The patterns of educational cooperation – the case of US-Brazil relations, and CAPES-Fulbright

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Abstract

The main objective of this paper is to discuss the educational cooperation between Brazil and the United States in the last two decades. The argument is that bilateral cooperation in education, research, development and innovation, traditional and somewhat sophisticated, surpassed the level of a simple collaboration and evolved into a multi-dimensional relationship in the form of a strategic partnership. This is a result not only of the consolidation of programs and the diversification of financing arrangements, but especially of the increasing importance of the major players involved – Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES) and Fulbright.

Introduction

On March 19, 2011, Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff welcomed the president of the United States at the Planalto Palace in Brasilia. During her speech, she thanked Barack Obama for the visit and highlighted two themes that she considered central in future partnerships between Brasilia and Washington: education and innovation. Rousseff also added that the key to the future of both countries would depend on bringing their educational experiences closer, improving them, expanding the exchange and building progress in all areas of knowledge.

In this context of cooperation and courtesy, during Obama’s visit, Brazil and the United States signed two agreements. One allows federal agencies of scientific training in both countries to identify and support the development of research in priority areas. The other enhances academic exchanges to promote mutual understanding and the development of science and technology (S&T) in both countries.

Does that mean that Brazil and the United States are building a mature relationship due to Brazil’s national and economic profile, now stronger and more
robust? Could this be a cooperation or a strategic partnership in the educational field? Despite the controversy that still surrounds the concept of strategic partnership in Brazil’s international experience, the fact is that this relationship has turned into a paradigmatic case of a more elaborated strategic partnership as the educational cooperation advances.

What are Brazil’s interests in this partnership? Moreover, what are the interests of the United States? Brazil seeks education, science, technology and innovation, which represent crucial stages of any development strategy. The United States has an interest in increasing its prestige among the institutions and government of the largest economy in Latin America and they believe that the cooperation instruments for educational exchanges are essential tools of its cultural diplomacy, an expression of its soft power. Training staff at U.S. institutions and sharing research and studies must be considered a way to influence the development of public policies in the countries receiving cooperation. In the end, cooperation may also represent a way to better control the transfer of advanced technology and the market for high-tech products (Amorim 1994).

Thus, given the intensity achieved by the educational cooperation between Brazil and the United States in the 2000s and its increasing sophistication, this article believes that this relationship has become a strategic bilateral partnership.

To answer these questions and to explain the argument, this paper aims to analyze the educational cooperation between Brazil and the United States in the perspective of two central actors, Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education (CAPES), within the Ministry of Education, and Fulbright, within the U.S. Department of State. On the one hand is the American program of international educational exchange sponsored by U.S. Federal Government that aims to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries (ECA 2014). On the other hand is Fulbright’s largest Brazilian partner, a federal government foundation that stimulates the qualification of human resources, the quality of education in Brazil and knowledge dissemination.

In order to discuss it, this article is divided into three parts: core concepts, the relationship between the countries and the role and relationship between CAPES and the Fulbright Commission, followed by final comments.
Core concepts and remarks

International and educational cooperation

Before addressing cooperation itself, it is important to understand that educational cooperation is part of the international relationship of a country, since this cooperation is only interesting when there is real complementarity of interests between states, through the existence of a certain scientific and technological basis by the actors involved (Amorim 1994). In the Brazilian case, reflecting on educational cooperation allows to observe the foreign policy chosen to meet the domestic priorities.

To make it clear, there is an emphasis on the difference between the concepts of cooperation and collaboration. Though these expressions usually means “working together”, they display distinct characteristics when referring to international cooperation (Silva 2007).

Collaboration is not a naturally fair form of relationship; it is mostly asymmetrical. In the project or program that is the subject of this type of relationship, there is always a main actor, responsible for the results obtained, while others are merely supporting actors. In this process, there is not necessarily a relationship of mutual trust and the survey results usually serve the “stronger” participant.

With the increasing sophistication of educational, scientific and technological systems of some of the countries that traditionally form part of simple collaborative relationship, such as Brazil, this type of relationship evolved towards a more equitable partnership. In this case, this form of relationship has matured due to an increase of dialogue, negotiation, co-decision, definition and joint management of projects, and sharing costs, including those related to research and development. In other words, in many cases there was a higher level of interaction, which could be called cooperation, according to the partners’ status of educational, scientific and technological development. In cooperation, each partner brings the best he can offer, dealing fairly, to meet the other partner’s needs, with the guarantee of maintaining its independence. In this form of relationship, the decision is jointly made during the stages of planning, implementing, evaluating and even changing directions of research and innovation strategies of collaborative actors.
International cooperation is a growing phenomenon, opens windows of opportunities for developing countries. This has benefited researches, since it involves a considered number of programs (Faria and Costa 2006). As partnerships result in successes, they motivate the achievement of more daring and complex partnerships, requiring more coordination, knowledge and mutual sharing of tasks.

