


Education in Brazil between 1930 and 1985: Prioritizing Quantity over Quality in Educational Expansion

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Abstract

In the history of research on Brazilian education, several studies have addressed the expansion of elementary education over the years in Brazil, in addition to the historical pedagogical context that permeated this process of expansion in the period between 1930 and 1985. The main objective of this article is to analyze the process of expansion of Brazilian elementary education, based on Laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71 of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (NEGFL). This research was based on a qualitative approach to documentary and bibliographic evidence and followed an interpretative research perspective. The article concludes that the educational policy of the military dictatorship in Brazil after the 1960s was supported by these two laws, and that their main objective was to ensure the expansion of vacancies in elementary education, aiming at the minimum qualifications for entry into the labor market, prioritizing the quantity and not the quality of education. Public education realized in the formation of human resources is considered a way to guarantee productivity, attending on the one hand to the demands for qualified labor in the capitalist market, and on the other hand, to the improvement of wages and the distribution of income to the elites.

Keywords: Elementary school. Brazilian education. Educational legislation. Educational expansion. Primary education.

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Resumo

A educação no Brasil entre 1930 e 1985: priorizando a quantidade sobre a qualidade na expansão educacional

Palavras-chave:

Ensino fundamental, educação brasileira, Legislação educacional, Expansão educacional, Educação primária.

Na história da educação brasileira, importantes estudos abordam a expansão do ensino fundamental ao longo dos anos no país, além do contexto pedagógico histórico que permeou esse processo no período entre 1930 e 1985. O principal objetivo deste artigo é analisar o processo de expansão do ensino fundamental brasileiro, com base nas Leis de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDB) no. 4.024/61 e no. 5.692/71. A pesquisa se caracteriza como qualitativa, do tipo documental e de natureza bibliográfica. Para a forma de análises dos dados, assumiu uma perspectiva interpretativa. O artigo conclui que a política educacional da ditadura militar no Brasil após a década de 1960 foi apoiada por essas duas leis e que seu principal objetivo era garantir a expansão de vagas no ensino fundamental, visando à qualificação mínima para ingresso no mercado de trabalho, priorizando a quantidade e não a qualidade da educação. A educação pública materializada na formação de recursos humanos é considerada uma forma de garantir a produtividade; atendendo, por um lado, às demandas de mão de obra qualificada para o mercado capitalista e, por outro, à melhoria dos salários e à distribuição de renda às elites.

Resumen

La educación en Brasil entre 1930 y 1985: priorizar la cantidad sobre la calidad en la expansión educativa

Palabras clave :

Escuela primaria; Educación brasileña; Legislación educativa; Expansión educativa; Educación primaria.

En la historia de la educación brasileña, importantes estudios abordan la expansión de la educación primaria a lo largo de los años en el país, además del contexto pedagógico histórico que permeó este proceso entre 1930 y 1985. El objetivo principal es analizar el proceso de expansión de la educación primaria, basado en las Directrices Nacionales de Educación (LDB) Leyes no. 4.024/61 y no. 5.692/71. La investigación se caracteriza por ser cualitativa, de tipo documental y de naturaleza bibliográfica. En cuanto a la forma de análisis de los datos, asumió una perspectiva interpretativa. El artículo concluye que la política educativa de la dictadura militar en Brasil después de la década de 1960 fue respaldada por estas dos leyes y que su objetivo principal era garantizar la expansión de las vacantes en la escuela primaria, apuntando a la calificación mínima para ingresar al mercado laboral, priorizando la cantidad y no la calidad de la educación. La educación pública materializada en la formación de recursos humanos se considera una forma de garantizar la productividad; atendiendo, por un lado, a las demandas de mano de obra calificada para el mercado capitalista, y por otro lado, a la mejora de los salarios y la distribución del ingreso a las élites.

Introdução

In research conducted on Brazilian elementary education, we found that the issue of educational reforms has been widely discussed by researchers, particularly the expansion of basic education and higher education, as one of the most disturbing issues in the educational sphere in the country.

In the nineteenth century, the provision of elective courses in other countries, for example the United States, was a way to increase undergraduate enrolments and improve the academic performance of students (ELLIOT; PATON, 2018). Scholars emphasize that higher education reform at the international level requires a more flexible curriculum, characterized by this continuous offering of elective courses, which enables students and teachers to adapt to the demands of the labor market. Undergraduate curricula should meet regional and international social needs so as to enhance and expand the different skills and knowledge considered essential for the development of a democratic society (ELLIOT; PATON, 2018).

Much of the scholarly literature on the history of Brazilian education primarily focuses on teacher education programmers in the first half of the twentieth century, as the growth and expansion of Brazilian universities began only in the late 1960s. These teacher education programmers basically followed one of four formats: teaching practice, normal school (whose objective was to prepare teachers to teach in primary schools), undergraduate courses, and postgraduate courses (GONDRA; VIEIRA; SIMÕES; CURY, 2014).

This article aims to analyze the expansion of Brazilian elementary education between 1932 and 1985 within the historical context in which it developed, beginning in 1932 (Francisco Campos Reform), to the military dictatorship, which lasted about 21 years, and addresses the key moments of pedagogical reasoning at that time, which have significantly influenced the current educational system in Brazil. In this context, it is important to understand how this process of national educational expansion, specifically basic education, began in the 1960s, with the Guidelines and Framework Laws (NEGFL)¹ No. 4.024/61 (BRASIL, 1961) and No. 5.692/71 (BRASIL, 1971). These laws emerged during an important social, political, and economic context of the country, the military regime, and influenced other official educational documents, for example, the 3rd LBDEN Law, No. 9.394, promulgated in 1996 (BRASIL, 1996). This law currently applies to education in Brazil.

This educational expansion reached several countries worldwide, but mainly Latin American countries, such as Brazil and Mexico, which underwent reforms aimed at the quality of education and social and educational equity. Multilateral agencies such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) played an important role in developing education in these countries, primarily in relation to financing, aiming at the full development of educational quality and equity (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

¹ Original excerpt of the translation: Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional (LDBN).

Focusing on the social, political, and economic issues of the country during the aforementioned periods, it is fundamental to understand that the public policies and educational reforms implemented over the years have significantly influenced the current system of education in Brazil.

In this light, public policies can be understood as the interference of the state in organization and public administration in the interests of capital. We should think about social policies to understand the implications of public policy for the state social project in its entirety (SHIROMA, 2004). It would be interesting to understand, then, the concept of educational policies as a set of measures elaborated by the state regarding the organization of school education that are primarily aimed at schooling and the qualification of students for the labor market (GERMANO, 1994).

Bearing in mind these historical considerations, this research was based on a qualitative approach of the documentary and bibliographic type (BOGDAN; BIKLEN, 2010). The data analyses followed an interpretative research perspective (ERICKSON, 1985).

Through this article, we aim to contextualize and critically analyze the key chronological changes in the period studied. We hope that this research can contribute to broadening the debate on the history of education in other contexts by addressing educational legislation and educational reform, as well as discussions of school curricula at the elementary and secondary levels from the perspective of Brazilian researchers.

