

Encounters in Theory and History of Education Rencontres en Théorie et Histoire de l'Éducation Encuentros en Teoría e Historia de la Educación



Anísio Teixeira, a Leader of Brazilian Education: Why is His Legacy Ignored Today?

Anísio Teixeira, un chef de file de l'éducation brésilienne : pourquoi son héritage est-il ignoré aujourd'hui ?

Anísio Teixeira, líder de la educación en brasil: por qué hoy su legado es ignorado ?

Naomar Almeida-Filho et Rosa Bruno-Jofré

Volume 23, 2022

State, Democracy, and Education in Brazil: The Trajectory of Anísio Teixeira

L'État, la démocratie et l'éducation au Brésil : le parcours d'Anísio Teixeira

Estado, democracia y educación en Brasil: La trayectoria de Anísio Teixeira

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1096722ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.24908/encounters.v23i0.15900>

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Éditeur(s)

Faculty of Education, Queen's University

ISSN

2560-8371 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

Almeida-Filho, N. & Bruno-Jofré, R. (2022). Anísio Teixeira, a Leader of Brazilian Education: Why is His Legacy Ignored Today? *Encounters in Theory and History of Education / Rencontres en Théorie et Histoire de l'Éducation / Encuentros en Teoría e Historia de la Educación*, 23, 92–112.
<https://doi.org/10.24908/encounters.v23i0.15900>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article porte sur le rôle d'Anísio Teixeira dans l'éducation brésilienne. Il souligne que les restaurations conservatrices ont empêché les innovations de Teixeira de s'enraciner. Cette situation explique pourquoi son héritage a été en grande partie relégué à l'oubli. L'influence des écrits de John Dewey sur les conceptions de l'éducation de Teixeira et sa lecture du cadre théorique et conceptuel de Dewey sont également pertinents ici. Les auteurs soulignent sa compréhension de la réforme universitaire ainsi que son expérience institutionnelle à l'Universidad del Distrito Federal et à l'Universidad de Brasília. Ils tentent en outre d'expliquer pourquoi son héritage est ignoré aujourd'hui. L'article se réfère aux « longues années 1960 » pour expliquer la situation historique et l'émergence de la pédagogie de Paulo Freire en tant que rupture épistémologique menant à une reconstruction de la notion du sujet politique, ce qui devient une inspiration pour ceux qui envisagent un ordre social différent. Cela a relégué Teixeira au second plan historique.

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Anísio Teixeira, a Leader of Brazilian Education: Why is His Legacy Ignored Today?

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Abstract

The article discusses Anísio Teixeira's role in Brazilian education. It makes the point that conservative restorations impeded Teixeira's innovations from taking root. This situation explains why his legacy was largely moved to oblivion. Of relevance here is the influence of John Dewey's writings on Teixeira's conceptions of education and his reading of Dewey's theoretical and conceptual framework. The authors put emphasis on his understanding of university reform, his institutional experiment at the University of the Federal District and University of Brasília. They further attempt to explain why his legacy is ignored today. The article goes to the "long 1960s" to refer to the historical conjuncture and the emergence of Paulo Freire's pedagogy as an epistemological break that led to a reconstruction of the notion of political subject, becoming an inspiration to those envisioning a different social order. This left Teixeira in the historical background.

Keywords: Anísio Teixeira, Brazilian education, John Dewey and Teixeira, University of the Federal District of Bahia, University of Brasília, Paulo Freire, Darcy Ribeiro

Anísio Teixeira, líder de la educación en brasil: por qué hoy su legado es ignorado ?

Resumen

Este artículo discute el papel que tuvo Anísio Teixeira en la educación Brasileña. Argumenta que las restauraciones conservadoras impidieron que las innovaciones que liderara Teixeira desarrollaran raíces. Esta situación explica por qué su legado se ha dejado de lado. Es relevante la influencia que los escritos de John Dewey en Teixeira así como la lectura que éste hiciera del esquema conceptual y teórico de Dewey. Los autores del artículo enfatizan la ideas de Teixeira sobre la reforma universitaria, su primer experimento institucional en la Universidad del Distrito Federal y en la Universidad de Brasilia. EL artículo lleva al lector a los “largos años sesenta” para referirse a la coyuntura histórica en la que se ubica Paulo Freire y la ruptura epistemológica generada por su método y concepción de la educación, que llevan a la reconstrucción del sujeto político. Las teorías y prácticas de Freire se convierten así en inspiración para quienes buscan un orden social diferente. Este proceso dejó a Teixeira en el trasfondo histórico.

Palabras-clave : Anísio Teixeira, educación en Brasil, John Dewey y Teixeira, Universidad del Distrito Federal de Bahia, Universidad de Brasilia, Paulo Freire, Darcy Ribeiro

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Mots-clés : Anísio Teixeira, éducation brésilienne, John Dewey et Teixeira, Université du District Fédéral de Bahia, Université de Brasília, Paulo Freire, Darcy Ribeiro

Introduction

Anísio Spínola Teixeira (1900–1971) left a vast legacy in Brazilian education as an institution builder, political leader, and educational thinker. Having received a Jesuit classical education, Teixeira embraced a Deweyan vision of education and pragmatism as a philosophical perspective in his conception of the new public school, in search of a democratic education within a liberal framework. As an institution builder, he was undoubtedly a great advocate of renewing the Brazilian system of public education. Regarding higher education, being that Teixeira was attuned to most advanced debates of his time, he anticipated with his radical experiments the emergence of the paradigms of interdisciplinarity and complexity, as we will discuss.

In spite of Anísio Teixeira's influence on the Brazilian intellectual and educational setting after the Vargas dictatorship, his legacy has not been duly recognized in the contemporary Brazilian intellectual context and is ignored in current international discussions on socio-political aspects of education. For many in Brazil, an interrogation and recovery of his legacy would contribute to overcoming the country's structural crisis of education in general and of higher education in particular. The intent of this editorial article is to call attention to that legacy. We also attempt to answer a difficult question: why is Anísio Teixeira not known on the international stage? And further, in what ways is he known? We consider these questions from a historical, *longue durée* perspective. To do so, we place Teixeira in a broader historical context, discuss his reception of Dewey's thought in two historical periods—the 1930s and 1940s, and the late 1950s and 1960s—and analyze the central lines of his initiatives in relation to the creation of institutional networks and organizations.

