

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE MEC-USAID AGREEMENTS IN THE PAGES OF *O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* (1962-1970)

O movimento estudantil e os acordos MEC-USAID
nas páginas de *O Estado de S. Paulo* (1962-1970)

El movimiento estudiantil y los convenios MEC-USAID
en las páginas de *O Estado de S. Paulo* (1962-1970)

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Abstract: The objective of this article is to present how the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* associated the process of technical and financial aid agreements, known as MEC-USAID agreements, with the Brazilian student movement, primarily represented by the National Union of Students (UNE), in a manner that sought to discredit it. The article adopts Abramo's (2003) perspective, which suggests that the newspaper's consensus-building aligns with governmental determinations and the private interests of its stakeholders. A total of 186 texts, including articles, reports, and editorials, were studied. The analysis reveals that the association between these two events was orchestrated to simultaneously express support for the agreements and criticism of the student protests against them, particularly during the years 1967-1968, when the debate over university reform in Brazil intensified.

Keywords: *O Estado de S. Paulo*; student movement; MEC-USAID agreements.

Resumo: O objetivo do artigo é apresentar como o jornal *O Estado de S. Paulo* fez a associação entre o processo dos acordos de ajuda técnica e financeira, denominados acordos MEC-USAID, e o movimento estudantil brasileiro, centralmente representado pela União Nacional dos Estudantes (UNE), de modo a desmerecê-lo. O artigo entende o jornal como Abramo (2003), que indica que a sua fabricação de consenso acompanha as determinações governamentais e os interesses privados de seus responsáveis. Foram estudados 186 textos, de entre artigos, reportagens e editoriais. O texto desvenda que a associação entre esses dois eventos foi articulada para, simultaneamente, manifestar-se favorável aos acordos e crítico aos manifestos estudantis contrários a eles, principalmente entre os anos de 1967-1968, quando se acirra a discussão pela reforma universitária no Brasil.

Palavras-chave: *O Estado de S. Paulo*; movimento estudantil; acordos MEC-USAID.

Resumen: El objetivo de este artículo es presentar cómo el periódico *O Estado de S. Paulo* asoció el proceso de los acuerdos de ayuda técnica y financiera, conocidos como acuerdos MEC-USAID, con el movimiento estudiantil brasileño, principalmente representado por la Unión Nacional de Estudiantes (UNE), de manera que buscaba desacreditarlo. El artículo adopta la perspectiva de Abramo (2003), que sugiere que la construcción de consenso del periódico se alinea con las determinaciones gubernamentales y los intereses privados de sus responsables. Se estudiaron un total de 186 textos, incluidos artículos, reportajes y editoriales. El análisis revela que la asociación entre estos dos eventos fue orquestada para expresar simultáneamente apoyo a los acuerdos y críticas a las protestas estudiantiles en su contra, particularmente durante los años 1967-1968, cuando se intensificó el debate sobre la reforma universitaria en Brasil.

Palabras clave: *O Estado de S. Paulo*; movimiento estudiantil; convenios MEC-USAID.

INTRODUCTION

We considered analyzing the students' movement on the pages of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo* (OESP) as an important point of the history of the MEC-USAID agreements because the editors themselves made this relation. The student movement (SM) started to occupy OESP's pages since a series of protest held nationwide in 1965 onwards against the interference of the USA in the reformulation of higher education through these agreements.

This article highlights the content (articles, reports, editorials) presented by the newspaper during the period to convince the public of the bilateral agreements for technical and financial aid established between Brazil and the USA through agreements between the *Ministério da Educação e Cultura* (MEC- Education and Culture Ministry) and the *Agency for International Development (USAID)*, which were historically called the 'MEC-USAID agreements'. Furthermore, we focus on how this newspaper analyzed these agreements while reporting the students' manifestations and discrediting them.

OESP believed that the agreement would open the way for university reform because the North American technicians "[...] would transfer their deep knowledge for the Brazilian technical team [...]" who were responsible for the analyses and recommendations on the planning of higher education and "[...] would offer the material help need for the reform" (O governo e a questão estudantil, 1967a, p. 3). According to the newspaper, one could not waste the knowledge of such mission and, therefore, claimed that the students were immature and had no intellectual knowledge of the facts. The position against students was constant in the paper in the 1960s. However, between 1967 and 1968, the newspaper intensified its opposition towards students' manifestations as they were contrary to the agreements.

One of the conditions listed at *Carta de Punta Del Este*¹ to maintain the agreements between MEC and USAID was "[...] the support of all social classes to implement the projects indicated [...]" by the North Americans (Organização dos Estados Americanos [OEA], 1961). This did not happen because part of the civil society, mainly the student movement connected to the *União Nacional dos Estudantes* (UNE- National Student Union), believed there was no need to keep this kind of relationship with the USA.

¹ The *Carta de Punta del Este* was signed in 1961 as the document that established the Alliance for Progress, an initiative of economic and social cooperation among the countries members of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the United States. According to its content, it aimed to accelerate the economic and social development in the region, seeking the idea of social justice. It is a document that established the United States's political expansionism in the region during the Cold War period (Ac. Yale Law School, 1961).

Santana (2014) presents the conflict points between the project of university reform defended by the students and the one proposed by the regime. According to the author, the student movement would not accept a reform that did not democratize Brazilian universities; it was dissociated with the needed socioeconomic changes, and that it a dictatorial government promoted. The debates about the reform were broad and the discourses often overlapped.

Nonetheless, in the military's perspective, the project to change the universities was thought towards a model to speed up economy, whose developmentalism nature was criticized by the students in the documents that emerged from the *Seminários Nacionais de Reforma Universitária da UNE* [UNE National Seminars on University Reform] (Santana, 2014)². Among the conflict points were the “[...] North American interference [...]” in higher education through the recommendations of the Atcon³ report (Santana, 2014, p. 254).

