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## HALF-CENTURY OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES IN BRAZIL: FROM HEROIC PERIOD TO PRODUCTIVISM BY MEDIATING OF A SUPERIOR MODEL TO ITS MATRICES

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### ABSTRACT

Starting from the characterization of the university institution and its manifestation in Brazil, this article considers, at first, the antecedents of graduate studies in Brazil, and then examines the structure of the Report 977/65 that dealt with the conceptualization of graduate studies initiating the process of its institutionalization that followed with its regulation standardized by the Report 77/69. In the third moment, it analyses the process of implementing postgraduate studies in Brazil, which has been configured as a new model superior to the two models from which it originated: the North American and the European. Following, it raises the problem of the risks of the disfiguration of the Brazilian postgraduate model represented by productivism, which leads to the examination of the productivity-quality dilemma in graduate studies, concluding with the presentation of strategies to avoid the disfiguration of the successful Brazilian experience post graduate.

**Keywords:** Brazilian Education. University. Postgraduate studies.

### MEDIO SIGLO DE POSGRADO EN BRASIL: DEL PERIODO HEROICO AL PRODUCTIVISMO POR LA MEDIACIÓN DE UN MODELO SUPERIOR A SUS MATRICES

### RESUMEN

A partir de la caracterización de la institución universitaria y su manifestación en Brasil, este artículo considera, en un primer momento, los antecedentes de los estudios de posgrado en Brasil y luego examina la estructura del Parecer 977/65 que abordó la conceptualización de los estudios de posgrado iniciando el proceso de su institucionalización que siguió con su regulación estandarizada por el Parecer 77/69. En el tercer momento, analiza el proceso de implantación de los estudios de posgrado en Brasil, que se configuró como un nuevo modelo superior a los dos modelos de los que se originó: el norteamericano y el europeo. A continuación, plantea el problema de los riesgos de la descaracterización del modelo de posgrado brasileño representados por el productivismo, lo que lleva al examen del dilema productividad-calidad en los estudios de posgrado, concluyendo con la

presentación de estrategias para evitar la descaracterización de la experiencia exitosa brasileña de Posgrado.

**Palabras clave:** Educación brasileña. Universidad. Posgrado.

## **MEIO SÉCULO DE PÓS-GRADUAÇÃO NO BRASIL: DO PERÍODO HERÓICO AO PRODUTIVISMO PELA MEDIAÇÃO DE UM MODELO SUPERIOR ÀS SUAS MATRIZES**

### **RESUMO**

Partindo da caracterização da instituição universitária e de sua manifestação no Brasil, este artigo considera, num primeiro momento, os antecedentes da pós-graduação no Brasil para examinar, em seguida, a estrutura do Parecer nº 977/65 que tratou da conceituação da pós-graduação dando início ao processo de sua institucionalização que teve sequência com sua regulamentação normatizada pelo Parecer nº 77/69. No terceiro momento analisa o processo de implantação da pós-graduação no Brasil que se configurou como um novo modelo superior aos dois modelos dos quais se originou: o norte-americano e o europeu. Na sequência levanta o problema dos riscos de descaracterização do modelo brasileiro de pós-graduação representados pelo produtivismo, o que conduz ao exame do dilema produtividade-qualidade na pós-graduação, concluindo com a apresentação de estratégias para evitar a descaracterização da bem sucedida experiência brasileira de pós-graduação.

**Palavras-chave:** Educação Brasileira. Universidade. Pós-Graduação.

### **Introduction**

Having emerged at the end of the 11th century of our era, the university assumed the status of a corporation destined to the training of intellectual arts professionals, defining itself as the main space for the development of research, which has been evident since the 17th century in seminars composed of groups of students who gathered around a teacher (SANTONI RUGIU, 1998. p. 109). Between the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, the university stripped itself of its medieval crust, giving rise to the modern university. This can be illustrated with the case of the University of Padua which in the last decade of the eighteenth century was still "a medieval university in a modern age", coming to modernize only with the

rule of Napoleon in the then kingdom of Italy, between 1805 and 1813 (GHETTI, 1982, p. 1-101, 214-312).

It is also at this moment that the three major models of university are configured that are based on the basic constitutive elements of contemporary universities: the State, civil society and the autonomy of the internal community to the institution.. As one or the other prevails, there is a different institutional model. The prevalence of the State gives rise to the Napoleonic model; prevailing civil society has the Anglo-Saxon model; and on the autonomy of the academic community is founded the Humboldtian model. This last model based on the autonomy of the internal community, that is, of teachers, led to the most intense development of scientific research. With the diaspora of brains provoked by Nazism, especially for the United States, one can credit the dominant university model in Germany the decisive impulse that was imprinted on scientific development that translated into a differentiated graduate system at the American university. It can therefore be said that the university, as we know it today, had its institutional configuration defined in the first half of the 19th century.

It is common to understand that the university in Brazil was instituted late. Luiz Antônio Cunha (1986) in his trilogy about the university in Brazil calls the first book, which deals with higher education in the period that extends from the Colony to the Vargas Era, *A Universidade temporã*. Effectively "temporã" means "out of the proper time".