To begin, we introduce Anísio Teixeira through a brief biography, focusing on his institutional work and its impact on Brazilian education. We then briefly examine the influence of Deweyan pragmatism on Teixeira's approach to education and democracy. Next, we present the model of a popular university as he conceived of, proposed, and implemented it on two occasions in recent Brazilian history—initiatives that were the target of hard political repression. We then explore the potential contributions of Teixeira's thought and practical institutional approaches to political and pedagogical debates, particularly his convergence with the Humboldtian and Flexnerian models of university reform. Finally, we pose some open-ended questions and attempt to explain the invisibility (or absence) of Anísio Teixeira's ideas within current institutional discourse and in proposals for professional and academic training and development.

We close with the argument that the political intersections that took place in the *longue durée*, the crisis of modernity/ies and its relationship with education, the epistemological rupture in the discourse of literacy that initially occurred in Brazil, and the processes of social, political, and religious radicalization in the early part of the

1960s have mediated our interrogation of the past and the significance of Anísio Teixeira in the international historiography of education.

Introducing Anísio Spinola Teixeira

Born in 1900 in Caetité, in the *sertões*, or backcountry, of the Northern State of Bahia, Anísio Spínola Teixeira, who was educated by the Jesuits in his formative years, had a robust religious background. As a young man and recent law graduate, he was invited to fill a position that today would be equivalent to secretary of education of the state of Bahia. During his mandate, Teixeira took a couple of trips to study in Europe and in the US, where he graduated in 1929 with a Master of Arts in Education from the Teachers College at Columbia University. Columbia's teachers college was then a point of reference in the new world of educational sciences, not only in relation to progressive education but also to the behavioural psychology of Edward Thorndike, a proponent of laws of learning. John Dewey was a professor of philosophy at Columbia University until 1930, but Teixeira's main reference was his advisor William H. Kilpatrick's work on the organization of elementary education. Upon returning to Bahia, Teixeira revealed himself as a gifted public manager, and in less than three years he had created a real revolution in Salvador (the capital of Bahia) by ensuring almost full access to basic education for the poor.¹

The coup d'état of 1930 took place with the support of the Liberal Alliance, dissident oligarchies, the middle classes, and the armed forces. The so-called second republic began with Getúlio Vargas at the head of the provisional government. The state was opened to sectors of the middle classes, which generated expectations of social and educational transformations. The creation of a ministry of education and health was well received by intellectuals seeking educational policies at the national level, and therefore progressive educators of liberal persuasion took positions of leadership in their states. In 1932, Teixeira was one of the key supporters of the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova*, led by his friend Fernando de Azevedo (1894–1974).

The first half of the 1930s is considered a favourable time for the dissemination of the ideas of Dewey and other representatives of new education. Teixeira was active in bringing John Dewey's work to the Portuguese-speaking world and in recreating his principles in the creation of institutions and policies. Thus, Teixeira translated two essays by Dewey, "The Child and the Curriculum" and "Interest and Effort in Education," compiled in the book *Vida e educação* (Life and Education).² These were not his only

¹ Luís Viana-Filho, *Anísio Teixeira: A polémica da educação* (São Paulo/Salvador: Editora UNESP/EDUFBA, 2008).

² John Dewey, *Vida e Educação* (São Paulo: Cia. Melhoramentos, 1930), translated and with a Preface – titled "Dewey's Pedagogy" – by Anísio Teixeira. The negotiation for this first publication of Dewey's work in Brazil was conducted by Teixeira himself with the New York branch of Houghton Mifflin Company, as analyzed by Maria Rita de Almeida Toledo and Marta Carvalho in "The Translation of John Dewey in the Authorial Collection *Biblioteca de educação*," *Educação & Sociedade* 38, no. 141 (out./dez., 2017): 999–1015.

translations. In 1934, Teixeira published *Progressive Education*, becoming the main divulger of Dewey's work, mediated by a liberal democratic conception.³

When Mayor Pedro Ernesto organized, in Rio de Janeiro—then the Federal District—a democratic government in the beginnings of the Vargas dictatorship, he invited Anísio Teixeira to take the position of director of instruction. The new appointee quickly overcame the set of problems faced by what we would call basic education today and launched the *Universidade do Distrito Federal* (UDF) project. For this endeavour, Teixeira engaged the greatest intellectuals of Brazil at that time: Gilberto Freyre, Hermes de Lima, Afrânio Peixoto, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Cândido Portinari, Josué de Castro, Oscar Niemeyer, and Mário de Andrade, among others. These intellectuals were given the task of thinking about a world-class avant-garde university, but one that would never lose the “Brazilian soul.”⁴

The short history of this revolutionary project is another one of Brazil's political tragedies. The Vargas Dictatorship and the Catholic Church thought that the liberal ideas of Anísio Teixeira and his comrades threatened their conservative alliance. The Jesuits, who dominated the Brazilian scenario of higher education and fueled petty resentment for having lost their great *potential intellectual*, opposed the young educator. Alceu Amoroso Lima, intellectual leader of the Catholic right, began a smear campaign, denouncing Anísio Teixeira as unfaithful and demonic, and, worse than anything in the dominant quasi-fascist context, as a communist. After the coup d'état of 1935 and the establishment of Vargas' *Estado Novo* (New State) in 1937, Teixeira fled from an order to arrest and took refuge in the backcountry of Bahia. Meanwhile, Gustavo Capanema, Vargas' minister of education, appointed Amoroso Lima rector of the UDF, with the explicit mission to take it apart as an institutional experiment. The UDF was closed in 1939.⁵

During a decade of self-exile, Anísio became a businessman, having pioneered in Brazil the implementation of modern industrial mining for manganese ore and limestone on a large scale. Then in 1946 he was invited to organize the Department of Higher Education of the United Nations Educational, Science and Culture Organization (UNESCO). After completing his task, and missing Brazil, he accepted the post of secretary of education upon the invitation of Octavio Mangabeira (the founder of the Brazilian Socialist Party who had been elected governor of Bahia). This was the most fruitful moment of Anísio's public life, as the position, which would bring him sufficient funding and strong political support, represented an opportunity to put into practice

³ Marcus Vinicius da Cunha, “Pragmatism in Brazil: John Dewey and Education,” in *Pragmatism in the Americas*, edited by Gregory Fernando Pappas, 40–52 (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011).

⁴ Anísio Teixeira, *Educação e Universidade* (Rio de Janeiro: EdUFRJ, 1998).

⁵ Ana Waleska Mendonça, *Anísio Teixeira e a Universidade de educação* (Rio de Janeiro: EdUERJ, 2002).

several of his ideas. It was at this time that he developed the concept of the Escola Parque and the pioneering creation of the State Research Foundation.⁶

In 1950, Teixeira was reintegrated into the federal public service in the Ministry of Education and Culture, where, with his partner Rômulo Almeida (1914–88), he founded the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), which is to this day the main funding agency for academic training in Brazil. Rômulo Almeida was Anísio Teixeira's mentor and collaborator, introducing him to the academic vanguard of the fields of planning and management led by Celso Furtado (1920–2004). Teixeira also founded and served as first general director of the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies (INEP), which is to this day the main agency for educational research and evaluation in Brazil.