We chose OESP because the newspaper is an 'opinion maker' and uses its credibility position with its readers to support these agreements. We should also consider that OESP is known to mirror the opinion of those responsible for it, mainly regarding Brazilian and São Paulo education, throughout the 20th century and, thus, consider itself legitimate to analyze students' behavior towards the agreement it wanted to be approved (Rossi, 2018; Ribeiro, 2006). This newspaper was founded on January 4, 1875, initially under the name *A Província de São Paulo*. Since 1890, it became known as *O Estado de S. Paulo*. In 1967, the daily print was 340,000 papers (Acervo Estado, s.d.).

After the coup in 1964, the newspaper removed the political support to the military for believing it would be a short-term transition, while the intervention with no determined timeline was the regime's proposal. Since then, OESP placed itself in opposition to the government regarding the permanence of the military in power but still kept its support on how the economy was conducted in the country (Aquino, 1999). This alternation perspective in the newspaper's narrative path was also seen by

² According to Santana (2014), the articulation of the political and the SM's educational fights to defend the university reform was not evident in the first two documents written by UNE during the I and II National Seminar on University Reform (Bahia Declaration and Paraná Letter, respectively). It only became apparent in 1963 in the document *UNE: luta atual reforma universitária* [UNE: current fight university reform] though it longer was enacted in practice.

³ The *Diretoria do Ensino Superior* (DES- Higher Education Directory), from the Education and Culture Ministry, in the period between June and September 1965, asked Rudolph Atcon to make a study to reform Brazilian universities. This study intended to establish associations between this reality and the plan made over USA assumptions, considering the rationality and efficiency of the institutions. The document *Rumo à reformulação estrutural da universidade brasileira* [Towards a structural reformulation of Brazilian university] from 1966 resulted from this action and became known as the Atcon Plan. However, this document is strongly connected to a work conducted at Princeton University in 1958, entitled: *Outline of a proposal for US policy concentration in Latin America on university reorganization and economic integration*. This document was published as *The Latin American University* in 1963 and became a reference for the *United States Agency for International Development* (USAID).

Carvalho (2003), when the researcher sought to understand OESP's view on the Brazilian educational system, analyzing the changes and continuities in the criticisms, and the analyses expressed in its editorials.

Previous the coup d'état, the newspaper approached emphatically the movement lead by UNE, revealing its political project for education and combating the communism, which it believe had infiltrated students' circles. However, after the AI-2⁴, the newspaper started to harshly criticize the regime, resulting later on its censorship. Even so, the newspaper continued to publish content regarding the exceptional and repressive measures to 'clean' the student and university environment from subversive activities.

We consider that the newspaper started simultaneously to criticize the permanence of the military in power but also violently judged the students contrary to the agreements because it defended the establishment of the pact despite knowing the difficulties of its implementation. Therefore, we seek to understand why the paper, while reporting and approving the agreements established by MEC-USAID, repeatedly attacked the students, so that the aggressions to the student movement in its narratives began to merge with the process to structure the agreements. The specific interest of this text is to understand how and why the students started to be offended and attacked, as a rhetorical vehicle to gain public opinion in favor of the agreements.

In this article, we considered the content published at OESP, the documents about the agreement and the legislation pertinent to both subjects. The first articles published by OESP about the agreements between MEC-USAID date from 1962 and approached the investment of North Americans in Brazilian programs. The newspaper points out the technical and financial support through the *Programa Aliança Para o Progresso* (APP- Program Alliance for Progress) in the country and shows the importance of such investments⁵. Between 1962 and 1973, 186 publications were found about the MEC-USAID agreements. Out of those, 78 entries refer to the students' movement and the relation between both events finish with an OESP journalistic article in 1970⁶.

⁴ The Institutional Act nº 2 (AI-2) was a decree published by the Brazilian military in October 27, 1965, which significantly broadened the regime's power. This act was an answer to the state elections from 1965, in which the candidates connected to former president João Goulart had important victories, which concerned the military. Through this act, indirect presidential elections were imposed and allowed intervention in state governments, for example.

⁵ The Alliance for Progress was a economic and social cooperation program launched by the United States president, John F. Kennedy, in 1961. The main goal was to accelerate the economic and social development of Latin America. It also tried to contain the influence of socialism in the region during the Cold War. (Acc. Ribeiro, 2006).

⁶ This text is part of a dissertation entitled *Os acordos MEC-USAID no jornal O Estado de S. Paulo (1962-1973)* [Os acordos MEC-USAID no jornal O Estado de S. Paulo (1962-1973), de Pamela de Mattos Rossi], by Pamela de Mattos Rossi, advised by Prof. Dra. Katya Braghini, at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São

The chronological choice – 1962 to 1970 – for this work was due to the reformulations that in education pre and post the civil-military coup, considering the negotiations between Brazil-USA before the coup and the extension of some pact by additive terms until 1970. The newspaper's contents were analyzed through information collected in a database, first seeking its identification (publication date, title, section, author, page, edition) and, later, quantitatively and qualitatively analyzing the subjects related to what was published on the topic. We highlight the contextualized relationships made by the editors between students' actions and the agreement processes.