Politics and education in the *Estado Novo* (New State): Pedagogical debates and circulation of ideas

In the 1930s, Brazil experienced one of the most striking moments in its political history, concomitant with a period of a great diversity of projects aimed at the modernization of the country. In this period, Brazil was governed by Getúlio Vargas. It was an era of intense political and pedagogical debates reflecting the political discussions of the time. The right and the left were clearly defined factions, and subsequently they became involved in debates over educational and social issues (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

According to Ribeiro (2010), Getúlio Vargas' government (1930–1945) can be divided into three periods: i) the Provisional Government (1930–1934), characterized by the creation of a new Constitutional Letter and the dissolution of the National Congress; ii) the Constitutional Government (1934–1937), characterized by the cancellation of the 1938 election and the establishment of the dictatorial regime known as *Estado Novo* (New State); and iii) the *Estado Novo* (1937–1945), characterized as centralizing power in Getúlio Vargas, press censorship, and the reduction of civil liberties. In this third period: '[...] police terror, violent repression, deportations imposed by Getúlio Vargas' dictatorship on the population were the

instruments for imposing an “internal peace” felt to be necessary by the elite groups [...]’ (RIBEIRO, 2010, p. 115).²

In this context, Vargas rose to power and established the *Estado Novo* (New State), which established Vargas’ dictatorship in the country, and started the (re)democratization process, which characterizes the post-1945 period. From the early years, Vargas paid great attention to education, which would play a fundamental role in consolidating the political order that was established in the country. During this period, debates about education were intense, as they had been since the 1920s; they focused on defending the expansion of primary schooling to all social segments, especially the less privileged ones.

In order to understand education in this period, we identify two important strains of thought about Brazilian education: new pedagogy (New School), introduced by the liberal intellectuals who expressed their desires for an industrialized and democratic country and supported a new educational project that consistently used newly acquired knowledge (SHIROMA, 2004), and the traditional pedagogy defended by the Catholic Church (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). The former was known historically as ‘new education professionals’. They have greatly influenced educational thinking in Brazil by spreading an ideology focused on qualitative and quantitative changes for Brazilian public education (supporters of renewing ideas). They created the ‘Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education’ in 1932, which proposed a new pedagogy and a reformed educational policy, in which educational reconstruction in the country would focus on free and compulsory public schooling. However, Catholics were radically opposed to this document, which would later be called the *Escola Nova* (New School) manifesto. Catholics had a great influence on the government which can be better understood through future political projects for Brazilian education developed during this period (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

The diversity of proposals presented to society involved these two main currents of educational thinking: on the one hand, the ‘new education professionals’ and, on the other, the adherents to traditional pedagogy, with factions linked to the Catholic Church³, caused the state to control various educational trends, mediating disputes between these two currents of educational tendencies. The state, however, emerged more in favor of the conservative forces.⁴

² Original excerpt of the translation: ‘[...] terror policial, a repressão violenta, as deportações impostas pela ditadura de Getúlio Vargas à população foram os instrumentos de imposição de uma ‘paz interna’ sentida como necessária pelos grupos dominantes [...]’. (RIBEIRO, 1992, p. 115).

³ The ‘New Education Professionals’ basically advocated free education, secularism, and public accountability in education, while conservatives favoured the subordination of education to religious doctrine, the differentiation between women and men, and the responsibility of the family in education.

⁴ The constitution of the historiography of Brazilian education framed a distinction between liberals and conservatives in a scenario of competing didactic-pedagogical theories. However, the struggle for control of education did not mean an impassable division between liberals and Catholics. There are, for example, postulates of the New School to which Catholics were not entirely opposed, and the participation of ‘Education Professionals’ later in the consolidation of *Estado Novo* (New State).

In 1933, the Constituent Assembly⁵ aimed to elaborate a National Plan of Education and guarantee resources for the Brazilian educational system. It was a moment of mediation between ideas, for an educational policy of both Catholics and liberals (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). The Vargas government, neutral at times, making speeches about the relevance of education in the political formation of the people, found itself against the wall: it needed to arbitrate the dispute between these two projects with skill and parsimony, because it depended on the support of both for its success. Moreover:

The Constitution also made compulsory the public tender for the filling of teaching positions, determined as the state's responsibility the supervision and regulation of public and private education institutions, determined budget allocations for education in rural areas and, finally, established that the Union should reserve at least 10% of the annual budget for education. (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, p. 45)⁶

The events during the Vargas government were part of a larger project aimed at structuring a national and unified system of education, which had not existed before. Among the measures taken, the educational reforms of the Ministers Francisco Campos in 1931 and Gustavo Capanema, in 1942 had the greatest impacts. In essence, the Vargas regime officialized educational dualism: a bifurcated system of education in which the country's elites (a project for those who would continue studying and reach university, preparing for leadership positions) were destined for secondary education, while establishing technical-vocational education for the popular classes, thereby defining the social layers in the construction of the Brazilian nation. In other words, two systems of education were created, one for the elites and another for everyone else (ROMANELLI, 2014).

These progressive measures were discussed by Catholics, who managed to impede the projects of secular (lay) schooling⁷. In 1937, the new Brazilian Constitution was promulgated, which from the outset differed from that of 1934, in that it was constructed by the dictatorial system of political organization in the Vargas government. Education continued to be an important duty that the state had to fulfil (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). In this sense, we can affirm that the main intention of this Constitution was to provide educational dualism, that is, a system in which the elites would continue their studies through the public or private system. The popular classes, on the other hand, would study in professional schools.

Undoubtedly, the Constitution of 1937 represented the desires of conservative sectors that, bringing together the figure of Vargas, wanted to give the State a para-fascist orientation [...]. And the

⁵ The Constituent Assembly of 1933, elected by the people, charged the Union with putting the 'National Education Plan into action'. It proposed in the Constitution of 1934 that education should be obligatory and totally free (primary education) and that later there would also free secondary and higher education.

⁶ Original excerpt of the translation: 'A Constituição ainda tornou obrigatório o concurso público para o provimento de cargos no magistério, determinou como incumbência do Estado a fiscalização e regulamentação das instituições de ensino público e particular, determinou dotações orçamentárias para o ensino nas zonas rurais e, finalmente, fixou que a União deveria reservar no mínimo 10% do orçamento anual para a Educação' (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, p. 45).

⁷ Religious teaching was inserted into public school, and private educational establishments plus the family were recognised in their educational role.

Constitution itself, made to contain the democratic advance, ended up being and part run over by the historical needs of the popular classes, to which Vargas never ceased to send a word of consolation and hope. Thus, during the *Estado Novo* (New State), many measures were taken in order to comply with the Constitution, but also others were developed in order to overcome the magnificent laws established with the retail dictatorship. (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, p. 83)⁸

This helps us understand that political debates in the 1930s focused on the modernization of Brazil; it was indispensable that this national, centralizing, anti-liberal, and interventionist modernization (construction) take place to arrive at social and educational reforms. This happened at a time when there were a high number of primary school enrolments, but school attendance was still precarious. However, a crucial question remains: did the Brazilian government recognize the place and purpose of education at the end of the 1930s?

