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The Politics of Access to Higher Education in Argentina and Brazil:

A comparative analysis

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in

Education

by

Jaana Flávia Fernandes Nogueira

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Politics of Access to Higher Education in Argentina and Brazil:

A comparative analysis

by

Jaana Flávia Fernandes Nogueira Doctor of

Philosophy in Education University of

California, Los Angeles, 2013

Professor Carlos Alberto Torres, Chair

Historically, higher education has played an important role in the development of societies. Indeed, this has been the case in both Argentina and Brazil. The overall goal of this dissertation is to examine the historical development and the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. In relation to history, it discusses the creation and the development of higher education institutions; the changes in educational policies; and the varying opportunities to access higher education that were offered to the populations of these two countries. In relation to the current situation, the study discuss the main strengths and challenges of higher education in Argentina and Brazil; the diversification of institutions and courses; the process of granting access to higher education adopted by institutions in each country; and finally the main policies implemented by the federal governments of both countries to expand access to higher education and assure quality. The analysis of the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil is based on relevant literature in the field, while the analysis of the current situation is based on interviews carried out with 19 key actors in the field of higher education in these countries. These key actors include government officials in charge of creating and implementing higher education policies in both countries, as well

as academic specialists on the subject. Several different activities were conducted to achieve the goals of this dissertation. First, there is an attempt to clarify the theoretical foundations upon which the analysis of higher education in Argentina and Brazil is developed. There is a debate about the state and its role in relation to education, as well as the impact of globalization the state and on higher education. Then, higher education in Argentina and Brazil is put into the context of higher education in Latin America. The status of higher education in Argentina and in Brazil is first examined individually, with a subsequent comparative analysis of the main aspects. This dissertation discusses important aspects of the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, as well as some key features of these institutions in the present. It also helps to illuminate relevant trends and alternative paths for the future.

The dissertation of Jaana Flávia Fernandes Nogueira is approved.

María Cristina Pons

Douglas Kellner

Sofia Lerche Vieira

Val Rust

Carlos Alberto Torres, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2013

To Ana Esther, João Pedro, and Ana Lívia,

who increased my hope in a better future.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

IRB	Institutional Review Board
IESALC	International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean
OCDE	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNAM	National University Autonomous of Mexico
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization

Argentina

CBC	Common Core Cycle
CNI	National Inter-university Council
CONEAU	Commission of University Evaluation and Accreditation
CONICET	National Scientific and Technical Research Council
DiNIECE	National Directorate of Information and Evaluation of Educational Quality
DNU	Decree of Necessity and Urgency
FLACSO	Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences
MINCyT	Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation
PNBTICS	National Scholarship Program for Undergraduate Studies in ICT Areas
PNBU	National University Scholarship Program
PROMAGRO	Project for Improving Teaching in Agronomy
PROMARQ	Project for Improving Teaching in Architecture
PROMED	Project for Improving Teaching in Medicine
PROMEI	Project for Improvement of Engineering Teaching
PROMFORZ	Project for Improving Teaching in Forestry, Natural Resources Management and Zoology
PROMFYB	Project for Improving Teaching in Pharmacology and Biochemistry
PROMOD	Project for Improving Teaching in Dentistry PROMVET
	Project for Improving Teaching in Veterinary Medicine
SPU	University Policies Secretariat
UBA	University of Buenos Aires

Brazil

ABRUEM	Brazilian Association of Rectors from State and Municipal Universities
ACE	Analysis of Teaching Conditions
ACO	Evaluation of Supply Conditions
ANDES	National Association of Teacher of Advanced Education
ANDES-SN	National Union of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions
ANDIFES	National Association of Directors of Federal Institutions of Higher Education
CAPES	Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel
CBPF	Brazilian Center for Physical Research
CEA	Special Commission of Evaluation
CEFET	Center of Technological Education
CFE	Federal Education Council
CNE	National Education Council
CNPq	National Council for Scientific and Technological Development
CONAES	National Commission for Higher Education Evaluation
CONSED	National Council of Education Secretariats
CONVESU	National Commission of the Unified Vestibular
ENADE	National Student Performance Exam
ENC	National Exam of Courses
ENEM	National Exam of High School
FGEDUC	Fund to Guarantee the Operation of Educational Credits
FIES	Student Financing Fund
FINEP	Financial Supporter of Studies and Projects
FNDE	National Fund for Education Development
IBGE	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics
IFES	Federal Institutions of Higher Education
INEP	National Anísio Teixeira Institute of Educational Studies and Research
IPEA	Institute of Applied Economic Research
ITA	Aeronautical Technical Institute
LDB	Law of Directions and Fundamentals for National Education
MCT	Ministry of Science and Technology
MEC	Ministry of Education
MPOG	Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management

PAIUB	Program of Institutional Evaluation of Universities
PARU	Program of University Reform Evaluation
PAS	Program for Access to Higher Education
PDE	Plan for Development of Education
PDI	Institutional Development Plan
PEIES	Program for Admission to Higher Education
PNAD	National Household Sampling Survey
PNAES	National Students Assistance Program
PNE	National Education Plan
PPA	Multiyear Plan
PROIES	Program for Incentivizing the Restructuring and Strengthening of Institutions of Higher Education
PROUNI	University for All Program
PSOL	Socialism and Freedom Party
PSTU	Unified Socialist Workers' Party
PT	Workers' Party
PUC	Pontifical Catholic University
REUNI	Program of Support for Plans to Restructure and Expand Federal Universities
SAEB	Basic Education's Evaluation System
SAPIENS	Progressive Evaluation System for Admission in Higher Education
SBPC	Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science
SEPIR	Special Secretariat of Promotion of Rational Equality Policies
SINAES	National System of Evaluation for Higher Education
SISU	Unified Selection System
TCU	Brazilian Court of Audits
UAB	Open University of Brazil
UB	University of Brazil
UDF	University of the Federal District
UFRJ	Federal University of Rio de Janeiro
UnB	University of Brasília
UNE	National Student Union
UNICAMP	State University of Campinas
UNIFOR	University of Fortaleza
UNILAB	University for the International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony

UNIR	Federal University of Rondonia
USP	University of Sao Paulo

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VITA

Education

2006 - 2008 Master's degree in Education
University of Brasilia (Brasilia, Federal District, Brazil)
Thesis: Higher education reform during president Lula's government: debate on increasing and democratizing access

2006 - 2007 Specialization in Public Management
National School of Public Administration (Brasilia, Federal District, Brazil) Thesis: Integrated planning, budget and finance system of the Ministry of Education: the perception of users from the direct administration

1999 - 2003 Degree in Education
State University of Ceara (Fortaleza, Ceara, Brazil)
Thesis: Ceara's educational policy expressed in the governmental messages from 1945 to 1964

Professional experience

2005 - Present Ministry of Education (Brasilia, Federal District, Brazil)
Post: Civil Servant

2003 - 2005 Ceara's Education Secretariat (Fortaleza, Ceara, Brazil)
Post: Assistant to the Secretary of Education

Scholarships/Fellowships

2009 - 2013 CAPES Foundation (Brazil) and Fulbright Program (United States)

2002 - 2003 Scientific Initiation Scholarship
Sponsor: Brazil's National Counsel of Technological and Scientific Development

2003 - 2005 Scientific Initiation Scholarship
Sponsor: Ceara's Foundation of Support to the Scientific and Technological Development

Honors and awards

2011 Honorary Founder of the Paulo Freire Institute at UCLA
Granted by the Paulo Freire Institute at UCLA

2003 1st Best Written Article of Scientific Initiation in the Field of Human Sciences and Applied Social Science
Granted by the State University of Ceara

2001 2nd Best Written Article of Scientific Initiation in the Field of Human Sciences and Applied Social Science Granted by the State University of Ceara

Collaborator in books

Vieira, S. L.; Farias, I. M. S. *Educational policy in Brazil: historical introduction*. Brasilia: Plano, 2003 (Collaborator).

Vieira, S. L. *History of education in Ceara; on promises, facts and deeds.* Fortaleza: Democrito Rocha, 2002 (Collaborator).

Vieira, S. L.; Ferreira, E. A.; Nogueira, J. F. F. *Being a teacher: research hints*. Brasilia: Plano, 2002 (Co-author).

Articles submitted to and presented in conferences

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Nogueira, J. F. F. Higher education in Argentina and Brazil: strengths and challenges. In: California Association of Freirean Educators Conference. Los Angeles, 2013.

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Lima, E. V.; Ferreira, E. A.; Nogueira, J. F. F.; Vieira, S. L. Profession: elementary school teacher. In: XI National Meeting on Didactics and Teaching Practices. Goiania, 2002.

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INTRODUCTION

The origins of higher education in virtually all parts of the world historically have been associated with a narrative of elitism and exclusion. In fact, even today in some regions access to this level of education remains a privilege reserved for a small portion of the population.[1] In the last decades, however, there has been a substantial increase in the number of students who attend higher education in many countries. Latin America and the Caribbean is one of the regions where access to higher education is increasing at a faster pace, moving from a Gross Enrollment Ratio[2] (GER) of 21% in 1999 to 42% in 2011 (http://stats.uis.unesco.org).

The situation of countries within Latin America in relation to access to higher education, however, is very diverse. Argentina and Brazil are prime examples. In 2010, Argentina and Brazil each had a little more than 2,000 institutions of higher education. Argentina has about 3 million students and Brazil about 5 million. However, the populations of these two countries are quite different. In 2010 the population of Argentina was around 40 million, while Brazil's was 191 million. This is why it is important to look at the GER in higher education for both countries. In 2009, this number for the population between 18 to 24 years was 69.5% in Argentina and only 26.7% in Brazil. Thus, the higher education system of Argentina includes a much higher percentage of the population.

Looking beyond gross enrollment rates is also important to observe the issue of public vs. private when examining the higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil. This information contributes to a preliminary characterization of higher education in both countries. Most of the students attending higher education in Argentina are in the public sector (70%), while in Brazil a

[1] It is necessary to point out that the situation in terms of access varies considerably in the different parts of the world. According to estimations of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the world Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) in tertiary education is 30%. There are parts of the world in which access is much more restricted (Sub-Saharan Africa, 8%; South and West Asia, 17%; Arab States, 23%; Central Asia, 24%), and areas in which access is more available (East Asia and the Pacific, 30%; Latin America and the Caribbean, 42%; Central and Eastern Europe, 68%; North America and Western Europe, 77%). The disparities, as these data show, are huge (http://stats.uis.unesco.org).

[2] The definition of Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) used by UNESCO is the following: "Number of pupils or students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the official school-age population corresponding to the same level of education. For the tertiary level, the population used is the 5-year age group starting from the official secondary school graduation age."

minority is in this same sector (27%). It is a fascinating conundrum that Argentina has a far superior GER in higher education as compared with Brazil, and that most of its students are in the public sector despite the fact that the countries have similar levels of investment in this level of education (around 0.9% of the Gross Domestic Product in 2010).[3] Which factors led Argentina and Brazil to have such a different state of affairs regarding access to higher education? In order to answer that question it is important to look at the past as much as at the present.

This dissertation examines the history and the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, with the issue of access as an important narrative thread. Access, however, is not understood in the simple sense of creation of vacancies. It is analyzed in all its complexities, which include questions such as: Access to higher education in which context? Access to which higher education? Access to what kind of institutions? Access for whom? These are some of the key questions that this dissertation will address. As such, this study is grounded in the belief that access cannot be discussed properly without taking into consideration themes that are intrinsically associated with it, such as the permanence of students in their programs and the creation of the conditions for them to graduate successfully. Another major theme that must be considered is quality of higher education. If one takes the position that higher education goes beyond simply granting degrees and has to do with the education of people for citizenship and to the professional environment, as defended in this study, quality is then a central aspect. Before describing the precise goals of this research it is important to explain why I have chosen to study higher education in Argentina and Brazil in this particular historical moment.

Rationale of the research

Institutions of higher education have played a crucial role in training the social, economic, and cultural elite throughout the centuries. These institutions were traditionally responsible for

[3] In Argentina, the budget allocated for national universities in relation to the Gross Domestic Product was 0.9% in 2010. In Brazil, the total public investment in higher education in relation to the Gross Domestic Product was also 0.9% in 2010.

teaching professionals in a number of areas of knowledge. Universities, in particular, stood out in the execution of this mission. Throughout time new functions were incorporated into the educational agendas of universities, including the activities of research and service, which have come to be seen as essential components of university education. The relevance of these institutions in the past has been reinvented in the present. The preservation, production, and diffusion of knowledge are at the core of higher education, and these activities are more than ever the engines of modern society.

It is widely accepted that higher education brings benefits to both individuals and society. In relation to individuals, for instance, there is a strong correlation between higher levels of education and higher earnings. In relation to society, it is known that higher levels of education contribute to a more enlightened citizenry. In fact, many scholars have posited that higher education is essential to any project of national development. Although it is possible to say that there is a consensus about the relevance of higher education today, there are many disagreements in relation to who should fund this level of education, and what should be the role of the State in that area. It is clear that higher education is an arena of struggles in which different interest groups fight for hegemony. While some view higher education as a public good, something that brings personal and collective benefits and thus should be available for all, others see it as merchandise, or something that people can buy according to their preference and purchasing power.

These tensions and different forces in higher education can also be observed in Latin America. On the one hand, as already mentioned, in the last decades there has been an intense expansion of enrollment, which has contributed to the democratization of this level of education. On the other hand, higher education in the region is also undergoing deep transformations, many of them directly related to globalization, and to neoliberal globalization in particular. Examples of these transformations are: a significant institutional diversification, growing restrictions to public funding, and an increasing privatization – that can be seen not only in the creation of new private

institutions but also in changes in public institutions as they are now required to sell services to supplement funding.

The higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil are also experiencing profound alterations. During the 1990s, both Argentina and Brazil witnessed the emergence of conservative governments that implemented agendas of neoliberal policies. These policies had a dual goal: on the one hand, to increase state control over higher education institutions, but on the other hand to reduce state funding of this level of education and stimulate privatization. In fact, it is possible to notice an increase of state control in higher education in both Argentina and Brazil, with the implementation of new laws during the mid-1990s and also the creation of national evaluations carried out by the state. In Argentina, public universities that were mostly responsible for the offer of higher education continued to have primacy in that area, which shows that neoliberal policies were not easily, implemented everywhere. In Brazil, the private sector that was already in charge of most of the students continued to increase its participation in the system.

More recent governments in Argentina and Brazil have started to resume the increase of the public sector, with the creation of new public universities and an increase in funding of these institutions, although the private sector has also continued to grow. These new governments in some cases continued or reformed old policies, and in some cases created new initiatives. It is a difficult task to characterize such governments due to the complexities of the current political moment. In many cases they present themselves as alternatives to neoliberal governments, but in fact it is possible to identify elements of continuity as well as signs of change in their policies.

Argentina and Brazil are two important countries in Latin America, and they have been intensifying their bilateral relations in the last decades. In a recent book with a suggestive title – Argentina and Brazil: From rivals to allies – Rapoport and Madrid (2011) explain that, "relations between Argentina and Brazil have tightened in a notable manner in the last two decades, marked by the creation of Mercosur, after almost a century of swings of different kinds where they alternated, above all, rivalries and suspicions with fleeting rapprochements of short duration" (p.

335). In fact, the creation of Mercosur[4] in 1991 and of the Educational Mercosur[5] in the same year allowed for a closer integration of these two countries, not only in the commercial area but also in other fields such as higher education. Accordingly, it is important to investigate the similarities and differences in the development and the current situation in higher education in these two countries, and see where they could collaborate and learn from each other. Having outlined the general purpose of this study, the next section will present the specific goals of this research.

Research goals

The overall goal of this dissertation is to examine the historical development and the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. In terms of the historical aspect, this study will address the creation and the development of higher education institutions; the changes in educational policies; and the degrees to which opportunities to access this level of education were offered to the populations of these two countries throughout time. In relation to the current situation, the study will discuss the main strengths and challenges of higher education in Argentina and Brazil; the diversification of institutions and courses; the process for granting access to higher education adopted by institutions in each country; and finally the main policies implemented by the federal governments of both countries to expand access to higher education and assure quality.

Two leading research questions and some subsidiary research questions have guided this dissertation. The first question is related to the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, while the second focuses on the current situation of higher education in these countries:

[4] On March 26, 1991, the Asuncion Treaty was signed between the Argentine Republic, the Federal Republic of Brazil, the Republic of Paraguay and the Easter Republic of Uruguay, creating the Common Market of the Southern Cone (Mercosur). Mercosur was established taking into consideration that "the expansion of their domestic markets, through integration, is a vital prerequisite for accelerating their processes of economic development with social justice. ...The main objective of this alliance was giving dynamism to the region's economy, through gradual tariff liberalization, facilitating the transit of persons, goods and capital" (Mercosur, 2008, p. 41).

[5] The creation of Mercosur gave rise to the necessity of countries to deal with correlative themes, such as education. The Educational Mercosur was established on December 13, 1991, through the Protocol of Intentions signed between Ministers of Education of Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay (Mercosur, 2008, p. 191). Higher education is an area in which these countries have been trying to collaborate, as it is possible to see through the signing of different protocols and other measures.

- What are the similarities and differences in the development of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and how they have affected access and equality of educational opportunity?
    - What were some of the main changes in policies for higher education in Argentina and Brazil along the development of their educational system?
    - How have the public and private sectors been interacting in the offer of higher education in both countries?

- What are the main features of higher education in Argentina and Brazil currently, from the perspective of specialists on higher education in both countries?

    - What are the main strengths and critical aspects of higher education in Argentina and Brazil?
    - What is the perception of specialists on higher education in Argentina and Brazil about the process of diversification of institutions and courses?
    - What are the main policies adopted by institutions to grant access to higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and how do they impact the democratization of this level of education?
    - Which policies and programs have been conducted by the federal government of Argentina and Brazil in order to increase access to higher education and assure its quality?

To answer both questions, it is important to first look at higher education in each country individually and then proceed to a comparative analysis. The next section will explain the methodology of this research.

Methodology

This dissertation is situated within the field of international and comparative education. As Brickman and Fraser (1968) explain in an effort to characterize this field of research, the terms "international education" and "comparative education" are associated but different. According to the authors, the term "international education" encompasses several kinds of relationships among individuals, groups, and I would include, institutions, from two or more countries. In other words, “it involves a movement across frontiers, whether by a person, book, or idea” (p. 1). The term "comparative education," by turn, refers to “the analysis of educational systems and problems in two or more national environments in terms of socio-political, economic, cultural, ideological, and other contexts” (p. 1). As they appropriately highlight, “judgments are arrived at not to determine which system, idea, or method is superior but rather to understand the factors, underlying similarities and differences in education in the various nations” (p. 1). Similarly, Arnove (2013) states that “the most important principle to be derived from studying the history of educational borrowing and lending is that there is no one best system, that all systems have strengths as well as weaknesses” (p. 6). One important tenet of this dissertation is that Argentina and Brazil can learn from each other’s experience.

Arnove (2013) says that the field of comparative and international education encompasses three principal dimensions, which he classifies as scientific, pragmatic, and international/global understanding. According to the author, “one major goal of comparative education has been to contribute to theory building: to the formulation of generalizable propositions about the working of school systems and their interactions with their surrounding economies, polities, cultures, and social orders” (p. 4). In that resides its scientific dimension. Another reason for studying other societies' educational systems is more pragmatic: “to discover what can be learned that will contribute to improved policy and practice at home” (p. 5). Finally, the third significant dimension is that of

"contributing to international understanding and peace" (p. 7). All three dimensions are connected and highlight the relevance of research in the field.

In discussing the contributions of research in the field of comparative education, Torres (2013) says that this kind of research is needed now more then ever and can contribute to better-informed and more enlightened educational policy – linking theory with action (p. 470). As it will be possible to see in the debate put forth in this dissertation, many of the challenges faced by Argentina and Brazil in the area of higher education are similar, and although the answers these countries offer to these challenges are connected with their unique histories and contexts, in practice they can learn from each other. This study intends to contribute to the process of mutual understanding between Argentina and Brazil, particularly in the area of higher education.

Three main activities were developed in order to achieve the goal of examining the historical development and the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil: 1) Literature review on the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil; 2) Interviews with relevant actors in the field of higher education in both countries; and 3) Analysis of data regarding the subject in these two countries. In the following sections, I will provide a more detailed description of each of these activities.

- Literature review on the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil

Many authors have addressed the value of going back to history in order to understand the present. Vieira (2000), for instance, makes a claim about the importance of this process in Brazil that also applies to other countries. According to her:

> In the understanding of the Brazilian educational policy it is necessary to proceed to a movement of return to the sources that, many times, means a return to the origins of our education. This is because a great deal of the contemporary problems finds their origins in the past and the forms of configuration of the Brazilian society, throughout its process of organization (p. 27).

Along the same lines, Arnove (2013), says that "in order to understand, appreciate and

evaluate the real meaning of the educational system of a nation, it is essential to know something of the history and traditions, of the forces and attitudes governing its social organizations, of the political and economic conditions that determine its development" (p. 7).

Returning to history is important not only to understand the issues of the present but also to propose and implement better-informed policies for the future. As Fávero (2006) states, much has been said in recent times about the university, but the main challenge remains: transform this institution. To bring about the required transformations in universities, the author explains that "it is necessary to be aware of the reality of these institutions, their creation and organization, how they work and develop, what forces can be mobilized to undertake the desired changes" (p. 18).

While it is true that much has already been said and done in relation to higher education in Argentina and Brazil, there are still huge challenges that need to be faced. One of these challenges, for example, is to coordinate democratization or social inclusion with academic excellence in this level of education. A look at the history of higher education in these two countries, and at its current situation – such as the one presented in this dissertation – can contribute to a better understanding its challenges and, more importantly, point out some alternatives for the future.

In this dissertation there is an attempt to put higher education in Argentina and Brazil in the context of higher education in Latin America. The origins of the first institutions in the region are outlined, as well as the political, religious, and educational influences on these institutions. This study highlights important aspects of the development of higher education in Latin America, and also recent transformations in the field. It also discusses several important political events that impacted higher education, and the key reforms of this level of education throughout the years. Some elements of higher education in Argentina and Brazil are introduced in this debate, and several similarities and differences between these two countries are analyzed.

The investigation of the history and current situation of higher education in Latin America is followed by a more specific focus on the cases of Argentina and Brazil. Here too the creation of the first institutions of higher education in each country is examined, in order to achieve a better

understanding of the context in which both higher education systems emerged. The study intends to make reference to the main changes in educational policy for higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and this helps to delineate some important features of this level of education in the past and in the present. An examination of the reforms in higher education in Argentina and Brazil show that this is an area in which different forces and political goals have been at play. Some groups, for instance, intend to maintain the *status quo* and conserve higher education as a privilege, while others fight for social inclusion. Some defend more governmental control whereas others support university autonomy, a value that is dear to the academic community of both countries. Based on this previous discussion about higher education in Argentina and Brazil, a comparison between these two countries is established.

- Interviews with relevant actors in the field of higher education in Argentina and Brazil

Interviews are an important instrument for collecting data in qualitative research in several fields of research, including the field of comparative and international education. As intentional dialogues in which the interviewer seeks to collect information on other peoples' perspectives, interviews provide relevant data to help the researcher to understand the way others interpret the world (Bogdan e Biklen, 1994, p. 134).

In this dissertation, a total of 19 interviews were conducted with relevant actors in the field of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. These actors included government officials in charge of creating and implementing higher education policies in both countries, as well as academic specialists on the subject of higher education. Eleven interviews in Brazil were conducted in Portuguese between January and March of 2012, and eight interviews in Argentina were conducted in Spanish between March and May of 2012. The purpose of these interviews was to get the perceptions of these professionals about central issues regarding higher education in their own country. Table 1 shows the study participants from Argentina and Brazil and their positions during

the time of the interview:

Table 1 – Interviewees in Argentina and Brazil and their positions

Brazil		Argentina	
1	Past-representative of faculty union	13	Specialist on higher education
2	Representative of the National Council of Education	14	Past rector and representative of the government
3	Rector and representative of state universities	15	Representative of the government
		16	Specialist on higher education
4	Specialist on higher education	17	Specialist on higher education
5	Specialist on higher education	18	Representative of international organization in Argentina
6	Past rector		
7	Specialist on higher education	19*	Specialist on higher education
8	Specialist on higher education	20*	Specialist on higher education
9*	Representative of the government		
10	Rector and past-representative of federal universities		
11	Specialist on higher education		

* All interviewees are university professors, with the exception of interviewees 9, 19 and 20.

These interviewees were selected due to their role as protagonist in the field of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. Some of them currently work or have worked at the Ministry of Education in their respective countries, some are or were rectors or university administrators, some were representative of faculty union, and most are university professors and researchers. These university professors and researchers, in particular, have written extensively about higher education. All of them were invited to participate in this research and consented to share their knowledge and reflections on the subject. Each individual was interviewed once for about one hour in a quiet and private place of his or her choice. They were made aware that the interview was voluntary and confidential, in compliance with the University of California, Los Angeles' Institutional Review Board (IRB) requirements.

These specialists presented their perceptions about the strengths and challenges of higher education in their country, many of these aspects being connected to the development of the systems. Among other themes, they gave their opinions about the movement toward diversification of institutions and courses, an international trend that is also impacting higher education in these two countries. A polemic issue at hand is the process of access to higher education adopted by each

country. Finally, they all shared their views on the main policies implemented by the federal governments in Argentina and Brazil to expand access to higher education and assure its quality.

The interviews were semi-structured, "combining the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the directionality and agenda of the survey instrument to produce focused, qualitative, textual data" (Schensul, Schensul and LeCompte, 1999, p. 149). Although some questions presented during the interview were pre-formulated, there were no standard or pre-prepared answers, which allowed unexpected information to appear during the investigative process. As it will be seen, important themes emerged during the interviews, such as the situation of the professoriate in Argentina and Brazil, and the issue of university autonomy.

The interviews about higher education in Argentina and Brazil make reference to important historical facts, but their main focus is the current situation of this level of education. It is important to note that the information collected comprises both actual facts and personal perceptions from the Argentine and Brazilian specialists on higher education. In the analysis of these interviews there is an attempt to dialogue with these facts and perceptions. Data presented as facts are either supported or disconfirmed with factual data about higher education from both countries. In relation to the perceptions, there is an effort to acknowledge different point of views. The analysis of the interviews is intertwined with the literature and also with data about higher education collected by agencies linked to the Ministries of Education in Argentina and Brazil.

- Analysis of statistical data about higher education in Argentina and Brazil

Some data used in this dissertation were gathered from the literature, but an important component was also collected by agencies linked to the Ministries of Education in Argentina and Brazil. In Argentina, the two main sources of data were: the University Statistics Yearbook, systematized by the University Policies Secretariat (SPU) and the Educational Statistics Yearbook, coordinated by the National Directorate of Information and Evaluation of Educational Quality

(DiNIECE). Data from different years were used, but mostly from 2010, which is the most current year available. In Brazil, the main source of data was the Census of Higher Education, organized by the National Anísio Teixeira Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP). Data from several years were used, but mainly from 2011, as that is the most current year accessible.

In synthesis, the examination of the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil is based on the literature produced in the area of higher education in these two countries. The investigation of the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil is based on interviews with 19 specialists on higher education from both countries – several professors and researchers in the area of higher education, and some professionals of the Ministries of Education in both countries. The data collected by agencies linked to the Ministries of Education in Argentina and Brazil help to support the discussion about the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and particularly the debate about the current situation.

Before proceeding to the organization of this dissertation it is important to make a comment about the term "higher education system" that is used throughout the document. Some authors recommend avoiding the notion of 'one country, one system' (Bray and Kai, 2007, p. 128). In fact, many countries have multiple systems of education, and sometimes multiple systems of higher education. In Argentina and Brazil, there are authors who question the existence of a single system of higher education. Mollis (2008), for instance, in relation to Argentina explains that "the basic organizational principle of the diverse systems of higher education (...) is that they function as 'one article.' Our group of university and non-university institutions does not function as a 'system' with parts hinged together" (Mollis, 2008, p. 515).

Antonio MacDowell, in relation to Brazil says that:

> A set of institutions makes up a system when they are organized into an organic structure and articulately operate organically conceived functions that permit or induce collective and global (that is, systemic) behaviours. It is therefore opportune to ask whether in Brazil a university system exists, or whether one has merely a set of institutions, levels, or procedures grouped through using common definitions and normative types. (Landinelli, 2008, p. 5).

Even from the legislation it is possible to notice the reference to more than one system of higher education in both Argentina and Brazil. In Argentina, the main law of higher education talks about the existence of the National University System, which comprises national, provincial and private universities, as well as state or private university institutes (Law 24.251/1995, Art. 26). It implies, thus, the existence of another system that encompasses non-university institutions. In Brazil, the main law of education states that there is a Federal System of Education, which includes institutions funded by the federal government and institutions of higher education created and funded by the private sector (Law 9.394/1996, Art. 16). The states and the Federal District systems encompass institutions created and maintained by them as well as higher education institutions maintained by municipalities. Like in Argentina, the existence of multiple systems is clear in Brazil as well. Thus, while in the context of these two countries it is not possible to talk officially about the existence of a single higher education system, for the purpose of this dissertation this term is used for the lack of a better term to refer to all institutions that deal with higher education in Argentina and Brazil.

Acknowledging this caveat, from now on the term "higher education system" will be used to make reference to the set of institutions that offer courses in this level of education in Argentina and Brazil, including public and private institutions, national/federal, provincial/state, and local institutions, university and non-university institutions. It is also important to say that although this investigation encompasses all of these institutions, in many moments the university sector, and particularly the public sector, is the focus of the analysis. This is due to the relevance of public universities in Argentina and even in Brazil, where the system is highly privatized. The next section addresses another important issue, which is researcher positionality.

Researcher positionality

I completed my undergraduate and my masters' studies in two public universities in Brazil, the State University of Ceara and the University of Brasilia, respectively. In these two institutions – inside classrooms, in research spaces, and in extracurricular activities – I started to learn the value of higher education and the importance of public universities to individuals and to society. My major in both programs was education. Motivated by inspiring professors, I began to read Paulo Freire and realized that education is in essence a political activity, which can be either used to oppress or to liberate people. My option for a liberating education led me to the conclusion that in the field of education we should work, teach, and research to change reality.

In my masters' thesis, I analyzed in detail the higher education reform proposed by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government, specifically researching the issues of access and democratization of this level of education. This reform was discussed during the first term of the former president Lula, and sent to the National Congress for approval in 2006. Although the proposal is still in Congress, I argued that a reform was implemented during Lula's government - before, during, and after the process of developing and debating the higher education reform law. This can be seen in the creation and implementation of important programs throughout the country, for instance the National System of Evaluation for Higher Education (SINAES) in 2004, the Program University for All (PROUNI) in 2004, and of the Program of Support for Plans to Restructure and Expand Federal Universities (REUNI) in 2007.

During the development of my masters' thesis I noticed that many challenges that Brazil was facing in the field of higher education were also present in other countries. I realized that in my Ph.D. dissertation it was important to examine how other Latin American countries were dealing with these challenges. The idea to look particularly at the case of Argentina came due to the

tradition this country has in the area of higher education, and to the intensification of the relations between Argentina and Brazil in the context of Mercosur, as already mentioned. While I was familiar with the theme of higher education in Brazil, I was very much a novice in relation to this subject in Argentina. I started to investigate the Argentine higher education system while completing my doctoral coursework in the United States, but the period I spent in Argentina doing interviews and reading about the subject was essential to the development of my reflections.

Also, it is necessary to address the fact that in Brazil I have been working as a civil servant at the Ministry of Education since 2005. It is not uncommon that government personnel and the academic community present different perspectives about important themes in the area of higher education. While the first group tries to push for an increase in government oversight, for instance, the second is categorical in the defense of university autonomy. Of course this is not always the rule. These institutions are not homogeneous and they are composed of people with different views. I tried to keep my own positionality in mind while developing this research about higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and also to have a balanced view on the relevance of both the government and higher education institutions.

The fact that I come from a working class family and I was able to attend public universities in Brazil, as well as my professional experience in the federal government, significantly contributed to shaping my belief that education is a public good and should be available for all. That is precisely why I value the importance of investigating the history and the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. An understanding of the past and the present can help to identify trends in higher education, as well as contribute to the proposal of a plan of action directed toward the necessary transformations. After this brief consideration, it is time to look at the organization of this dissertation.

Organization of the dissertation

This dissertation is organized in five chapters, in addition to this introduction and the conclusions. The introduction orients the reader to the main theme that will be the object of this study, namely higher education in Argentina and Brazil. It presents the rationale of the research, the research questions that guided this investigation, the methodology adopted to achieve the stated goals, as well as researcher positionality.

Chapter 1 is entitled "The State, globalization and its impact on higher education." This chapter has three sections. The first section focuses on the state and its role in relation to education. It presents some of the different conceptions existing about the state, and it explains the one adopted by this study. The second section includes a debate about the several faces the state has adopted in Latin America. The third section discussed the emergence of globalization and its impact on the state and on higher education. As it will be seen, this is a complex phenomenon that encompasses both potentials and limitations.

Chapter 2 is devoted to "Higher education in Latin America," and offers a context for the subsequent discussion about higher education in Argentina and Brazil. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the colonial period. The second section focuses on the republican period. The third section is related to higher education during the bureaucratic-authoritarian period. Finally, the fourth section discusses higher education after the return to democracy. The chapter, thus, addresses higher education in the region from the emergence of the first institutions until the current period, showing both the strengths and the challenges existing in the field. It is possible to see the main political changes that happened throughout time, as well as to identify some external influences and internal forces that played a role in the configuration of contemporary Latin American higher education.