These documents are analyzed from the ideas proposed by Abramo (2003), Fonseca (1997), and Capelato and Prado (1980), who, directly or indirectly, analyzed how the main press is socially and politically guided and, especially, how OESP is characterized throughout its history. In this paper, we can perceive a strong defense of the liberal state, but it frequently aligned with conservative and reactionary interests when noticing any threats to its power or the social order (Capelato & Prado, 1980). OESP sought to instill values considered liberal to the public opinion and intended to defend concrete positions, rejecting those it considered impertinent. Moreover, it acts to manipulate social interests while caring for its own business and protecting values such as 'Homeland,' 'Nation,' and 'People' (Almiro apud Fonseca, 1997).

Though the content of a newspaper cannot be properly understood as a lie, Abramo (2003) warns that mainstream media is always ready to legitimize the political measures announced by the rules and the 'market strategies', disseminating them as opinions. It builds consensus, educate perceptions, produces partial realities presented as the totality of the world, distorts facts, falsifies, mystifies, and acts, summing up, as a type of party, proclaiming itself to be the spokesperson and the mirror of civil society's 'general interests', while fighting for its own interests.

It is relevant to perceive how OESP structures its discourse to convince the public of the MEC-USAID agreements, not always well explained, though made essential. Meanwhile, the negative representations about the students' movement, which were contrary to the issue at the time, were published. In other terms, this study shows how this newspaper guided one subject through another so that it could, simultaneously, sow the acceptance of the agreement terms while stimulating and fomenting the authority action over the students politically mobilized.

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THE MEC-USAID AGREEMENTS IN OESP PAGES

We understand that the MEC-USAID agreements are contracts with a history connected to previous international projects that marked the relationships of Brazil in a multilateral way with countries members of the Organization of American States (OAS). Maluhy (2010) indicates that between the 1950s and 1960s, the *United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) projected specific policies of educational action fundamentally focused on 'Latin American development' placing itself as an essential body for structural educational changes⁷.

In education, more directly as international agreements, the first records between MEC and EUA were formalized in 1946⁸. The agreements were punctual between the 1950s and 1960s, mainly through technical assistance.

From APP (1961) onwards, there was a formalization of the technical agreements associated with financial assistance between the sovereign countries members of OAS. Such agreements were based on the proposals from *Carta de Punta del Este* (1961), announced here as APP milestone document. The intention was to keep the existing technical assistance programs and insert the financial support in the form of donations and loans for Latin American countries. APP presents itself as a program that seeks the modernization and development of member countries, with the USA acting as the main interlocutor (Rossi, 2018).

USAID was created in 1961 as part of this external politics, aiming to provide the so-called technical and financial cooperation to the places recognized as geopolitical areas of USA influence by the Department of State (Rossi, 2018). Caterina (2015) shows the financial movement of agreements signed with Brazil. The expenditure that exceeded US\$ 205 million in 1962, reduced to US\$ 141 million in 1963. After the coup d'état in 1964, there is a US\$ 50 million loan. In the fiscal year of 1964, the agreements reached almost US\$ 337 million. The subsequent records show US\$ 270.8 million (1965), US\$ 329 million (1966), US\$ 240 million (1967), and US\$ 280.7 (1968). The loans had little relevance in the mid-1970s.

As we can see, after the civil-military coup, there was a considerable financial negotiation between Brazil and USAID. In this relationship, there was a proposal of

⁷ In the case of the UNESCO project, we can perceive the straight connection between the plans of the entity and the important institutions of control and administration of education in Brazil. Among them: *Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais* (INEP); *Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais* (CPBE), *Centro Regional de Pesquisas Educacionais* (CRPEs), *Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras* (FFCL-USP).

⁸ According to Nogueira (1999), the first agreement dates from March 1st, 1946, during the government Dutra (1946-1951). It referred to industrial education and the construction of the Technical School of Curitiba, which would be a reference in the area. The project had the North American support to send Brazilian teachers to the USA to train them and, between 1946 and 1951, the agreements sought to acquire North American equipment to 33 Technical Schools built in Brazil.

educational reform that, in Brazil, took place through 12 agreements established between MEC-USAID, presenting measures that, in general, sought to train and qualify teacher, train specialists connected to the Education Secretaries, curricula review and reformation, production and circulation of technical and didactic books, insertion of new teaching and planning techniques, building of new schools, mainly technical ones, the granting of scholarships in the USA to train Brazilian teachers, etc. (Brasil, 1967a). The nature of these agreements reflects a complex interaction between assistance, intervention, economic development, and social resistance in Brazilian education, which included the promotion of an education that prepared students for the work market and economic modernization (Rossi, 2018). Later on, the position of the universities in the agreements stand out, considering that the analyzed newspaper attacks, first, the higher education students.

The first articles published at OESP about the agreements between MEC-USAID date from 1962. The newspaper was critical regarding the government's actions in that period but vehemently defended the implementation of the project (Rossi, 2018). Between 1963 and 1964, the paper only published information regarding the formalized agreements in health, energy, housing, and others. After 1964, the USAID presence focused on implementing educational reforms that, together with the Atcon report, proposed the rationalization of the universities and the restrain of students' movement. From 1965 onwards, OESP's content defended the improvement and expansion of primary, vocational, agricultural, and domestic education and the formalization of the plan to organize higher education (Planejamento..., 1965).

Contrary to previous agreements, the MEC-USAID contracts appear as a cooperation more focused on structuring education, showing the military government's interests that are reflected in the assistance's change of nature, which becomes more guided and controlled. Specifically about higher education, a relationship between the Ministry of Education and USAID was established in June 1965 by the *Diretoria do Ensino Superior* (DESu- Higher Education Direction), whose Brazilian representative to the Technical Cooperation was teacher Faria Góis, responsible for the 'Organization of Higher Education'. The document was signed by the Minister Flávio Suplicy de Lacerda, the USAID director in Brazil, Stuart Van Dyke, and the teacher Deolindo Couto, who was then the president of the *Conselho Federal de Educação* (CEF- Education Federal Council) (Brasil, 1969).