A moment that clearly shows this attempt at modernization was the Revolution of 1930, in which Brazilian political society suffered an impact in the economic, social, and educational fields, but the ideas of New Pedagogy began spreading nationwide. The provisional government established after the Revolution introduced the elitist ‘Francisco Campos Reform’,⁹ which offered a rigid structure for the national educational system (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

However, this reform was unable to solve the problems of popular education, nor was it concerned quantitatively or qualitatively with primary education (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). In the same year, the Ministry of Education and Public Health was created, concomitantly with the IV National Conference on Education, which served as the main platform to discuss the education situation in Brazil and formulate future projects for education.

It was a question of adapting education to guidelines that were defined in the political and educational fields. The objective was to create a more adequate education for the modernization that was desired for the country and that would be a complement to the revolutionary work, guiding and organizing the new nationality to be built. (SHIROMA, 2004, p. 18)¹⁰

In other words, in the New State in the 1940s, political and pedagogical debates continued to circulate in civil society. According to Buffa and Nosella (2001), the main characteristics of the Vargas

⁸ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘Sem dúvida, a Constituição de 1937 representou os anseios de setores conservadores que, aglutinando-se a figura de Vargas, desejavam imprimir ao Estado uma orientação parafascista [...] E a própria Constituição, feita para conter o avanço democrático, acabou sendo e parte atropelada pelas necessidades históricas das classes populares, as quais Vargas jamais deixou de remeter alguma palavra de consolo e esperança. Assim, durante o Estado Novo, muitas medidas foram tomadas no sentido de cumprir a Constituição, mas também, outras foram desenvolvidas no sentido de ultrapassar as leis magnas instauradas com a ditadura varguista’ (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, p. 83).

⁹ Francisco Campos was part of the group known as new education professionals and had contact with both liberals and the Catholic Church. Regarding the reforms, he tried to create the National Council of Education’s Guidelines for Higher Education and to organise secondary education.

¹⁰ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘tratava-se de adaptar a educação a diretrizes que se definiam no campo político e educacional. O objetivo era de criar um ensino mais adequado à modernização que se almejava para o país e que se constituísse em complemento da obra revolucionária, orientando e organizando a nova nacionalidade a ser construída’ (SHIROMA, 2004, p. 18).

regime in that period were the centralization of power, the weakening of the legislature, and the strengthening of the executive, which led to the repression of the educational political debates taking place in that period and the political persecution of intellectuals, for example, Anísio Teixeira and Paschoal Leme. For the authors, the *Estado Novo* was concerned with meeting the interests of capitalism, such as professional training that would serve the country's industries, which led to increased educational dualism (ROMANELLI, 2014).

However, in 1942, a series of elitist and conservative Reforms were created, aimed at the national educational system: The Organic Laws of Teaching¹¹ or 'Capanema Reforms', also, in a certain way, contributed to a systematic advance in national education, and in this sense the New State was in fact a dictatorship. It did not function properly in the National Congress; political parties acted illegally and without elections. The growth of industrialization during this period added to the already growing population. It is in this context that the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), which are still in force in the country, emerged (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

During this regime, there was a growth of industrial development and urbanization in the country. Both demanded technical labor, which was sufficient encouragement for the government to fulfil an important provision of the Constitution of 1937: vocational education for the lower classes. We can thus see a continuity of educational dualism. The path to higher education seemed to be easier for the elites than for the 'poorest' classes, who would move through different professional courses and, very often, drop out of school.

Secondary education, as specified in the Organic Laws¹², was rigorous and aimed to prepare students through a curriculum that emphasized a strong culture with social influences of humanism, besides providing patriotic teachings. There was an extensive program of tests and evaluations as well as authoritarian characteristics, as it was directed by the ideology of the New State. Indeed, 'the legislation was clear: the school should contribute to the division of classes and, from an early age, separate by differences in the chances of cultural acquisition, leadership and direction' (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, p. 86).

However, the vocational education system proposed by the Organic Laws failed to keep pace with the progress of industrialization in the country. The rate of industrial progress in Brazil demanded a qualified labor force in the short term, which resulted in insufficient time for preparation in vocational

¹¹ These laws aimed to establish guidelines on all levels of education in the country. Basically, they were consolidated in decrees that ordered primary, secondary, industrial, commercial, normal, and agricultural education.

¹² In addition to taking care of primary and secondary education, these laws organised a vocational education system, expressing the interest of the *Estado Novo* (New State).

schools. In view of this, the government action in this scenario was to create a vocational education system¹³ parallel to the official system which could solve this problem, because the middle class itself was dissatisfied with the short time of preparation for a labor market with an accelerated demand for technical labor in this period of rapid industrial progress. It was at that moment that the National Teaching System for Commercial Learning (NTSCL)¹⁴ and National Teaching System for Industrial Learning (NTSIL)¹⁵ emerged; these education systems, created by the government at that time and still in force today, have played a fundamental role in the Brazilian educational system (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). It was clear to businessmen that they needed to make the factory a school, an ideal place for the formation of national industrialism, that is, its primary function would be to organize and manage schools of learning and industrial training throughout the country (SHIROMA, 2004).

Interestingly, NTSIL recognised that the public education system should take care of literacy and primary education, because it is at this stage that the majority of workers are formed; their absence in civil society would create a major obstacle in reaching the industrial market, which was on the rise at the time (SHIROMA, 2004). The New State faced a difficult moment in its initial years from 1937 to 1941, when Brazil entered the Second World War; it was senseless to fight against totalitarian regimes if the country was ruled by a fascist dictatorship (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). However, the stability of bourgeois rule was consolidated during the New State (GERMANO, 1994).

[...] to fight for an anti-liberal policy, it was fundamental for the ‘future of the nation’ to be achieved, demanding a more resistant state. This future would be in the economic, industrial and educational development of the country, i.e., it would be an authoritarian state that monopolizes multiple functions, from the intervention and regulation of the economic sphere—leading the process of industrialization—to the civic education of the people. (GERMANO, 1994, pp. 44–45)¹⁶

After the collapse of the New State in 1945, there was an increase in popular demonstrations throughout Brazil. The new constitution of 1946 obliged public authorities and the private network to guarantee education at all levels. At the same time, there was an increase in the number of workers in the country as a result of the growing urbanization and industrialization, which began in the 1930s (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

¹³ Later, this education system also played a very important role in educational policy during the military regime (between 1964 and 1985) by multiplying the number of work-oriented schools: about 600 of them were built in the country during the military period, with US funding from USAID (Agency for International Development).

¹⁴ Original excerpt of the translation: Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial (SENAC).

¹⁵ Original excerpt of the translation: Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (SENAI).

¹⁶ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘lutar por uma política antiliberal, era fundamental para que o “futuro da nação” fosse alcançado, demandando de um Estado mais resistente. Este futuro estaria no desenvolvimento econômico, industrial e educacional do país, ou seja, trata-se de um Estado autoritário que açambarque múltiplas funções, desde a intervenção e regulação da esfera econômica – conduzindo o processo de industrialização – até a educação cívica do povo’ (GERMANO, 1994, pp. 44–45).