Regarding educational cooperation, since it allows expanding and increasing academic mobility, it enables countries like Brazil to form human resources able to cooperate, improve science and technology and promote innovation. The qualification of these human resources can even allow the disengagement of low competitiveness, better management in the private and public sectors and the implementation of projects aimed at improving infrastructure (Cervo 2012).

Moreover, in the specific case of an international experience in the United States, this experience motivates personal, educational and professional growth of the egress. By presenting an appropriate environment to the development of any research without financial or material problems, besides enabling the participation in research projects and cooperation with classmates and teachers, the experience makes it possible to learn new teaching strategies and enables the increase of the scientific production of the beneficiary (Demir, Aksu and Paykoc 2000).

As a result, the exchange with the Americans allows the beneficiary to develop interpersonal and intercultural relations, besides their study and language skills. For Brazilians, in particular, the international experience contributed to the economic and social development by giving opportunities for technology transfer when training scientists, developing science and making room to introduce its culture abroad (Ibid.).

**Soft Power and educational exchange**

Soft power, a concept developed by Joseph Nye Jr, describes the ability of a state to influence, attract and persuade others. When referring to the sources of that power, he says:

The soft power of a country rests primarily on three resources: its culture (in places where it is attractive to others), its political values (when it lives up to them at home and abroad), and its foreign policies (when they are seen as legitimate and having moral authority) (Nye 2004: 11).
In this sense, educational exchange programs play an important role in spreading liberal values and practices, i.e., the promotion of soft power – especially when addressing students of authoritarian states (Atkinson 2010). As Nye himself says, many of the graduates of international exchange programs return to their home country appreciating the American values and institutions, as shown in reports of the Association of International Educators (Nye 2004).

It also considers that the experience of students and researchers abroad, besides disseminating ideas, values and principles transnationally, can have an impact on political institutions and influence political behavior in the home country – since many of these graduates can occupy positions convenient to American politics or interests (Nye 2004; Atkinson 2010).

It is worth mentioning that educational exchange programs will only produce the desired effect, i.e., influencing graduates about patterns, ideas and processes – the efficiency of soft power – if the student or researcher return to their country and meet three conditions. They are: 1) the occurrence of real social interactions abroad; 2) sharing the sense of community or common identity between a foreigner and those who receive him; 3) and the possibility of influence (political, institutional, scientific and academic position) of graduates (Atkinson 2010).

In turn, Nye mentions that international exchange is an effective and long lasting strategy of soft power and democracy promotion. However, achieving effectiveness depends on if the type and elements of the U.S. policy are consistent with the message of a broad democracy (Nye 2004).

**Strategic partnership**

The last concept to understand the objective of this article is strategic partnership. Here, the term is not used as a label vulgarized both by diplomacy and by the Brazilian academy (Lessa and Oliveira 2013), nor in the sense of the decision to reject partners due to conjectural reasons; but considering what international bilateral relationship is a priority, in an environment full of possibilities.

Farias points that partnership is used as “an association to achieve common goals, involving cooperation, association and collaboration” and the expression strategic relates to the “identification of relevant long-term goals and the existence of interests and means to achieve them”. Unlike alliances, key concept to international
relationships, which are linked to the security area, especially under perceived threats, strategic partnerships “are articulated based on perceived opportunities” (Farias 2013: 24-25).

It is noteworthy that factors such as the advent of globalization, the increase of market and financial flows, the end of division into blocks and the technological revolution allowed a stronger contact between countries. This, in turn, led to the increase in bilateral contacts and an appropriate environment to the achievement of common projects and political and economic cooperation (Lessa and Oliveira 2013). In this scenario, international partnerships, especially those involving the United States and Europe, are important to the economic, social and human Brazilian development, besides enabling the realization of interests and international projection. Especially when, nowadays, the state seeks to mitigate internal asymmetries, attend the emergence of society, maintain its ascent, and internationalize its society and economy (Cervo 2012).