Table 1 shows more precisely the themes presented in OESP about the agreements portraying, even more clearly, the paper's reaction regarding the pact procedures and the moment in which the student movement starts to be a theme highlighted in this same history.

Table 1. Quantitative distribution of the main themes covered in OESP per year

Main themes/Year	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1970
Formalization and/or end of the MEC-USAID agreements	2	-	-	7	-	3	-	-	1	-	-	-
Demands from the Brazilian states to implement projects developed through the MEC-USAID agreements	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	5	-	-	-
Declaration of USAID representatives about the MEC-USAID agreements	-	-	-	-	2	3	2	1	-	-	-	-
Development of works and implementation of the MEC-USAID projects	-	-	-	-	1	4	2	3	1	-	1	-
Constitution and appointment of the Brazilian technical team to plan the higher education	-	-	-	-	1	10	6	-	-	-	-	-
Review and expansion of the MEC-USAID agreements	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	1	-	-	1	1
Declarations about the agreements from the ministers of education and names connected to education	-	-	-	-	-	15	1	2	4	-	1	-
Political debates and denouncements about the MEC-USAID agreements	-	-	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	-	-	-
The student movement and the MEC-USAID agreements	-	-	-	2	1	53	21	-	-	1	-	-

Source: Data organized by Rossi (2018).

Table 1, between 1967 and 1968, the newspaper constantly reported the students' manifestations regarding the agreements; it criticized students in six editorials, responded criticisms of political opposition in other two editorials, announced its disagreement in 12 covers, declarations defending the agreements, violent results of students' demonstrations, and intensified the publication of news related to the agreements. We can perceive that the greater agglomeration of contents in the newspaper in 1967 regards the relationship between students and MEC-USAID.

In this case, students were mentioned when they protested against the agreements. According to the newspaper, these students were unworthy of being taken seriously (Filosofia da USP..., 1967). It pointed out that the students' protests, which were increasing in several states, were raising concern among the military circles (Filosofia da USP..., 1967). The paper reported the violent ending of a demonstration promoted by the students (A UNE perde terreno, 1967). It predicted that almost all students disagreed with UNE's guidelines because they considered it radical and, consequently, students who protested were a radical minority.

Between 1967 and 1970, OESP reported the processes related to MEC-USAID in different sources. First presenting the difficulties of assembling technical team when there were mutual accusations about the relational problems between Brazilian and North American technicians. When analyzing the documents in detail, we perceive that not even the newspaper was convinced that the agreements were flowing easily (Rossi, 2018).

In general, we can see that higher education was grounded on agreements because it is possible to perceive them as associated with the scholarship grants to teachers in the USA (Agreement 7), as a fundamental part of the formation of an academic and technical elite; the review of curricula, as the curriculum review was a central aspect in the university reform (Agreement 3); and the introduction of new teaching methods and techniques and the implementation of new pedagogical approaches that promote more efficient and dynamic teaching (Agreement 4) (Rossi, 2018).

Considering specifically the universities, OESP followed the works undertaken by the *Equipe de Assessoria ao Planejamento do Ensino Superior* (EAPES- Higher Education Planning Advisory Team). This report presents the actions of the Brazilian and the USA teams⁹. It presents pathways to restructure the national system of higher education. The team kept a constant dialogue with several intellectual networks, including the *Conselho Federal de Educação* (CFE- Education Federal Council) members and other professionals in the educational area. The document delineates the works that were effectively done by the team. Issues such as the objectives of

⁹ In 1966-1967, by the indication of USAID and Midwest Consortium, Profs. Henry W. Hoge, John D. Ryder, J. M. Klotsche, and John M. Hunter were designated. The Midwest Consortium was a group of public universities in the Midwest of the USA (graduated in the Universities of Illinois, Indiana, Wisconsin, Michigan). The Brazilian team oscillated and, often, the members were appointed by demand. Professors Ernesto Luís de Oliveira Júnior, Heitor Herrera, João Paulo de Almeida Magalhães, Paulo Accioly de Sá, and Rubens d'Almada Horta Porto were appointed between May-June 1967. In the following month, all of them resigned, except Horta Porto. After that, Prof. Paulo Ernesto Tolle and the CFE members, Professors. Roberto Figueira Santos, Valnir Chagas, Rubens Mário Garcia Maciel, and Newton Sucupira to provide services to the team. Next is the appointment of the 3rd Brazilian Commission composed by professors. Hermínio Pessoa, José Fernando Domingues Carneiro, Laerte Ramos de Carvalho, Osmar Ferreira, and Rubens d'Almada Horta Porto, in January 1968 (Brasil, 1969).

higher education, the lack of resources, and the comparison between the universities in both countries were part of these works (Brasil, 1969).

The report also points out the challenges that hindered the efficiency of this collaboration. Among the factors mentioned are the language barriers, the severe criticism that the agreement received in some sectors, and the relative isolation of the North American team, which limited the capacity to understand higher education problems in Brazil. Among the action products, norms were established seeking the authorization and the recognition of new universities and colleges, besides the need for a bibliography about Brazilian higher education, because a lack of materials in the theme was perceived. There was a collection and analysis of statistical data about educational institutions, courses, and academic performance (Brasil, 1969). According to Silveira (2020), the content and conceptions presented in this report were kept by the work group about University Reform, created by the Decree n° 62.937, from July 2, 1968.