It is thus evident that the period from 1932 to 1947 saw a strong balance between traditional pedagogy and new pedagogy (the latter was predominant from 1947 to 1961), since it marked the emergence of the first National Education Guidelines and Framework Law for Brazilian Education, known as Law No. 4.024/61 (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). This historical context was also characterized by the transition from new pedagogy to technical pedagogy, which will become clear in the subsequent section.

Military dictatorship and the emergence of the expansion of primary education in Brazil

The campaign in defense of the public schools, initiated during the years of the Vargas Era (1930–1945) and including the period known as the New State, continued after the end the 1950s, because the emphasis given the government of Juscelino Kubitschek (JK) was largely due to the national development policy that he proposed. His proposal referred to improvements in national education as the key to national industrial development—that is, education for work, which provided an incentive for the technical-vocational education that later became the national educational system (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

During this period, we observe a large increase in the number of technical schools in the country, which aimed to train qualified labor to meet the demands of the labor market. Resources for industrial education increased significantly, although a large portion of the Brazilian population still had only basic knowledge of reading and writing (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

As a result of the situation of national education, characterized as elitist and anti-democratic, JK handed over the government to his successor Jânio Quadros, who, during his term (1960–1961)¹⁷, sought to contain the expansion of higher education and prevent more colleges from joining the federal education system (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

In relation to illiteracy and basic education, Juscelino oscillated between conflicting and incongruous poles. Now he was crying out for private resources for education, hitting the old key that the State could not assume, alone, the burden of the universalization of basic education. At other times, inadvertently, they said they were willing to grant federal financial aid to private institutions that could collaborate with public education in the task of distributing educational services. (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, pp. 131–132).¹⁸

¹⁷ Jânio was elected for the 1961–1965 term, but his government lasted only seven months, as he resigned as President after being denounced on television and radio by the governor of Guanabara of the state of Rio de Janeiro, who alleged that the President intended to reform institutions in the country by amending the constitution without the support of Congress (CPDOC-FGV, 2020). In addition, it is important to point out that the policy adopted by Jânio Quadros was extremely populist, nationalist, and reformist (SILVEIRA, 2013).

¹⁸ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘Em relação ao analfabetismo e a educação básica, Juscelino oscilou entre pólos conflitantes e incongruentes. Ora clamava por recursos privados para a educação, batendo na velha tecla de que o Estado não poderia assumir, sozinho, os encargos da universalização do ensino básico. Em outros momentos, inadvertidamente, dizia-se disposto a conceder auxílio financeiro federal para as instituições particulares que pudessem colaborar com o ensino público na tarefa de distribuição de serviços educacionais’ (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, pp. 131–132).

In this scenario, with national development underway, we observe a serious problem: how did the State and political society experience this new ideology, since the very economy maintained by the government failed to follow this path of development by opting for foreign investments from countries such as the United States? In our understanding, this resulted in a conflict of politics with the existing ideology that education is the key to national development.

In addition, the educational situation in the country was very bad: half of the population remained illiterate and less than 10% of students reached grade 4 (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). One of the government's solutions was to expand primary schools, reinforcing the issue of the expansion of elementary education. Subsequently, in the 1950s, the workers' movement, increasingly dependent on the state, was vulnerable; peasant leagues (COSTA; CABRAL, 2016) and rural unions began to emerge. In the educational field, the end of this decade was marked by discussions between intellectuals about the NEGFL in the National Congress, while several elite intellectuals sought to spread their ideologies through mass media (television, radio) and the churches, among other venues (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985).

As we enter the 1960s, we can identify that these years presented important historical moments for Brazil in terms of political disputes and discussions of Brazilian education. Thus, in 1961, NEGFL Law No. 4.024/61 was promulgated (the first NEGFL of the country), deeply subordinated to the net of private education and the Catholic Church, giving indiscriminate financing to both and enabling a strong expansion of Brazilian education. During discussions on the creation of this NEGFL, the main disputes were between the Catholics, who proposed a defense of the freedom of teaching, and the educators who defended free and secular public schools. It is important to clarify that with this Law, teaching in Brazil became the right of public power and private initiative. In this sense, the state had a clear route to finance the private network (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985).

The NEGFL triggered a series of popular campaigns, with students as their main representatives, reinforcing the defense of public schools discussed in the late 1950s, at a time of dissatisfaction with the social and educational situation in the country (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985). In this context, several popular movements around culture and national education grew in the streets, pushing many intellectuals and politicians to worry about the consequences and the direction that the country was taking, specifically with regard to education.

It is important to mention that the Decennial Education Plan (1962), created in the 1960s, imposed the government's obligation to finance education at a minimum of 12% of the resources collected by the Union. We can affirm that this plan aimed to qualitatively and quantitatively improve Brazilian education (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985).

During this period, Brazilian society was divided into those who advocated an adjustment to the economic model so that the poorest would not be excluded, and those who sought to defend a policy that

prioritized the country's elites (SAVIANI, 2008). Moreover, according to Saviani (2008), the articulation between businessmen and the military that led to the military coup of March 31, 1964, with the dominant classes as victors (powerful economic forces in the country, such as businessmen and bankers, for example), was also marked by various agreements made with the United States that influenced education in Brazil. These agreements, which became known as the 'MEC-USAID Agreements', guided the productivity conception of education in which the maximum result is attained with the minimum financial input.

However, in reality, USAID¹⁹ was a strategy aimed at injecting financial resources into Latin America to promote modernization and to combat communism (SILVEIRA, 2013). Brazil was undergoing a process of internationalization with multinational companies installing themselves in the country and large loans coming in from foreign financial agencies, with the justification that this would accelerate the economy, but causing high dependence on the United States. However, this process, although it presented significant progress, did not solve the social problems that worsened in the country, such as high unemployment rates, low quality of life for poorer populations, and a high concentration of income among the country's elites (SILVEIRA, 2013).

As a result, the establishment of the military government in 1964, a dictatorial, political, and bourgeois regime, was initiated and the military solidified its leadership of the state (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). This regime was established to guarantee national capital and protect the country against the possible threat of socialism, standing against any obstacle that might hinder the economy and national politics in Brazil, along with the new ideology of 'National Security' formulated in the Superior School of War and greatly influenced by American interests and values (SHIROMA, 2004). However, Germano illustrates that the Superior School of War constituted an ideological apparatus within the Armed Forces intended for the formation of civil and military elites (GERMANO, 1994).

The military dictatorship sought to bring education within the economy of national development in force at the time. In this sense, education during the military regime was, in fact, planned by economists who, together with the industrial bourgeoisie and the federal government, took control of civil society by rationalizing and controlling the national economy in order to accelerate the process of accumulation and centralization of capital in the country (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). However, the popular classes and elites were unhappy with the government's policies, especially those related to education, when they realized this lack of democracy in the country. In other words, the ideology of the coup of 1964 tried to adapt to the national economy. It was in this context that the so-called 'Liberation Pedagogy' arose²⁰ with American liberal influences (SHIROMA, 2004).

¹⁹ In other words, education should train professional technicians through a technological and advanced society, and should be directed towards the accumulation of capital (SILVEIRA, 2013).