The relations between the United States and Brazil

Brazil and the United States are the two largest economic powers in the hemisphere and they have similarities, despite the asymmetries. Especially when considering that they are democratic countries, with leadership aspirations and holders of multiethnic societies with social and racial pressures (Crandall and Crandall 2008).

In this bilateral relationship, there are moments of alignment; nonalignment and cooling off; and realignment along with a mature dialogue and autonomy by Brazil¹; and moments of bilateral commercial tensions in times of cordiality, cooperation and friendship between presidents since the 1990’s. Concurrently, in the field of educational cooperation the relationship progressed positively between Brasilia and Washington, especially after signing the Science and Technology Framework Agreement in 1984, followed by the signature of other agreements and memoranda.

After the Cold War, given the international context, new constraints as the dynamism of democratization and economic globalization in Latin America have been taken into consideration for an increase in the formulation and implementation

¹ The context of the relationship between Brazil and the United States is in Hirst 2006 and Pecequilo 2013.
of Washington’s policies. At that moment, there is a return to Wilsonian\(^2\) values, with the rhetoric of democracy, freedom, open market and cooperation – gathering topics such as drug trafficking, immigration and commercial market – driven by the United States (Crandall 2008).

On the Brazilian side, the country starts the nineties democratized and ends the decade with a stabilized economy, along with political ascendency in the international arena. In the 2000’s, Brazil holds the status of a respectable global actor. In this context, relations with the United States evolve, the level of complexity increases and there are new issues added to the agenda, such as: a seat for Brazil on United Nations Security Council, regional market, environmental agenda, regional security, science and technology (Hirst 2005).

With the consolidation of democracy in Brazil, there is a change of attitude and a detachment from that vicious circle that permeated the relationship with the United States in the past (Ibid.). Despite understandings, misunderstandings and mutual frustration, in the 1990’s and throughout the 2000’s, Brazil is still seen as a mature partner. Both parties have positive expectations based on increasingly intense and balanced relationships.

Regarding the topic of this paper, on the one hand is Brazil who is part of BRICS with China, India, Russia and South Africa. As an emerging economic power and in the process of achieving the desired development, Brazil needs, partly, to expand and improve its higher education to have technical professionals highly skilled and innovative in the fields of science and technology (Carnoy 2013). On the other hand are the United States, a hegemonic actor in higher education.

In the 1950’s, Brazil expected to receive financial support for its project of economic development after supporting the United States during World War II and the subsequent ideological alignment, coupled with the domestic containment of communism in the 1960’s. At that time, technology transfer and training staff to serve the development project and the Brazilian strategic dimension was in the agenda in Brasilia. In 1951, the National Council of Technological and Scientific Development (CNPq) was created to formulate the national policy of science and technology and the current Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate

\(^2\) About the Wilsonian values, Hook and Spanier highlight it, because they underpin Washington’s global diplomacy, which is not only about protecting states, but also its own international interstate system, very appealing to Americans. For more see HOOK, Steven and SPANIER, John. *American Foreign Policy Since World War II*. Washington: CQ Press, 2007. 7. ed. p. XVI.
Education (CAPES) to ensure the qualification of staff needed for public and private sectors.

Brazil wanted to access the technology necessary for its development, while Washington was interested in the policy of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. Thus, because Americans showed no interest to Brazilian interests, Brazil sought technological alternatives and cooperation agreements with technology similar to the American, already evident in the 1970’s when Brasilia showed interest in a nuclear program that would guarantee development and its sovereign security. Therefore, Brazil became partners with France and Germany and signed cooperation agreements for training human resources, especially during the seventies and eighties to the present.

Washington, in turn, invested in teaching, research and its universities during sixty years. Besides that, is the fact that Americans dominate the granting of scholarships in various areas of knowledge, followed only by certain European countries that show similar support to investigation and elite research, such as Germany and England. Currently, in the United States, scholarships and grants are available not only for those areas that require more resources, like science and health, but also for those fields of research that are less expensive, i.e., humanities and social sciences.

The United States attract students from all over the world to work on research projects and obtain advanced training degrees. Thanks to the availability and management of research funds, they have also been able to concentrate most resources on research and work with doctoral students in the academic and scientific environment.

Much of this academic concentration in the United States is a result of the role of the state\textsuperscript{3}. In this case, of a state focused on domestic economic growth, power, military domain and, especially, in competing with the former Soviet Union. Through specific policies, Washington has developed a system of research-intensive higher education that form highly qualified talents that maintain and expand U.S. hegemony in higher education (Carnoy 2013).