At that time, President Juscelino Kubitschek commissioned Anísio Teixeira and his colleagues to create a model university in Brasília, the new capital, that would be one of the most advanced in the world.⁷ Teixeira invited the young anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro (1922–97) to join the task force. Together, they recovered and updated the ideas that had been at the core of the UDF, the avant-guard institution of the 1930s discussed above. They worked out and integrated ideas that Teixeira had developed between 1954 and 1958 and expounded them in several texts that were published in INEP's journal.

The proposal to create the Universidade de Brasília (UnB), illustrated by a masterful architectural plan created by Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer, was so valued that Juscelino made it the topic of the presidential message on the first anniversary of the new capital, April 21, 1960. On that same date, he forwarded the pertinent bill proposal to the National Congress, with Anísio Teixeira as chairman of the drafting committee and Darcy Ribeiro as its rapporteur. During the short period of Jânio Quadros' government, the project was shelved. However, on the tumultuous day of Jânio's resignation, Darcy managed to put it at the top of a package of projects that would go to a block vote as Congress plunged into tremendous confusion. When the parliamentary session ended, UnB had been created, without the members of Congress knowing that they had approved it.⁸

Anísio Teixeira was sixty years old at the time their utopian university was implemented. Darcy Ribeiro had been appointed president and Teixeira vice-president, but then Ribeiro took leadership of the Civil House of João Goulart, so that Teixeira was, in fact, the first president of the new university.⁹ The university was born with a new organizational design, revolutionary for Brazil. The UnB project generated a strong negative political reaction. The opposition was against all basic reform projects of the

⁶ Viana-Filho, *Anísio Teixeira*.

⁷ Roberto Salmeron, *A universidade interrompida: Brasília, 1964–1965* (Brasília: Editora UnB, 2008).

⁸ Darcy A. Ribeiro, *Invenção da Universidade de Brasília 1961–1995: Cartas, falas, reflexões, memórias* (Brasília: Gabinete do Senador Darcy Ribeiro, 1995).

⁹ Salmeron, *A universidade interrompida*, 37 and 43.

Goulart government, including advanced models of education (such as Paulo Freire's contextual pedagogy). Nevertheless, under the leadership of Teixeira and with Ribeiro's political support, after placing emphasis on scientific research and cultural action as institutional points of reference, UnB became an academic mecca. Scientists, distinguished teachers, and progressive intellectuals flocked there.

During the military coup of 1964 in the Federal District, the troops invaded and occupied the UnB campus.¹⁰ Students were taken at gunpoint with their hands up, detained, and taken to the gym. Teachers were arrested, and some were immediately fired. Anísio Teixeira was exonerated, but he was forced to retire. A number of teachers and academic leaders decided to stay in order to resist. The university continued to function for some time, since the first intervening rector, Zeferino Vaz, ended up accepting the curriculum model initially proposed, continuing with academic innovations until he was fired by the military in October 1965, along with some professors. There were 263 teachers who quit in protest, and the institution practically ended its activities. A succession of intervenors and rectors, particularly navy officer José Carlos de Azevedo, dismantled the utopian university, once again with the establishment of faculties and the fragmentation of courses.

After being acquitted by a parliamentary investigation commission in the National Congress and still under a military police inquiry, Teixeira went into exile, first to Chile and then to the US, returning to Brazil in time to participate in the movements in favour of university reform. He died in 1971 in Rio de Janeiro, in mysterious circumstances that are currently being investigated by the Truth Commission as a possible result of his kidnapping and torture by the military regime's repression agencies.¹¹

Deweyan Influence on Anísio Teixeira's Thought

The work of John Dewey was influential in Latin America from very early in the twentieth century, within the framework of the crisis of the oligarchic liberal state and the construction of the public educational system. He was also present in radical projects. In the background, at the international level, configurations containing socialist, anarchist, and/or communist ideas circulated; in some cases, these were spiritualist ideas, while others were liberal democratic positions. All of them intersected with the "new education" and the ideas of Dewey, and their related conceptual spaces. Inevitable points of reference were post-revolutionary Mexico and its reforms of education, to which Dewey was no stranger, particularly during the predominance of the spiritualist and developmentalist currents of the 1920s, the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the university reform of 1918—a revolt of the middle classes that expanded from Argentina and its popular universities. Thus, political languages that combined notions of democracy in different ways were recreated. Paradoxically, Deweyan concepts often

¹⁰ This event was narrated in detail by one of the university founders, physicist Roberto Salmeron, in his remarkable book entitled *A universidade interrompida*.

¹¹ João Augusto Rocha, *Breve história da vida e morte de Anísio Teixeira* (Salvador: EDUFBA, 2019).

intersected with anti-imperialist positions, although no one questioned whether the rhetoric of modernity had hidden, as Mignolo says, new forms of the colonial matrix.¹²

Leaders with different ideologies found, in eclectic readings of Dewey and from authors related to the movement of the new education and progressive education, concepts and ways of thinking that they used in their encounter with modernities. They were attracted to social reconstructionism and the social critique of the traditional school. The extension of schooling, which was not without opposition, and, in other cases, practices of popular education were seen as instruments of social transformation. It seems that social problems were educationalized using different political agendas.

We will distinguish two periods in Anísio Teixeira's public life. The first period, from the late 1920s and the first half of the 1930s, when the new state was established, is situated in relation to the construction of the educational state and modern citizenship in Brazil.¹³ Inspired by his interpretation of John Dewey's thought, Teixeira advocated education as a right, as well as the extension of schooling, reorganization of formal education, and transformation of pedagogical methods. Dewey had an international projection, and his theory of education, often de-pragmatized, was appropriated and related to different political conceptions in the search for accommodation with the modern world.¹⁴

The second period began in the 1950s and was abruptly cut off in 1964 with the coup d'état that established a military dictatorship, which sent out of the educational system, or into exile, Teixeira, Paulo Freire, and many others. Teixeira concentrated his efforts on the promotion of research in education and the creation of the University of Brasília. Beyond his political positioning, throughout the 1950s, Teixeira was one of the intellectual mainstays of the golden phase of Brazilian developmentalism, within a nationalist line and with all its hybridity.¹⁵

Although he was a builder of the educational system in Brazil, Teixeira's name appears in the international literature in relation to the reception of Dewey or of pragmatism through Dewey in Brazil.¹⁶ The influence of Dewey is reflected in Teixeira's work as director of education for the Federal District and in his institutional legacy as

¹² Walker Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham and London: Duke University, 2011); Rosa Bruno-Jofré, "Localizing Dewey's Notions of Democracy and Education: A Journey Across Configurations in Latin America," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 80 no. 3 (July 2019): 433–53. See also the following important article, Paulo Margutti, "Pragmatism and Decolonial Thinking: An Analysis of Dewey's Ethnocentrism," *Cognitio, São Paulo* 14, no. 1 (Jan/June 2013): 63–83.