²⁰ This new pedagogy had characteristics of Catholic Church social thought, strongly based on the doctrines of the Church, thus making it distant from Marxist socialism.

Thus, with the coup of 1964, we can observe a continuity in the political and social history of the country, of the exclusion of the popular classes and favoring of the elites (mainly military and businessmen). The creation of the Institutional Acts²¹ made evident the authoritarianism of this regime and helps us identify an attempt to institutionally prepare the military dictatorship, concomitant with a state that was trying to reorganize itself (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). This coup was an intense political articulation submitted to economic interests and with strong repression of the press, art, and culture, or any other display of dissatisfaction with the government and the established regime. (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985).

After the creation of the Institutional Acts (Capital letter), which dictated what had to be obeyed by the Brazilian people, a new Brazilian constitution was promulgated in 1967 (GERMANO, 1994). The 1967 constitution, also known as the ‘Institutionalization of the State of National Security’, legitimized the militarization of the state and granted significant autonomy to the armed forces. In spite of this, some ‘democratic gaps’ opened, such as: habeas corpus, guarantees against the invasion of homes, the right to trial and defense by jury, and the right of expression, among others. This opening, important in the social mobilizations of validation of the regime in 1967 and 1968 and expressed in AI-5 document (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985), guaranteed ample rights to capital, but was inconsistent with regard to the issue of labor, since wages and the market were to be regulated by the executive, and stability in employment was eliminated through the Guarantee Fund for Severance of Service (GFSS)²² (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

In the economic field, we can observe a strong national capitalism, related to the ideology of national security, justifying the heavy investment of the state in the infrastructure necessary for capital accumulation (GERMANO, 1994). In this way, the federal government demonstrated a centralising character by eliminating the economic autonomy of the states, making them dependent on the federal government.

This Constitution created a State that violated the republican principle of the separation of powers, since it was based almost exclusively on executive power. The controls lowered in the institutional acts assumed a constitutional power, with an institutionalized political regime and, consequently, a form of government of a notoriously authoritarian nature. (GERMANO, 1994, pp. 62–63)²³

As Germano rightly points out, as a result of political debates regarding social and educational issues, the state decided to promulgate so-called ‘mass literacy’, another proposal for educational expansion that aimed to reduce illiteracy in the Brazilian population and increase awareness of serious social problems. This can be better seen in the government of João Goulart (1961–1964), which proposed the ‘National

²¹ Among these acts, we highlight AI-5, which really ‘showed the faces’ of the military dictatorship, establishing total autonomy for the President of the Republic, because it closed the national congress, limited the judiciary’s power, and ended individual and collective rights. A true network of repression began to devastate the country, causing even universities and educational institutions to have their political ideology ‘ceased’.

²² With the FGTS (original excerpt from the translation of *Fundo de Garantia por Tempo de Serviço - FGTS*), employment stability in the private sector was eliminated, as the first flexible experience in Latin America (LUZ; SANTIN, 2010).

²³ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘Essa Constituição criava um Estado que violava o princípio republicano da separação dos poderes, uma vez, que tomava por base, quase que exclusivamente, o Poder Executivo. Os controles baixados nos atos institucionais assumiram um poder constitucional, de regime político institucionalizado e, por conseguinte, de forma de governo de notório cunho autoritário’ (GERMANO, 1994, pp. 62–63).

Literacy Plan' to teach millions of Brazilians to read and write in a very short period of time. However, this proposal failed, because it was impossible to teach this national contingent to read in a short span of time; moreover, the state did not present a pedagogical proposal for this plan, leading to a decrease in the quality of Brazilian education, which was already among the worst in the world (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

It is important to clarify that this mass literacy had an important objective: to contribute to the reduction of poverty and marginalization in the wealthiest classes in the country and also significantly increase the number of voters, since at this time voting was not yet allowed to the illiterate. At this moment, we observe a quantitative increase in the number of enrolments in primary education, reinforced by Law No. 4.024/61; this was the beginning of the expansion of Brazilian primary education. Subsequently, the Brazilian Literacy Movement²⁴ (BLM), led by the Brazilian intellectual Paulo Freire, emerged in 1967²⁵, which also did not meet the expectations of the government in imparting literacy to a large part of the Brazilian population.

After an economic adjustment between 1965 and 1967, Brazil began economic expansion, leading to the Brazilian 'Economic Miracle' (1968–1973), in which the gross national product (GNP)²⁶, exports, and even the population began to grow considerably (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001). The state developed financial resources and the economy in this period, since both were under its control, and also created several state companies (GERMANO, 1994).

However, after the ideology of 'national development' was replaced by 'national security', several students who were unhappy with education under the military regime insisted on university reforms, making the university itself a space for struggle against this regime. Consequently, Law No. 5.540/68²⁷ (Higher Education Reform) was enacted in 1968, which, like Laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71 reflected unhappiness with the "national education system in the period 1975–1985, guided by an anti-grassroots legislative jungle" (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001, p. 170). To elaborate, educational policy in the military regime developed around the following axes:

- 1) Political and ideological control of school education, at all levels [...] As a result, the military and dictatorial state fails to exercise total and complete control over education;
- 2) Establishment of a direct and immediate relationship, according to the 'theory of human capital', between education and capitalist production, which is most evident in the reform of secondary education;
- 3) Encouragement of research linked to the accumulation of capital;
- 4) Lack of commitment to the financing of public and free education, denying, in practice, the discourse of valuing school

²⁴ Original excerpt of the translation: Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização (MOBRAL).

²⁵ This movement aimed to reduce much of the national illiteracy by about 10% in a period of ten years. In order to achieve this, a mass communications network (radio: the Minerva project, and television) was organised to spread this movement. However, the BLM (Brazilian Literacy Movement), due to not being able to solve this serious problem, was left aside at a time when high school dropout rates and the questioning of the pedagogical methods used during this period were not adequate for the illiterate, who were increasing in the country.

²⁶ Original excerpt of the translation, Produto Interno Bruto (PIB).

²⁷ It is not our objective to analyse this law specifically at this time, since it would deviate from the objectives of this article, but only to cite it for a better understanding of the Brazilian educational system during the military period.

education [...] In this way, the Regime delegates and encourages the participation of the private sector in the expansion of the educational system and disqualifies the public school of 1st and 2nd degrees. (GERMANO, 1994, pp. 105–106)²⁸

Consequently, in 1971, Law No. 5.692/71 (in the second NEGFL) was enacted, which, like the previous Law, introduced important changes in the structure of education. According to Shiroma (2004), this time there were no disputes between the church and the defenders of free, secular, public education. The most important change in this law, in addition to making high school education entirely professional, was compulsory schooling for 4 to 8-year-olds through an expansion of primary education.

Leading on from Shiroma (2004), Ferreira and Bittar (2008) affirm that Law No. 5.692/71 had the objective, besides universalizing teaching, of increasing the productive efficiency of labor and the capitalist modernization of production. In other words, education in this period was conceived as an instrument at the service of the technocratic rationality of making Brazil a ‘great power’. In this understanding, the reforms that occurred in the 1960s and 1970s were related to the desires of the military regime: development of education for the formation of human capital; union between education and work; integration of national politics with national security plans; and repression and political-ideological control of the intellectual and artistic life of the country, besides not counting on the participation of civil society (SHIROMA, 2004).