The institutionalization of higher education in Brazil, begun in 1808 with the higher education courses created by D. João VI, continued in the Empire with the creation of law schools. The First Republic occurred the creation of free institutions, therefore unofficial. From the 1930s onto the resumption of public prominence that became accentuated in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s through the federalization of state and private institutions and with the creation of new federal universities. In the phase of the military dictatorship, along with the public protagonism, with emphasis on the organization of graduate studies, there was a certain stimulus to the opening of private institutions, especially in the form of isolated colleges. But all

this period started with D. João VI and that extended until the Constitution of 1988 detects a continuity represented by the prevalence of the Napoleonic model of university in the organization and expansion of higher education in Brazil.

Since the 1990s, in a process that, is currently underway, a new change emerges characterized by the diversification of the forms of organization of higher education institutions changing the university model in the direction of the Anglo-Saxon model in the North American version. With this the process of expansion of public universities was halted by stimulating the expansion of private non-profit institutions. This was the policy adopted in the eight years of the FHC government.

Throughout the Lula administration, if on the one hand a certain level of investment was resumed in federal universities with the "REUNI" Program, on the other hand, the stimulus to the private sector continued, receiving additional encouragement with the "University for All" Program, PROUNI, aimed at buying vacancies in private institutions, which came in handy in the face of the problem of idle vacancies faced by several of these institutions.

The advance of the privatization of higher education is expressed in the quantitative indexes of institutions and students reaching a relationship of four private institutions to a public one. In the case, however, of graduate studies, this relationship is reversed, manifesting a clear supremacy of public institutions. But, as we will see, through productivism also the graduate has been pressured to submit to the logic of the market.

## **1. Background of Graduate Studies in Brazil**

An important milestone in the trajectory of higher education in Brazil is Decree No. 19,851, of April 11, 1931, which, published on April 15, put into force the Statute of Brazilian Universities. We can consider that it is with this act that the issue of university officially begins in our country. These Statutes do not refer to graduate studies. But among the "Ends of University Education" established in Art. 1 included "stimulating scientific research in any fields of human knowledge" (FÁVERO, 2000, p. 159); and establishes in Art. 46 that, "[...] university institutes should organize and facilitate the means for conducting original research, which take advantage of

skills and inclinations, not only of faculty and student, but also of any other researchers... " (idem, p. 177). When dealing, in Title X., of the "Diplomas and University Dignities", the Statute stipulates, in Art. 90, the award of the title of doctor "when after the completion of normal, technical or scientific courses, and other regulatory requirements of the respective institutes, the candidate defends a thesis of his own", explaining, in § 1. "The thesis dealing with this article, in order to be accepted by the respective institute, shall constitute publication of real value on a matter of a technical or purely scientific nature"; and, in § 2: "defense of thesis shall be made before an examining committee, whose members must have specialized knowledge of the matter" (idem, p. 188).

It can be seen that the route opened by the Statute follows the system in force in European universities that maintained research activities, as a rule in seminars directed by teachers, but as the only instrument of formal recognition the granting of the title of doctor through the defense of thesis without the organization of courses or regular graduate programs leading to the obtaining of master's or doctor's degrees.

It is worth making a differentiated mention to the Free School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo. Created in 1933, it was incorporated into USP as an autonomous complementary institution in 1939, the same year it began to count on its teaching staff with the American sociologist Donald Pierson who remained until 1952 contributing strongly to the consolidation of the institution. Thus, although its Statute does not refer to postgraduate courses or to awarding academic titles, under these favorable conditions, the Division of Graduate Studies was created in 1941, which hosted the first Graduate Program in Social Sciences in Brazil.

It was in this Program that Florestan Fernandes obtained the title of master with the research *A organização social dos Tupinambá*, published in 1949. References to graduate studies and doctorates are also included in Articles 71, 76 and 77 of the Statute of the University of Brazil (now UFRJ), approved on June 18, 1946, as well as in Article 9 of Law No. 3,998 of December 15, 1961, which created the University of Brasilia (CURY, 2005, p. 8-9).



Finally, our first Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB), promulgated on December 20, 1961, when dealing, in Art. 69, of the courses to be taught in higher education institutions contemplated, in point b) the courses "graduate, open to enrollment of candidates who have completed the undergraduate course and obtained the respective diploma". Here is the provision that led to the then Minister of Education and Culture, Flávio Suplicy de Lacerda, the referral to the Federal Council of Education of a Ministerial Notice requesting pronouncement defining and verifying the possibility of regulation of the aforementioned postgraduate courses. And the answer to this notice was the preparation and approval, by the CFE, of Legal Opinion nº 977/65 reported by Councillor Newton Sucupira approved on December 3, 1965, approved by the Minister on January 6, 1966 and published in the Official Gazette on January 20, 1966. There began the process of institutionalization, at the national level, of post-graduate studies in Brazil.

## **2. Structure of Legal Opinion nº 977/65**

With the title "Definition of Graduate Courses" the Legal Opinion, after an introduction in which it reports to the Minister's Notice, develops the following topics:

### **2.1. Historical origin of graduate studies**

According to the Opinion, both the name "graduate" and the "system" originate from the structure of the American university comprising the **college or Undergraduate School**, which corresponds to our Graduation, and the Graduate **School**, corresponding to our graduate program. And he points out that graduate school in the United States is a product of German influence representing the culmination of Germanic ancestry over The American University.

### **2.2. Need for graduate studies**

A graduate education's need stems from the enormous development of science in all its branches making it impossible to master it only in undergraduate

courses. Therefore, in all countries, the tendency to introduce post-graduate studies is manifested, observing that France does not refer to undergraduate and graduate studies, but organizes higher education in three staggered cycles, the third cycle being that of doctorate. Finally, the opinion highlights that in Brazil graduate courses "hardly exist" in regular operation, imposing, therefore, the urgency of their implementation.

