

O parecer CFE 977/65 e o processo de institucionalização da pesquisa educacional na pós-graduação

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Resumo

O tema no artigo é a institucionalização da pesquisa em educação. Considerando a importância do Parecer do Conselho Federal de Educação 977/65, que teve como objetivo a definição da pós-graduação, seus níveis e suas finalidades, este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar alguns apontamentos sobre o processo de institucionalização da pesquisa educacional, com base nas discussões normativas sobre a pós-graduação como espaço institucional da pesquisa científica. O Parecer foi documento fundamental no processo que institucionalizou, conceituou e sistematizou a pós-graduação brasileira em um contexto de transformações econômico-político-sociais em que a educação foi terreno necessário para as demandas exigidas pelo projeto de desenvolvimento nacional, no cenário organizado, à época, pelo governo militar. Resultante de pesquisa bibliográfica e documental, o artigo apresenta como resultado a presença do Parecer do Conselho Federal de Educação 977/65, sua importância no sistema de pós-graduação e seus impactos no debate sobre os processos institucionais da pesquisa educacional brasileira.

Palavras-chave: Educação. Instituições. Pesquisa.

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CFE's Legal Report 977/65 and the process of institutionalising postgraduate educational research

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Abstract

This article deals with the institutionalisation of research in education. Considering the importance of the Federal Education Council's Legal Report 977/65, which aimed to define postgraduate studies, their levels and their purposes, this article aims to present notes on the process of institutionalising educational research, based on the normative discussions on postgraduate studies as an institutional space for scientific research. The Legal Report was an essential document in the process that institutionalised, conceptualised and systematised Brazilian postgraduate studies in a context of economic-political-social transformations in which education was the necessary ground for the demands of the national development project, in the scenario organised at the time by the military government. As a result of bibliographical and documentary research, the article presents the presence of Federal Education Council's Legal Opinion 977/65, its importance in the postgraduate system and its impact on the debate about the institutional processes of Brazilian educational research.

Keywords: Education. Institutions. Research.

El dictamen CFE 977/65 y el proceso de institucionalización de la investigación educativa de posgrado

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Resumen

Este artículo trata sobre la institucionalización de la investigación educativa. Se considera la importancia del Dictamen 977/65 del Consejo Federal de Educación, que tuvo como objetivo definir los estudios de posgrado, sus niveles y sus finalidades. Se presenta algunas notas sobre el proceso de institucionalización de la investigación educativa, a partir de las discusiones normativas sobre el posgrado como espacio institucional de investigación científica. El Dictamen fue un documento fundamental en el proceso que institucionalizó, conceptualizó y sistematizó los estudios de posgrado en Brasil en un contexto de transformaciones económico-político-sociales en el que la educación era el terreno necesario para las demandas del proyecto de desarrollo nacional, en el escenario organizado de la época por el gobierno militar. Como resultado de investigación bibliográfica y documental, el artículo presenta la presencia del Dictamen 977/65 del Consejo Federal de Educación, su importancia en el sistema de posgrado y su impacto en el debate sobre los procesos institucionales de la investigación educativa brasileña.

Palabras clave: Educación. Instituciones. Investigación.

Introduction

The debates presented in this research work were developed based on studies and investigations into the institutionalization of educational research, where part of the discussion regarding the contextualization of Brazilian society and the institutional movements related to it are tied to a completed doctoral dissertation. Through a debate on the institutionalization of educational research, we aim to understand the aspects that propelled this process towards research from a scientific perspective. One of the pivotal elements in this process was the Federal Education Council Opinion No. 977/65 (Parecer CFE 977/65).

Using the Federal Education Council Opinion No. 977/65 (also known as Parecer Sucupira) as a foundation, we propose to discuss the institutionalization of educational research, considering the organization of graduate education in Brazilian universities. Over the years, graduate education and higher education in general have undergone transformations not only in structure but also in their political and institutional organization. The structural and organizational transformations of graduate education were guided by the context of changes influenced by Opinion CFE 977/65. Adjustments such as the duration and organization of programs, the training of qualified professionals, funding models, and university autonomy itself were fundamental for graduate education, which implemented these changes to meet social and institutional demands and needs.

Based on Opinion CFE 977/65, which aimed to define graduate education, its levels, and purposes, this article seeks to present certain aspects of the process of institutionalizing educational research, grounded in normative discussions about graduate education. Graduate education was understood as a priority space for the development of scientific research. In this way, Opinion CFE 977/65 acted as a catalyst for transformations that impacted educational research.