In our analysis, through important chronological moments in the history of education, we arrive at NEGFL Laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71, which present relevant information to help us analyze this process of expansion (Chart 1). We begin with an analysis of these Laws in the context of mandatory elementary education, expansion, and financing. It is not our objective to analyze the historical context and the emergence of the current NEGFL (No. 9.394/96), as that would require a greater focus on national educational history and deviate from the objectives of this article.

Chart 1. Expansion, compulsion, and financing primary education: Analysis of NEGFL laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71*	
Law No. 4024/61	Law No. 5.692/71
Art. 9 - To the Federal Council of Education, complete, among others:	Art. 4 - The curricula of teaching of 1st and 2nd degree education will have a common core, obligatory in national scope.
a) To indicate compulsory subjects for high school systems;	Art. 7 - The inclusion of moral and civic education, physical education, artistic education and health

²⁸ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘1) controle político e ideológico da educação escolar, em todos os níveis [...] Em decorrência, o Estado militar e ditatorial não conseguir exercer o controle total e completo da educação; 2) Estabelecimento de uma relação direta e imediata, segundo a “teoria do capital humano”, entre educação e produção capitalista e que aparece de forma mais evidente na reforma do ensino do 2º grau; 3) Incentivo à pesquisa vinculada a acumulação de capital; 4) Falta de comprometimento com o financiamento da educação pública e gratuita, negando, na prática, o discurso de valorização da educação escolar [...] Dessa forma, o Regime delega e incentiva a participação do setor privado na expansão do sistema educacional e desqualifica a escola pública de 1º e 2º graus’ (GERMANO, 1994, pp. 105–106).

<p>m) Adopt or propose modifications and measures aimed at the expansion and improvement of education;</p> <p>q) Annually analyse education statistics and complementary data.</p> <p>Art. 22 - The practice of physical education in primary and secondary courses, up to the age of 18 years, will be mandatory.</p> <p>Art. 26 - Primary education will be taught in at least four annual grades.</p> <p>§ The education systems may extend their duration up to six years.</p> <p>Art. 27 - Primary education is compulsory from the age of seven.</p> <p>Art. 28 - The administration of education in the states, federal district, and territories shall promote:</p> <p>a) An annual survey of the registration of school-age children;</p> <p>b) The inspection of the attendance of the classes.</p>	<p>programs in the full curricula of 1st and 2nd degree establishments will be mandatory.</p> <p>Art. 18 - The teaching of the first grade will have a duration of eight academic degrees and will comprise, annually, at least 720 hours of activity.</p> <p>Art. 19 - In order to enter the first degree education, the student must be at least seven years old.</p> <p>Art. 20 - The teaching of first degree will be obligatory for 7 to 14-year-olds, being the responsibility of the Cities to promote, annually, the survey of the population that reaches school age and to proceed to call for registration.</p> <p>Art. 47 - Commercial, industrial, and agricultural companies are obliged to maintain free primary education for their employees and the education of their children between the ages of seven and fourteen, or to compensate for this purpose by means of educational salary contributions, as established by law.</p>
<p>Art. 31 - Industrial, commercial, and agricultural companies, in which more than one hundred people work, are obliged to maintain free primary education for their employees and their children.</p>	<p>Art. 56 - The federal government is responsible for allocating resources for the granting of scholarships.</p> <p>§ 1st - To the federal resources, the states, the federal district, and the municipalities will add their own resources for the same purpose.</p>
<p>_____</p>	
<p>Art. 38 - In the organization of high school education, the following norms will be observed, among others:</p> <p>VI - Compulsory attendance and only students who have attended at least 75% of classes may take the final exam.</p>	
<p>Art. 93 - The resources referred to in Art. 169 of the Federal Constitution shall be applied preferentially in the maintenance and development of the public education systems in accordance with the plans established by the Federal Council and by the state councilors of education so that they ensure, among others:</p> <p>1) Access to school for as many learners as possible;</p> <p>§ 1 - Education expenses are considered:</p> <p>a) Maintenance and expansion of education, among others.</p>	

The Union will provide financial cooperation for education in the form of, inter alia:
§ 3 - A subsidy or financing shall not be granted to an educational establishment which, under false pretext, refuses enrolment to students on the grounds of race, color, or social condition.

*Authors' translation

In Law No. 4.024/61, we can identify signs that contributed to this expansion; in Article 9, Paragraphs *e*, *m*, and *q*, referring to the Administration of Education and mentioning that the Federal Council of Education ‘is responsible for indicating disciplines of mandatory character for the high school system’s’, with a duty to ‘propose measures that aim at the expansion and improvement of education’; since in our understanding, it was a form of the government of the time to try to ‘inspect’ this process of expansion quantitatively.

Paradoxically, Article 18 of this Law reflects an attempt to control this expansion of teaching. It states: ‘the enrolment in official high schools and universities of a student with more than one failure in any grade or discipline will be refused’. It seems that the most important thing was for the student to complete elementary school, regardless of how he or she learned and developed. However, this article differs from Article 4 of Law No. 5.692/71 in its reference to school performance in Paragraph 2: ‘students with insufficient performance may obtain approval through recovery studies, which must be provided by the educational establishment’. Notably, Article 15 of this law states that the school regulations may admit a student into the serial regime from the 7th grade on, the enrolment dependent on one or two subjects of the previous grade, but provided that the curriculum sequence is followed.

Law No. 4.024/61 makes mandatory the practice of Physical Education in primary and secondary education up to the age of 18, while Law No. 5.692/71 also provides for compulsory artistic education, as well as moral and civic education.

Articles 26, 27, 28, and 31 of Law No. 4.024/61 state that primary education is compulsory from the age of seven, should be taught in four annual grades, class attendance should be supervised, and industrial, commercial and agricultural companies should provide free primary education for their employees and children. Law No. 5.692/71, in its first article, establishes that the objective of 1st and 2nd degree education is to provide students with the necessary training to develop their potential for self-fulfillment, qualification for work, and preparation for the conscious exercise of citizenship.

The municipalities were responsible for carrying out a survey of the population reaching school age in order to proceed with their annual call for enrolment. We observe an increase in the number of enrolments

in primary education at this time, since the Administration of Education monitored whether the obligation was being fulfilled by schools.

Article 34 of this Law (5.692/71) establishes that this education system will have two cycles: junior high school (5th to 8th grade) and high school (1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade). However, Law No. 4.024/61, Article 36 says, in reference to high school, that the entry of a student to the 5th grade (1st year of the cycle), would depend on passing an exam, since Article 37 states that to reach the 1st year of the current high school, the student was only required to complete the junior high school.

Unlike the current NEGFL, both laws (4.024/61 and 5.692/71) establish that the year must have at least 180 days of effective school work.²⁹ Item VI of Article 38 of Law No. 4.024/61 specifies the minimum frequency required (75%) for the completion of the grade, following which the educational establishment must issue completion certificates. This is a system still in force today. In this Law, technical and secondary education (Articles 44 and 49) refer to the junior high school cycle having a duration of 4 grades (5 to 8), and high school a duration of 3 (1 to 3); industrial, agricultural, and commercial courses must be taught in 2 cycles, with the same duration.

