

A critical analysis of the factors influencing the catholic higher education system in Colombia, 1965-1999

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Summary

This article is based on an educational, historical and critical study comprising the factors that have influenced the development of the Colombian Higher Education system during the period 1965-1999. The article aim is to reconstruct qualitatively the relevance of educational historical research for the development of higher education in Colombia. Methodologically, special attention is paid to the hermeneutical process applied to the data collection and compilation of the data as well as renewing the documentary analysis. Focus is placed upon establishing levels of authenticity, truth and reliability of the documents selected as paradigmatic umbrella for the analysis presented. Finally, a set of comparative and critical analyses of Colombian conceptualisations and the European assumptions on higher education are included in order to establish an equilibrium between factors and historical facts.

Key Words: Higher education, *Catholic universitie*, Post-Conciliar period, Social progress, Colombian history

Resumen:

Un análisis crítico de los hechos que influenciaron el sistema católico de educación superior en Colombia, 1965-1999. Óscar Holguín R. *La educación superior colombiana ha sufrido variedad de cambios durante los últimos cuarenta años. No obstante estos cambios no han logrado establecer los parámetros necesarios para el logro de un cambio social. Este artículo por lo tanto presenta los elementos educativos e histórico-críticos de los factores que influyeron en el desarrollo de la educación superior colombiana durante el periodo histórico 1965-1999. Trata a su vez de reconstruir cualitativamente la relevancia de la investigación histórica para un aporte al desarrollo de la educación superior en Colombia. En el desarrollo de esta investigación sobre educación superior se aplicó con rigurosidad el método hermenéutico para el análisis de textos y documentos y se renovó el proceso integrado para la recolección de datos, su estructuración y diseminación. Adicionalmente, durante el proceso de interpretación de documentos y textos, se enfocan los parámetros científicos trabajados por investigadores en educación superior e historiadores contemporáneos que garantizaron los altos niveles de autenticidad, y verdad; conjuntamente, se logra una ubicación paradigmática*

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de los factores influyentes en el desarrollo de la educación superior y de la promoción social en Colombia.

Palabras claves: Educación superior, Universidad Católica, período post-conciliar, Progreso social, historia colombiana.

FACTORS AND THEIR ANALYSIS

Following the hermeneutical evaluation, codification and a compilation of the data collected, I will now present the factors found (see *Table 4.1*) together with a critical analysis that has been derived from the documents studied and compiled in Chapter Three. In *Table 4.1*, I identify the factors that have influenced the Catholic higher education in Colombia during the post-Conciliar period.

The table is divided in the following scheme: the **aspects** or categories to which every factor belongs, the **factors** found (here the concept “**factors**”- following the definition presented by the Cambridge International dictionary of English- is understood as the facts or situations that influence the results of something); the **actors** that were directly involved within the historical process and the most relevant **issues** that the data has unfolded, together with their **chronological period (Year/s)** where they can be historically located.

As a criteria to take into account for the analysis, it is important to clarify that there is not priority structure of the factors; they all have the same level of priority, and have been understood a whole that is influencing the Catholic Higher Education in Colombia. Also, due to the qualitative nature of this research there is no inclusion of quantitative approaches to this analysis.

1. FACTORS

Table 4.1 Factors Found

ASPECTS	FACTOR	ACTORS AND ISSUES	Year/s
Ideological	<p>1. Continuity of the Medieval challenge <i>Subsidiary factors:</i> 1.1 The concept of authority developed in Colombian Catholic universities 1.2 Challenge of the new theological paradigm (Derived from <i>Compilation 1</i>)</p>	<p>Actors: Colombian Catholic Church and Colombian academics.</p>	<p>1960-1999</p>
		<p>Issues: Relationships between dogma and scientific research. New Theological paradigms.</p>	
Academic	<p>2. The non-implementation of rigorous research programmes (Derived from <i>Compilation 2</i>)</p>	<p>Actors: French Commission and American Mission; Colombian Government and Colombian Catholic Authorities.</p>	<p>1958-1999</p>

		Issues: Provision distribution, historical preference for Catholic education and an education system for the Colombian elite	
Political	3. A continuous political confrontation between students and authorities (Derived from <i>Compilation 3</i>)	Actors: Students, Colombian Government, Catholic authorities and Communist groups.	1965-1985
		Issues: Political decisions on educational changes, provisions and dogmatic confrontations. Conservative methodologies for teaching and research.	
Theological	4. Guides to define Catholic identity in Catholic universities. (Derived from <i>Compilation 4</i>)	Actors: Vatican Authorities, Colombian Hierarchy. Theologians of Liberation.	1965 and 1991
		Issues: Conciliar and Pontifical guides for Catholic education and Catholic universities. Internal confrontation based on hermeneutical approaches to the educational system.	
Economical	5. The absence of economic policies in higher education (Derived from <i>Compilation 5</i>)	Actors: Colombian Government, Catholic Authorities and university lecturers.	1965-1999
		Issues: Educational chaos, absence of provisions for educational development.	