Regarding the planning of higher education, the newspaper turned its attention to the constitution of the responsible technical team by the universities with criticisms (MEC-USAID já em reexame, 1967), such as: the delay in choosing the team (MEC fará certame nacional de ensino, 1968); the collective resignation demand (MEC revê os acordos, 1967); the appointment of new members and the bureaucratic issues that stopped the constitution of new technical staff (Acordo terá 5 do Brasil, 1968); as well as the declarations of the higher education director claiming that the agreement had not been implemented because of the Brazilian government's fault (Epílogo..., 1967).

According to Fávero (1994), and deepening Atcon's recommendations for the educational philosophy in the continent, the following measures should be adopted: remodel the state universities as private foundations; ground higher education in profitable bases, charging increasing enrollments during a period of ten years and eliminating students' interference in the administration of institutions. Fávero (1991) points out that the proposal also suggested political neutrality within the higher education institutions as the basic fundament of the reform process.

To Germano (2011), university reform in the military regime essentially represents a distorted incorporation of experiences and previous demands, added to the privatization recommendation of Atcon, the EAPES report, and other commissions. Conceptually, it was grounded on the 'theory of human capital', which establishes a direct connection between education and job market; education and production, aligned to the demands of the work market and the accumulation of human capital that, in Brazil, were associated to Ideology of National Security.

The discussion about university education turns to the qualification of people as economic values. In other words, there is a physical capital that seeks production dynamism but there is also a human capital (in the shape of certain types of knowledge and abilities) that merge to the idea of efficiency and the productive capacity of

individuals. Certainly, this ideal, together with the State's political violence, activated the students' manifestations.

The newspaper centered its attacks on the manifestations contrary to the MEC-USAID agreement, mainly in the actions and debates led by UNE, especially the discussions on the interference of the agreements in the university reforms. The vast majority of criticisms were in the editorials, meaning the voice of the newspaper's owner and activating the readers' judgment over what should be thought about the students¹⁰. Students' manifestations denounced the following educational problems but for OESP it was only a reaction of inconsequent young people.

THE STUDENTS' MOVEMENT UNDERSTANDING OF MEC-USAID AND THE UNIVERSITY REFORM

According to the SM, the government's policies did not consider the cultural bases of Brazilian education; on the contrary, they aimed only at education efficiency in the shadows of a capitalist industrial formation under the USA's guidance. Therefore, the students opposed the university reform promoted by the regime, defending the formation of a technical team constituted in Brazil (Santana, 2014).

Fávero (1992) points out that, for university students, the materialization of the agreement MEC-USAID contributed to a university reform in reverse, discussed, planned, and enacted within the structures that needed to be reformed. Therefore, they doubted the 'technical answer' the agreement intended to give to the problems because they believed this question would not be restricted to the educational scope but involved commitments loaded of determinations, whose nature was political..

Parallel to this, there are demands for surveillance in schools and the places young people circulated, seeking students' disciplining, etc. The Special Commission Meira Mattos – whose base document guides the anti-student actions – interprets the university reform precisely relating it with the 'student problems', resulting in the Decree nº 62.024 (1967), that "[...] established the Special Commission to propose measures related to students' problems [...]" and in the Decree-Law nº 477 (1969), and that defined the "[...] disciplinary infractions practiced by teachers, students, workers, or employers of public and private education establishments".

The conflict points between these projects and the university reform started to be debated in seminars in students' bodies and congresses promoted by UNE. SM's actions translated into marches, strikes, assemblies, and demonstrations against the military regime; discussions regarding the charging of annual fees, the incorporation

¹⁰ We must mention that the AI-5 was established in 1968 and, therefore, all demonstrations were forbidden. Furthermore, there was a moment of disarticulation of the students' movement due to the regime's enclosing. We highlight the arrest of students in the Clandestine Congress of UNE in Ibiúna (SP) in the same year.

of exceeding students in the universities, as well as the relationship the privatization of universities and education democratization, the precarization of teachers' salaries, and the cut on federal funds for the universities, among other themes. These actions resulted in the production of documents, such as political letters and official notes written by academic directories (Rossi, 2018).

Due to these reasons, criticizing and attacking the student movement demonstrations was one way to defend and point out the benefits of the MEC-USAID agreement. Following the determinations of the laws to demobilize students' politics implemented by the military regime, the newspaper took measures to eliminate and demobilize the movements contrary to the agreements (Rossi, 2018).

In this sense, we highlight that the political-educational alignment of the students' movement for university reform was considered a focus to be eliminated even before the civil-military coup. According to Braghini (2015), the youth practices were used as an incentivizing method by the press to depose João Goulart's government and later as the main justification for creating a law to control student organizations. In other words, while the criticisms made by students were the fuel to keep the calls for demobilization alive, it was assumed that the students were responsible for seeking to halt an agreement favorable to the country's development.

***O ESTADO DE S. PAULO* DEFENDING THE MEC-USAID AND CONFRONTING THE STUDENTS' MOVEMENT**

The first article of OESP that related the students' movement to USAID was published in July 1965. The text informed that, during the 27th *Congresso Nacional dos Estudantes* [Students' National Congress], the chairman of the event's direction board, José Henrique Maia, declared that the students' movement was united against a common enemy, the education minister Suplicy de Lacerda and USAID (Universitários debatem tese, 1965).