The issue of financing in education is provided for in NEGFL Laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71. Law No. 4.024/61, Articles 93 and 95, establishes that the ‘resources for education will be applied preferentially in the maintenance and public development of education’, according to the plans established by the Federal Council of Education and by the state councils ‘as long as they ensure, mainly, the access to school of the largest possible number of students’. In addition, of ‘expenses for education, those related to maintenance and expansion will be considered, since no subsidy or financing will be granted to the educational establishment by the Union that refuses enrolment to students’ (BRASIL, 1961).

In reference to the financing of education, Article 55 establishes that ‘the Union shall organise and finance the education systems of the territories, according to Education Planning’; Article 47 states that commercial, industrial, and agricultural companies shall be obliged to maintain free 1st degree education for their employees and the education of their children between the ages of 7 and 14, or to compensate for this purpose through the contribution of the education allowance; finally, Article 48 states that ‘this type of scholarship shall be due from all companies and other public or private entities’ linked to social security. The federal government shall also be responsible for financial assistance to the states and the federal districts for the development of their education systems.

We can conclude that these Laws (No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71) contained legal devices that directly influenced the process of expansion of Brazilian fundamental education, either by encouraging an effective expansion or by controlling it (e.g. Art. 18 of Law No. 4.024/61).

²⁹ Law No. 9.394/96 establishes under Article 24, item I, that the school year will have at least 200 days, which is currently in force in Brazil.

Based on this framework, we understand that the educational policy under the military dictatorship was supported by Laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71. Further, the obligation and expansion of primary education and educational financing emerge as important categories for understanding the process of expansion of education; the main objective of these laws was to increase vacancies in primary education—the minimum qualification for entry into the labor market—with the objective of offering full conditions for the formation of a qualified workforce, which is in line with one of the objectives of education today: training for the labor market.

In addition, analyses of these laws allows us to state that although there were quantitative improvements in the country during this period, such as the expansion of enrolment at all levels, the quality of education did not follow educational universalization (MCCOWAN, 2006). The enactment of these laws (4.024/61 and 5.692/71) caused even more educational and social inequality.

Similarly, Ferreira and Bittar (2008) state that the national education system under the military regime had the objective of meeting the socioeconomic interests of the capitalist market through the productive increase of the national economy and the universalization of primary, middle, and higher education, which did not occur concomitantly with the quality of education offered at the time. In light of this, Silveira (2013) states that during this period, the process of capital accumulation intensified and education should have followed this same process, further favoring the country's elites who monopolized opportunities for power, while the poorer classes were excluded from wealth and decision-making processes (MCCOWAN, 2006).

The consolidation of the expansion of Brazilian elementary education

With the end of the 'Economic Miracle' in 1973 due to the international oil crisis, opposition against the military dictatorship increased. International capitalism exerted economic pressures on the regime that destabilized it, while popular demonstrations erupted in the streets, such as that of the students (the National Union of Students); with the Brazilian Lawyers Order (BLO)³⁰, the press, and even the Catholic Church, they tried to 'break the chains' of the dictatorial regime, seeking new paths to a national democracy. It was in this context, through the discussions surrounding social policies, that a new ideology emerged of social integration (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985).

During the military regime, in addition to the failure of the education policy, the schooling rates for children from 7 to 10 years old were low (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985). In addition, school dropout rates were very high and the number of illiterate people was still worrying; about a third of the national population could not read or write properly.

³⁰ Original excerpt of the translation: Ordem dos Advogados do Brasil (OAB).

It should be noted that the well-known ‘automatic promotion’ was used by the military to ‘pass’ (approve) children from one grade to another. It did not matter if the child could learn, provided there was an expansion of education, even if it did not correspond with an increase in new pedagogical opportunities for schooling (CUNHA; GÓES, 1985).

Shiroma (2004) clarifies that the state had autonomy to implement its own educational policies but directed them to a new educational project that would solve social inequalities and poverty in the country. Thus, in the government of President José Sarney, initiated in 1982, we can identify similarities with the military regime with regard to the financing of education. However, this increasingly deepened educational dualism, now focused on a dispute between municipal and state education networks (GHIRALDELLI JR., 2001).

In this line of reasoning, the state assumed a more capitalist position for about 20 years (1960 to 1980). There was an increase in the concentration of income in the country, especially during the ‘Economic Miracle’, but it became unequal again in the early 1980s, when the Brazilian economy suffered a strong recession (GERMANO, 1994). The education policy was based on the economy, in an attempt to establish a link between education and production, leading to the formulation of the well-known ‘Theory of Human Capital’, which emphasizes the link between education and work.

After the professionalization of 1st and 2nd degree education was banned from the curriculum of this education system at a time when the military forces seemed to disappear, during the government of General Figueiredo (1986), there was no longer talk of qualification for work, indicating that the teaching until 2nd degree education finally could be free of mandatory professionalization. We can affirm that this moment decreed the failure of the educational policies in force during the military period (SHIROMA, 2004). The failure of the professionalization of 1st and 2nd degree education stems from the ongoing industrialization process (creation of advanced industrial poles and the obtaining of cutting-edge technological machinery); the country needed more workers with basic general knowledge than schooled workers with specific technical training. Consequently, some businessmen were not interested in vocational education, because with basic knowledge, the worker could most often be trained by the company itself, allowing greater flexibility in the issue of qualified labor (SHIROMA, 2004).

It is thus evident that Laws No. 4.024/61 and No. 5.692/71 brought about significant changes in Brazilian education from the 1960s onwards, notably the unification of primary and secondary education and the expansion of compulsory education at these levels (primary and secondary education) to children from 4 to 8 years old (MONTEIRO; BUENO, 2008). At this time of development and industrialisation, marked and defended by the ideology of the military regime, this expansion process accelerated. However, the training and status of teachers suffered; teacher training courses were precarious and insufficient to

meet the demand, and their professional status did not proceed democratically—they lost recognition that they had enjoyed up until then.

Ferreira and Bittar (2006) make an important analysis of this period: educational policy under the military regime extinguished the careers of liberal professionals and created the current category of basic education teachers in Brazil, accompanied by low economic conditions (low salaries), precarious academic training, and devaluation of the teaching career.

In summary, the period between 1969 and 2001 was marked by the configuration of a productivity pedagogical conception divided into three important moments: a) predominance of technical pedagogy and manifestations of pedagogical conceptions regarding the philosophy of education; b) emergence of historical-critical pedagogy and popular education; c) and the emergence of ‘new productivism’ and its variants in Brazilian education, new-constructivism and new-technicalism (SAVIANI, 2018).

This moment included the expansion of the economy in the country concomitant with the foreign financial investments received to finance Brazilian education, mainly from countries such as the United States. The world of work saw further transformations in the 1980s, when there was a technological leap in the economic sectors of the country and worldwide (ANTUNES, 2002). The insertion of new production processes and transitional forms of production aimed at the improvement of goods, also characterized this period. Consequently, this framework has brought significant changes to the world of work, economics, politics, and education.