2. ANALYSIS

2.1 Continuity of the Medieval Challenge

The first key factor found was *a historical continuation of the medieval challenge between dogma and scientific research.*

The historical situation from 1917 until 1963 was a great concern for the Catholic Church and having realised the increase of injustices in society, it had decided to call for a Council, which

was the Vatican Council II. This was 48 years after the Russian revolution (1917) and 4 years after the Cuban revolution (1959).

The aim of this Second Council called by Pope John XXIII in 1963, was to draw up guiding principles that established the Catholic Church's participation in society. But after 30 years of Vatican II constitutions, it is clear that the Vatican internal intentions were not merely drawing those guidelines but also re-structuring the meaning of power. This restructure was motivated by the historical events that happened during the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries in Eastern and Western Europe, as well as due to the rise of the anthropological and philosophical theories proposed essentially by Feuerbach (1841); such theories were opposed to the traditional theocentric doctrine. In part I of *"The True or Anthropological Essence of Religion"* Feuerbach argued:

"As man thinks, as is his understanding of things, so is his God; so much worth as a man has, so much and no more has his God. The consciousness of God is the self-consciousness of man; the knowledge of God is the self-knowledge of man. Man's notion of himself is his notion of God, just as his notion of God is his notion of himself — the two are identical. What is God to man, that is man's own spirit, man's own soul; what is man's spirit, soul, and heart — that is his God. God is the manifestation of man's inner nature, his expressed self; religion is the solemn unveiling of man's hidden treasures, the avowal of his innermost thoughts, the open confession of the secrets of his love". (Feuerbach, 1841: 43).

This Feuerbach's Transcendental Anthropology theory explains that the new conception of man is the infinite self-consciousness. There is no need for the idea of God. Instead, there is a necessity for men to discover their own infinitude and as a consequence of this need, men became God of their own self-consciousness.

The Catholic Church presupposed that its traditional doctrine could be absorbed by ideological and external popular powers that promoted men instead of God. Indeed, these kind of ideas were contradictions to Catholic theology therefore, ideologically there was an urgency to restructure that Catholic background in order to create a guideline to confront these kind of antitheses, as well as to renew the Catholic Church role in society.

One explanation that emerged from the data was that historically, the Catholic Church tried to play down liberal thinking and liberal academic approaches that were developed in Western Europe based on doctrinal and underlying strategies that could demolish that Transcendental Anthropology theory.

Centuries before, the Catholic Councils were interested in maintaining authority, therefore councils developed theological topics in order to clarify doctrinal positions and enhance the authoritarian doctrine. For example there is a historical list of councils that promoted a doctrinal strength based on the topics like: Why believe in God? (Nice Council, A.D. 325); the Church reformation (Council of Trent, from 1545 to 1560); where the authority of the Church is coming from? (Vatican Council I, from 1869 to 1870).

Now, putting this into historical retrospective, for the first time in ecclesiastical history with the Vatican II, there was a u-turn in topics and strategies. There was an interest in renewing the Catholic role in society. Indeed, it was after the Trent Council (1545-1560) that the Catholic Church with the Vatican Council II had pointed issues to a 20th century reformation at internal and external level; internal reformation to promote its theological doctrine in society, and external in the sense of establishing practical relationship with modern society.

As a consequence and in terms of defining the relationship between Church and society, the data suggested that, for the first time in the history of the Catholic Church education had become a

central issue and that it was defined along an open ideological path, establishing a modern Catholic paradigm on higher education.

Now, continuing under this modern context (from 1963 to 1999) of establishing new doctrinal paradigms, the Vatican Council II acted as the channel that motivated all sorts of changes to the Catholic Church itself and the institutions that had been developing policies and philosophies based on this set of principles.

The data highlighted important reforms that the Vatican Council II has developed, with reforms being clarified under the following interpretation: Theologically, the Vatican Council II presented the principle that the mission of the Church includes service to human needs in social, political and economic areas, as well as the preaching of the Word and the celebration of the sacraments. This principle is especially set forth in *Gaudium et Spes* (1966) and is reiterated in more abbreviated form in other documents of the Council. The principle supplants the pre-Vatican II notion of pre-evangelisation, wherein such service is, or may be a necessary preparation for, the preaching of the gospel but is not itself essential to the Church's mission in the same way as the preaching itself or the celebration of the sacraments.