This article, based on bibliographic research, highlights the role of Opinion CFE 977/65 in the debate about the process of institutionalizing educational research, its significance, and its impacts on Brazil's graduate education system. We argue that the article brings originality to the topic by emphasizing Opinion CFE 977/65 in the context of the institutionalization of research and by recognizing its relevance as a legal milestone in defining graduate education as a space for the development of scientific research, particularly in the field of education. In this sense, we assume that to discuss the institutionalization of educational research, it is essential to consider Opinion CFE 977/65.

Within the parameters of analysis and discussion in this study, primarily based on a critical

bibliography and analyses grounded in a historical-social perspective, we present the relationships between societal demands and the political-institutional projects of graduate education. We understand the process of institutionalizing research as a set of needs and demands that are articulated and rearticulated according to specific interests. Under these conditions, research and its main themes are linked to broader and more general issues that go beyond the intrinsic objectives of graduate education as an institutional space for scientific research.

It is important to clarify, in this introductory section of the text, that graduate education and its entire structure as a system have been considered, both in this study and in prior ones, as a significant driver of state policies since its early stages of organization. This includes its role in public policy actions, the training of qualified human resources, and as a means of producing and disseminating knowledge.

The Context of Brazilian Society and Educational Changes

In an effort to advance the debate on the laws governing education in the 1950s and 1960s, a campaign emerged as a reaction to the controversies stirred by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), approved in 1961 by the Chamber of Deputies. This campaign, which resonated across various social circles, advocated for public education and revived the spirit of the 1932 movement the first campaign for a unified, public, secular, and free school system. This initial campaign aimed to promote an educational renewal for the country, emphasizing the value of education and the application of scientific principles in its planning (SILVA, 2002). At that time, there was no consensus regarding the argument that public education could foster the social changes necessary for the country's development. Perhaps this lack of agreement explains the need to revisit discussions on investments in and incentives for public education thirty years later.

The discussions surrounding the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB) No. 4,024/61 were marked by the theme of freedom, revisiting the 1932 campaign and the debate between public and private education. On one hand, there was a group of educators such as Lourenço Filho, Antônio de Almeida Júnior, Carneiro Leão, Fernando de Azevedo, Anísio Teixeira, Leonel Franca, Alceu de Amoroso Lima, Júlio Mesquita, Abgar Renault, Paschoal Lemme, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, Darcy Ribeiro, and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, among others committed to the ideal of education for all, advocating for a unified, public, secular, compulsory, and free school system. On the other hand, there was the discourse from private and Catholic-oriented schools, which

emphasized the need for freedom for educational institutions of any and all types in Brazil (FERNANDES, 1966).

According to Fernandes (1966, p. 346–347), at that time, there was a growing “reactionary conspiracy against public education, born from the strange collusion between the owners of secular private schools and the leaders of schools maintained by the Catholic clergy.” The differing discourses and interests in the educational debates, which highlighted conflicts between public and private institutions, were evident in both basic education and higher education, which had become an important arena for political and economic disputes. Barros (1998) notes that LDB No. 4,024/61 focused on introducing measures related to undergraduate programs within higher education. These measures were:

1- an increase in the normative power and control of the Federal Education Council (CFE); 2- higher education could be offered both within universities and in independent institutions; 3- the organization of a university would require at least five unspecified schools under central administration; 4- the maintenance of the chair-based system; 5- the guarantee of student representation in collegiate bodies, without specifying the proportion or composition of the representatives (BARROS, 1998, p. 60).

These measures took place amidst the political instabilities and economic uncertainties of the time, when Brazil's educational policy was guided by a new project initiated in 1948 and only concluded thirteen years later with the approval of the final text of the LDB/61 (BARROS, 1998). It was in this context that not only higher education, particularly undergraduate programs, took on new directions, but the university itself underwent significant changes.

According to Fernandes (1966), universities started from a weak foundation, lacking structure and guidance, being formed by the aggregation of preexisting vocational schools that did not integrate into a cohesive whole. From this perspective, the 1960s became an opportune moment to articulate,

[...] ideal models for organizing Brazilian universities. Darcy Ribeiro's project (The University of Brasília, Rio de Janeiro, Brazilian Center for Educational Research, 1961) emphasized the ambition to create a new type of university organization in Brazil. (FERNANDES, 1966, p. 581).

Even amidst the conflicts surrounding the LDB, the obligation to draft national education plans was established: “a requirement to formulate national education plans tied to the use of government resources constitutionally allocated to education” (BARROS, 1998, p. 60). In 1962, the first National Education Plan was developed by the Federal Education Council. That same year, the University of Brasília (UnB) was inaugurated as part of a project aimed at the growth and modernization of Brazilian higher education.

