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THE UNIVERSITY REFORM OF 1918 AND THE CONSEQUENT FIGHT FOR UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY IN ECUADOR

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Abstract: This work has two parts, the first will study the influence that the University Reform Movement of Córdoba had in Ecuador, to reach what we today conceive as university autonomy in legislation, social and political matters. An assessment is made of the importance of the educational content that must be taught to improve university autonomy. In the second part, we will see how Ecuador has evolved in the field to reach the current university autonomy, the definition of university autonomy as a principle of higher education and co-government as an inherent element of it is analyzed. The study carried out shows that the path towards university autonomy is still being built, and in this construction is added the importance of addressing certain economic, political, social and cultural factors that must be examined to achieve the goal of the path, which is to have autonomy. university within the plurinational and intercultural State.

Keywords: Autonomy; university; education; social; history.

INTRODUCTION

University autonomy is the cornerstone of free academia, of quality and excellence, necessary for the development of a free, fair and dynamic society. For this reason, this essay seeks to outline the foundations of university autonomy in Ecuador, taking as a reference the influence of the University Reform Movement of 1918, the same one that gave rise to many changes in universities throughout Latin America.

After independence, Latin American countries changed the university administration model. It was no longer the clergy or the crown that ran the university academy, but the government (Pazos, 2015). Universities transitioned from crown imperialism to being part of the State. But, this did not mean a real change in the teaching

model and academic structure, since there was no academic freedom and positivism and liberalism prevailed in theory in university education. It was from the Córdoba University Reform Movement that it was possible to democratize participation in universities, respect heterogeneity in academia, legitimize academic freedom, university autonomy and co-government (Tünnerman, 2008).

Without a doubt, the Córdoba University Reform Movement has repercussions on all universities in Latin America and with it, student and educator movements arise that promote university reforms throughout the continent (Svampa, 2010). Ecuador achieved these reforms a few years later, but it is undoubtedly thanks to this emancipatory movement that originated in Argentina and the influence of great thinkers who illuminated this libertarian path.

In Ecuador, the achievements of the University Reform Movement of 1918 were initially reflected when the creation of the university student movement occurred and, after that, its achievements were reflected in the Law and regulations of the different universities in the country.

The analysis that will be addressed in this work on the influence that the University Reform Movement of 1918 had in Ecuador will be carried out from two aspects:

- Historical background on university reform in Argentina and Ecuador.
- Analysis and concepts of: university autonomy and co-government today.

Sunkel (1970) states that university reform processes cannot be considered isolated from each other, even if we are talking about different countries and even continents. University reform processes arise simultaneously in a region, changing structures, levels of development and being closely linked to the political moment that the world in general and the country in particular is experiencing.

In the historical background, the evolution of the Córdoba Reform Movement will be observed, what happened, the impact it had, why it occurred, among other aspects. In the second, the link between what happened in Córdoba and its impact in Ecuador is established to observe what is conceived today as university autonomy.

METHODOLOGY

The methods used to write this investigative work and solve the problem posed from the beginning have been the following:

Because several historical texts and legal articles have been interpreted to obtain a discussion and subsequent results of the problem raised about the conception of university autonomy from a historical perspective. An example of this is the study of the article: University Reform, underdevelopment and dependence by the author Osvaldo Sunkel ¹. In which it is described how the University Reform has influenced and how some processes of historical movements are linked to each other.

1. Exegetical method, reading and studying articles from different codes and laws of both Argentina and Ecuador have been used to understand how the countries progressively integrated university autonomy into their regulatory framework.
2. Deductive method, it has been used because it is analyzed in the documentation and record of historical events that occurred in different countries to identify specific actions and circumstances regarding university autonomy of each of them.
3. Descriptive method, this method was used to determine which were those actions that had an impact and ordered

the existing reforms and movements in both Ecuador and Argentina.