This may have been the most important ecclesiological change noted by the Council; namely, the move away from the idea that the mission of the Church is composed entirely of word and sacrament to the idea that pursuit of justice and the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel.

Educationally, Murphy (1991) explained that, the change that intrinsically altered the ecclesiastical approach to the Church's mission is the shift from education for leadership primarily in Catholic circles to education for leadership in the modern world. This means that rather than educate for exclusivity those more skilled or a social elite, the role of catholic education must turn into an inclusive educational scheme, where social, institutional and personal issues must be taken into account as a whole. There is a special orientation towards the educational settings under the Catholic doctrine that have to be developed right through primary and secondary education and then reach the universities as centres that could promote the right kind of development to persons, cultures and science.

First, there is a new approach towards the sacraments presenting a distinctive relationship between science and faith, leading to educational settings in the different spheres that have to be followed in order to comply with the mission of the Catholic Church.

Second, the long-standing focus on the institution's Catholic character and tradition and on the development of the values has remained; but now it co-exists with heightened concentration on the achievement of solid academic standards.

On the other hand, the Catholic Church defended its position against the Transcendental Anthropology followers, explaining that the Council has its meaning based on an exclusively theological interpretation. In this way, the challenge between dogma and scientific research is replicated in modern times with new language and new paradigms.

An educational problem that the Catholic Church must have faced is that, by attacking political and theological positions or anthropological theories with modern theological conceptions, the assumptions in education and scientific research became ideal concepts and the probability of their application in reality can fall. And as a consequence of this, there is a cyclical and internal repetition of the medieval scheme of confrontation essentially between advanced theologians and the scientific community. Nowadays, this challenge can be seen during discussions on ethical and ideological issues like human cloning, human artificial insemination or new theological interpretation of the holy gospel.

During the Middle Ages and in Modern times, the challenge between Catholic dogma and science (related to scientific research) was presented and developed in Europe; that Medieval challenge continued its historical journey until it flourished in Latin America, and of course, it has to be Latin America! To explain the exclamation mark the number of Catholics in Latin America has been on the increase since Colonial times (1492) from 0% to a level that today represents 98% of the Latin American population following the Catholic faith (CELAM, 1995). In this sense, Latin America has gained its stereotyped qualification as the “continent of hope” according to John Paul II. And by setting up its own interpretative view on theological, educational and social issues, (a view that academically has been known as “Theology of liberation”-Further explained in the Literature Review, Chapter One, pp. 34 & 35) Latin America became the key region for the Vatican authorities.

The data -*Table 3.3 (Compilation 1)*- shows also that there is an interest in the human person, for human dignity; and deep interest in justice and in promoting educational inclusion in higher education to those Catholics who are skilled. Supposedly, the background of the Vatican II is an anthropological humanist theory and indeed, the educational constitution *Gravissimus Educationis* (1966) is essentially a re-enforcement of these new anthropological concepts.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the ideological confrontation for defining the dominant paradigm in society between the Transcendental Anthropology tradition and the Catholic Church doctrine continues. In this order of ideas, the data (O’Keefe, 1997) supports the inference that the Catholic Church is using a less liberal doctrine called: “Universal Humanism” (Buckley, 1997) in order to re-define the doctrinal approaches against the Transcendental Anthropology used by Marxists and liberal theories. This “Universal Humanism” promoted by John Paul II, is based on the German Idealism (Glossary, p. 141) lead by Kant (1724-1804) and further developed by other post Kantian Philosophers such as: Schelling (1775-1854), Schiller (1759-1805) and Fichte (1762-1814).

Now, transferring this European conceptualisation into a Modern context and especially in relation to the Colombian context, the data unfold from this first factor a further two subsidiary factors **(2.1.1) the concept of authority developed in Colombian Catholic universities and (2.1.2) challenge of the new theological conceptions.**

2.1.1 The concept of authority developed in Colombian Catholic universities

The concept of authority was relegated to the confrontation of personal interests, and the educational actions are dependant on desires or particular plans of the principals of the universities or bishops’ guidelines from that time. I must recognise that there is a set of good intentions of some university’s authorities to be inclusive and pluralist as well as ideologically open and scientifically advanced (See explication of the *Table 3.5, compilation 3*) but the ethical problem with good intentions is that without their application in reality, those intentions can become a very good imaginative guidelines.

In relation to this concept of authority, there is the factor of the continuation of the challenge by the conservative authorities of the new theological conceptions. An example of this is shown by the data when a radical case was presented saying that Colombian Catholic universities did not employ lecturers with a Marxist background or even more critical they do not accept people with different ideological views rather than Catholic.