Despite setbacks in the process of democratizing education such as the persecution of researchers, intellectuals, professors, and students, as well as the closure of some research centers the 1960s saw a strong drive toward university growth and aspirations for a structured graduate education process in Brazil, driven by the vision of a powerful and developed nation. However, advancements in the expansion of higher education and the creation of a systematic process for university reform faced significant challenges following the business-military coup in Brazil in 1964. Educational projects that had been under development found their efforts stalled:

[...] social scientists and educators, who had previously been involved in the educational debate, withdrew from public life. If their interest in education had already been overshadowed by the broader transformations in Brazilian society, the coup and the loss of institutional space for educational research left nothing within the school system that seemed to capture the attention of these researchers (SILVA, 2002, p. 128).

In the 1950s, the prevailing narrative revolved around transitioning towards development and modernization, as the democratic moment encouraged the participation of researchers and social scientists in the process of planning and institutionalization. However, in the 1960s, the dominant narrative shifted to uncertainty and brutality.

According to Silva (2002), in March 1964, a business-military coup took place in Brazil, supported by the national business sector, religious institutions particularly members of the Catholic Church and some middle-class sectors of Brazilian society. The intervention was portrayed as a savior of the nation, rescuing it from institutional chaos attributed to inflation and corruption that plagued the country. Initially, the government presented itself as a “guardian of the Brazilian democratic process, which would resume with direct presidential elections in 1966, after the reorganization of Brazilian political forces” (SILVA, 2002, p. 135–136). However, after its initial political maneuvers, the same government began to take on increasingly authoritarian and dictatorial characteristics.

From 1964 onward, education became a concern for the military, who assumed control of the national planning and development process. This concern, as analyzed by authors such as Florestan Fernandes (1966), Barros (1998), Silva (2002), and Cunha (2007), was not driven by an interest in the growth or democratization of education but rather by anxiety over what education could instill, debate, and produce at the time. Consequently, education lost its prominence as a practice aimed at fostering national citizenship and addressing social concerns. Instead, it became, in the view of sociologists of the time, a practice reproducing the dominant ideology, where the project of autonomy was replaced by dependency (FERNANDES, 1966).

In Cunha's (2007, p. 22) assessment of that period in Brazilian society and the role of education, the following question was posed: "Did the coup leaders not have a plan for education?" Regarding the broader educational process, Cunha (2007) does not provide clear answers but asserts that, in the case of higher education, the answer was immediate, as the interests at play demanded urgency. In Cunha's (2007) analysis, higher education had a well-formulated plan, but a law was needed to institutionalize the educational project effectively. Until that point, projects had been implemented superficially; at that moment, however, there was a pressing need for rigid institutionalization, where opponents were either neutralized or eliminated to accelerate the realization of educational initiatives.

The Modernization Process of Brazilian Society: Higher Education

To understand graduate education and its challenges, it is essential to examine the historical background that shaped the political discussions surrounding the institutionalization of graduate programs and educational research.

It was based on Brazil's economic and social development plan, particularly from the 1950s onward, that investments in education and the promotion of scientific research began to take shape, primarily through the creation of various institutions. In 1951, the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES) and the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) were established. In 1955, the Brazilian Center for Educational Research (CBPE) was created, followed by the establishment of Regional Centers for Educational Research (CRPE), both linked to the Anísio Teixeira National Institute for Educational Studies and Research (INEP). One of the main objectives of these institutions was to transform Brazil into an industrialized and developed nation with a focus on education.

For the country to develop and become a prosperous nation, education had to focus on both educating and professionalizing the population, shaping a society capable of adapting to the emerging model of a more modern, industrialized, and educated society. To support these extensive changes, a skilled workforce was essential, making education a pathway to national growth. Initially, Brazil relied on foreign teachers and tutors, but later it began to train its young population enrolled in the country's universities. This shift led to significant encouragement of education and scientific research, intensifying efforts to prepare and qualify the national workforce for educational activities.

Despite facing numerous ups and downs due to the economic and political changes in the country, educational research began a decisive effort in the 1960s to reorganize education and the educational system for development. Even amidst the more drastic political changes following the

business-military coup of 1964, a new organization of graduate education in Brazil was formalized in the mid-1960s, marking a new phase for scientific research in the country.

Although the initial efforts to implement graduate education in Brazil date back to the enactment of the Statute of Brazilian Universities, Decree No. 19,851, of April 11, 1931 (SILVA, 2011), it is understood that only in the 1960s, thirty years later, did graduate education undergo significant changes. These changes affected not only its structure and organization but also the very conditions of its purposes and identity within the context of national scientific policy. With the creation and enactment of new laws, graduate education underwent decisive transformations that propelled the advancement of Brazilian scientific research.

