ACCESS TO HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

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This paper will describe the opportunities for higher education in Brazil since the colonial period (1500-2000). It will show the creation of the first institutions of higher education in Brazil and their proliferation in time. In addition, this paper will also provide information about access to elementary and secondary education in order to analyze its impact on access to higher education. It will focus on the long-lasting reduced access to higher education depicting its restriction to segments of the Brazilian society in the basis of race and social class.

Approved: Thomas Walker
Dedication

To Fernando, always standing by me.
To Augusto.
Acknowledgments

My special thanks to my Father.
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Introduction

In Brazil, higher education is associated with better social conditions, better chances for employment and higher wages. However, access to higher education in Brazil is restricted to an only small segment of the population: students from the upper class. Brazil has recently (mainly in the last 40 years) witnessed an increase in opportunities for higher education, most of which are provided by private institutions, which already account for more than half of the enrollment of undergraduate courses.

This paper proposes to make an historical review of the creation and development of Brazilian institutions of higher education since colonial times (1500-1822). Chapter one describes educational opportunities in elementary and secondary schools since opportunities for higher education in Brazil began to emerge only during the Imperial regime (1822-1889). Chapters two and three deal with the first institutions of higher education created in Brazil. They describe the main characteristics and effectiveness of these first institutions.

Chapter three and four will focus on the Republican period, from 1889 to present. They will show that, while opportunities for higher education opportunities increased during the twentieth century, access to this level of education remains restricted. They will also examine whether the current increase in access to higher education provided by private institutions is adequate to the Brazilian demand at this educational level. This paper will
also shows that the priority of government investments in higher education combined with a reduced investment in elementary and secondary education is not a contemporary policy but the long-lasting agenda of prior regimes.

Inadequate support for elementary education for the mainstream population has not only reduced access to higher education, it has also prevented Brazilian society from developing economically and democratically. Employment can guarantee one’s livelihood and literacy is required for employment. Moreover, illiteracy can prevent Brazil from developing its consumer market. In addition, illiteracy can prevent people from being aware of their rights and standing up for themselves. Those who are illiterate can easily be manipulated to vote for populist politicians instead of choosing more representative leaders. “Illiteracy not only threatens the economic order of a society, it also constitutes a profound injustice. This injustice has serious consequences, such as the inability of illiterates to make decisions for themselves or to participate in the political process. Thus, illiteracy threatens the very fabric of democracy.”¹

1. Education in Colonial Brazil

The first Portuguese colonizers arrived on the Northeast coast of Brazil on April 22, 1500. They explored and settled Brazil, holding both the territory and the natives as a colony until 1822. In colonial times, higher education was a privilege for those inhabitants who were able to study in Portugal, mainly at Coimbra University or other European universities.²

Coimbra University began receiving Brazilian students during the XVI century, when the enrollment of students born in Brazil numbered 363. In the XVII century, there were 1,749 Brazilian students, enrolled either at Coimbra University or at Montpellier Medical School in France.³ These students had been sent and supported by their families, the wealthy and well-established Portuguese descendents who owned sugar plantations, sugar mills, or gold mines. At the end of the XVIII century, municipalities in Minas Gerais asked the Portuguese government to help educate less well-to-do Brazilian students in the fields of engineering, topography, medicine and accounting at Coimbra University with the understanding that these students would return to Brazil upon finishing their courses.⁴

² Maria Luisa Santos Ribeiro, Educação brasileira: a organização escolar, 2nd ed. (São Paulo: Cortez e Moraes, 1979), 38.
⁴ Ibid., 69.
Considering estimated population figures in 1660 (i.e., 184,000) and in 1766 (1,500,000), these numbers of students enrolled at Coimbra University during the same periods show that access to higher education was indeed restricted.

Moreover, education was restricted to men. In accordance with tradition, among wealthy families: the first male son would inherit and preserve the family property, the second male son would study to become a doctor or lawyer, and the third would study to become a priest. In colonial Brazil, education of females was limited to instruction related to the care of a husband, children and the household. “Education was restricted to the sons of colonizers. They would lead their father’s business, study in Coimbra or become priests. White women, black slaves, and Indians had no access to the arts of reading and writing”.

In the XVI century, schools for girls did not exist in Portugal either; thus, the majority of Portuguese women were illiterate. The first convent, the ‘Convento Santa Clara do Desterro’, was founded in 1678, in the State of Bahia. This type of institution was the only educational opportunity for women since there wasn’t any other formal education for women in existence. At the convents girls could learn to read and write in addition to learning music, household tasks and the arts of making candies and artificial flowers.

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6 Ribeiro, op. cit., 23.
Before the appearance of convents in Brazil, women from wealthy families were sent to study in convents in Portugal. It wasn’t until 1720 that freed black or freed mixed girls were accepted in Brazilian convents as servants. A person classified as “mixed” was someone born of a black slave and a free white parent. Because of the black parentage, this person too was a slave and referred to as “mixed”. Within the convents a nun’s economic condition determined her position, which was demonstrated by the color of her veil; the wealthiest wore black veils, while a white veil signified that a nun’s family had not provided any financial donation to the convent and that this nun would have to pay to study each period. There were also servants who were accepted into the institution to work in exchange for some instruction. The goal of feminine education in the colony was to prepare a wife and a mother to carry on Portuguese religious and family values.

While Brazilian women had to wait until the XVII century to have access to educational opportunities and even then they could only learn to read and write, it was possible for Brazilian men to be educated in schools and religious seminaries, such as those of the Jesuits as early as 1549; at home the education of males was a priority. Not until the XVII century were higher education classes offered in Brazilian territory. In 1699, classes in military engineering were offered to prepare army military personnel for subsequent service in military units; those enrolled learned to build fortifications. These classes were held in Rio de Janeiro, where

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8 Ibid., 87-89.
later the same institution would offer classes to members of the armed forces in geometry, arithmetic, French, drawing and even elementary instruction as needed.\footnote{Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 61,66.}

It should be noted that there is a pre-XVII century reference to higher education in Bahia, Salvador. In the then capital of the general government, the Jesuits founded an establishment in 1550 that taught only reading and writing. In 1553, students were also able to study math, science, grammar and literature, when this Jesuit school started to offer classes in the arts and theology. The four-year long theology course offered the graduates the title of “Doctor”, while the three-year long arts course included logic, physics, math, ethics and metaphysics. In the XVIII century, a Jesuit school called ‘\textit{Colégio da Bahia}’ created an undergraduate course in math. Students enrolled in these Jesuits establishments were descendants of the white, Portuguese colonizers, the sons of sugar plantation and mills owners, of cattle farmers and of those who owned the gold mines.\footnote{Luís Antônio Cunha, “Ensino Superior e Universidade no Brasil,” in \textit{500 Anos de Educação no Brasil 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed.}, ed. Eliane M. T. Lopes \textit{et al} (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000), 152.} For the most part, access to higher education was a possibility only to men from families with property.

Education at any level was inaccessible to Africans or to their descendants. Slaves were seen as property. Their white owners agreed that blacks should only learn about work and learn this one from another. Reading and writing was taught to the Indians, who were
seen as barbarians,\textsuperscript{11} of slightly higher status than black slaves, but still inferior to whites. Their education was a mean of Portuguese domination because as they learned the Portuguese language, they would also learn the Portuguese religion, culture and vision of the world. In this vision, the Portuguese occupy a position of superior knowledge, religious virtue and social prestige that justified the subservience of the natives.

The most significant educational work in colonial Brazil was the Jesuit endeavors to drill Catholic catechism and instruction.\textsuperscript{12} Many religious orders had establishments in Brazil working with catechism and education: the Benedictines in Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Bahia; the Franciscans in Pernambuco, Maranhão and Rio de Janeiro; the Carmelites in Pernambuco, Pará and Rio de Janeiro; and the ‘Mercedários’ in Pará and Amazonas.\textsuperscript{13} Yet the Jesuits were the most important and largest religious order; they established institutions throughout the vast Brazilian territory, all well-organized and ruled by the \textit{Ratio Studiorum}, a document published in 1599 determining the curricula and method of study.\textsuperscript{14} The Jesuits were the most significant religious order responsible for primary education in colonial Brazil.

\textsuperscript{13} Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 51.
\textsuperscript{14} José Maria de Paiva, “Educação Jesuíta no Brasil Colonial,” ,” in \textit{500 Anos de Educação no Brasil} 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., ed. Eliane M. T. Lopes et al (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000), 44.
The Jesuit establishments often consisted of a church and a school. Such establishments were set up first at Bahia in 1549, where, only 15 days after their arrival in Brazil, an elementary school of reading and writing initiated its activities in the city of Salvador. At Ilhéus reading and writing classes began in 1565, and the first school in Porto Seguro opened in 1551. In the same year the Jesuits settled areas in Espírito Santo and São Vicente provinces (São Paulo Region). They established a seminary where Portuguese reading and writing was taught, and by 1553, students could also learn Latin there.

In 1554, the Jesuits opened the ‘Colégio de São Paulo de Piratininga’, a school that gave origin to the city of São Paulo. Fourteen years later, in 1568 another Jesuit school was established, this time in Pernambuco, with 104 students enrolled by 1574. Jesuits schools were located on other States of northeastern Brazil: Paraíba (1587), Rio Grande do Norte (1597), and Sergipe (1575). In 1586 the Jesuits pushed Portuguese religion and instruction further - to Paraguai and in the south of the Rio São Francisco region (Minas Gerais).¹⁵

While there were only 6 Jesuits who arrived with the first colonizers in 1549, when they were expelled from Brazil more than 200 years later in 1759, they had opened 20 schools for boys, 12 seminaries, and one school for girls, 36 homes and 36 missions. More than simply being numerous, the Jesuits held a position of high prestige in the eyes of the Portuguese government. Since 1564, the Jesuits had received subsides from the

¹⁵ Niskier, op. cit., 48-49.
Portuguese Crown; 10% of all taxes collected in the colony were designated to maintain Jesuits schools. An ordinance signed by the Portuguese King on September 7, 1564 instructed the captain of Bahia province to financially support the Jesuit school, ‘Colégio da Bahia’, by collecting an income tax, ‘Redízima’, and to this day the ‘Colégio da Bahia’ is officially recognized as the first public school in Brazil.

Because Jesuit schools were supported not only by income tax but also by income obtained through the work of black slaves and Indians, these individuals should have been permitted to study in Jesuits schools. Yet, since their arrival in Brazil, Jesuits were ordered to provide instruction to Indians and to the descendants of the colonizers only; instruction for Africans slaves was prohibited. The Jesuit schools were highly respected and at certain times, the demand for instruction became greater than their capacity to receive students. Subsequently, some Jesuit schools started to prohibit children of mixed ethnicity, claiming that they were too numerous and without discipline. However, in 1689 an ordinance obliged the Jesuits to accept into their schools Indian children and mixed children whose freedom had been secured.

The instruction for Indians and mixed inhabitants was different from the education reserved for the Portuguese colonizers. “Access to instruction was determined by social structure; some would have more education, other would have less.” Thus, the sons of

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16 Ribeiro, op. cit., 33.
17 Ibid., 46.
18 Ibid., 28.
19 Paiva, op. cit., 44.
Portuguese colonizers were sent to Jesuits schools to become priests or lawyers and would later occupy important public positions. Indian children and freed mixed children could learn to read and write and later continue in vocational studies to be prepared for a job of less prestige.