When evaluating the event, the newspaper affirmed that UNE had promoted subversive demonstrations against the government and the educational policy and insisted on violently attacking the Law Suplicy¹¹, calling upon students to "[...] emphasize the manifesto and halt the end of the entity, revoke expulsions and punishments of ideological nature, and combat the progressive alienation of national sovereignty to the North Americans" (Universitários debatem tese, 1965, p. 15). Days later, when announcing the end of the Congress, OESP informed the reader that the

¹¹ Law nº 4.464, from November 9, 1964, known by the name of its author, education minister, Suplicy de Lacerda. Through the article. 22, legally extinguished UNE by revoking the Decree-Law nº 4105, from February 11, 1942, which recognized the *União Nacional dos Estudantes* as an entity that coordinated and represented the students' bodies from higher education establishments nationwide.

student movement had a new director board¹² and that it had approved a report of the *Comissão de Problemas Nacionais* [Commission of National Problems], in which it called upon university students to reject the devices of Law Suplicy and the MEC-USAID agreement. According to the paper, in a critical tone, the students did not believe in any real solution for Brazilian universities (Termina o congresso..., 1965).

After the 27th Congress and during 1966, the SM articulated new protests against the regime. According to Santana (2014), after the 27th Congress, there was a generalized reaction from the student movement under UNE leadership. Dozens of demonstrations against the regime's educational policy were reported.

According to Sanfelice (2015), the movement reacted to the attempt to transform federal universities into particular foundations and claimed a free public school (Sanfelice, 2015)¹³. As mentioned by the author, the demonstrations echoed nationwide and abroad as students were faced with police repression. He also points out that the students denounced the North American intervention in education and other sectors of national life, besides questioning the authoritarian form of government. With banners against the federal government, shouts of 'down the dictatorship', in the name of national sovereignty and against imperialism, the student movement took over the national scenario (Sanfelice, 2015).

Considering the expansion and the dissemination of the students' perspectives about the topic, the newspaper starts to take a stronger position. On the one hand, despite the reluctance to favor the SM, it showed the students' point of view (Presidente apressa..., 1967). On the other, it reported other considerations on the topic, showing the North American's goodwill towards the reforms of Brazilian education (Alterações entravam acordos, 1967).

When approaching the students' fight against the agreement, OESP sought to show that the groups produced baseless debates. According to the paper, the Brazilian student was the indicator of the level of education vulnerability, due to their irrationality. Thus, it considered the students' criticisms as "a session of ridiculous positions" against a large technological civilization (As sugestões epidêmicas, 1967c). Following the OESP discourse, Tarso Dutra, the education minister at the time, treated the students' debates as a mere lack of knowledge on the topic (Tarso..., 1967).

The newspaper said that, if well executed, the university reform would contribute to eliminating the rebellion causes and insisted that the university reform would follow the standards of North American universities. However, it highlighted that the young rebels would not be convinced because they were committed to a global contestation (A causa dos rebeldes..., 1968).

¹² According to Santana (2014), the new UNE president was Antonio Xavier, from São Paulo.

¹³ 28º Congresso da UNE, June 28, 1966, held in Belo Horizonte.

The newspaper also emphasized students' insubordination and, at the same time, announced, in a reductionist view, the events produced by the SM. Their arguments were belittled, disqualifying the entity with the term 'ex-UNE,' and criminalizing the movement that was then considered 'illegal' (Direção da UNB, 1967). At that moment, UNE proposed that the fight should not be restricted only to denouncement but enacted in the 'boycott' to its implementation, to show that they were in the political fight for the theme (Santana, 2014).

In parallel with and contrary to what was published, SM's actions were to deepen the knowledge about the agreements. Sometimes, these events were publicized, and, at other times, they were demoralized. The events produced by the SM show that students did not make the agreements 'unwanted' before knowing them first. Even so, the movement highlights that the unwanted element was 'Imperialism', the 'USAID', according to the announcement of Valdo Silva, president of *União Metropolitana dos Estudantes* (UME- Metropolitan Students' Union), in the Regional Seminar held in Rio de Janeiro between June 13 and 15 about this theme (Presidente apressa..., 1967).

Besides attacking the students, the newspaper reminded readers that those were illegal actions and, therefore, should not even be happening. About this, the 29th UNE Congress was announced by OESP, which presented a headline with the declaration of the minister Tarso Dutra, reinforcing UNE's illegal condition. At the occasion, the paper highlighted that the entity's activities were suspended by the Decree-Law nº 57.634, from January, 1966, based on art. 36 of the National Security Law (*Alterações entravam acordos*, 1967). After, OESP showed that it had information about the Congress, including about the deliberation of the National Plan of fights from the movement and also spread the idea that many university students had returned to their original states to trigger a national upheaval plan against the government's policy for education and against the MEC-USAID agreement (Tarso..., 1967). Some days later, the newspaper evaluates the publicity given to the 29th Congress and belittles the final letter written by UNE (*Carta da ex UNE...*, 1967).

In September of the same year, OESP published a headline stating that the majority of students did not follow UNE's guidelines. According to the text, only 7 out of the 21 higher education institutions followed a line of action to defend students' demands. According to the newspaper, though the majority of students bodies were also against the MEC-USAID agreement, almost all of them did not agree with UNE's guidelines, considering them extremely radical (*A UNE perde terreno*, 1967). This argument also filled another idea, parallel to the debate about the agreement, that the student associated with the entities was a 'bad student', a minority. This line of argument reinforces the idea of removing the 'bad students' from those who were the symbol of good education (Braghini, 2015). In other words, making politics in the streets and acting beyond the walls of schools caused a dissatisfaction that, to a great

extent, was fed by the newspaper pages. The combat between 'good' and 'bad' students was established.

However, UNE continued its denouncements. In December 1967, the entity announced the *II Encontro Sobre Infiltração Imperialista no Ensino* [II Meeting about Imperialist Infiltration in Education], which took place in February 1968. According to OESP, the meeting aimed to show the federal budget cuts suffered by the universities as a justification for the infiltration of international money and that the agreements were a way to accept the idealization of Atcon report. Within SM's appeasement perspective, the report indicated the creation of guidance centers in higher education for all its acts (Discutido caso "Caetano," 1967). In this case, when undervaluing the students' encounter, the newspaper announced a truth because, according to Cunha (1988), the students clearly saw the relationship between Rudolph Atcon and USAID and the processes to demobilize the movement (Cunha, 1988).