Focusing on the pursuit of a higher education project, one can identify in Brazilian universities a certain subordination to the practices of what might be termed Americanism. These included the organization and evaluation of universities at the time based on productivity, the structuring of work, and the command lines within research spaces (CUNHA, 2007).

According to Cunha (2007), the government established by the 1964 coup was decisive in maintaining the trajectory that universities were taking:

The 1964 coup, carried out by an alliance between liberals who did not hide their longstanding authoritarian tendencies and the military educated in the Comtean positivist school advocating for a “republican dictatorship,” took five years to shed its liberal-democratic façade. During this period, the doctrine of reforming Brazilian universities took shape, as expressed in two decrees and Law No. 5,540 of November 1968 (CUNHA, 2007, p.20).

The 1960s were a period of many conflicts in history. It was during the conflicts of the early years of the regime established by the 1964 coup that the modernization of higher education took place, marked by Law No. 5,540/68:

These conflicts involved the imposition of restrictive measures on higher education institutions by the authoritarian government, against which various forms of resistance arose. The restrictive measures were diverse, ranging from the dismissal of rectors and directors and the expulsion of professors and students to the legal prohibition of specific modernization experiments in higher education, such as those at the University of São Paulo. The resistance ranged from the revitalization of the student movement, which sought an original conception of the university, to the rejection of interference by American consultants in the planning of Brazilian higher education (CUNHA, 2007, p. 21).

Brazil was transitioning from a society in flux to an authoritarian society submissive to the logic of international capitalist exploitation (SILVA, 2002). Supporting this idea, Cunha (2007) states that the demands and struggles of professors and students against certain effects of the 1968 higher

education reform and its consequences led to the belief that the university was shaped and molded by American consultants brought in by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) to implement a U.S.-style university model in Brazil.

In December 1968, Institutional Act No. 5 (AI-5) was enacted, hindering or silencing dialogues with the general public. It provided “a paralegal cover for a new and ominous phase of the military dictatorship that had been building since April 1964” (CUNHA, 2007, p. 25). AI-5 brought fear and silence to Brazilian society, suppressing individual freedoms, indefinitely dissolving Congress, granting the president authoritarian powers, and promoting the normalization of censorship, arbitrary arrests, and torture. In this new phase of the civil-military dictatorship advancing across the Brazilian landscape, some dismantling of institutional structures occurred. Until then, these structures had served as “bridges between the state and the university but were dismantled for being considered too closely tied to the former government” (SILVA, 2002, p. 141).

Despite oscillations between articulations, disarticulations, and new arrangements transforming traditional higher education institutions into modern ones, this transformation was one of the objectives of the new regime’s technocrats. In their vision, “the structure of the ‘best American universities’ was seen as the model that should guide Brazilian reforms” (CUNHA, 2007, p. 71).

Although there was special attention given to higher education, the military government also implemented a series of reforms across all educational levels. These included the creation of the *salário-educação* (education salary), aimed at increasing funding for education by collecting a levy per employee from businesses; the creation of the Brazilian Literacy Movement (*Movimento Brasileiro de Alfabetização – Mobral*) in 1967, one of the most ambitious plans to eradicate adult illiteracy in Brazilian history; the 1968 higher education reform, which, despite occurring during a period of heightened repression and persecution of professors and students, managed to expand university enrollment and was instrumental in institutionalizing graduate education; the establishment of a national science and technology system; and the introduction of Moral and Civic Education into the elementary school curriculum (SILVA, 2002).

Despite the numerous changes in the field of education implemented after the coup, the new government promoted many initiatives to advance its projects for Brazilian society. According to Silva (2002), by the late 1960s and early 1970s, education had become the government’s largest area of investment: “The Federal Government prioritizes education in terms of ministry expenditures, and

for the first time, I believe starting in 1970, the Ministry of Education rose to the top among the Republic's ministries and, on its own, is the best-funded" (SILVA, 2002, p. 143).

The concept of educational investment began to take on a new dimension. The financial aspect of education gained prominence, as the coup brought about the rise of a new type of "education thinker" in the country: the economist (CUNHA, 2007). Consequently, educational action began to be viewed as an economic activity. Treating education as an economic activity became the guiding perspective for educational policy and directed pedagogical reforms. In this context, all government investments in education were expected to yield returns in the form of production:

The university, in a certain sense, must be considered a true enterprise whose purpose is to produce science, technology, and culture in general. Like any modern enterprise, it must rationalize its production processes to achieve the highest degree of efficiency and productivity. Certainly, it is a *sui generis* enterprise, as its intellectual production, in many of its forms, cannot be measured by strictly economic criteria. Nevertheless, the university, as a form of knowledge organization defined in terms of service and practical efficiency, fostering its community of technicians and scientists, cannot escape the imperative of rationalization, which is one of the defining characteristics of industrial societies. In principle, the university, as the place where rational knowledge is developed and transmitted, should be the most rationalized of institutions (SUCUPIRA *apud* CUNHA, 2007, 236).