Bringing young men into the priesthood motivated the work of the Jesuit order, ‘Companhia de Jesus’, which would guarantee many volunteers to expand Catholic influence and doctrine. During the XVI and XVII centuries, one who was representing the Catholic Church was empowered and highly esteemed within society. Catholic doctrine was the dominant ideology in Europe and at any other place colonized by European countries. Furthermore, Christianization of the native Indians was of importance to the Catholic Church as a way to gather new converts, since the Reform movement in Europe had harmed its religious supremacy.

The Jesuits helped with the Portuguese colonization because the Catholic faith and the Portuguese language taught to the Indians would adapt them to European culture and make them more gentle and willing to work for the Portuguese colonizers instead of rebelling against the territorial invasion of the Portuguese. An ordinance of King Felipe I in 1587 tells: “two or three priests of Jesus Order, due to their credibility among the pagans, will persuade them easily to serve in the farms and mills with no violence.”

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20 Ibid., 58.
1609\textsuperscript{21}, the Jesuits began establishing missions, ‘\textit{reduções}’ or ‘\textit{recolhimentos}’, in less populated areas of the Paraná, Rio Grande do Sul and Mato Grosso regions to receive orphans, Indians and peasants to instruct them in the Portuguese language and faith. The concentration of Indians in those establishments was known to attract attacks (referred to in both 1602 and 1629) by the Portuguese interested in selling these children into slavery.\textsuperscript{22} However, the Jesuits protested against these attacks causing antipathy and resistance from Portuguese settlers against the prestige of the Jesuits.

The Jesuits had a curricular plan designed for students in the basis of different origin and future. At the beginning, the students would learn Portuguese and Christian doctrine. Later, they could opt to continue their studies in agricultural techniques or in improving grammar and preparing to study in Europe. The students of wealthy family origin would be enrolled in a European university, most likely at the Coimbra University. Since exclusively wealthy whites could have their European studies financed by their families, the last option was more suitable to upper class students. Indians and ethnically mixed students would take the agriculture course. Unfortunately, the Jesuit’s commitment to providing educational opportunities to a broader population than exclusively well-to-do students was short-lived.

\textsuperscript{21} Azevedo, \textit{op. cit.}, 8-11.
\textsuperscript{22} Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 52.
This plan was used only until 1570; from 1570 to 1759 the curricula followed the order described in the *Ratio Studiorum*. The *Ratio Studiorum* regulated the educational plan in Jesuit schools and changed the former curricula removing both the first years of Portuguese classes and the vocational courses, which in 1570 were only courses in agriculture. This change in the curricula prevented poor children from having access to any level of education, unless that the educational institutions needed them to supply labor demand within the schools, and then they could receive some instruction in exchange for internal school services. Students from wealthy families could learn to read and write at home with paid tutors and later enroll in a Jesuit seminary to continue studying Portuguese Grammar, Latin, Introduction to Theology and Philosophy in the Humanities, Philosophy or Theology courses. Upon completion of studies in the seminary, there would be a study trip to Europe. In addition to the seminary courses, there were also schools that taught only reading, writing, and arithmetic, which were more appropriate to the needs of Indians and the sons of destitute peasants.

Sons of the elite were prepared for intellectual work: to become priests, lawyers, or Physicians. “By the XVII century, the academic degrees obtained in the Jesuit schools or seminaries were, besides the property of land and slaves, important criteria in determining social position.”\(^ {23}\) A diploma and its related prestige would determine one’s social position.

\(^{23}\) Ribeiro, op. cit., 29.
In 1759 the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil, their schools closed and their buildings and libraries either confiscated by the government or sacked. Pombal, who was a minister of King Dom José I in 1750, was opposed to the popularity of the Catholic Church. Pombal saw Jesuit influence as a threat to the King’s power and thus, convinced the King to expel them because they might oppose the changes in public administration that were applied under the banner of modernization. With the expulsion of the Jesuits and Pombal’s disinterest in education, the education system underwent changes without the benefit of explicit direction. Justified by the modernization of instruction in the colony, studies were simplified with less Latin and Greek giving more importance to the use of the Portuguese Language. Math and sciences were taught as isolated classes called ‘Aulas Régias’ to which teachers were named by the government. The ‘subsídio literário’ was a tax over the commerce of wine, meat, vinegar and cachaça created for the payment of those teachers; however, because this tax was not regularly collected, the ‘Aulas Régias’ were in fact, rare and often interrupted.

The ‘Seminário de Olinda’, was founded in 1800 at the city of Olinda, Pernambuco. This seminary was the most remarkable educational endeavor in the colony after the expulsion of the Jesuits. Academic content was more modern than in the curricula of the Jesuits. In Latin grammar class, understanding of the language was used more than the Jesuit method of memorization, and the structure of Portuguese grammar was also an important theme. In rhetoric class, geography and history were developed along with arguments in favor of international commerce. Philosophy class divided its program to include: the
classical masters of philosophy, logical practice, chemistry and Natural History. Geometry teachers also had to develop arithmetic, trigonometric and algebra principles.

In spite of these differences, the Olinda Seminary was similar to the Jesuit schools in that it prepared students for either the priesthood or for a program of study in Europe. As in Jesuits seminaries, there was a predominance of wealthy students. At Olinda, in the year of its foundation 33 students were accepted with free tuition to the Olinda Seminary while one hundred admits were paying students. Wealthy families could pay to have their sons study in the seminary. The Olinda Seminary was highly respected in part because of the quality of its faculty, chosen and recruited directly from European Universities.

Besides the income collected in the name of the “subsídio literário”, the founder of the seminary and also governor of Pernambuco Province, the Bishop Azevedo Coutinho, created the ‘imposto pessoal’, a tax of 20 ‘Réis’ charging every inhabitant over twelve years of age. Again taxes would finance the education of the wealthy class. Everyone had to pay the taxes, but orphans, blacks, people of mixed races and those considered to be of illegitimate birth were forbidden from taking classes at the seminary. Sons of the elite could pay to study there, but the amount paid was not enough to support the establishment and maintain the seminary. Therefore, an education subsidy provided by

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25 Ibid., 73.
the Portuguese Crown would complete the required financial support. Less wealthy students could only start the Latin grammar classes during the first years of study in the Olinda Seminary or other similar institutions if they had had a previous opportunity to be instructed in Latin and Portuguese languages. Forty-one years after the expulsion of the Jesuits, due to the failure of the “Aulas Régias” system to meet the demand for education, there was almost no educational opportunity for poor students. Students with previous Portuguese and Latin instruction were almost exclusively from the elite because only wealthy families could afford private tutoring at home.
2. Higher Education in the Empire of Brazil

Under orders from Napoleon, the French army invaded Portugal in 1808 forcing the King of Portugal, Dom João, and his court to move to Brazil, which became part of the United Kingdom of Portugal and Algarve. At that time, the Portuguese Court in Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Brazil since 1763, was important because it encouraged the development of many cultural activities.

In 1810, books were transferred from the National Library in Portugal to Brazil, initiating the installation of the Royal library, later named the Brazilian National Library, in the capital. Many bookstores were opened and the first newspapers and magazines began to circulate. In 1816 in Rio de Janeiro, the then capital of the Portuguese Empire received the visit of French artists that had been hired to describe Brazilian landscapes, flora and fauna. Works presented by those artists resulted in the creation of a museum, a botanical garden and an art academy, which have offered courses in painting, drawing, and sculpture since 1820. During this period, classes in anatomy, surgery and obstetric proceedings were started in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro. These classes were established by Royal decrees, one in 1808 for those in Salvador and one in 1813 for the classes in Rio de Janeiro. The decrees specified content and identified the teachers. These classes later evolved into Medical courses four or five years long, operating at the Royal Military

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Hospital in Rio de Janeiro and in Salvador, where the Portuguese Crown financially supported teachers’ salaries and hospital maintenance.

In 1810, King Dom João ordered the commencement of engineering classes to be offered at the Royal Military Academy. Later, these classes constituted an engineering course, which, in 1874, was transferred to another building apart from the Military Academy. At that time the curriculum was changed to give instruction beyond building fortifications and battle equipment. This institution was called the Polytechnic College and the course, Civil Engineering. At its inception, the course was supported by the central government, support that continues to the present.

In 1808, Brazil inaugurated international commerce with the liberalization of international trade from Brazilian ports. In the same year, King Dom João determined the creation of classes in economics, also to be offered in the capital, and appointed Dr. José da Silva Lisboa to teach. Dr. Lisboa was a Portuguese noble, who had traveled with the Royal Court to Brazil and advised the King to open Brazilian ports to international trade.

On September 7, 1822 Pedro I, son of King Dom João, declared Brazil an independent nation and assumed its governance as Emperor of Brazil. Five years later, in 1827, Dom

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27 Ibid.
28 Ibid., 155.
29 Niskier, op. cit., 85.
Pedro I authorized the creation of a law school in São Paulo and another college in Olinda, Pernambuco, also to offer a course in law\textsuperscript{30}. In the newly declared Empire of Brazil, graduates in Law would be quite useful in filling many of the judiciary offices needed to judge cases and matters that would no longer be taken to Portuguese courts of law. At this time, Brazilian students were still traveling to Portugal to enroll in European universities; there were 818\textsuperscript{31} Brazilian students from Rio de Janeiro, Bahia, Pernambuco and São Paulo at Coimbra University during the XIX century. Yet the establishment of Law Schools in Brazil was essential in order to promote cultural independence and intellectual prestige of Brazil.

Since 1808, institutions of higher education were administered and financially supported by the central government. King Dom João and later Emperor Dom Pedro I were responsible for creating the courses, determining the curricula, and appointing teachers and course directors, who were named and paid by the government of the Empire.

Admission into institutions of higher education was restricted to those students that would pass admission tests, called preparatory exams. The government established and maintained an institution in Rio de Janeiro, called ‘Colégio Pedro II’, which consisted of both a middle school and a high school. Only college applicants that had completed their

\textsuperscript{30} Cunha, \textit{op. cit.}, 154.
\textsuperscript{31} Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 79.
studies at ‘Colégio Pedro II’ could be accepted into any of the Brazilian colleges without taking the tests.\textsuperscript{32}

Colégio Pedro II was founded in 1837 and located in the capital. Since 1857, the school has accepted both full-time and part-time students. Only those who could pay for their studies were accepted as full-time students. Part-time students received fewer hours of instruction but could enroll without paying tuition. The students intending to enroll at ‘Colégio Pedro II’ should have prior instruction of elementary or middle school level to give them the academic foundation necessary to attend classes at the level to which they were enrolled.

At this time high schools began to appear throughout the young Empire, these new schools offered also education at elementary and middle school levels. In 1819 the Colégio do Caraça, an establishment that offered studies at the middle and high school levels for paying students, was founded in Minas Gerais. In 1867, another private institution, the Colégio São Luis in ITU, São Paulo, began its activities and was run by the Jesuit order. In São Paulo, protestant north Americans came to Brazil where they installed the Colégio Piracicabano/Escola Americana in 1870.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} Cunha, \textit{op. cit.}, 156.
\textsuperscript{33} Ribeiro, \textit{op. cit.}, 67.
The Colégio Santo Antônio, founded in 1877 at Blumenau, Santa Catarina, was maintained by German funds as it was created for the benefit of German immigrants. Besides regular courses of study, the school taught carpentry and shoemaking. In 1883, the Salesiana, a religious order established a middle and high school in Niterói, a city close to Rio de Janeiro for full-time and part-time students. The Colégio Salesiano Santa Rosa also accepted some part-time students with free tuition. In the same year the Colégio Abílio, a private high school was founded in one of the fanciest neighborhoods of Rio de Janeiro. This institution received the sons of the most distinguished and wealthy families of the capital. Besides its strict instruction and erudite education, the school often held parties with recitations and orchestra. These establishments were examples of educational initiatives conducted by religious orders that, while on occasion provided tuition free instruction for some students, were essentially private institutions created to offer private education. The majority of the students were paying students, whose payment was welcome and necessary to provide financial support to the activities of these establishments as well to serve the profit-making interests of their founders.