Murphy (1991) explains that the implications of these authoritarian and exclusionist positions are identified within the three issues: first, in the area of common interests, people want to do and to act for the best interest of the Church and University as an institution at the same time. Second, the conflict that appears over the interpretation of the Church teaching on doctrinal and moral issues is one example of their shift to a more pluralistic approach; and thirdly, decisions arise when values themselves are conflicting, and a choice must be made between two goods.

The implications suggest the dual position that Catholics (here are included the Catholic theologians of liberation) must assume when confronting interests, theological interpretations and the choice of values, but essentially apply to Catholic university leaders because of their direct educational involvement when they must combine management actions, either for good of the Church as an institution or for good of the Catholic university (Freire, 1993).

The data also reveal a tendency of these Catholic university authorities to assume the position of acting for the good of the Church at the expense of any academic work. Interpreting this situation in a deep approach, I can deduce that two issues derived from the data can illustrate the conflictive situation; one, it was the conservative position assumed in reaction to the liberal theories proposed by Theology of Liberation: -therefore, the Church's guidelines have been the justification for this conservative position of the Colombian Catholic church; and two, the prevalence among Catholic leaders and conservative governments of the sense of faith (at the level of popular religious conviction) over the meaning of science.

Therefore, evidence (Mutchler, 1971 and Sobrino, 1987) supported the argument that the Colombian traditionalists and papist groups did not take any risk of modifying the ways in which the Catholic Church worked and took up social and political issues. Instead, they have reinforced their structure to a parallel level with the Colombian State, maintaining their status quo and establishing political coalitions and economic relationships with North American authorities and conservative groups within the government with the aim of fortifying the abolition of any pluralist thinking.

An historical explanation of this evidence was found in Mutchler (1971). He explained that in Colombia, there was a papist group formed by the most conservative Jesuits that tried to discredit the Colombian Institute of Social Development (*ICODES*), which represents if any organisation does, what Ivan Valleir calls "pluralism" in Colombia.

Comparatively, in Colombia and especially in the Catholic environment, there does not exist an initiative for applying the "pluralist view" (Kogan, M. *et al.* 2000) in the Higher education system that already exists in European countries and especially in England, Sweden and Norway and that is often called "democratic elite theory" (Kogan, M. *et al.* 2000). It would be an important factor in preventing the abuse of power by one ruling class. This theory consists of an emphasis on the concept of multiple and autonomous elites. Kogan M. *et al.* (2000) explain that the autonomy of the elites, both from government as well as from other elite groups, enhances the idea of co-optation, the process of absorbing new elements into the leadership of policy-determining structures of an organization as a means of averting threats to its stability or existence.

Critically, I presuppose that the co-optation theory proposed by Freire (1993) and Kogan, M. *et al.* (2000) will work in the Colombian Catholic elite, under the following criteria; first, by giving more participation and defining common policies between Catholic Church and Government; second, by giving participation and accepting critically and interpreting government rules; and third, by creating common hierarchies of resources and esteem, avoiding the concept of dogmatic authority.

2.1.2 Challenge of the new theological conceptions

The second implication presented here shows that theologically, there is no assumption of pluralist ideas on higher education proposed by modern theologians (Theology of Liberation). Ideas on justice, educational inclusion, social participation and political freedom presented and promoted by the Theology of Liberation were understood as contradictories and enemies to tradition by the Colombian Catholic authorities.

By contrast, in Colombia this open approach of the Vatican II on higher education was not possible. The data has suggested that Cardinal Alfonso Lopez Trujillo during his period as Archbishop of Medellin (from 1978 to 1991) has made every possible effort to stop the spread of liberal and Marxist theories in the Colombian Catholic Universities and Seminaries. Therefore some of the Rectors of the Catholic universities assumed the same policy of academic blocking; there are the cases like the Franciscan University in Colombia (St. Buenaventura University); The Jesuit University (Javeriana University) and The diocesan University in Medellin, Pontifical University Bolivariana, Sabana University and Catholic University of the East. (See *Figure 2.1*)

Logically, the data showed that the Conciliar documents did not promote this radical idea of authority. Instead, there is an open way to plurality and ecumenical dialogue. Finally, for Colombian academics the situation has a similarity with the situation experienced during Medieval times illustrated previously in the Literature review, where scientific work and textual interpretations of theories and scientific laws were predisposed and predetermined by the Catholic authority without place for any other tangential interpretation.

The Colombian Catholic Church does not further the historical changes proposed by the pluralist spirit of these constitutions. Here the medieval challenge between faith and reason and its scientific controversy continues during 1965 to 1999 in different time and with different actors. Therefore, an internal division within the Colombian Catholic authorities and the Colombian theologians is historically evident. Consequently, this affects the development of research, the promotion of the pluralist education and the level of investment in higher education programmes.