### **2.3. Graduate concept**

To conceptualize the graduate program, the opinion begins by distinguishing between the *lato sensu* and *stricto sensu* graduate studies to conclude that *stricto sensu* graduate studies are of "academic and pure research", while *lato sensu* "has an *eminently* practical-professional meaning"; *stricto sensu* "confers academic degree" and *lato sensu* "grants certificate". And it presents the following definition of graduate studies in the strict sense: "the cycle of regular courses in secuiemento to graduation, systematically organized, aiming to develop and deepen the training acquired in the scope of graduation and leading to the achievement of academic degree".

### **2.4. An example of graduate studies: the American**

Considering incipient our experience of graduate studies, the opinion will seek guidance in the North American experience, noting the distinction between master's and doctorate degrees as two levels that, although hierarchical are relatively autonomous, are therefore not the prerequisite master's degree for the doctorate. Thus, there may be careers, such as medicine that, in the United States, have a doctorate but do not have a master's degree. And, of course, it is possible to obtain the master's degree as a terminal degree without ascending to the level of the doctorate. Both the master's and the doctorate involve studies and exams that extend in a much longer time than graduation and, for admission, there is rigorous intellectual selection. In the doctorate it is always required thesis. In the case of the master's degree, a dissertation, memory or essay may be required, or the exams



provided may be considered sufficient. In any case, both for the master's and for the doctorate in addition to the thesis or the dissertation, memory or essay are required a certain number of courses, participation in seminars and research and a series of exams, including sufficiency in foreign languages. But in all activities the student will always have the assistance and guidance of a teacher.

## **2.5. The graduate program in the Law of Guidelines and Bases**

After to delineate the characteristics of graduate studies, the Legal Opinion begins to deal with the provisions of this subject in the Law of Guidelines and Bases, which is embodied in Article 69 in which three categories of courses are distinguished:

- a) graduation, open to the candidates who have completed the collegiate cycle or equivalent and obtained a classification an assessment.
- b) graduate, open to the registration of candidates who have completed the undergraduate course and obtained the respective university degree.
- c) specialization, improvement and extension, or any others, at the judgment of the respective educational institute open to candidates with the preparation and requirements that may be required.

Analyzing this point Newton Sucupira understands that the provisions of letter “b” corresponds to *the stricto sensu graduate* program, since it is limited to candidates who have already completed the graduation while the specialization, improvement and extension courses, provided for in point “c”, do not necessarily imply the completion of the graduation.

## **2.6. Postgraduate studies and the Statute of the Magisterium**

Considering, on the one hand, the Ministerial Notice that asked the CFE to define the Graduate Courses provided for by the LDB and also its regulation and, on the other hand, his own understanding that the regulation is necessary under penalty of the "inevitable abastardization of the degrees of Master and Doctor"; and given that Article 70 of the LDB limited the regulation to courses that confer privilege for the exercise of liberal profession, the rapporteur then uses the Statute of the Magisterium which, by Article 25, it was the responsibility of the CFE to, within 60

days, conceptualize and fix the characteristics of graduate courses. A certain regulation could be established on that delegate's basis.

## **2.7. Definition and characteristics of the Master's and Doctorate**

Finally, in view of the Ministerial Notice and the determination of the Statute of the Magisterium, Newton Sucupira concludes his opinion by defining and fixing the characteristics of the Master's and Doctorate courses. It clarifies that it is a question of indicating only the master beacons so as not to impair the necessary flexibility of the graduate program in order to preserve the margin of initiative of the institution and the student in the organization of their studies. And, after some considerations, the result of the Opinion is in sixteen conclusions which are then fully transcribed:

- 1) The graduate program referred to in article 69 of the Law of Guidelines and Bases consists of the cycle of regular courses in follow-up to graduation and aimed at developing and deepening the training acquired in undergraduate courses and lead to obtaining an academic degree.
- 2) The graduate program will comprise two levels of training: Master and Doctorate. Although hierarchical, the master's degree is not an indispensable condition for enrollment in the doctoral course.
- 3) The master's degree can be seen a preliminary step in obtaining the doctor's degree or as a terminal degree.
- 4) The doctoral program aims to provide broad and in-depth scientific or cultural training, developing the research capacity and creative power in the different branches of knowledge.
- 5) The research doctorate will have the designation of the following areas: Letters, Natural Sciences, Human Sciences and Philosophy; professional doctorates are<sup>1</sup>called according to the corresponding undergraduate courses. The master's degree will be qualified by the undergraduate course, area or subject to which it refers.
- 6) Master's and doctoral courses must have a minimum duration of one and two years respectively. In addition to the preparation of the dissertation or thesis, the candidate must study a number of subjects related to his area of concentration and related domain, undergo partial and general examinations, and tests that verify the ability to read in foreign languages. At least one for the master's degree and two for the doctorate.
- 7) The area of concentration means the specific field of knowledge which will constitute the object of studies chosen by the candidate, and by related domain any matter not belonging to that field, but considered convenient or necessary to complete its training.

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<sup>1</sup> This name does not refer to professional specialization as in current professional masters. This is the production of research in areas of liberal professions. The examples mentioned in the Opinion are: "Doctor of Engineering, Doctor of Medicine etc.".