During the nineteenth century the development of education, especially public education, in Brazil lagged far behind the growing Brazilian population. By 1827, the central government had founded only four institutions of higher education. In 1855, there were only 25 officially recognized high schools, all private, which were responsible for

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34 Niskier, op. cit., 171-177.
attending to the educational needs of Brazil’s, approximately 8,000,000 people.\textsuperscript{35} Even in 1889 there were only three public high schools in Brazil: the Colégio Pedro II, the Colégio Militar both in Rio de Janeiro and the Escola Militar in Ceará, created to give free instruction to the sons of the Army officials.\textsuperscript{36} Besides the fact that these educational establishments were insufficient to address educational needs of the population, they also could not provide a democratic access to education. Access to education was restricted to the social elite because most educational establishments were private and required payment to provide instruction. In the XIX century, elementary and secondary education expanded through the work of the religious orders that had established many institutions both to provide education and also to propagate either catholic or protestant doctrines. As these institutions were private, most of their students paid for instruction, but there was also a minority of students who were granted scholarships as part of their charity work.

In 1835 in Niterói, in 1836 in Bahia, in 1845 in Ceará and in 1846 in São Paulo, schools were created for the first time ever to offer education at the secondary level to prepare teachers for elementary instruction. The courses were two years long.\textsuperscript{37} However, these courses were unpopular. Secondary school students preferred to be prepared for higher education entrance exams because a diploma was associated to social status. Secondary

\textsuperscript{35} Joaquim Norberto Souza e Silva, “Investigações Sobre o Recenseamento da População Geral do Império e de Cada Província de per si, tentados desde os tempos coloniais até hoje” (1870) and Francisco José.Oliveira Vianna, “Resumo Histórico dos Inquéritos Censitários Realizados no Brasil” (1920), [site of the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics], [cited 13 November 2001]; available from INTERNET ibge.gov.br/ estatísticas/população.

\textsuperscript{36} Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 165.

\textsuperscript{37} Ribeiro, \textit{op. cit.}, 51.
courses to prepare for the admission tests for college were mainly preferred by middle and upper class students, who intended to continue studying in institutions of higher education and who had no need to get a job soon. For example, in 1859, at Colégio Pedro II a class was started offering a certification to teach middle school, yet no one wanted to enroll in this course. That year, all students enrolled in the first year course to prepare for the higher education admission tests.\textsuperscript{38}

In Brazil, the level of education reflected one’s social position. “Social selection was mainly determined by whether or not someone was literate. This phenomenon caused the failure of a rational distribution of educational opportunity throughout Brazil.”\textsuperscript{39} Educational establishments, most of them private institutions, were concentrated in the most populous and developed areas where the majority of wealthy families lived and could enroll their children in schools by paying for their studies. “While there were no statistical data on education, it is believed that only 10% of the real demand for elementary education was served.”\textsuperscript{40} Secondary education did not provide an opportunity for the majority of Brazilians spread out around the country to prepare for the admission exams since most of them never had access even to elementary level instruction and because higher education courses were available only in few state capitals (São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco).

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 60.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 57.
Restricted access to higher education gave to the elite of Brazilian society more than a diploma; it gave to those moneyed Brazilians the means to maintain their privileged social position, in addition to the property that they held. “In that society, where economy was based on land property and slaves, public education was not of interest to the elite. Boys with the means to pay for their studies would enroll in private high schools, which were of better quality than the few existing public secondary schools. Students who completed a secondary school of high quality had a much greater chance of being admitted into college, whether public or private. Public offices in government administration and politics, positions of prominence within the imperial regime, and the titles conceded by the Emperor gave even more value to diplomas acquired in the country’s institutions of higher education. This contrast between the rare opportunity for public education and the development of higher education restricted to the elite established greater inequality between the illiterate subjugated lower classes and the erudite dominant class. The culture of the elite was notable and resembled the most erudite of European societies.”

The first Brazilian Constitution of 1824 stated in Article 170, line XXXII that all citizens should have access to free elementary school instruction. It also stated in Article 170, line XXXIII that the government had to guarantee the means to instruct Brazilians in the Sciences and Arts, both at the levels of high school and higher education. Later a law in

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1834 amended the Constitution putting provincial governments in charge of the establishment, development and financial support of elementary educational institutions. In contrast, higher education was the priority of the central government. The Brazilian Emperor created and maintained higher education courses as well as one high school in Rio de Janeiro. In other provinces, there were few public high schools.

The government did not supply the needed opportunity for public elementary education to address the needs of the population because it had not allocated enough funds to prepare and pay teachers or to purchase books and other instructional tools. The imperial government prioritized the financing of institutions of higher education. Students that aspired to higher education first needed elementary instruction of quality. Upon finishing elementary and middle school they should enroll in high schools where they could prepare to succeed on admission tests for courses in higher education. This was clearly an opportunity more suitable to students that could pay for the private education available primarily in the capital cities of the most wealthy and developed provinces.

Investments to develop elementary instruction are critical because this level is the basis for the development of all other levels of education: a lack of elementary instruction can halt one’s learning capacity at any other subsequent level. The Law of October 15, 1827 mandated the establishment of an elementary school in all cities, villages and most populated areas. This Law also required that the schools in provincial capitals and other populated villages should follow the Lancaster Method of teaching. This method,
invented by an English educator, Joseph Lancaster, became popular in Europe during the XVIII century and later influenced the Brazilian government. The method interested the Brazilian government because it enabled the government to expand educational access with fewer investments. This method was based on using the best students, called tutors, as assistants to teachers. Thus, with tutorial assistance, many more students were able to learn successfully.

Neither the Lancaster method nor the imperial ordinances were capable of expanding access to elementary instruction because there weren’t adequate investments to provide classrooms, books and other instructional tools or to prepare and adapt teachers to the Lancaster method.\textsuperscript{42} The Constitution of 1824 recommended providing free elementary instruction to all citizens, but it did not determine the means to make it feasible. The Law of 1834 that put the provincial governments in charge of the maintenance of elementary schools left this important dimension of educational policy dependent upon the interest and available funds of the government of each province.

A report ordered by the imperial government in 1855 presented data on institutions of public education. At that time there were 1,076 students enrolled in the four institutions of higher education: the Medical Schools in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro and the Law Schools in São Paulo and Recife. 3,813 students were attending one of the 25 high

\textsuperscript{42} Luciano Mendes de Faria Filho, “A Instrução Elementar no Século XIX”, in 500 Anos de Educação no Brasil 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed., ed. Eliane M. T. Lopes et al (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000), 141-142.
schools located in the provinces and 61,700 students were enrolled in the 1,506 elementary schools of the provinces of Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Bahia, Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco.43

Paulino José Soares de Souza, a minister of the Brazilian Empire, reported on the state of public education in 1869, pointing out the inadequacy of appropriations to establish and maintain public schools and to prepare the teachers. According to Souza: “Since we do not have accurate numbers to rely upon, supposing that the number of students attending classes in all the Empire is approximately 150,000, and, if Brazil has, as many say, 8,000,000 inhabitants among free men and women, the situation deserves some consideration by the Congress. If we consider the Empire’s investments in education divided among each Brazilian citizen, we have 12,875 Réis collected from each citizen as income tax. Only 378 Réis are invested in education. I am sorry to say that the means for developing elementary education are far from adequate to address the needs of the society. We have few and inefficient schools lacking well paid and prepared teachers instructed in the methods of teaching.”45

Although access to public education was seriously inadequate, this was primarily a problem to the poor. Upper class families often sent their sons to private schools, and even there weren’t any private schools available, families with the means to pay for a

43 Niskier, op. cit., 147-148.
44 Réis was the currency of Brazil during the imperial period.
private tutor sponsored a home schooling system, which included the children of families that could not rely on the quality of education offered in public schools nearby, a phenomenon often occurring in less populated or backward areas.

In 1827, a report presenting the conditions of elementary schools in Minas Gerais pointed out that there were 23 public elementary schools and 170 private elementary schools, many of which were home schools. It was maintained that these home schools were responsible for instructing more students than the public schools.\textsuperscript{46} Home schools were often set up in places arranged by parents who would hire and pay a teacher responsible for the education of their children; some schools also received the neighbors’ children.

During the Imperial period (1822 – 1889) black children were forbidden to attend classes in either private or public schools.\textsuperscript{47} In 1851, the Imperial Ministry ordered Gonçalves Dias, a famous poet and associate of the Brazilian History and Geography Institute, to study the educational conditions of private and public schools in the provinces of the north and northeast regions. In 1852, after one of his research trips, Gonçalves Dias presented his report. Among the observations: “Indians and the black slaves are the two great classes of our society that have no instruction, excluded from access to any level of

\textsuperscript{46} Faria Filho, op. cit.,145.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
education."\textsuperscript{48} Little did Dias realize that the decades to come would show negligible change in this dire situation.

\textsuperscript{48} Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 133.
3. Higher Education Opportunities in the Brazilian Republic

The Republic of Brazil was established in 1889, and in 1891 a new Constitution was ratified. Under the constitution, the federal government had the responsibility to provide official instruction in the capital at all levels: elementary schools, high schools, and institutions of higher education. The Federal Government also was to promote secondary and higher education in other states, providing orientation to curricula and the structure of programs. The federal government was the only one with the authority to validate programs, recognizing their certificates and diplomas. While the Constitution specified the federal government’s role with regard to education within the capital, the responsibility for elementary and secondary education outside of the Federal Capital was not even mentioned. Similar to imperial system of education, under the new Constitution, the promotion of higher education geographically concentrated and restricted to the social elite prevailed against the concept to promote a more democratic and widespread access to basic education.

Ordinary laws, called “education reforms”, named after their mentors, regulated the national system of education. These so-called reforms were unfortunately also responsible for restricting access to institutions of higher education.

The Benjamin Constant education reform of 1891 extended the right to enroll in institutions of higher education without having to take admissions tests to students who
had attended state high schools with curricula similar to that of the federal capital high school, Colégio Pedro II. Commissions named by the Federal government would visit, evaluate and validate diplomas offered by institutions that were developing instruction with curricula and conditions in accordance to standards determined by the federal government. This official inspection would extend admission test exemptions to students of private high schools in 1901. Under this reform, institutions of higher education in other states, both those maintained by state governments and private institutions, which had the same curricula as public institutions maintained by federal government were recognized officially and could, therefore provide diplomas to their graduates. Officially recognized diplomas were necessary for one’s professional legal practice. Without the diploma, a citizen was not allowed to work as a physician, a lawyer, or an engineer for example.

In 1911 the Rivadavia Correa reform, Decree number 8659, reinstated the requirement of admission tests for graduate programs. All applicants, including students who had completed high school instruction at Colégio Pedro II, needed to pass admission exams to enroll in higher education programs.

In 1915, Decree 11530, the Carlos Maximiliano reform, maintained the admission tests, and called “exames vestibulares”, as a requisite to enroll in higher education programs. Yet, this reform restricted access to higher education even more because besides requiring passage of admission tests, the applicants also had to present certificates of
completion of high school studies from Colégio Pedro II or from similar establishments officially inspected by State governments. Students from private high schools had to submit to special exam provided by officially recognized establishments to ascertain whether their education met set standards.