2.2 The non-implementation of rigorous research programmes

The data -*Table 3.4 (Compilation 2)*- shows a second key factor: ***“the non- implementation of rigorous research programmes”***.

This factor contains another three subsidiary issues (a) the lack of State participation in the higher education system; (b) proliferation of universities and academic programmes without an evaluation of the benefit for the social situation of the country; (c) provision for higher education depended upon two requirements, one from the reports of international missions and the other from the political and historical preferences.

The Colombian State and the Colombian Presidents that were in power during the post-Conciliar period did not provide the cash needed for the development of universities; and in terms of provision distribution, there was a historical preference for Catholic universities (Henaó, 1999).

Hence the set of findings suggest the following inference: the State participation was based on political structures to maintain power and on the implementation of an education system principally based on education for the elite.

The implication of this inference is explicit in the need to establish educational policies that guarantee State control regarding educational settings and also, the need to define policy for the fair distribution of provision to those institutions designing adequate programmes towards social development.

Adding to the previous inference, the data suggested that during the last 421 years, Colombian Catholic universities developed an educational system with the aim of helping the government to control ideological changes as well as to create a political preference in times when conservative parties were in power. Logically, this assumption of institutional preference

cannot be fully expressed during all liberal periods because Colombian history has shown that the liberal President Alfonso Lopez Pumarejo (1942) established limits of interventions of the Catholic Church in Educational issues (Borda, 1997).

Comparing this situation with the British higher educational system during the postwar period shows similarities, essentially, in terms of provision distributions. This division and exclusivity for the distribution of provision for universities depended upon the traditional name of institutions. Silver (1999) explained that in England for example during the postwar period, this division and exclusion between North and South has been illustrated in the “*Redbrick Report*”. In England, the Northern Universities like Manchester, Newcastle, Sheffield and Leeds were in comparison to the Southern Universities, in this case Oxbridge, understood as poor universities and stereotyped as the “Redbrick universities” due to the absence of tradition and elite.

In the situation described above, the issues of provision and recognition are simultaneously related to each other. Deductively, if there is an adequate policy for provision distribution for education, subsequently, there will be an equal distribution, and the elite division will be avoided. As a result, the recognition for academic institutions does not depend on historical tradition or upon the elite influence of politicians. By contrast, it will depend on the development and promotion of a special strategy for teaching and research.

The implication of the situation of provision and recognition of academic tradition in Colombia has been illustrated in the data in the following terms: there is no implementation of rigorous research programmes in two ways, academically and economically. Therefore, this is the cause of the absence of a spirit for scientific research (*Lebret's report*). Simultaneously, the data continues showing that in Colombia there was an increase of students and programmes, and as a social gender situation, the matriculation of women had increased especially in technical studies programmes (CELAM, 1995 and Henao, 1999).

Paradoxically, there is no academic evidence that the investment in research, training and postgraduate programmes has increased either in state or public universities or in private universities. Lecturers' employment was affected to the level of changing the type of contract and affecting their academic work, forcing them to flee from their profession. Therefore, the pedagogical structure was affected by the way that the lecturers who survived these structural and management changes followed the authoritarian methodologies in the universities' classrooms. Subsequently, the research spirit was lost.

By contrast, the only provision delivery was invested in new university buildings (Catholic Universities), creating the idea of “Campus” as the urgent need to accommodate a large number of students without a management decision of dedicated provisions to improve research programmes or to train lecturers at highest level.

For this, the idea of a university as a “Campus” originated in Colombia and the implications of these political actions were on the one hand economic, because a campus could matriculate more students and therefore the income received via students fees was higher. On the other hand, the opportunity to justify a full campus, the Catholic universities argued that those new buildings were established to help the country by giving the poor students within the country access to education but the fact was that this was not true. Here is a case of double standards applied by Catholic institutions and authorities. To support this claim, the data (COLCIENCIAS, 1980) suggest that due to the high cost of university fees, most of the students matriculated for an academic programme during the 1960s to 1980s were students that had come from medium to high social strata, thus, the idea of helping the poor was only a theoretical idea.

To prove this double standard applied by the conservative wing of the Catholic church, there was evidence that Cardinal Lopez Trujillo during the Episcopal conferences in Puebla and Santo

Domingo was the person that wanted to manipulate the final text of the conference by cutting up the section of “the preferential option for poverty”. As a Machiavellian, he wrote some letters and sent them together with a set of recorded instructions on how to alter the conference text to his fellow bishops and Clerical friends to persuade them to change that poverty conception, and in case of opposition to these ideas, he illustrated some strategies on how to oppose the approval of this section of the conference text. Lopez Trujillo letters and a tape were sent by accident by himself to one Colombian journalist who immediately published the letters and the content of the cassette and consequently, that was the cause for his dismissal from the conference.