\textit{Fulbright and CAPES actors}

\textsuperscript{3} On the role of the state in education, see more in CARNOY 2013, chapter 1.
When the United States enacted the law for creating the Fulbright Program in 1946, after the Second World War, the world was divided into two opposite blocks. The Americans were building their role internationally in an atmosphere of mutual distrust with the Soviets when it was obvious the incompatibility between capitalism and socialism. In the following years after the War, through the formulation of military alliances, political doctrines and plans for economic and social reconstruction of countries, especially those susceptible to the Soviet influence, the United States sought to increase its influence in the international arena. In this environment, domestically, Washington created laws and institutions essential to international coordination of the U.S. interests, hemispheric security and the fight against communism during the Cold War.

The main objective of the program was to broaden the understanding between Americans and other countries (Fulbright 2013) and concurrently promote cooperation for educational and cultural advancement. One could note the potential of the program in its primordium. In 1948, there was already an exchange between Americans and foreigners from China, Burma and the Philippines. The following year, the exchange reached New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Norway. In 1953, there were 1,253 Americans abroad and 2,210 foreigners in the United States.

Initially financed with the surplus of World War II, the program had funding problems due to declining balance and dollar shortage. In 1954, Congress authorized the use of money that came from the exceedance of agricultural products sold abroad. In the seventies, funding gradually began to evolve since it was based on federal budget allocation (Adams and Infield 2011).

In 1961, the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, known as Fulbright-Hays Act, granted greater flexibility and breadth to the program by increasing the number of participants, expanding joint financing, training long-term planning, helping researchers’ dependents, establishing bilateral commissions, as well as consolidating similar programs and other government sectors (Ibid.). This provided greater flexibility to manage the program.

The Fulbright Program, when stimulating exchange, allows educators and foreign scholars to achieve a higher degree of training in U.S. institutions and

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4 The international environment after World War II is in Saraiva 2001.
enhances the image and values of the United States abroad, practicing its soft power. The same happens when enables international education to American professors and students abroad. International education here means the deliberate effort to educate people through a concrete experience in other countries or through national education that is not limited to a nation’s bound and is opened to intercultural structures (Demir, Asku and Pankoc 2000).

The partnership with Brazil started in 1957. Subsequently, after the exchange of diplomatic notes, the Fulbright Commission was instituted locally, composed by Brazilian and Americans representatives. After signing the 1984 Agreement, the role of the Commission for Educational Exchange between the U.S. and Brazil (Fulbright Commission or Fulbright Brazil) was strengthen.

Fulbright maintains cooperative relationships not only with CAPES but also with other prominent institutions such as CNPq, São Paulo Research Foundation (FAPESP), Rio Grande do Sul Research Foundation (FAPERGS) and the National Foundation for the Development of Private Higher Education (FUNADESP). The increasing number of collaborators made it possible to offer doctorate, sandwich doctorate and postdoctoral programs (Brazil 2011).

Regarding global diplomacy and the ongoing reflection about the values and culture of the Americans, the United States cultural diplomacy stands out, especially in the Americas. Until 2012, the Fulbright Program offered about 35,000 scholarships to foreigners of the region so they could study in the United States and more than 14,000 Americans received scholarships to study in other countries in the region (Fulbright 2012). The grant-in-aid to the region only lost to Europe, whose numbers reach around 130,000 foreigners and 80,000 Americans.

With this potential, the idea is to expand the program for other foreign visitors – professionals such as journalists, intellectuals, young political leaders and entrepreneurs (Finn 2003). In Brazil, this expansion is clear when you analyze two other programs: NEXUS and Hubert H. Humphrey, both specific to attend professionals. The first one discusses sustainable energy and climate change; the second focuses on issues related to sustainable development, strengthening of democratic institutions and public health.

CAPES was created in a different context, as an expression of national developmentalism. This agency was established during Getúlio Vargas’ second term (1951-1954), when urged the need to form specialists and researchers that could be a
part of the effort to consolidate national intelligence, strengthening the existing universities, and improving the staff that worked for the state and the private sector. This demand reflected, in some way, the ambition to drive the development process by means of an accelerated industrialization. Areas like Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, Economy and Social Sciences lacked enough personnel to support this growing process. One of CAPES’ initial goals was to ensure specialized staff in sufficient quantity and quality to meet the needs of public and private projects focused on Brazil’s economic and social development (Brazil 1951).