In 1925, the Rocha Vaz Reform established by Decree 16782-A, extended the restriction to a graduate diploma. In addition to passing the admission tests, the applicant needed to achieve a good score classification. The number of available slots for admission was limited for each exam session, generally two per year. Admission was distributed among applicants with the best scores. The Rocha Vaz reform demanded the adoption of these criteria called ‘numerous clauses’ criteria.

During this period, while access to higher education was restricted, the value of diplomas was enhanced. Graduation guaranteed legality and credibility for professional practice according to legal regulations and the influence of class entities. The number of institutions of higher education increased since republic was founded by the creation of new institutions, most of which were private. Their founders were encouraged to open new institutions believing that the demand would grow.

The law school of Ouro Preto was officially recognized in 1893, and in that same city, the federal government also validated a College of Pharmacology. In 1898 a College of Engineering was recognized in Bahia. A College of Engineering was also founded in
Pernambuco and another at Porto Alegre in 1897. Porto Alegre witnessed the establishment of Pharmacology, Medical and Law schools. Law schools were also founded in Amazonas, Goiás, Ceará and Bahia. In São Paulo Colleges of Pharmacology, Odontology, and Obstetric Proceedings were created, and in 1894 a college of Engineering opened its doors. At Pará and Recife, Colleges of Pharmacology were established; in 1912 in Belo Horizonte a Medical School was created.

A Medical School in São Paulo was created in 1891 but did not actually begin courses until 1913; it was officially recognized in 1922. In 1908, an Agriculture School was founded in Lavras, another city in the rural areas in the state of Minas Gerais.

In Pernambuco an institution offering Agriculture and Veterinary courses was established in 1913. Meanwhile, in São Paulo, the “Escola Superior de Agricultura Luis de Queirós”, an Agriculture Technical School at Piracicaba City was founded and since 1901 has been offering professional courses until nowadays. 49

In 1909 the University of Amazonas opened in Manaus to offer undergraduate programs in Engineering, Law, Medicine and Pharmacology. While the institution closed in 1926, the Law School continued to operate until 1962 when it was incorporated to the Federal University of Amazonas, created during that same year. In 1911, a private university was

founded in São Paulo city, initially consisting of Law and Medical Schools. In time, Odontology, Pharmacology, Commerce and Fine Arts courses were also offered. This private institution was closed in 1917 because it could not compete with the state Medical School, which provided scholarships.  

In Curitiba, Paraná, a University was founded in 1912 by the merger of a Medical and a Law School. This university also offered courses in Engineering, Odontology, Commerce and Pharmacology. The Carlos Maximiliano Reform of 1915 prohibited official recognition of institutions of higher education located in cities of less than one hundred thousand inhabitants, which included the city of Curitiba.

Therefore, as the diplomas provided by the university in Curitiba would no longer be officially recognized, the institution folded in the same year. In 1920, the University of Rio de Janeiro was founded, and in 1927 State of Minas Gerais established its first university. As in Rio de Janeiro, it resulted from the merger of preexisting Engineering and Law Schools. In Rio de Janeiro, these were the same institutions that had been created by the imperial government in 1808 and 1810. In Minas Gerais, when the Engineering College and Law School merged to establish the university, courses in Odontology and pharmacology were also instituted.  

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50 Cunha, op. cit., 162.
51 Ibid., 163.
By 1912, there were already 50 institutions of higher education in Brazil, 6 maintained by federal government and 5 by the states. Thirty-nine were private institutions.52

Federal recognition of new institutions of higher education stimulated the proliferation of similar institutions. Yet, this proliferation still could not extend access to education to a greater part of population, since such access was restricted by admissions tests and the completion of studies in selected high schools. Federal government policies made access to higher education a priority. In terms of federal legislation, only the Rocha Vaz Reform of 1925 addressed elementary education, demanding that federal and state governments agreed that establishment and maintenance of elementary and high schools be maintained by state tax revenues.

The federal government assumed financial support of elementary school only in the federal capital, Rio de Janeiro. Without enough financial support of elementary and high schools in other states and municipalities, access to higher education was restricted even more, available only to students with the financial means to pay for elementary studies, since completion of elementary studies and subsequently of middle and high school was required to apply for admission to a program of higher education.

In 1890, 85% of the total population of Brazil was illiterate, i.e. Only 2,120,559 out of a total population of 14,333,915 Brazilians could read and write. In 1920, although the total population had doubled, there were still 23,142,248 illiterates, 75% of the 30,635,605 Brazilians.\textsuperscript{53}

In 1912, 15,926 students were enrolled in public technical schools and 13,546 were enrolled in private establishments. Between 1907 and 1912 some additional public technical schools were created and 102 new private high schools were opened. The number of public high schools financially supported by the states decreased slightly, while at the federal and municipal levels, there was no change.

Table 1 - Number of high school institutions maintained by governments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The predominance of private institutions at this level of education ensures the maintenance of reduced access to higher education for the mainstream population,

\textsuperscript{53} Instituto Nacional de Estatística, \textit{Anuário Estatístico do Brasil}, (Rio de Janeiro”Tipografia do departamento de Estatística e Publicidade, 1936), AnoII, 43.
especially for the poorest, because there were fewer “free payment” opportunities to acquire the high school diploma mandated for enrollment in institutions of higher education.

In 1930, the Ministry of Education and Health Care was created, and in 1931 it issued a new law, the ‘Reforma Francisco Campos’, which changed the rules for national education through decrees #19851 and #19852. According to the new law, state governments were responsible for providing free education at the elementary level and, subsequently, should provide public education at the secondary level as well. The federal government was still responsible only for public education in the federal capital; it was also in charge of coordinating the structure and curricula of programs in institutions established in other states. The federal government had no responsibility however to assume financial support for the maintenance of these institutions; such responsibility rested with the state governments and their municipalities.

In 1934 a new Constitution mandated for the first time that, within the budget, investment quotas should be established for education. Although financial support for free elementary education and progressively for secondary education continued to be the responsibility of states and municipalities, the federal government had to define national policy for the entire educational system. The planning for such policy was to be based on the analysis of statistical data. However, prior to their time, record keeping related to education in Brazil, was decentralized and sporadic. Then in 1931 the National Institute
for Research on Education, INEP was founded, enabling the government to assemble and maintain accurate records on education throughout the country as a whole. In 1935, the state governments spent 15% of their tax revenues on education, but the amount decreased in subsequent years to 11.7%, in 1945 and 13.7% in 1955. The Constitution of 1934 defined an education budget as at least 20% of state tax revenues together with 10% of municipal taxes. The states governments did not satisfy this Constitutional ordinance although municipalities came close. Municipalities spent 9.5% in 1945 and 11.4% in 1955. The Constitution of 1946 changed the quota for the municipalities, requiring that a quota of at least 20% of municipal tax revenues be invested in the maintenance of educational establishments.54

In 1936, the total Brazilian population was 42,395,151 inhabitants while the total educational enrollment was 3,064,446, less than 7.5% of the Brazilian population. Access to education was very selective, which meant that from one educational level to the next, enrollment decreased drastically.

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In 1936, government statistics counted 39,104 education institutions: 36,818 elementary schools, 1,870 high schools and 416 institutions of higher education. Of the total, 10,341 were private institutions while federal, state, and municipal governments maintained 28,763 establishments. Besides the fact that access to education decreased in relation to the level of education, enrollment also decreased because of high attrition. 48% of students enrolled in elementary school failed at the end of the school year. 21% of students enrolled in high schools failed their final exams and 16% of students in higher education were not approved to pass into the next school year. In addition to failing, many students had no financial means to continue studying because they needed to work. The selectivity of the educational system favors wealthy students that have access to private schools of better quality and have no need to work while studying.

Table 2 – Enrollments in 1936 – Brazil

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enrollments in 1936 (number of students)</th>
<th>Elementary schools</th>
<th>High schools</th>
<th>Higher education institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary schools</td>
<td>2,750,014</td>
<td>107,649</td>
<td>26,732</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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Although government appropriations fell far short of the level of education need in Brazil, investments in education were effective in reducing illiteracy rates. The increase of government investments was motivated by the need to prepare the labor force to engage in industrial growth. During the Getúlio Vargas administration (1930-1945), and later during the Juscelino Kubitscheck government (1956-1960), the Brazilian economy base shifted from agricultural export to an import substitution industrial model. This period also witnessed a rapid movement toward urbanization; after 1940, the predominantly rural population became more urban: 64% of Brazilian population lived in rural areas in 1950. In 1960, 55% of population was living in rural areas while the urban population represented 45% of total population.\textsuperscript{57} During this same period, as Brazil was becoming more urban, illiteracy among Brazilians over 15 years of age dropped from 56% in 1940 to 39.4% in 1960.\textsuperscript{58}

The expansion of access to elementary education between 1935 and 1955 was insufficient to meet the demand of the total school-age population. In 1935, 54.4% of the school age population did not attend elementary school, but in 1955 this figure was reduced to 25.8%.

Failure and dropouts continued to prevent students from completing their elementary education. Enrollment in the final year of elementary school was only 10.3% (1935) and

\textsuperscript{57} Instituto Nacional de Estatística, \textit{Anuário Estatístico do Brasil}, (Rio de Janeiro”Tipografia do departamento de Estatística e Publicidade, 1971), 44.

\textsuperscript{58} Instituto Nacional de Estatística, \textit{Anuário Estatístico do Brasil}, (Rio de Janeiro”Tipografia do departamento de Estatística e Publicidade, 1963), 28.
16.5% (1955) of the enrollment rates of the first year. Only 13% (1935) and 20.9% (1955) of students enrolled in the first year of the elementary course completed their studies four years later. In 1935 and 1945 around half the students failed the school year.\footnote{59}

During the period 1935-1955 enrollment in secondary education increased from 173,981 to 828,097. The number of traditional high schools, which prepare students to take admissions tests for higher education programs, doubled from 1935-1945; there were 520 schools of this type in 1935 and 1,282 in 1945. The most noticeable improvement during the same period was in the number of technical secondary schools, i.e. 143 industrial technical schools in 1935 and almost ten times more (1,368) in 1945. Enrollment increased from 15,035 in 1935 to 65,485 in 1945. In addition, the number of institutions established to train laborers working in commerce doubled from 512 in 1935 to 1,014 in 1945. The enrollment increase was significant, i.e. 26,569 students were enrolled in commercial technical schools in 1935 and 90,768 were enrolled in 1945.\footnote{60}

The following table shows the number of institutions of secondary education the number of teachers by type of course.

\footnote{59} Ribeiro, op. cit., 129-131. \footnote{60} Ibid., 132.
Table 3 – Institutions and teachers of high school, by type of institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Traditional high schools</th>
<th>Industrial technical schools</th>
<th>Commerce technical high schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td>19,105</td>
<td>6,498</td>
<td>9,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutions</strong></td>
<td>1,285</td>
<td>1,368</td>
<td>1,014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A comparison of the number of teachers in the different kinds of secondary courses suggests higher quality education in the traditional high schools, where the typical student was from the upper social class, intending to apply for study in programs of higher education upon finishing high schools. The students in high schools that prepare them for careers in industry and commerce were mainly of middle and working class origin.