Due to this situation the European Catholic movements published several documents and articles about the true intentions of the conservative wing of the Catholic church in Latin America that were based on the defense of the political regimes and the tradition in order to keep the political power of the church.

Critically and based on the evidence that the data has unfolded, I must state that due to the radical conservative identity of the Catholic Church and Catholic university in Colombia, Catholic universities did not make an investment in research nor in postgraduate training for university staff. On the contrary, the evidence (COLCIENCIAS, 1980) supports that in Colombia from 1965 to 1985 the increase of places in Catholic universities and matriculations together with a constant increase of university fees was one of the highest in Latin America. These administrative actions of increasing the income for the sake of saving money were common practice in all Colombian Catholic universities, making them between 1963 and 1985 some of the richest institutions in the country (Henaó, 1999 and COLCIENCIAS, 1980).

On the other hand, Law 30 of 1992 of Colombian higher education did not constrain the research work of Catholic Universities and the structure that was promoted by the Basic Plan and the Californian mission from 1967- *Table 3.4 (Compilation 2) The ten years Institutional report (1999)* has persisted as a continuous and disordered scheme, and a verification of this is the proliferation of academic programmes in both Catholic and public universities without planning or benefit for the country.

Pedagogically, there was no promotion of a critical analysis as an academic methodology. Instead, the continuation of traditional methods of teaching as repetition of concepts, as the appropriation of methodologies without critical examination were a re-enforcement of the historical continuation of the conservative conception of the university management that as stated before, was based by tradition on political power instead of knowledge and research.

Finally, the lack of planning in methodological and pedagogical strategies has motivated a set of confrontations between the academic and political forces during the last 30 years.

2.3 A continuous confrontation between Students and authorities

Borrero's Documents -*Table 3.5 (Compilation 3)* - showed the third key factor as “*A continuous confrontation between Students and authorities*”

The data showed that in Colombia since 1966, there has been an increase in confrontation between students and authorities, essentially governmental authorities and that under the influence of the Theology of Liberation during the 70s, the confrontation escalated to the Catholic Church itself. The confrontation was focused against policies imposed on the students and the universities either by the Catholic authorities or by the Colombian Government.

The cause of this confrontation is manifested in two ways: one, through the student's opposition to foreign interference in Colombia and two, through the claim for change in policies and politics to the point of presenting a Marxist theory as the real option to change the Colombian reality. The data highlight that in Colombia, the confrontation was up to the level that students

lead by Camilo Torres founded the Guerrilla group called: National Liberation Army (ELN) that exists and is present in the political arena nowadays. This group was opposed to conservative ideas of elite and wealthy institutions, and had proposed a social change taking the political power and ruling the Colombian state under the Marxist theory. Clearly, this was an opposite theory to that one promulgated by the Catholic Church. These ideas were also motivational in founding other Marxist groups in Colombia like the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

The Marxist theory assumed an opposition to the State and the Church and was not a situation that had happened exclusively in Colombia, but was a general movement experienced in Europe and Latin America.

Drawing comparisons between the Colombian experiences with the student's movement, Smith (1999) explains that during the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s, Europe and England also had experience of this kind of Marxist movement inside the university clusters; strongly in Paris with violent confrontations against the police and the army.

Indeed, Europe has experienced a students' movement that has led to a confrontation with the governmental establishments as well as with the religious beliefs, promoting changes to the European society based on those Marxists theories. This is the background for the actual political parties in Europe like the Socialist Party (Italy), The Social Democratic party (Germany and France) and the Labour party (England).

Educationally, there are two implications of these political and ideological confrontations. On the one hand is the time and effort that the Colombian Catholic authorities must spend in restructuring the educational programmes in order to satisfy to some extent the requests of these groups, with the only objective of surviving the ideological, and very often violent storm. On the other hand, the Catholic authorities must restrict the boundaries of their acts in order to avoid any adoption of the Theology of liberation. Therefore, the most diplomatic position for the Colombian Catholic Church as well as for the university authorities (Principals and Head of Academic Programmes) is to back up their position with the guideline that the Vatican hierarchy has underlined, but with a strong conservative approach.

Consequently, due to these actions of defending conservative positions and especially those promoted by Cardinal Ratzinger (position presented in the literature review, Chapter One) from 1980 to 1998 Catholic universities have experienced an institutional and ideological limbo.

The academic programmes in Colombia's Catholic institutions had developed a traditionalist and non-critical scheme, promoting exclusively higher education for the elite and for those who are not very interested in modifying social structures. Borrero (1992) explains that from 1960 to 1999, research has been affected economically and pedagogically because of the lack of investment in it; and its improvement and projection solely depends upon the continuation of the political relationships that Catholic authorities can establish with the economic elite and the politicians or upon external sponsorships.