8) The establishment must offer a varied list of materials so that the candidate can exercise his option. The subjects, preferably, will be taught in the form of monographic courses of which, whether in lectures or in seminars, the teacher will develop, in depth, a determined subject.

9) The candidate for the Master's degree requires a dissertation, on which it will be examined, in which it reveals mastery of the chosen theme and systematization capacity; for the degree of Doctor it is required defense of thesis that represents research work importing in real contribution to the knowledge of the subject.

10) The Master's and Doctorate studies program will be characterized by great flexibility, leaving ample freedom of initiative to the candidate who will receive assistance and guidance from a director of studies. will invite the program, above all, of seminars, research work, laboratory activities with the active participation of students.

11) The same postgraduate course may receive graduates from various undergraduate courses, provided they have a certain affinity. Thus, for example, the master's or Doctorate in Public Administration could be admitted bachelor's degrees in Law or Economics; in Biology, Doctors or graduates in Natural History.

12) For enrollment in postgraduate courses, in addition to the diploma of the undergraduate course required by law, institutions may establish requirements that ensure rigorous intellectual selection of candidates. If undergraduate courses should be open to the largest number, by their nature, graduate studies must be restricted to the fittest.

13) In universities, research or academic post-graduation should be the object of central coordination, covering the entire area of science and letters, including those that are part of the basic cycle of professional faculties.

14) doctoral candidates will be entrusted with teaching tasks, without prejudice to the time allocated to their studies and research papers.

15) It is advisable that the graduate program be done on a full-time basis, at least regarding the minimum duration of the courses.

16) Postgraduate courses must be approved by the Federal Council of Education so that their diplomas are registered with the Ministry of Education and can produce legal effects. To this do, the Council will lower standards by setting the criteria for the approval of the courses (BRASIL, 1965, p. 84-86).

These conclusions are, in fact, configured as master becomes indicating the way the implementation of graduate studies in Brazil should be regulated. Thus, this Legal Opinion nº 977/65 is undoubtedly the initial milestone of the institutionalization of graduate studies in Brazil. Its importance is therefore undeniable to the point of being generally considered as the "founding text of systematic graduate studies in Brazil" (CURY, 2005, p. 18). But the regulation itself occurred with CFE Opinion No. 77/69, also authored by Newton Sucupira, approved on February 11, 1969, which established the "Accreditation Standards of Graduate Courses", explaining in the sole paragraph of Article 1: "The graduate courses that deal with these standards are those that confer the degrees of Master and Doctor in the form defined by Legal

Opinion nº 977/65 of the C.F.E.". After indicating the documentation that must accompany the application for accreditation and the conditions of building, financial capacity, the proof of the high qualification of the faculty, the resources and equipment according to the nature of the courses, the existence of an updated and selected library, are resumed with some variation and terminological update, in Article 13, in twelve sections, the conclusions of Opinion nº 977/65. Article 15 provides for the establishment of a committee of experts *for on-the-spot verification of* the operating conditions of the course to be accredited. And Article 17 determines that the accreditation will be valid for five years, and renewal is up to date.

It can be seen, therefore, that the proper object of Opinion No. 977/65 was the conceptualization of graduate studies, while the object of Opinion No. 77/69 was the regulation of the implementation of graduate studies. From then on and throughout the 1970s, the process of opening and expanding graduate programs in Brazil was triggered, constituting **the heroic period**, because infrastructure conditions and bibliographic materials were provided at the same time that the programs were opened and graduate activities began.

### 3. Graduate studies and its configuration in Brazil: a new model?<sup>2</sup>

On the conceptualization of graduate studies it is worth remembering that graduate courses are understood, literally, as those that take place after graduation. It can be seen, then, that Sucupira, in Opinion No. 977/65, recognized the *distinction between lato sensu and stricto sensu* graduate studies and interpreted article 69(c) of LDB No. 4,024/61 ("specialization, improvement and extension courses or any others") as corresponding to the *lato sensu* that, in the LDB standard, would not be requiring the completion of the graduation. Well, then, it would not be graduate courses. It is then worth noting that it is possible to offer specialization, improvement, and extension courses in the form of graduate or not. In case they are graduate will be open to candidates who have completed the graduation and will

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<sup>2</sup>In this topic I return to aspects of previous studies (SAVIANI, 2014, p. 134-141).

focus on the *lato sensu modality*. In the Brazilian context, the distinction between *lato sensu* graduate studies and *stricto sensu* graduate studies became *common*.

The *lato sensu* courses assume the forms of improvement and *specialization* and constitute a kind of extension of the graduation, because they aim at an improvement (improvement) or deepening (specialization) of the professional training obtained in the corresponding undergraduate course.

The *stricto sensu graduate program* organized under the forms of master's and doctorate, has its own objective, distinct from that of the undergraduate program and is therefore considered as the graduate program itself. In this condition, unlike undergraduate courses that are focused on professional training *stricto sensu graduate studies turn* to academic training focused on the goal of researchers training.

Therefore, *the lato sensu graduate program* has as a defining element teaching because it is this that determines the objective to be achieved, entering the research as mediation to achieve the recommended objective. In opposition, the defining element of *stricto sensu graduate is* research, which determines the objective to be achieved for which teaching competes as a mediation intended to provide the requirements for the development of research that will be the touchstone of the intended formation.