In 1937, the dictatorial government of Getúlio Vargas (1937-1945), established under a state coup, issued a new Constitution, which declared that educational objectives should give priority to the preparation of an urban labor force, and to that segment of society destined for such preparation. The Federal Constitution of 1937, like its predecessor of 1934, declared elementary education obligatory for all children. This Constitution excluded the recommended of establishment of investment quotas within government budget destined for education. The Constitution mandated the inclusion of specific classes to prepare students for manual work at both elementary and secondary levels. The development of vocational and professional education programs were recommended for
students of the lower classes, i.e. “ensino pré-vocacional e profissional que se destina às classes menos favorecidas”, as stated in article 29, the Brazilian Constitution of 1937. The Constitution clearly established the foundation for social discrimination within the educational system.

In 1946, the reinstated National Congress voted in a new Constitution that reestablished budgets, specifying support for public education: 20% of state tax revenues and 20% of municipal tax revenues. The Constitution also required that all companies with more than 100 employees assume responsibility for organizing and financing the education of their employees or the employee’s children under 18 years of age.

During the period 1955-1965 enrollment in elementary, secondary and higher education continued to increase although selectivity did not disappear.

Table 4 - Enrollment per educational level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Elementary school</th>
<th>Secondary schools</th>
<th>Higher education institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td>4,545,630</td>
<td>828,097</td>
<td>69,942</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>9,973,183</td>
<td>2,154,430</td>
<td>154,981</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Compared to the enrollment in elementary schools, secondary school enrollment represented about 20% of the enrollment in elementary schools. In institutions of higher education enrollment represented less than 1.6% of the enrollment in elementary schools.

At the end of the nineteen-thirties there were only five universities in Brazil, one in Rio de Janeiro maintained by the Federal government, one in Belo Horizonte founded by the State of Minas Gerais, two other state universities- one in São Paulo and one in Porto Alegre, and finally, a state university in Rio de Janeiro. By 1955 there were 845 institutions offering higher education programs (undergraduate programs), universities and isolated colleges.\textsuperscript{61} Between 1945 and 1960, federal universities were established in: Alagoas, Bahia, Ceará, Espírito Santo, Goiás, Pará, Paraíba, Paraná, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Norte, and Santa Catarina. A Federal University was created in each of the states cited above. From 1946 to 1960, 18 public and 10 private higher education institutions were created.\textsuperscript{62} By 1960, in addition to private colleges and the isolated public colleges maintained by government, there were already 30 universities.\textsuperscript{63} The creation of these universities was generally based on the union of a college of engineering, a law school, and medical School.

\textsuperscript{61} Instituto Nacional de Estatística, \textit{Anuário Estatístico do Brasil}, (Rio de Janeiro: Tipografia do Departamento de Estatística e Publicidade, 1959), Ano XX, 355.
\textsuperscript{62} Helena Maria Sant’ana Sampaio, \textit{O Ensino Superior no Brasil: O Setor Privado}, (São Paulo: Hucitec; FAPESP,2000), 70.
\textsuperscript{63} Niskier, \textit{op. cit.}, 316-317.
Several private Universities were founded during this same period, many of them created and supported with financial aid from the Catholic Church: the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro (1946), the Catholic University of Goiás (1959), the Catholic Universities of Minas Gerais and of Paraná State both founded in 1960, the Catholic University of Pernambuco (1952), the Catholic Universities of Rio Grande do Sul (1948) and Pelotas (1960) both in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. In São Paulo State, the Catholic University of São Paulo city was founded in 1946 and another one in Campinas (1959). In São Paulo, the Mackenzie University was founded (1952) by a protestant order.64

During the 1960’s, universities maintained by the federal, state and municipal governments continued both using admissions exams for the selection of students and requiring the completion of secondary education as a prerequisite to enrollment. Education at the elementary and secondary levels in Brazil was already selective because of dropouts and failure rates, caused in part by the social-economic conditions of less-moneyed students. These students needed to begin working earlier in life than students from the upper class. Work and studies are hard to manage simultaneously, causing low attendance and poor grades, both of which contribute to attrition. According to a 1965 study, repetition of schoolwork is more frequent among students attending evening courses in high schools of São Paulo city, and its students who work during the day that represent the predominant enrollment in these evening courses.

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64 Sampaio, op. cit., 397.
Table 5 – Performance of students in high schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Repetition on High School - first years</th>
<th>Approval on High School - last year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Day courses</strong></td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening courses</strong></td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The problems of the academic achievement of evening students further contribute to narrowing that segment of society with the means to successfully complete elementary and high school education. This phenomenon of selectivity prevents less-moneyed students from achieving entry into higher level of education.

Since the responsibility for the organization and financial support of elementary and secondary education rests with state and municipal governments, the Federal budget specified for education is applied to institutions of higher education in the federal capital and in other States. Investments in education in less developed geographic regions were certain to be less than investment in education in the federal capital beginning with the disparity in tax revenues, which is greater than tax revenues of the poorest states and municipalities in the country. In this way the investment in elementary and secondary education has always been inferior to the investment in higher education. Investments in higher education end up benefiting a narrow social segment, mostly students from the upper class, who have access to private elementary and secondary education of better
quality and accessibility. It is also important to bear in mind the fact that students from
the upper class generally had no need to work while studying.

In addition, investment in education was not a priority of the Brazilian government. The
federal investment in education in 1965 represented only 9.6% of federal expenses,
followed by the expenditures of the Ministry of War (11.1%), fiscal policies (32.1%) and
transport ventures (21.8%).

This model of investment in education inherited from the imperial government is not
adequate to extend access to education to the mainstream population. The share of the
greater tax revenue in hands of the federal government was invested in higher education,
which ultimately was to benefit students from higher socio-economic conditions. Within
this model, public elementary and secondary education had to be financed by local
governments. The imbalance of tax revenues between the highly-developed and
backward regions consequently caused disparities in education opportunities that were
worst in the poorest regions, which explains higher illiteracy rates in the less developed
and poorest regions.

The Constitution of 1937 divided high schools in two types. One type was based on the
traditional curricula that prepared students to enroll in institutions of higher education.

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The other type was the technical college, which provided students with professional skills to work in industry, commerce, and agriculture. Students who finished technical schools could not apply for admission into programs in higher education. Enrollment in such institutions was restricted to students that had finished a classic high school program.

This structure was changed in 1961, when Law 4024 established a new organization for the national education system. This law declared that students from both traditional high schools and technical colleges could apply for admission into programs of higher education. This change promoted an increase in enrollment at the secondary level and consequently led to an increase on the demand for higher education. Enrollment on secondary schools doubled from 1970 to 1980.

Table 6 - Comparison between the number of students enrolled in the first year of secondary school and the number of high school graduates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Enrollments - first year of secondary school</th>
<th>High school graduates</th>
<th>Variation (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>445,773</td>
<td>329,851</td>
<td>74.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,065,848</td>
<td>541,350</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Helena Maria Sant’ana Sampaio, O Ensino Superior no Brasil: O Setor Privado, (São Paulo: Hucitec; FAPESP,2000), 396.

The increasing demand for higher education enhanced the competition for entrance into college. Student associations staged public demonstrations against the admission tests for higher education programs and also protested against the proliferation of private
institutions of higher education. They demanded that the government invest in public universities in order to promote greater access to free higher education. These demonstrations were organized around ‘UNE’ – National Student Union, founded in 1937, officially recognized by the Federal government in 1942, and still the most representative student association.

Increases in high school enrollment did not lead to a democratic expansion of access to education. In 1965 a study of high school student attendance and achievement in São Paulo City revealed a problem of discriminatory admission into higher education. At this time the percentage of school age children actually enrolled in schools was less than the percentage of children who should have been in school. Furthermore, educational enrollment showed a progressive decrease level by level as students moved from elementary to middle school, and from middle to high school.

Table 7 – Students’ access by socio-economic origin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students of normal school age</th>
<th>Students whose schooling had been interrupted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High class origin</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle class origin</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working class origin</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the data provided above, one can conclude that the probability that students from a high social-economic origin will complete elementary and secondary school at the normal age and subsequently apply to a program in higher education is greater than that for a student of working class origin.

During the period of 1970-1980, most new institutions of higher education were private. In 1971, there were 122 public and 527 private institutions of higher education, 16 of which were private universities. In 1980, the number of public institutions dropped to 109 while the number of private increased to 684.66 These new private institutions included: a Catholic University, founded in Salvador, Bahia in 1961, the Catholic University of Petrópolis (1961), Santa Úrsula University (1975), and the University of Rio de Janeiro (1979), all established in Rio de Janeiro State. The University of Itaúna was founded in 1966, in Itaúna, a city in the industrial mining area of Minas Gerais, and in 1973, the University of Moji da Cruzes was established in São Paulo State, at Moji das Cruzes, a municipality also based on industrial economy.67 These universities created during this period were all private universities.

The period 1960 to 1980, witnessed enrollment in institutions of higher education increase 14.8 times. Yet the number of teachers involved in higher education programs increased only 5.5 times in the same period. Thus, the proportion of students per teacher

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66 Sampaio, op. cit., 71.
67 Ibid., 397.
increased. The disparity in the teacher-student ratio reveals a loss in the quality of education programs.

Table 8 – Proportion of teachers per student on higher education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Proportion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>93,202</td>
<td>21,064</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>1,377,286</td>
<td>116,454</td>
<td>11.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1951, the ‘Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES’ was founded to promote the development of graduate programs in Brazilian institutions of higher education. The establishment of this agency was important not only because it promoted the creation of the first Masters and Ph.D. programs, but also because it enhanced the quality of undergraduate programs. The year, 1968 witnessed the introduction of new criteria for the selection and promotion of public university faculty. In compliance with Public University Reform legislation, Law 5540, the new criteria mandated that selection and promotion be based upon one’s actual degrees. The search for academic prestige and the new relationship between graduate degrees and better wages promoted enrollment in Masters and Ph.D. programs.

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In 1982, there were already 992 graduate programs in Brazil and by 1995, there were 1,775 graduate programs, of which 616 were Ph.D. programs. In 1995 São Paulo State University alone accounted for 60% of all graduate diplomas conferred. 69 Since that time the development of graduate courses has been concentrated in São Paulo.

The CAPES agency was responsible for inspecting and certifying graduate programs both in public and private institutions, ensuring effective quality control. Nevertheless, this control did not extend to undergraduate programs. The quality of public undergraduate programs was under the oversight of the Ministry of Education, which simply required fulfillment of the requirements established in higher education legislation.

Of even greater concern, programs in private institutions were inspected only in two instances. Initially, new courses had to be submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval. Specially appointed commissions assessed the course, its curriculum, faculty and facilities. If approved, the course would be evaluated again as the graduation of its first class drew near. Only then was the course officially recognized. There was no other means of quality control for private programs in higher education. Only in 1996 did the Ministry of Education establish national tests for students who have just received the undergraduate diploma, to measure their achievements. In 1997 the Ministry of

Education also established a system of periodic evaluations again under the oversight of appointed commissions to inspect the quality of undergraduate programs.
4. Access to Higher Education in the Last 20 Years

During the last 20 years, access to higher education has continued to increase. This increase was promoted by the creation of new institutions of higher education and by the creation of new courses in existing institutions. The increase continues to be promoted mainly by private institutions.

In 1980, there were 793 institutions of higher education in Brazil, of which 109 were public, and 684 private. By 1998, the total number had increased to 973 with 764 private, continuing to represent the majority, in contrast to 209 that were public. Of these public institutions, 57 were maintained by the federal government, 74 by states and 78 by municipalities.

From 1980 to 1998, enrollment in higher education had almost doubled. As might be expected, enrollment increases in public higher education (29%) were lower than the figure for enrollment increases in private institutions (49%).
The number of higher education courses offered by public and private institutions also presented an increase during the period.