RESULTS

Firstly, as a result of the research work, it has been possible to compile the following historical background that serves to subsequently determine how the concept of university autonomy is created and its impact and effects until today.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In colonial times, the University was created in Latin America as a reproduction of the University of Salamanca and the University of Alcalá de Henares. Universities in South America, founded mostly by the clergy, preserved the model of organization and education that respected the conditions imposed by the crown and the church (Tünnerman, 2008).

With independence, there was no palpable change. Well, while it is true, the majority of Latin American universities became state institutions, regulated by state policies, without this meaning the total separation of the teaching model that persisted until then. Thus, the education provided was Westernized, defending local oligarchies, with a liberal and positivist tone, the field of ideas prevailed (Ozlak, 1997). There was no academic and research freedom. The State limited the autonomy of the universities by subjecting them to administration policies and educational provisions imposed by the government of each country. That is to say, with independence the only thing that changed is the group managing university policies. With this, in Latin America, the university no longer obeyed the clergy and the crown, but rather the government that imposed its conditions, policies and ideology.

1 Sunkel, O. (2019) University Reform, underdevelopment and Dependency. Source: The Economic Quarter, Vol. 37, Number: 146(2) (April-June 1970), pp. 223-244 Published by: Stable Economic Culture Fund URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20856128>

ARGENTINA

Given the background, it is clear that at the University of Córdoba - Argentina - a movement was born that sought university reform, a change to all the prevailing thinking that dominated the university professorship and policies.

Why at the University of Córdoba? The answer to this question is not unique; many have tried to answer it without being able to reach a conclusion with the same point of arrival. However, it is necessary to mention that the University of Córdoba was one of the first university creations in Latin America, being the oldest of the universities in Argentina and the only one that functioned before independence. Therefore, this university had its own oligarchic characteristics. from the colonial era. Canon law was part of the traditional study at the University of Córdoba and had academic programs that were not in keeping with the time. The students were on the verge of rebelling against this system and they succeeded when they tried to impose university authorities that would allow this outdated and inefficient model to persist. It is at this time, some thinkers such as Ortega y Gasset, Rubén Darío, José Martí, Vasconcelos, Mariátegui, Rodó, Manuel Ugarte, José Ingenieros, among others, decided to question local oligarchies, imperialism and promoted social change. Thanks to these thinkers, the movement that promotes the university reform of Córdoba in Argentina arises (Castro, 1992). This movement was conceived from a heterogeneous reformist thought, which arose from urban growth, the expansion of the industrial working class and the search for the democratization of the functioning of universities in Argentina. Furthermore, the University Reform Movement was a reaction against the prevailing liberalism and positivism, with renewing and emancipatory thoughts in politics, the arts, science and

education.

Carlos Tünnermann (2008) summarizes what defines the university reform movement and its influence in Latin America in three postulates: 1) Those related to the organization and government of the University; 2) Those linked to teaching and teaching methods; and, 3) Those referring to the political and social projection of the University.

Thus, this movement proposes some postulates in order to achieve a reform that achieves the independence of the university from the State, thus within the universities a co-government would be structured that guarantees democracy, allowing student representation, academic freedom, the free and fair hiring of teachers, not because of political ties with the government but because of their commitment to teaching, freedom of research and the connection of the academy with society.

ECUADOR

The search for university autonomy began on April 25, 1907. After that, in the year in which the manifesto of the University Reform Movement of Córdoba was promulgated, the legislative power of Ecuador issued a decree that granted rights to university students for the first time. students to participate in the General Board of Professors and the reform of the Córdoba decree of 1918 was reflected in Ecuadorian legislation in 1922 (Aguirre, 1967), the year in which the legislation provided for the figure of co-government in universities.

In 1925, the Student Federation participated in the Julian Revolution, achieving the issuance of a new Higher Education Law in which the principle of university autonomy was enshrined, allowing for the first time the university to issue its own policies and administrative statutes. and teaching (Diario "El Universo", 2004). However, despite

these important advances, tensions between universities and the government continued. Within the country, there were university closures, struggles and even the death of student leaders, until the arrival of the 80s and with it neoliberalism (Pazos, 2015).