It is important to highlight the paradigm shifts and conceptual changes that shaped the debate on education in Brazil during the early decades of the 20th century, as well as how higher education advanced in favor of the modernization of society. In this context, the growth of universities and the new formats that the university institution was designing and redesigning were more than necessary to foster an entire intellectual culture rapidly emerging in the country. This process of modernizing higher education, following a U.S. model, combined with increased institutional control by the state, indicated that Brazilian universities were undergoing reform.

According to Cunha (2007), it was within this scenario and with this purpose that graduate education developed, with an emphasis on science and technology courses. However, the modernization of the university, the more systematic establishment of graduate programs, and the discourse of university autonomy were increasingly subjected to strict governmental control, exercised through the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) and the information services of the military government.

Florestan Fernandes (1975) argued that there was a need in Brazil to reform the operational structure of universities so they could keep pace with the historical context of growth in science and technology, a growth that gained momentum primarily after World War II. The idea became evident

that higher education should constitute an institutional space concerned not only with its individual units, other institutions, and society at large through its teaching function but also capable of integrating and managing a graduate education system among its core functions.

According to Fernandes (1975), the organization of Brazilian universities was a way to overcome the isolated higher education schools and conglomerated universities that predominated in the country between the 1930s and 1960s. These institutions offered a few precarious spaces for graduate studies, still incipient and fragmented, often reliant on foreign tutors—quite different from what emerged after the 1960s. Only through this new organizational structure for university operations could the country transform its transplanted technical-scientific system to achieve national autonomy. This reform process was essential to integrate scientific research activities into university life.

Through Decree No. 19,851 of 1931, Francisco Campos's intervention marked the establishment of the Brazilian university, without specific attention to graduate education. In contrast, Opinion CFE No. 977/65 aimed, among other objectives, to address the gap left by the 1961 National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), which repealed the Statute of Brazilian Universities. According to the Opinion itself, this gap pertained to the definition of the nature of graduate courses in Brazil.

Opinion CFE 977/65: The Systematization of Graduate Education in Brazil

To discuss and understand educational research in Brazil and its developments stemming from graduate education as an institutional space for research development, it is essential to highlight the importance of Opinion CFE 977/65. This document is fundamental to the process of institutionalizing graduate education and scientific research.

According to Ortega and Brandão (2020), it is necessary to acknowledge that the entire period from 1930 to the late 1960s was a productive time for building the foundation of graduate education in Brazil. However, the authors argue that it was only with Opinion No. 977/65 that the organizational framework for Brazilian graduate education, as it exists today, began to take shape. In their analysis, while the document did not establish this mode of education in Brazil given that precedents already existed it was only with the publication of the Opinion that the lack of regulations defining the objectives and structure of graduate education in the country became evident.

According to Cury (2005, p. 9), “the specific creation of graduate education had one of its most significant moments in the founding of the University of Brasília (UnB) through Law No. 3,998, of

December 15, 1961. At this university, graduate education became an institutional activity.” However, it is understood that only with Opinion CFE 977/65 was graduate education established as an integral and fundamental part of the research training process and institutional formation, directly linked to the university.

Vicente (2022) states that there was considerable conceptual variation regarding graduate education until the conceptualization established and consolidated by Opinion 977/65. This highlights the lack of clarity about the nature, role, and scope of this mode of education. There was an idea of what graduate education should be, but its characterization was, until then, imprecise:

Opinion 977/1965 did not impose an entirely foreign system of courses on Brazilian higher education, as by that year the country already had 23 Master's programs and ten Doctoral programs. It took into account experiences that were already becoming widespread, albeit still tentative, giving them a clear structure and defining a systematic approach that contributed to their development (VICENTE, 2022, p. 220).

To discuss Opinion CFE 977/65, it is necessary to mention the efforts of a team of distinguished professors dedicated to producing that document, including Alceu Amoroso Lima, Anísio Teixeira, Valnir Chagas, Rubens Maciel, Antônio Ferreira de Almeida Júnior, among others (CURY, 2005). Special attention must be given to the figure of its coordinator, Professor Newton Sucupira, who was present during the critical moments of higher education restructuring and the systematization of graduate education in Brazil. However, while many authors view Newton Sucupira as an almost heroic figure in the context of drafting the Opinion, others argue that his role in the creation of the document does not exempt him from being aligned with “the interests of an oligarchic national state that was experiencing the early years of a military dictatorship, during a period when higher education was being promoted as a way to showcase to society the benefits that the military regime had already proposed in its short time in power” (NETTO; CARNEIRO, 2021, p. 154). In this regard, we agree with Vicente (2022) in emphasizing how the history of graduate education in Brazil is intertwined with state-driven initiatives for its implementation, expansion, and consolidation as a social space for scientific knowledge production and professional development. Nevertheless, it remains evident that these efforts also appealed to the broader interests of the state.