Table 9 - Enrollment in higher education (number of students)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public institutions</th>
<th>Private institutions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>316,715</td>
<td>885,054</td>
<td>1,377,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>408,640</td>
<td>1,321,229</td>
<td>2,125,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1975, private institutions were predominant, representing for 61.8% of the higher education enrollment in Brazil. In 1994, these institutions were still predominant accounting for 58.4% of enrollment.\(^70\) In the year 2000, comparing to 1999, enrollment in institutions of higher education in Brazil had increased 13.7% from the previous year. Public institutions represented 33% of the enrollment in higher education programs while

\(^{70}\) Sampaio, op. cit., 86.
67% of the students at this level of study were enrolled in private institutions. In São Paulo State, in the year 2000, 84.7% of its College students (693,000 out of the 818,000) were studying in private institutions.

Table 11 – Higher education figures in 1999.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Enrollment on higher education</th>
<th>Number of higher education institutions</th>
<th>Private Institutions</th>
<th>Public Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1999</strong></td>
<td>2,369,000</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>905</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In 1999 alone, ninety-nine new private institutions were established and more than 1180 undergraduate programs were officially created. From 1994 to 1999, enrollment increased by 42.6% representing a significant expansion in contrast to the period from 1980 to 1994, when enrollment in higher education institutions increased by only 20.6%.

In Brazil, the federal, state and municipal governments maintain institutions of higher education. These institutions are the only source of free access to undergraduate and

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72 “Em SP, 84,7% Estudam na Rede Privada”. Folha de São Paulo, [cited 22 November 2001], available from Internet folha.com.br.

73 Suwwan, op. cit.

graduate programs. Students may also seek financial support for studies in private institutions from the Fies Fund, a fund that distributes financial aid to applicants to assist them with tuition costs. Recipients of such aid are selected on the basis of grades, attendance and social class origin. In the year 2001, 152,000 students received financial aid from FIES, a fund that is administered by the Ministry of Education. In 2002, the Minister declared his intention to support an additional 30,000 students through this fund.\footnote{Paulo Renato Souza, Fies Financiamento Estudantil: Financia Estudantes, Forma Profissionais, MEC, [cited 21 December 2001], available from Internet mec.gov.br/sesu/fies.}

The predominance of private institutions of higher education is worrisome, not only because it fails to promote a democratic expansion of access to higher education, but also because the quantitative increase of private programs has no corresponding increase in quality. Programs offered by public institutions of higher education are considered of better quality than the programs offered by private institutions. Due to federal government investments, public universities are more attractive to prospective faculty. In a public institution, a professor is guaranteed career stability, higher academic prestige and research development incentives. Furthermore, the number of teachers with postgraduate degrees is superior in public institutions than in those that are private.
Table 12 - Teacher with Master or Ph.D. degrees in public and private institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Public institutions</th>
<th>Private institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>54.9%</td>
<td>31.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>34.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The Brazilian Ministry of Education has promoted assessment to measure the quality of programs offered by institutions of higher education. According to the most recent evaluation, conducted in 2000, private institutions offered programs of inferior quality to those in public institutions. Since 1996 the Ministry of Education has annually assessed students upon completion of their undergraduate programs to measure learning and the acquisition of professional skills. The ‘ENC’, the National Course Exam, also called ‘Provão’, or “big test” showed public institutions with better results than private institutions, confirming the better quality of public higher education. In 1997, 60.2% of students enrolled in Business administration courses in private institutions, of them received grades of C or D, and in 2000, only 20% of the courses offered by private institutions received grades A or B, in contrast to 58% of the courses at public institutions with these results.76

76 Suwwan, op. cit.
Table 13 - Qualification of courses by institution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Percentage of Courses with Grades A or B</th>
<th>Grade C</th>
<th>Grades D or E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal University of Rio de Janeiro</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rio de Janeiro State University</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unip</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estácio de Sá University</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>65.5%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


1- second greatest on enrollment in the country
2 - third greatest on enrollment

In contrast to what happens in higher education, private elementary and secondary schools are considered better than public ones, which are more heavily attended. While only 38.35% of institutions of higher education are public, 89.3% of elementary and middle school students attend public schools, and 80.2% of high school students are enrolled in public institutions. The Brazilian government spends 5.5% of the GDP on Education. Of this amount 55.7% is invested in public elementary, middle, and high schools. The remaining 54.3% is invested in public institutions of higher education, which offer students free tuition. Generally, students enrolled in public universities were previously educated in private institutions with greater means to pay for their education.

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than public school students, who work full-time and have to study at night and who, therefore, have the least opportunity to pass the Public university Vestibular exam.

The Constitution of 1988 defined budget quotas for government investment in education and divided the responsibility for maintaining public education among each level of government. The federal government has to invest at least 18% of tax revenues, while states, municipalities and the federal capital municipality must invest at least 25% of their tax revenues. Municipalities are responsible for maintaining access to public elementary education, including day-care and primary school for children from birth to 6 years of age; states are responsible for secondary education. The 1988 Constitution also provides for free enrollment in public educational institutions, prohibiting any fee request.

Despite the increase in institutions and programs of higher education, the college population is still small. In 1985, access to higher education met only 2.4% of the demand. In 1996, such access was still low at about 2.9%. Only 11.8% of Brazilians between 18 and 25 years of age were actually enrolled on higher education programs.  

79 Sampaio, op. cit., 89.
In the year 2000, only 2.7 million people were enrolled in higher education programs, representing approximately 1% of the Brazilian population, with access to higher education. 80 1.5 million Brazilians finished secondary school in 1998 and were thus eligible to apply for enrollment in higher education. 81 Access to higher education occurs predominantly from the programs of private institutions. Access to higher education is diminishing and mainly restricted to students with the means to pay for the tuition of private institutions.

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81 Cunha, op. cit., 200.
Table 15 – Private vs. Public – undergraduate courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Private institutions</th>
<th>Public institutions</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Places offered on higher education courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>675,801 (75.56%)</td>
<td>218,589 (24.44%)</td>
<td>894,390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicants for undergraduate courses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,538,065 (45.99%)</td>
<td>2,806,108 (54.01%)</td>
<td>3,344,273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applicants who succeed on admission tests for undergraduate programs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>533,551 (71.71%)</td>
<td>210,473 (29.29%)</td>
<td>744,024 (22.25%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There are many more applicants for undergraduate programs in public institutions than applicants for programs offered by private institutions. Many students need scholarships because of the difficulties paying tuition and supporting their own expenses or those of their families. In public undergraduate institutions the average number of applicants competing for one tuition-free slot is 9.57; for one such slot in a private institution it is 2.26. 82 In the Southeast Region, 11 students compete for a single place in public undergraduate institutions while the competition for a slot at a private institution is 1.9 applicants. 83

82 Cristina Charão and Ângela Lacerda, “Qualidade não acompanha aumento de vagas,” O Estado de São Paulo, 6 August 2000, A14.
A student has to pay approximately 2.5 times the minimum wage (US$ 100.00) per month to study in a private institution of higher education. This amount varies according to the career and institution chosen; tuition is more expensive for traditional professions like medicine and law, professions of social prestige that guarantee better earnings. Study expenses are greater also depending on the credibility of the institution in the labor market. The tuition for a law course at PUC in São Paulo, a famous private institution at São Paulo State capital, is around 3.5 times the minimum wage and the tuition in medical school is 8.5 times the minimum wage per month. The tuition for a law course at PUC in Campinas is about 2.5 times the minimum wage, and at the medical school there the tuition is approximately 8 times the minimum wage.

The tuition for a course in Business Administration at Fundação Getúlio Vargas, a very famous institution also in São Paulo State capital, is about five times the minimum wage and approximately twice the minimum wage at Mackenzie, another private institution in the same city. At PUC-São Paulo, the tuition for the publicity course is around 3 times the minimum wage, and for the tourism program at PUC-Campinas, it is 2.5 times the minimum wage per month.84

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Studies confirm that students of better social and economic means, with a reasonable monthly income and access to private elementary and high schools represent the greater share of those enrolled in higher education enrollment.

Table 16 – Profile of students in Business, Law and Engineering majors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Students with month income of 20 minimum wages</th>
<th>Students that had studied on private elementary school and high school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business administration</td>
<td>52.4%</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law School</td>
<td>46.1%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>48.0%</td>
<td>50.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


A 1994 study involving institutions of higher education in São Paulo State revealed that 1.8% of students enrolled in public institutions of higher education had a monthly income less than 2 times the minimum wage while students with a monthly income above 20 times the minimum wage represented 32.7% of the enrollment. In private institutions, 0.3% of students had a monthly income less than 2 times the minimum wage while 33.9% had a monthly income above 20 times the minimum wage.\(^{85}\) In the 1980’s, only

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\(^{85}\) Sampaio, *op. cit.*, 254.
3.3% of the enrollment of higher education corresponded to a poorer social segment of students or their families with a monthly income between 0.5 – 5 times the minimum wage. In 1996, this percentage remained at 3.3%.\textsuperscript{86}

Evening courses represent the majority of the higher education enrollment, i.e. 62.1% in 1981, and 55.8% in 1999.\textsuperscript{87} In 1996, 64.9% of students enrolled in Business Administration courses in private institutions were working 40 hours a week, 8 hours a day, making it possible for them to study only at night.\textsuperscript{88}

Competition for evening courses is greater because many students have to work part or full-time during the day. 23 per hundred students are enrolled in evening courses in institutions of higher education maintained by the federal government. 45% study in evening courses in institutions supported by the state governments, while in private institutions, students engaged in evening programs constitute 66% of the total enrollment.

In contrast to the situation in 1999, the year 2000 marked a 10% increase in students enrolled in day courses actually completing their programs, while the completion rate for those taking evening courses had increase by 6%. The need to work full-time during the day makes it difficult to commit enough time to study, thus explaining the lower

\textsuperscript{86} Santos, op. cit., 79.
\textsuperscript{87} INEP, Resultados e Tendências da Educação Superior no Brasil, (Brasília: INEP/MEC,1999), 24,26.
\textsuperscript{88} Sampaio, op. cit., 264.
graduation rate for students pursuing their courses at night. At Minas Gerais State, 1/3 of the students who had initiated undergraduate programs in private institutions in 1996 had not completed their programs 4 years later, the regular length of study for an undergraduate program. At public institutions, however the number of students completing their undergraduate program of study was the same as the number of those who had begun their programs in 1996, indicating that almost all of the students who had initiated undergraduate programs four years before had completed their programs.

A place in an evening undergraduate program is the best opportunity for a student who needs to work during the day to continue studying. A place in a public institution is the only opportunity for many Brazilians to continue their studies and acquire both professional skills and a diploma enabling them to compete in the labor market. Public universities offer programs with free tuition guaranteed by government scholarship. However, the possibility of studying in a public university is more feasible for well-to-do students with the financial means to pay for tuition at a private college, or with a prior education at a private elementary and high school guaranteeing a better chance in the competition for a place in public universities.

In Brazil, institutions of higher education require their applicants to take the “Vestibular”, an admission exam that tests the knowledge obtained during prior years of schooling; the

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exam is based mainly on subjects taught at high school. The admission exam is more competitive at public institutions, where there are more applicants competing for scholarships. Diplomas from public universities in Brazil are highly respected and guarantee better chances in the competitive job market. Employers prefer students who graduated from public universities because, knowing of the stiff competition to enroll in these institutions, employers presume these are the best students and therefore, more qualified for the job.