¹³ Rosa Bruno-Jofré, Invited panel speaker, "Colóquio IV, 120 Anos de Anísio Teixeira," Panel III, Internacionalização e Educação, University of São Paulo Institute for Advanced Studies, December 18, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7KkJv881vMQ>.

¹⁴ Bruno-Jofré, "Localizing Dewey's Notions."

¹⁵ Bruno-Jofré, "Colóquio IV, 120 Anos de Anísio Teixeira."

¹⁶ Libania Nacif Xavier, "Anísio Teixeira on Universities, Research and Public Education," *História, Ciências, Saúde* 19, no. 2 (April–June 2012), <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22872398/>.

founder of the UDF in 1935. Considered the main exponent of Dewey in Brazil, he would experience strong attacks from the conservative sectors of the Catholic Church, even in the 1950s. There were theological, political, and personal reasons for this harassment. In his youth, Teixeira had set aside his Catholic background to embrace a liberal democratic conception—Dewey’s thought founded on pragmatism—and a naturalistic metaphysics that can be referred to as naturalistic humanism, which the Church did not accept.¹⁷ In the decades under consideration, the Church in Brazil, although separated from the state, was an ally of the agrarian oligarchy with a predominance of São Paulo coffee growers and regional oligarchies, while capital circulated from the agricultural to the industrial sector through financial connections between coffee growers, importers, and industrialists. It was broadly an oligarchic institutional context with great social inequality, exploitation, and widespread illiteracy.

On our way to answering the question set forth in this article, let us consider the manifesto of 1932, to be read as part of a national reconstruction project along Republican lines.¹⁸ It has been written that Dewey’s thought and pragmatism are present in the manifesto of 1932 through the participation of Teixeira, one of the signatories. Conceptual elements of Dewey can be inferred, but are separated from his philosophical base, contextualized and interwoven, in some way, with the variants of progressive education and the new education movement, and with a reformist, eclectic, liberal political ideology that does not create the popular subject as the protagonist. The extension of education would overcome its backwardness. The manifesto is concerned with the scientific method and particularly with the aims and objectives of education, questioning the dispersion of objectives. It is notable that Dewey’s definition of education that so appealed to reformers in general—“[education] is that reconstruction or reorganization of experience that adds to the meaning of experience, and that increases the ability to direct courses of subsequent experiences”—has no purpose external to the educational process itself and is not a fixed goal, as the manifesto pursues.¹⁹ The same goes for growth or development, which is conceived as a process of adaptation in light of new problems; in other words, growth leads to more growth. It is a reception of Dewey contextualized in the direction of a project of society. It is not surprising that the manifesto has a meritocratic view of the social order and refers to the hierarchy of capacities; in its view, universities would educate the nation’s leaders. The authors conceived of a change from above. This vision is key to understanding the

¹⁷ The Vatican Magisterium defended and imposed a neo-scholastic intellectual superstructure with modernity as the enemy, defined by Pius X as the synthesis of all heresies. Antimodernism was reiterated in 1929 in the encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri (On Christian Education)* of Pius XI, which advocated a neo-scholastic framework for education. See Jurgen Mettepenningen, *Nouvelle Théologie/ New Theology* (London & New York: Continuum, 2010), 24.

¹⁸ *Manifesto dos pioneiros da educação nova* (1932 e dos Educadores (1959), <http://www.dominiopublico.gov.br/download/texto/me4707.pdf>, accessed September 23, 2022.

¹⁹ Quotation from John Dewey, “My Pedagogical Creed,” in Ossian H. Lang, *Educational Creeds of the Nineteenth Century* (New York and Chicago: E. H. Kellogg, no date), 14.

epistemological rupture that occurred in the 1960s and that expanded with Freire in different international contexts.

The experimental conception of the educational process is related to Dewey, but Teixeira took into the field the relationship between theory and practice. Experimental schools are intended as reference sites for planning, implementing, and evaluating experimental methods that go back to practice. It could be argued that there were elements of other currents coming from administrative progressives in line with efficiency. However, in this period, little attention was paid to Teixeira's originality and his vision of professional training for teachers, for which he was again criticized by the right and branded as a communist. Given the interest in Dewey and the historical critique of the formation of a modern citizenry, in their work, researchers have centred the reception/appropriation of Dewey's ideas and the limits to the exportation of concepts of democracy and education to contexts marked by inequality of all kinds.²⁰

In Brazil, liberal educators found in Dewey a point of reference for the construction of the educational system, with the premise that the extension of schooling, understood as democratization of education, would generate change and social mobility. Within a liberal framework with strong undertones from Dewey's conception of democracy and education, Teixeira had a political vision of the function of education in society. In the late 1930s, he had written that the public school was "the machine for making democracy";²¹ this sentence later became a motto for political movements working toward democratizing education in Brazil. In 1952, he took the opportunity to expand this idea with a strong statement before a hearing of the National Congress Commission for Education and Culture:

The instrument of democracy—I must insist—is popular education, that is, the education of all for community life (*vida comum*) and education of a few—selected from among all—for the specialized functions of democratic society.²²

For Teixeira, in addition to being foundational for economic development processes, education was to be understood fundamentally as an emancipatory process, as "educational emancipation or emancipation through education."²³ He considered educational emancipation through public schooling to be a condition for human emancipation that would be achieved only under democracy; he also related these dimensions of human emancipation to national emancipation, which was political emancipation in the geopolitical international dimension. In his words:

²⁰ We are referring to Thomas Popkewitz, to the excellent compilation of Gregory Pappas in the philosophical field, to Jürgen Schriewer, and to some extent to Bruno-Jofré's own work as a historian.

²¹ Anísio Teixeira, *Educação para a democracia: Introdução à administração educacional*, (Rio de Janeiro 1936), 247. Teixeira, Anísio. *Educação para a democracia: introdução à administração educacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 1997).