Chapters 3 and 4 deal with "Higher education in Argentina" and "Higher education in Brazil," respectively. Chapter 5, by its turn, draws out a comparative analysis between higher education in these two countries. These chapters are each divided into two sections, one that deals with the history of higher education and another that deals with the current situation. The second

section of these chapters is organized in the following subsections: characterization of higher education, strengths of higher education, critical aspects of higher education, the diversification of higher education, policies to grant access to this level of education, policies implemented by the federal government in order to increase access to higher education, and finally policies implemented by the federal government to ensure of higher education.

In the chapters that discuss higher education in Argentina and Brazil individually there is a concern to present specific facts and figures, to make reference to the literature and to present precise information about the issues under examination. The comparative chapter benefits from the analysis developed in the previous chapters and it is more general. The idea is to emphasize the main aspects already discussed, as well as to outline some similarities and differences between the cases of Argentina and Brazil.

In the conclusions of this dissertation there is an attempt to present some of the key learning of this research and its potential contributions, as well as to point out a research agenda for the future, in order to continue the process of understanding and transforming higher education in Argentina and Brazil.

CHAPTER 1 – THE STATE, GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

As presented in the introduction, the main goal of this dissertation is to develop a comparative study between higher education in Argentina and Brazil. In order to so, it is important to clarify the fundaments upon which the analysis will be developed. This chapter is divided in three sections. The first section is entitled the State and its role, where different conceptions of the State are presented, as well as the one that is adopted by this study. The second section looks at the State particularly in Latin America. The third section focuses on globalization, its impact on the State and on higher education.

1.1 – The State and its role

There are different points of view on the State and its roles. These distinct and sometimes opposite perspectives have strong implications for public policies, in particular to those related to education. As Torres (1998) argues, "the definition of what are the "real" problems of education and what are the most appropriate solutions depends greatly on the theories of the State that underpin, justify, and guide the educational diagnoses and proposed solutions" (p. 9).

According to Torres (1998), "any analysis of the relationship among democracy, the State, citizenship, and education should consider the classics, particularly classical theories of the State, including liberalism and Marxism" (p. 23). He explains, based on Held (1989), that there is a classic liberal conception of the State "centered on the notion of separate public powers (for the government and the governed), and the State is conceived of as the supreme political authority within precise limits" (Torres, 1998, p. 23). Contemporary political science brings in new elements to the discussion on the State. Torres (1998) makes reference to four perspectives of analysis within the contemporary political science. The first one is the tradition of liberal political science,

concerned with issues of sovereignty and citizenship. The second is the liberal democracy tradition that focuses on issues of political representation and accountability. The third is the Marxist tradition, which underlines the power of the State and its relation to class struggles. Finally, the fourth is the political sociology tradition, greatly influenced by Max Weber's work, centered mainly in the operation of the State (p. 23-27). In summary,

> For critical perspectives of classic liberalism, those that are an extension of liberalism (including theories of democracy and political sociology), and those that are a critical re-elaboration (including neo-Marxism), the discussion of the State acquires a new profile. At first glance, the State appears as a heuristic instrument, a concept that radically differs form the classic notions of government, political regime, public power, and public sector. As a heuristic concept, the notion of State is exercised through a specialized State apparatus and implies actions of force and coercion of civil society (Torres, 1998, p. 27).

The relevance of the State in contemporary societies is underlined by many authors, as for instance by Carnoy (1984):

> As economies throughout the world have developed, the public sector – what we call the State – has grown increasingly important in every society, from advanced industrial to Third World primary-good exporter, and in every aspect of society – not just politics, but in economics (production, finance, distribution), in ideology (schooling, the media), and in law enforcement (police, military) (p. 3).

Carnoy (1984) analyzes the concept of the State from a class-perspective view. Although he believes that "Marx, Engels, and particularly Lenin's views of politics and the State were incomplete, the fact is that recent Marxist theories have their roots in these earlier works." It is, therefore, important to understand their view on the State[6].

"Marx viewed the material conditions of a society as the basis of its social structure and of human consciousness" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 46). Consequently, it is not the consciousness of men that determines their material condition; it is their material condition that determines their consciousness. The form of the State, thus, emerges from the relation of production. Marx argues that the State "does not represent the common good, but it is the political expression of the class

[6] According to Carnoy (1984), "since Marx did not develop a single, coherent theory of politics and/or the State, Marxist conceptions of the State must be derived from Marx's critiques of Hegel, the development of Marx's theory of society (including his political economic theory), and his analyzes of particular historical conjunctures, such as the 1948 Revolution in France and Louis Napoleon's dictatorship, or the 1871 Paris Commune" (p. 45). There are, therefore, different interpretations of Marx's view on the State.

structure inherent in production" (p. 47). It is part of the class domination in capitalist society. This is a rupture with Hegel's view of the State as a representative of the common good, "standing above particular interest and classes and ensuring that competition among individuals and groups remains orderly while the collective interest of the social 'whole' are preserved in the actions of the State itself" (p. 47).

According to Marx and Engels, the State emerges from the contradictions between the interest of an individual and the communal interest of all individuals (Carnoy, 1984, p. 48). It is an institution that mediates the contradictions between individuals and the community. Since the community is dominated by the bourgeoisie, the State is also under their control. To Engels and Marx:

> The State has its origins in the need to control social struggles between different economic interests and that control is carried out by the economically most powerful class in society. The capitalist State is a response to the necessity of mediating class conflict and maintaining "order", and order that reproduces the bourgeoisie's economic dominance (Carnoy, 1984, p. 49).

The idea that the State is the repressive arm of the bourgeoisie is fundamental to Marx's theory of the State. As Carnoy (1984) says, "the rise of the State as a repressive force to keep antagonisms in check not only describes the class nature of the State, but also its repressive functions, which, in capitalism, serves the dominant class, the bourgeoisie" (p. 50). There are many reasons for this preponderance of the bourgeoisie in the State, some of them are mentioned by Carnoy (1984): the personnel of the State system "tend to belong to the same class or classes that dominate civil society" and "the capitalist class dominates the State through its overall economic power" (p. 52).

It is interesting to pay attention to Marx and Engels' notion of State autonomy. They believe that "the State arises from and expresses a real overall need for the organization of society – a need that exists no matter what the particular class structure is. But as long as there is a ruling class in socioeconomics relations, it will utilize this need to shape and control the State along its own class lines" (Drapper, 1977, cited by Carnoy, 1984, p. 53). The State in this conception is not necessarily

an instrument of the bourgeoisie, “but rather has its actions framed by the conditions of the class struggle and the structure of a class society” (p. 55).

Carnoy (1984) talks yet about another interpretation of Marx's theory of the State, derived mainly from the analysis of the *Capital*. The State in this perspective is seen as an “expression of a specific historical form of class rule and not simply as a bearer of particular social functions” (Hirsch, 2978, cited by Carnoy, 1984, p. 55). For Hirsch,

> Marx's theory of the State must be derived from the economic laws of capitalist development described and analyzed in *Capital*, particularly the law of the declining rate of profit. The form of the capitalist State emerges from the necessity of its intervention to offset this decline and thus reestablish capital accumulation. The State, therefore, develops as a function of the material barriers to realizing profit by individual capitals, or, in other words, to the extraction of surplus from workers (Carnoy, 1984, p. 56).

For Marx and Engels, as well as for Lenin, “interest in the State focused on revolutionary *strategy*, on a theory of change from capitalism to communism” (Carnoy, 1984, p. 57). According to Lenin's interpretation of Marx, “the necessity for a State, since the State is the repressive apparatus of a dominant class, does not exist unless there is a class conflict” (p. 57). He thus proposed the destruction of the bourgeois State that should “take place through armed confrontation, since the State is the armed force of the bourgeoisie” (p. 58). In the transition from the capitalist to the socialist State he foresaw the replacement of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie for the dictatorship of the proletariat: “for Lenin the class struggle goes on in the transition from capitalism to communism, and requires a State that eliminates the bourgeoisie: thus, the dictatorship of the proletariat” (p. 58).

Lenin sees “the use of parliament – ostensibly the institution of democratic representation – as a means of mystifying the masses and legitimizing the bourgeois-controlled social order” (Carnoy, 1984, p. 60). This happened basically due to the bourgeois control of the parliament. He proposed instead a “revolutionary democracy extended to the mass of working people” (p. 60). Yet, in practice, as Carnoy (1984) points out:

> He led the Bolsheviks to abolish all democratic forms, including gradually taking power from the soviets and putting it into the hands of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party, baked by the Red Guards. This strategy was squarely consistent with Lenin's ideas of smashing the bourgeois State and crushing opposition to the revolution, but it resulted in the destruction of all attempts to build the democratic worker's State envisaged by Marx in his writings on the Paris commune. Lenin, in fact, saw the transition to socialism being carried out by a vanguard Communist Party Central Committee that would lead the workers toward communism, rather than relying on them to provide the dynamic for social change (p. 61).

Gramsci, by turn, made important contributions to Marxist theory by systematizing "from what is implicit in Marx, a Marxist science of political action" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 65). His theories were based on the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin. For instance, he used Marx and Engels' idea of a bourgeois hegemony "and made it a central theme of his own version of the functioning of the capitalist system. This hegemony, in Gramscian terms, meant the ideological predominance of bourgeois values and norms over the subordinate class " (p. 66). Carnoy (1984) believes that "it was in his concept of civil society and his elevation of bourgeois hegemony to a predominant place in the science of politics that Gramsci went beyond Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Trotsky" (p. 66).

Gramsci addressed the importance not only of the structure (economy) but also of the superstructure (ideology), and not only of the political society (force) but also of the civil society (consensus). He believed that "neither force nor the logic of capitalist production could explain the consent that production enjoyed among the subordinate classes. Rather, the explanation for this consent lay in the power of consciousness and ideology" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 69). Gramsci's concept of hegemony has two meanings:

> First, it is a process in civil society whereby a fraction of the dominant class exercises control through its moral and intellectual leadership over other allied fractions of the dominant class. (…). Second, it is a relationship between the dominant and dominated classes. Hegemony involves the successful attempts of the dominant class to use its political, moral, and intellectual leadership to establish its view of the world as all-inclusive and universal, and to shape the interest and needs of subordinate groups (p. 70).

Gramsci assigned a very relevant role to the State in the promotion of the *status quo*. To him, the State has a big part in "promoting a single (bourgeois) concept of reality, and, therefore, gave the State a more extensive (enlarged) role in perpetuating class" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 66). The

State was, thus, "much more than the coercive apparatus of the bourgeoisie; the State included the hegemony of the bourgeoisie in the superstructure" (p. 66). In relation to the Civil Society,

> For both Marx and Gramsci, civil society is the key factor in understanding capitalist development, but for Marx civil society is structure (relations in production). For Gramsci, on the other hand, it is *superstructure* that represents the active and positive factor in historical development; it is the complex of ideological and cultural relations, the spiritual and intellectual life, and the political expression of those relations that become the focus of analysis rather than structure (p. 68).

Gramsci provides different explanations of the relation between the State and civil society in his work. One explanation refers to the opposition between the State (in charge of domination) and civil society (hegemony): "the dominant class gains consent to its social domination through hegemony in the society as a whole, but exercises domination through the control of the State's coercive apparatuses" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 72-73). In a second explanation, the State includes civil society. Hegemony – a synthesis of consent and coercion – is everywhere. In a third explanation, State and civil society are identical. Carnoy (1984) believes that the second explanation is the most useful to analyze advances in capitalist societies (p. 73). In that second conception, "Gramsci viewed the State as an extension of the hegemony apparatus – as part of the system developed by the bourgeoisie to perpetuate and expand their control of society in the context of class struggle" (p. 74).

It is essential to mention that Gramsci stresses the dialectical relationship between the structure and the superstructure, rather than the separation of them: "the importance of the State as an apparatus of hegemony is for Gramsci still rooted in the class structure, a class structure defined by and tied to the relations in production" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 75).

Carnoy (1984) presents an interesting question: "if the arena of consciousness of Gramsci is the primary struggle between the dominant and subordinate classes, then how do things change?" Gramsci believed there would be a crisis of hegemony or a general crisis of the State, and did not believe "that this crisis of hegemony was the result of an economic crisis. Rather, an economic crisis could create the conditions for a crisis of hegemony (p. 78). For Gramsci:

> Increased impoverishment is only one element in the possibilities for raising this consciousness. More important for him is the disintegration of the capability of the State to extend and maintain bourgeois hegemony – that is, a crisis in the belief system developed by the bourgeoisie to serve its own ends (Carnoy, 1984, p. 79).

Another aspect of the change was what Gramsci termed a "war of position." To him, "capturing the State – overthrow and control of the State – *per se* did not mean control of society; it did not mean establishing an alternative proletarian hegemony" (Carnoy, 1984, p. 80). The "war of position" has four elements. First, each country has to create its own path in the process of creating socialism, taking into consideration its peculiar history. Second, "the "war of position" is based on the idea of surrounding the State apparatus with a counterhegemony, created by mass organization of the working class and by developing working class institutions and culture." Third, consciousness is a key ingredient in the process of change. The "war of position" was an effort to increase working-class consciousness. Finally, Gramsci underlined the role of the intellectuals in the process of change. For him the traditional intellectual or professional intellectual had a role to play but more important yet was the role of the organic intellectual: "this is any person who is the possessor of a particular technical capacity – the thinking and organizing of every social class." These intellectuals have a function in directing the ideas and the aspirations of the class to which they organically belong (Carnoy, 1984, p. 89).

There is a group of intellectuals, including Claus Offe, that challenge the orthodox Marxist perspectives on the State. Although they do not constitute a school, it is possible to underline some of their main ideas:

> (1) The State does not, (either instrumentally or relatively autonomously), function unambiguously in the interest of a single class.
> (2) The State is not a centralized-unified political actor. It is 'an arena of struggle', constituted-divided by quite opposing interest.
> (3) There is no satisfactory, general analysis of the (capitalist) State. The proper subject of study is given nation-States in their historical and international particularity.
> (4) The State cannot be overcome and will not wither away; it is essential to any developed society. While not a necessary evil, it must however always be subject to strict delimitation and control. This may be summarized as a call for the effective restriction of a necessary power State.

(5) The State is not an institution that can be 'occupied'; State power is not such that it can be 'seized', transformation of the State can be 'profound' but it will also be gradual and, at least in part, internal (Pierson, 1984, p. 567).

Although there are many more classic authors who discuss the role and relevance of the State, as for instance structuralists Althusser and Poulantzas, or Max Weber, the goal of this section was to give a broad overview of the many perspectives in this field. As defended in the beginning of this chapter, these different definitions of the State have implications for education. If one considers that state only as a repressive arm of the bourgeoisie, for instance, educational institutions seem to have the role of merely reproducing the existing social structures. If on the other hand, the State is understood in all its complexity as an arena of struggles, then there is space for educational institutions to contribute to the process of either reproducing or transforming reality.

Current work, as explained by Evans, Rueschemeyer, and Skocpol (1985), "increasingly views the state as an actor that, although obviously influenced by the society surrounding it, also shapes social and political processes" (p. vii). In this dissertation, the State is considered a space where multiple actors fight to pursue their interests. The basic tenet here defended is that the State, despite its different conceptualizations, needs to operate as an instrument to promote social equity within a country. Education is one of the key areas through which this goal can be constantly pursued, and thus, must be a central concern of the State. The next section makes reference to the different faces the state has adopted in Latin America in particular.

1.2 – The State in Latin America

In Latin America, the State has presented several faces. According to Torres and Puiggrós (1995), the second half of the nineteenth century and the three first decades of the twentieth century in Latin America were characterized by the dominance of a liberal State defined as oligarchical. This kind of State helped to consolidate the nation and to generate relative political stability, sometimes using repression as its main strategy. "Systems of public education were developed as

part of the project of liberal States that sought under the control of a landowning oligarchy to establish the foundations of the nation and citizenship" (p. 5). This model of State collapsed in the beginning of the 1930s, and new forms of government arose.

> These new models included experiences as diverse as the Mexican postrevolutionary State, the democratic State that emerged in Costa Rica after the 1948 revolution, the liberal-democratic States that were implemented by pacts between liberal and conservative parties in Venezuela and Colombia, and modernizing developmentalist regimes in Chile, Uruguay, Brazil, and Argentina arising after the 1950s (Torres and Puiggrós, 1995, p. 5).

Latin American societies saw the emergence of populist governments in many countries and, "in addition to populism, a central element of the Latin American State has been the implementation of public policies with a welfare orientation" (Torres and Puiggrós, 1995, p. 5). Welfare States are a kind of democratic-liberal States that emerged in industrialized societies. Some associate its origins with "industrial and financial changes in the post-Depression United States, based on a 'social pact' (New Deal) between employers and labor" (p. 6). There are authors, however, that argue that Latin American countries never really experienced real welfare States. Torres and Puiggrós (1995) mention some elements that prevented the fully implementation of this kind of State in the region: unequal distribution of income; lack of unemployment insurance and welfare benefits; and the impact of populist experiences that disorganized the State's bureaucratic control (p. 6).

In the 1960s and 1970s Latin American countries were under authoritarian governments. These governments had different faces, as explained by O'Donnell (1986). One kind of regime was, for instance, what he calls "traditional", a government with strong patrimonialist characteristics. That is the case of Nicaragua, Cuba, and Paraguay. Another kind of regime is termed by the author as "populist", which is represented by the case of Peru. Among the peculiarities of the Peruvian government is the anti-oligarchic orientation of their policies, the intention to expand industry and the economic role of the State, and finally the attempt to incorporate various political segments (p. 4). Venezuela and Colombia had, according to the author, a mixture of traditional and populist features (p. 5). Chile, Uruguay, and Brazil are examples of "bureaucratic authoritarian" regimes.

During the 1980s Latin America experienced the return to democracy, after the long years of authoritarian governments. The new liberal-democratic governments, however, were confronted with several challenges. "A grave crisis of capital accumulation and income distribution, coupled with a fiscal crisis of the State and growing external debit, threatened the region's return to democracy" (Torres and Puiggrós, 1995, p. 6). There was a combination of an increase of social demands (repressed during many years) and an incapacity of the State to give appropriate answers to these demands. The economic stagnation of the region made the 1980s enter the history of Latin America as the "lost decade."

The return to democracy in Latin America was, thus, associated with the emergence of neoliberal policies. Neoliberalism is basically a strong belief in the power of the market to regulate itself, along with the reduction of the State influence on the economy. These policies flourished in the region "due to the weakness of both the economies and the democratic political systems in place" (Henales and Edwards, 2002, p. 121). Mudge (2008), based on Bourdieu, defines neoliberalism as

> an ideological system that holds the 'market' sacred, born within the 'human' or social sciences and refined in a network of Anglo-American-centric knowledge producers, expressed in different ways within the institutions of the postwar nation-state and their political fields (p. 706).

Higher education was strongly impacted by this new neoliberal face of the State, as the next section will discuss in detail. The impact of neoliberalism on this level of education can be seen in "the intent of taxation in this area of the business rationale, to diversify sources of funding, in the issue of efficiency, of quality, in the advancement of private universities and the tuition of public ones" (Iriarte, 2008, p. 21). International agencies played a critical role in promoting these policies in Latin America, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. These agencies

> exhorted governments in the region to adopt structural adjustment policies to address these balance-of-payment difficulties and fiscal deficits. The attempt to restore economic stability by restructuring the economy and the relationships between State and society prompted

> numerous scholars, politicians, and informed observers to notice the formation of a new social pact of domination controlling capitalist States in Latin America: the neoliberal State (Torres and Puiggrós, 1995, p. 7).

Many are the criticisms of neoliberal policies. Although the neoliberal ideology is still strong even today, their policies were a failure. A sign of this is the increase in inequality all over the world, particularly in Latin America (Henales and Edwards, 2002, p. 123; Smith, 1993, p. 4).

> A major criticism to neoliberal policies is that while high costs are already being paid in terms of drastic deterioration of wages, cutbacks in spending on education, health and infrastructure, and massive unemployment, the majority of the population have not yet felt the benefits of these policies. It is also claimed that economic restructuring leads to a model of social exclusion that leaves out large sectors of the world population from accessing economic and social civic minimums. Another criticism is that with the implementation of neoliberal policies, the State withdraws from its responsibility to administer public resources and from the liberal premise of pursuing egalitarianism, replacing them with a blind faith in the market and the hope that economic growth will eventually generate enough of a spillover to help the poor and disenfranchised (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002, p. 433).

The failure of market-oriented policies, according to Smith (1993), "may lead to a more 'catastrophic' scenario of State shrinkage that seriously compromises the public sector's capacity to maintain essential infrastructure and to meet the minimal needs of the poor and the marginal sectors" (p. 14).

In recent years Latin America has supported the emergence of several leftist governments in the region. This is evidenced by the victory of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela (1999), Luis Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil (2003), Nestor Kirchner in Argentina (2003), Tabare Vazquez in Uruguay (2004), Michele Bachelet in Chile (2005), Evo Morales in Bolivia (2005), Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner in Argentina (2007), Alvaro Colom in Guatemala (2007), Rafael Correa in Ecuador (2007), Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua (2007), and more recently of Dilma Rousseff in Brazil (2011). Lanzaro (2009) classifies some of these governments as populist regimes (Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador) and some as social-democracies (Brazil, Chile, Uruguay). The author explains the differences between one and the other governments:

> What distinguishes these social democratic governments from their populist counterparts is that they are composed of a left that is integrated into competitive, multi-party democracies. These social democrats were once part of a socialist, revolutionary, or reformist left, tightly

> allied with labor unions. But they ultimately accepted the market economy, and came to lean toward ideological moderation and to compete for votes in the political center. At the same time, motivated by their political competition and their own leftist ideology, these social democratic governments emphasize both economic growth and social inclusion.

These governments have been attempting to reverse some of the neoliberal policies in the region. In Argentina and Brazil, for instance, increases in the public sector of higher education have resumed, despite the fact that the private sector continues to grow, as will be discussed in chapters 3 and 4. It is impossible, however, to talk about a complete change in neoliberal policies, as leftist governments contradictorily extend neoliberal policies in order to stay in power. In addition, it is important to mention that Latin American governments are now operating under new pressures. Processes of globalization have intensified recently, impacting the role of the State in education, and particularly in higher education. It is important to analyze this phenomenon in greater detail.

1.3 – Globalization, its impact on the State and on higher education

Some say that globalization is an old phenomenon while others believe that it is a more recent trend. Hobson (2004), for instance, argues that "the West and the East have been fundamentally and consistently interlinked through globalization ever since 500 AD" (p. 2). More specifically, he shows that there was a diffusion and assimilation of Eastern resources by the West through Eastern globalization and also an appropriation of Eastern resources through European imperialism (p. 21). Segrera (2003), on the other hand, argues that globalization is a qualitatively new phenomenon possible due to the coincidence of three interdependent processes: "the crisis and collapse of the real socialism, neoliberalism and the vertiginous development of the new technologies of information and communication" (p. 40). In this dissertation it is recognized that there has always been some level of "globalization", that is, different parts of the world have always being in touch with others, but this process has intensified over the last 40 or 50 years. Such intensification carries implications for education, and for higher education in particular.

Globalization is a distinctive trend and one of the most hotly debated issues of the current period. Some say that it is currently impossible to talk about education without taking globalization into consideration. This is without a doubt a complex phenomenon, which introduces positive and negative effects into societies, thus encompassing both potentials and limitations (Kellner, 2002, p. 1; Torres and Rhoads, 2006, p. 3; Sobrinho, 2010, p. 36; Narvaez, 2005).

Different authors present distinct definitions and clarify particular aspects of this process, but in a broad way it is possible to define globalization as "the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, ideas... across borders" (Knight and de Wit, 1997, p. 6, cited by Knight, 2005, p. 6). Globalization affects countries in different ways due to a nation's individual history, traditions, and culture (Knight, 2005, p. 6; Ball, 2008, p. 29; Narvaez, 2005, p. 5). Talking about the challenges to answer the demands of globalization, Sobrinho (2010) emphasizes that

> difficulties are general, however they also present very distinct and specific characteristics, according to the degree of economic, cultural, and politic development of the countries. The most developed countries, despite having serious contradictions in its democracies, already had constructed, throughout the times, the cultural and politics structures and the basic equipment. Obviously, the demands that their educative institutions receive are adjusted to this degree of consolidation and development and to the problems created in their societies. Peripheral countries, in different degrees, still need to construct and to extend its physical structures, to deepen the democratic and institutional practices, to diminish the educational gap and the social debts gathered, etc., and, at the same time, to face the requirements imposed by the competitiveness of the globalized world (p. 74).

Kellner (2002) argues that in order to critically understand globalization it is necessary to analyze it "as a product of technological revolution and the global restructuring of capitalism in which economic, technological, political, and cultural features are intertwined." (p. 2) The technological revolution has many facets, and the author mentions one of the most important of them: the development of the Internet or the global system of interconnected computer networks. In his words, "the internet and global computer networks make possible globalization by producing a technological infrastructure for the global economy" (p. 2). Carnoy (2005), along the same lines, says that "this globality became possible only recently because of the technological infrastructure

provided by improved telecommunications networks, information systems, including the Internet, microelectronic machinery, and computerized transportation systems (p. 2-3).

Globalization is also a phenomenon full of contradictions. One central contradiction mentioned by Kellner (2002) is the explicit tension between capitalism and democracy. As he synthesizes, "globalization is thus a contradictory amalgam of capitalism and democracy, in which the logic of the capital and the market system enter even more arenas of global life, even as democracy spreads and more political regions and space of everyday life are being contested by democratic demands and forces" (p. 8).

Another contradiction is that, on the one hand, "the government of the developing countries are under an increasing pressure to invest more in all levels of education in order to have a working force more prepared to produce with sophisticated technics, the only way to compete in a world marked more and more globalized" (Segrera, 2003, p. 41)[7]. On the other hand, international agencies as the IMF and the World Bank are advocating for reforms based on financial imperatives (Torres, 2009 p. 16). Higher education is at the same time essential to the social and economic development, but it is also attacked by conservative forces (Sobrinho, 2010, p. 38). Finally, a contradiction can be seen, for instance, in the field of culture: "there is democratic dimension of globalization via expanded access to the internet and electronic mail, but at the same time there is a homogenizing dimension product of the unidirectional character of cable TV, by which a few media conglomerates promote the Americanization of taste and values" (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002, p. 433).

Talking about the contradictions of globalization(s), Santos (2006) says that,

> on the one hand, if, for some, globalization is still considered a great triumph of rationality, innovation and liberty, capable of producing infinite progress and unlimited abundance, for others, it is increasingly an anathema, as it brings misery, loss of food sovereignty, social exclusion for ever vaster populations of the world, and ecological destruction, etc. (p. 395).

[7] "Governments of developing countries are under the increasing pressure to invest more in all the educative levels to have their working force more prepared, able to produce with sophisticated techniques, the only form to compete in a worldwide market more and more globalized" (Segrera, 2003, p. 41).

Boaventura de Sousa Santos explains that it is impossible to talk about one kind of globalization, since this is a multifaceted phenomenon. Thus, he proposes to talk about globalizations. Some people focus on the economic aspects of this phenomenon (Stiglitz, 2003; Stiglitz, 2007), while others prefer to emphasize its social, political, and cultural dimensions (Santos, 1997; Santos, 2006). It is, thus, a reductionist perspective to focus only on its economic-commercial dimensions. To emphasize only one dimension of globalization contributes to naïve positions that demonize it for all the bad things that it promotes, or to deify it for all the prosperity that it brings to all (Narvaez, 2005).

Santos (1997) differentiates four types of globalization, two of them can be considered a kind of globalization from above, and two a kind of globalization from below. The first globalization is the globalized localism, a process by which some local phenomenon becomes globalized. An example of this is the use of the English language as a lingua franca. The second form of globalization is the localized globalism, which is the opposite situation of the first kind of globalization: global practices are imposed upon localities. One illustration of this is when countries use their natural resources in order to pay for international debts, or when places with specific cultural practices become international touristic attractions. According to him, "the international division of globalism assumes a distinct pattern. The core countries specialize in globalized localism while the choice of localized globalism is imposed upon the peripheral countries" (p. 17). From these two kinds of globalization comes his definition of the phenomenon:

> It is a set of unequal exchanges in which a certain artifact, condition, entity or local identity extends its influence beyond its local or national boarders and, in doing so, develops an ability to designate as local another rival artifact, condition, entity or identity (Santos, 2006, p. 396).

The third type of globalization mentioned by the author is cosmopolitanism. He writes, "cosmopolitanism is the cross-border solidarity among groups that are exploited, oppressed, or excluded by hegemonic globalization" (Santos, 2002, p. 43). He gives as an example South-South dialogues and organizations, or new form of labor internationalism. The fourth type of globalization

is what he calls the common heritage of an life on earth, or such environmental issues as the protection of the ozone layer" (Santos, 2002, p. 43).

Torres (2009) works with the hypothesis that the phenomenon of globalization has four layers[8]. The first one is the globalization from above, or the neoliberal globalization, which calls "for the opening of borders, the creation of multiple regional markets, the viability of faster economic and financial exchanges, and even the presence of a State other than the nation-State, shrinking State services, and its overall presence in civil society" (p. 14-15). The agenda of neoliberal globalization includes

> a push toward privatization and decentralization of public forms of education, a movement toward educational standards, a strong emphasis on testing, and a focus on accountability. Specific to higher education, neoliberal versions of globalization suggest four primary reforms for universities related to efficiency and accountability, accreditation and universalization, international competitiveness, and privatization (Torres and Rhoads, 2006, p. 10).

Privatization is one of the strongest faces of neoliberal globalization. "Privatization also has advanced hand in hand with increased entrepreneurialism, especially in the most developed countries, as universities have sought to expand their revenues through a variety of profit-seeking endeavors" (Torres and Rhoads, 2006, p. 12).

The second type of globalization is the globalization from below, or the resistance to neoliberal globalization, carried out by individuals, institutions, and social movements in many places. Among these movements are environmental groups, feminist groups, indigenous rights groups, and many others. Groups and "social movements opposed to corporate globalism argue from positions focused on social justice and democracy for workers and citizens" (Torres and Rhoads, 2006, p. 14).

The third is the globalization of human rights, where local and traditional practices that harm human dignity are being challenged and fought. "The interest of global human rights advocates largely center on the universal rights to food, water, and health care. But other issues also

[8] In an article co-authored with Robert Rhoads, Torres mentions a fifty kind of globalization, "represented by the movement and exchange of people and ideas and the subsequent influence on culture". This *would* be seen as a globalization of culture (Torres and Rhoads, 2006, p. 8).

arise within the context of global rights discussions, including equality for all women, indigenous people, and ethnic minority" (p. 17). There are groups who include other demands in the roll of the human rights, like those who believe that education is a universal right.

Finally, the fourth is the globalization of the international war against terrorism, especially after the events of September 11th, 2001 (Torres, 2009, p. 15). "US-led antiterrorist initiatives continue to transform global relations, including significant changes within the spheres of economics, politics, culture, and education" (Torres and Rhoads, 2006, p. 18). One example of the effects of this war on higher education is the restrictive climate for students and scholars seeking transnational mobility.

Analyzing the classification presented by Torres (2009), it is possible to propose the idea that there are two kinds of globalization. The first would be an economically-driven globalization, that currently is, without doubt, a neoliberal globalization. The second is a socially-driven globalization, which includes the second and third layers mentioned by the author. The socially-driven globalization represents a resistance to the neoliberal globalization, centered in economic issues, while bringing its focus to social matters. The issues of democracy and especially of human rights are central to a globalization focused on social aspects. The fourth layer presented by Torres could be subsumed in these two kinds or faces of globalization – the economically-driven and the socially-driven, although I would argue that it fits mainly in the first one. The war on terror and the intensification of terrorism in a global scale itself have an economic and a social element. In a very general way, it is possible to see these processes as a result of the international economic order currently effective, not diminishing the importance of the undeniable cultural element present in this war.

Regardless of the classification used, globalization has a strong impact in the redefinition of the State's role in relation to education. Ianni (2007) says that it is already possible to see that the meaning of the nation-state has been changed, when analyzed in light of the globalization of the capital intensified after the end of the Second World War (p. 59). According to the author, the

capitalist world-economy continues to be articulated based on the nation-state (p. 39). However, "with the new international division of labor, the flexibilization of the productive processes and other manifestations of the capitalism in a world-wide scale, the transnational companies, corporations and conglomerates acquire preeminence on the national economies" (p. 56). As he puts it:

> At the time of the worldwide markets of capitals, when the most diverse forms of capital start to move in a sped up and generalized way, at this time the national controls are diminished. More than that, the national governments, its agencies and organizations that traditionally manage and guide the movements of the capital, all these national instances see its capacities to control the movements of the capital reduced (p. 66).

Sobrinho (2010) explains that the flagship of our time is the economic globalization:

> Amongst its main characteristics are a new international division of labor and the interdependence of the markets, the intensive and extensive use of the information technologies, liberalization and flexibilization of enterprises, new relations between capital and work, structural unemployment, increase of the social inequalities, imbalance between countries, reduction of the presence of the state in the promotion of the public education and social justice, with the consequent expansion of the privatization and the educational market (p. 23).

As Ball (2008) underlines, "national policies need to be understood as the product of a nexus of influences and interdependencies" (p. 30). The author says that "education policy is increasingly thought about and made within the context of the 'pressures' and requirements of globalization" (p. 1). As Segrera (2003) emphasizes,

> globalization - in its neoliberal dimension, a conception that combines the ideology of market with practices of the world of the businesses, and profit as its main target - has had a deep impact on the educative systems of Latin America and the Caribbean (ALC) in the two last decades of the past century and in the 21st century (p. 29).