Between 1967 and 1968, OESP continued with the publications about the SM, reporting demonstrations, strikes, concentrations, assemblies, and 'invasions'. Regarding the students' agenda, it reported that, besides continuing to be aligned in their deliberations, the students expanded them to different states, showing a *esprit de corps*.

We created table 2 below from the content published by OESP to better understand the manifestations portrayed in the newspaper, as well as comprehend their actions, agendas, and places.

Table 2. Students' manifestations covered at OESP 1967-1968

State	Agenda
DF	MEC-USAID and university reform, military regime
GO	MEC-USAID and lack of funds for higher education
MG	MEC-USAID, Atcon report, university reform, lack of places in higher education, repression of students, connection of Brazilian university to the MEC-USAID agreement
PE	MEC-USAID and lack of funds for higher education
PR	MEC-USAID, Atcon report, exceeding students, military repression, university reform and UNE extinction, government educational policy, annual fee charge for higher education
RJ	MEC-USAID, Atcon report annual fee charge, North-American infiltration in Brazilian university, police repression of students' manifestations, ratification of MEC-USAID agreement, maintenance of students' restaurant, government educational policy, imperialistic domination of education, destruction of students' restaurant
RS	MEC-USAID and punishments against academic prisoners
SP	MEC-USAID, Atcon report, ratification of MEC-USAID agreement, North-American infiltration in Brazilian university, exceeding students, current government educational policy, professorship system, paid education, imprisonment of students, repression of students' manifestations and lack of funds for higher education

Source: *O Estado de S. Paulo* (1967-1968). Information organized by Rossi (2018).

We can see that the manifestations occurred in several Brazilian states, and the agendas portrays the main fights of the students' movement to defend a university reform associated with social reforms. Moreover, the table demonstrates the structural problems of Brazilian universities at that moment, highlighting the lack of funds, the professorship system, and the issue of exceeding students.

OESP reported the first student demonstration concerning the MEC-USAID agreement in Belo Horizonte in March 1967. It indicates that the students received a license from the *Departamento de Ordem Política e Social* (DOPS- Department of Political and Social Order) to approach only the problems of the students' group (Tarso estuda falta de vaga, 1967). In the following month, the students occupied the pages of OESP again to show the perspective of the leaders of *Diretório Central dos Estudantes* (DCE- Students' Central Directory) of Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) about the agreements (Filosofia da USP..., 1967). Afterward, it reported about a student demonstration condemning the violence wave over them (Estudantes: governo..., 1967). Later, they agreed with the secretary of Security, Joaquim Ferreira Gonçalves, who announced the ban of the march and was challenged by the students (Suplicy pede o diálogo legítimo, 1967). The result was “[...] the arrest of dozens of students and local people, and seven students were imprisoned under the National Security Law” (Polícia mineira impede passeata, 1967, p. 32).

This same style of narrating an event was perceived regarding the state of Paraná, with students from the Medicine School of the university in that state, when promoting a demonstration (MEC-USAID já em reexame, 1967). There was also a demonstration against MEC-USAID in Porto Alegre against the punishments applied after a USA flag was burnt EUA (MEC-USAID já em reexame, 1967). In Rio de Janeiro, the students protested and presented a “[...] discourse against American infiltration in the Brazilian university” (Estudantes fazem exigências, 1967, p. 5).

In the following month, the students from *Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro* (UFRJ) announced a protest strike against the ratification of parts of the agreement and a joint assemble of UNE and DCE members to determine the position to be adopted regarding its ratification (Acordos: estudantes..., 1967). During the month of May, OESP reported the whole saga of Rio de Janeiro students and an increasing number of conflicts, always warning that they were manifestations of the ‘extinct UNE’ (UNE carioca fará passeata, 1967; Rio: Polícia dissolve passeata, 1967b; Crises no Rio..., 1967; Convênio visa planificação..., 1965).

To OESP, it was necessary for “[...] promoters of the strikes, and the disrespect towards the norms of university sociability, to be expelled from all Brazilian universities”. In this sense, it defended the government, stressing the need for discipline and maintenance of the order, because young people followed an “[...] ideological distortion [...]”, being led by the primary designs of the resentful Cuban dictator (O melancólico congresso da UNE, 1967, p. 3).

Thus, the newspaper's action framework regarding the student movement starts to be delineated. OESP spent the 1960s pointing out students' ebullience since the first student strikes in 1962. However, regarding the MEC-USAID, we can perceive that the student themes were also progressively used as an excuse to defend the agreements, even demanding more repression in the shape of disciplining. This scenario, with the exception of the demand to purify the academic space, points out an environment that creates contradictions, in which opposition is seen as distortion.

According to the paper, young people participating in these acts were disorderly (O governo e a questão estudantil, 1967a).

The public acts outside the university were also not well accepted. On April 20, students from São Paulo were on the cover of OESP because they "[...] promoted a concentration at Ramos de Azevedo Square to express solidarity to the exceeding students of several São Paulo universities and to protest against the MEC-USAID agreement" (Concentração é hoje às 18h, 1967, p. 9). On the following day, when commenting about the 'public act', OESP suggested that the demonstrators had used the exceeding debate to promote other movements, including an 'out *Estadão*' (Polícia tolerou a passeata estudantil, 1967).