Due to the above is that preference was given to *the* term program instead of course for *stricto sensu graduate studies*. The reason for this distinction lies in the fact that the **term** course binds directly to teaching and its center is a cast of subjects that students must **attend**. Now, that is the specific characteristic of *lato sensu graduate studies*. On the other hand, *stricto sensu graduate programs*, in addition to teaching, involves research as a central element. Hence, the adoption of the **programa** term program to include both teaching and research activities.

This distinction was also enshrined in the text of the new LDB, of 20/12/1996, which reserves the **programa** term program for the *graduate program stricto sensu* using the **term** course for the *graduate program lato sensu*, as stipulated in Article 44:

Higher education will cover the following courses **and programmes**: I- sequential courses...; II - undergraduate...; III - graduate programs, including **master's** and doctorate programs, specialization courses, improvement and others, open to candidates graduated in undergraduate courses and who meet the requirements of educational institutions (bold mine) (BRAZIL, 1996).

It should be noted that in this LDB there is no longer the ambiguity contained in point "c" of article 69 of the previous LDB, because in the current LDB, both for the "master's and doctorate programs" and for the "specialization, improvement and other courses", it is explicitly stated that they are open to candidates graduated in **"undergraduate courses"**.

It is therefore important that the proposal for a course of improvement or specialization is justified as a result of the advancement of knowledge resulting from the development of research in the area in question, whose results affect the profile of the corresponding profession. In this case, the *lato sensu postgraduate course* will be proposed to ensure the assimilation of procedures or results of the advancement of the research, by the professionals in the area in reference, adjusting their profile to the changes operated in the profile of their profession. *Stricto sensu* graduate programs, *in* turn, are justified in view of the very advancement of knowledge, that is, the development of research in some area, contributing directly to this purpose.

The conceptual abstract question was clarified, the following is how graduate studies were configured in Brazil.

The graduate model adopted in Brazil deliberately followed the experience of the United States, as evidenced in the text of Legal Opinion nº 977/65. It is based on this experience that the organizational structure of our *stricto sensu graduate* program focused on two levels, the master's, *and* doctorate degrees. Both of them would include the study of a set of subjects related both to the area of *concentration*, that is, the field of study chosen by the candidate, as well as to the related *domain*, that is, the area of knowledge complementary to that chosen by the student. The study program should be completed with the writing of a work resulting from research, the dissertation, for the master's degree, and the thesis, for the doctorate.



Thus, the organization of the studies is quite clear with well-specified tasks, including the figure of a mentor for each of the students.

However, if the organizational structure was inspired by the American model, the spirit with which the implementation of the programs took place was largely influenced by the European experience.

It is interesting to note that in the United States the fundamental education prevailed, under the influence of the idea of new pedagogy, the objective of socialization of children and young people justified by the discourse of encouraging the autonomy and initiative of students, with the domain of systematized knowledge in the background; and at the higher level, the students tended to be placed before a very defined organization with tasks guided by the teachers. Conversely, in Europe, basic education systems were organized under the traditional conception inherited from the Enlightenment which placed as its main objective the domain of systematized knowledge; consequently, students who entered the university tended to expect a degree of maturity and intellectual autonomy that dispensed with teachers, a direction or even a more direct orientation. And, especially in graduate studies, which was fundamentally constituted by the doctorate, it was expected that the candidates would conceive and perform for themselves their own work being the advisor more an examiner and the president of the examination benches than someone who directed and directly interfered in the definition and development of the doctoral study theme. Thus, while the North American university experience places a certain emphasis on the technical-operative aspect, in the European experience the main emphasis is on the theoretical aspect.

We know the weight of European influence on Brazilian intellectuals, especially in human sciences area. And this fact is important to understand the trend that eventually prevailed in Brazilian graduate school. In fact, the implementation of the graduate program took place from the master's degree. And although students were to attend certain subjects, teachers generally assumed a reasonable degree of autonomy of the master's students hoping that they would define their own object of investigation and, continuously act, choose the appropriate advisor to accompany

them in their research. This is one of the explanatory factors of the long time destined to the realization of the master's degree linked to the expectation that students should produce a breathless work, in practice equivalent to a doctoral thesis. This did not cause major problems in the initial phase when, in view of the pent-up demand and there is still no doctorate, teachers already with reasonable intellectual maturity and a good experience in the higher teaching degree were accessed. After, however, this first phase was verified on an increasingly generalized scale that, while the advisor expected the student himself to independently choose the theme of his dissertation, formulate the problem, define the theoretical approach, delimited the object and established the methodology and respective procedures of analysis, the master's student felt aimless and spent a lot of time without meeting these expectations of the advisor, which made him seek the help of other teachers, go through the most found readings or field observations until he could find, but after much expenditure of energy and time, the object of study that would give rise to his master's thesis.

It is in the face of this situation that the pressures for the reduction of time have arisen with the tendency to secondary the master's degree, dispense with the requirement of a dissertation or even eliminate this stage of *stricto sensu graduate studies*. I understand that this referral can jeopardize the particularity of brazilian graduate studies that allowed it to constitute one of the richest and most consistent graduate experiences. And this richness comes, I believe, from the fusion between a very articulated organizational structure, derived from American influence, and the commitment to ensure a satisfactory degree of theoretical density, resulting from European influence. To avoid the risk pointed out by preserving the particularity of the Brazilian experience, it is necessary to keep in mind the specificity of *stricto sensu graduate studies*, whose objective is training researchers.