During CAPES’ first decade, one of the most important tools of action was the Scholarship Service, simply because it was the only instrument available of specialization and designed to train personnel (Gouvêa 2011). In a scenario in which Brazil did not have enough money to form human resources, nor universities that could offer it, the remaining option was to study abroad (Neddermeyer 2002). In the 1950s, CAPES offered its first scholarships. In 1956, the Rockefeller Foundation handed out its first 200 scholarships to Brazilians, so they could continue their postgraduate courses in the United States; and in 1964 started the partnership with Ford Foundation.

Thinking of meeting economic development to achieve national security (Lima 2005) and improve educational policy for the development of science and technology as a resource for overcoming economic challenges, it became a priority to establish and consolidate a postgraduate national system, which received substantial financial backing and political support at the time (Canto 1999; Neddermeyer 2002). At that moment, international cooperation was (and still is) a key element of foreign policy to meet domestic priorities.

Thus, in the second half of the twentieth century, Brazil took geostrategic actions, such as recruiting foreign professors; hiring foreign commissions; establishing specific schools in fields like Administration, Agriculture and Medicine; training nuclear scientists; sending engineers and other Brazilian professionals abroad to get proper training to meet national interests. These actions made it possible to consolidate Brazilian undergraduate and postgraduate programs.

In 1965, after the publication of Sucupira Technical Report, which disciplined the training of Brazilian staff at postgraduate courses, CAPES expanded the relationships with foreign entities. In 1978, CAPES signed its first international partnership, the agreement known as CAPES/COFECUB – The French Committee for
Evaluation of University-Level Cooperation with Brazil. By the end of the 1970’s, CAPES had already another partner: LASPAU (Latin American Scholarship Program of American Universities), affiliated with Harvard University and Fulbright.

After that, CAPES signed several permanent commitments. For example, with Portugal in 1986, with the British Council in 1988, with the DAAD (The German-Brazilian Academic Exchange Service) in 1994 and with Argentina in 1998. CAPES is Fulbright’s major partner in Brazil and works in collaboration with CNPq to achieve one of the ambitions of Brazil’s Federal Government regarding scientific and technological development: to improve Brazil’s current role by increasing substantially the number of scholarships.

*Brazilian postgraduate studies and the current partnership between CAPES and Fulbright*

During CAPES’ first decades, granting scholarships abroad was a way to train professors and researchers to establish postgraduate programs in Brazil. After achieving that, educational cooperation in the twenty-first century reaches another level. Besides providing knowledge exchange, it allows scientific research to mature, the internationalization of science and technology and the training of specialized staff in areas poorly consolidated in Brazil, such as Biotechnology, Nanotechnology and Biodiversity.

Moreover, the success of consolidating postgraduate studies explains the decision to reduce full doctorate scholarships and to privilege, since the last decade, other types of programs, such as sandwich doctorate and postdoctoral courses abroad. This change reflects the technical and scientific capacity installed in Brazil and the decision to first improve students’, researchers’ and professional’s knowledge and skills.

In the first decade of the 2000’s, Fulbright and CAPES both offered doctoral scholarships in the United States. Even when priorities in financing changed – in favor of sandwich doctorate and other types of scholarships to doctors, professors and researchers – Fulbright still supported CAPES to maintain and boost the following programs.
Until 2009, the CAPES/Fulbright Scholarship Program granted scholarships to full doctorate. The following year, the sandwich doctorate program in the United States (Brazil 2010) replaced the prior agreement – but there were still four more agreements to grant individual scholarships to professors and researchers. Four years later, it was easy to see the change in priority, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – CAPES/Fulbright programs between 2010 and 2014, according to target public