Opinion CFE 977/65, or *Opinion Sucupira*, as it became known due to the contributions of Newton Sucupira (1920–2007), was published on December 3, 1965, and its organization occurred during a delicate period in national politics. According to Moura and Borba (2022), reflecting on the

institutional organization of Brazilian society requires analyzing the role of the state in structuring political life, which directly and indirectly influences the organization and functioning of institutions. The authors further argue that a commitment to policies aimed at national development became imperative for transformative policies in favor of institutionalization to take place in the country.

Within this pro-institutionalization movement, the Opinion clearly proposed the regulation of graduate programs in Brazil. It sought to establish and defend a vertically structured institutional framework for future graduate programs, which until then existed not as cohesive programs but as isolated initiatives without systematized or institutionalized connections to universities as institutions for producing scientific knowledge (CURY, 2005). This regulation and systematization were essential at the time and remain so today, positioning the Opinion, according to Silva and Brandão (2020), as a document of enduring relevance:

Studies on *stricto sensu* graduate education in Brazil reveal that Opinion No. 977, dated December 3, 1965, serves as a legal milestone and a driving force for this level of education in the country. For this reason, and considering the elements it aims to highlight, it is regarded as a timeless document a classic that provides guidelines and definitions that remain in effect to this day. This Opinion, titled “Definition of Graduate Programs,” presents eight items that allow for an understanding of graduate education at the time, both in terms of how it was being conducted and its objectives. It represents an initiative by the Minister of Education requesting the Council to provide more precise definitions for programs in Brazil, addressing existing ambiguities. Furthermore, this document is where the nomenclature appears with its respective definitions, serving as a foundation for curricular organization that continues to influence education today (SILVA; BRANDÃO, 2020, p. 43).

Thus, according to Saviani (2020), Opinion No. 977/65 marks the beginning of the institutionalization of graduate education in Brazil and is generally considered the founding document of systematic graduate education in the country. There was a pressing need for a policy to organize this new level of education.

According to Opinion CFE 977/65, there was a concern within public education policies to define the pedagogical organization of graduate programs:

he Minister of Education and Culture, considering the need to implement and develop the system of graduate courses within our higher education and recognizing the prevailing lack of clarity regarding the nature of these courses, requests that the Council issue a statement on the matter to define and, if necessary, regulate the graduate courses referred to in item (b) of Article 69 of the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (BRASIL, 2005, p. 162).

Opinion CFE 977/65 sought to provide a more operational framework for the institutionalization of graduate programs, combining research and teaching to promote national development. In this sense, to reformulate the concept of graduate education as it existed up to that point, it was necessary to establish the idea of graduate programs, moving away from the notion of isolated courses.

Cury (2005) states that Opinion CFE 977/65 also outlined guidelines that promoted the institutionalization of graduate programs. Among these guidelines were the encouragement of interinstitutional collaboration, the inclusion of long-term research projects, and the prioritization of training highly skilled professionals. Furthermore, according to Cury (2005), the process of institutionalizing graduate programs was characterized by the strong presence of the Brazilian state and the limited participation of organized civil society. Regarding the state's presence and control, Cury (2005) points out that a new political order drove the state's significant involvement in the institutionalization of graduate programs.

According to Boaventura (2005), Opinion CFE 977/65 helps to understand the process of institutionalizing graduate education in Brazil within the economic, political, and social context of that time. Despite the state's strong control over various areas of society, the integration of teaching and research within institutions introduced a new operational model for these entities. These institutions were granted "autonomy" in their operations, which was a notable innovation during such a politically turbulent period. This autonomy stood out against the backdrop of profound centralization of economic, political, and institutional power, marked by the presence of the military in key political and economic roles.

Mariano and Pereira (2022) argue that it is within the context of strong state interventions that we must reflect on and analyze Opinion CFE 977/65, as it is:

[...] a context in which the training of highly qualified human resources was intended to develop science and technology within higher education institutions, as part of a broader Economic Plan of the Military Regime. The Military Regime began to construct a national scientific policy that was strongly tied to other societal development plans, establishing a model of higher education in which science and technology were expected to serve society (MARIANO; PEREIRA, 2022, p. 48).