According to Carnoy (2005), "two of the main bases of globalization are information and innovation, and they, in turn, are highly knowledge intensive" (p. 3). Education is implicated in the discourse and processes of globalization through the idea of the knowledge economy (Ball, 2008, p. 25; Olssen and Peters, 2005, p. 313). In the knowledge economy, education is seen as a crucial factor to ensure economic productivity and competitiveness in the international context. Thus,

education has become a tool to increase economic development rather than as a tool to prepare students for life in society.

Neoliberal globalization, the dominant form of globalization, is severely effecting educational institutions. To Giroux (2002), neoliberalism is a dangerous ideology that eliminates engaged critique about its most basic principles and social consequences. Democratic values are being replaced for commercial values. Citizens are becoming consumers. He calls our attention to the fact that corporate culture is invading noncommodified public spheres, like public schools. "In the absence of such public spheres it becomes more difficult for citizens to challenge the neoliberal myth that citizens are merely consumers." He explains,

> as society is defined through the culture and values of neoliberalism, the relationship between a critical education, public morality, and civic responsibility as conditions for creating thoughtful and engaged citizens are sacrificed all to willingly to the interest of financial capital and the logic of profit-making (p. 427).

Under the umbrella of neoliberalism, public universities are facing several issues today. Some of them are: (1) Areas of study in the university that don't translate into substantial profits get either marginalized, unfunded, or eliminated; (2) Research projects are discussed not in terms of their contribution to the public good but for the potential profits they may make in the commercial sector; (3) Applied research is more valued than basic research; (4) University curricula and research have increasingly open themselves to market pressures; (5) Professors and institutions are increasingly engaged in competitive behavior; (6) Inadequate working conditions exist (e.g., oversized classrooms); (7) Emphasis on efficiency rather than on equality of opportunities; and, (8) Students and their families no longer believe that higher education is about higher learning, but about gaining better foothold in the job market. In addition to that, it is possible to see many corporate leaders running institutions of higher education (Giroux, 2002; Sobrinho, 2010; Ball, 2008; Morrow, 2006; Torres and Schugurensky, 2002). As Morrow (2006) says, "in the neoliberal model higher education is ideally integrated into the system of production and accumulation in

which knowledge is reduced to its economic functions and contributes to the realization of individual economic utilities" (p. xxxi).

Narvaez (2005) believes that "significant weakening of public higher education due to the destabilization or regression of the 'welfare state' is an important effect of economic globalization inspired by neoliberalism" (p. 6). Another serious effect of the neoliberal globalization is the increasing commodification of cultural goods and the production and dissemination of knowledge. The neoliberal or corporate culture's threat to professors includes the use of part-time workers as a form of outsourcing, an increase in the professors' workload, professors having their power reduced within the institutions, as well as other threats to the tenure process. Students are also affected. It is possible to see students accumulating debts to pay for the increasing cost of their education (loans), many potential candidates not going to higher education, and those who do go on to higher education will find themselves in courses taught by part-time faculty, study in oversized classes, etc. (Giroux, 2002). Torres (2007) mentions two other relevant aspects. The first is that pressure that professors are receiving now to publish, especially in English. The second is the inversion of the process of academic production. In the past, intellectual used to have ideas and seek funding. Now they see where funding is and adjust their area of research (p. 7).

Giroux (2002) mentions the rise of online courses as a way to make more money. In his analysis,

> the consequences of the substitution of technology for pedagogy is that instrumental goals replace ethical and political considerations, result in a loss of classroom control by teachers, make greater demands on faculty time, and emphasize standardization and rationalization of course material (p. 448).

Higher education represents a central site for keeping the tension between market values and those values representative of civil society (democratic values) alive. Rather, higher education should be related to the development of the population, and to the values and principles of democracy (Giroux, 2002; Sobrinho, 2010). Higher education is a vital resource to the democratic and civic life of the nation.

> Situated within a broader context of issues concerned with social responsibility, politics, and the dignity of human life, higher education should be engaged as a site that offers students the opportunity to involve themselves in the deepest problems of society, to acquire the knowledge skills, and ethical vocabulary necessary for modes of critical dialogues and forms of broadened civic participation (Giroux, 2002, p. 451).

Sobrinho (2010) emphasizes that,

> the mechanisms of globalization and internationalization, directly associated to the neoliberal capitalist system, can bring and certainly bring inlaid values and visions of world, ways to see and to interpret the cultural relations which, instead of incorporated, must be rejected by the university (p. 14).

One important thing to keep in mind is that "there is no essential determinacy to the ways in which globalization pressures work, since for various globalization pressures there are also sites of resistance and counter movements" (Taylor et al., cited for Ball, 2008, p. 31). Giroux (2002) also mentions resistance by faculty and students in different form, within and outside institutions like: (a) professors speaking up; (b) students organizing strikes, and (c) teachers and students association with other groups who struggle for global social justice like labor unions, community activists, environmental groups, and other social movements.

As Segrera (2010) puts it, globalization presents both serious problems and opportunities for higher education. He reflects that this is an irreversible phenomenon and argues that we should be concerned about what kind of globalization that will prevail. As he asks, "should we simply accept some of the most negative and more visible aspects of globalization, or should we seriously devote ourselves to the construction of a global society that broadly and equitably services human and social development?" (p. 1). This dissertation takes the second position.

This chapter considered some conceptions existing about the State and its implications for education. Although the State is a space where multiple actors fight to pursue their interest, its basic role from my point of view should be to promote social equity within a country. Education, thus, is an important responsibility of the State. It was also seen that the State in Latin America took different faces along the time: oligarchical governments, populist governments, authoritarian regimes, and more recently democratic governments. In many moments in history, it was possible

to notice more than one tendency in effect. The rise of democratic governments in Latin America coincides with the emergence of neoliberal policies in the region. Although such policies failed to meet the demands of the population, neoliberalism is still a strong ideology not only in Latin America but also around the world. The chapter ends with a discussion about globalization and its impact on higher education. It is necessary to understand this phenomenon in all its complexities. There is an economically-driven globalization that has a very strong neoliberal mark, and also a socially-driven globalization, which represents a resistance to the neoliberal globalization. The neoliberal globalization is severely impacting higher education, with the privatization of institutions and the consequent replacement of the citizen by the consumer. The next chapter will focus on higher education in Latin America, from the origins to the current situation. Some of the elements discussed in the present chapter will be resumed in the following.

CHAPTER 2 - HIGHER EDUCATION IN LATIN AMERICA

This chapter examines higher education in Latin America. It is divided into four sections, focusing on higher education during the colonial period, the republican period, the bureaucratic-authoritarian period, and finally during the return to democracy. The debate ranges from the emergence of the first institutions of higher education to the current situation in the region, and it also points out some prominent trends in the field. Some information about higher education in Argentina and Brazil is introduced, in order to provide relevant context for the debate that will be advanced in the next chapters.

2.1 – Colonial period

Higher education in Latin America has its beginnings in the religious institutions founded by European colonizers. The first universities were established in the 16th century "by the Spanish crown under the church's control and supervision" (Schwartzman, 1993, p. 9). It is interesting to note that Portugal didn't create any universities in Brazil during the colonial period[9], while Spain created several in its colonies[10]. Spain, as Bernheim (1999) mentions, is an exception among the

[9] "In contrast to the rest of America, Brazil arrives at the independence without any university. According to the data available (Sergio Buarque de Holanda, 1963), universities of Spanish America had, during the colonial period, 150,000 graduated. During the same period (1577-1822) only 2,500 young people born in Brazil followed courses in Coimbra (H.R. Benjamin, 1964). This shows how reduced was the number of people with a higher education degree available in Brazil to direct its independent life. This country only created its first schools of higher education in the decade previous to independence (1822). When the republic was proclaimed (1889), the country only counted on five faculdades, two of Law in São Paulo and Recife, two of Medicine in Bahía and Rio de Janeiro and one Polytechnical in that same city. Enrollment in these establishments was of 2,300 students" (Ribeiro, 1971, p. 112).

[10] In the 16th century, were created the following universities: Santo 1o Domingo (1538), Lima (1551); México (1951); La Plata o Charcas (1552); Santiago de La Paz, Santo Domingo (1558); Tomista de Santafé (1580) and San Fulgencio de Quito (1586). In the 17th century, Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Santiago de Chile (1619); la Javeriana de Santafé (1621); Córdoba, Argentina (1621); San Francisco Xavier, de la Plata, Charcas; San Miguel, Santiago de Chile (1621); San Gregório Magno de Quito (1621); San Ignacio de Loyola, Cuzco (1621), Mérida, Yucatán; San Carlos de Guatemala (1676); San Cristóval de Huamanga (1680); Santo Tomás de Quito (1681); San Antonio de Cuzco (1692) and San Nicolás de Santafé (1694). In the 18th century, San Jerónimo de La Habana (1721); Caracas (1721); San Felipe, de Santiago de Chile (1738); Buenos Aires, Popayán; San Francisco Xavier de Panamá (1749); Concepción, Chile (1749); Asunción, Paraguay (1779); Guadalajara, México (1791). In the 19th century, Mérida, Venezuela (1806) and León de Nicaragua (1819) (Bernheim, 1999, p. 32). The list with the first universities presented by Rama is different from the list presented by Bernheim: Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, in the Domenican Republic (1538); Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás de Hidalgo, in Mexico (1540); Universidad Autónoma de México, in Mexico (1551); Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, Peru (1551); Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico (1578);

colonial countries in relation to the creation of universities outside Europe (p. 14). As Maier and Weatherhead (1979) explain:

> The Portuguese never exported their university to the colonies. Brazilian colonial education was at first under Jesuit control and later under royal supervision, with the Brazilian university being established only in the twentieth century. Those in Brazil who wanted a university education had to go to Coimbra, in Portugal, while almost all Spanish Americans who had higher education attended universities in Spain's American empire (p. 5).

Cunha (1985) says that a very common argument is that Portugal prevented the development of higher education in Brazil, seeking to maintain the country through its inability to develop, cultivate and teach sciences, literature, and the arts (p. 12). According to the author it is important not to overemphasize this argument. He mentions two explanations for that situation provided by Faria: First that "Spain found in its colonies people endowed with a superior culture, thus making the dissemination of the culture of the conquerors difficult. The universities would have received, then, the function to prepare missionary experts in the native customs." Secondly, it is argued that Spain had more professors by then. By the end of the XVI century Spain had eight universities, while Portugal had only one (p. 13). He agrees with this second explanation. In addition, he asks: "Would not many of the Hispanic-American universities be equivalent to the Jesuit colleges of Bahia, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Olinda, Maranhão, Pará? Equivalent to the seminaries of Mariana and Olinda that had never been called university?" (p. 13).

It is necessary to take into consideration the policies of the main religious institutions in order to understand the early proliferation of colleges and universities in Latin America. The universities were the instrument used to evangelize the elites during colonization. The first universities began to be created after 1538, "for several Catholic orders, among them especially the Dominicans, and in second instance the Augustine and Franciscans" (Rama, 2006, p. 22). There were also institutions created directly by the crown that only later came to be recognized by papal bulls. In the beginning, the differentiation between these two kinds of institutions, religious and

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Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina (1613); Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, Colombia (1653); Universidad Autónoma de Querétaro, Mexico (1625); Universidad de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, Colombia (1653); Universidad Mayor de San Francisco Xavier, Bolivia (1664); Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala, Guatemala (1676); and Universidad Nacional San Cristóbal de Huamanga, Peru (1677) (Rama, 2006, p. 24).

state institutions, was more formal than real due to the intrinsic relation of the church and the State. The Society of Jesus, approved in 1540 and installed in Latin America in 1549, also had a very important role in the development of universities in the region, until it was expelled in 1767 (Rama, 2006, p. 27).

As Rama (2006) points out, "the creation of these new institutions is related to a set of several coincidences, taking into consideration the political and cultural situation of Europe, the religious conflicts of Christianity, fights for the creation of the national States, and the disputes over domination of the New World" (p. 22). To Bernheim (1999) the factors responsible for the creation of the first universities were, among others

> a) The necessity to provide local training to the novices of religious orders who accompanied the Spanish conqueror, and to meet the growing demand for church staff created by the extension of the work of evangelization; b) The convenience of providing educational opportunities, more or less similar to those offered in the metropolis, to the children of *peninsulares* and *creoles*, in order to create cultural ties to the empire and, in turn, train the personnel necessary to fill the secondary positions of the colonial, civil and ecclesiastic bureaucracy; c) The presence, in the early colonial period, in colleges and seminaries of the New World, of religious trained in Spanish university classrooms, mainly Salamanca, eager to raise the level of studies and to obtain authorization to confer higher degree (p. 13).

The universities in Latin America were similar to the universities in Spain: Manorial, scholastic, and clerical. Salvation was the main purpose of instruction. As we are told: "The colonial university was manorial and classist, as the society whose interest it served" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 14). Its main function was to serve the interest of the crown, of the church and of the higher classes of society. "By way of exception the university admitted and educated children of the *caciques* and the main indigenous, as they were linked to the dominant caste" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 16). According to Bernheim (1999),

> the constitutions generally excluded Blacks, Chinese, Brown, *mullatos*, and those who had parents or grandparents convicted by the Inquisition. As late as 1775 it was necessary to submit a certificate of racial purity to enter schools and to be able to graduate at universities. Illegitimate children, although white, were not admitted as well (p. 34).

Another obstacle to access higher education was the requirement to study previously in the *Collegium*. "Naturally, those attending school were the sons of the dominant classes, thus accentuating the classist character of the university" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 35). Interestingly, from the beginning, the university "enjoyed privileges and its own forums in relation to local authorities, in order to assure the liberty to teach and learn. From its origins this represented an aspiration of autonomy in relation to the civil and ecclesiastic powers" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 24).

Latin American universities were strongly influenced by European models. There were basically two main models of university, the model of Paris and the model of Bologna. As historians tell us, "Paris was prototypical of the university run by masters, the *universitas magistrorum,* in contrast with Bologna's largely student-controlled institutions" (Góngora, 1979, p. 17). The second model influenced the universities in Spain, including the University of Salamanca and Alcalá de Henares. Programs and organizational structures of the universities in Latin America were modeled after the University of Salamanca, the option of the crown, or Alcalá de Henares, the preferential option of the church (Rama, 2006, p. 23; Bernheim, 1999, p. 25; Maier and Weatherhead, 1979). The Universities of Lima and Mexico, created by the Crown in 1551, were the two most important colonial universities, and followed the model of Salamanca. The University of Santo Tomás de Aquino, in Santo Domingo, on the other hand, followed the model of Alcalá. This last institution is the first university of Latin America and is considered the antecedent of Catholic or private universities in the region (Bernheim, 1999, p. 41). The constitutions and statutes of the University of Lima and Mexico were adopted by several other universities on the continent.

Of course it is impossible to talk about a complete transplantation of institutions from one country to another. Higher education systems in the area developed their own paths, sometimes following completely different directions. Mexico and Argentina, for instance, developed university systems dominated by a main national university, while Brazil and other countries built decentralized systems. These historical differences are helpful to understand the varying paths taken by each country when faced with the pressures for expansion in the second half of the twentieth

century. Some countries responded by opening the doors of their national universities, like Argentina, while others allowed a strong expansion of the private sector, as in the case of Brazil (Schwartzman, 1993, p. 20; Bernasconi, 2007, p. 34).

Due to the relevance of the University of Lima and Mexico to the Spanish-American world it is worth mentioning some elements of the organization of both universities[11]. Taking the University of Lima for example:

> According to the constitutions of 1578, promulgated by the viceroy Francisco de Toledo, and inspired by the *samantinas*, the university administrator was elected by the doctors or teachers of the cloister. Election by a member was required, but that member could not be a cleric or monk. The re-election was allowed once and by means of the favorable vote of two thirds of the cloister. The cloister also elected the three chaplains and the syndic, who was in charge of administrative functions of the university (Bernheim, 1999, p. 43).

The books that the professors should read were specified in the constitutions, and were the same as those used by Spanish universities. Latin was the mandatory academic language. Besides that "there was a department of Indian languages, which acquired some importance when the Viceroy Toledo ordered in 1579 not to order any ecclesiastic without dominating an Aboriginal language" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 43-44).

The University of Mexico also adopted the statutes of the University of Salamanca, although there was a gradual adaptation of the statutes to the local reality. Such adaptation had been occurring since the first statutes of the university, written by Pedro Farfán. For instance, the University of Mexico was different from the University of Salamanca in relation to the appointment of professors due to the local needs and circumstances. As Bernheim (1999) explains,

> following this route, Juan de Palafox and Mendoza introduced more significant reforms in the statutes that he wrote as a result of his appointment as Visitor of the University (1639). The statutes written by Palafox were valid, with small modifications, throughout the colonial period, and were those that gave physiognomy to the University of Mexico at that time. Palafox thus carried out the first university reform of importance in our continent, in the heat of the 17th century, that transformed, according to Steger, the University of Mexico from the state university of the viceroyalty (p. 47).

[11] For a more detailed description of the organization of the colonial universities, see Bernheim (1999).

According to Bernheim (1999), “the University of San Carlos, in Guatemala, was possibly the most *criolla* or American colonial university, due to its adaptation to the American reality” (p. 52). An important reform took place in that university that “followed the guidelines of the enlightened policy of Carlos III, through the enactment of the 'constitutions' of 1771” (p. 50).

The 17th century was fruitful in terms of the creation of universities, but “the decay of the colonial university began in this century and was accentuated in the first half of the following century, until the decay finally arrived at a real academic abasement which only the thirst for knowledge brought about by the Enlightenment could raise towards the end of the 18th century” (Bernheim, 1999, p. 58). The colonial universities experienced similar challenges faced by universities in Spain during this period: A bookish and memoirist system that did not encourage scientific investigation (p. 58). Only the process of Enlightenment, promoted specially by Carlos III, was able to introduce modern science in the colonial universities (p. 61).

Colonial universities were, in general, “disconnected from their reality and concerned about issues that had little relevance to the real welfare of all members of their society” (Bernheim, 1999, p. 68). Despite several problems, the colonial universities had some positive aspects. One of them was the unitary concept of the university, a notion that was destroyed by the French university model (Bernheim, 1999, p. 65). Another aspect was “the colonial university's claim to govern itself through the action of its cloisters, a claim that is an important antecedent of the university autonomy” (Bernheim, 1999, p. 66).

According to Bernheim (1999),

> the advent of the Republic did not result in the modification of the socio-economic structures of the colony. In this sense, the movement of Independence lacked a really revolutionary content, meaning, to a great extent, the replacement of the peninsular authorities by the *creoles*, representatives of the oligarchy landowner and the rising commercial bourgeoisie (p. 71).

The author writes: “Since the beginning Latin American societies were linked to the development of capitalism, but were dependent” (p. 72). Political independence was not followed by an economic independence. As he says,

> the basic aspiration of the creoles, which was to extend its commercial relations with Europe and especially with England, that stimulated its desire for independence to assure a market to its booming industry, it came to reinforce the dependent situation of the Latin American societies, characterizing them as agro-exporter societies, whose development is oriented "towards outside", to the service of the new metropolis, to which it provides with cheap primary products, in exchange for expensive manufactures" (p. 80).

He also says that "the same principles of the Enlightenment, which worked as ideological support of the independence movement, were intellectual loans that paved the way for another form of dependency: the cultural" (p. 73). This doesn't mean that there weren't concerns about social changes coming from the popular classes, but those were repressed by the dominant classes (Bernheim, 1999, p. 75).

After discussing the origins of Latin American universities and the influence of European models on these institutions, it is important to take a look at the changes that took place during the republican period.

2.2 – Republic period

With the expulsion of the Jesuits, Latin America entered a new phase in higher education, characterized by the strengthening of the public face of universities. As Rama (2006) says, "during the 19th century the slow process of secularization of some universities and the genesis of the construction of Latin American public universities came about" (p. 30). As Maier and Weatherhead (1979) state, "higher education in Latin America throughout most of the 19th century had two goals: to forge a national identify and to create a national culture under the banner of positivism" (p. 7).

Bernasconi (2007) explains that "universities were created from scratch or revamped from colonial predecessors to spearhead the post-independence effort to create a modern nation-state released from the fetters of Iberian colonial heritage (p. 27)." He says that

> the new universities, all of them public in the sense that they were created, funded, and governed by the state, were to train the professional, secular elites, especially civil servants, in whose hands the building of the new republics was entrusted. The university was to be the state's educational arm for the promotion of national unity and an enlightened citizenry (p. 27).

Later on, particularly in the beginning of the 20th century, the middle classes used the university as a platform for their own upward social mobility.

The way that the republic found to nationalize and modernize the colonial universities was by emulating French universities. As a result, "the restructuring lacked (...) the sense of national affirmation that it was sought for the new societies; it followed instead the path of cultural alienation" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 86). The Napoleonic university "is characterized by its professionalist emphasis, the disarticulation of education and the replacement of the University by a sum of professional schools, as well as the separation from the scientific research, so that research stopped being a university task and was passed to other institutions (e.g., academies and institutes)" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 87). The difference is that in Latin America these academies and institutes were not established (p. 89). What *was* created were "the so-called 'university of doctors': centralized, bureaucratic, hierarchic, professional and focused on teaching, based on a rational paradigm of knowledge and its appropriation" (Rama, 2006, p. 30).

One of the main characteristics of the university in previous centuries was "the weight of the professional schools in law, medicine, engineering, dentistry and a few others" (Schwartzman, 1993, p. 9). Mollis (2003) characterizes these institutions as the "universities of the lawyers" (p. 207). Higher education in the region was created with a strong professional emphasis, a feature that remains evident today. According to Bernheim (1999), the most important critique of universities is that they were a juxtaposition of professional schools, without correlation among themselves (p. 100).

From the beginning, the republican university functioned "to provide cultural and professional training to the bourgeois elite, while, at the same time, promote the unit and political stability of the State" (p. 87). As we shall see "the republic, that at first did not know what to do

with the ruinous colonial universities, chose to close them. It was to reopen them soon under a new scheme, the Napoleonic one" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 91). Bernheim saw the adoption of the Napoleonic model of university (1999) as a retrocession, writing:

> First of all, this destroyed the very concept of university, creating a new institution that was no more than a group of isolated professional schools. Secondly, it made the development of science even more difficult in our countries, since the professionalist emphasis postponed the interest for the science (p. 88).

The subordination of the universities to the State also contributed to the reduction of the limited autonomy enjoyed by the universities.

The republican university continued to be manorial, frequented by the sons of the ruling classes. In relation to the public who attended universities,

> the republican university also failed to extend the social base of the student enrollment, that remained representative of the dominant classes. The fundamental structures of society remained intact, and the elitist nature of the institution lasted throughout the 19th century (Bernheim, 1999, p. 90).

Rama (2006) says that "the republican universities of the 19th century had their doctrinaire consolidation only at the beginning of 20th century, when the region underwent its first shock in the area of higher education and the increasing urban middle-class pressed to obtain the democratization of the elitist houses of study" (p. 31).

There were two universities that retained the classical models followed by Latin American universities: a university created in 1843 by Andrés Bello in Chile, and a university founded in 1910 by Justo Sierra in Mexico. Of these two universities, "the one that has had more influence in the organization of the present Latin American universities, is the scheme of Andrés Bello, described by Steger as 'the university of lawyers'" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 91-92). Bernheim (1999) describes the organization of the university created by Bello:

> The university was integrated by the Schools of Philosophy and Humanities, Mathematical and Physical Sciences, Medicine, Law and Political Sciences, and the School of Theology. The university, according to the Napoleonic model of educative monopoly, initially was in charge of the direction and supervision of all public teaching and the control of the private sector. Nevertheless, teaching continued in the National Institute, being the university in

> charge only of the academic functions of granting degrees. Soon after primary education was detached from the university to form a special service under the direction of the State; high school was separated from higher education until 1847, reserving the right of bachelor degree conferral to the University, an indispensable marker of superior studies (p. 96).

In Mexico too the university went through a period of successive closures and reopenings, that shifted according to the political moment in which the country was living.

> After the definitive closing decreed by Emperor Maximiliano in 1865, higher education was in charge of several dispersed professional schools that were dependent on the government. The University, as an institution, disappeared in the scope of national life, until the year 1910 in which, on the occasion of the first centenary of Independence, Justo Sierra reestablished it with the name of "National University of Mexico" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 98).

President Emilio Portes Gil enacted the autonomy of this university, that eventually became the National University Autonomous of Mexico (UNAM) (p. 99). From 1910 to the present day the evolution of UNAM has been connected to the development of the modern Mexican State (Ordorika, 2003, p. 39).

The first important questioning of the Latin American universities occurred in 1918, with the Cordoba Reform[12]. It is impossible to reduce this reform only to an academic context. The Cordoba Reform had an impact on the social evolution of many Latin American countries. The reform "envisaged the university as a catalyst and promoter of change, producing elites to direct and induce the transformations needed in the country and in the continent" (Romero, 1979, p. 146). It was basically an assertion of cultural independence from European models of higher education and a claim for Latin American solutions to Latin American problems.

To Ribeiro (1971), the Cordoba Reform represents the main force for the renewal of the university in the region. "The truth, nevertheless, is that the reform movement preceded that event and succeeded it as a deliberate effort of the university members, particularly of the students, of all

[12] There are authors who think that there is a myth related to the Cordoba Reform. Aken (1971), for instance, says that there is a widespread idea that "the impulse for reform appeared first in the year 1918 at the University of Córdoba, quickly affecting other Argentine universities, and then spread to other Latin American countries" (p. 447). According to him, "research into South American student activity before 1918 indicates that most of the goals of the "Cordoba Movement" were anticipated by a multi-national reformist movement that developed in the first decade of the 20st century. Student leaders of Uruguay were most prominent in promoting the exchange of ideas and the discussion of university problems, but Chileans, Peruvians, and Argentines seconded the Uruguayans' efforts. A full ten years before the Cordoba uprising, South American student leaders set forth in Montevideo a reform program which clearly foreshadowed the vaunted University Reform of later years" (p. 450).

the region, especially of Hispanic America, to change the bases of the academic life, surpassing its more archaic contents" (p. 152). The middle class was the most relevant protagonist of this movement, according to Bernheim (1999), "in its eagerness to obtain the opening of the University, until then controlled by the old oligarchy landowner and the clergy" (p. 107). The author believes that "the Reform has its origins in immigration that around the sixth decade of the 19th century changed the economic substructure of the country and generated a social middle-class" (p. 107). Higher education was seen as a way to promote social mobility.

Several factors helped stimulate the reform. Albornoz (1979) states that "one of the major factors in university reform in Argentina was the increase of the size of the student population and the emergence of students organizations" (p. 124). To Julio V. González, the European war, the Russian revolution, and the emergence of a radical government in Argentina were the main responsibilities for the movement (cited by Bernheim, 1999, p. 108). Increasing urbanization was also a factor, as Bernheim (1999) adds.

> The world war put the system of western values to which Latin America had subscribed in crisis. It also produced the displacement of the dominant hegemonic center from Europe to the United States. The Russian socialist revolution of 1917 extended the social horizon and created new expectations. The arrival of the radicalism to power in 1916, by means of the exercise of the universal suffrage, represented the political ascent of the middle classes, invigorated by the immigratory torrent (Bernheim, 1999, p. 108-109).

Argentina, as Bernheim (1999) explains, was

> within Latin American countries, the one that had an industrial development of greater vigor and a strong process of urbanization. On the other hand, progressive changes, structural as much as cultural, were pronounced in Argentina with greater force than in any other Latin American country. This explains why the movement started in this country, although later it spread, unequally, to the rest of Latin America (p. 111).

Bernheim (1999) says that the republican university, organized in a Napoleonic model, was less autonomous than the colonial university. He characterizes the situation of universities in Latin America in the beginning of the XIX century as follows:

> The Latin American universities, encased in the Napoleonic professional mold and dragging in their education a heavy colonial burden, were far from answering what Latin America

> needed to enter decorously in the 20th century and to answer the new problematic raised by the changes undergone in the social composition, due to the urbanization, the expansion of the middle-class and the appearance of an incipient industrial proletariat (p. 123).

This was also the condition of the University of Cordoba, created in the beginning of the 17th century. Argentina had three national universities (Buenos Aires, Cordoba, and La Plata) and two provincial universities (Santa Fe and Tucuman). According to Bernheim (1999), the University of Cordoba was more attached to its colonial heritage (p. 126). The lessons, basically a repetition of old texts, were a sign of the submission and routine spirit of the time (p. 127). There are those who believe that this was precisely the reason why the reform began in Cordoba (p. 128).

The Cordoba Reform tried to find local answers to local problems, and to create a real national university. It had, thus, an anti-imperialist face. As stated by Bernheim (1999), "the moment had arrived for stopping breathing foreign airs and trying to create one own culture, that was not a simple reflection or transplant of the European or the North American" (p. 117). Some authors, however, underline the ideological backwardness of the reform, saying that it was a reform born late in its time (p. 121).

The *Manifesto Liminar*, a manifesto addressed to the free men of South America, triggered the Cordoba Reform. It was followed by a series of street protests, and student manifestations. The intention of the manifesto was "to justify the attitude of the students, to explain reasons for their decision to not recognize the elected Rector and to invite all the university young people, not only of Argentina, but of all Latin America, to add themselves to the beginning revolution" (Bernheim, 1999, p. 130). Maier and Weatherhead (1979) mention some of the main claims of the reform:

> The young leaders of the 1918 Reform wanted to liberalize the traditional university and open its doors to all members of society. They asked that professors be promoted on the basis of merit and achievement. They wanted full time professors and full-time students, sensitive to the great ideas of the West and their own cultures, and aware of what was "relevant" to the contemporary university and modern society. The student was to be given an expanded role in the governance of the university. Autonomy was to be guaranteed by constitutional law and observed by all governments. University life was to be a more truly communitarian experience of master and student living in an ideal republic (a State within a State) than had ever existed (p. 9).

As Bernheim (1999) states, "the movement originated in Cordoba soon widespread throughout Latin America, showing that it constituted an answer to similar needs and circumstances, experimented in all the region" (p. 133). "During the decades of the reformist movement (1918-1945) its program has undergone triumphs and reverses, according to the swings of the Latin American policy" (p. 141). Rama (2006) says that the model created by the Cordoba Reform "became generalized throughout the continent as an answer to the demands of the new social classes, to the new international insertion of the countries and to the introduction of a model of industrialization by substitution of imports" (p. 37).

Autonomy was one of the most important flags of the Cordoba Reform. Autonomy meant liberty. The reform "tried to make the university community (…) sufficiently independent to challenge the conservative society of which it was a part of. University autonomy facilitated the reorientation and modernization of the university" (Romero, 1979, p. 141). Another important aspect is that the reform tried to open the doors of universities to the emerging social classes. Bernasconi (2007) synthesizes the main tents of the reform in seven topics:

1. Democratic governance, or co-governance by students, professors, and alumni, whose representatives were to be elected to Faculty-level and university-wide decision-making councils;
2. Orientation of the mission of the university toward the solution of the social, economic, and political problems of the country;
3. Institution of an extension function of the university, alongside those of research and teaching, the purpose of which was to bring the university to the working masses;
4. Democratization of access through tuition-free education and expansion of enrollments
5. Autonomy from state intervention and academic freedom;
6. Selection of faculty through competitive and public contests based on academic merit; and,
7. Original research by full-time professors committed to the university (p. 31).

Autonomy and co-governance were the main achievements of the reform, and helped differentiate Latin American universities from others. An interesting aspect of the reforms was the fight for open enrollment. This,

> sought to allow access to university by young people coming from the weak economic sectors and who needed to work. By means of this (open enrollment) it tried to make the

> democratization of higher education more effective, and open the doors of professional training to larger groups of society (Bernheim, 1999, p. 159).

The Cordoba Reform created, as Rama (2006) says, a specific model of universities characterized "by the autonomy of its public institutions, a management based on the co-government modality, the outstanding presence of the public monopolistic education, the gratuity in its access, a corporative structure of management and a State role oriented to the provision of financial resources" (p. 36).

Doing an evaluation of the Cordoba Reform, Bernheim (1999) mentions that the reform didn't succeed in transforming the university as it wished, but gave positive steps in that direction. Darcy Ribeiro considers the following points to be the most important innovation of the reform:

> The eradication of theology and its replacement with positivist directives; The extension and diversification of the modalities of professional training through the creation of new professional schools; The attempt to institutionalize co-government of the university by its professors and students; The implantation, more verbal than real, of the autonomy of the university in relation to the State; The regulation of a system of contests for the entrance to the teaching profession, that, nevertheless, never eliminated the nepotism among university professors; And, finally, some achievements in the field of the educational freedom, the modernization of the system of examinations and the democratization, through the gratuity of public higher education (cited by Bernheim, 1999, p. 172-173).

It is also important to consider criticisms of the reform. Puiggrós (2010) says that among the concerns of the students and other reform activists, there was little reference to the economy and labor. In her words, they "rightly rejected the positivist scientism that had been aligned with the dictatorial regimes and the oligarchies (...) But they were not able to restore the idea that science and technology were linked to the industrial progress of Latin American societies nor to give higher education a key role in this aspect" (p. 135).

According to Rama (2006), in the beginning of the 20th century universities were absolutely elitist and reserved for the children of the small dominant groups, with an almost total absence of popular sectors, indigenous population or women. Things changed in the second half of this century, when "the students were no longer members of a small elite but came from a more plural and diverse sector within our universities, until it lost its standing as a place for privileged or

exceptional groups" (p. 43). Although there are sill strong inequalities in enrollment, the opportunities of access, permanence and graduation in higher education have increased considerably.