After this confrontational experience, the Catholic Church had realised its own weaknesses and consequently, had worked in order to re-establish a new meaning of institutional participation in society as a new meaning of university autonomy.

This internal work and evaluation was completed by the Vatican authorities and some of the Episcopal Conferences in the Latin American countries with the objective of avoiding further ideological confrontations. On the other hand, the Colombian government worked in the same way, establishing relationships with American universities and sponsorships in order to establish a policy that confronted the radical Marxist theories proposed by the students.

Consequently, the confrontation over defending ideological positions between government, Catholic Church and external groups became intensive and institutional, and as a result, the need to redefine a philosophical idea of university was an urgent issue. This redefinition of the idea of a Catholic university takes me to presenting the fourth factor that has influenced the development of the Catholic educational system in Colombia. Factor four is presented as follows.

1.4 Guides to define Catholic identity in Catholic universities

The data -*Table 3.6 (Compilation 4)*- suggested that the publications of the “*Guides defining Catholic identity in Catholic universities*”, is the most influential factor that showed the ways in which Catholic universities had to follow objectives and academic work for the next three decades. Although the Vatican II constitution *Gravissimum Educationis* (1966) draws on the theological background, there was a completion by the pontifical document *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1997).

As the data has suggested, the intention of the pontifical document is focused on a re-establishment of a pluralist dialogue between Faith and Reason, logically, a dialogue that implies what the document shows in different terms and in a different perspective, rather than being traditionalist. As mentioned previously, it shows a modern conception of men called the “Humanistic” approach based on the German idealist theory developed by Kant, Scheler and Schelling. This theory presupposed a transcendental conception of men as creature and God as the transcendental being or creator. Logically, these ideas can be understood only from a transcendental action of men (in terms of faith and spirituality).

Educationally, the data (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 1997) suggested that this anthropological view helped to promote the new conception of academic work and research as a human action for the good of men and institutions and to show that every work developed must lead to a manifestation of the welfare of society.

This theoretical background has permitted the identification of two positive implications as follows: (1) Catholic universities must change direction and the medieval presumptions of administration of academic work and research must change for a modern approach and; (2) based upon these anthropological perspectives, the benefit that they can create must show the re-establishment of the relationship with students and lecturers under the conditions of justice and fairness. In this way, confrontations will be avoided and the dialogue between *Faith* and *Reason* could be an open path to an academic understanding between Catholics and other groups in society. As a result, Catholic universities could be universal places where faith and pluralistic approaches walk together.

Furthermore, the data has also suggested that this process of Catholic identification in Colombia could take another 25 years due to the political and internal confrontations within the country. As a consequence of these historical circumstances, higher education will reflect this continuous confrontation and the lack of pluralistic approaches on research and on application of new pedagogical methods.

Finally, it is well understood that the Pontifical and Vatican II documents are theoretically well structured and deeply justified, but regarding economic provisions there are no guidelines nor a practical scheme for the investment that Catholic universities must apply.

Now, the risk of this situation is that in Colombia the theoretical guidelines may can be assumed to be a very well done archival document that them universities used as the weapon to defend themselves from Marxist attacks and not as the guidelines to promote radical changes, and then economically the university will depend only on students’ fees.

As a result, the further development of the Catholic university will depend upon the rule of the person or community that leads the university. In this case, confining the development of the university to an individual preconception of education.

1.5 The absence of economic policies for higher education

The fifth factor found is that during the period from 1960 to 1999, Catholic universities in Colombia experienced “*an absence of economic policy*” that could guarantee a development of the whole higher education system. As mentioned previously, and as the data highlights (Henao, 1999) in *Table 3.7 (Compilation 5)* these Catholic documents do not define a proposal for economical provision for universities. There is found a reference to a fair distribution of income but further than that assertion, there are no practical ideas for dealing with poverty and economic exclusion. In fact, this is one of the weaknesses of those Catholic approaches (Sobrino, 1997; COLCIENCIAS, 1992 and Henao, 1999).

The same issue regarding absence of an economic provision guideline was revealed in law 30 of higher education (1992). It has a reference on how to structure a university, on how to start a non-profitable higher educational institution but it does not present a framework that coordinates and controls the economical provision for higher education.

Another relevant issue is that the same law 30 does not mention Catholic universities although there is identification of public and private institutions. Therefore, interpreting this legal situation in a critical way, this law shows the historical recognition of exclusivity and preference that policymakers have for Catholic institutions up to the point that the same part of the law omitted a specific reference to these universities and therefore, did not discuss economic issues with the Colombian Catholic hierarchy.

