policy that chose to follow ideas from the US. Such a position is understandable from an ideological point of view, but it presupposes the existence of the possibility of a modernization alternative that the Brazilian elite, in general, was not in a position to assume.

It is evident that only ideas that could bring the rationality present in the universities of the United States could come from that country, and these would be desired by the Brazilian elite that wanted to share its technological and economic development. For this reason, one of the experts in higher education in Brazil defends the thesis that

[...] the concept of University based on North American models was not imposed by USAID, with the convenience of the dictatorship bureaucracy, but, first of all, it was sought, since the end of the 40s by educational administrators, teachers and students, mainly those, as an imperative of modernization and, even, of the democratization of higher education in our country. When the North American advisers landed here, they found plowed and fertilized land to sow their ideas. (Cunha, 2007b, p. 24).

We consider that in fact the participation of the Americans included always assuming, as was their duty, that their advisory role and their proposals were based on the analysis of the situation of the university in Brazil. There is no doubt that they were guided by the organization of the system of higher education in the United States and that they made use of the strong recognition given to them by the Brazilian authorities, which gave them the capacity to formalize proposals of great assertiveness and topicality. They sought to introduce a rationality based on an already consolidated experience of higher education that was more in line with technocratic modernity. and which pointed in a more versatile and administratively more rational direction that was more in line with the need for economic expansion and development that society had been experiencing. From this institutional point of view, it was absolutely necessary to follow what they proposed: to extinguish the system of professorships and adopt the departmental regime. It was necessary to institute a career of professors in a full-time and exclusively dedicated regime, to establish the semester-based course regime and the credit system, and to institute postgraduate courses in order to promote the development of consistent research (MEC, 1969).

The implementation of these reforms through Law n. 5.540/1968 and those that complemented it were well accepted by society and by the majority of the student body, as they met one of their main demands. However, it should be pointed out that there was no consensus on this issue, since the established government regime and its alignment with American policy were not well accepted by those who were supporters of left-wing ideologies, among them a portion of students, artists and intellectuals.

But naturally, the criticisms, visibly of an ideological nature, have always been forceful from some theorists, among them Florestan Fernandes, who stated that,

[...] the dictatorship used another trick: to flood the University. Simulating the democratization of educational opportunities at the level of third-level education, it expanded the places of higher education, to stifle the rebelliousness of young people, and to expand the private education network. (Fernandes, 1989, p. 106).

Even with such criticisms, categorically based on the MEC-USAID Agreements as well as the reform of the Brazilian university, it is extremely difficult to deny that they had an enormous influence on the university reform approved by Law n. 5.540 of 1968. The fact to be considered is that the university structure, established in that moment, remained practically unchanged until the National Education Guidelines and Bases Law (LDBEN) n. 9.394 of December 20, 1996, when small changes were made. But, in essence, the structure remains the same until the present moment.

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