



## International Models of Higher Education and the University Nowadays

### Modelos Internacionais de Educação Superior e a Universidade Atual

### Modelos Internacionales de Educación Superior y la universidad actual

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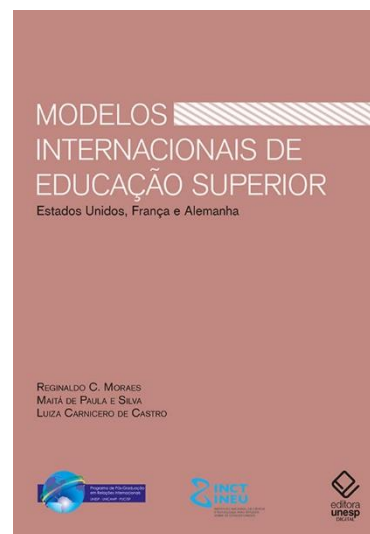
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As we look at higher education in contemporary Western societies, we see two very distinct trends: on the one hand its constant expansion (which would mean, to some extent, the recognition of the university as a central institution for the development of these societies); on the other, its disfigurement with the expansion of the so-called higher-level technical courses whose offer of courses is instructional, some modular and many at a distance. It is against such a backdrop that the work *International Models of Higher Education* is inserted: United States, France and Germany (2017).

Based on the two most influential and established university models in the Western tradition, the German and the French, the book describes not only the higher education systems of those countries but also the United States, considered heir to the Humboldtian model mainly due to the intense flow of German migratory to the New World during the 20th century. The work privileges the first decade of this millennium and seeks to verify how the public and private systems are structured in the three countries. We highlight among the categories of analysis: the thorough and thorough description of the models and patterns of funding adopted in the United States, the clear presentation by graphs of the number and type of students that flock to this level of education as well as an overview of the role assigned to higher education within the formal education system in the countries investigated.

The first - and most detailed - chapter deals with US universities. The authors question whether there we could actually consider a system in higher education, since there are several state and regional systems with very different modes. A pyramid gives the general picture of American higher education. At its base are the Community Colleges, responsible for 40% of the graduation in the country. There are approximately 1,000 public and 700 private schools, all of them small in size and with an average duration of two years. Up one level are four-year state universities that also offer master's degrees. Above are the 200 "doctoral" universities, receiving 30% of the research funding and also forming this percentage of doctors in the country. At the top are the research universities: about 100 institutions receive 70% of research funding and make up 70% of doctors in the country. More than 65 of these universities are public and the rest are private.

This drawing already points to the forms of institution financing as its main feature. In that country, they are divided into public, private, nonprofit, and private for-profit. The authors demonstrate how public resources are invested not only in public universities, but also, and significantly, in nonprofit private universities. The numbers belie the frequent claim that in the United States higher education institutions and their research would be primarily funded by companies. Most of the money received by universities (over 65%) comes, however, from government agencies.

The main reason for the use of public money in these institutions, even private ones, is the interest in research and its consequences, such as products and patents. It is the Departments (which are equivalent in Brazil to the ministries) of health, science and technology, agriculture and defense that are responsible for allocating most of their budgets to fund research. Government investment in research has been high for many decades, but there

has been a change in the area of interest as, with the exception of the present military-profile funding agencies, investments in health and care as in the area of energy have increased. Hence, we realize how the relationship between universities and public policies, resulting from research funding, influences that country's agenda, priorities and referrals.

As for teaching, the most varied undergraduate courses are offered at Community Colleges and state public universities. This is where the largest number of students enrolled is concentrated, either in short courses (2 years) or 4-year bachelors. Together, these course modalities at public universities account for 70% of total US higher education enrollment. Note that even the public system is paid by the student; However, the amount obtained from the monthly payments is just over 10% of the budget. The authors identify that those who drop out of a four-year state university tend to join Community Colleges to complete their studies and vice versa. Thus, from the “business model” point of view, only one exchange of seats takes place, but cash flow remains unchanged. The big difference is in the offer of careers. Since the first two years offer a more general education, what would correspond to the bachelor's degree are the last two years that require a greater supply of specialties. At this level of education, private tends to offer fewer options and more prestigious careers, while public ones tend to offer a wide range of courses.

However, the authors identify that after the 2000s the growth of private for-profit institutions has been increasing. If today the sector accounts for more than 10% of enrollment, the authors predict that this “privatization route” will tend to expand and consolidate rapidly, as public or even non-profit private institutions also have fees and annuities and whose admission is selective and competitive, they eventually “push” the student to the private sector, cheaper and without so many requirements for the newcomer. The authors close the chapter with an alert to Brazilian public policies that are interested in adopting this model, as there is concern both regarding the quality of teaching - some of these institutions do not even have teachers, who have been replaced by professional course designers. - as well as encouraging the indebtedness of households through financing programs that, with their interest and amortization systems, end up penalizing those with lower incomes.