Students that had attended primary, secondary and high school at private institutions have a greater chance to succeed on the admissions exams for undergraduate programs. At the Federal University of Minas Gerais - UFMG, 60.8% of undergraduate students enrolled in 1996 had attended a preparatory course for the “Vestibular” exams in a private establishment, and 59.3% of undergraduate students enrolled at UFMG had studied on private elementary and secondary school.  

USP, which is one of the largest and most respected institutions of higher education in Brazil, is maintained by the São Paulo State government and offers tuition-free undergraduate programs. There, only 1.17% of applicants who passed the year 2000 “Vestibular” exam had attended public schools in their entire student life.

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91 Fundação Universitária Mendes Pimentel, Perfil Socioeconômico e Cultural dos Estudantes de Graduação da UFMG: Relatório, (Belo Horizonte, 1997), 41-43.
Only 6 students, who applied for evening courses, among the 510 new entries in the year 2000 had attended a public school and public high school. In 1999, only nine, or 1.89%, of the 475 approved on the admissions exam had the same background.\textsuperscript{92} Around 98% of places occupied at USP received students with prior education on private institutions.

At UNESP, another institution offering tuition-free programs, 24% of students that began the Medical course in the year 2000 came from public schools in contrast to 59% that had studied before only at private institutions.\textsuperscript{93}

These numbers not only call into question the quality of public schools but also demonstrate that access to higher education is restricted to a social elite. At UFMG – Federal University of Minas Gerais, the largest and most important institution of higher education in Minas Gerais State, an institution maintained by the federal government, 60% of the students that had the privileged to get enrolled, tuition free, in undergraduate programs came from families with a monthly income of 16 times the minimum wage. 20% lived in families earning approximately 25 times the minimum wage, and 8% had families with a monthly income more than 40 times the minimum wage. Only 2.7% came from families that live on a monthly income of less than 2 times the minimum wage.\textsuperscript{94}

\textsuperscript{92}“USP Tem 6 Calouros 100% Públicos,” \textit{Folha de São Paulo}, [cited 20 February 2000], available from Internet folha.com.br.
\textsuperscript{93}“Desigualdade social está nos cursos,” \textit{Folha de São Paulo}, [cited 20 February 2000], available from Internet folha.com.br.
\textsuperscript{94}Arce, \textit{op. cit.}, 6.
The lower class students, who for the most part had previously attended public schools, had more difficulty when competing for a place in a public institution of higher education. 68% of the new students enrolled in one of the undergraduate programs at USP in 1999 had attended a preparatory course for the Vestibular exam plus the regular high school studies. This kind of course is always expensive; the monthly tuition of a preparatory course can vary from 2.5 to 5 times the minimum wage. 92% of the new students at USP in Ribeirão Preto, who studied in public schools, had attended a preparatory course in the year that preceded the Vestibular exam. 95 None of these preparatory courses are free; students pay to attend. In other words, students pay to pass.

At FUVEST in Rio de Janeiro, 56.2% of applicants that passed the Vestibular exams had attended a preparatory course while only 16.5% of the approved had attended a public high school. 35% of the students’ families lived on a monthly income of more than 15 times the minimum wage; in Medical school 58% came from families with the same income range. 95% of the new students in 1999 do not need to work,96 most likely students of upper social class origin.

The federal, state and municipal governments maintain the public institutions of higher education, which offer free tuition. Yet lower class students do not represent the majority of students in these institutions. The lower class families send their children to public

96 “USP Tem 6 Calouros 100% Públicos,” Folha de São Paulo, [cited 20 February 2000], available from Internet folha.com.br.
elementary and secondary schools, which offer an inferior quality of education, in contrast to what happens in higher education. The Ministry of Education requires that students who have completed high school take the ENEM (‘Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio’) exam, a test created to measure the quality of education. In 2001, the results were the worst in the last three years. It is interesting to note that the 2001 exam included more lower class students than ever before. In 2001, 80% of students tested were poor, and of this group, 66% had only attended public schools. Brazilian high school students placed last among students from 32 countries tested by the UNESCO Program of International Students Exam in the year 2000. This test evaluated the knowledge of 15 year olds. Students from Finland took first place while students from Brazil had the worst results. 97

In 1996, the National Congress approved Law 9394, ‘Lei de Diretrizes e Bases para a Educação’. This law introduced into national education legislation the recommendation to develop higher education courses for the instruction and training of elementary school teachers, intending to improve the quality of elementary education. It established a 10-year deadline for elementary teachers to obtain the diploma of higher education, an important measure to improve the quality of education at the elementary level. Before this regulation, most public elementary school teachers needed only a high school diploma.

97 “Mais Notas para o Ensino,” Correio Braziliense, [cited 7 December 2001], available from Internet correioweb.com.br
Access to education is important for social development and the improvement of a labor force qualified to compete in the globalized economy. Education can bring better employment opportunities to each family to maintain the household and improve its income. It is not essential that the educational system make itself a vehicle for transforming social structure and promoting social justice as an isolated policy. But access to education could play an important role in reducing inequality.

Brazil has long had an unequal social structure. Since 1992, the wealthiest 1% of population has accounted for 13.1% of the total national income, while 50% of population, the poorest segment, earns a mere 14% of the national income. Brazil has 17.6 million illiterate inhabitants, 12.8% of the total population. 1.26 million children between 7 and 14 years old are not enrolled in school and 1.33 million dropped out before the end of the school year. The results of a UNESCO study, analyzing the schooling conditions of 47 countries pointed to Brazil as having the worst teacher – student ratio and the third worst wage for entry-level teacher.

During the previous 20 years, elementary schools in Brazil became considerably more crowded, and access to quality elementary education had decreased.

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Table 17 – Public vs. Private – evolution of institutions and enrollments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of elementary schools</th>
<th>Number of public elementary schools</th>
<th>Number of private elementary schools</th>
<th>Enrollment on public elementary schools</th>
<th>Enrollment on private elementary schools</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>224,696</td>
<td>211,530</td>
<td>13,166</td>
<td>19,296,304</td>
<td>2,852,505</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>196,479</td>
<td>179,133</td>
<td>17,346</td>
<td>30,565,641</td>
<td>3,663,747</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Between 1980 and 1997, the number of institutions of elementary education decreased by 12.6%, a decrease which occurred predominantly within public institutions. Although, the number of private elementary schools actually increased during this period, they represented only a small portion (12.9% in 1980 and 10.7% in 1997) of the total number of elementary schools in Brazil.

Although private institutions accounted for only about 10% of the elementary school enrollment, the enrollment in public institutions showed almost the same rate of increase as in private institutions. This caused an overload for the system of public elementary education, which was destined to meet the demand of the lower social classes for education. In addition, the increase in enrollment in public institutions occurred simultaneously with a decrease in the number of institutions, leading to an increase in the number of students per teacher, which is clearly associated with a lower quality of
education. The increasing access to public elementary education should be greater than in the private sector because public institutions are responsible for expanding free access to education at the most basic level, reaching out to the poorest social segments, where illiteracy levels are highest.

According to a study by the Center of Social Politics of ‘Fundação Getúlio Vargas’, 9.8% of the total Brazilian population has the likelihood of becoming poor, and for Brazilians with only a few years of study, the probability is even greater, 13.2%. This study also revealed that the likelihood of upward mobility is 24.8%, except for Brazilians with less schooling, where it is only about 21.5%.100 The Institute of Applied Economic Research published a study that concludes that access to education is responsible for 40% of social inequality as indicated by the uneven distribution of income, wages and access to property. The study also pointed out that one year of schooling could enhance per capita income by 20% and cause a 16% increase in the medium wage.101 Among the wealthiest 20% in Brazil, 90% of six year-old children are enrolled in elementary school, yet among the poorest 20%, only 50% are studying.102

One’s wage varies according to educational background. The wages for someone who has an undergraduate diploma is 474% higher than the wages for an employee with

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middle school completed. A graduate diploma guarantees 259% more income to an employee than to one with a high school certificate.\textsuperscript{103} For each 50 students that completed an undergraduate program in the year 2000 it was estimate that only one would achieve the Ph.D. Degree.\textsuperscript{104} In 1998, 300,761 students completed their undergraduate programs.\textsuperscript{105} According to the estimate above, only about 6,000 students would go on to complete a Ph.D. program. Out of a population of around 170 million people, it is likely that only 0.0035% will obtain a Ph.D. diploma.

A recent study based on data from the years 1988, 1992, 1996, and 1999 examined income and educational inequalities and their influence on per capita income. This study proved that income and educational inequalities are related to lower per capita income. The study also concluded that income inequality is related to educational inequality.\textsuperscript{106} An education system that cannot provide access to the mainstream population, reaching out to its poorest segment perpetuates inequality in income distribution.

A study conducted to identify the main determinants of income inequality in Brazil over the period from 1981 to 1999 concluded that educational heterogeneity, together with

\textsuperscript{105} Os Números do Ensino Superior Privado no Brasil, (ABMES: Associação Brasileira das Mantenedoras de Ensino Superior, 1999), 19.  
\textsuperscript{106} João Barbosa de Oliveira, Renda Per Capita, Desigualdades de Renda e Educacional, e Participação Política no Brasil, IPEA [cited 23 November 2001], available from Internet ipea.gov.br, texto para Discussão n.º 827.
income profile and individuals’ degree of schooling are the main reasons behind the level and evolution of income inequality.

Table 18 - Determinants of inequality social conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Geographic location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>2.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Compared to other determinants education figured as the greatest determinant of income disparities along the period, followed by racial discrimination. Social inequality based on racial discrimination is reflected in unequal access to higher education. In 1998, only 2% of students enrolled in higher education programs in Brazil were blacks, while bi-racial people accounted for only 12% of the undergraduate population. Black and bi-racial people represent 45% of the Brazilian population.

Only 0.2% of medical students are black, and 3.1% are bi-racial at Fuvest, a public institution in the capital, Rio de Janeiro. The percentage of whites enrolled in medical school is 75%. At UFF, a public institution supported by the federal government and also
located in Rio de Janeiro, 12.5% of medical school students are black or bi-racial, 19%
are in Engineering, 14% in dental school, and 19% undergraduate programs in
Psychology. \(^{107}\) The majority of students enrolled in higher education courses are white,
and the proportion increases in courses where there are more applicants, courses that
prepare students for professions of high social prestige and that guarantee a better
income.

The disparity in access to education is also shown in the education rates for black women.
19% of Brazilian women work as housemaids, and 56% of these housemaid workers are
black. A black female worker earns 60% less than a white male employee. 44.7% of
black women between 25 and 30 years old are poor, and 41.3% of bi-racial Brazilian
women are poor while 21.4% of white women are poor. 20.1% of black women and
17.5% of bi-racial women live below the poverty line, while only 7.6% of white women
live in such conditions. 83% white women are enrolled in educational programs while
76% of black women have some level of schooling. Among them, 12% are illiterate,
while the illiteracy rate among white women is only 10%. \(^{108}\)

Race has more of an impact than gender on the inequality reflected in these numbers
related to education. The proportions change when gender alone is considered. 91.8% of
Brazilian girls between 7 and 14 years old are schooled, slightly more than the 90.6% of

\(^{107}\) “Cresce Presença de Negros na Faculdade,” Folha de São Paulo, [cited 20 February 2000], available
from Internet folha.com.br.

\(^{108}\) Cíntia Kelly, “Mulheres Negras Têm Menor Grau de Escolaridade do País,” A Tarde, 23 November
2001, 5.
Brazilian boys. Women comprise 56% of undergraduate students enrolled in Brazilian higher education institutions. Enrollment rates for women have been increasing 15% since 1991 while the enrollment of men on undergraduate programs had increased 12% on the same period. The predominance of women among students in higher education tends to last. The predominance of white women within the female student population is related to differences of race more than of gender.