Despite the many changes in the context of higher education, within universities, and the increasing control exerted by the military during the 1960s, graduate education underwent the

necessary transformation to foster the institutional development of scientific research in Brazil across numerous fields of knowledge.

In the field of education, this was no different. Educational production, aligned with the institutionalization of graduate education, began organizing various forms of production in the area, addressing themes, methods, and research structures within the new institutional spaces where the country's scientific output became systematized.

Graduate Education: An Institutional Space for Scientific and Educational Research

Discussing graduate education is a critical step in understanding the process of institutionalizing scientific research in Brazil. This process encompasses not only the establishment of graduate programs but also the creation of specific institutes dedicated to research development, as well as the implementation of laws that promote transformations and reforms within these institutional space.

Regarding higher education institutions, these institutions were transplanted models and, as such, faced many challenges in creating their own identity. Initially, higher education models were transplanted from Iberian culture; later, beginning primarily in the 1950s, they came under the influence of the hegemonic position of the United States (FERNANDES, 2010).

According to Fernandes (2010), the way higher education is organized reflects how society is organized, a principle evident since the early stages of higher education institutions. The author further concludes that it was not pedagogical demands that prompted changes in the structure, functionality, and efficiency of the educational system; rather, it was societal demands that imposed these changes. These structural, functional, and efficiency-related changes in higher education directly addressed their objectives and defined how universities fulfilled their social commitment to producing knowledge about reality a process that involved not only institutional conditions but also material conditions.

In Saviani's (1999) analysis, despite all the transformations and changes in Brazilian education since the early 20th century, it was in the 1960s that education in Brazil was categorically organized, contributing significantly to the country's development. According to Saviani (1999), this decade marked the consolidation and expansion of higher education and graduate programs. In this process of expansion and consolidation, the characteristics of graduate education in the field of education were defined. Initially, these characteristics aimed to prepare human resources for teaching. However,

in a later phase, shaped by various discussions on national scientific policy, they began to emphasize qualified research and intellectual production in the country. This emphasis on qualified research and intellectual production stemmed from the American model that guided the creation of Brazilian universities. In this model, the guidelines for research production and development are clearly defined.

Considering the development of research in education, it is important to highlight the establishment of pedagogy faculties during the 1968 university reform. According to Silva (2002), the creation of pedagogy faculties provided more institutional spaces for researching pedagogical issues, which until then had been the domain of social sciences research. (SILVA, 2002).

Silva (2002) highlights that the faculty of education was proposed during Francisco Campos's Reform in 1931. According to Saviani (1999), Decree No. 19,851/31, known as the Francisco Campos Reform, although outlining guidelines for the organization of the faculty of education and including courses in specialization, improvement, and doctorate programs, did not use the terms undergraduate and graduate education, leaving this responsibility to the institutions offering these courses. It was only thirty years later, in 1961, that the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law, Law No. 4,024/61, came into effect, providing a new framework for higher education. Despite the debates surrounding educational policy, the 1960s were decisive for the systematic implementation of graduate education in Brazil and for higher education reform (SILVA, 2011).

According to Cunha (2007), the university is a:

[...] hegemonic apparatus, whose specificity lies in the organic intellectual formation of the bourgeoisie. As a hegemonic apparatus, the university itself is subject to a hegemonic struggle that unfolds within its own structure, which explains many of the identity crises experienced by this institution (CUNHA, 2007, p.14)

In the discussion about graduate education, it was indicated that the central issue of higher education at that time concerned the advancement of knowledge in different areas of scientific knowledge production. In this sense, undergraduate and graduate programs, as defined by the National Education Guidelines and Framework Law (LDB), Law No. 4,024 of December 20, 1961, needed to be organized to meet the demands of scientific progress.

In that context, Opinion CFE No. 977/65 was responsible not only for implementing but also for developing the system of graduate courses in Brazilian higher education, addressing the lack of clarity regarding the nature of these courses, which had until then been presented as isolated improvement courses, unstructured and lacking systematization.

Newton Sucupira's name is closely associated with the definition of graduate education, as he was the author of this opinion. Newton Sucupira created, organized, and structured graduate education, establishing an entire system of education beyond the undergraduate level. Notably, the structure of Brazilian graduate education was conceived in two segments: *stricto sensu* (master's and doctoral programs) and *lato sensu* (specialization and professional development programs):

In the section concerning the concept of graduate education, the rapporteur defines its nature. He begins by distinguishing between *lato sensu* and *stricto sensu* graduate education. The former refers to any course taken after graduation and includes, for example, specialization courses aimed at training individuals in specific areas of a professional or scientific field to develop specialized professionals. These courses do not aim to cover the entire body of knowledge within the broader field of the specialization. On the other hand, *stricto sensu* graduate education fulfills the essential purposes of the university by offering advanced studies and research in a regular, permanent manner and granting an academic degree of high scientific competence in a specific field of knowledge. Although it may serve professional sectors, its primary objective is scientific, whereas specialization has a predominantly practical-professional focus (CURY, 2005, p. 12).