²² Anísio Teixeira, "Depoimento e debate sobre o Projeto da Lei de Diretrizes e Bases (1952)," in Anísio Teixeira, *Educação no Brasil* (Rio: Editora UFRJ, 1982), 75.

²³ Anísio Teixeira, "A escola pública universal e gratuita," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*. Rio de Janeiro 26, no. 64 (out./dez., 1956): 3–27, quotation at 3.

In a society like ours, traditionally marked by a profound spirit of class and privilege, only the public school will be truly democratic and only if it is to have a common formative program, without prejudice against certain forms of work essential to democracy.²⁴

Considering education as a potential vector of human emancipation, Teixeira defended the political character of the pedagogical processes necessary for the integration of thought and action, in a libertarian project inspired by Deweyan thought. Given its pragmatic tone, his notion of educational emancipation was distinct from Paulo Freire's conception of human emancipation, which was forged much later.²⁵ It was the opposite of those positions that demanded changes in material conditions and a strong contextualization of and participation in the transformative process. Teixeira's thought was thus in line with a modernist line that came from the Enlightenment and had a universalist tone, albeit with an expansive notion of democracy. This universalism has been questioned in the last decades.

The Teixeira Concept of Higher Education

In a speech given at a teachers' graduation ceremony and entitled "Masters of Tomorrow," Teixeira summarized his modernist vision of education as a social transformative tool.

We are entering a new phase of so-called industrial civilization, with the contemporary explosion of knowledge, with the development of technology and with the extreme complexity consequent to modern society. ... Education for this period of our civilization is yet to be conceived and planned, and after that, to execute it, it will truly take a new master, with a degree of culture and training that we have just begun to imagine.²⁶

This paragraph seems to combine the Deweyan notion of old habits with liberal modernist strands that aimed at progress, to the detriment of ways of being that were considered obstacles to that progress. Within an intellectual and ideological frame of reference that today could be described as colonial and Eurocentric, Teixeira also shows his position as a liberal educator committed to universal equality, demonstrating enormous confidence in technoscience as a sign of modernity. For him, the solution to dilemmas generated by the democratization of access and outcome, while keeping high-quality education, lay in the intensive use of the most up-to-date educational

²⁴ Teixeira, "A escola pública universal e gratuita," quotation at 20. See also: "we are not here to discuss, as is so much to our liking, the education of a few, the education of the privileged, but the education of the many, the education of all, in order to open up to our people the initial equality of opportunity which is the very condition for their indispensable social integration"; Teixeira, "A escola pública universal e gratuita," 3.

²⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York: Continuum, 1983).

²⁶ Anísio Teixeira, "Mestres de amanhã," *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, Rio de Janeiro, 40, no. 92 (out./dez., 1963): 10–19, quotation at 11.

technologies. From an anticipatory and visionary perspective, he explained this conviction with clarity:

the new technological resources and audiovisual media will transform the master into the stimulator and advisor of the student, whose learning activity should guide him amid the difficulties of acquiring the fundamental structures and ways of thinking of [our] contemporary culture of scientific basis in its physical and human aspects.²⁷

However, Teixeira was aware that new information and communication technologies would be limited and would need to resort to other knowledges “as content of teaching, in short, culture, civilization and human thought in its methods and results,” which should be provided by university education. In several works, Anísio Teixeira advocated higher education as an inducer of social, cultural, and human development.²⁸ He wrote that universities had gone through the risk of becoming obsolete in at least two moments in history. The first, around the beginning of the sixteenth century, marked the end of the medieval university. The second moment resulted from the decline of the classical university, giving rise to the modern university at the beginning of the nineteenth century, whose most evident landmark is the University of Berlin, created in 1810 by Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835).

Teixeira praised the historical mission of the universities, but he faced the political dilemma of how to make it democratic and popular as well as accessible without lowering academic standards. In his practical work, there are numerous creative solutions: exposure to cultural diversity, recognition of social inequality and adverse socio-economic reality, review of a painful historical context, immersion in plans of concrete practices, transgression of pedagogical roles, and transposition of disciplinary boundaries, without losing scientific, technological, and praxiological competence. Teixeira foresaw a democratic, peaceful, and sustainable revolution made possible by the universalization of education at the initial levels—as a condition of political emancipation and social equity—and by the widespread opportunity for access to higher education—a determinant of the economic and human development of nations—in university institutions actually open to the people. In his understanding, popular education also required popular universities.

The first project of a “popular university,” the UDF in 1935, was an institutional model very advanced for Latin American standards and included the Institute of Education, where teachers at all levels would obtain a university education. As Libânia Xavier notes, Teixeira understood the relationship between content and method and sought to articulate scientific disciplines and teacher training, and he noticed the tension between professional schools, such as education and faculties with intensive research.²⁹ This conception was updated as a proposal for UnB, as mentioned above. Structural

²⁷ Teixeira, “Mestres de amanhã,” 19.

²⁸ Teixeira, *Educação e Universidade*; Anísio Teixeira, *Ensino superior no Brasil: análise e interpretação de sua evolução até 1969* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 2005); Anísio Teixeira, *Educação e o mundo moderno* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora UFRJ, 2006).

²⁹ Xavier, “Anísio Teixeira on Universities.”

elements of the popular university idea reappeared in UnB's original proposal: general and specific curriculum components that were mostly optional;³⁰ articulation between short bachelor's degrees, medium-term professional careers and long careers;³¹ and a non-specialized modular structure for undergraduate and graduate schools.³²

UnB was organized into basic science institutes and training centres, surpassing the model of powerful faculties and isolated schools. In practice, this curriculum model implied two years of general education, and another year to complete a bachelor's degree. Only after this degree did the student gain access to professional graduation. This complex curricular architecture is described in the following excerpt from the introduction to the bill that created UnB:

... a new structure of university education, to give it organic unity and greater efficiency. The student who comes from high school will not enter directly into the professional higher education courses. They will continue their scientific and cultural preparation in research and teaching institutes dedicated to fundamental sciences. In these university bodies, which do not belong to any Faculty, but serve all of them, the student will seek, by choice, basic knowledge indispensable to the professional course that they intend to continue.³³

In his proposal for university reform, Teixeira demonstrated a clear intention to introduce greater efficiency in the pedagogical function of the undergraduate cycle and highlighted the vocational purpose of graduate studies.³⁴ This model is reminiscent of the university model of the US, where Teixeira had completed graduate studies for his master's degree at Columbia University. There, Teixeira became familiar with the work of Abraham Flexner (1866–1959), a schoolmaster and educator who ended up revolutionizing the concept of the research university worldwide.

Commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation, the 1910 Flexner report was a study of medical education conducted by Flexner that triggered impactful reform in the North American system of higher education.³⁵ Given this success, Flexner was hired by the Rockefeller Foundation as director of the General Education Board. Between 1915 and 1926, he expanded his reforming activities to secondary education and directed funding programs aiming at course articulation between universities and experimental schools, the latter being inspired by Deweyan pragmatism. Some Flexnerian ideas that embraced active pedagogies (gathered in a text entitled *A Modern School*, published in

³⁰ Teixeira, *Ensino superior no Brasil*, 302.

³¹ Teixeira, *Educação e Universidade*, 144–60.

³² Teixeira, *Ensino superior no Brasil*, 202.

³³ Brasil, *Exposição de Motivos – Projeto de Lei que institui a Universidade de Brasília*, Brasília: Congresso Nacional, April 21, 1960, item 12.

³⁴ Teixeira, *Educação e Universidade*, 156.

³⁵ Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada* (New York: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Science, 1910), http://archive.carnegiefoundation.org/publications/pdfs/elibrary/Carnegie_Flexner_Report.pdf.

1916) were incorporated into the project of Lincoln School, a pioneering college of application linked to Columbia University's Teachers College, from which Teixeira graduated.³⁶

The profound transformation brought about by the Flexner reforms was of such an impact that, in ten years, the medical education reform had spread to practically all areas of the higher education systems of North America. In 1926, Flexner returned to Oxford University in England, invited to give conferences that were later gathered in a book published in 1930, entitled *Universities: American, English, German*. The book was a harsh critical analysis of the main university models of the time, complete with the prospect of what should be the "university of the future."³⁷

Anísio Teixeira was at Columbia University between 1928 and 1929, when Flexner had already retired and was in Europe exploring the European university scene. They never met. However, there is no doubt that, as Teixeira explained the operative pedagogy of the Parque School and technological schools, and conceived of the open curricular structure of the "Brazilian university of the future," both at UDF and UnB, he was aware of the Flexnerian reforms. Teixeira's pedagogical framework shows many contact points with the learning system grounded in practice, into which Flexner translated the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey. In one of his books, Teixeira mentions Flexner's Oxford conferences with respect and pertinence, without, however, using the proper bibliographical citation:

it is necessary for the country to fixate on the idea, which also inspired Abraham Flexner in the United States, to create the graduate school. ... the tradition of independent and self-sufficient high school and university as a confederation of schools persisted, recalling that of London—which Flexner said was not a university—in contrast to the integrated university of the previous type.³⁸

A Latin quotation—*imperium in imperio*—that appeared in Walter Pritchett's introduction to the Flexner report gives an account of another element important for the present discussion: the fact that medical schools constituted sovereign organs within the empire of universities. Such schools (or faculties) were loosely linked to university institutions, and as such they behaved as separate small universities within universities, with their own peculiarities and rules. One of the main recommendations of the Flexner report was to reintegrate the medical school, and later all the other "imperial schools" (law schools, polytechnic schools) of Napoleonic origin, into the university institution. This aspect of the Flexnerian legacy is little known, and practically ignored in Brazil, even though it has constituted one of the main bases of Teixeira's criticism of the anachronism of the universities.

³⁶ Abraham Flexner, *A Modern School* (New York: General Education Board, 1916), 1, https://scholarworks.uni.edu/education_history/1.

³⁷ Abraham Flexner, *Universities: American, English, German* (London, Oxford, and New York: Oxford University Press, 1968; originally published in 1930).

³⁸ Teixeira, *Ensino superior no Brasil*, 180.

In many respects, Teixeira revealed an impressive convergence with Flexner's ideas. For education in general, they both advocated innovative learning models, anticipating in the coming decades problem-based learning methods, teaching by competencies, and the use of active pedagogical strategies for higher education based on case studies and solving concrete problems, and both recommended the training of professionals in the context of concrete practice. As for higher education, they both denounced early career choice and the submission of education to the labor market and consumerism; criticized the lack of integration between professional graduation and university education; and lamented the absence of prior scientific, cultural, and humanistic formation in higher education.³⁹

Both UDF and UnB, as experiments for Teixeira's notion of the popular university, were designed on bases very similar to the proposals of the Flexner report: a conceptual framework grounded on scientific foundations; full-time professors; a review of curricula; the reduction of vacancies; pedagogical methodology based on practice; and smaller classes in laboratories and services. In addition to Flexner's points, Teixeira took a political libertarian tone in favour of non-elitist public education, raising two crucial aspects for the issue of higher education: the public character of the university, and the central place of autonomy in higher education. Regarding the first point, Teixeira had premonitory foresight when he identified the structural problems of the Brazilian university that later led to a process of unbridled expansion, based on the great expansion of the private sector and encouraged by the educational policy of the 1990s. With regard to the issue of autonomy—crucial for the current panorama of Brazilian higher education—Teixeira regretted the fact that although the whole world had advanced in a direction marked by the Humboldtian and Flexnerian model, the Brazilian university insisted on maintaining an outdated system (the bureaucratic Napoleonic model). In Teixeira's words,

at the university, especially the German one, which became a model of [the] modern university, the idea of freedom to teach and freedom to learn was consecrated as its greatest law. It was not understood that teaching could not count on the full participation of the student. These freedoms to teach and learn take the form of free teacher course and free choice by students at the American university.⁴⁰

Decades later, innovative learning models and competency teaching are still promising to focus on the training of professionals in the contexts of concrete practices and services. This is in line with Teixeira's vision, in which students were expected to build their own learning programs and not receive a fixed curriculum; where they could change curricular itineraries without succumbing to the rigidity of pre-fixed guidelines; and where they would eventually become active and conscious protagonists in the

³⁹ This sounds like an assessment of the current Brazilian university context of the early twenty-first century. In fact, for these reasons, the curricular model of higher education hegemonic in Brazil today is incompatible with the curricular models of most universities in the world.

⁴⁰ Teixeira, *Ensino superior no Brasil*, 182.

teaching–learning process, and not merely marginalized pawns within an alienating bureaucratic system.