This period was also marked by the emergence of studies of pedagogical experiences through historical-critical pedagogy, based on the struggles of educators who defended a quality public education as a right for all in the country. In this scenario, entities such as the National Association of Education (NAE)³¹, National Association of Post-Graduation and Research in Education (NAPRE)³², and National Association of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions (NATHEI)³³, among others, are active in defending Brazilian education (SAVIANI, 2018).

Nonetheless, critical analyses and foci of resistance to the dominant orientation in educational policy have been maintained, which tend to be strengthened in this new century as problems worsen and contradictions deepen, evidencing the need for deeper social changes. In this context, it would be welcome to reorganize the educators’ movement, which, together with a deeper analysis of the situation, would bring forces to a great national mobilization capable of translating into concrete proposals the defence of a quality public education accessible to all of the Brazilian population. (SAVIANI, 2018, p. 449)³⁴

³¹ Original excerpt of the translation: Associação Nacional de Educação (ANDE).

³² Original excerpt of the translation: Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação (ANPED).

³³ Original excerpt of the translation: Associação Nacional dos Docentes das Instituições do Ensino Superior (ANDES).

³⁴ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘Não obstante, mantiveram-se análises críticas e focos de resistência à orientação dominante na política educacional, que tendem a se fortalecer, neste novo século, à medida que os problemas se agravam e as contradições se aprofundam, evidenciando a necessidade de mudanças sociais mais profundas. Nesse contexto, seria bem-vinda a reorganização do movimento dos educadores que permitisse, a par do aprofundamento da análise da situação, arregimentar forças

The above quotation is critical. The author expresses hope for the development of the country, but currently, crisis is evident in Brazilian education—a result of counter-reforms carried out in the last two years. The approval of the Project of Constitutional Amendment (PCA)³⁵ No. 55/2016 (BRASIL, 2016)—which defunds any type of public investment in education, health, and science, among other sectors, for 20 years—has led to a decline in the qualitative sectors for development, such as education.

When this PCA was approved, the elite discourse cited ‘downsizing’ the expenses that could enable the country’s economic growth, but in fact it was a way to concretize a political coup in Brazil with the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, in which the country’s elite were more interested in the financial system than in the development of the nation. In addition, with this PCA, the National Education Plan (NEP)³⁶ was affected by this public policy that aimed to increase the country’s GDP for education to 7% in five years, reaching 10% by 2024 (BRASIL, 2014). However, with this PCA, the NEP proved incapable of accomplishing this, which will negatively affect the development of Brazilian education in the coming years.

In other words, political discourses today advocate the improvement of the quality of public education free of charge, and schooling focused on the formation of critical citizen, with the skills to build a new social profile, but in practice, due to this PCA, there has been a drastic cut in investment in the Brazilian public schools and universities.

In order to advance the conclusions of this research, it is important to affirm that education needs to be transformative and not reproduce an exclusionary society that only privileges the country’s elites. Although society is no longer under a military regime, some legacies of this period still remain, such as the strengthening of the private sector of education and the invasion of the public sector by an entrepreneurial mentality (BUFFA; NOSELLA, 2001; SAVIANI, 2008).

In other words, the participation of entrepreneurs in education is a way to adopt market criteria that values the creation of new undergraduate courses and raises the production process. In fact, ‘if the privatizing tendency was already manifest before the installation of the civil-military dictatorship, it is certain that it has deepened and consolidated itself during the validity of this regime. It is therefore pertinent to recognize that favoring of private initiative is another legacy left to us by the military regime’³⁷ (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 301).

para uma grande mobilização nacional capaz de traduzir em propostas concretas a defesa de uma educação pública de qualidade acessível a toda a população brasileiro’. (SAVIANI, 2007, p. 449).

³⁵ Original excerpt of the translation: Projeto de Emenda Constitucional (PEC).

³⁶ Original excerpt of the translation: Plano Nacional de Educação (PNE).

³⁷ Original excerpt of the translation: ‘se a tendência privatizante já se manifestava antes da instalação da ditadura civil-militar, é certo que ela se aprofundou e se consolidou no decorrer da vigência desse regime. É procedente, pois, reconhecer que o favorecimento da iniciativa privada se constitui em mais um legado que nos foi deixado pelo regime militar’ (SAVIANI, 2008, p. 301).

Although Brazilian society is one of the most unequal in the world—a legacy of being the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery (1889) and of experiencing only intermittent democracy³⁸ in the second half of the twentieth century after the military dictatorship of 1964–1985 (MCCOWAN, 2006)—it still needs to improve the quality of basic education offered in schools. In view of this, the universal right to education, as expressed in law, needs to be realized, since it can no longer be left to chance alone. In this respect, it is up to the state to universalize this right through public policies and, finally, to implement them for the entire population and monitor whether they really work, that is, verify whether children, young people, and adults learn effectively. It is necessary to fight so that these policies are not just on paper and in data, and for those already in force that they are revised and upheld, because they are fundamental for meeting the diverse needs of the Brazilian population.

Conclusion

As the research shows, the economic development model adopted in the context of the military regime in the country was the result of a dependence on external factors (political and economic, mainly) of countries such as the United States. This aimed to ensure the accumulation of capital via the internationalization of the economy, favoring the elites and, consequently, increasing social inequality in the country. In practice, instead of improving, sectors such as health and education, these worsened because the difference in income concentration, unemployment, and poverty increased significantly during this period (SILVEIRA, 2013). The coercion adopted by the military regime is revealed here; for order in the country, it assumed an unprecedented totalitarianism.

This analysis, based on scientific literature, helps us understand that Law No. 4.024/61 reflects the principles of liberal thinking of the 1950s, while Law No. 5.692/71 reflects the principles of the military regime. However, both laws are comparable in their general objectives of primary and secondary education, shown in Chart 1.

The study affirms that the period of the military dictatorship in Brazil was marked by repression, privatization of education, and the exclusion of the majority of the population from attending quality education (both in basic education and in higher education), since only the elites of the time had this right.

This indicates that these laws have favored the quantity and not the quality of education in Brazil. Although these were the first two laws to govern the educational system in Brazil, it is essential to point out that the implementation of Law No. 5.692/71 took place precisely in the years of greater repression under the military dictatorship.

³⁸ The 1988 Federal Constitution marked the beginning of a redemocratization process in Brazil (SORJ; FRAGA, 2020).

Public education materialized in the form of human resources is considered a way to guarantee productivity; attending, on the one hand, to the demands of qualified labor for the capitalist market, and on the other hand, to the improvement of wages and the distribution of income to the elites.

This research is important, because there are few comparative studies of Laws No. 4.024/61 and no. 5.692/71 in Brazilian educational research. In addition, fulfilling one of its objectives, it is suggested that there should be elaboration by other studies that approach the legacy of these laws in Brazilian education after the 1990s and 2000s, using documents and bibliographical analyses of educational legislation and contributing to amplify research on this theme, which has not been exhausted by the discussion in this article.

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