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Target public</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Bolsa CAPES – Fulbright de estágio de doutorando nos EUA</td>
<td>Postgraduate students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programa de Bolsa de Estudos para Master of Fine Arts (MFA) nos EUA</td>
<td>Postgraduate students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programa CAPES/Fulbright Professor/Pesquisador Visitante nos EUA</td>
<td>Professors</td>
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<td>Programa de Bolsa Dra. Ruth Cardoso</td>
<td>Professors</td>
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<td>Programa Bolsa Júlio Redecker de Estágio de Doutorando nos EUA (CAPES/Comissão Fulbright)</td>
<td>Postgraduate students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programa Professor Visitante Norte-Americano (no Brasil) Capes/Fulbright</td>
<td>Professors</td>
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<td>Programa de Bolsa de Doutorado Sanduiche para as áreas das Humanidades</td>
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<td>Programa de Bolsa de Estudos para Master of Fine Arts (MFA) nos EUA</td>
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<td>Programa CAPES/Fulbright Professor/Pesquisador Visitante nos EUA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programa NEXUS 2014-2016</td>
<td>Professors and researchers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Programa de Desenvolvimento Profissional para Professores de Língua Inglesa nos EUA (PDPI)</td>
<td>Professors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programa de Bolsa de Pós-Doutorado em Ciências Humanas, Ciências Sociais, Letras e Artes nos EUA</td>
<td>Professors</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Programa de Assistente de Ensino de Língua Inglesa para Projetos Institucionais (no Brasil)</td>
<td>Professors</td>
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The data in Table 1 show a decrease in the number of programs offered to postgraduate students and an increase of the ones offered to professors and researchers. The reason is to stimulate Brazilian and American research and improve the English Language between 2010 and 2014. Furthermore, data show how the priority in financing changed through international mobility and consequent access of Brazilian intellectual mass to the greater American academic and training centers.

It is also important to stress the support granted by Fulbright, as Brazil’s partner, to the program known as Science without Borders. This program, supported by Brazilian government, is one of the flagship programs of President Dilma Rousseff. It consists of sending abroad undergraduate and postgraduate students of...
areas like Exact Sciences, Health, Biological Sciences and Engineering to consolidate, expand and internationalize science, technology and innovation in Brazil. According to recent data from CAPES, from 2011 to the first half of 2014 about 3,800 scholarships were granted to Brazilian students and researchers in the United States, mostly sandwich undergraduate opportunities, made possible with the help of the Institute of International Education (IIE). The Fulbright Commission equally supports other modalities, such as sandwich doctorate study and postdoctoral internship.

In this partnership, there are examples of key government actors articulating in favor of participation, definition, understanding and management of joint projects to achieve long-term goals. These conditions are essential to this strategic partnership, based on the interests and resources of each party. It is noteworthy the harmony and improvement in the performance of both agencies, which reflect the mature relationship of this educational cooperation between Brazil and the United States and the ongoing dialogue between authorities, society and all levels of bureaucracy (Farias 2013).

**Final comments**

The partnership built between Brazil and the United States in the twentieth century is as long as the one between Brazil and Argentina. However, it is a more relevant relationship to national training, never neglected by governments or political regimes (Cervo 2012). In this context, the idea was to show that the educational cooperation between Washington and Brasilia, since its beginning, reached a level of strategic partnership, due to the resources and interests of each party. This analysis took into consideration the perspective of two actors, Fulbright and CAPES.

In this partnership, on the one hand are the United States, which conceive educational and cultural exchange programs as a powerful tool. First, to promote its image abroad. Second, to allow a better understanding of other countries and cultures. Third, to disseminate the American values. This means that international exchange within the cultural diplomacy is one the strategies for exercising soft power (Nye 2004). The Fulbright Program, largely sponsored by the U.S. federal government, is part of this context. The program aims to strengthen ties between the United States and other countries through the promotion of educational and cultural exchange and mutual understanding (Fulbright 2008). In Brazil, CAPES is the lead partner.
On the other hand is Brazil, an emerging power that presents himself on the international arena as a global partner and regional leader, which demands higher quality in education, science, technology and innovation to achieve the desired development and meet the demand of its society and of internationalization strategies. CAPES, under the Ministry of Education, is part of the state apparatus. The agency promotes the formation of qualified human resources and quality in Brazilian education, seeking development and the improvement of advanced skills and research capacity (Arnove 2013).

It is also noteworthy to stress that the expansion of bilateral programs, especially in the last decade, corroborates Fulbright’s alignment and monitoring of the actions taken by CAPES in postgraduate development, even after a change in priorities. This means that Fulbright supports CAPES in this task of improving the quality and maturity of Brazilian science, necessary for the economic, social and human development. Furthermore, this paper shows that the affinity between both collaborators guarantee a balanced relationship that can last for many years, always considering the resources and interests of each party – elements that consolidate this strategic partnership.

Given the above, it is worth adding a final note. Given the different interests of the partnership between the United States and Brazil, here is a challenge for Brazilian society, its leaders, policy makers and organizations: make the most out of this cooperation with Washington to meet its needs – no matter what are the American’s real interests or if this partnership represents the exercise of soft power.

**Credits**

To CAPES, Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education, for the support granted.

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