> Indeed, the deep transformations that happened in the Latin American universities became visible thanks to a process of massification, feminization, privatization, regionalization, differentiation and segmentation, that were added to the changes of those societies, transformed by the urbanization, the productive revolution and the economic opening that substantially changed students' roles and characteristics (p. 43).

Rama (2006) says that the Cordoba Reform was the first important reform of Latin American universities. The university model influenced by Cordoba was relevant until around the 1970s, "when a new *shock* struck the region, was installed at the doors of higher education institutions, restated in a new context the installation of the private universities and gave protagonism again to the religious universities" (p. 32). According to the author,

> thus began the Second University Reform in Latin America, that started a new university model of dual character: a public higher education with access restrictions, based on limitations of the public financing and examinations of knowledge acquired in previous educative cycle, and a private sector with restrictions based on household income and unequal income distribution (p. 32).

Bernasconi (2007) states that by the late 1960s and 1970s the Latin American model of the university reached the peak of its influence on the region's universities (p. 32). This model was characterized by:

> Autonomy from government control; democratic governance by faculty, students, and alumni or administrative staff who elected deans and rectors and shared in decision making through collective bodies; full funding by the state and free or nominal tuition; and the belief that universities had an irreplaceable role to play in the political objective of transforming society. In spite of the intention to institutionalize research and full-time commitment among faculty, the teaching of professions by part-time instructors remained the dominant function (p. 32).

It was also during this period, around the 1960s and 1970s that "the erosion of the Latin American model began, first in private and later in public universities" (Bernasconi, 2007, p. 33). Bernasconi (2007) presents some reasons for this: the expansion of enrollment and the diversification of the kinds of institutions; the effects on public universities of their massification;

the emergence of the knowledge economy, which redefined some goals of higher education; and "finally, the Latin American model has been affected by the worldwide rise of the U.S. idea of a research university, which has gained ascendancy as the top echelon of North American universities continues to increase its lead in scientific productivity and harness the opportunities and challenges of the new economy" (p. 33).

Rama (2006), in line with Bernasconi (2007), also thinks that during these two decades the university model that was created during the Cordoba Reform underwent significant changes (Rama, 2006, p. 44). This, according to him, is related to the social and economic crisis of the way Latin American countries were incorporated into the global economic system, among other factors. It is important to stress that "the expansion of enrollment was not followed by an increase of financing and, towards the end of the 1960s, the public sector began to indicate an increasing incapacity to maintain the rates of financial growth in several countries" (p. 44).

Rama (2006) mentions that the increase in enrollment in the region was not followed by measures to assure the maintenance of the quality of education. In addition, "the disproportionate weight of enrollment in traditional professions and the low presence in the technological areas contributed to create a greater distance, in terms of relevance, between the universities and a productive apparatus that was trying to be diversified" (p. 45).

To Rama (2006) the Second University Reform was characterized by the mercantilization, the expansion of private universities, and the differentiation of institutions.

> The establishment of quotas and examinations, a direct result of the stagnation of the budgets, was the instrument by which the birth or expansion of the private education was promoted, through which the demand not covered by the public universities was absorbed (p. 46).

It is important to pay attention to the relationship between quality, cost, and coverage in higher education. In Rama's (2006) point of view, "given the increase of the investment by the presence of more students, the increase of the educative coverage is only feasible, without affecting the quality, with an extension of the financing. Inversely, the elevation of quality will only be

possible through an increase of budgets or a reduction of coverage" (p. 47). The amount of professors per class, the qualification of professors and their wages, libraries, among other elements, are essential to assure the quality of education, and all of them are related to economic costs (p. 47).

As has been demonstrated in this section, the republican period brought many changes to the Latin American university. The same happened during the authoritarian period that followed, as we shall see in the next section.

2.3 – Bureaucratic authoritarian period

It is important to underline that during the sixties and the seventies devastating dictatorships controlled many countries in Latin America. The military dictatorships in the region "violated all the human rights, they imposed autocratic regimes, they eliminated the autonomy of the university institutions and dismantled its capacity to generate and to apply new knowledge and technologies" (Yarzábal, 2001, p. 2). These governments

> intervened in universities, they destroyed its installed capacity of scientific research (with the remarkable exception of Brazil), expelled the social sciences, they resulted in the creation of higher education institutions without regulating them nor assuring its quality, and condemned a significant number of professors and researchers to death, forced disappearance or to exile. They attempted thus, of indelible way, against the quality of higher education and against the endogenous capacity to produce and to manage knowledge (Yarzábal, 2001, p. 3).

Authoritarian government takeover started in Brazil (1964), and was followed by Chile (1973), Uruguay (1973), Bolivia (1975) and Argentina (1976). The phenomenon of dictatorships in Latin America, according to Yarzábal (2001), took place as a reaction to leftist movements, particularly to the Cuban revolution in 1959. The author explains that there is evidence that these

dictatorships were supported by the United States as part of the Cold War and the development of capitalism[13] (p. 3).

In Brazil, the Agreements MEC-USAID (Ministry of Education and United States Agency for International Development) covered all the levels of education during the military regime: primary, secondary and higher education, teacher training, and the production of schoolbooks (Góes, 1985, p. 33). They are an illustration of the connection of the US with an authoritarian government.

Kaufman (1991) believes that there was a partial but systematic link between bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes and some post-World War II developments:

> Declining opportunities for "inward-oriented" import-substituting investment, the growing size and political independence of the "popular sector", and intensified struggles over the evolving role of transnational manufacturing and financial forces in new models of development. A turn toward authoritarianism has not, to be sure, been an inevitable product of these developments – there has been important space for choice (p. 85).

Levy (1981) explains that authoritarianism is a good concept to describe regimes that are neither democratic not totalitarian. This is, however, a broad term, and it is more appropriate to talk about "bureaucratic-authoritarianism" to characterize regimes with "widespread repression in societies that have experienced relatively substantial bureaucratization, industrialization, and mass mobilization" (p. 31). The author says that there are three critical elements associated with this kind of government: rationalization, exclusion, and coercion. He then analyzes higher education policies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Mexico during bureaucratic-authoritarian governments, assuming that "policy patterns in one field may suggest more general patterns" (p. 33).

Rationalization is one of the first elements of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes. These policies, in many cases, seek to control inflation. In this context, social policies as well as political liberties are retrenched. Drawing on O'Donnel, his analysis,

[13] Whitehead (1991) mentions a series of declarations the US made and treaties it signed supporting democracy across the world. The author also shows, however, a number of practices that the country adopted that goes against these declarations. Some of these practices are direct support to authoritarian governments (p. 5-6).

> uses rationalization to represent the authoritarian regime's attempt to use rationalization to supplant perceived *politiquería* (the excessive, often pretty and demagogic, politicization of issues felt to deserve more disinterested consideration) with more logical, austere, economically efficient policies. Rationalization "depoliticizes" social and political issues to "technical" problems (p. 33).

Levy (1981) points out that "rationalization is pursued not only for domestic reasons, but to attract foreign capital" (p. 33). Some of the main features of the new political and economic period are: "a growing reliance on private external credit and technology; expanded export of a variety of 'nontraditional' manufactured and primary products and, within the domestic social structure, the emergence of traditional(ized) oligopolies – banks, industrial firms, and agribusinesses – as major new poles of accumulation and growth" (Kaufman, 1991, p. 86).

Particularly in higher education, rationalized policies would,

> curb government subsidies, bar dissident personnel, centrally reoriented admissions, career selection, and research – or, in short, follow the dictates of an imposed model of economic orthodoxy rather than the free-flowing demands of students and intellectuals (p. 34).

He mentions that Chile and Argentina were examples of countries with both strongly, and moderately, rationalized regimes. These two countries have endured "shock treatments" in their economies. In Argentina, for instance, "the education ministry's share of total government expenditures dropped nearly in half in 1976, while education's claim on the GNP plummeted from 2.2 percent to 1.3 percent" (p. 34). More than cutbacks, there were also reorientations in fields of study and research. Brazil and Mexico, on the other hand, are examples of moderated and strongly politicized regimes. In Brazil, according to Levy (1981), "despite some attempts at rationalization, *o jogo da política* (the political game) has generally prevailed" (p. 35). In this country, "the higher education budget has fared well within the educational budget, and both have received increased shares of the federal budget and GNP" (p. 35). In Brazil, the military regime pursued rationalized policies, "but not at the expense of political disorder, illegitimacy, and middle-class dissatisfaction" (p. 36).

Another element of bureaucratic-authoritarian regimes was exclusion. To a certain extent, as Levy (1981) states, all authoritarian regimes are exclusive (they do not include some sectors of the

society). Exclusion, by turn, involved "the widespread forced exodus of sectors already incorporated" (p. 37). It is interesting to compare the exclusion policies among some countries. While Argentina and Chile "suffered sudden, centrally imposed foreclosure and even cuts in enrollment", Brazil and Mexico saw great expansion in their higher education system (p. 37). In Argentina,

> enrollment ... in national universities (which comprise the bulk of higher education) peaked in 1976 at 475,000 and then declined sharply to just over 400,000 in 1978. A more sensitive indicator of regime policy, first-year openings (*vacantes*), peaked in 1973 and 1974, declined in 1975 and 1976, and then suffered a precipitous 50 percent drop in 1977 (Levy, 1981, p. 38).

In Brazil, which had an opposite situation of Argentina, "a system of 150,000 which let in 50,000 yearly, became a system of 1.25 million, letting in more than 350,000 yearly" (Levy, 1981, p. 38). The country "actually boasted the fastest rate of enrollment growth in Latin America from 1965 to (at least) 1970" (Levy, 1981, p. 38). It is essential to underline, however, that Argentina and Brazil had a different percentage of their population in attendance in higher education, as the Table 2 shows.

Table 2 – Percentage of 20-24-year-old in higher education

	Argentina	Brazil
1960	10.9	1.6
1965	14.5	2.2
1970	14.2	5.3
1975	28.1	9.8 (1974)

Source: Levy, 1981.

While in 1960 Argentina offered higher education to around 11% of the population of 20 to 24 year-olds, Brazil only offered it to less than 2% of the same population. The percentage of students attending university in that age range increased during the sixties until in 1975 Argentina had around 28% and Brazil around 10% of 20 to 24 year-olds in higher education. Fernandes (1975) argues that this "explosion" of higher education in Brazil was not a democratic or democratizing process. It was a result of the increasing demand of students finishing secondary education, on the

one hand, and of the irresponsible increases in offers, on the other hand: most of the offer in private institutions of doubtful quality (p. 38).

Finally, the other element of bureaucratic-authoritarian governments was coercion: "rationalized and exclusionary policies are likely to be coercive ones as well" (Levy, 1981, p. 39). Some level of coercion needed to be implemented by these governments in order to repress public demands and mobilizations. Levy (1981) talks about the repression of student movements in many Latin American countries. Student movements in Argentina and Chile, for instance, were very strong and highly politicized.

The consequences of such coercion for universities were dramatic. In many cases there was a reorganization of the power structures, as well as of curricular changes. Levy (1981) describes some of these consequences:

> The new intense coercion required top-down structures of authority. Naturally, both professors and students must lose influence. The most blatant offense is the political purge – for example, at Argentina's University of Bahía Blanca in 1976. Staff was cut just as enrollments were. In fact, these were political-economic purges based partially on the argument that expenditures must be reduced and that staffing had become inflated by irresponsible hiring. Rationalization was administered disproportionately against leftists, and those in disfavored fields of study. Cherished principles of co-government by administration, professors and students gave way to government by university administration closely tied to the national regime (p. 40).

In Brazil there were also several manifestations of coercion:

> Brazil's "cornerstone" 1969 reform challenged academic freedom by forbidding student and professor dissent and imposing stiff penalties for acts of subversion, while it also restricted institutional autonomy over academic affairs by demanding an intrauniversity reorganization with increased government regulation of curriculum and course content (Levy, 1979, p. 114).

The Brazilian junta responded to leftism by abolishing the National Union of Students. The Brazilian evolution to increased political repression between 1964 and 69 included a harsh crackdown on dissent (Levy, 1979, p. 109). Levy (1981) mentions that in Brazil there was considerably coercion, but it was reduced during the seventies. He says, however, that "on balance, Brazil probably sets itself off from Argentina and Chile less on this dimension than on others."

Repression of professors was more intense in some universities, such as the University of São Paulo and the University of Brasília[14], but in general it was less severe in Brazil (Levy, 1981, p. 40; Cunha, 1985, p. 81).

Analyzing the cases of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Mexico, Levy (1981) draws some conclusions. One is that the recency of the installation of authoritarian governments has had an impact on their level of rationalization, exclusion, and coercion. These characteristics are stronger in earlier dictatorships. Thus, "the younger authoritarian regimes of Argentina and Chile pursued more rationalized, exclusionary, and coercive policies than the older authoritarian regimes of Brazil and especially Mexico" (p. 42). Another conclusion is that "the greater the extent, suddenness, and radical nature of the mobilization that precedes the installation of an authoritarian regime, the greater the likelihood of harshly rationalized, exclusionary, and coercive policies" (p. 43). Brazil, for instance, had many popular protests in the sixties, "but nothing approaching Argentine and Chilean experiences in the early seventies" (p. 44).

It is interesting to note that while the authoritarian regimes affected the middle class, the burden of the regime was significantly higher for the lower classes. "Universities in all four nations are primarily middle-class institutions, having made the transition from more elite status, however, without generally incorporating lower classes" (Levy, 1981, p. 45).

To Cunha (1985) repression was the main characteristic of education during the military regime in Brazil. Repression was appropriate for all and anything that could be associated with communism or subversive ideas (p. 36). In the administration of the educational system, those who were for public education were replaced with those who supported private education. Professors and students were among the victims of the regime, and many were expelled from their institutions.

Interestingly, one of the main laws of higher education in Brazil was approved during the authoritarian regime (Law 5.540/1968). This law required that all public and private universities in the country would adapt to the model that the regime imposed upon federal universities; and so, all

[14] The University of Brasília was created two years before the beginning of the military regime in Brazil. The university had a completely new and innovative design, that was in great part challenged for the new regime. Cunha (1985) says that the *innovative modernization* gave space to the *conservative modernization* (p. 83).

federal universities adopted some innovations of the University of Brasília, a new university in Brazil. They had to adopt the "department" as the smallest unit of the university administration, following the US model, and adopt the "credit" system among other changes. This did not mean, as Cunha (1985) emphasizes, "that all the determinations of the law for university reform derived directly from the educational policy of the dictatorship" (p. 86). Some historic requests that professors and students made in order to improve higher education were incorporated to the reform.

Vieira (1982) analyzed the reform of 1968 in Brazil in detail. According to the author, five main goals were sought during the reform period: rationalization, expansion, flexibility, integration, and autonomy. The idea was to rationalize the university, bringing her to a new phase of Brazilian development and experiencing a process of modernization. There was also the goal of answering the pressure to increase access to higher education. In many cases professional education was seen as a way to reduce this pressure; the private sector also had a important role in alleviating this pressure. As Vieira (1982) explains, "flexibility would be an indispensable element to make possible the expansion of vacancies that should be achieved with the university reform. Only a flexible institution would absorb the increasing demand for higher education" (p. 69). Reformers also sought to promote the integration between the university and society. Finally, reformers proposed an authoritarian version of autonomy or, as Vieira (1982) says, a relative autonomy (p. 78).

The law of higher education in Brazil established that the university was the main administrative model that should be adopted. The expansion of the private sector, however, followed an opposite model. The majority of institutions created was small, and generally had only few social science courses. Cunha (1985) tries to explain reasons for why this happened, writing:

> Even before the law of the university reform was written, the growth of the private sector in higher education had already started, giving answers to the insufficient offer of public universities. As the entrepreneurs of education were strongly implanted in the Federal Council of Education, that orientation of the law (to expand preferentially universities) was not followed. The same council members who had helped to write it or had approved it created all types of facilities so that the particular schools proliferated as flies, without adjusted installations, without laboratories and libraries, with professor-ghosts. Thus, the

> idea of having universities as the main institution of higher education, as in the majority of the countries of the world, were run over by the educational policy implicit in the dictatorship (p. 87-88).

Fernandes (1975) mentions three threats that the university faced during the authoritarian regime in Brazil: the university was under foreign tutelage; intellectual radicalism was seen as a treat to society; and professors were facing a dilemma concerning the pervasive idea that the young should be set apart from the reconstruction of society (p. 29). Although Brazilians weren't in a time open for dialogue, he asked people to reflect about these issues in the middle of the dictatorship in Brazil.

The process of liberalization, according to Kaufman (1991), can be seen as a combination of different changes in the context of the authoritarian governments.

> The first is the decline of the initial sense of emergency and fear. The second is the attempt by bureaucratic-authoritarian governments to expand their links to civil society but tolerating broader institutional and political opportunities for "public contestation." Third, there is the formation of liberalizing oppositions – let alone or supported by some of the middle-sector groups that initially backed bureaucratic-authoritarian coups. Finally, there are changes in the interest calculus of the capitalist and military elites themselves, each of which must continuously assess the risks of supporting a potentially isolated bureaucratic-authoritarian government (p. 92).

In order to obtain success, the new governments would have to achieve a few things. Sheahan (1991) mentions two requirements that pulled in contrary directions: one was to organize a stable economy in which economic growth was possible. Another was to give answers to many popular demands that were repressed during the long years of dictatorships. These were some of the challenges faced by the new governments during the return to democracy, as the next section will discuss.

2.4 – The return to democracy

In the eighties "the arduous process of reimplanting the democracy in the majority of the countries of Latin America began, in a context marked by severe policies of fiscal adjustment"

(Yarzábal, 2001, p. 2). As Yarzábal explains, the cycles of dictatorship finalized once the movements of national liberation were destroyed, popular organizations and movements were dismantled, and the neoliberal model started to be implemented in Chile, an important country in the region (p. 4). The emergence of "oligarchic democracies" in Latin America was also parallel to the emergence of neoliberalism in the region (Yarzábal, 2001; Torres and Puiggrós, 1995, p. 8).

> The military dictatorships that operated in the region from the Sixties to the Eighties prepared the social, political and economic conditions necessary to orchestrate neoliberal reforms based on macroeconomic stabilization, fiscal adjustment, privatization of state companies and opening and deregulation of markets, measures all recommended by the International Monetary Fund (the IMF) and the World Bank (WB) in Latin America (p. 4).

Some of the consequences of the neoliberal model implemented in Latin America were: an increase of unemployment, an increase in the informal sector of the economy, an increase of poverty, and the dismantling of the social security (Yarzábal, 2001, p. 5). In higher education, neoliberalism challenges the notion that education is a social investment and one that is essential to the development of an informed citizenry. In synthesis,

> concerns about equity, accessibility, autonomy or the contribution of higher education to social transformation, which were prevalent during previous decades, have been overshadowed by concerns about excellence, efficiency, expenditures and rates of return (Torres and Schugurensky, 2002, p. 429).

Olssen and Peters (2005) emphasize the fact that the ascendancy of neoliberalism "has produced a fundamental shift in the way universities and other institutions of higher education have defined and justified their institutional existence" (p. 313). This is evidenced, for instance, in the replacement of the traditional practices in higher education institutions "with a institutional stress on performativity" (p. 313).

Higher education in Latin America has been undergoing deep transformations over the last few decades, particularly after the 1990s. Many of these transformations are directly related to globalization, and to neoliberal globalization in particular. The main trends the region faces are, among others: quantitative expansion of enrollment, significant institutional diversification, increasing privatization, and growing restrictions on public funding. There are also problems

associated with equity and the quality of education (Vitale, 2007; Segrera, 2010; Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003; Yarzábal, 2001; Mercosur, 2008; Torres and Schugurensky, 2002).

Some of the transformations higher education faces are directly related to an increasing demand for access to this level of education and countries' efforts to respond to demand. There are several explanations for the intensification of the pressure for more access. Some say that it is a direct result of the faster economic growth of the region. The fact is that, internationally, "the more important access to higher education is for the life chances of a large number of students, the stronger these pressures become" (Trow, 1973, p. 5). According to Schwartzman (2002), "demand for higher education is only partially and indirectly determined by the changing requirements of the labor market" (p. 18). He believes that demand is "associated with broad expectations that jobs would be created to accommodate a growing number of graduates moving up the social ladder, and being absorbed by large and permissive higher education institutions" (p. 18).

There are other aspects that have influenced the pressure for more access to higher education, namely: a demographic increase, an increase of the middle-income segment, an increase in the number of students graduating from high school, the urbanization, and especially the incorporation of women into society's economic and political life (Landinelli, 2008, p. 3; Balán and Fanelli, 1997, p. 12). To Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003),

> in parallel with restructuring of national economies, countries in the Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) region have increased the supply of education at all levels. Secondary graduates with skills and aspirations have in large numbers taken advantage of new opportunities to pursue tertiary studies. This effect has been coupled with shifts in the productive sector and the labor market, resulting in an upward trend in the demand for advanced skills (p. 1).

Higher education in Latin America during the 1950s was highly elitist, with only 2% of students between the ages of 18-24 years enrolled (Trindade, 2003, p. 165). There was, however, a permanent increase in students' enrollment in Latin America over the years. From around 267,000 students in 1950, the region went to 11.2 million in 2000, and by 2005 more than 15 million students were enrolled in higher education, as the data in the following table shows:

Table 3 – Number of student of higher education in Latin America and higher education gross enrollment ratio

Year	Students of higher education in Latin America	Higher education Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)
1950	267.000[15]	2,0%
1970	1.640.000	6,3%
1980	4.930.000	13,8%
1990	7.350.000	17,1%
2000	11.500.000	19,0%
2003	-	28,7%
2005	15.293.181	-

Source: IESALC

The increase in enrollment has been stressed over the last few decades. As Vitale (2007) explains in detail, "the expansion of registration has taken place from the late eighties, augmented by the middle nineties. Thus, the increase in the number of students shows a sustained tendency over time. And after the year 2000 this evolution has clearly accelerated (p. 15). According to the author, the increase in enrollment was far more intense that the increase of the population between 20 and 24 years. This means that there was a significant increase of the coverage rate (p. 15).

Despite this great increase in enrollment, Latin America still falls considerably behind leading economies (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, p. 2; Yarzábal, 2001, p. 7). Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) state that an average of 27% of the relevant age cohort is enrolled in a post-secondary institution in the region (p. 2). He compares this to the average of in OCDE countries (55%), as well as with Korea (66%), and Spain (55%).

Some authors call our attention to the fact that Latin American countries have approached the expansion of higher education in different ways. Some countries expanded the public sector, while others, the private sector.

> In Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay and Venezuela, public universities have expanded and diversified and new public institutions have been created at the regional level to absorb much of the demand. In other countries, such as Chile, Colombia and Brazil, public

[15] According to Mollis (2006) the number of students enrolled in Latin America in 1950 is 1,5 million (p. 92).

> education has remained restricted and a growing network of private institutions has absorbed increases in demand (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, p. 3)

The increase in the number of students enrolled in higher education brought some consequences. Yarzábal (2001) mentions some of them. There was a variation in the composition of students like a significant increase in women, that today make up around 47% of the student population, as well as the incorporation of people older than the traditional 18-24 years group (p. 7). There was also a great increase in the number of professors. This increase, however, was not followed by an increase in the capacity of the system to train professors. The result was a reduced number of qualified professors in the region. Besides that, decreases in wages has forced professors to have multiple jobs, or to teach in different institutions, reducing their dedication to teaching and particularly to the development of research (p. 7).

Another consequence of the massification of higher education has been the differentiation of institutions, and an increase of the non-university sector and the private sector as well (Mollis, 2006, p. 93). Today we have elite higher education, which takes place basically in research universities, mass higher education, specialized higher education, and etc. (Torres, 2007, p. 2). Some authors see this diversification as something negative, while others evaluate this as a positive thing. Those who see it as negative argue that differentiation produces inequalities, since it creates elite institutions and second-level institutions. Some institutions are research institutions, with lots of opportunities to for students, while others are only teaching institutions, for example. Those who see diversification as positive say that it creates more opportunities for a diverse public. Students have different backgrounds, and they seek different things in higher education. A diversified system, thus, would be more appropriate to meet these different demands. In fact, in theories of development and modernization institutional diversification is one of the responses to the complexities of the new modern society and its need.

According to Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) for example, the differentiation of higher education has many positive implications.

> Today, the region features far more learning opportunities than it did a few decades ago. For this reason, the ability to accommodate a diverse student body with different backgrounds, skills, and aspirations has improved. Additionally, the massification of higher education could not have taken place had it relied solely on the existing, primarily public, tertiary institutions. Diversification is crucial to the region's continual strive to increase tertiary enrollment and accommodate a growing demand (p. 5).

The authors, nonetheless, point out that "increased diversification and increase coverage have come at a price."

> The vast number of institutions that differ in terms of ownership, autonomy, funding and programs has contributed to a somewhat disjoined and fragmented system divided among institutions with weak links between them. In Colombia, for example, the proliferation of a highly heterogeneous university sector has made it difficult to coordinate between entities and avoid internal inconsistencies (Brunner, 2002a). A major difficulty throughout the region is the highly segmented character of non-university tertiary education. These institutions often lack a clear educational policy and strategy, raising many questions regarding quality and relevance of the learning offered (Brunner, 2002b) (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, p. 5).

The presence of higher education in Latin America evolved from 75 universities, around 1950, to about 700 universities, in 1990, in addition to "roughly 3,000 non-university education institutions, 60 percent of them private" (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, citing Schwartzman, 2003, p. 4). With the massification of enrollment, there was also an increase in the private sector. "The majority of private institutions are 'institutions that absorb student demands' whose offer is reduced to high demand careers and of low costs of operation, and which behave like lucrative companies" (Yarzábal, 2001). There are many reasons for this increase of the private sector. As Torres (2007) explains,

> one thing is that the State cannot cover all the budgetary demands of the higher education institutions and, in addition, because the private institutions contribute to fill an emptiness in this area. But, on the other side, it is necessary to accept that the neoliberal model advocated a privatization model and this privatization arrived at the public universities, as it also arrived at the levels of primary and secondary education, and since then universities are forced to finance to themselves through the sale of goods and services (p. 3).

Rama (2006) also discusses the increase of enrollment in the private sector.

> In a context of increasing demand in Latin America, private higher education has developed. Nevertheless, due to the unequal start of the societies, the increase of higher education, from the direct financing of the vacancies, has had limitations to its expansion. This was the center of the privatization policies, deregulation and opening to the private

> competition of the decade of 1980, that took place since the reduction of the economic resources of the region (p. 48).

Balán and Fanelli (1997) say the 1980s are a good period to start to study the process of privatization in Latin America's higher education due to the fact that it was the period when international organizations began to spread the idea of privatization in the region, and many countries introduced changes in their policies for higher education (p. 13). Argentina is identified by the authors as one exception among the other Latin American countries since reforms there began one decade later (p. 14).

The emergence and consolidation of the private sector in Latin America's higher education is old, starting many years before the current privatization wave within the scope of neoliberal reforms. Over the last decades, however, this debate has intensified. There has been an increase in the participation of the private sector in Brazil and Argentina's higher education, but in different ways.

> On the one hand, Argentina, after the military coup of 1976 and the first important inflationary crisis, already revealed some of the consequences of the absolute reduction in the state financing, of the limitation in the vacancies of the public sector and the strict police control imposed by the military dictatorship in the universities: the public enrollment fell and the private one increased in proportional terms. On the other hand, in Brazil, with a reformist military regime, the limitation of vacancies was a consequence of the attempt to promote a selective reform of the public sector that wished to maintain high quality norms. The dynamics of expansion of the demand, a result of the economic and demographic growth, was then absorbed by the private sector.

According to Balán and Fanelli (1997), the public sector faced three main issues around the 1980s: the lack of financial resources, a great increase in the demand for higher education, and the bureaucratic inefficiency of educational institutions. The two first issues contributed to open access for the private sector (p. 18). Brazil, from the 1970s to the end of the 1980s, increased the participation of the private sector in the offer of higher education from 55% to 60%. Argentina, despite an increase in the participation of the private sector from 17% in the beginning of the 1970s, to 22% in the beginning of the 1980s, saw a decline in the 1990s with a participation rate of the

private sector over the total enrollment smaller than in the 1970s - only 15%. Table 4 illustrates this transition:

Table 4 – Evolution of the enrollment in public and private institutions

	Argentina			Brazil		
	Total enrollment	Enrollment in private institutions	Percentage of the enrollment in the private sector	Total enrollment	Enrollment in private institutions	Percentage of the enrollment in the private sector
1970	274634	47763	17	430473	236760	55
1982	550556	120101	22	1345000	852000	63
1991	1077212	159475	15	1570860	943276	60

Source: Balán and Fanelli, 1997, p. 38.

It is also important to look at the funding of higher education. The data presented by Balán and Fanelli (1997), based on Piffano and Klein, shows that the Argentinean government reduced the funding of higher education over the 1980s, while in Brazil there was a fluctuation in the same period, but without a significant decrease. They write that,

> the Argentinean public expenditure on universities decreased between 1980 and 1990, in real terms, 21.4%, whereas the expenditure by student decreased in 1980 to 75% of its level in 1960 and in 1990 to 26% of that same level (Piffano, 1993). In Brazil the tendency showed cyclical fluctuations more than a prolonged reduction: the transferences of the public treasure for federal institutions of education superior represented, in 1982, 330% of the expenditures in 1972, decreasing to 233% in 1984 and increasing to 299% in 1985 (Klein, 1992, p. 18).

Public universities in Latin America were forced to diversify their funding through competition for research funds, external contracts and fees. According to Torres and Schugurensky (2002), "in the late 1980s, public universities received more than 25% of total revenues from tuition and fees, and an increasing percentage of their operating budgets was obtained through contracting with industries" (p. 445). This reduction in funding of public universities is particularly problematic because these institutions carry the most important part of the research developed in Latin America. As Landinelli (2008) explains, based on García Guadilla,

> the main organized concentration of science, technology and intellectual work in the region is located within a few tens of large-scale complex institutions, primarily at the State level, which facing severe financial difficulties, cover the different areas of knowledge, have the most prestigious accumulation of science and technology degrees, are responsible for the

> bulk of graduate academic programs and contribute more than 70% of the research that takes place in these countries (p. 7).

Mollis (2007) talks about an international division of the academic work taking place globally. Through this process the production of new knowledge, as well as the development of science and technology, is concentrated in the hands of a few countries from the North, while most of the countries in the South act like consumers of this knowledge produced elsewhere. The reduction of investments in public institutions in Latin America reflects this process. Such institutions are largely responsible for the research produced in Latin American countries. In the moment that these institutions have their funding for research and other activities reduced, they stop being protagonist and become consumers of research developed in the developed countries (p. 71).

The reduction of higher education funding has a direct impact on the quality of the education offered and on the research developed in educational institutions (Coraggio, 2003, p. 110; Torres and Schugurensky, 2002, p. 441). Expansion and improvement of higher education, as mentioned by Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003), presupposes adequate funding. The authors, however, present the problematic idea in which the way to solve the funding problem is by increasing the participation of students and their family in the funding of their education.

> Although often reluctant, public tertiary institutions in a number of LA countries are increasingly moving towards cost sharing. As is the case with private provision, charging tuition to students who can afford to pay may be beneficial since it provides additional resources for tertiary education and eases the strain on State budgets. In addition, it ensures that the costs of higher education are borne by those who receive the benefits.

They also mention as positive how universities are now developing new ways of raising revenues. Institutions are becoming entrepreneurs in order to raise extra funds, doing things like selling services or renting facilities. They forget to mention the problems associated with this. In many circumstances the main functions of the universities are compromised by this new entrepreneur position. One example is when universities receive money from companies to develop research. This money almost always comes with strings attached, reducing the autonomy of

university research. This is a clear illustration of "academic capitalism" as defined by Slaughter and Rhoades (2004).

The neoliberal program creates dilemmas for higher education. Through the neoliberal agenda, free (but in their perspective expensive and inefficient) public higher education competes with elementary and secondary education. As such, a dilemma arises over whether universities should offer access to those who can pay and to the more talented poor, or to provide access for all. There is also the dilemma between public funding assured by law and by the competitive market (Coraggio, 2003, p. 113; Trindade, 2003, p. 168).

Talking about strategies to finance higher education, Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) believe that is important to attack internal inefficiencies in universities. He points out some elements that indicate a lowered efficiency in systems of higher education in Latin America, writing “throughout the region graduation rates are very low and have deteriorated in recent decades with rising costs per student as a consequence” (p. 8-9). He highlights that low internal efficiency is particularly common in countries with open access to universities, like in Argentina (p. 8-9). Other sources of inefficiency, according to the authors, are: the high proportion of overhead expenditures and salaries of non-teaching staff, the high proportion of salaries of retired faculty members, and the low ratios of student-teacher (p. 10).

When discussing access to higher education, it is important to pay attention to issues of equality. Latin America has some of the most unequal countries in the world. Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) show that “there is a strong relationship between a country's level of inequality and access to higher education. Although enrollment of students from low-income families has increased in the region, so has the enrollment of students coming from the wealthiest families. The end result appears to be a distribution of students that is very much the same before expansion. Tertiary education in Latin America still remains largely elitist with the majority of students coming from wealthier segments of society” (p. 15). Here are some examples to illustrate this point.

> In Brazil, persons belonging to the richest 20% of the population comprise more than 70% of the enrolled students whereas the poorest 40% make up just three percent of the student body. In Mexico inequities are also prevalent with the least affluent 60% of the population accounting for only 18% of tertiary enrollment. Colombia, Chile and particularly Argentina fares somewhat better, but access to tertiary education is still highly unequal (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003 p. 15).

Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) mention that regressive patterns are widespread in Latin America. They mention how a significant portion of students in public universities, particularly in countries with a zero-tuition policy, come from the wealthiest families; these students attended elite private institutions during elementary, middle and high school, and are better prepared for university entrance exams (p. 16). This is actually an argument used by neoliberals to support fees and tuitions in public universities in Latin America. But many defend an education free of charge in public institutions (Cunha, 1985; Coraggio, 2003).

Alternatives to this elitism in higher education include the creation of programs that support students from working-class families, such as credit, scholarships or fellowships. Hauptman (2002) believes that "a viable formula is making grants available to students with high need and merit and providing loans to students with some need and excellent academic records (cited by Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, p. 16).

Another essential dimension of the debate about access is the question of quality of education. Carnoy (2006) presents an interesting point. He questions,

> although numbers of graduates are important, the issue of critical thinking and innovativeness, which would be fostered by college teachers who know how to develop and nurture such skills in students, and higher education institutions that provide incentives for such teaching, may be even more important in the future. Are institutions moving in this direction? (p. 20-21).

There are many problems faced by Latin American universities that impact the quality of the education offered to students. These include professors working in part-time jobs, insufficient qualified teaching staff, structures that emphasize seniority rather than performance, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate physical facilities, "lack of equipment, obsolete instruction material and outdated curricula" (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, p. 12). In addition to that, students come from high

school with deficiencies that need to be solved in higher education. On the other hand, it is possible to see in Latin America the emergence of systems that seek to assure the quality of education. As Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) explain, "such systematic modes of quality control generally involve the certification of new tertiary institutions and accreditation of existing programs based on previously established standards and expectations" (p. 12-13).

Another problem that impacts the quality of higher education, among other aspects, is the so called brain drain. This is the emigration of highly qualified professionals from the region towards more developed countries. As Yarzábal (2001) puts it the emigration,

> increased from mid-Sixties by the repressive strategies of the totalitarian governments. [It] has stayed due to multiple factors, among which stand out: the low intraregional supply of masters and doctorates of excellence, the institutional infrastructure deficiencies, the lack of social recognition to the investigation, the small percentage of the GIP given to science and technology, and the low remuneration for academic and scientific activities. This has caused a high number of Latin American professors and researchers be strengthening the educative systems, research centers, and the economies of industrialized countries (p. 9).

With the increase in the number of students in higher education, Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) emphasize that it is necessary to develop new pedagogical approaches: a varied mix of teaching methods, learning content and programs (p. 11). This can have an impact on the graduation rates mentioned before. According to them,

> most LA countries have a long way to go in adopting a pedagogical model that involves student participation and an emphasis on "learning to learn" methodologies. Reproductions of content and sole reliance on classroom instruction are still prevalent and little focus is placed on cultivating skills such as creativity, reflection and entrepreneurship. Adoption of a more problem-based mode of knowledge formation is often hampered by entrenchment of university departments and the dominance of a discipline-led approach among instructors (Altbach, 2003). In addition, tertiary students are usually required to follow a tradition of high specialization at the beginning of their studies. This generates rigidities in the learning process and goes against the international tendency of more general and module-based undergraduate education and specialization at the graduate level (Holm-Nielsen et al., 2003, p. 11).

Many authors also talk about the connections between higher education, the State, and the market. Holm-Nielsen et al. (2003) emphasize that is important to have feedback systems with employers and recent graduates in order to evaluate if the students are getting the right qualification

to the job market. It is also a way to diagnose discrepancies between supply and demand of skilled labor (p. 13). The relationship between universities and the market is very complex. On the one hand, the university prepares highly qualified labor to the market. On the other hand, there is one component of higher education that is more related to the development of a informed citizenship. The first goal of higher education is more instrumental, while the second is more philosophical[16]. In certain circumstances the university needs to be set apart from the more immediate demands of society in order to develop its main functions. This is true in the area of research.

The integration of colleges and universities into the new economy – described by many as a knowledge economy – gave rise to what Slaughter and Rhoades (2004) define as "academic capitalism." By academic capitalism they mean the "pursuit of market and market-like activities to generate external revenues" (p. 11). Market activities "have come to permeate almost all aspects of colleges and universities, from research to instruction, including administration" (p. 303). The authors believe that "colleges and universities are integrating with the new economy, shifting from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime" (p. 7). Mollis (2003) also talks about changes in the identity of universities: "our universities have their identity like knowledge institutions altered towards the construction of a new identity similar to a '*supermercado*', where the student is a client, knowledge is a merchandise, and the professor is a teaching employee" (p. 204).

It is important to mention that the reform that higher education faced in Latin America was greatly influenced by international agencies, including the World Bank. Reforms implemented in several countries came from "global, universal and homogeneous diagnoses. They are characterized by an economist type of discourse that is ahistorical, denies multiculturalism, and is aimed at the privatization of public universities and pragmatic recognition of the market as the only source of 'innovation and quality'" (Landinelli, 2008, p. 8). Many aspects of this reform are expressed in the

[16] Ball (2008) presents an interesting reflection related to the goals of education. He says that "within policy, education is now regarded primarily from an economic point of view. The social and economic purposes of education have been collapsed into a single, overriding emphasis on policy making for economic competitiveness and an increasing neglect or sidelining (other than in rhetoric) of the social purposed of education" (p. 11-12). It is always important to recall the social functions of higher education.

creation of a new legal framework for higher education in some countries, as well as in the creation of instances for evaluation and accreditation of institutions (Mollis, 2006, p. 93).

Academic capitalism is legitimized by the current economic crisis. Decrease in the participation of the State in the share of annual operating revenues of public universities, the rise in tuitions, and other recent changes in university funding are all manifestations of the new capitalist university. In this context, it is important to remember Mollis' (2003) claim that an efficient administration of universities is oriented not by the profit motivation but for the pursuit of their social functions (p. 211).

All these elements discussed above show that higher education in Latin America is in a stage of transition. This transition, according to Yarzábal (2001), "is progressively shifting its character of public good, giving it little by little the attributes of a service or a commodity, whose costs should be borne by the 'clients' or 'consumers' and not by the State" (p. 9). The author finalizes his arguments by writing that this panorama requires a radical transformation of higher education in Latin America. In this part of the world, universities are characterized by democratic values, ands these values are currently being challenged by the neoliberal perspective (Mollis, 2006, p. 86). It is necessary to prevent the neoliberal instrumentalization of universities and create alternatives that allow for human development.

As it was possible to see, higher education in Latin America went through different stages along time. This chapter discussed the main characteristics of higher education in that area during the colonial period, the republican period, the bureaucratic-authoritarian period, and finally during the return to democracy. The debate ranges from the emergence of the first institutions of higher education to the current situation in the region, and it also points out some prominent trends in the field. Some information about higher education in Argentina and Brazil is introduced, in order to provide relevant context for the debate that will be advanced in the next two chapters. The next chapter will focus on higher education in Argentina.

CHAPTER 3 – HIGHER EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA

This chapter focuses on higher education in Argentina. The first section examines some important elements related to the emergence and development of higher education in this country, and it is written mainly based on the literature. The second section discusses the current situation of higher education in Argentina, based on interviews with relevant actors in the field of higher education.

3.1 – The development of higher education

Universities have been very important institutions to the development of Argentina. These institutions have played several roles over time. Universities were charged with training needed professionals required by society during its development and also served as cultural centers, among other activities. Since the colonial period, they have been a space for the training and socialization of the political and cultural elite of the country. From the end of the 19th century on they were essential to the social mobility of the middle classes, and from the mid-20th century on (to some extent), they have provided similar social mobility to the popular classes (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 9).

The first university in Argentina was the University of Cordoba. The history of its creation is linked to the Catholic Church, particularly to a movement that came to be known as the Counter-Reformation[17]. It is important to remember that at that time only the king and the pope could approve the establishment of universities. In 1607 the Jesuits created a novitiate that in 1610 was converted into the Colegio Máximo. In 1613 a bishop made a donation to this school in order to create a chair of Latin and Theology, which was created the following year. To many scholars this was the true foundation of the Argentine university. It was only in 1621, however, that pope

[17] The Counter-Reformation or Catholic Reform was a movement that emerged in the Catholic Church in response to the Protestant Reformation around 1517. In 1545, the Roman Catholic Church convened the Council of Trent establishing, among other measures, the creation of a list of books banned by the Church (*Index Librorum Prohibitorum*) and stimulating catechesis of the people of the so-called "new world." The Society of Jesus or Jesuits played an important part in this process.

Gregorio XV authorized all Jesuit schools that were located more than two hundred miles from the nearest university to confer university degrees (Endrek, 1992, p. 14; Ramírez, 2002, p. 46; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 13). Accordingly, in 1623 the Colegio Máximo was renamed the Universidad de Córdoba del Tucumán[18].

Within its own colonies, the Spanish throne created two kinds of universities: the major or official universities and the minor universities. Major universities were inspired by medieval universities in Spain, particularly by the University of Salamanca. They were organized in four main schools: Theology, Law, Arts, and Medicine, with the first being seen as the most important. The universities of Mexico and Lima are examples of such major universities. Most of the universities in Latin America, however, were minor universities. These institutions had limited autonomy and were generally controlled by religious groups. Such is the case of the University of Córdoba.

The Jesuit Society in Latin America used education for two primary purposes: to promote the indoctrination of Catholic principles and to prepare the ruling classes required by the emergence of capitalism. In 1767 the Jesuits were expelled from Spanish domains, as a result of several political changes that were occurring in Spain during the so-called enlightened despotism period[19]. This of course had an impact on the educational system in development in these territories. The kings of the new dynasty wanted to modify the content of university programs and to strengthen royal power. In Cordoba, for instance, the viceroy became the vice-patron of the university.

According to Buchbinder (2010),

18 According to D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005), the 1613 Jesuit College became a university in 1622, making arts and theology courses available (p. 91).

[19] Enlightened despotism, enlightened absolutism or benevolent despotism generally refers to "a form of government in the 18th century in which absolute monarchs pursued legal, social, and educational reforms inspired by the Enlightenment." These governments embraced Enlightenment principles such as rationality, and they "typically instituted administrative reform, religious toleration, and economic development but did not propose reforms that would undermine their sovereignty or disrupt the social order" (www.britannica.com). There are many explanations for the expulsion of Jesuits from Spain and its territories during this period. Some say that the Enlightenment had been a force of anticlericalism in Europe. Others say that monarchies in Europe were concerned with the excessive power of Jesuits in their territories. Mörner (1966) asserts that regalism – or "the assertion of royal rights in ecclesiastical affairs at the expense of the pope" (p. 157) – was one of the most important aspects in this process. In his view, "the removal of the Jesuits was partly meant to open the way for a further extension of the already vast royal control over the overseas church and, thereby, over colonial societies" (p. 159).

> This movement for change in the university system gained momentum with Carlos III, who hoped to raise the level of scientific rigor of university research by stimulating interest in science and standardizing course requirements. This movement, which had decisive influence on the expulsion of the Jesuits from areas ruled by the Spanish crown, was met with strong resistance in Spanish-ruled universities and was progressively weakened during the reign of Carlos IV in the end of the 18th century. Fear that universities would become incubators of revolutionary ideas provoked a notable pullback in the rollout of these projects for transforming the university (p. 20).

The idea of the Spanish throne was to replace the Jesuits with secular ecclesiastics who could teach without professing their doctrine. However, in Cordoba the majorities of secular ecclesiastics were trained by the Jesuits and shared their principles. Secular clergy and Franciscans started then to fight for control over the university (Pueyrredon, 1953, p. 39; Endrek, 1992, p. 15; Ramírez, 2002, p. 54; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 21).

The governor of Buenos Aires gave the direction of the university to the Franciscans, whose regency went from 1767 to 1807. The purpose of this measure, according to Pueyrredon (1953), was twofold: on one hand, to avoid interruption of instruction; to provide teachers with a different doctrine from the Jesuits, on the other (p. 4). Thus, the university, "fell under the intervention of royal authority, but was not yet secularized" (Ramírez, 2002, p. 56). From 1781 on, as Buchbinder (2010) explained, the university started to grant doctoral degrees to seculars (p. 31). In 1784, an important innovation was the creation of the *cátedra* of Civil Law or *Instituta* (Buchbinder, 2010; Ramírez, 2002, p. 78).

In 1778 a royal order stated that the universities should be handed over to the secular clergy. The viceroy, however, did not implement this measure. His motives have been explained as follows:

> the University of Cordoba could not be equated to the other universities of the monarchy. According to his arguments, the institution in Cordoba could not be formally considered a university and, on the other hand, there were not enough funds to support their *cátedras*, which used to be taught free of charge by the Franciscans (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 22).

The secular clergy continued to make pressure to assume control of the university. Finally, in 1800 a royal decree created a new university in Cordoba, extinguishing the one created by the

Jesuits. This was the end of the Franciscan control over the university. The Real Universidad de San Carlos y de Nuestra Señora del Monserrat was created as a major university, equated to the universities of Alcalá y Salamanca in Spain, which began to work in 1808.

Colonial universities were in charge of preparing the local elite to work for the monarchy and for the church. The University of Cordoba prepared their students mainly to be part of the cleric. Along the years other roles were being introduced inside these institutions. In synthesis, the university "fulfills an essential role in the education of the lettered elite and grants members thereof the necessary tools for work in bureaucratic administration and the exercise of political power" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 31). Having a university degree was not necessary to be part of the colonial bureaucracy, but in some cases this was required. As explained by the author, often the access to the university served as a means of social mobility within the elite.

Of course access to higher education in the beginning was restricted to a few. Around 50 students attended the first courses created in Cordoba. All of them were part of the elite. The colonial society was split into basically two groups: the Spanish, in one group, and the mestizos, indigenous, mulattoes and slaves in another. Access was granted to the first group. It is important to mention that the line between these two groups could sometimes be crossed, and "many mestizos were admitted as part of the Spanish population, especially in peripheral areas of the empire" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 29-31). There was, however, resistance coming from the Spanish in Argentina. As Buchbinder (2010) explained, "near the end of the colonial period and during the first half of the 19th century there were mechanisms of segregation that tended to limit access to the university and the potential role of such as a means of social mobility" (p. 32).

The need to prove *bloody purity* to access university was an excluding requirement existing by the end of the colonial period. This was not an explicit requirement stated in the constitutions of the university approved in 1664 but in practice there were example of students that had their plea of attending university denied due to their origins. The *illegitimate*, as some of them were known, did

not have the same privileges as the Spanish. Only with the XIX century were these practices being overcome (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 32).

In terms of academic content, the scholastic was the dominant perspective in the origins of the university in Argentina. This perspective underlined the importance of critical thinking and reason in the educational process. This reason, however, was subordinated to the religious dogmas. There were efforts to reformulate the ideas prevailing inside the university and to incorporate elements of the modern science and philosophy along the years. During the XVIII century there was an attempt to incorporate novelties from the sciences and philosophy inside the university but this attempt was limited and in general these innovations were incorporated under the broader boundaries of the scholastic (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 24; Ramírez, 2002, p. 100).

In 1781 universities began to grant the title of doctors also to seculars, and near the end of the 18th century they began to do likewise with students of law (Del Bello, Barsky and Giménez, 2007; Buchbinder, 2010). "This marks the beginning of the College of Law and Social Sciences in 1791. Thus the University of Córdoba, after a century and a half of operation, ceased to be exclusively theological in focus" (http://www.unc.edu.ar/institucional/historia/origenes). In the XIX there were new efforts to renovate the educative content – around 1815, for instance, the university reformulated its curriculum incorporating some elements of the enlightenment –yet in this period it is possible to identify challenges to the scholastic view of the world (Buchbinder, 2010; Lamarra, 2003, p. 24).

The independence of Argentina, in the beginning of the XIX century, brought some changes to the government of the University of Cordoba. This institution--national since 1810--with the fall of the central government in 1820 passed its administration on to the provincial authorities of Córdoba (Endrek, 1992, p. 16; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 34). During this period, the university faced several funding problems. The lack of students was also an issue[20]. In general, "during the decades of the 1830s and 1840s the university attempted few changes in its organization and general

[20] Ramírez (2002) offers data about enrollment and number of graduates in the University of Cordoba from 1768 to 1853 (p. 133). Endrek (1993) presents data about enrollment in the University of Cordoba from 1810 to 1874 (p. 10-12). There are some small disparities in the data about enrollment from 1810 to 1853 between these two authors.

functioning" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 35). Important personalities in the political life of Argentina continued to be educated in Europe during this time. In 1856 the university was transferred once again to the national jurisdiction (i.e. nationalized)[21].

Indeed, in the second half of the XIX century there were important measures adopted in relation to the University of Cordoba. After nationalization, in 1857 "a new constitution was adopted for the university that determined that its rector…would be elected by the cloister with later approval by the national government" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 36). According to Buchbinder (2010), in 1864 a new reform took place: the College of Theology was suppressed and the study of Law was renewed and modernized so as to eliminate the study of natural law and incorporate the study of Argentine civil law (p. 36). Miranda (1993), while analyzing the same period, explained that in the beginning of the 1870s the university started to transform its organization and orientation which until that moment focused on the Schools of Law and Theology (p. 35). She references the creation of the School of Physical and Mathematical Sciences and the School of Medical Sciences in the 1870s. The creation of these institutions, in her view, "was not only driven by the intrinsic development of these scientific disciplines, but also by the strong ideological influence they represent: that is, positivism" (p. 38).

Finally, in 1879, a new statute was established for the University of Cordoba, and it included four schools: Law and Social Sciences; Physical and Mathematical Sciences, where engineers and architects would be trained; Medicine; and Philosophy and Humanities. During the 1880s there were strong conflicts between the liberals and Catholics, "deepening in this sense the separation between the university and ecclesiastical spheres, although without doubt religious influence continued to be a trait that distinguished the university of Cordoba" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 40).

A very important step in the area of Argentinian higher education involved the creation of the University of Buenos Aires in 1821. A new model of institution was developed – the model of

[21] There are some divergences about the year of nationalization of the Univeristy of Cordoba. Del Bello, Barsky and Giménez (2007) and Buchbinder (2010) insist that it took place in 1854 and Lamarra (2003) in 1858. The webpage of the National Univeristy of Cordoba says that the institution was nationalized in 1856.

the French university that was being restructured (i.e. the Napoleonic imperial university) (Donghi, 1962, p. 35; Miranda, 1993, p. 39; Lamarra, 2003). According to Buchbinder (2010), "Unlike Córdoba, at the time of the creation of the first agencies of higher education in Buenos Aires the cultural reality there already had a secular character that would leave its mark on these new institutions" (p. 42). The scholastic, however, continued to have an impact at some institutions. As a matter of fact, the first five rectors of the university and those that led it until the fall of Juan Manuel de Rosas in 1852 (…) were all priests. Only from this year on was there an end to the tradition of designating clergy to the position of rector (http://www.uba.ar/historia/ Retrieved in 03/20/2013).

There were claims to create a university in Buenos Aires since 1770s, resistance to this idea persisted. The opposition coming from Córdoba was an important element in the delay of the creation of such an institution (Donghi, 1962, p. 15; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 43). Some institutions of higher education, however, were created before the project of a university became reality. In 1780 "the office of Protomedico was created, which had the primary objective of controlling public health and the exercise of those professions associated with it. Later, this same institution was authorized to teach the medical profession" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 43). In 1799 the schools of design and navigation were founded. The process of creation of institutions of higher education continued in the beginning of the XIX century. "The study of medicine was concentrated in a Military Medical Institution that, founded in 1813, functioned regularly until 1821. In 1810 the School of Mathematics was created; in 1814 the Law Academy began; in 1816 the Academy of Mathematics and Military Arts was founded; in 1816 a new school of art was established, and finally in 1818 a nautical school was founded" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 43-44).

The University of Buenos Aires was created through a provincial decree. The presbyter Antonio Sáenz, its first rector, was the most important catalyst of this institution. The university was organized in departments, and some of them were created from existing institutions of higher education. In the project of the University of Buenos Aires there were six departments: the

department of First Letters, which was focused on basic education, and the departments of Preparatory Studies, Medicine, Exact Sciences, Law and Sacred Sciences (Donghi, 1962, p. 35; Ramallo, 1992; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 45). The new institution, however, faced several challenges in the beginning:

> During the early years the primary organizational efforts were focused on the departments of First Letters and Preparatory Studies. The main problem with the other departments was based in the scarce number of students they received. The department of Sacred Sciences, for example, was not able to function for lack of students. Meanwhile, only four students enrolled in Medicine, 165 in the Exact Sciences … and 150 in Preparatory Studies. In Law, likely the only truly new institution, there were only nine enrolled students. But this reduced number of students was not the only problem experienced by the university. The lack of commitment of various professors to teaching, the budgetary subordination experienced by the university in terms of the availability of funds from the province and the lack of internal regulation were all elements that conspired against the university's regular functioning (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 46).

The condition of the newly created institution was so dramatic that in 1824 rector Sáenz wrote to the governor of the province "that if serious measures were not taken, the university was under threat to become an 'assembly of phonies'" (Ramallo, 1992, p. 78). The University of Buenos Aires was affected by the political situation of the time. In 1838, for instance, in the midst of the economic difficulties brought on by the French blockade of Buenos Aires, the university saw its provincial funding significantly reduced (Donghi, 1962, p. 52; Ramallo, 1992, p. 83; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 49). Tuitions had to be increased in order to obtain resources to pay professors and maintain the institution. Some professors at the time even taught without any financial compensation. Many important personalities of the province of Buenos Aires continued to be educated in this institution during this time, nonetheless.

Until the end of the 1850s, according to Buchbinder (2010), despite the creation of new cátedras "the curricula and organization of the university still remained the same as when first created in 1833, and the university remained strictly controlled by political powers" (p. 51). An important happening in this decade is that the School of Medicine acquired autonomy from the university in 1852, and will remain separated from this institution until 1874.

Changes take place from 1861 on, when Juan María Gutiérrez is appointed rector of the University of Buenos Aires. "The process of liberating the university from ecclesiastical control took on new momentum when, starting at this time, the development of scientific studies began in a truly modern sense" (http://www.uba.ar/historia/ Retrieved in 03/20/2013). This can be seen, for instance, in the creation of the department of Exact Sciences, which included courses in three areas: Pure Mathematics, Applied Mathematics and Natural History. In 1865 Gutiérrez developed bylaws that established that the university would be governed by a counsel of professors presided over by the rector; a clear attempt to promote transformations in the university government.

In 1874, through a decree of the provincial executive power, the university was converted into a federation of schools: Humanities and Philosophy, Medical Sciences (now reincorporated into the university), Law and Social Sciences, Mathematics and the Physical and Natural Sciences (these last two would be brought together later on). Finally, during the 1880s the university went through an important transformation related to its nationalization in 1881. "The university was transferred to the national state soon after the nationalization of the city of Buenos Aires and was accompanied in this process by other cultural and educational institutions, like the Provincial Public Library" (http://www.uba.ar/historia/ Retrieved in 03/20/2013).

The first national law of higher education in Argentina was the Law 1597 (1885), which came to be known as the Avellaneda Law. This law was applied to the two national universities existing at the time, the universities of Cordoba and Buenos Aires, which until that moment had been regulated through decrees and statutes established particularly for them. Such universities had to adjust their statutes to the law, mainly pertaining to administrative matters. The law was a response to the sharp increase in enrollment between 1870 and 1880. From that moment on these institutions started to be seen as unities that can be controlled by the state, within the limits of the university autonomy (Mollis, 1990, p. 65). The tension between state control and university autonomy proved to be a constant element in university history within Argentina. Despite the university's autonomy, the government at this time had important powers, such as:

> Election of candidates to occupy vacant teaching positions, from the list proposed by the Superior Counsel, which had been submitted prior to approval; dismissal of professors as proposed by the Schools; and finally, albeit most important, the right to veto university statutes, the only legal instrument that regulated the control, organization and functioning of each national university (Mollis, 1990, p. 65).

Until the beginning of the XX century there was a close connection between the university and the political power. According to Cano (1985), "members of the political elite alternated their governmental roles with work in teaching and university management" (p. 11). He explained that "in these conditions of social and political homogeneity and the functional associations of such, university law allowed for wide university autonomy which at few times had to be applied, due to a lack of conflict between the powers of the state and the directors of the university" (p. 12). Mollis (1990), in turn, characterized the Avellaneda Law as "ductile". In her view, that is the reason why this law was in effect for 62 years. The promulgation of this law, according to the author, expressed the centralizing purposes of the national-state under construction.

The role of universities at that time was to educate the ruling class, and there was a strong preference of students for professional careers such as law and medicine. The data regarding enrollment in the universities of Cordoba and Buenos Aires presented in table 5 illustrate this tendency. As it is possible to see, in the University of Buenos Aires enrollment in medicine was over 50% during the three years. In the University of Cordoba enrollment in this course was also high, at 44.4% in 1885.

Table 5 – Students enrolled per school at the Universities of Cordoba and Buenos Aires (1983-1985)

	1883		1884		1885	
	Buenos Aires	Cordoba	Buenos Aires	Cordoba	Buenos Aires	Cordoba
Medicine	363 52,5%	65 38,2%	332 56,8%	81 40,3%	351 57,9%	96 44,4%
Law	180 26%	80 47%	154 26,4%	82 40,8%	142 23,4%	80 37%
Physics and Mathematics	148 21,5%	25 14,7%	98 16,7%	38 18,9%	113 18,6%	40 18,5%
Total	692	170	584	201	606	216

Source: Miranda, 1993, p. 43.

From 1885 to 1917, Mollis (1990) identified three tendencies in the development of higher

education in Argentina: an institutional differentiation of the university subsystem, elitism, and professionalization (p. 65). From 1918 to 1930, the author noted two new tendencies: the nationalization and democratization of universities. The tendency towards professionalization, seen in the previous years, remained constant (p. 66).

In the first period mentioned by Mollis (1990), from 1885 to 1917, three provincial universities were created: the University of Santa Fe, created in 1889; the University of La Plata, created in 1890 and functioning by 1897; and the University of Tucuman, created in 1912 and functioning by 1914. These two last universities intended to be an alternative to the traditional model of the Universities of Cordoba and Buenos Aires. The University of La Plata "offers a modernizing model, with a positivist orientation reflected in the predominance of experimental and scientific teaching" (p. 67). The University of Tucuman was inspired by that experience.

The University of La Plata, according to Mollis (1990), was not as successful as expected by its founders during the first years of its existence. Enrollment passed from 47 students in 1897 to 105 in 1902, and reduced to 75 students in 1904. She points out two main reasons for such a phenomenon. First the funding provided by the provincial government was limited, and second the lack of national recognition of the titles granted by the university contributed to such low numbers. Finally, in 1905 this university was nationalized (p. 68). The University of La Plata possessed some important peculiar initiatives, such as "the creation of a Secondary School for Women, the furtherance of University service, and the organization of the Pedagogical Section of the School of Law and Social Sciences" (p. 70).

The development of actions in the field of university service by the University of La Plata is a phenomenon worth highlighting. Besides regular classes, as Mollis (1990) explained, vacation courses and evening courses were also created. The purposes of these actions were:

> The incorporation of the public from diverse social classes, guilds, corporations and hierarchies in the teaching work of the university; the diffusion of history and science from the universities, based in ancient sources and foreign languages; and mutual teaching or reciprocal instruction between the professors and students of the university (p. 71).

The University of Tucuman was created some years after and inspired by the University of La Plata. Under the motto "Los pies en la tierra y la mirada en el cielo," or "feet on the ground and eyes on the sky," this university proposed a connection between the courses and the local economies, or a more practical education. In Mollis' (1990) interpretation, "this conception of university teaching reflected the modernizing purposes of the regional bourgeois" (p. 73). According to Lamarra (2003), authors who had studied this period agree that the Universities of La Plata and Tucuman anticipated some innovations that were incorporated years later by the university Reform of 1918 (p. 29).

Mollis (1990) noted that between 1885 and 1917 there was an elitist tendency in all institutions of higher education in Argentina, though the focus of her work is the university. She explains that "the impulse of the directing elite of the '80s to maintain the university as the trainer of the political cadres indirectly promoted university access primarily among certain social groups, due to the accepted validity of elitist ideals held by the inner circles of the regime" (p. 77). She additionally explained that the elitist character of higher education in Argentina depended in great part of the region of the country. The increasing middle class of Argentina at the time started to pressure for more political participation and educational opportunities. An important aspect of this historical moment is the emergence of reform proposals toward technical education.

In the beginning of the XX century a trend involving nationalization of universities in Argentina began. The University of La Plata was nationalized in 1905 (Law 1595). Afterward the National University of the Litoral was created in 1919 (Law 10,861), from the University of Santa Fe, and finally the University of Tucuman was nationalized in 1924. Another university proposed by representatives of the Radical Party and strongly sported by students was created in 1939, the University of Cuyo (Law 12,578). Students organized in the reformist movement, as a matter of fact, played an important role in the creation of the University of Cuyo. This tendency toward nationalization of universities, in Mollis' (1990) perspective, illustrates the purpose to centralize the state power (p. 81).

In the end of the XIX century and beginning of the XX century new social actors fought for access to higher education in Argentina, which until that point was dominated by the elite. These new actors were descendants of immigrants and part of a new middle class. Not all of them, however, were included in traditional courses. “Vías menores de educación superior” (Cano, 1985, p. 12) or shorter courses in non-university institutions are created to incorporate them. Examples of these courses are the normal schools and the military schools. In fact, around the 1870s we have records of the first antecedents that could be considered the beginnings of pedagogy at the university level (Lamarra, 2003, p. 41). These alternatives allowed the inclusion of women and poor men in higher education. D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005) said that these new students would politicize higher education and this will lead to the University Reform of 1918 (p. 92).

1918 marked the beginning of a process of democratization in Argentine universities. During this period takes place an important university reform or the Cordoba Reform. As explained in Chapter One, this movement began in Argentina but had a huge impact on many Latin American countries. Mollis (1990) defined democratization as the quantitative and qualitative inclusion of social sectors previously excluded from higher education. The quantitative inclusion in her perspective is related to the increase in enrollment but also in graduation. The qualitative democratization in her view involves the inclusion of social groups that do not belong to the tradition elites (extern democratization) but also to the increase in political representation of these new actors inside universities (internal democratization) (p. 86).

Mollis (1990) compared the enrollment in national and provincial Argentine universities five years before and after the reform. As she explained,

> between 1913 and 1917 the total number of matriculated university students was 32,500, with an annual average of 6,500 enrollments; between 1918 and 1922, the second period, the total of matriculates was 58,600, with an annual average of 11.720 enrollments, which represents an 80% increase in the annual average of enrollments (p. 88).

The number of students graduating also increased 244% in this period (between 1913 and 1922). One important element to democratize higher education in the period was, in Mollis’ (1990)

view, the policy not to limit the number of entering students at the university (p. 88). The author made an interesting point by noting the number of enrollment increased significantly during this period, but if one also looked at the growth of the population that increase may not be as relevant when considering only enrollments. The data from the table 6 illustrates that argument:

Table 6 - Number of students enrolled in universities per 10,000 inhabitants per province (1920, 1925 and 1930)

Province / year	1920	1925	1930
Buenos Aires*	25	21	24
Litoral**	6	11	14
Cordoba	15	20	25
Tucuman	2	3	2

* It includes the Federal Capital and the province of Buenos Aires (UBA and UNLP)
** It includes the provinces of Santa Fe, Entre Rios and Corrientes
Source: Mollis, 1990, p. 89.

Additionally, these data show that the increase in population coverage was higher in the area where the university reform started, in Cordoba. The democratization happened not only through the increase of enrollments, but also in the political participation inside universities, as Mollis (1990) clarified. As a reflection of what was happening in society at large, where new groups arrived to the government, the incoming students, organized under a group entitled the Argentine University Federation, claimed more participation in the government of universities.

Brutto (2009) synthesized the main claims of the movement of 1918:

> Autonomy, a three-part government with representatives from the cloisters of professors, students and graduates, the liberty of professorships and parallel professorships, a rubric for competitions for professorships and for professors' periodical reviews, the extension of university activities to the larger society, the ability of graduates to decide on the formulation of the oath, unrestricted access to enrollment in a university, and free access to educational offerings, among others (p. 47).

Not all these claims were attained during the reform, such as free instruction, that came to be achieved later during Peron government. However, it is possible to say that the democratization of the universities in fact took place, with the support of the government under Hipólito Yrigoyen, from the radical party. As Mollis (1990) explained, "the reforms suffered by the 1918 statutes of the Universities of Buenos Aires and Cordoba, which later impacted the rest of the national universities, constituted the axis of the transformation of the democratic government of the

universities of the period" (p. 95). The increase in the democratic participation inside universities, by its turn, was responsible for some social mobility of the middle class, and of immigrants in particular (Brutto, 2009, p. 47).

Yrigoyen (1916-1922 and 1928-1930) was the first democratic president to be elected without electoral fraud in Argentina. His government, according to Mollis (1995), "represented a deep renovation in social life: for the first time a government was representative of the majority of the population and thus permeable to the influences of these social sectors" (p. 4). Despite his efforts to promote change, however, the author explained that the economic structures did not change substantially. The economic power continued under conservatives, and they were also dominant in Congress and other social areas (p. 4).

It is important to mention that there were two groups inside the radical party with different ideologies. The group led by Yrigoyen was more liberal and open to the democratization of institutions, while another group led by Alvear was more conservative. During the government of Avear (1922-1928) some modification in the statutes of the universities took place, indicating a countertendency in relation to the previous government (Mollis, 1990, p. 95).