However, if the primary objective of *stricto sensu graduate is the formation of the researcher*, the central element around which it should be organized is research. And as *stricto sensu graduate studies are organized* at two levels, master's and

doctorate degrees, it is concluded that the first level has the meaning of initiation to the researcher's education, reserving the consolidation function at the second level.

Thus, although it is desirable that the initiation take place already at the undergraduate level, it does not seem reasonable to inscribe it as a mandatory requirement already in this first stage of higher education. The *so-called scientific* initiation in undergraduate courses has the purpose of familiarizing the student (the future professional) with scientific research, which does not imply the realization, by each of the students, of a specific and complete research project.

In the case of the master's degree, however, the required initiation will be done by carrying out a complete research work. For most students it will be, in fact, the first research work that he completes, including all the steps involved in the type of investigation initiated, culminating in the writing of the dissertation with a logical structure appropriate to the readers' full understanding of the subject treated.

Thus understood, the *master's thesis supposes* a relatively simple work, expressed in a logically articulated text giving an account of a particular theme. It is distinguished from thesis, a denomination reserved for the work of the doctorate, since thesis means position, suggesting that the defense of a thesis is the defense of a position in the face of a given problem. The thesis presupposes, consequently, the requirements of intellectual autonomy and originality, since these are conditions for someone to express their own position on a given subject. Such requirements are not required in the case of the master's degree. It is assumed, rather, that it is the completion of the master's degree that will provide the fulfillment of these requirements, since, having carried out, with the support of the advisor, a complete research work, this exercise will allow him to acquire a theoretical and practical domain of the process, thus achieving the desired intellectual autonomy that will provide him with the original formulation of new research objects. Thus, while for the master's degree intellectual autonomy and originality constitute a point of arrival, for the doctorate these requirements are at the starting point as preconditions for the realization of the final stage of the researcher's training process.

In a statement: considering that *stricto sensu graduate program* is intended for the training of the researcher; considering that the master's degree has the task of carrying out the initiation of students in view of their assumption of the condition of researchers; considering that this initiation implies the performance of a complete research work, it is concluded that it is inconceivable a master's degree without a dissertation.

In view of the above, I understand that wanting to reduce the time of master's degree by giving up the dissertation is to obtain the reduction to the price of its mischaracterization. It is necessary, therefore, to remove certain alternatives that, in view of the objective of reducing the time of training, nod with the organization of master's courses without dissertation, as occurs in the United States. In fact, this type of master's degree would be mischaracterized as *a stricto sensu* graduate degree, being assimilated to specialization courses, members of *the lato sensu graduate* program, since it would tend to subordinate academic to professional training, giving up the objective of training researchers. In fact, it seems that it is precisely the admission of a distinction between a kind of professional master's degree and an academic master's degree that explains the existence, in the U.S., of a master's degree without a dissertation alongside the master's degree with dissertation. It is therefore worth considering that, in the Brazilian case, the alternative to master's degree with dissertation would not be the master's degree without a dissertation or even the professional master's degree, even with a dissertation, but specialization courses.

Then, it defines the time necessary to complete master's degree from the understanding of its nature and objectives and not the other way around. And since, as it turned out, the central point of the master's degree consists of the dissertation, it is from the dimensioning of the time required to carry out the dissertation that it is necessary to define the duration of the master's degree. And this time can only be defined to the extent that it has some criteria for characterizing the dissertation itself. And it was in the search for such criteria that I elaborated the text, the basic monograph as a regulatory idea of the master's thesis (SAVIANI, 1991). The idea

was to think of the dissertations as focusing on relevant topics not yet sufficiently explored, and it was up to the master's student to carry out a survey, as complete as possible, of the available information, organize them according to appropriate logical-methodological criteria and write the corresponding text that would allow agile access to the subject. The existence of these basic monographs would enable a more experienced researcher to perform, from the primary information already properly organized, far-reaching synthesis that would be unfeasible or would require excessive time without this preliminary work of the basic monographs.

This proposal supposed that the faculty would identify the themes, approaches and moments of Brazilian education that are open, establishing a broad program of production of basic monographs in which master's students would be engaged for the purpose of preparing and their dissertations which they would be starting as researchers, while contributing to the advancement of knowledge in educational field. As can be seen, the proposal implies the existence of lines of research in which teachers develop, in an articulated way, their own research projects. As the prevailing practice was that the professors, after carrying out their doctoral research, started to guide the students' research without, however, developing their own projects, it was difficult to implement the program of production of basic monographs as proposed. Paradoxically, in the current situation when these conditions have been fulfilled with the creation, in most programs, research groups and the development, by professors, of their own research projects, that proposal is forgotten and it is the very existence of the master's degree, as a graduate *program*, which is threatened.

The strategy of producing basic monographs in each graduate program would be a simple way to ensure, for most students, the initiation of their training as researchers since it would offer precise alternatives for the realization of dissertations, saving them time and energy by immediately involving them in a real research process. With the theme of the dissertation defined from the beginning, it would be possible to size the duration of the master's degree, which in principle would be in three-year range. Given its initiation character involving the need to take

courses, I consider it neither feasible nor desirable to reduce the time to below the indicated deadline. However, successfully completed this stage of initiation, the doctorate could be strongly focused on carrying out the research, which would enable its completion, as the experience has shown, within 30 to 36 months. Thus, the total time of the researcher's training would be around five to six years, a term that would fatally end up being destined for the doctorate if, in the event of extinction of the master's degree, the entire process of formation of the researcher was attributed to him.