Placing the Mediations of Teixeira's Philosophical Readings

Teixeira started from a neo-scholastic, ultramontane Thomistic formation acquired in Jesuit schools and moved outside of this frame of reference toward a universalist vision of education as a generator of democracy and modernist progress. France's influence is reflected in his view of the central role of the state in relation to education rather than civil society. It is possible that Teixeira's admiration for Henry Ford and his book *My Life and Work*, a subject analyzed by Mirian Jorge Warde,⁴¹ gave him a very partial vision of society in the US; Teixeira used non-critical lenses to look at a society whose entrepreneurial style he admired, without paying attention to the racial and social problems that would become central in the long 1960s. Teixeira was no stranger to the international networks that became organized institutions in the 1920s and 1930s, such as the New Education Fellowship, and he was part of the project to institutionalize the sciences of education. Note that Kevin Brehony perceived a difference between moral and philosophical conceptions of education and those along a positivist line, with psychology occupying an ambiguous position.⁴² Teixeira started from a moral position, with education as a right, but in politics he moved to a practical, organizational, positivist line, and thus seemed to have fluctuated in the practical search for an approach.⁴³

At the centre of his political and social commitments was the notion of a public school, secular, compulsory, and conceived as an instrument of transformation and social integration with respect for the diversity of the country. However, the modernist idea of progress permeated the approach, which had a westernized tone. Education was, in his view, a right. The Deweyan notion of cooperation and the concept of community, although historically decontextualized, helped Teixeira to think of a stable society, detached from social reality and conflictive power relations, that would be concerned with the common good. He made a strong criticism of school education “by decree” that did not reflect the real situation of the school, with its school dropouts, poorly prepared teachers, and poor material conditions. However, despite the criticism of the Church and the conservative sectors calling him radical and a communist, Teixeira did not seek a structural solution to the social exclusion reproduced by the school; instead, he tried to generate, through school extension, a change in subjectivity, a new relationship between subjectivity and a limiting liberal democracy within the

⁴¹ Mirian Jorge Warde, “John Dewey through the Brazilian Anísio Teixeira or Reenchantment of the World,” in *Inventing the Modern Self and John Dewey. Modernities and the Traveling of Pragmatism in Education*, edited by Thomas S. Popkewitz, 205–21 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

⁴² Kevin Brehony, “A New Education for a New Era: The Contribution of the Conferences of the New Education Fellowship to the Disciplinary Field of Education 1921–1938,” *Paedagogica Historica* 40, nos. 5 & 6 (October 2004): 733–55.

⁴³ See Warde, “John Dewey through the Brazilian Anísio Teixeira.”

existing socio-economic system. The significance of his work is contextualized by its historical time and its political conception.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Teixeira promoted research in education, attending to the application of social sciences, and left his mark on higher education, in particular at the University of Brasília. Dewey's eclectic reading, and through his ideas, a version of pragmatism, continued to influence his work. In 1951, Teixeira was appointed secretary general of the National Campaign for High-Level Personal Improvement (CAPES), and, in 1952, he became director of INEP. Note that early works by Paulo Freire were published by INEP,⁴⁴ and that Teixeira supported the Popular Culture Movement. During this period, Teixeira founded the Regional Centers for Educational Research and sought advice from Rudolph Atcon, an American advisor to UNESCO.

In the conceptions of the modernization of education in general there was a movement from liberal reformism to developmentalism, and authors Mendonça et al. argue that developmentalism in Brazil was fertile ground for pragmatism.⁴⁵ In reality, pragmatism came through the contextualized reading of Dewey, and to an important extent through the Teixeiran reading in relation to his practice.⁴⁶

The changes in education and the varied responses occurred at an international juncture marked by the intensification of the Cold War and the developmentalist agenda of the Alliance for Progress for Latin America, launched in 1961 as a response to the Cuban Revolution, including its successful literacy campaign. The objective was the training of human resources in line with the economic project and its alignment with the US. Numerous international organizations, including UNESCO, promoted the program by laying the groundwork for the idea of global education planning.⁴⁷

Teixeira—as well as his group around INEP under the Ministry of Education and Culture that he founded—is located broadly in the developmentalism of a nationalist

⁴⁴ Heinz-Peter Gerhardt, "Paulo Freire," *Prospects* 23 (1993): 439–58.

⁴⁵ Ana Waleska P.C. Mendonça, Libânia Nacif Xavier, Vera Lucia Alves Breglia, Miriam Waidenfeld Chaves, Maria Teresa Cavalcanti de Oliveira, Cecília Neves Lima, and Pablo S.M. Bispo Dos Santos, "Pragmatism and Developmentalism in Brazilian Educational Thought in the 1950s/1960," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 24 (November 2005): 471–98.

⁴⁶ An indicator, as Mendonça et al. write, would be the application of scientific knowledge to the solution of practical problems and experimentalism in the school sphere; see "Pragmatism and Developmentalism." We would like to complicate the idea a little more and quote William Shea, who writes about Dewey and the method: "[education] is critical in the sense that the scientific method is critical, that is, that the method itself, rather than the conclusion is the norm and that all texts and statements are subject to inquiry ... Scientific method is not understood as the methods of the sciences, but as the responsible and systematic exercise of empirical intelligence. Education, then, is the process by which the democratic community becomes aware of the relationship between idea and action, theory and practice, and thus learns what it is to be a 'mortal god'. In this way by promoting community life through thoughtful action, society shows itself what ideas are for and what they are valuable for"; see William M. Shea, "From Classicism to Method: John Dewey and Bernard Lonergan," *American Journal of Education* 99, no. 3 (May 1991): 298–319, quotation at 307.

⁴⁷ See, for example, the Inter-American Seminar on Integral Planning of Education held in Washington in 1958; see UNESCO Regional Office for the Western Hemisphere (Cuba), *UNESCO-Latin America Education Main Project: Quarterly Newsletter* II, no. 6 (1960).

nature. The group shared a non-totalitarian nationalist vision. In this period, Teixeira also proposed to restore the freedom of private education to compete with the public system. The illiteracy rate was very high, with only twenty percent of those who completed primary school going to secondary school, an education that Teixeira described as bookish and summarized. The 1959 manifesto, *Manifesto dos educadores: mais uma vez convocados* (“Once Again Convened”), reveals a conception of the role of education within a nationalist development project.⁴⁸ Teixeira wrote “Education and Nationalism” in 1960, trying to clarify his position by referring to nationalism as a movement of national consciousness against the division between the favoured and disadvantaged, while remaining within a framework of liberal democracy.⁴⁹

Developmentalism, which had various currents, including national and regional, gave way to forms of popular developmentalism within the context of a growing critique of economic dependence. Two influential institutions were the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLAC), where economist Celso Furtado was, and the Higher Institute of Brazilian Studies. Pressure from the US and its modernization program for Latin America, the Alliance for Progress, were also being felt.