The second chapter describes the French system. Much more concisely, it focuses on explaining the various institutions that make up the higher level (schools, universities, “*grand établissements*”, technical schools, non-university schools, etc.) and their different forms of preparation and access. To this end, it also addresses basic education, especially high school, which is already determining for the type of university career to be pursued. The preparatory classes and entrance exams (baccalaureates) act as filters for access to higher education. This makes the choice of the student for the formative pathway very early in the school system. The system is practically public and determined by the central power. Almost 90% of the higher education budget comes from the government, and the remainder is covered by students, who pay for enrollment, food and lodging. These are low fees paid by students, as the cost of food and lodging is also subsidized by the government.

Regarding the type of education offered, the *Instituts Universitaires de Technologie* (IUT) and the Sections de *Techniciens Supérieurs* (STS) stand out. These constitute new possibilities for short-term technological careers. STS courses are more open access and last two years; On the other hand, those offered in the IUTs - which operate within the traditional universities, but with their own regime - last three years, with a higher workload, higher academic requirements and restrictive admission system. The choice of the type of college is still closely related to the social stratum to which the student belongs, according to the authors. In this way, the Lyceums remain the great selective filter for the entrance in the quality superior education. As much as the democratization of university access occurred in France at the end of the last century, the resulting expansion and reform “included, but segregated” (p. 55). They explain that the arrival of a new audience for entrance exams came along with the expansion of these exams and institutions, especially those aimed at technological or professional careers. However, even low-income students who choose to take the exam for entry into a more traditional college career tend to evade more than those from higher social backgrounds.

The last two chapters are about the German model. The authors start from a historical resumption and point out that although German university institutions are not as old as other European ones dating from the Medieval era, they predate German unification itself, which gives them some antiquity. The mark left by Humboldt in the conception and execution of the university system, whose main characteristic is the fusion between research and teaching, reverberates to the present day, not only in Germany, but also around the world. Humboldt imprinted on the university the modern view of valuing science as a way of knowing the world and, therefore, needs to be autonomous in the forms of investigation and transmission of what he knows. This gives rise to a humanist conception of the university and its freedom as a chair.

As for the model currently adopted, the text recalls as early as 1969 in West Germany, a constitutional reform expanded the role of the federal government in these institutions, which ensured the expansion, unification and consolidation of universities. In 1976, the more applied and shorter duration Higher Technical Schools (*Fachhochschulen*) were created. In German reunification, the Western model prevailed and existing universities in East Germany were incorporated into the federal system.

In the German school course, after the completion of primary education students should already choose three types of continuity in their studies that will determine whether or not to enter higher education. *Hauptschule* offers another 5 years of teaching and is targeted at apprentice courses; *Realschule* with 10 years of schooling and qualifies for entry into higher technological careers; and the Gymnasium enables preparation for university entrance. This third type of school ends with the application of an exam whose certification is Abitur, indispensable for university entrance.

The increase in qualified students to attend university as a result of the expansion in the 1970s has caused institutions to adopt the limit of places for some courses, since the expansion in higher education did not keep up with the speed of expansion in the levels of basic education. There was an interesting inversion as not only *Realschule* high school graduates, but also those who attended the Gymnasium began to look for the technical colleges, which led them to adopt a vacancy limit as well. With this, students from the richest sections of the population who attended the Gymnasium now occupy most of the vacancies in technical schools. As for financing, the regions (Land) and the federation bear most of the costs and in some regions, investment has been conducted following the logic of competition between institutions. It follows that some departments of education have been withdrawing from funding from higher institutions, establishing contracts with established duration, which brings insecurity to universities regarding their planning. Even with such uncertainties, it is important to note that higher education in Germany is free; and students have access to various forms of funding and other forms of financial support to support themselves during the course, as well as scholarships based on academic merit.

In Brazil, we can see resonances inherited from both the US and the French models regarding the tendency to offer modules that, as they are being fulfilled, confer different degrees (technological, bachelor and licensed), with emphasis on increased supply of short and distance courses, as has been the case in those countries for some time now. The tendency to delineate the choice of higher education in previous stages of schooling, as occurs in the German model, is also a feature that has been implemented in our country, especially after the reform of High School provided by Law No. 13,415 / 2017. However, if in Germany the choice for a technical level education does not impact the social status and income of individuals, the same does not occur in our country. The issue of “segregated inclusion” observed in the French model is also one of the points of similarity with our country. The recent democratization of higher education to date does not seem to have eliminated the existence of different careers and universities for different social strata. In short, reading **International Models of Higher Education: United States, France and Germany** invites us to think about the role that schooling and its certification have in the lives of individuals belonging to contemporary societies. What is the weight in determining the quality of life and social place and power to be occupied by the young person who attended and who was excluded from this system? The presentation of the systems of these three countries also shows that the demands and expectations on higher education vary according to the student's social class, but the perception remains that, as a rule, what is offered to the poorest sections of the population fits in with the logic of a productive system in which the credentials obtained keep these individuals - albeit with a university degree - at the base of the social hierarchy.