Solving the question of time through a consistent organization of studies, it would be possible to preserve and even deepen and strengthen the rich experience of Brazilian graduate studies. This, merging the organizational structure of the American model with the theoretical density from European influence, produced a new model, certainly better than those. This perspective, however, does not clearly outline the horizon of our graduate studies. On the contrary, the current situation is home to the disarticulation trend of the successful experience of post-graduate studies in our country, which is threatened by pressure to reduce deadlines, exercised in a special way on the master's degree by the requirement of productivity. Such pressures put us in the face of a real dilemma when we strive to seek quality in graduate school. We must therefore consider what this dilemma is and how this dilemma is manifested.

#### **4. The productivity-quality dilemma in graduate school<sup>3</sup>**

Considering the character of scientific activity and education as non-material production modalities whose product is not parted from the act of production; that research, as a scientific activity, and the training of the researcher, as an educational activity, participate in this characteristic; that the compatibility between the search for productivity and the pursuit of quality presupposes the full objectification of the work process; that non-material production is not susceptible to full objectification, it follows that, under the conditions of non-material production, the search for

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<sup>3</sup> In the wording of this topic I take back aspects of previous analyses (SAVIANI, 2019, p. 12-15 and 323-325).



productivity is in contradiction with the quality of the results of this production. There is the root of the productivity-quality dilemma in graduate programs, that is, in the development of research and in the training of the researcher.

Dilemma is a term derived from the Greek (διλήμμα) that has the meaning of an argumentation with two contradictory conclusions equally possible, logically generalizing the meaning of dilemma as an embarrassing situation with two equally difficult exits. It can be seen, therefore, that when we talk about the productivity-quality dilemma in graduate school we are talking about an embarrassing situation, because the increase in productivity negatively interferes in quality and vice versa. Thus, both paths are equally difficult, because quality cannot be given up, but productivity cannot be neglected either. It happens that this feeling focuses on that "bourgeois mental narrowness", referred to by Marx, who is content to consider productive all work that produces something, which is nothing but a tautology, because it leads to the conclusion that unproductive work is the one that produces nothing. Thus, it is evident that graduate programs cannot give up productivity because this would mean admitting that they would become unproductive, it is worth saying, without producing anything. Hence, the tautological classifications of evaluation processes that reach conclusions of the following type: a given Program is very productive because it produces a lot; another is unproductive because it produces little; a third is very unproductive because it produces very little, and so on. But, productive work, in the capitalist society in which we live is the one that generates added value;; and unproductive work is what does not generate added value which, of course, does not mean that nothing produces.

As Marx explains, the productive work corresponds to the M-C-M' circuit, that is, a situation in which you exchange goods for money as capital, that is, the commodity is a means to increase capital, to add value to it; whereas the unproductive work corresponds to the C-M-C circuit (Commodity-Money-Commodity) in which goods are exchanged for money as money, that is, the money obtained from the sale of finished goods is a means to acquire another commodity

that will satisfy a certain need for consumption of the buyer, not entering the capital circuit.

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In the light of the considerations made it is clear the management of the concept of productivity in the field of research and graduate studies means placing them under the orbit of capital. And this is understandable, because "capital is the economic force of the bourgeois society that dominates everything" (MARX, 1973, p. 236) which causes everything, in this type of society, to fall under the logic of capital.

Despite this finding, it cannot be disregarded that it is a contradictory process that, in the case on screen, places in opposite fields the productivity and quality of research and postgraduate training: the requirement of productivity hinders the realization of quality and the emphasis on quality does not fit the criteria for measuring productivity.

The dilemma is that it is admitted that the two aspects, productivity and quality, should integrate the process of research and training of researchers, but we do not know how to articulate them or what specific weight each of them should have in the said process. And when we see some prospect of a solution at the institutional level, we face two equally embarrassing exits. In fact, we could give precedence to the first aspect and, in this case, we would endeavor to meet the criteria of CAPES and the agencies supporting research and graduate studies. Thus, all the energies of coordination and faculty of graduate programs and research groups linked to them would be directed, on the one hand, to increase the number of research reports, to find mechanisms to transform them into works

presented in scientific events or published in articles, books and book chapters and, on the other hand, to reduce the time allocated to the production of dissertations and theses. With this, the relevance, relevance and consistency of the work produced would be used in the background.

The consequence would be the increasing fall in the quality of graduate programs. Or, on the other hand, we could, giving precedence to the second aspect, return all attention and care to the improvement of quality, a situation in which the productivity requirements put by the evaluation and financing bodies would be subordinated. Here, the consequence would be the reduction of financial support and scholarships, which would result in a decrease in productivity, also reflecting the quality of graduate studies.

The two exits are therefore equally problematic, thus remaining embarrassing. How to solve the problem? How to get out of the dilemma? I believe that the argument sparked throughout this exhibition already indicates, in a certain way, the possible outputs.

In radical terms, the exit lies in the break with the logic of capital. This implies the transformation of the production relationships themselves, giving rise to a new type of society. However, even assuming that this is the goal to be achieved, we know that it is not present in our immediate horizon. Thus, it is about resisting the dominant logic by reacting to pressures through actions whose strategies must be triggered according to the correlation of forces detected in the light of the analysis of the situations faced.