With the arrival of neoliberalism and capitalism, the privatization of companies and public services begins to prevail in all areas, including education. The idea of less State and not better State tries to penetrate politics and society. This redefined the traditional roles of the State, rethinking the role of the market and private enterprise. These events contributed to shaping different characteristics of a disorganized capitalism, but hegemonic with respect to other forms of economic organization (Ayala, 2015).

From this new political-economic model, private educational centers emerge for all levels of education, including the university. This implied the beginning of a quality competition for the educational level offered by public and private universities. As Oscar Oszlak clearly states, the reform of the State entails its responsibility in the transformation of its role in education, which, with capitalism and the privatization of public services, diminishes. For this reason, those functions related to social welfare, closely linked to education, have been abandoned by the State in terms of its role as direct producer of goods and services, an area that in turn has been assumed by subnational states, the company private and NGOs.

The participation of the private sector in higher education increased in 1995 and has not stopped until today (Pazos, 2015). It is crucial to observe the university from the window of capitalism, which is currently why there is a tendency to conceive higher education as a kind of privilege: those who can pay for it or to whom the State has given an opportunity have a better education and It mustn't be like that.

Higher education is not a prerogative that must be granted to selected sectors of society, it is a right that must protect all citizens, especially those who are in vulnerable sectors and have little probability of access to it, such as the indigenous, the poor, the peasant and the oppressed, considerations that are impossible to reach having capitalism as the north of the compass of higher education.

Public university establishments that depend economically on the State in their entirety have always been subject to impositions coming from the government. Because to function they need budgetary approval from the government, which has often authoritatively taken advantage of this condition and demanded that its will be done within public universities.

In recent years, the fight for university autonomy has been endowed with different components than those that promoted it in the first instance, these are philosophical, political, economic and even artistic, typical of our country, which have highlighted the need to rethink education at the university level. University autonomy could not be built with an Anglo-Saxon or Western educational and administrative scheme that does not coincide at all with the ideals of our people; we cannot import these educational models by seeking solutions to our problems in structures that are strange and alien to our reality. If this is not overcome, the principle of university autonomy could not be developed. The university is community, culture, art, knowledge, search for truth, identity, diversity and all of this can arise if there is freedom.

Thus, it is important to briefly know a little about the journey towards university autonomy in Ecuador, since this allows us to know the attitude taken by power groups and social movements towards the problem of the restrictions that existed and remain in place. The academy. The past cannot be denied, it is

necessary to recognize it, to not repeat it, to build a new path overcoming disagreements.

UNIVERSITY AUTONOMY IN ECUADOR

Ecuador has had its own construction of university autonomy, seeking independence from formal power. Both the student communities as well as professors and workers of the university institutions have participated in the construction of university autonomy; in addition to other sectors not linked to the education sector, but with market forces. Starting from this, we must analyze the implications of university autonomy from the achievements of the University Reform Movement of Córdoba that are reflected in our legislation. University autonomy and co-government are principles of higher education enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador in articles 351 and 355, they are also recognized in the Organic Law of Higher Education in titles II and III (Organic Law of Higher Education, 2018).

DEFINITION

It is necessary to analyze: What is University Autonomy? Starting from the definition of autonomy, it can be understood that this is the power that some State institutions have, to be governed by rules and governing bodies that do not depend on anything or anyone other than themselves. With this, it is concluded that university autonomy is the capacity and power that the university has to be governed by its own administrative and governing rules and bodies that must not abide by the will of the interests of the governments in power to function fully.

University autonomy is a principle contemplated in our 2008 Constitution in article 355, provided for as academic, administrative, financial and organic autonomy that must be in accordance with

the objectives of the development regime and the principles established in the Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of Ecuador, 2008, art. 355). Furthermore, university autonomy guarantees the exercise of academic freedom, the right to search for the truth, without restrictions.

However, the following questions must be raised: does university autonomy currently exist? For university autonomy to exist, is it necessary that the academic content be consistent with the national and Latin American context?