Meanwhile, the criticism of the educational system of the US gained intensity in the 1950s, and authors such as Holt, Kozol, and Goodman questioned the social inequality, social discrimination, racial segregation, and lack of realism. The right questioned the active methods and philosophy of Deweyan education. The launch of the Sputnik satellite into Earth’s orbit in 1957 was treated by the press as an expression of a national crisis; it was interpreted as a reflection of the lack of attention given by the public school to science. Deweyan theories and progressive pedagogical practices were the target of criticism.⁵⁰

At the national level, on the threshold of the 1960s, there were, on the one hand, the movements of the peasantry in the northeast of Brazil with Francisco Julião, founder of the Socialist Party, and the Communist José dos Prazeres being the best-known leaders. On the other hand, there was an accentuation of the process of industrialization and urban growth with an urban industrial bourgeoisie, and there were political turns in sectors of the Catholic youth, along with the opposition of the conservative clergy, as well as a rapid radicalization of popular education programs, particularly those linked to Catholic initiatives.

After success with the Natal movement and the creation of a network of Catholic radios in 1961, the bishops along with the government helped to establish the Grassroots Education Movement (MEB) to bring literacy and improvements to the rural

⁴⁸ See *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova (1932) e dos Educadores (1959)* (Casa Forte, Recife: Fundação Joaquim Nabuco/Editora Massangana, 1959), 69–99, <http://www.dominiopublico.gov.br/download/texto/me4707.pdf>.

⁴⁹ Anísio Teixeira, “Educação e nacionalismo,” *Revista Brasileira de Estudos Pedagógicos*, Rio de Janeiro, 34, no. 80 (out./dez., 1960): 205–208.

⁵⁰ Wayne Urban, *More than Science and Sputnik: The National Defense Education Act of 1958* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

population, in an attempt to reduce the influence of rural oligarchies and the left. The movement was concentrated in the north, northeast, and central west regions of Brazil. The point here is that MEB was radicalized, and in the process adopted Paulo Freire's methodology. Thus, adult learners were expected to think about the structural causes of their poverty and ignorance, and they became aware of their situation within the system, which did not seek to integrate the learner into the existing social matrix. This process took place alongside the first steps of liberation theology. It was in Petrópolis in 1964, at the Centre that Illich opened with the help of Hélder Câmara, that Gustavo Gutiérrez discussed the basis of what would later be his liberation theology; the base communities already existed.

The Freirian conception of adult education in its early expression was located along a developmentalist line. It cannot be separated from the popular culture movement to which Paulo Freire belonged and the practice of MEB that promoted the opening of consciousness and adopted Freire's method.⁵¹ MEB, following MEB member Marina Bandeira, used the term "awareness" as early as 1962 or earlier with political content. These practices led to a strategy of reform from the grassroots, in a bottom-up fashion. Eventually, they provoked a critical, epistemic, discursive, and political rupture in the way of conceiving the processes of literacy and in the conception of education; they broke on the ground with liberal premises and developmentalism. As Elias said, Freire's method contained the seeds of revolt, although at that time it was not his goal.⁵² The 1964 coup attacked the radicalism of the MEB and Freire's work that, from Recife, had spread throughout the country as part of the National Literacy Plan.

This critical current, which would be nourished by the global dissension of the long 1960s and the new search for subjectivity, extended throughout the world, even beyond the Western world. In the international educational macro-context, there had been a political displacement of Dewey as an inspiring force for social change and the notion of social reconstruction, either because of what has been called the scientification of education, through processes of radicalization in Latin America, or because of a new language of critical education. As Lawrence Cremin said: "Much of what it [progressive education] preached was simply incorporated into the schools at large."⁵³ Freire, in particular with his experience and radicalization in Chile, emerged in the international field of education as the representative figure of change.

Both Teixeira and Freire had Catholic backgrounds. Both were backed by a political ethic of social change, albeit a different one, and both placed education as a transforming force in society. The interrogation of the past in terms of intellectual and social interactions generated historiographical currents and redefined the significance of

⁵¹ Andrew Dawson, "A Very Brazilian Experiment: The Base Education Movement, 1961–67," *History of Education* 31, no. 2 (2002): 185–94.

⁵² John Elias, "The Paulo Freire Literacy Method: A Critical Evaluation," *McGill Journal of Education/Revue des Sciences de l'éducation* 10, no. 002 (1975): 207–17.

⁵³ Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876–1957* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1962), 379.

reforms, intentions, and affirmations. While Teixeira's institutional work, in the first period of his public life, was historiographically overshadowed by the interest in Dewey's reception and the encounter with modernity, his roles in the development of research in education and the organization of a new model of university were temporarily obscured by the political complexity of the historical moment and the emergence of an alternative paradigm, which we define as an epistemological rupture.

Final Comments

Teixeira's thinking and practical actions reveal both his reading of Dewey's pedagogical theories and his familiarity with Flexner's conceptions of university education. However, unlike Flexner in the US, Teixeira was not able to implement his institutional, curricular, and didactic innovations in Brazilian higher education. Both the institutional and pedagogical experiments at UDF and UnB fell victim to totalitarian regimes that considered them to be highly subversive, and Teixeira was persecuted and his work destroyed. Conservative restorations and political repression moved his innovations to oblivion. Nevertheless, a historical understanding of Teixeira's conception of the university and the formation of professionals, the notion of autonomy for the student, the understanding of the process of learning as teaching and teaching as learning, the notion of cooperation rather than competition, and the integration of virtual learning within this framework can help in today's search for an equitable model of the university.

A further comment is due regarding Teixeira's emphasis on the role of science and technology, which he understood as a key cultural feature of modernity. As a liberal politically, with a strong admiration for the European Enlightenment and North American modernism, in a rather uncritical approach, he saw science and technology as promoting quality of life with equity and as decisive in the improvement of teaching and learning. Nonetheless, Teixeira's writings show a pedagogical approach that consistently denounced archaic ways of teaching and learning that aimed at producing conformist subjects. He recreated and proposed the notion of learning by extending it to the various levels of the educational system. In the current day, in a post-pandemic era, global changes emerging with the new millennium have brought about the need to expand post-secondary education and engage in an active pedagogy that deals with concrete problems in order for higher education to become a tool for human emancipation.

The long 1960s brought not only a critique of the educational system all over the western world, but also a new political orientation beyond the liberal premises. Dewey, as we said, was not the point of reference, although many of his pedagogical ideas were internationally integrated. The convergence of Freirean liberation pedagogy with the critical currents dominant in the macro international context generated a new conception of emancipatory education based on notions of political liberation, changes in material conditions, and the development of political consciousness. In other words, it brought the materials for the construction of a new political subject who would envision

a new social order. Thus, it was Paulo Freire, and not Anísio Teixeira, who became a point of reference for a revolutionary pedagogy in Latin America.