In this direction we can, if we conclude that the correlation of forces is favorable, challenge the reasons for the modification of the master's degree, show the negative implications of the proposed changes and, turning the game, make it clear that it is the official bodies that depend on the Programs and not the other way around, since it is in the Graduate Programs that the end-activities are carried out and that is also where the members of the evaluation committees and the leaders of the official bodies are provided.

However, it should be evaluated that the correlation of forces is not favorable to the strategy indicated above, it should be necessary to trigger other types of strategy. For example, if it is not feasible to change the criteria that require the reduction of the deadlines for the completion of master's dissertations, it can be articulated with specialization courses, understood as a deepening of studies in the area in which the student will perform the master's degree. With this, even taking into account the time limits defined by the agencies for the master's degree, there is a time that, in addition to specialization, can guarantee the quality that resulted in the reduction of the master's degree.

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In this case it is necessary to consider that what was implanted in Brazil was the *Stricto Sensu Graduate Program*. In Legal Opinion nº 977/65 Sucupira acknowledges the difference between *lato sensu graduate studies* and *stricto sensu*, but did not bother with its regulation. Thus, just as he considered that "regulation is necessary under penalty of the inevitable subordinating of the degrees of Master and Doctor", we can consider that, not being regulated, the "inevitable subordination" of the post *lato sensu* was provoked. Focused on the improvement, specialization and professional updating, the *post lato sensu* was occurring more or less randomly, on the margin of the effective graduate policy that was restricted to *stricto sensu*.

In view of the non-regulation, the universities that decided to act in the *scope of the lato sensu graduate* program took the form of specialization, improvement and extension courses creating specific bodies for their organization and management of the type of the General Coordination of Specialization, Improvement and Extension (COGEAEs). With this, what should be articulated as two modalities of the same academic sector, graduate studies, resulted in two initiatives entirely separated from each other, materialized, including two totally separate bodies.

Considering, furthermore, that the prominence of *stricto sensu level regulation* by the Federal Council of Education led institutions with some research experience to devote themselves only to *stricto sensu*, the *lato senso* ended up being circumscribed to the initiative of institutions that were dominantly dedicated to teaching without, further, a consolidated research structure. Thus, the *lato sensu courses* were being organized horizontally, according to the prevailing model in the undergraduate course, with several subjects attended at the same time, when they should, as in the case of *stricto sensu*, be organized in a vertical form with two or three disciplines, at most, per semester, thus enabling the deepening. This discrepancy was so evident that even in the case of institutions, such as PUC São Paulo, which dedicated themselves to both levels, this occurred entirely separately, with *stricto sensu* Programs located in a **Graduate Department** entirely separated from the *lato sensu courses* allocated at **COGEAE**.

In the face of this situation, the role of *lato sensu Graduate Courses* to ensure, in fact, the specialization, improvement and updating of professionals trained in undergraduate courses resulted in the aggravating of the image of a lower status with which *lato sensu courses* were stigmatized in the face of *stricto sensu programs*.

Given this picture, as I indicated earlier, there would be no place in Brazil to reproduce the distinction existing in the United States between Academic Masters and Professional Masters. What would be necessary to do, effectively, would be to *articulate the lato sensu with the stricto sensu* by inserting the Specialization, Improvement and Updating Courses in the Graduate Sector itself, subjecting them to the decisions of the Graduate Commissions within the university units and the Central Graduate Commission within the university, giving them the same status and ensuring them the same quality. This is what I tried to do when I took over, between 1989 and 1992, the coordination of the Graduate Program in Education of UNICAMP and formulated a proposal to organize Specialization Courses articulated with the Master's degree. The fact, however, is that, as the "Bologna Process" attests, the American model tends to impose itself and we end up having



no alternative but to assume, also here in Brazil, the distinction between academic and professional master's degrees, bowing to the requirement of the creation of professional masters.

## Conclusion

Aware of the problems faced, graduate programs must choose their priorities and firmly pursue the objective that justifies them, that is, the training of researchers. The issue of productivity should be clearly subordinated to this objective and not the other way around, as has been the case today, as a matter of pressure from investment and accreditation policies. That is, it is only worth increasing the productivity aimed at research reports; in the publications of articles and books; in the works presented in the most different types of events that have multiplied in the area of education; and in the dissertations and theses, if the products in reference configure results of relevant research on the priority problems faced by Brazilian education.

On the other hand, it is observed that the graduate program walked towards the opposite of graduation, in a divorce that also manifested itself within the post-graduation *between lato sensu* and *stricto sensu*, that is between courses (teaching) and programs (research). This divorce was accentuated with the reforms of the 1990s and with the new LDB that were headed for the diversification of higher education models, aggravating the phenomenon of fragmentation.

Instead of this tendency it is necessary to walk in the opposite direction, that of integration, articulating the graduation with *the lato and stricto sensu graduate* studies, which is nothing other than the realization of the proclaimed indissociably between teaching and research. It would then be up to the university's units to welcome young people and place them in an environment of intense and demanding intellectuals' stimulation. His training would begin with the undergraduate course articulating the teaching of theoretical and practical foundations with the research provided by the insertion of students in the projects developed by the teachers, through programs of scientific initiation; would continue with the *post lato sensu*, that

is, with specialization courses articulated with the master's degree where, as it turned out, it would give its full initiation in the research courses, completing with the doctorate.

Here we can, finally, not only preserve the new model of training of researchers built in Brazil. The analyses, although limited to the limited space of a simple article, sought to go further, proposing strategies conducive to the improvement and consolidation of the successful experience of Brazilian graduate studies.

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