The second government of Yrigoyen was very brief and aborted by a military coup. During this government the statutes of 1918 once again guided the universities. With the military coup of September 1930, however, the democratizing period inside universities ended: "the system of Argentine university statutes were modified so as to suppress 'student participation in the university government,' as it was considered 'anarchistic,' with the incarceration of a number of reformist professors and students" (Mollis, 1990, p. 96).

During the period under the scope of Mollis' (1990) investigation, 1885-1930, she identifies one important feature in Argentine higher education: a tendency towards professionalization. By professionalization she meant a relationship between institutional learning and professions. In other words, the higher education courses existing are associated with specific professions. She mentioned three factors that corroborated to that professionalization of higher education:

> 1 – economic motivations: industrialization and the consequent specialization of productive activities (derived from the rational division of labor) demands trained (that is, certified) human resources, to perform the functions necessary for a diversified labor market; 2 – political motivations: the "bureaucratization" consequently produced by the complex organization which the national state acquired in its first stage translated into … institutionalization penetrating other areas of civil society. These institutions required employees whose rational authority was made legitimate by receiving the enabling title granted by universities; and 3 – social motivations: the consciousness or perception that some sectors of society, particularly socially mobile groups, begin to organize themselves around the legitimacy granted by 'professional titles' which converts them into holders of prestige that have acquired status and acquire expectations of economic advancement (p. 97-98).

Political and social motivations were dominant in Argentina, according to Mollis (1990). She added that from 1901 to 1930 it is also possible to notice a preference towards classic courses such as medicine, law, and civil engineering (p. 98). The liberal-professional model was particularly dominant from 1915 to 1930 (p. 100). In her words, "the university for lawyers and doctors continued as the hegemonic model for the training of future leaders of the political class and the creation of 'resources' for the state" (p. 114).

In 1930 Argentina was dominated by a military coup; the first of many others that the country had to endure during the 20th century. Universities suffered intervention from the government, and "this begins a cycle characterized by what could be called 'the University of the Restoration of the Oligarchy.' This same period is characterized by moderate growth in university enrollments, by a climate of obscurantism and renewed clericalism and by the semi-illegal goings-on of the student movement" (Cano, 1985, p. 13).

Public universities, as Plotkin (2006) explained, at each military coup had to bear radical changes such as the loss of autonomy and independence, massive losses of teachers, and new political orientations (p. 44). The reduction of university autonomy in Argentina, according to Plotkin (2006), happened not only during military government but also in some constitutional governments. He makes explicit the contradictions of the first Peron government (1946-1955), a period in which the autonomy of universities was limited, on the one hand, but the doors of public universities were opened, on the other hand (p. 44).

Other authors agree that autonomy was limited during the first Peron government (Azevedo, 2001, p. 100; Lamarra, 2003, p. 32). The law 13.031 (10/09/1947) stated that universities had technical, pedagogical and scientific autonomy. In practice, however, universities experienced high levels of government intervention. The law established, for instance, that faculty and students should not have direct or indirect political participation as members of the university. This is a clear attempt to separate politics from education. However, the law defines that rectors will be nominated by the government, without any participation of the academic community. "It is an ironic contradiction: the Peronist government clearly sees the role of rector as being political, as it takes upon itself the incumbent responsibility of designating this top manager of the university without consulting the academic community, yet this position directs an institution that Peronism contends is apolitical" (Azevedo, 2001, p. 100-101).

It is important to underline that during Peron government, the open access policy to universities was introduced in Argentina. University enrollment increased from 47.400 in 1945 to 136.362 in 1955, an increment of 187% in ten years (Lamarra, 2003, p. 32). Only in the University of Buenos Aires, as a consequence of this policy, enrollment passed from 17.742 students in 1942 to 41.325 ten years after (Plotkin, 2006, p 44). To D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005), there is a massing of higher education during this government, as well as a transition of the system to incorporate the principles of social justice and national sovereignty (p. 92).

The Universidad Obrera Nacional was created in 1948, "as part of a national system of learning and professional guidance and training aimed at engineering for factories" (Cano, 1985, p. 14). Non-university higher education also increased significantly during the period. Before the 1950s, in Krotsch's (1996) analysis, "in an almost imperceptible way the university that served the traditional elite morphed into a more differentiated system, still academic in composition but representing diverse interests, de-monopolized in terms of the institutions that offered higher education and the social classes that constituted the demand for such" (p. 35). This process of diversification of the system had continuity in the following governments.

In September of 1955 Peron was overthrown and the *Revolución Libertadora* (Liberating Revolution) took power. This had a large impact on universities. Students who militated against Peron occupied universities and there was little resistance to it. New university authorities were appointed during this time. As Buchbinder (2010) explained, "the coalition that assumed power in 1955 was formed of political factions and intellectuals of very diverse origins" (p. 169). This included, according to the author, liberals from left and right, socialists and diverse other groups. To the Ministry of Education, for instance, the new government selected Atilio Dell'Oro Maini, a conservative catholic. His administration, however, appointed personalities such as José Luis Romero, "a distinguished historian, though a recognized militant socialist", as inventor of the University of Buenos Aires (p. 170).

If during Peron's government there was a centralization of the university system, the Revolución Libertadora tried to go in the opposite direction. Shortly after taking power the new political leaders reestablished the Avellaneda law, but soon replaced it for the Decree 6,403 (1955), that increased and strengthened the university's autonomy. This legal document "conceded to university authorities the power to administer and give structure to their patrimony and curricular plans. This document also granted them liberty to organize their own forms of university government and, of course, dictate their own statutes as long as they secured 'managerial responsibility from representatives from the cloister of professors'" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 172). Progressively, "the approval of curricula and the designation of professors to particular positions fell definitively in the hands of the same university authorities" (p. 172).

Universities had more autonomy during this time, but it is necessary to say that the command was to "de-Peronize" these institutions. For instance, "the teaching staff of the universities was to be declared by commission and completely replace, beginning with the call for new competitions for titles and antecedents" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 170). Many professors and staff linked the Peron government to their lost jobs. At the same time, "the government in fact resolved to reintegrate to academic chairs all those professors that had been renounced between 1943 and

1946. Political criteria also prevailed in the massive call for applications that was implemented during 1956 and 1957" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 171).

During the time the *Revolución Libertadora* was in power only two public universities were created, from existing institutions: the Universidad Nacional del Sur, created from the Instituto Tecnológico del Sur; and the Universidad Nacional del Nordeste, from the national universities of Litoral and Tucuman. The Universidad Obrera was reorganized and became the Universidad Tecnológica Nacional (Cano, 1985, p. 14; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 173). On the other hand, the government created the conditions for the flourishing of the private sector.

Until the end of the 1950s higher education in Argentina was under state's monopoly. Plotkin (2006) wrote that there were private institutions working with higher education in this period, some of them linked to the Catholic Church, but they could not grant degrees. The Decree 6.403 (1955) opened the possibility to authorize the creation of private universities. This measure faced strong resistance coming from students and other members of the academic community. On the one hand were those that defended a state monopoly of universities, and on the other hand those that supported the possibility of the private sector to grant degrees as well. This measure generated the first rupture in the political group that controlled universities, leading later to the resignation of Dell'Oro Maini and Jose Luis Romero (Mendoza and Busala, 2002, p. 10; Lamarra, 2003, p. 33; Buchbinder, 2010, p. 174).

Only in 1958, with Law 14,557, the first private universities were authorized to grant degrees accepted all over the country. This law regulated private universities and was a landmark in the history of higher education in Argentina. It expressed the confrontations between the supporters of secular and "free" education. The private sector in Argentina was developed to answer the demands of a conservative sector that wanted to have a specific professional education.

Plotkin (2006) presented data about the increase of the private sector in Argentina. In 1961 there were five private universities accredited in Argentina. In 1968 there were 12 private universities, in charge of around 5% of the university enrollment in the country (16,122 students out

of 237,256). As the author noted earlier, the first universities were in general religious and linked to the Catholic Church, but this changed along the 1960s as more secular institutions started to be created. These institutions could not receive any funding from the state, according to the law of 1958, and were completely funded by students' fees (p. 46).

Some authors explained that the university that developed from 1955 until 1966 (the period between the fall of Peronism and the military coup led by General Onganía) was an institution that temporarily managed to combined academic development and political participation (Cano, 1985, p. 14; Krotsch, 1996; Lamarra, 2003, p. 33). Buchbinder (2010) said that this period is remembered in history for the renovation of the academic life. Institutions tried to deal with the issues related to the fast expansion of higher education; modernize curriculums; and also to strengthen the scientific activities of universities. The author, however, underlined that this renovation did not happened in all institutions. In the University of Buenos Aires, for instance, it took place in some schools and in some areas. "The impact of modernization was certainly limited in universities of the interior, like Tucumán or Cuyo or even in the better part of the academic divisions of the University of Córdoba" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 178-179).

Buchbinder (2010) mentioned some changes that took place in universities, such as the establishment of new courses (e.g.: psychology and sociology) and the reformation of existing courses. Service activities were also stimulated, in an attempt to reach communities with ideas produced inside universities. Furthermore, the author makes reference to a relevant transformation in institutional organization that happened at the Universidad Nacional del Sur and partially in other institutions; that is, "the replacement of a structure based on schools into one organized by departments. The objective was to unite, through these departments, the specialties that were common across all universities or schools and closely unite teaching and research within them" (p. 182).

It is important to mention that in 1958 the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) was created--an organization that up to today plays a strategic role in the

promotion of science and technology in Argentina. This institution emerged in a context where scientific knowledge started to be seen internationally as essential to contribute to the social and economic development of countries. Other measures were implemented seeking to reinforce the development of research inside universities, such as the expansion of full-time faculty. The University of Buenos Aires had nine full-time professors in 1958, and this number increased to around 700 in 1966 (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 181). Another important organization was created between 1957 and 1958, the Interuniversity Council, integrated by the rectors of all universities.

A new military dictatorship in 1966 brought changes once again to public universities. Buchbinder (2010) explained that many scholars associate this date with the end of the renovation period in public universities. In his view, this process started around the beginning of the 1960s, when the modernizing projects were losing strength due to several conflicts. In his words, "in addition to those conflicts which arose from different opinions regarding the curricular, pedagogical or scientific orientations which fit the role and functions of a university, there were also political disputes" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 185).

The military government under Juan Carlos Onganía tried to limit the university autonomy and put an end to the co-government in public universities. About one month after the dictatorship was installed, on July 29, there was a violent episode that became known as "The Night of the Long Batons". Professors, students and graduates had occupied five schools of the University of Buenos Aires in protest against these measures of the dictatorship in relation to the university. They were brutally dislodged from the university by the police, and many of them were detained. This government, however, failed to achieve its main goals in Buchbinder's (2010) view, such as reducing the increasing politization of universities. Confrontations between the government and students were strong during this time, and many students died in different political demonstrations (Lamarra, 2003, p. 34). Students organized their protests due to increases of prices in university restaurants and the insufficient funding of public universities, among other things. Student union organizations were strengthened and started to be intensely associated to political parties.

The government implemented a policy of creating new universities. Only between 1971 and 1973 12 universities were created (Lamarra, 2003, p. 35). In Cano's (1985) view, "this political objective was related to a technocratic developmentalism, that argued the necessity of creating within the country 'poles of development, made up of new universities with a regional orientation, among other things'" (p. 15). Among the motivations to the creation of these institutions, the author mentioned relieving congestion within the larger universities and creating human resources for a technocratic-authoritarian project (p. 16). Buchbinder (2010), however, explained that the diversification of higher education was one of the most important strategies used by the military government to reduce students' mobilization. The idea of the government was to decentralize the higher education system, and also to created smaller institutions to avoid the concentration of huge number of students in one same area. The so-called Taquini plan, named after Alberto Taquini who was dean of the School of Pharmacy and Biochemistry of the University of Buenos Aires,

> …sought to make compatible the process of expanding university enrollment, the creation of a truly scientific university, the necessities that arise from regional development and the process of depoliticization. In this same vein, this plan sought to bring about a wider geographic distribution of students, thus far concentrated in the large cities, and also stimulate through enrollments the development of the exact sciences and technology, which until this point only represented the studies of 15% of university students (p. 200).

During this dictatorship many professors of public universities lost their jobs again (some resigned and some were fired). In Plotkin's (2006) view, the private sector indirectly benefited from this situation. On the one hand, some professors migrated from the public to the private sector. On the other hand, the private sector started to attract more students who would perceive this sector as more stable and organized (p. 47). The law 17,604 (1967), implemented during this government, was somehow contradictory in relation to the private sector. This law established that the private sector needed an authorization from the government to operate. At the same time, it allowed these institutions to receive funding from the public sector (p. 48). In 1973 the federal government interrupted the authorization of new private institutions; a measure that will remain in general valid until Carlos Menem government.

Krotsch (1996) underlined the relevance of two cycles of expansion in Argentine higher education. The first cycle was characterized by the expansion of the private sector, and the second by the regional expansion of the public sector. Argentina went from 7 national universities in 1956 to 30 in 1970, 21 of them being private institutions (p. 40). This is what he calls the first cycle of expansion. The second took place in the context of a bureaucratic-authoritarian regime. Between 1971 and 1974, 19 universities were created and "the system had, from this moment on, a national coverage" (p. 41). Besides the creation of these universities, some provincial institutions were nationalized. In 1975 Argentina had 47 universities. This number remained constant until 1989, when a new process of creation of public and private universities started. In relation to enrollment, "the number of enrolled students in higher education (in university settings and otherwise) was increasing relative to the total population. The number of students for every 10,000 people increased from seven in 1914, to 32.4 in 1950, to 106.7 in 1970 and 149 in 1980" (Mollis, 2008, p. 515).

Between 1973 and 1976 Argentina had constitutional governments. All universities, according to Puiggrós (2010), supported this return to democracy, and they were committed to the idea of training professionals to help the country to follow a path of development (p. 173). There was an explicit expectation that these institutions could contribute to the process of national liberation, as well as to the advance of local and popular culture. This period witnessed an intense mobilization of students, particularly of the Juventud Universitaria Peronista.

Law 20.654 (1974), according to Buchbinder (2010), tried to reconcile "the ideas of hegemonic Peronist groups that had an academic scope with elements of the reformist tradition, like autonomy" (p. 203). Perel, Raíces and Perel (2006), however, challenged that idea. They explained that "definitively university institutions, as soon as they are established as open to society, seek to replace their earlier self-definition based in the principle of university autonomy" (p. 43). The policy of creation of new national universities continued in this government. An important measure adopted during this period was the end of entrance exams to access universities. As a result, there

was a fast increase in enrollment. From around 377 million students in 1973, universities went to more than half-million students in 1975.

The project implemented in this brief constitutional period faced strong resistance from conservative sectors of society. The Peronist movement that led the process was also very diverse and factions did not approve the direction the government was taking. Around mid-1974 this more conservative force of Peronism started to gain influence in the area of education. Buchbinder (2010) explained that "Starting in July the conservative and authoritarian faction of the government led General Perón's widow forced substantial changes in the directive bodies of the universities" (p. 205). During 1975 many professors were dismissed and students expelled from universities, forcing many of them to go underground. Violence reigned in Argentina and there were many incidents in which professors and students were kidnapped and, in some cases, murdered.

In 1976 there came a new military coup that remained in power until 1982. This new dictatorship was brutal and made all efforts to silence social protests. A significant portion of the victims of the terrorist dictatorship were members of the university community. Soon after the coup Law 21,276 was promulgated, and collegiate governmental groups were suppressed, like the Superior Councils of the universities and the Directive Councils of the schools. Guild and political activities were also explicitly forbidden in university settings (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 208; Lamarra, 2003, p. 37). Once again the academic and administrative autonomy of universities were undermined. Universities during this period had to act as apparatus of the state, according to D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005).

The political and ideological control of university activities held strong. There were changes in the syllabus of almost all courses and some courses were discontinued. Many new scholars and also prestigious intellectuals had to exile. In 1980 a new law for universities was implemented, "which foresaw that rectors and deans should be designated by the Executive Branch, and stipulated that professors must compete for positions and stipulated that university study could include fees" (Buchbinder, 2010, p. 211). "An examination system based strictly in quotas for different careers

and schools, as well as the implementation of duties associated with university courses, significantly reduced youth access to university study" (p. 209). While 128,000 new students entered universities in 1974, only 44,000 entered in 1977. Enrollment in national universities decreased 22% between 1976 and 1983 – passing from 430.024 students to 337.998 (Lamarra, 2003, p. 37). As a consequence of this, there was a reduction of the participation of the public sector in relation to the private. As Plotkin (2006) explained,

> during the country's final military dictatorship (1976-1983), enrollment went down in public universities and rose in private ones. Restrictive policies, the intensively repressive climate that existed in state universities, a strong public discourse favoring privatization (...) and a drastic reduction in university budgets were all partially responsible for this reduction that only reverted itself with the restoration of democracy in 1983 and the establishment of a virtually unrestricted admission policy (p. 44-45).

The victory of Raúl Alfonsín from the Radical Party in 1983 brought changes to higher education in Argentina once again. This democratic party, which was more linked to the middle classes, was sympathetic to the traditional university values and claims of autonomy and co-government. Through the Decree 154 (1983), for instance, the government reestablishes the statutes that directed the universities before 1966 (Krotsch, 1996, p. 42; Lamarra, 2003, p. 38). The new government tried to normalize universities. Massive public contests to hire professors were implemented, and restrictions to students' access were extinct in almost all institutions. As a result, enrollment increased considerably, particularly in the public sector. Enrollment in national universities went from 443.400 in 1984 to 679.400 in 1990, an increase of 65% (Lamarra, 2003, p. 39).

Buchbinder (2010) mentioned some important changes take took place during the 1980s. "A new relationship developed between the state and the university that assured continued autonomy. This tendency was made into law in 1988, through legislation regarding the economic/financial government of national universities" (p. 216). This law allowed universities to manage and generate their own resources. In addition to that the development of research started to be seen as important

again, and “it was supported through a systemic boost focused on promoting teaching and a group of scholarships and subsidies that were focused on the training of young scientists” (p. 216).

Buchbinder (2010) explained that the optimism that was present during the first years of Alfonsín government was replaced by an increasing disenchantment in this regime’s later years. “This came from a deterioration of university political and institutional conditions and, above all, a reduction in the materials necessary to fulfill their task” (p. 217). The financial crises that struck many Latin American countries during the 1980s certainly affected the funding of public universities in Argentina, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Plotkin (2006), based on Balán and Garcia de Fanelli, noted that the public spending in universities reduced 21,4% between 1980 and 1990. Additional funding did not follow the growth in enrollment. “The expenditure per student (base 100 in 1960) was 75 in 1980 and 26 in 1990” (p. 45).

As Krotsch (1996) noted, that process which began in 1983 ended by 1989, when the Justicialist party took office (p. 45). From this moment on, according to the author, universities needed to deal with different policies that tried to increase control and intervention over them. The creation of the University Policies Secretariat, in 1993, illustrates the increase of the federal bureaucracy in charge of dealing with universities. This Secretariat “was the first nodule in a configuration of new regulatory agencies that would soon acquire legal stature through university law” (p. 46).

D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005) also agreed that Carlos Menem’s government, which started in 1989, was a landmark in Argentine higher education police. In their analysis,

> from 1989 on, there began a new era in the creation of national and private universities, as well as non-university institutions of higher education, all under the aegis of a new model that sought to define the role of higher education in a differentiated macroeconomic context characterized by globalization, the opening of new markets and the formation of regional economic blocks. This model, whose principles would be enshrined in the Higher Education Law (1995), was inspired by the Argentine Education Reform Program, financed by the World Bank (p. 94).

The Law 24.521, 07/1995, or the Law of Higher Education, was the first law to establish a common regulation to the whole system of higher education in Argentina, including the university

and non-university sectors, belonging to the public and private sectors[22]. As some authors explained, this law was approved under many resistances coming from the academic community (students, professors, some rectors, and even members from the legislative). This law placed in check many principles dear to public universities in Argentina, such as autonomy, public funding, free instruction, and free access, among others (D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani, 2005; Mollis, 2007, p. 71).

It is interesting, as some authors underlined, that in a context characterized by a strong deregulation of the economy the government implemented a law that in many aspects increased regulation over higher education institutions. On the one hand, the government attempted to reduce its participation in relevant areas such as education. On the other hand, it enlarged its intervention in academic and financial areas (Iriarte and Ferrazzino, 2008. p. 65; Meyer and Gavarotto, 2008, p. 87).

Azevedo (2001) explained that the first two years of the Menem government was characterized by the dominance of the opposite political party inside universities. This government, according to the author, knew that an attempt to change the role of the state in relation to higher education would prove difficult due to the strength of the public sector in the country and the tradition of university autonomy (p. 75). In his view this led the government to create what he calls "conflict dampers". These "conflict dampers" were basically instances to serve as arenas for

[22] It is not the intention of this chapter to discuss all the laws that regulated higher education in Argentina, although most of them are briefly mentioned. Brutto (2009) does a good summary of the main legislation after the Avellaneda law, the first law to regulate public universities. According to her, the reform of 1918 was a set of norms that regulated the work of public universities, covering items such as the organization and management of such institutions, among other things. She synthesized the main laws that came after this reform, promulgated during the second half of the 20st century: "in 1947 there came law 13.031, another university law that was chiefly focused on all aspects of university life, including government, resources, student scholarships, curricula, and nationally set university competencies, although it recognized university autonomy and autarchy. In 1954 there came forth law 14.297 that conformed university law to the constitutional changes of 1949. The coup of 1955 abolished law 14.297 and reestablished law 1.597 from 1885, which was known as the Avellaneda law, until another decree (6.403/55) introduced a reaction to the Peronist government as well as centralized regulation, and granted for the first time in Argentina the ability of private entities to create institutions of higher learning that grant certifications and titles. With the 14.557 law of 1958 these last two policies were made definitive. In 1966, another government modified the regulation of higher education, limiting the university autonomy and autarchy, through the 17.245 law that regulated universities between 1967 and 1974 and soon afterwards the 17.604 law focused on private universities. The 17.778 law, which regulated the activities of provincial universities, came soon after. Soon afterwards in the 1970s there came the 20.654 law, which was modified by the military regime in 1976 and lasted until the passage of the 22.207 law in 1980" (p. 48-49, translation from the original Spanish). The author noted that between 1984 and 1995 there was no renovation in relation to law. The next important law to be established was the so-called Law of Higher Education.

discussion between the government and higher education institutions. He mentioned, for instance, the creation of SPU, CONEAU, and the University Council, which has representatives of the public and private sectors. The context of creation of CONEAU and its relevance will be discussed in subsection 3.2.7.

It is true that the Law of Higher Education created several management bodies. In D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani's (2005) analysis, "as a consequence of the transformation of these management bodies in agencies of political control, the existing commissions, such as the National Inter-university Council, were weakened and university autonomy was reduced" (p. 97).

Although autonomy was formally assured, D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005) proposed that some requirements of the law reduced this autonomy: namely, approval of statutes by the MCyE; external evaluation of public and private universities, and the setting of minimum curricular goals for programs that lead to professions involving health, security, the law, or the material goods or training of residents (art. 43) (p. 99). Article 29 of the law states that the university has autonomy to establish student's admission policies. Article 50, by its turn, determines that "in universities with more than 50,000 students, the procedures for admission, continuance and promotion of students will be determined by each school or equivalent academic department" . Marquina (2011) noted that this measure represents a rupture in the traditional idea of university autonomy. As she explained, this "complicated the link between central administration and the various schools in the larger (and more traditional) universities, as it established that in institutions with more than 50,000 students those academic departments with the lowest enrollments would be those entrusted with deciding their respective mechanisms of enrollment" (Marquina, 2011, p. 68).

Despite all the claims that the law of higher education limited the autonomy of universities, many of them being factual, it is possible to see areas in which the law increased the autonomy of these institutions. Unfortunately, this happened in order to allow universities to follow a path considered more adequate by neoliberal perspectives. Such is the case of article 59, which opened the possibility for universities to charge students for their undergraduate studies. The law

emphasized the power these institutions have to "dictate norms relative to the generation of resources above and beyond the contributions of the national treasury, whether through the sale of goods, products, rights or services, subsidies, contributions, inheritances, rights or fees for services rendered, along with any other resources generated through any title or activity". In addition, "additional resources that come from contributions or fees for undergraduates should be destined primarily to loans, subsidies or other forms of credit, student help or didactic support".

There is no doubt that the inclusion of this article is related to the neoliberal idea that public universities have to seek new funding to support their activities. "Charging fees or annuities from students was a source of great debate in Argentine society, as it is a subject with strong historical relevance, given that higher education in this country has been free since the 1950s, with the exception of the last era of the dictatorship (1976-1983)" (Azevedo, 2001, p. 79).

To implement measures such as an entrance exam to grant access to universities or charge students for their studies in undergrad courses would probably prove politically unfeasible in a democratic government in Argentina. The political cost of such initiatives would be too high. Rather, the government created the possibility for institutions to take such decisions.

Other relevant policies are introduced with this legislation. Mollis (2007) mentioned some of them:

> [this legislation] authorizes each university to set their own salaries for professors and administrators, assuring decentralized management of the funds they generate; it states that universities can promote the enlistment of "society, foundations and other forms of civil association" to support financial management and to facilitate external relations for universities and/or schools; it asserts that collegiate boards can determine policies defining functions and control, insofar as chairpersons maintain executive functions; it modifies the integration of the faculty, authorizing all teaching staff (including auxiliary staff) to be elected as faculty representatives; and finally, it increases the number of people represented by collegiate boards (p. 71-72).

The creation of the University Policies Secretariat (SPU) in 1993 and the implementation of the Law of Higher Education in 1995 established the legal framework of the state reform applied to higher education. This reform, according to several authors, was inspired in the guidelines of the World Bank. It tried to conciliate the recommendations of this institution with the multiples

interests existing in the Argentine society. As a matter of fact, the reform in Argentina can be understood in the context of an international agenda of modernization promoted in Latin America by such institution (Krotsch, 1996, p. 47; D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani, 2005; Mollis, 2007, p. 70). The policies that Menem tried to implement, as previously said, faced strong resistance inside universities, most of them in tune with the opposition party (D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani, 2005).

The diversification of higher education was intensified during Menem's government, with the creation of new public and private universities, as well as non-university institutions. It is interesting the fact that nine new national universities were created in this government, in contrast with the neoliberal premises of reducing the participation of the state in funding higher education. Rasetti (2012), however, brings essential information to understand this situation. He explained that the government was not interested in the creation of new universities. "The university issue was hegemonized by attempts to cut the budget, the effective limitation of university action and the resistance of the university community to these adjustments" (p. 9). As he wrote,

> The truth is during the process of expansion noted in the Menem administration, only twice was this initiative explicitly put forward by the Executive; in the proposal to Congress to nationalize the Provincial University of La Rioja in 1994 (which was the only exception from the former period to the Higher Education Law), and in the move to create the National Academic Institute of Art through the controversial Decree of Necessity and Urgency (DNU) in 1996, as the LES was already valid (p. 5).

The Law of Higher Education had an impact on the creation of new national institutions. From the beginning of the Menem government, in 1989, to the promulgation of this law, in 1995, nine public universities were created. From 1996 to 1999 (the end of his government), no public university was created (Lamarra, 2003, p. 41; Del Bello, Barsky and Giménez, 2007; and http://portales.educacion.gov.ar/spu/sistema-universitario/listado-de-universidades-e-institutos/, 03/07/2013). This is due to the article 48, which stipulates that national universities need to be created by law, "with the expectation of corresponding budget appropriation and on the basis of a feasibility study that evaluates the initiative". According to this same article the creation of national

universities require “a previous report from the National Inter-university Council” . The Decree 599 (1995), in turn, specifies that this feasibility study has to include “enumeration of the resources that make the initiative viable, the need to train sufficient resources in the area that the new institution proposes to cover and general guidelines of the institutional project which are essential to evaluate its justification” (Art. 18).

Rasetti (2012) analyzed these articles as follows:

> Perhaps we can say that these normative texts express some forethought to what could appear to be an inadequate disproportion between the apparently brief circumstances in which legislative action is created and its relentless and excessive performative character: inevitably the law will give way to a string of commitments and tasks that imply the order of a series of particularly scarce resources, and this because the creation of a university effectively happens after the law. The notion that part of this task should be transferred to the legislative process (that is, the determination of what conditions is possible and institutional design) appears to be a means of anchoring in technical terms the apparent ease of the sanctioning act, and therefore reduce the discretion that is awarded to the political process. There is also the requirement to consult the National Inter-university Council. Given the expressed thoughts of the rectors of the national universities, the opinion of this agency will present a pertinent systemic perspective which can balance the isolated position that supports each project and which is not required to maintain distance from the prescribed feasibility study. In one case technical knowledge is needed and in the other the university body (represented by the rectors, and in which politicians and technicians are supposedly involved) is assigned the capacity to evaluate viability and pertinence, which allows a political decision (p. 4).

In Rasetti’s (2012) view, during the 1990s there was no clear policy to expand the public sector. As he explained, “there were no studies, let alone plans; organizational formats and adopted institutional policies were notoriously different, seeming to depend more on those responsible for design and implementation than on a set plan” (p. 5). There are many explanations for the creation of these new public institutions. Some say that this was an attempt to meet the demands of local politicians interested in creating universities in their political redoubt (Meyer and Gavarotto, 2008, p. 83). Others see this as an attempt to balance the power inside the National Inter-University Council (CNI). As previously mentioned, most of the rectors of existing universities were in tune with the opposition party. Rectors appointed to these new universities were more in line with the government party. Additionally, the creation of new institutions allowed the government to gain

majority in the University Council and to promote changes (D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani, 2005; Marquina, 2011, p. 68).

One important argument defended by many authors is that these universities were created in an attempt to implement a new model of university. As Mollis (2008) expounded,

> One of the reasons for creating new public universities in the Buenos Aires urban area ... was to break with the reformist model of traditional public universities, changing key criteria of how universities function. They replaced the traditional university governance structure with a university management group committed to obtaining alternative resources, replacing unrestricted enrollment with a selective admissions process, free access with tuition (in the case of the University of Quilmes), auxiliary teaching positions with contracted temporary professors, undedicated professors with professors strongly dedicated to teaching and research and mentorship (following up with students, maintaining office hours), differentiated salaries, shortened course programs with labor outputs, intermediate degrees, distance education and the application of virtual technologies, professional development and little or no offerings in the basic or applied sciences. While these characteristics are generally associated with new university models, they are not present in the same form in all cases" (p. 519-521).

The author also identified some positive aspects in these different models introduced by the new universities. Making an assessment of the first five years of operation of these institutions, Mollis (2008) highlighted hat

> Due to their organizational size, there was a more direct connection between university management and the academic sector ... they produced agreements or partnerships with the municipalities and local governments ... to open up new sources of financing and satisfy common needs, the offering of professional degrees was key to obtaining alternative resources, the teacher-student ratio in undergraduate courses was lower, and there was a lower percentage of student attrition due to admissions tests (p. 521).

On the other hand, as Mollis (2008) noted, in many cases it was possible to see an overlapping in the offer of higher education courses by public universities; some courses had a very small number of students that do not justify their existence; and the professorate was not always qualified; among other things.

The law of higher education also impacted the creation of private universities. From the beginning of the Menem government, in 1989, to the promulgation of the law, in 1995, 18 private universities were created. From 1996 to 1999, which was the end of his government, no private university was created (Del Bello, Barsky and Giménez, 2007; and

http://portales.educacion.gov.ar/spu/sistema-universitario/listado-de-universidades-e-institutos/, 03/07/2013). Two articles make reference to the creation of private universities: Article 62, which stipulates that these institutions "would be authorized by national Executive decree to function provisionally for a period of six years, given favorable reports from CONEAU, specifically regarding the programs, courses and degrees that the institution can offer and issue"; and Article 63 that expounds on the criteria that CONEAU has to consider in its report. As it is possible to see, the law restrained the creation of new universities in general: firstly, public national universities by requiring a law with "sufficient expected budget appropriations and on the basis of a feasibility study that evaluated the initiative"; and secondly, private universities by requiring an authorization of the federal government, based on a positive report of CONEAU.

Looking at the bigger picture, Mollis (2008) presented some consequences of the reform promoted during the 1990s, with an emphasis in its critical aspects:

> 1. it has negatively affected academic traditions; there has been a negative impact on the promotion and development of the cultural and scientific field, fundamentally in the arts, humanities, social sciences and basic sciences;
> 2. it has diversified university offerings, although disciplinary offerings have become more homogeneous, with more short course programs focused on the service industry and fewer course programs focused on cultural or scientific fields;
> 3. it has discouraged, whether through lack of funding or lack of program offerings, the number of graduate programs in the basic and applied sciences and has multiplied the number of professional graduate programs;
> 4. it has discredited the public university as the institution responsible for training the "national leadership class," with many elites going to one of several new private universities that have no tradition of being recognized for their "quality," and many going to international locations (especially in the United States) for graduate school" (p. 81).

The economic crises of the beginning of the XXI century in Argentina strongly impacted public higher education. In the short government of the Alliance (1999-2001) no new university was created. This administration soon was immersed in a "political, institutional, economic and budgetary crisis that included periods of time in which the university faced a real threat of financial failure" (Rasetti, 2012, p. 9). During Duhalde's (2002-2003) also brief administration, surprisingly two public universities were created. The policy of creation of national universities possessed continuity during Néstor and Cristina Kirchner's government. One university was created in 2005,

two in 2007, and seven in 2009. It is important to note that the expansion of higher education took place not only through the creation of new universities, but particularly from the mid-1990s on also through the creation of other types of institutions. In addition to that, there has been an expansion of many existing institutions. This issue will be discussed in sections 3.2.4 and 3.2.6.