In Brazil, the richest 10% of the people earn more than 11 times the minimum wage, while the poorest 40% earn 0.5 times the minimum wage. In Brazil whites represent 54% of the population while black and bi-racial people constitute 45%. Among blacks only 3.4% earn more than five times the minimum wage and 21% are illiterate, 3.2% of mixed population earn more than five minimum wages and 20% are illiterate, while among whites 14% earn more than five times the minimum wage.

African descendants represent 45% of the Brazilian population, yet blacks or bi-racial people occupy only 6% of the leading positions in Brazilian companies. Unemployment rates for the black and bi-racial population is 21.6% compared to 15.3% for whites, according to a study of the Institute of Applied Economy Research (IPEA). Only 2% of African descendants are enrolled in higher education institutions. 7% of black children

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110 Suwwan, op. cit.
are out of school while only 3% of white children are not attending elementary school. The difference between white children and children of color in the average number of years of schooling between is 2.2 years; white children attend for an average of 6.6 years, while black and mixed children generally attend school for only 4.4 years.

In 1982, the percentage of white Brazilians between 20-24 years old with 12 or more years of schooling was 13.6% while it was 1.6% for blacks and 2.8% for bi-racial people. The percentage of whites with no or less than one year of schooling was 5.1% while for blacks it was 15.4% and for bi-racial Brazilians on the same wage range 14.4%.

Moreover, according to the IPEA analysis, Brazil has 53 million inhabitants living in poverty. Among them 37% are whites and 63% are blacks or mixed. 22 million Brazilians are living in conditions below the poverty line, among them 70% are black or mixed. Among the richest 10% of Brazilians, 85% are whites and only 15% are black. Black and bi-racial people are less educated because the majority of them are poor and cannot afford private education. In addition, the public education system in Brazil is inadequate, both in quality and quantity to respond to the need. Employment and upward mobility are remote opportunities for the less educated, and without adequate access to

quality public education, the inferior social condition of black and bi-racial people will last.

Regional contrasts in Brazil reinforce inequality in living conditions and in access to education. 38% of Brazilian urban homes present substandard sanitary conditions: no potable water, no sewage and no trash collect service. This figure gets worse in the Northeast, historically the poorest and less developed region in Brazil. There 67.5% of urban homes do not have basic sanitary conditions. The national average for family earnings with less than 0.5 times the minimum wage is 20%, while it is 39% in the Northeast region.114

The average of schooled Brazilians between 20 and 24 years old in 1992 was 16.9% of Brazilian population; in 1999 Brazilians in this age range with some level of education had increased to 25.5%. Still, education rates in the Southeast region compared to those in the Northeast confirm regional disparities.

Table 19 - Schooling by region

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Schooling years (18-19 years old Brazilians)</th>
<th>Illiterate rates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southeast Region</td>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast Region</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Disparities in educational level by region are related to unemployment rates or lower wages. The unemployment rates in the Northeast are strikingly higher than in the Southeast. The Xerox branch in Northeast Brazil requires at least a high school diploma for employment even for the lowest positions. Also located in the Northeast region, the branch of a big textile company, Marisol, offers more job opportunities to those who had completed middle school.\textsuperscript{115} The national illiteracy rate is 14%, but in Northeast, this rate can reach 30% among citizens over 15 years of age and can even climb to 60% in some countryside areas.\textsuperscript{116}

According to the census on education prepared by the Ministry of Education in the year 2000, half of the 2.7 million students enrolled in undergraduate programs are studying on

\textsuperscript{115} Andréa Háfez, “Sobe a Escolaridade e Diminui o Índice de Analfabetismo,” Gazeta Mercantil, 5 April 2000, A-10.

\textsuperscript{116} “Convênio pode erradicar analfabetismo no meio rural,” [cited 27 April 2000], available from Internet www.mec.gov.br/acs/asp/noticias.
countryside institutions and the other 1.3 million are enrolled in programs at institutions of higher education located in state capitals. Enrollment in rural institutions had improved, in the year 2000, 5% more than enrollment on the higher education institutions of state capitals. At São Paulo State access also increased in institutions located outside of the state capital, however, educational opportunity remains concentrated in cities near the capital and in well-urbanized and industrialized cities. Access to higher education has not grown in the most backward areas.

The concentration of institutions of higher education both in the countryside as well in state capitals can be seen in few states of the southeast and southern regions, which are the wealthiest, most developed, urbanized and industrialized regions of the country. In São Paulo State, in 1999, institutions of higher education offered 711,616 slots in undergraduate programs; in Rio de Janeiro State there were 242,965 and in Minas Gerais, 203,435. In the South, there were 197,898 slots in Rio Grande do Sul State and 150,609 in Paraná State.

In States of the North Region such as the Acre State there were only 3,894 slots available to undergraduate students, only 2,933 openings in the Amazonas State and 3,347 in Roraima. In Amazonas State, there were 23,646 openings primarily in the Federal University of Amazonas, located in the state capital, Manaus.

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117 Suwwan, op. cit.
At Bahia State, the largest State in the Northeast region 71,548 places were available in undergraduate programs, but considering the young population within the proper age range applying for higher education studies, there were 24.9 applicants for each place. The ratio is even worse in Maranhão State, 33.2. In São Paulo State there were 6.6 potential students for each place, 5.9 in Rio Grande do Sul State, and 5.6 in Brasília, the Federal Capital. In Mato Grosso do Sul and Mato Grosso States there were few places compared with the Southeast States, 35,205 and 33,316 places. In relation to the demand the results were 7.7 and 10.2 applicants for each place offered for undergraduate programs.

In 1990, 55.47% of teachers in higher education were working in institutions in the Southeast region; 61% of teachers with a Master or PHD Degree in the country were working there. By 1998, 52.54% of teachers were working in the Southeast and 57.28% of teachers with Master and PHD Degree in the country were in the Southeast. Back in 1955, institutions located in the Southeast region had offered 54.4% of undergraduate courses offered in Brazil. In 1970, institutions of higher education in the Southeast accounted for 55.3% of higher education courses offered. In 1980, institutions of the Southeast offered 47.91% of undergraduate courses. In 1996, institutions of higher education in the Southeast were responsible for 55.04% of enrollment. The Southeast region also presents a concentration of enrollment in elementary and secondary

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118 INEP, Evolução do Ensino Superior, (Brasília: INEP, 1999), 38.
119 Santos, op. cit., 136.
120 Ibid., 100.
education. In 1997, the Region was responsible for 38.04% of the enrollment in elementary schools, and only the State of São Paulo was responsible for 28.39% of enrollment at secondary level, 4.2 times more than in the North and 4 times more than the enrollment in the 'Centro-Oeste' region.\(^\text{121}\)

In addition, the geographic distribution of higher education institutions is not adequate because it is concentrated in the most developed urban area of the Brazilian Southeast. Of the 101,844 new places created and approved by the Ministry of Education in 1998 and 1999, 61% were proposed by institutions located in States that already had higher concentrations of openings for undergraduate programs.\(^\text{122}\)

Regional contrasts are also shown in governmental investment in Education. The following table shows investments in public schools per student by different governmental levels.

\(^{121}\)Ibid., 72,75,77.
\(^{122}\)“Cursos Se Concentram em Poucos Estados,” Folha de São Paulo, 30 January 2000, 4 Cotidiano, 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>States</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northeast - urban areas</td>
<td>US$ 70.8</td>
<td>US$ 49.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast - urban areas</td>
<td>US$183.4</td>
<td>US$228.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northeast - rural areas</td>
<td>US$ 56.0</td>
<td>US$ 26.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast - rural areas</td>
<td>US$201.8</td>
<td>US$146.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Government expenditures in education in the Northeast region are less than in the Southeast. This represents a trend of lower investment in less developed regions in part because tax revenues of the poorest States are less than the tax revenues of wealthy States. Thus independent of each government’s agenda priorities related to education, the investment in public school in the poorest regions will always be inferior. This trend contributes to the higher illiteracy rates of the poorest Brazilian regions, reinforced by the inequality of access to education.
Conclusion

Since the creation of the first institutions of higher education in Brazil access has been restricted to a small contingent of the Brazilian population. This restriction is caused by the reduced availability of higher education programs predominantly provided by private institutions. Although the number of institutions of higher education has been increasing, there are still too few to respond adequately to the need in Brazil. In addition, the number of slots available in public institutions is even smaller. Private institutions account for the majority of enrollment, which restricts access even more for the mainstream population where people lack the means to pay for higher education studies.

In addition, access to higher education is restricted to students from the upper classes because the availability of quality public education at the elementary and secondary levels is insufficient. Upper class students have uninterrupted access to private elementary and secondary education of better quality. These students have more opportunities to complete high school and be selected for higher education admission. Students from the upper class are not pressured to begin working while studying early in life. This happens mostly with working class students who need to work to complement their families’ budget, or simply to afford to live. In consequence, upper class students present lower drop out rates and better school attainment.
In addition to class, there are other variables that impact negatively upon access to higher education. Geographically, the concentration of institutions of higher education in the most developed regions excludes prospective students from less developed parts of the country. Social disparities related to race also influence the inequitable distribution of higher education degrees. Brazilians of African decent represent a tiny minority in higher education enrollment. They also present higher illiteracy rates.

The government system of expenditures in the education further enhances unequal access to higher education. Priority of investments in higher education in Brazil has been maintained since the imperial regime. It is a long-lasting model that contributes to the endurance of restricted access to higher education. Decisions about investments in public education at elementary and secondary levels continue to reside in the hands of local governments. Local governments have lower tax revenues and, subsequently fewer investments in education. While public institutions of higher education have their budget guaranteed by federal revenues, elementary and secondary schools have to deal with reduced budgets, mainly in less developed areas. Regional contrasts in terms of development are related to social conditions disparities as well as to inequality in education opportunities.

Even if federal tax revenue shares for investment in education could be distributed, giving priority first to elementary and secondary education, one could not hope for an immediate increase in access to public higher education, which to date has mostly been
for the benefit of upper class students. One might, however, hope for access to public education more adequate to Brazil’s social needs.

Long-standing government policy, marking higher education as a priority for investment, contributes to the maintenance of inequity in income distribution by benefiting wealthy students, who comprise the majority in public universities. The ongoing priority given to higher education within the government’s education budget corresponds to the elite’s interest in maintaining the status quo and its privilege within the social structure. Investments in elementary education should be a priority at all government levels. Elementary education of quality provided to the mainstream population is the greatest need in Brazilian society. Any positive social change of significance, including greater political participation of the lower classes, requires educational policies committed to reducing illiteracy rates.

The imbalanced profile of the student enrollment in higher education in Brazil as related both to social class and to race calls for a change in the process of admitting students into college. This should start by replacing the current discriminatory admission tests system with a system in which students would compete only against other students whose educational background was comparable. In such a system colleges and universities would have to reserve a balanced number of slots for both groups of applicants, i.e. students from public secondary schools and students from private secondary schools.
In addition, government educational policies should aim to develop the quality of public schools so that they could provide the same high quality of education offered in private schools. When more democratically representative contingents of the Brazilian population become eligible to enroll in institutions of higher education, the government should invest in improving access to higher education by creating more new public universities, by expanding those that already exist, and also by subsidizing lower class students who hope to study in private institutions of higher education. Yet, while all of these changes are necessary, any real long-lasting change in education in Brazil must begin by making broad public access to high quality elementary education a national priority.
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