The first time that the provision on higher education was mentioned radically was in the Lebret’s international missions report made by the Belgium Government, which asked the Colombian authorities to invest more cash in the universities’ development; but rather than understanding the idea of development presented by the report based upon a set of investments in research programmes, lecturers’ training and the launching of campaigns for the improvement of literacy and numeracy from primary school up to the undergraduate studies, on the contrary, this concept of development was understood by government and Catholic authorities (including university principals) as an opportunity to increase their income. As a result, the investment delivered was to construct new buildings (idea of “campus” explained previously).

The lack of Catholic commitment to alleviate poverty throughout higher education and the absence of investing cash in research and teaching led to a major pedagogical and long term inference: “If there is no money to invest, therefore there is not research, consequently there is no social development”. This inference concludes by showing that the lack of cash investment is essentially a disadvantage for educational settings as well as for society. An example of this, the data (Henao, 1999) has revealed that when evaluation of academic programmes took place from 1960 to 1995, Colombian Catholic universities as well as some of the public universities found that the academic evaluators sent by the Colombian Minister of Education Office did not have research experience or teaching training, so, the process for implementing academic changes based on their recommendations in pedagogical areas was limited.

Critically, due to the lack of investment and the establishment of the right policies and guidelines, Catholic universities together with the public universities did not invest in educational development. Therefore, the sense of competitive work and the adequate responses to market forces was lost and as a result, social development was affected.

The only guidelines to educational investment after the Le Bret's Report in 1958 have been the policies requested from Colombia by the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) as the pre-requisites to international loans; policies that were related to social development, including educational changes, with a special reference to the implementation of decentralisation policies. Here also, the higher educational settings are not mentioned, those decentralisation policies were strictly focused on the concept of universality of education but essentially primary education as a way of promoting literacy and numeracy programmes in poor communities in both rural and central areas.

It is true that since 1960 the idea of education was connected directly to the conception of economic growth, and effectively, Aldcroft (1998) explains, this was the idea defended by the International Conference on Economic Growth and Investment in Education held in Washington in October 1961, expressing firmly the belief that educational expansion was the powerful agent of economic growth as well as an ideal way of ensuring equality and opportunity. This set of ideas proposed by the economists at that time were connected with the idea of human capital, education and economy worked together in order to re-establish a new conception of development based on the conception of the individual capacity of men and educated communities.

In this order of ideas, there was another interesting theory explained by Perking (1998) of combining education, economy and individual capacities to develop the idea of social welfare. This theory is presented by Perking as the idea of the "third revolution". In fact, this third revolution has to be based upon the professionals' and experts' experience to provide a service of assistance and promotion of social welfare expressed in better health, longer life, state welfare, vast sports and entertainment industry, rapid transport, electronic communications and information technology, in other words, education for development.

Contrary to this, the Catholic Church in Latin America and Colombia was not interested in those economic theories; and in neither the Vatican Council II that was held two years after that Washington International Conference or the Medellín Bishops Conference that was held in Medellín eight years after the same conference was there a mention of ideas of developing education and economy together. There is no interest in adopting either of these two ideas of "human capital and the third revolution" proposed by Aldcroft (1998) and Perkin (1998).

As a result, the data (Henao, 1999) showed that education provided by Catholic Universities from 1965 to 1999 has suffered from internal and external inefficiency. These data claims are supported by Fischman (1998) who presented the picture of the Latin American educational situation saying that in his report analysing the educational situation in the four countries Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico and prepared for Conference on Education for All held in New Delhi, "that decentralization and private education were two factors that caused internal deficiency and the low quality" (UNICEF, 1993, cited in Fischman, 1998:11). He found also, that time tables, calendars and curriculum in primary, secondary and university were completely disconnected from students socio-economic and cultural background and needs. Similarly, Fischman adds, teachers' and lecturers' working conditions are worse than ever before (Carnoy and Moura Castro, 1996).

Finally, I would like to finish this analysis with a remark supported in Perkin (1998) and Aldcroft (1998) on theories of human Capital and third revolution; that due to the continuous challenge of defending traditional and conservative positions, the Catholic authorities in Latin America and Colombia have forgotten or misinterpreted the real meaning of the holy gospel in relation to the sense of investment and improvement of social life throughout education and especially throughout Catholic higher education.

"St. Mark's gospel says: Man does not live by bread alone". The quality of life is much wider and more significant than quality of goods that one can purchase. Social progress

includes improvement of health, well-being, enjoyment of friends and family, fresh air and clean water, freedom from pollution, relief from heavy labour and the enjoyment of arts, music, literature, and the mental and intellectual stimulus of continuing education” (Perkin, 1998: 215).

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