In 2008 the federal government called for discussion on a new law to higher education. At the same time, some important universities such as the University of Buenos Aires and the National University of La Plata were in the process of reforming their statutes (Camou, 2009, p. 20). Brutto (2009) said that at least seven bills related to the university reform were presented to the Argentine House of Representatives, coming from different political parties. In her assessment, these bills "continue to bring up key issues from the law currently in force, those of autonomy, government, regulation, evaluation, accreditation and financing, especially focusing on the issues of free access to universities and the right to education" (p. 51).

Puiggrós (2010) brought an important element to the debate. She noted there is a need today for an academic reform inside many universities. As she explained, there was a huge increase in the number of students in higher education without any relevant academic reform. She offered as an example the case of University of Buenos Aires. This institution went from less than 80,000 students in 1973 to 300,000 in 2003, "without any significant academic reform and without the student movement having updated their demands, while the teachers' movement had been seriously debilitated" (p. 184).

As it was possible to see in this section, higher education in Argentina went through different stages, some more favorable to the development of public education, some less. "Political interventions, efforts to reduce autonomy, efforts of resistance, forfeitures, expulsions, co-optations and (speaking generally) the fight for the direction of university institutions all denote the importance given to the university in Argentina" (Azevedo, 2001, p. 102). The next section shall make reference to relevant aspects of the history of higher education in Argentina, but the focus is the actual situation of this level of education in the country.

3.2 – Current situation of higher education

The previous section presented important historical facts of the development of higher education in Argentina. It was possible to notice how educational opportunities were created in the country along the years. It also discussed the current situation of this level of education, pointing out many challenges that remain to be faced currently. One example of this is the law of higher education in effect in the country. This law was introduced through the hands of a neoliberal government, and more recently there were movements intending to change this important document.

This section will examine the current situation of higher education in Argentina, based on eight interviewees conducted with Argentine professionals in Spanish between March and May of 2012. Among them are professors and researchers that are specialists in higher education, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education. These professionals present their perception about the most positive and critical aspects of higher education in their country; about the diversification of institutions and courses; and about the process to access higher education. Finally, they all share their view on the main policies implemented by the federal government in Argentina to expand access to higher education and assure quality of this level of education. University autonomy is a relevant dimension that permeates all the debate. The analysis of these interviewees is intertwined with the literature and current data collected by Argentina's Ministry of Education.

Before moving to the analysis of the interviews, some data will be presented in order to start a characterization of the system of higher education in Argentina. A more comprehensive characterization of this system will be achieved with the development of the themes mentioned above.

3.2.1 – Characterization of the Argentine higher education system

The Constitution of the Argentine Nation (08/22/1994) establishes that all inhabitants of the nation are entitled the right to teach and learn, in accordance with specific law that regulates this. The document only mentions universities twice, in the article that deals with the powers of Congress. First, it says that Congress is empowered "to provide for the prosperity of the country, for the advance and welfare of all the provinces, and for the progress of education, drawing up general and university educational plans" (Art. 75, 18). Second, in the same article it declares that Congress is also empowered "to enact laws referring to the organization and basis of education consolidating national unity and respecting provincial and local characteristics; (…) which guarantee the principles of free and equitable state public education as well as the autonomy and autarky of national universities" (Art. 75, 19). Although the references in the constitution are not extensive, they include two important principles of higher education in the country: public education is free and universities are autonomous institutions.

The general law of education that is in effect in Argentina is Law 26.206 (12/14/2006) – the National Law of Education. As it is possible to see by the date of its promulgation, this law is fairly recent and it was published more than twelve years after the publication of the current constitution. This is probably due to the fact that the previous general law of education was approved one year prior to the constitution: Law 24.195 (04/29/1993) – known as the Federal Law of Education. Both the previous and the actual general law of education contain articles dealing with higher education. Argentina, nevertheless, has a specific law that regulates higher education, including universities and non-universities, national, provincial and municipal institutions--both public and private. It is Law 24.251 (08/07/1995) – the Law of Higher Education. Many important aspects of this law were mentioned in section 3.1. The interviewees throughout this section will highlight others.

According to Law 24.251 (1995), higher education in Argentina is composed by two groups of institutions (often considered two subsystems): university institutions, which encompass

universities and university institutes; and non-university institutions, whether they are focused on teacher education, the humanities, social sciences, technical/professional education or the arts (Art. 5). The law makes reference to the National University System, which comprises national universities, provincial universities and private universities, as well as state or private university institutes (Art. 26). The difference between universities and university institutes is that the first one "should develop work in a variety of unrelated disciplinary areas, structured organically in schools, departments or equivalent academic units". The second "should focus their academic offerings on a single disciplinary area" (Art. 27).

The purpose of university institutions, as stated by the law, is "(…) the creation and disbursement of knowledge of the highest quality in an academic climate of liberty, justice and solidarity, offering an interdisciplinary cultural education aimed towards the integration of knowledge along with scientific and professional training that is tailored to the distinct careers that students are pursuing (…)" (Art. 27). The law also states the basic functions of these institutions as follows:

> a) To train and qualify scientists, professionals, teachers and technicians, capable of acting professionally, with responsibility and a critical and reflective spirit, a creative mindset, an ethical mindset that is socially-minded, attending to the needs of individual students alongside national and regional requirements;
> b) To promote and develop scientific and technological research, studies in the humanities and artistic creation;
> c) Creation and spread knowledge and culture in all their forms;
> d) Preserve national culture;
> e) Extend their works and services to the community, with the end of contributing to community development and transformation, focusing on the study of national and regional problems and offering scientific and technical support to the state and the community (Art. 28).

In relation to the non-university institutions, which according to the law should be linked to the local and regional cultural and productive life, their basic functions are:

> a) To train and qualify students for teaching at the university level of the educational system;
> b) To provide higher-level, instrumental training in the humanities, social sciences, technical and professional fields and in the arts (Art. 17).

The Ministry of Education is in charge of "creating general policies regarding university curricular material, on the assumed basis of participation from coordinating councils and previous consultation of the … law, respecting the policy of autonomy that as been established for university institutions" (Art. 70). The coordination and consultation bodies provided in the law are: the University Council, the National Inter-university Council, and the Council of Rectors of Private Universities and the Regional High Education Planning Councils (Art. 71). The provinces and the municipality of Buenos Aires are in charge of organizing the non-university higher education (Art. 15).

It is important to look at some data regarding both subsystems of higher education--the university and the non-university--as well as regarding the public and private sectors. The table 7 shows the number of institutions of higher education existing in Argentina in 2010:

Table 7– Higher educational institutions, organized by academic organization and administrative category (2010)

Type of Institution/Area of Instruction		Public	Private	Foreign	International	Total
University	Universities	48*	46	1	-	95
	University institutes	7	11	-	1	19
	Subtotal	55	57	1	1	114
Non-university	Exclusively pedagogical	290	282	-	-	572
	Exclusively technical/professional	228	622	-	-	850
	Both types of training	390	249	-	-	639
	Does not distinguish between the two types	40	28	-	-	68
	Subtotal	948	1,181	-	-	2,129
Total		1,003	1,238	1	1	2,243

* Seven national universities are included that were created in the end of 2009 and had no academic activities in 2010, as well as the Popular University of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo.

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 37, and Educational Statistics Yearbook, 2010..

In 2010 there were 114 university institutions, 95 them being universities (83%) and 19 university institutes (17%). The number of private and public universities is very close (48 and 46, respectively). Among the public universities, 47 are national and only one is provincial. There is one foreign university (the University of Bologna) and one international institute (Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences – FLACSO). The large majority of institutions, however, are non-university. This subsystem has 2,129, 44% of them being public, while 56% private. One important

characteristic of higher education institutions in Argentina is that the most traditional universities are very large, concentrating most of the enrollment in the sector. The table 8 presents information about enrollment in both subsystems:

Table 8 - Enrollment by academic organization and administrative category (2010)

Institutional type		Public	Private	Total
University		1.366.237	352.270	1.718.507
Non-university	Exclusively pedagogical	260,155	86,138	346,293
	Exclusively technical/professional	117,764	191,246	309,010
	Both types of training	9,222	4,658	13,880
	Does not distinguish between the two types	387,141	282,042	669,183
	Subtotal	774.282	564.084	1.338.366
Total		2.140.519	916.354	3.056.873

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 38, and University Statistics Yearbook, 2010.

The data about enrollment is important because it presents the real face of the higher education system of Argentina. This is a largely public system. If one takes into consideration the whole system, 70% of the students are in the public sector (2.140.519 students), while 30% are in the private (916.354). 56% of the students are in the university sector (1.718.507 students) and 44% in the non-university (1.338.366). Looking only at the university sector, 80% of the students are in the public sector. In the non-university sector the public sector represents 58%.

To have an idea of the dimension of enrollment in Argentina, it is important to look at the educational attainment rate for 18- to 24-year-olds in 2010. The Net University Enrollment Rate was 18.9%; the Gross University Enrollment Rate was 36.3%; and the Gross Higher Education Enrollment Rate, which includes information of students from the university and non-university sectors, was 50.5% (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 59).

In the university subsystem, there were 99.431 graduates in 2010, 70.857 in the public sector and 28.574 in the private. Unfortunately it was not possible to get official data about the number of new enrollments and graduates in undergrad courses for non-university sector.

The table 9 presents some more detailed information for the university system. The number of students and graduates are shown by area of study:

Table 9 – Enrolled and graduating students according to their field of study and administrative category (2010)

Field	Enrolled students			Graduates		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
Applied sciences	362,795	58,640	421,435	15,394	4,173	19,431
Basic sciences	52,747	3,122	55,869	2,299	222	2,521
Health sciences	185,210	42,510	227,720	13,608	4,370	17,978
Human sciences	239,484	48,630	288,114	9,770	4,786	14,556
Social sciences	520,022	199,368	719,390	29,786	15,023	44,809
No field*	5,979	-	5,979	-	-	-
Total	1,366,237	352,270	1,718,507	70,857	28,574	99,431

* Refers to academic offerings that, due to differing characteristics, can be classified in other specialized areas of study.
Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010 (p. 43).

Most of the students, as it is possible to see, are in the social sciences (42%), both in the public (38%) and private (57%) sectors. In terms of number of students, this area is followed by the applied sciences, the human sciences and the health sciences. Only a few students are in the basic sciences (3%), which include the courses of biology, physics, mathematics, and chemistry. As expected, the areas that have more students enrolled also have more graduates. While 44,809 students graduate from courses in the social sciences (45%), only 2,521 graduate from the basic sciences (2%).

Although the focus of this dissertation is mainly the undergraduate level of higher education, some information about the graduate level is also mentioned. It is important to look at some data about enrollment and graduation in graduate programs by subsystem.

Table 10 – Graduates students by academic organization and administrative category (2010)

Type of Institution/Area of Instruction		Public	Private	Foreign	International	Total
Universities	Universities	86,492	19,942	130	-	106,564
	Universities institutes	934	1,221	-	2,752	4,907
	Subtotal	87,435	21,163	130	2,752	111,471
Non-university	Exclusively pedagogical	8,683	7,033	-	-	15,716
	Exclusively technical/professional	1,286	3,131	-	-	4,417
	Both types of training	634	1,057	-	-	1,691
	Subtotal	10,603	11,221	-	-	21,824
Total		98,038	32,384	130	2,752	133,304

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 49, and Educational Statistics Yearbook, 2010.

The majority of students are enrolled in the university subsystem (111,471 students, which represent 84% of the total), particularly in universities. Looking at the sector of management, most

of them are in the public sector (98,038 students or 73% of the total). Such data make clear the relevance of public universities for the development of graduate programs. Alone, these institutions have 86,492 students out of the 133,304 enrolled in graduate programs (65%).

For the university subsystem, it is possible to see the enrollment in graduate courses by program (doctorate, master, or specialization), as table 11 shows.

Table 11 – Graduate students by degree type and administrative category (2010)

	Public	Private	Foreign	International	Total
Doctorate	15,354	2,683	-	211	18,248
Master's	30,612	10,847	130	1,763	43,352
Specialization	41,460	7,633	-	778	49,871
Total	87,426	21,163	130	2,752	111,471

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 49.

In the public sector most of the students are in specialization programs (47%), followed by master's (35%) and doctorate (18%) programs. In the private sector, the majority of students are in master's programs (51%), followed by specializations (36%) and doctorate (13%) programs.

The table 12 shows the number of students that graduated from graduate programs for the university subsector. Following the logic of the number of students enrolled in these programs, the majority of graduates come from public universities (67%).

Table 12 – Enrollment in graduate programs by academic organization and administrative category (2010)

		Public	Private	Foreign	International	Total
University	Universities	7,173	2,999	24	-	10,196
	Universities institutes	53	194	-	264	511
Total		7,226	3,193	24	264	10,707

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 49.

The number of graduates in graduate programs is also detailed by degree. As table 13 presents, most of the graduates are from specialization courses, followed by masters and doctorate programs. The public sector has more graduates in these three levels of programs.

Table 13 – Enrollment in graduate programs by degree type and administrative category (2010)

	Public	Private	Foreign	International	Total
Doctorate	1,342	166	-	10	1,518
Master	2.963	1,206	24	72	2,963
Specialization	4,678	1,366	-	182	6,226
Total	7,226	3,193	264	24	10,707

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 49.

Finally, Table 14 presents the number of graduates from undergrad and graduate programs for the non-university sector. Unfortunately the data is not desegregated by level of education (undergrad or graduate programs). Here is an interesting differentiation from the university sector: most of the students graduate from the private sector (58%). Students in the public sector graduate mostly from teaching courses (64%), while in the private sector from technical-professional courses (70%).

Table 14 – Enrollments of undergraduate and graduate, by portfolio programs and administrative category (2010)

	Public	Private	Total
Exclusively pedagogical	26,377	16,101	42,478
Exclusively technical/professional	13,596	40,639	54,235
Both types of training	1,131	982	2,113
Total	41,104	57,722	98,826

Source: Educational Statistics Yearbook, 2010.

Although the higher education system of Argentina has many more peculiarities, the goal of this subsection was to provide a brief introduction to the system. In the following subsections this characterization will become clearer.

3.2.2 – Strengths of higher education system in the country

According to the interviewees, some of the most positive aspects of higher education in Argentina are related to its history, and others are more associated to current policies. One interviewee, who thought that the most outstanding characteristics were related to history, said that this history began in 1885 with the first law about universities, which came to be known as the Avellaneda Law. This law, in her analysis, organized universities and founded the university

autonomy. It created a model of universities that was very innovative in relation to the Latin American experience. She explained that later, with the reform of 1918, there was a democratization of universities for middle classes.

> The first aspect I would note is that the history of higher education in Argentina is a long history that begins in 1885 with the first law on universities, the Avellaneda law. This law states mandates an organized, structured system that has served us very well, until those times of crisis that were related to a certain political and social era. So one very positive element of our higher education system is its permanence across time since the original founding educational law, that was fundamental to the establishment of an autonomous university and which … gave the university a high level of influence through its mission to provide professional and scientific training, and soon after through the expansion of universities. So there is this traditional, historical model that was highly, I would say, highly innovative relative to the rest of Latin America, highly efficient and with the reform of 1918 our universities were democratized in a very encouraging way in terms of the middle classes and the future leadership classes. So, these positive conditions came very clearly linked to the existence, the permanence over time, a foundational law that permitted universities to enjoy full autonomy, a direction that universities took since the reform until the extension of the university and the inclusion of a political paradigm which is clearly included in the Argentine university framework (Interviewee 16).

The Law 1.597 (1995), known as Avellaneda Law and also called Statutes of National Universities, was very brief and had only four articles. It was directed at the two national universities existing then: the universities of Cordoba and Buenos Aires. According to this law, the Superior Counsels of these universities should enact their statutes following a few rules established in the same law (Art. 1). One of the rules was, for instance, that the rector of the university should be elected for a four-year term, and could also be reelected. These statutes needed to be approved by the executive (Art. 2). The appointment of university teachers was a responsibility of the executive (Art. 3).

There are other interviewees that agreed that some of the most remarkable moments in Argentine higher education are not recent, being part of the tradition of the country in that area. One of them noted that universities are in general very inclusive – except during dictatorships – and are traditionally a space for social mobility for middle and low-income classes. In his view, it helps that these institutions are free and open to all.

> Well, in reality, some of the things that are most notable are not present now, but are part of

> a tradition of the Argentine model of higher education. … One of the most relevant characteristics, from my point of view, is that the Argentine university was (in general, not including the various periods of dictatorship) very inclusive, and was traditionally an instrument of social mobility for the middle and popular classes, ever since the first Peronist era, that is between 1945 and 1955, and then later in the 70s, when democracy was restored in 1973 and in 1983 when again democracy was regained is when it was very inclusive. … Well, what helps all of this very much, is that education in Argentina is free enrollment is direct (Interviewee 14).

Another interviewee shared the idea of universities as institutions that promote social mobility. He stated that Argentina has a very strong tradition of public higher education. The majority of students are in the public sector, which is open to all and free of charge. Public universities continue to be, in his view, an engine for equalization and for social mobility.

> Argentina has a very strong tradition of public higher education. That is, more than between 70 and 80% of enrollment in higher education is through public universities and another portion that varies, we'll say between 20 and 25%, up to 30% in some cases, go to private universities. What does this mean? It means that public universities, that is, those universities that are open, free and so forth, serve the most important portion of students in the country. This continues to be positive to the degree that it continues to be a means of promoting equality and social mobility and to continue this the public university has adapted, it has adapted with difficulties but it has adapted to a certain point to this demand (Interviewee 13).

As one interviewee explained, Argentina has a very high percentage of 18 to 25 years old students in higher education compared to other Latin American countries. The problem is that only less than 20% of these students graduate, according to him. This issue will be discusses in the next subsection, when the interviewees mentioned some problems in higher education in Argentina.

> There is a bad correlation and it is that there is a lot of student defection. That is, the number of students who graduate relative to the number that enroll is very low. Compared to other Latin American countries, we have a high percentage of enrollment among the typical age range of university students, between 18 and 25, we actually have the highest. Now Cuba passed us, and now it looks like Venezuela is also passing us…I do not know about Colombia, I do not think they are, but anyway, we have more than 30% inclusion, around 36, 37, but we maintain less than 20% of those that enroll, which is a catastrophe (Interviewee 14).

Another interviewee noted that there are several aspects that differentiate Argentina from other Latin American countries in the area of higher education. First, studies are free of charge. Students do not have to pay anything during their undergraduate studies and universities do not

depend on them to develop their activities: teaching, research, and service, among others. In fact, as D'Almeida, Mataluna and Catani (2005) wrote, this public character of universities in Argentina (free instruction and free access) is almost an exception in Latin America (p. 90).

> Argentina separates itself from the rest of Latin America due to various characteristics, such as free access to higher education. This is very important in financial terms. For students it is completely free, students do not pay anything at any time in their course of study as undergraduates. (...) The university does not depend on students for its support, or to pay its professors, or for research, for service, not for infrastructural costs, not for anything (Interviewee 17).

Another important characteristic of Argentine universities is related to their government. The interviewee said that although other countries in Latin American also have co-government, this model in the country is very deep and has been perfected over time. Teachers, students and graduates are part of the university government through different councils. There is a directive council inside each school and a superior council inside the university. In her view the political struggles of society are reflected inside universities and this is a very strong link between universities and society. She noted:

> Another important characteristic of university government, even though in other Latin American universities there is also co-government, Argentina has a very deep and well-developed model. The government is run by professors, students and alumni, that is, within the university there is a collegiate body, a superior council, and within each school a directive council. Al of this are like a legislative body, and this body brings society's political fights into the university. This is a powerful means of communication between the university and the larger society (Interviewee 17).

There are different perspectives about the level of autonomy universities have. While some posit that the university is completely autonomous, others believe that there are limits to this autonomy or that they are autonomous only in some areas. A positive aspect about the history of higher education in Argentina mentioned by one of the interviewees in the beginning of this section was precisely the university autonomy. She believed that since their origins--with the exception of periods under military governments--universities in Argentina are completely autonomous (Interviewee 16). Another interviewee said that autonomy is something that Argentina shares with other Latin American countries. In her view, however, there is a limited autonomy because the

government allocates a budget for universities but they have to use it in accordance with the university statute. In relation to academic aspects – teaching and the development of research – she thought that there is full autonomy.

> Autonomy is something that we share with the rest, with many other countries in Latin America. Autonomy, in reality, is very relative because when there is a budget for each university and the government gives you this budget and there is a university statute, you can only work within those limits. Now, there is academic autonomy, this is distinctive, each professor and each researcher can research and teach what they what with the approval of the directive council, in this sense there is fully autonomy (Interviewee 17).

Other positive aspects of higher education mentioned by the interviewees are related to recent policies. They refer in particular to the creation and decentralization of new institutions, the support provided for some students trough fellowships and other programs, the creation of mechanisms to ensure quality of higher education, and an improvement in funding of public higher education. Their opinion on these policies will be briefly mentioned here but discussed in further detail in the next subsections.

According to one interviewee, the economic crises that Argentina went through had an impact on universities. In recent years, however, there has been more investment in higher education, as illustrated by the creation of new state institutions.

> Argentina has gone through very important crises that have affected the university. In the last few years there has been more investment in the university on the part of the state, they have created many universities, not only privates but also state universities, and this is a very significant expansion of higher education (Interviewee 15).

The interviewee mentioned the decentralization of higher education through the creation of new institutions in some outlying areas. This policy allows the inclusion of many students that could not attend university in Buenos Aires or La Plata, for instance.

> There is also the policy of territorialization, which is expanding the system to include those students that are in a geographical situation that makes access to education difficult. For example, those that live far away, or those that in this great metropolis of Buenos Aires are in poorer areas ... and so they have created universities in these areas and the students that go there are students that would not have been able to come study at the University of Buenos Aires or La Plata, who now can because they have a university close to home. And now these people with a university close by can go and study, and this is another means of

expansion, or we might say inclusion through expansion (Interviewee 14).

He mentions a project that is currently in development at the Ministry of Education. The idea is to create "centers" in areas that do not have universities and have a big demand for higher education. These "centers" will be supported by universities and the courses will be decided based on the priorities of the area.

> There is another project strictly aimed at expansion which is similar to what the Open University of Brazil is doing, but it is not based in distance education but rather in-person education, at least part of the time, through creating centers where there is no university and which have, rather, which are declared a priority for some reason or because development is important and they need university-level academic support or because development is lacking and that makes education necessary to stimulate and promote development, and thus in various municipalities they are beginning to do this (…) And they are thinking of putting centers in far-away places, run by existent universities with defined course plans who will offer certain degrees that are most pertinent to regional priorities, rather than those degrees that would have the most demand or get the most students (Interviewee 14).

The idea is, as he explained, to have courses related to the needs of the area, or research being developed to benefit the community alongside interaction with the productive sector.

> Those degrees that would improve the region, and yes it is possible that they would do this not just to train people but also so that there is academic activity in the region related to these disciplinary areas, that is, they think there could be a link between research groups at the university, who see the problems that exist in the area and create community-driven activities, linked to the productive and social sectors, that would improve the quality of life in the area where this university center would be installed. These would be policies of inclusion in a geographical sense (Interviewee 14).

The same interviewee noted that MEC created a new fellowship program for students in higher education that is very important. They receive a monthly payment and this payment increases during their progress in the program. This intends to avoid, according to him, dropout around the third and fourth years. These fellowships focus on some priority areas, such as technology.

> The government has created a new scholarship policy that is novel and important for Argentina, because there used to be 2000 annual scholarships, and we have a million and some students, with 2000 scholarships…And now there is a new scholarship system that, first, is important in terms of its value, it is a minimum wage, which is good, more or less, and even goes above a minimum wage when a student advances, because one of the problems we have is that students leave in their fourth year, in their third year…because

> there are economic opportunities, especially for students in programs like technology, engineering, computer science…So they created scholarships for technology students…they were given priority: that is, these scholarships are for engineering students, technology students…priority areas, like these and others, like nursing. There are also special scholarships for those that are studying to be teachers, or professors (Interviewee 14).

He further explained that these new fellowships come associated with other policies, such as tutoring.

> These scholarships are connected to some complementary policies (the name of it isn't the best), which are fundamentally tied to tutoring to make sure the students that receive these scholarships are progressing, so that…well, if these students have difficulties, someone can advise them and so forth, like other types of programs that are related to access, right? This is a bit of what's directly related to the problem of access generally...to improve access generally (Interviewee 14).

Another interviewee mentioned that in the last years some mechanisms to ensure quality of higher education were consolidated. Today there is evaluation and accreditation of all graduate programs, and of the undergrad programs that are of state interest. In his description, these are, for instance, programs related to health, education, and security, among others:

> There are currently functioning evaluative mechanisms focused on the quality on newly created institutions, for graduate and undergraduate programs that are of interest to the state and which are professionally focused on health, security, education, business or management. These accreditation mechanisms have been consolidated in recent years (Interviewee 15).

There has also been some improvement of funding public universities in the last years. Along with increased investment, there has also been an increase in teachers and staff' salaries and number of fellowships for students. This, however, has not been enough to solve the issue of desertion in one interviewee's perspective:

> Another important issue that I could mention is that in recent years there has been, together with higher investment, an increase in salaries for professors and university employees, an increase in the number of scholarships focused on bringing in students that are less favored economically, but these mechanisms aren't sufficient to take care of this huge attrition problem (Interviewee 15).

As seen in this subsection, some interviewees associated the strengths of higher education in Argentina to traditional aspects of the system, while others made reference to more recent policies.

The university autonomy and the co-government (government of universities by faculty, students, and graduates) are practices highly valued in the Argentine culture. It is also mentioned as positive the fact that universities are historically very inclusive. Some recent policies were pointed out as relevant, particularly the creation and decentralization of national universities, the improvement in funding of these institutions, programs to support students (e.g.: fellowships), and the creation of mechanisms to ensure quality of higher education. In the next subsection, interviewees will comment on the critical aspects of the higher education system from their perspective.

3.2.3 – Critical aspects about higher education in the country

One interviewee discussed university-related challenges and problems. These challenges, she noted, the university can face more directly. However, the problems in her evaluation are more difficult to attack and sometimes are beyond the scope of the university. One challenge, according to her, is how to make the research carried out at the university have a beneficial effect on society's problems.

> I feel the problem is more serious than a challenge because it is dependent on other aspects of society (…). There are other challenges, but...how do I say it? It is clearer to me how to handle some challenges, like for example, I'll mention two that for me are fundamental. How do we ensure that research that is carried out in universities can have some beneficial effect on social problems? That is an important challenge (Interviewee 17).

Another challenge is how to train professionals more in tune with the current problems faced by society. Also, an important challenge seems to train professional that can continue to develop their qualification by themselves.

> How do we ensure that university staff trains professionals that are more adequate, more sensitive to the needs of society? Professionals that can go on continuing to train themselves (Interviewee 17).

A last challenge that she mentioned related to teachers' qualification. How can the university increase the level of qualification of their faculty? These are challenges that the university can act upon:

> How can we improve the educational level of the teaching staff, that is, making sure that they all have a doctorate? How can we democratize access to university professorships? This whole problematic area related to teaching and research, these are real challenges, and it seems to me that universities can work to solve them (Interviewee 17).

She then discussed two important problems. The first problem is related to who has access to universities. High school, in her opinion, works as a filter to select those that are going to reach university, so those that succeed are already a selection of the young population.

> In return, the problem of access, that is, the democratization of access, of who gets into universities. This I see as a true problem. (...) If the first filter is high school, those that get into university are a careful selection of the youth population (Interviewee 17).

The second problem that she identified is, in her opinion, the most serious issue faced by Argentine universities. This problem is the high levels of dropout. In fact, all other interviewees mention this same problem. As another interviewee mentioned, a high number of students enroll in universities but around 50% of them dropout during the first year, and this process continues throughout the years. That is why, in his view, the graduation rates of Argentina are so low, even compared to other Latin American countries. He believes that the country is not dealing properly with the issue of retention in higher education. In other words, policies to keep students in their programs, including curriculum organization, are not working well.

> This large group of students that enrolls in university, one, they drop out heavily in the first phase, basically the first year, in which there is approximately a 50% general dropout rate and this increases throughout, which is why the university graduation rate, especially in Argentine public universities, is so low, so low, even when compared with the rest of Latin America. In this I believe we are talking about structural flaws in how we think about and approach this massive teaching responsibility for which the university was designed, but on the other hand I believe that our residence enrollment policies, including the curricular organization of our universities, are not working sufficiently well so that this huge number of students advances in their academic trajectories (Interviewee 13).

The above phenomenon has many explanations according to one of the interviewees. He

noted that part of the problem is related to social issues. Even though public universities are free in Argentina, some students just cannot afford to attend these institutions because they have to work and support their families Another aspect of the problem is related to the low quality of high school, and consequently to the academic preparation of students. Students did not receive the academic qualifications needed to succeed in higher education. He also attributed part of the problem to the quality of some universities:

> Well, there is a retention problem, that is, there is a high attrition and dropout rate, as Argentina has a very good university matriculation rate but a very low graduation rate. In the normal operations of the university, many people fall by the wayside and this cannot be completely explained through social issues. If it is related to Argentine society, which is clearly unequal, this inequality is also reflected in the quality of secondary school, or high school. This can be seen in universities, the failure of universities has to do with the quality of secondary schools, but this is not the only cause of this problem. Everyone contributes to this: economic issues, the issue of the quality of secondary schools, as well as the varying levels of quality among the universities(Interviewee 15).

This approach used by the interviewee to explain the complex phenomenon of dropout is interesting and it recognizes the participation of higher education institutions in the process. As Ezcurra (2011) wrote, based on several author, the academic qualification of students prior to higher education is an essential element to predict his/her success in this level of education. She also mentioned studies that find a direct relationship between academic qualification and socio-economic status. The author pointed out the existence of a "cultural inequality socially conditioned". The academic qualification of students, however, is not the only aspect that has to be taken into consideration. Based on Vincent Tinto, Ezcurra (2011) stated that the prevalent perceptions put the burden of dropout on students: "thus, students fail, not the educational institutions" (p. 35). In her view this is a way to protect the institutional *status quo*. Citing many researchers, the author underlined the relevance of institutions, teachers, pedagogical practices and the curriculum in the success or failure of students.

Another interviewee, along the same lines, said that part of the dropout issue is economic – students cannot afford to stay in higher education even though it is free or they are not prepared enough academically – but part of the issue is related to the university. A problem that he identifies

is that it is not explicit which competences students should have to access higher education.

> There is also a big problem. In terms of attrition, the problem isn't only economic, it is more, I'd say it is less related to economics than to other things, you know? But a big part of the problem has to do with universities themselves. First of all, it isn't defined – here I'm talking only about the province of Buenos Aires – what competencies are required to enroll at university. This isn't clarified, it isn't. If a parent wants to know what a student should learn in secondary school which will be required at university, they do not know, because it is not written (Interviewee 14).

In his view, it is important to have a definition of which competencies are required for entering students because this could guide the work of teachers during the first year of university. As he explained, some subjects they have to expect students to know while others they need to teach them. To require the knowledge of contents that they do not know can also lead to dropout.

> Why should these competencies be made explicit? If they are explicit, then you can better manage relations with first year professors, that is to say, first year professors, there are things that you need to make sure your students know, and there are things you need to teach your students…you understand me? This is to say, there are professors that in reality require that their students learn things that they do not have to know. A student that enters the humanities has to know how to read and write, has to know how to write a summary, but does not have to know how to write an essay, this is what the university needs to teach them. (…) At times competencies are demanded that aren't necessary, and this contributes to the attribution problem, too (Interviewee 14).

Ezcurra (2011) said that a central question related to the academic success or failure is whether or not institutions take into consideration the "cultural capital" of students as a starting point for their work. In many circumstances, as she explained, there is a gap between the real and the expected student (p. 39). Additionally, she mentioned that students are in a stage of transition. There is a social and also an academic adjustment they go through. The academic adjustment is more challenging to economically disadvantaged populations (p. 41).

Another issue mentioned by the interviewee involved how staff members are not prepared to help students in their transition to universities. In high school the system is different: they have their academic material ready for them in advance. In university they have to find the material by themselves in many cases, and face many challenges while doing this. This, to the interviewee, in many cases discourages students:

> Another issue is that many students aren't well-attended by university staff. So, when a student has quarterly assignments, when the first quarterly assignment comes around after two months of study the student does not know how to research their bibliography. Here secondary students are used to having a manual or textbook for each subject. So imagine, you go to university, you've seen how it is, it is different, they give you 20 books and you have to read a chapter from here, another from there, you have to go seek new books out…it is all part of the work. Many students do not know how to do this. Even more, they do not know how to recognize a citation in a book chapter, because they never saw these things in secondary school, no-one taught them. When they get to the end of the first quarter, they cannot put their bibliography together, it kills them, they get discouraged and they leave (Interviewee 14).

His point is that universities do not pay enough attention to entering students. He made reference especially to public universities. Private universities, in his view, pay more attention to this aspect.

> So, there are a number of reasons why universities, at least our universities, do not pay enough attention to incoming students, they aren't prepared, they aren't thinking that these students have a problem. (...) This mode of teaching (...) obviously helps students develop survival skills, but it is leaving a lot of people behind along the way, who could have been good students if we had accompanied them better during their initial studies, in a situation like ours where you have to learn how to get along in a university, you know how it is, where is the library, what am I going to find in this library, what am I going to find in this other one, what do I have to seek out on the internet, how can I flesh out my bibliography using the internet. (...) It seems to me that so much of this is lacking, while private universities have focused a lot more on this, because well, they are more interested in their students sticking around for their own sustainability, whereas for the publics it is what it is (Interviewee 14).