According to Hagemeyer (1997, p. 23), to neutralize the opposition discourse, the authoritarian alternative resided in seeking to embody the conflict and demonize the protests against the current order. However, what this researcher called a "[...] strictly educational problem [...]", as part of the government, cannot be ignored. Some of the people responsible for the newspaper were irritated by the slogans and mottos typical of university students' routines. The main problem laid in the fact that, when attacking MEC-USAID, the students presented a series of discontents regarding the university structure and the general education system.

This discontentment about the legal order of the educational system can be seen, for instance, in the exceeding students. The 'exceeding problem' concerns the flow of people that, though approved by the classificatory admission exam, did not have a guaranteed position at the university. This was a legal guarantee, and the university and the government could be held accountable, which points out that students' protests about this theme were legitimate. Furthermore, problems related to the University's work were added, that is, the restaurant, the way of teaching, the educational policy, and the violence against students, to cite some examples. We must think that the students, adopting an anti-imperialist agenda, denounced the problems related to the students' routines but also as citizens and as people claiming basic elements regarding education and formation. Therefore, what is 'strictly educational' can be considered a primordial political element.

In the May editorial, OESP reproduces a statement from President Costa e Silva regarding students' manifestations. The text presents the government's dissatisfaction and shows the support of the paper to the intensification of repression

to contain protests, reinforcing the idea that this was a demand from “[...] the whole community” (*O governo e a questão estudantil*, 1967a, p. 3). In the same text, students’ manifestations go back to the pages about exceeding students as something out of reality, something that disturbs the public order and restricts the educational planning to experts (*O governo e a questão estudantil*, 1967a) and reiterates that “[...] the students’ campaign against the agreement MEC-USAID was ‘unworthy’ and that the intention was to undervalue specialists able to promote the educational planning of higher education” (*O governo e a questão estudantil*, 1967a, p. 3, author’s highlight). From this excerpt, we can understand that the newspaper resumes discussing the competence of North American technical assistance that would transmit to the Brazilian team the knowledge of university teachers from highly evolved countries (*O governo e a questão estudantil*, 1967a).

The issue of exceeding students continued to trigger the debates. OESP does recognize that there was an obstacle for young people to join the university and that this happened due to governmental irresponsibility, reinforcing the argument on the need for foreign technical knowledge. It is also clear that there was a disarticulation between what determined the law about students’ admission to the university and how it happened in fact. The issue of exceeding students is highlighted historically because it reveals a deficiency in articulating higher education and high school (Braghini, 2015).

Costa e Silva considered the university reform to solve the issue of the exceeding students. However, not having all the resources for its implementation, the military feared students’ manifestations because part of the solutions to enact the reform, roughly 40%, was conditioned to the MEC-USAID agreement. Therefore, appeasing students’ dissatisfaction became an important and non-official item but expected to maintain the agreement (*Costa propenso ao diálogo e reformas*, 1968).

Even though Costa e Silva alleged that “[...] around 40% of the resources foreseen for the university reform would come from the MEC-USAID agreement [...]”, we can see in the document (Brasil, 1967b) USAID’s financial commitment to maintaining the North-American technical team in the country, for a maximum period of four years, and the cost to train grantees; the respective ‘responsibilities’ were conditioned to the availability of resources from the agency (Brasil, 1967b). However, we should mention that the EAPES report considered the resources to maintain the North American team in Brazil as a donation of USAID for higher education (Brasil, 1969).

Between 1967 and 1968, it was important to keep the perspective of a common enemy. The students were seen as enemies because they also denounced abuses, the government’s flaws regarding their formation processes, the lack of material structure for teaching, and the admission and permanence policies in public universities.

FINAL REMARKS

The analysis of the newspaper *O Estado de S. Paulo*, when covering the agreements MEC-USAID and the students' manifestations between 1962 and 1970, reveals a complex intersection among media, politics, and education in Brazil during a period of intense repression and social transformation. The newspaper explicitly positioned itself as a defender of the agreements, promoting a narrative that disqualifies the dissonant voices of the student movement, characterizing them as immature and subversive. This position not only reflected an alliance with the military regime interests, in the sense of maintaining the agreements, but the text also evidenced a strategy of manipulating public opinion, seeking to legitimize the educational reforms proposed and reinforcing the demands to control students' protests.

The fact is that the manifestations of the so-called 'subversive minorities' occupied a significant space in part of the dominant press and, even when repressed by the legal sanctions and the violence of the regime, moved the university environment and part of the population Hagemeyer (1997) states that the students' movement was the single survivor of the coup, the only organization that opposed the regime and was stable even when in hiding, before the explosion of clandestine guerilla, also composed by students. Furthermore, according to the author, the movement could, in a given moment, gather the support of societal sectors that started to show a gradual dissatisfaction with Brazil's political direction and increase the solidarity with students protesting in the streets.

OESP considered the student partisan debate sterile and misguided, affirming it was part of a decline in the country's sovereignty. A considerable part of OESP content, regarding the agreement history, is directly connected to the dismantling of the student movement. From this perspective, the newspaper covered the students' manifestations in a way that disqualified the debate, stressing a possible lack of maturity of the students when they guide politics.

Thus, a journalistic fact was built from two narrative facets: one that supported the need for the agreements; and another that, when validating them, undermines the sociopolitical character of the students' movement. Above all, it was a matter of mischaracterizing the debates and criminalizing the movements contrary to the newspaper's opinion.

The students denounced the educational conditions in the country through their actions in many moments. Thus, as a way to contain the protests contrary to the agreement, the paper supported and asked the government to intensify the repression actions to restrain them and claimed that such measures were needed for good and the future of the Nation, even suggesting measures to eliminate those students from the universities.

The fact is that some of them were eliminated from life.

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