Another significant contribution by Sucupira to Brazilian higher education was his leadership in the movement to restructure federal universities, which was followed by the university reform (SILVA, 2011). Regarding university reform, Opinion CFE No. 77/69 revisited the discussions from Opinion CFE 977/65 by establishing the regulations for accrediting graduate programs in Brazil, clearly specifying that these regulations applied to programs conferring master's and doctoral degrees.

Changes in education accompanied the political, economic, social, and cultural transformations of Brazilian society. In the 1950s, one of the initiatives of scientific policy was the creation of institutions that promoted scientific development. This initiative was complemented in the 1960s by legislation on higher education, culminating in the university reform initiated in 1968 and marked in 1969 by Opinion CFE No. 77/69 (SILVA, 2011). These two milestones indicate that liberal educational policies succeeded in materializing their critiques and implementing their organizational approach within the educational landscape.

As part of this modernization process, higher education underwent vertical diversification, transforming the university and establishing graduate education in a form closely resembling its current structure. In this sense, within the process of implementing graduate education in Brazil from the 1950s onward, it is evident that the urgency to create a legal framework and institutions to guide

research activities was inseparable from defining graduate education as a strategic space for national development.

According to Silva (2011), starting in the 1950s, even in an embryonic form, graduate courses began to emerge with the aim of conducting research. To support the initial steps in research and to attempt to systematize this nascent process, the creation of institutions such as CNPq and CAPES two pivotal organizations in the institutionalization of research in Brazil was fundamental.

However, it was only in the 1960s, with Opinion CFE 977/65, that a structured framework for graduate education was developed to foster scientific and technological progress, as well as to promote the training of new researchers across various fields of knowledge. This effort enhanced and expanded the country's human resources while boosting scientific production, including educational research, which gained new directions and opportunities for development.

Final considerations

Introducing our reflections on the historical notes regarding the institutional processes of educational research, based on the historical milestone of Opinion CFE 977/65, we present a citation from the Opinion itself. This citation highlights the fundamental role of institutionalizing graduate programs in Brazil for scientific development and knowledge production, as it establishes graduate education as the institutional space for scientific investigation and research production:

Graduate education thus becomes, in the modern university, the pinnacle of studies a specialized system of courses demanded by the conditions of scientific research and the needs for advanced training. Its immediate objective is undoubtedly to provide students with a deepened knowledge that allows them to achieve a high standard of scientific or technical-professional competence, which is impossible to attain at the undergraduate level. Beyond these immediate practical interests, graduate education aims to offer, within the university, an environment and the appropriate resources for the pursuit of free scientific investigation, where the creative freedom of the highest forms of university culture can be affirmed (BRASIL, 2005, p. 164).

While acknowledging the importance of institutionalizing graduate education as the ultimate space for research and the advancement of Brazilian science, we cannot overlook the ideological and political influences and interferences that shaped the creation of the legal frameworks for this process. These frameworks reflect the conflicts of interest and power struggles that plagued Brazilian society in the 1960s. As a reflection of the country's economic, political, and social issues, the university, higher education, graduate programs, and consequently, the nation's scientific production became arenas for disputes over political control of Brazilian society.

It is essential to understand that, regardless of the historical moment, the theoretical and intellectual influences of each era, or the agents responsible for political-institutional initiatives, there has always been more than just state involvement there has been control over the directions of educational actions and over the production in this field of knowledge. For this reason, the necessity and concern for research and knowledge production in the field of education have always been present in graduate education.

Education and educational research gained visibility in arenas of power disputes and political ascension over the years, especially in the 1960s, as they could serve as platforms for disseminating ideologies capable of advancing political interests and commitments. Consequently, the university became a heavily targeted space during that historical moment, as it was the institutional hub for researchers and intellectuals exploring alternative paths and proposals for society and education not only as a field of action but also as a means to challenge and transform prevailing thought.

The journey toward the institutionalization of educational research was long and fraught with conflict, underscoring the importance of Opinion CFE 977/65 as the fundamental legal milestone in the process of consolidating graduate education in Brazil. Graduate education has since been recognized as the effective and legitimate space for scientific production.

Considering the importance and significance of legislation in achieving societal goals, we highlight and acknowledge the role of Opinion CFE 977/65, its relevance to the graduate education system, and its impact on the debate surrounding the institutionalization of scientific and educational research in Brazil.

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