Trying to answer the first question, from the sources consulted we have that the governments in power have often functioned in the educational field as a machine of repression, coercion and punishment disguised as persuasion and imposition of new ideologies that incapacitate student movements to ensure their domination. Governments have imposed, abusing their economic power over universities, their rules of the game. Thus, universities that depend on the government are not exempt from its political influence.

In response to the second question in Ecuador, it is necessary to emphasize that the teaching, learning and reproduction of models with Western content continue. This, added to the repression and impositions of governments, leads to severe complications when trying to achieve autonomy and freedom in universities. Well, with this, university autonomy is limited, subjected to the government or the interests of the market and as well pointed out by thinkers such as Sarmiento, Alberdi, Echeverría, Montalvo and Samper (Svampa, 2010), authoritarianism, superstition and censorship prevent the realization of freedom. The Latin American identity, and in particular Ecuadorian, is different from the Western one, therefore, the construction of university autonomy in

Ecuador implies a different knowledge that emanates from ancestral knowledge and cultures. This implies the responsibility that public universities have to educate and teach from Ecuador for Ecuadorian and Latin American citizens. Paulo Freire already says it in his work "Pedagogy of Autonomy" the importance of teaching and learning from a diverse ethic, which is not restrictive nor does it belong to the market, which is inclined towards obedience to the interests of profit. Educational pedagogical ethics, for the freedom that is required, needs knowledge of what is unique and diverse.

The fight for university autonomy includes the fight of young people who seek a liberation of thought that serves to unleash society from a repression or political and cultural moment that a State is going through.

The affirmation of autonomy, horizontality and democracy by consensus, which is what we want to achieve with co-government, are part of an autonomist narrative typical of the construction of an identity story that emerges from Latin America. With this aspiration to build or discover our identity that has emerged from the academy with various models and forms of militancy. The militant groups for university autonomy have allowed us to build new paradigms in education linked to the rediscovery of our identity in Latin America, highlighting the importance of debureaucratizing and democratizing universities, in addition to distrusting those structures given by political parties.

With the aforementioned elements we can build the path towards true university freedom and autonomy that reflects the struggles, achievements and real needs of our country.

CO-GOVERNMENT

Now, with the implications of university autonomy mentioned, and because co-government is an important element of university autonomy, it is necessary to specify: What is co-government? Our legislation establishes as co-government what is mentioned in article 45 of the Organic Law of Higher Education: "the shared management of universities by different sectors of the university community: teachers, students, employees and workers, in accordance with the principles of quality, equal opportunities, alternability and gender equity" (Organic Law of Higher Education, 2018).

Co-government is an essential part of university autonomy, and a necessary element so that this principle can be developed and maximized progressively.

DISCUSSION

From the results obtained in this research, it is known that university autonomy is a principle that continues to be constantly and permanently under construction; and, that as long as the university exists as a social institution, university autonomy will have to be protected by all those who make up this institution that is so important to the State. Well, without a university there is no social thought, construction of criticism based on theory and science, there would be no research, innovation and therefore progress would be truncated. However, for all this to be possible, it is necessary that the critical thinking inherent to teaching in higher education be developed freely, and also objectively. Higher education needs its groups in constant and permanent union, the groups that make up a university must be strong to be able to respond to the situation that a country often demands. Without university autonomy, the institution of the university cannot be a contribution to society. But each society is

different and therefore educational models and the respect and evolution of this principle must be in accordance with national needs.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The challenges involved in building a free and autonomous university are linked to its role in society to achieve the strengthening of interculturality and plurinationality.
2. In recent years we have seen the prevailing need to link university projects with the community and with this the academy has transcended the university classrooms to the streets, the town and the people who are outside the establishments. educational.
3. The academy must aim to build a better, free, untethered society, and it must also be plural.
4. The autonomous university is diverse, multicultural, plurinational and is enriched by the heterogeneity of its members and ideas. By growing based on these foundations, it in turn enriches society, providing it with thinkers who work and build from freedom, fighting for equality, the construction of a national identity that can allow the progress of the entire State.

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