Another interviewee also considered that dropout is the biggest problem faced in higher education. In his analysis, the failure to increase graduation rates will negatively affect the economy. He gave an example that the economy in the beginning of 2012 was growing around 8 or 9% a year, while the rates of graduation in higher education are increasing less than 2%. He noted that here is a rising need for qualified people and the universities are not graduating more students in the same intensity.

> Basically I believe that attrition is the biggest problem we have. (...) To the extent that we haven't increased our number of university graduates, our growth model is going to be affected, because our economy is growing at 8 or 9% annually, and yet we aren't increasing our university graduation rates by even 2%. So it seems we need more and more trained workers but we aren't training enough people (Interviewee 14).

Much money has been invested to attack that issue, as one interviewee explained, without success. She said that universities so far have not offered answers about how to keep students until they graduate, and also there are no good studies about what effectively happens inside universities in relation to that matter.

> Who is graduating…This is also a real problem. So much money has been spent on this problem of enrollment and attrition, money that hasn't had any impact. Universities haven't been able to retain students long enough to graduate, and also I do not believe that there are good studies that have been done about what's really happening inside universities to prevent this from happening (Interviewee 17).

To one interviewee, the mechanisms to access universities are very flexible in the beginning, but the real selection takes place inside universities. This explains the high dropout rates. He said that from 1985 to 2005 Argentina went through different economic and social situations but the behavior of enrollment continues the same: around half of the enrolled students drop out in the first year.

> Though we have wide territorial coverage, an institutional expansion of higher education, there are still persistent problems, such as: High attrition, and mechanisms that facilitate enrollment a lot but which assume a deferred selection. Selection occurs inside the university and this is one of the reasons why attrition is so high. To speak in statistical terms, if you look from 1985 to 2005, for example, 20 years in which Argentina has passed through very different social and economic situations with significant times of crisis and several bonanza years, university enrollments have behaved similarly. 50% of students drop out in the first year, that is, 100 enter and 50 re-enroll, this is a homogeneous statistic (Interviewee 15).

These high dropout rates, according to one interviewee, exist in universities with open access but also in institutions with selective processes or entrance exams. This problem, according to her, happens all over Latin America, even in countries with highly competitive selective processes such as Mexico and Brazil.

> In Argentina, from universities like UBA that are more open (...) to several universities that have entrance exams, that is, those that are more closed, in all of them attrition is tremendous. Dropout is over 50% (...) this is also a problem throughout Latin America. In Mexico where there is a strict entrance exam, in Brazil where some universities also have entrance exams, in this places dropout is also above 50% (Interviewee 17).

She mentioned that dropouts are a waste of scarce resources, particularly of public institutions. Students that spend two years studying in medical school or being trained to be a math or history teacher, for instance, will not benefit from this in their professional life and this will have no impact on the human resource policies of the country.

> University dropout is possibly one of the biggest problems, especially in public universities because there is a waste of financial resources that are already scarce, that for universities are scarce. And if a student studies medicine for two years, or math for two years, or history for two years, it won't have any beneficial effect on their work life, it won't have any effect on the human resources policies of this country (Interviewee 17).

She also noted that the dropout rate distorts the funding and the teaching model of universities. The first years of university are always more expensive because there is much more students and more teachers are required. Graduate students that want to become university teachers also focus on classes of the first year, since there they have more opportunities.

> To me, this is the biggest problem in universities, but not just in Argentina, throughout the Americas, university dropout, because this distorts the financial model, it distorts the pedagogical model, it even distorts the programs of study (…) the first few years of university are always the most expensive because they have the highest number of students and the highest number of faculty, it is a significant waste of resources. Faculty concentrate on the first years because there are more possibilities, graduate students that want to be faculty, they focus on the first few years because there are more students there (Interviewee 17).

One interviewee stated that there is no strong state policy to solve the problem of retention of students in higher education. There are dispersed policies, such as the Ministry of Education supporting proposals of universities in that area. Each university creates its own policy and MEC decides which one it is going to finance. In his view, when there are many different strategies to attack this issue is very difficult to assess if the reality has changed a lot or a little, or if nothing has changed, and it is very difficult to expect a massive result. This critique is particularly interesting because it comes from someone that is part of the current government.

> There has never been—and I believe this is a failing of the government—there has not been a significant policy, a state policy that applies throughout the country for this issue of retention, of access, of improving performance in retention and graduation. There are policies here and there, that is to say the government has often financed university budgets.

> So every university has their own projects, and the government looks into whether these projects are reasonable, they fund them, but they all have distinct strategies. And when there are so many separate strategies for these problems it is difficult to evaluate, it is difficult to know if things have really changed much or not at all, and it is hard to expect much of a system-wide result, you know? (Interviewee 14).

Another interviewee pointed out the lack of concentrated policies between the federal government and universities in order to solve problems in general in higher education. This deals with the issue of university autonomy – its relevance and its extension. In his opinion, there is no doubt and no divergence in Argentina about the relevance of university autonomy. The issue arises when talking about the level of autonomy that these institutions should have. As he sees it, it is possible to have an accountable and socially responsible autonomy or an autonomy that in practice means sovereignty.

> The other problem is that there aren't systemic policies between universities and the government that tend to deal with these problems, and so the response to these problems comes from each university, because the Argentine university system is strongly based in autonomy. Autonomy has a strong hold. That is, today this is one of the common denominators, one of the most important points of consensus that Argentina has, that is, no-one today disputes the need for university autonomy. Now, the extension of autonomy is more up to interpretation, it can be a responsible autonomy, or an autonomy that maintains social responsibility, which is what keeps it pertinent, or even an autonomy that is similar to sovereignty, from the idea of the university being an island. These issues raise some warnings for Argentina and for the operating of the university itself (Interviewee 15).

The issue of university autonomy permeates all the debate about higher education in Argentina. One interviewee said that important negative aspects of higher education in Argentina are related to the intervention of governments during dictatorships, suppressing temporarily their autonomy. As a matter of fact, public universities in Argentina were strongly affected by the political instability of the country since 1930 (Plotkin, 2006, p. 43). One clear impact of military government on universities, besides the changes in the political orientation of these institutions, was the loss of professors. Some professors of public universities migrated to private institutions and many exiled. To the interviewee, these dictatorships eliminated scientific advancement and people's critical thinking.

> Negative aspects are related to the influence of the social and political context, as the military dictatorships led to the elimination of science, and of people's critical thinking (Interviewee 16).

These negative aspects, in her view, are related to the intervention of military governments but also of democratic governments. She mentioned in particular the Menem government, when it was approved the law of higher education. This law, in her evaluation, let universities more permeable to external interests.

> Negative aspects have to do with the meddling of agendas, generally from outside, whether from dictatorial governments or from democratic ones like in the 90s, during the government of Carlos Menem, which promoted higher education laws that permitted that the universities were taken over as agencies of…I won't say of the government, but there are notable influences that were generated by external interests (Interviewee 16).

Another important negative element in her opinion involved internal dynamics of universities that lead to the *status quo*. There is little leadership of academics toward innovation and changing the university. She believed that part of this problem is related to the system of teacher's work – many of them are part-time workers, having little time to commit to a specific university.

> Those negative aspects that I see are related to those internal dynamics in universities that are oriented towards the status quo, that is, there are few changes, few innovations, few professors, few researchers, and few academics speaking up in support of internal changes. I think this lethargy, this acceptance of the status quo has to do with the professors, that are very accustomed to working part-time, with little dedication to any particular university (Interviewee 16).

The situation of teachers in Argentina was an issue that was only slightly mentioned by one Argentine interviewee. This was actually brought up by a Brazilian interviewee. She thought that teachers' conditions in Argentina were very difficult. As she explained, only a minority was part of the permanent staff of universities. Most of them had to work in many institutions to make a decent salary. This theme will be discussed in subsection 3.2.7, which discusses the quality of higher education.

> In Argentina there was a terrible process of cleaning out the professor corps. There was a huge teacher-student ratio in the beginning, but not in the end, because you have to fit everyone. And is there sufficient faculty for everyone? No. Who is faculty? If an institution has 100 faculty, 25 are university professors. The other 75 are what we here call hourly

> staff. It is very different from Brazil. So folks that are faculty at universities, at UBA for example, they will say they are from UBA and Quilmes. They work very little. Unless they can get a CONICET research fellowship. Then they become class A [higher social class]. Which isn't very much money, I'm not talking about rich folks, we're talking about someone who finally does not have to have three or four jobs to keep themselves in a university setting. Because then they have a research fellowship. Because here in Brazil you have time for teaching and research. A CONICET fellowship gives him time to do research, so he does not need to give 30, 40 hours a week. It is very common that they work in two or three institutions. It is rare to not be in that situation, really. Or if you only teach in one or two places, then you have to give lots of class hours (Interviewee 7).

A final element mentioned as critical by the interviewees is the lack of planning in the system of higher education. The system, in one interviewees' perspective, is very diversified but this diversification was not planned. She said that universities and other tertiary institutions were originally not associated together when they were created, but were brought together later. This led to a very chaotic and overlapping system, an issue that will be discussed in detail in the next subsection.

> It is difficult to talk about higher education today without talking about the history of universities on one hand and other tertiary institutions on the other, because that's how the system was organized. And starting in the 90s it was all brought together, everything related to higher education in Argentina, but this created a lot of chaotic overlap (Interviewee 16).

As it was possible to see, interviewees explained that there are challenges and serious issues that need to be addressed in Argentine higher education. Among the challenges are to make university research socially accountable, to train professionals committed to society's issues, and to increase the level of faculty qualification. A problem mentioned by all interviewees is the high attrition rate. This happens in several institutions, and it is part of a larger social problem. It is important to consider also, as some interviewees noted, the role of institutions in this process. On one hand, some interviewees point out governmental intervention in higher education as negative (either during dictatorships or democratic governments). On the other hand, some interviewees mentioned as a problem a lack of concerted policies between the federal government and universities. Two other aspects mentioned as critical are: a tendency to the *status quo* or the lack of leadership toward innovation, and the faculty's working situation. In the next subsection, the focus is the diversification of higher education.

3.2.4 – Diversification of higher education

There are different perspectives on the theme of diversification of higher education. While some say that the system is already diversified, others observe that this diversification is more official than real. There are institutions with different names doing similar things, and not much innovation in the system. Some see this is the current trend. It can be positive because it promotes inclusion, but others note there right now it's been negative due to its lack of planning.

To one of interviewee, higher education in Argentina is very diversified. There are huge universities, some intermediary universities in terms of size and small universities; old and new institutions; university schools, institutes, tertiary institutions.

> And we currently have a very diverse public university system. So you can talk about huge universities, mid-sized universities, small universities, new universities…there is a huge typology, a great variety, so today, in 2012, it is very hard to talk about the higher education system as being clearly differentiated when you have new structures that overlap. Today there are colleges, new university institutions and around 1700 total tertiary institutions that make up higher education, that in the 90s were strongly attacked in terms of their identity because they used to focus on training technicians and teachers and then in the 90s they changed and revised this system and were, well, strongly chastised for doing so (Interviewee 16).

The diversification of higher education is a process occurring throughout the development of the educational system of Argentina, but this process was certainly intensified during the 1990s. During this period, a number of different institutions emerged in higher education. As many authors explained, today there are public and private institutions, traditional and reformist universities, Catholic and secular, elite and massive universities, research and vocational institutions, with a variety or courses or specialized, with different selective processes, among other peculiarities (Iriarte, 2008, p. 28; Brutto, 2009, p. 50). To Fanelli (2012), public and private institutions are heterogeneous, and there is also diversity inside each one of these sectors. She explained that "within the public university sector, there are a few research-intensive schools (or *faculdades*) – most of which target the basic and agronomic sciences – at some traditional institutions. All the others are primarily teaching schools, devoted mainly to professional training" (p. 38).

Another interviewee believed that the process of diversification is an adjustment to new society's demands, including students that would not take traditional courses. This trend is more visible, according to her, in new institutions.

> Well, it seems to me that this is one of the ways to respond to society's new demands and needs. Logically, I believe that many students who would not be too worried about their prospects in society, they would not study traditional career paths in a university. Rather, they are enrolling in new programs. In Argentina, in general new programs are in the new universities, in the huge number of new universities from the 90s (Interviewee 17).

One interviewee explained that in the last years there has been a strong process of creation of new courses and mostly of new institutions. This is happening in the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires, which concentrates most of the institutions of higher education in the country, but also in small towns in Argentina.

> In Argentina recently there has been a strong creative impulse, particularly creating new institutions, also new programs but above all new institutions. This has happened especially in the province of Buenos Aires, in that urban area but also in many of the country's smaller cities (Interviewee 13).

To one interviewee, the creation of new universities dovetails with the creation of new courses. She mentioned that it is very difficult to diversify inside old institutions in Argentina. As a matter of fact, many of the new universities created in the last years present themselves as innovative in relation to traditional universities. Iriarte (2008) wrote that these institutions created new courses, many of them in tune with local or regional needs, focused on specific knowledge fields and shorter (p. 28).

> Now, unlike Brazil, they are all national, and there are very few, or now there are a couple of provincial universities, but rather the tendency has been the opposite here, that the provincial universities have become national. Now there are a couple of provincial universities, but this isn't the general pattern, as provincial governments do not want to fund universities, they want the government to do that, clearly, and with each of these waves of institutional creation came new programs because the old universities have a hard time diversifying internally (Interviewee 17).

In another interviewee assessment, however, the new universities that are being created do not differ in relation to the existing universities. They have, for instance, new denominations for

their departments, but do not innovate greatly.

> To me, it seems like there is a problem. (...) In Argentina in the past we have created new institutions that in my personal opinion…while there is a certain novelty in how they designate their departments, it does not appear to me that there is a lot of innovation there relative to how we traditionally understand universities to be (Interviewee 14).

He illustrated his point with an example related to information and communication technology (ICT). None of these institutions in his opinion is completely permeated by technology. They all incorporate the use of technology as traditional universities do.

> To give an example, none of these new institutions has really fully incorporated ICT. The truth is this, that is, in each case they've done the same as earlier institutions, that is, they incorporate Information and Communication Technology…Well, this gets your attention, because if we are incorporating new institutions we shouldn't think of them without the virtual side, that is, we should think bimodally, that is, we have a setting in which your student, your in-person student that is learning traditionally also has a virtual class that replicates his daily in-person physical class and where he goes on working later at home or where he replaces a class he could replace in the environment, where everything is automated, where students sign up on the internet, ask for things over the internet…that is, it seems to me that these new universities still incorporate technological advances in a very traditional way, that is, they use structures that are not different from what they used to be, you know? (Interviewee 14).

He continued saying that instead of the traditional schools some institutions were creating departments or institutes, while managing careers and teachers the same way colleges do. The difference sometimes was that they were smaller, and could innovate somewhat through service activities.

> Beyond this instead of schools they have departments or institutes...but these institutes manage the programs and professors just as the schools did, just in smaller numbers, and sometimes they put more work into university service, or community connections (Interviewee 14).

Other interviewees shared similar feelings. One interviewee recognized that there was a tendency toward diversification, but she said that this process was very slow in Argentina, in her mind due to its conservative population. This conservative mindset meant students preferred traditional courses. In her analysis too, even the new courses created didn't differ a lot from

traditional courses. The new universities, in her opinion, innovated more in terms of research than teaching.

> But to me it seems we tend towards diversification. In the case of Argentina we do so very slowly because the population is very conservative. Those that get to university want, for the most part, traditional programs that lead to traditional careers. Only in a few places (...) from the Buenos Aires region are there newer programs, and they are not very new, or very different. The universities in Buenos Aires, in my view, have had more innovation in their research models than their teaching, or their programs, though there still isn't a university with truly new programs (Interviewee 17).

There were those that said that institutional diversification was something positive, but criticized the fact that it was taking place in an unplanned way. One interviewee said that the growth in the number of institutions was a response to demands for new careers or for universities in different localities, including complaints from political leaders from different localities or regions (like mayors and governors) pushing to have a new university in their jurisdiction. So, in his opinion, this was leading to an unplanned expansion of the system. Apart from that, though, he still felt some of the new universities had an important role to play in geographic areas where there was no institution of higher education.

> I believe that institutional diversification was at first a positive trend, now though, it seems questionable to me that this growth has been unplanned. It is a growth that has come in response to a demand for new programs, new universities in more diverse geographical areas, or claims by political leaders from certain regions or areas, that is, of mayors, governors that are pushing to have new universities in their areas and this to me leads to unplanned systemic expansion, an expansion that does not always pass evaluative requirements, not formal requirements but the substantive requirement to consider what Argentina's growth policy based in geographical needs should be, more universities or more programs? There is in this a negative element to consider, in more than a few cases, some of these universities fulfill an important function because they reach populations that weren't able to go to university before. But I believe that this is a very important problem to consider, that this growth has been unplanned. (Interviewee 13)

Another interviewee said that diversification in Argentine higher education was quite chaotic. The diversification of courses, as well as of institutions, didn't follow a state-organized or rational plan. It was led by political and market interests, with some external influence. This idea was shared by Mollis (2008), to whom higher education in Argentina "[was] characterized by a great diversity in its education offer, with a significant overlapping regarding degrees granted by the

university and the non-university sectors, and a visible fragmentation throughout the system shaped by different types of institutions disarticulated among themselves". She also said that this situation was a consequence of many fragmented educational policies implemented by different administrations with divergent ideologies and plans (p. 514).

> In general, in Argentina, the wide variety of programs and of university facilities do not obey a rational, systematic and planned structure set by the state, but rather have obeyed other motives set by the labor market, by the political market and also by the influence of external agencies and third parties. The diversity we have is very chaotic (Interviewee 16).

Another interviewee agreed that there was a lack of planning in the whole system of higher education. Some universities were planning their own activities, creating strategic plans and using other managerial instruments, but this didn't happen at the system level. This was something identified as a problem in the last subsection.

> I believe that in the entire higher education system there is a notable lack of planning. There is no planning. What you can find in the last few years are incipient attempts at planning within universities, for example, the sanction of university strategic plans…that is, the organization of universities around concrete objectives they plan to reach. These strategic plans to me seem like a good thing, it has been good that they have been utilized and they should continue in this work, there is a growing urgency that university people should engage in this type of planning (Interviewee 15).

One example of lack of planning was in relation to courses. The interviewee said that there was still some prejudice against courses that are not taken inside universities. This led to a situation in which courses that in his view belonged to the non-university sector were offered by universities. He identified teacher-training programs as an example of such courses. Mollis (2008) considered that superposition as expensive and inefficient. In the last decade, she added, new courses were oriented by the profile of potential consumers (p. 514).

> It seems that all postsecondary institutions that aren't universities have an impairment in terms of people's appreciation for the value of such studies and this has led to universities doing everything, that is, they now provide all the programs that both the tertiary system and universities typically offer. Now, for example, technical teaching programs are offered in the university. They also are offered in other higher educational institutions, but that just shows a lack of planning (Interviewee 15).

In terms of concerns specific to courses, the interviewee mentioned that there was a huge dispersion in this area. He presented a comparison with the European case to show his point. According to him, during the Bologna process Europeans identified around 900 courses, while in Argentina there are more than 5,000 accredited courses. This was stated as an implied critique of the excessive specialization of undergrad programs in Argentina.

> In terms of degree programs, there is a great spread of degree programs in Argentina, an enormous spread. (...) for example, through the Bologna process the Europeans established 900 diploma-granting degree programs, and in Argentina there are accredited kinds of degree programs, more than 5000 higher education degree programs, which is folly, they have the most extravagant definitions, descriptions, when the common core of these degree programs, for example, the degree of general studies, have the most varying descriptions. You can get a degree in administration and then open a business. You can get a degree in design, but there is costume design to industrial design, also film graphic design, sound design, at any rate, there are so many types of design that it does not mean anything (Interviewee 15).

Being even more specific, he mentioned a case that happened in 2004, after a teenager shot several colleagues in a school in Carmen de Patagones, Argentina, leading some of them to die. In the same month that this tragedy took place, seven universities asked the MEC to accredit new courses they created in school conflict mediation. This illustrated, in his opinion, how in many cases universities responded to "trends." Finally he commented that the MEC could not really intervene in this due to strong university autonomy.

> I'll share an anecdote that is illustrative of this point. This is a tragedy, a very lamentable situation (...) of a boy, a 12-year-old primary student that went into Carmen de Patagonia, that went into his class and killed his classmates with a revolver. He went in to kill, and killed several children, it was a tragedy, a shocking thing. In the month when this happen seven universities asked the ministry to formally recognize new courses in school conflict mediation. That gives you a sense of how universities react to trends, or to what happens…It is folly, really, all folly. And the ability of the ministry to intervene in these types of situations is very low, because of how strong university autonomy is in these cases (Interviewee 15).

One interviewee explained that a larger unplanned increase in diversification happened during the 1990s. It was associated with new trends of privatization and also with the creation of new national universities during the Menem government. She explained that rectors from the existing national universities were more in line with the radical party, an opposition party, while rectors of

the new universities were more associated to the government. D'Almeida, Mataluna, and Catani (2005) shared similar thoughts, as mentioned in section 3.1.

> This unplanned diversification started I believe in the 90s as a consequence of these new tendencies related to privatization and the growth of new universities whose rectors were politically affiliated to the national government. In general, national universities had rectors that followed certain political guidelines that generally were closer to the radical party. In the 90s new universities were created in the urban cone whose rectors were openly affiliated with the official line of thought of the Carlos Menem government and this diversification in the universities I would say came from more patronage-based political thinking than planning (Interviewee 16).

The interviewee commented on the process of privatization in higher education in Argentina. In her perspective, this trend could be seen not only in the creation of new universities but rather in the creation of non-university institutions.

> This privatization isn't really tied to new universities, but rather to new tertiary institutions, the many new private tertiary institutions. (...) privatization didn't push the growth of the university system as it was the public universities that grew the most, and in terms of private growth what grew most were tertiary institutions, not universities (Interviewee 16).

As can be seen in subsection 3.2.1, in 2010 there were 55 public and 57 private university institutions. In the same year, there were 948 public and 1,181 private non-university institutions (about 45% and 55% of the total, respectively). Such data about the number of higher education institutions are helpful in understanding that the real increase in the public and private sectors was the number of enrollments in each sector. Table 15 presents this information for selected years:

Table 15 – Enrollment by academic organization and administrative category (1996-2010)*

	University sector			Non-university sector		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
1996	812,308**	-	-	233,254	122,833	356,087
1998	954,790**	-	-	225,075	143,478	368,553
2000	1,124,044**	166,539	1,290,583	243,600	170,365	413,965
2002	1,257,561	204,595	1,462,156	285,640	177,508	463,148
2004	1,299,371	234,281	1,533,652	273,435	210,895	484,330
2006	1,304,003	279,373	1,583,376	265,354	235,591	500,945
2008	1,283,482	317,040	1,600,522	315,826	261,683	577,509
2010	1,366,507	352,270	1,718,507	387,141	282,042	669,183

* University Statistics Yearbook, which presents official data about the university subsystem and Educational Statistics Yearbook, which bring data about the non-university subsystem, are available online from 1996 on. The University Statistics Yearbook from 1996, however, present data about previous years.
** Data collected only for national universities.

Source: University Statistics Yearbook and Educational Statistics Yearbook, years 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010.

Looking at the university subsystem, it is possible to see that there was an increase in enrollment from 2002 to 2010 (data from 1996 to 2000 was collected only for national universities, which represent most but not all of the public sector). The private sector also increased continuously during this period. In 2002, the participation of the public sector in enrollment represented 86% (1,257,561 students out of 1,462,156). In 2010, this participation reduced to around 80% (1,366,507 students out of 1,718,507).

Among non-university institutions, the enrollment in the public sector varied during this time, although the tendency was towards growth. Increases in enrollment in the private sector, on the other hand, were constant. The participation of the public sector in enrollments in the non-university subsystem, which was 65% in 1996 (233,254 students out of 356,087), reduced to 56% in 2010 (387,141 out of 669,183). In general, the public sector reduced its participation in relation to the private sector in both subsystems during the last decades.

In relation to private universities, these institutions evolved along the years but it is possible to say that the new institutions

> are typified by fewer degree programs offered, and by focusing more on administration and communication and increasing their short-term programs. These private universities, focused on particular demands, budgeted for tertiary degree programs that focused on particular demands of the labor market or focused on the academic demands of the elite; attending to an audience that saw public universities as being 'overcrowded' due to political conflicts and lowered resources (Iriarte, 2008, p. 27).

Regarding the non-university sector, it is possible to say that these institutions were different from the university institutions since their focuses were teacher and technical training. In terms of number of institutions they represented 95% of all institutions but in terms of enrollment only 28% of the total. This shows that these institutions were much smaller than universities, particularly the oldest universities. According to Marquina (2011) such institutions "are devalued by the popular imagination when compared with what the university can offer, as it is free and has lax admissions requirements" (p. 64).

Puiggrós (2010) made an important comment in relation to the offer of higher education:

> in many parts of the country the tertiary or the regional center of the university is the only place where you can study at the higher education level, and at this time a secondary degree only is sufficient to work in low-level posts, economically and socially speaking. The solution thus isn't to close institutions in a country with such a deficit, but to improve these institutions, to build and recognize students rather than encourage deserters (p. 179).

In Mollis' (2007) eyes, the problem was not necessarily the diversification of institutions and courses, but the lack of articulation among these institutions and courses (p. 73). According to one interviewee, there have been efforts to organize this diversification recently. There were proposals to organize the creation of new universities, and to integrate these new institutions with local governmental and economic organizations in order to attend to local demands.

> There is however, and I have participated in this, there is a willingness, a vocation on the part of some higher education actors that hope to organize this diversification. There are proposals so that this growth, so that these new institutions arise in a more organized fashion, there are proposals to create links between universities and regional governments and economic agencies so that this growth corresponds to needs that haven't yet been satisfied (Interviewee 16).

It became clear that there had to be integration inside the higher education system, among the institutions that make up this system and also between the higher education system and external institutions such as the government, industry, private enterprise, and others. The integration inside the higher education system had to take into consideration the vocation of different types of institutions and seek a coordination in the development of their activities (e.g. their course offerings). The integration with external institutions should be based on the social responsibility of higher education institutions and have their mission in mind. This relationship had to allow universities and other higher education institutions to improve their own activities (teaching, research, and service), and at the same time bring benefits to their partners and society in general.

Puiggrós (2010) pointed out a number of measures that need to be taken. Some of them were: build connections between non-university institutions and universities; implement a curricular reform that, among other things, would shorten undergrad courses (she proposed an average of four

years) and establish intermediary degrees; and link higher education to "social urgencies" (for instance funding research projects that seek to solve social problems).

In sum, some interviewees said that the system of higher education was already diversified while others stated that this diversification was more official than real, or that there were institutions with different names doing similar things. For many interviewees this was a current trend and it could be positive because it promoted student inclusion, but at the time of these interviews it felt prejudicial due to the lack of planning of the system. In the next subsection interviewees shared their view on higher education access-related policies in Argentina.

3.2.5 – Policies related to access to higher education

Policies related to access to higher education in Argentina have been a matter of heated debate. As Duarte (2009) clarified, there have been some that defended open access while others defended access with restrictions. Those that were in the first group associated open access with the democratization of higher education, while those that were in the second group claimed to intend to assure quality of education. These different opinions were present among the interviewees.

From a historical perspective, the university in Argentina was created as a very selective institution dedicated to train the local elites. The first law that regulated higher education was Law 1,597 (1885) – the Avellaneda Law, which allowed each institution to decide on their own selective process. With Law 13,031 (1947), which replaced the Avellaneda Law, this function was handed over to the National University Council. "Consequently enrollment exams were eliminated and enrollment went up significantly. From then on, the norm relative to whether admission should be open or have restrictions (like exams and quotas) varied according to changes in the democratic government" (González and Claverie, 2007, p. 1-2).

As one interviewee explained, at the time of the interview there was no national system of access to higher education in Argentina. Each institution decided which kind of entrance policy to

adopt. In fact, the Law 24,521 (1995) instituted that universities had autonomy to establish their admission policies, as well as policies to maintain and promote students in their programs (Art 29, j). As Mollis (2008) explained, there was a correspondence between the institutional diversification and the diversity of systems of access. In her view "what is good for one institution with some characteristics, not necessarily works for another." She added that countries with different institutions usually also had different entrance policies (p. 516).

There were institutions that adopted the open access policy, while other had entrance exams. Others, for instance, had a preliminary course that could be eliminatory or not. The interviewee explained that even within one university different policies for access could coexist. In practice, she said that in general once students graduated from high school they had direct or open access to higher education. In her view access to the university at the time of the interview was very easy.

> Access is direct generally—that is, if you have your degree, if you've finished secondary, access to the university is very easy. Admission to university (...) there isn't a general admissions system like in Brazil, you do not have a national entrance exam here, here who runs the admissions system is each individual university. So there are universities with direct enrollment, with no requirements beyond having finished secondary; others demand an enrollment course; others have an enrollment course that is intended to eliminate some applicants; others establish a common cycle, like the University of Buenos Aires; others have a closed system with a rigorous enrollment course and quotas, like in the case of medical school. Medicine isn't widely taught, there are quotas and there are rigorous exams. So there is a mixture of each of these enrollment systems, like direct enrolment, quota systems, enrollment systems, eliminatory enrollment courses, all in the same university, depending on the degree program (Interviewee 15).

As another interviewee synthesized, in practice from the perspective of institutions, each one of them had a different model. From the perspective of students, most of them gained access to higher education through the open access policy.

> If you look at the number of students that enroll, the bulk of this enrollment is through open access. If we look from the perspective of each institution there are various enrollment methods, various mechanisms for enrollment that have been established, whether through courses, through tests, and so forth (Interviewee 13).

There were those that thought that the expression "open access to higher education" was somehow misleading. Open access, according to one interviewee, did not mean that students had

access to the first year of university. According to her there were courses and other strategies that universities used to guide students through an intermediary cycle between high school and higher education. In fact, as Mollis' (2008) put it, the idea of universal access in higher education was a myth in Argentina. She explained that "these huge public universities with open access, they have in the last decade developed enrollment devices that conceal the selective mechanisms that have been staked out, they have had common entrance cycles, summer courses, tutorial courses, and so forth" (Mollis, 2008, p. 529). In addition to that she touched upon the economic situation of students, saying that the sons of many workers were excluded from the system. This was also the opinion of Puiggrós (2010), to whom there was no unrestricted access in Argentina and the university was exclusive (p. 178).

> Open enrollment isn't synonymous with direct access to the first year of university; this phrase "open enrollment" covers a reality in which there are degree programs and various mechanisms that each university has to make sure that each student that enrolls goes through a type of intermediate cycle. And in some cases there are entrance exams, so I believe it is very confusing to use the term direct access, because it gives the appearance that any student can enroll and have direct access to the first year of university studies, which isn't true. In general they go through selective mechanisms, they call them preparatory cycles, summer courses, they have different names but they all serve the function of working with secondary graduates before they enter the first year of their program. The clearest case is the CBC or Common Core Cycle, which makes clear how the term direct access is deceiving. What does not exist in Argentina is a unified enrollment exam policy, as that was more associated with earlier authoritarian eras (Interviewee 16).

The interviewee mentioned the example of the University of Buenos Aires (UBA). This institution adopted the Common Core Cycle. According to her, students in their first year took classes in order to homogenize their knowledge and took exams at the end of the academic period. As she explained, only half of them on average proceeded in their studies.

> Direct access does not mean that everyone enrolls and begins their first year of study. The University of Buenos Aries has a cycle, they call it the Common Core Cycle in which in one year students enroll, take classes, clarify their previously acquired knowledge and it is calculated that of every 100 that enroll in this cycle, more or less half of these go on to university. Around 40 or 50% go into their programs. This shows how direct access isn't direct in the sense that all who enter enroll in university, because in the first year there is almost a 60% dropout rate associated with this cycle (Interviewee 16).

Another interviewee also mentioned the case of UBA. She explained that the purpose of the

Common Core Cycle (CBC) was to overcome educational inequalities that come from high school, or in other words to equilibrate the knowledge of students. She, however, recognized that it is impossible to overcome some cultural differences. Those that were approved in this course access university because there was no specified number of vacancies. This entrance policy seemed interesting because it did not take into consideration the performance of one student in relation to others. It considered the performance of one student in relation to some knowledge that allegedly was required to access higher education.

> This is very important: access is unrestricted in most universities, which is to say that there are not quotas. There is nothing like the entrance exams in Mexico or Brazil. So, anyone that wants to go to university can enroll in an enrollment course which universities give, like UBA, which you see, some universities have enrollment exams but the exam comes after a course. You do not arrive from secondary school and enter a degree program. First, the university offers a course, in the case of UBA it is a year-long course, that is, in this year they hope to equalize the levels of inequality that came from differential teaching in secondary schools. In reality, as you know very well, cultural differences aren't equalized ever, but now, having finished secondary school is a filter in our countries, but in any case access is unrestricted. That is, anyone that passes this long course, like at UBA, can enroll, because there are no quotas. No university says, this year we're accepting 100 into math and 80 into history. All those that want to do a course can simply do so. This is one of the things that, while I would not say unique, is very specific to Argentina (Interviewee 17).

The new national universities created in the urban cone of Buenos Aires were often criticized for breaking the tradition of national universities and introducing selective processes to grant access to higher education. According to Azevedo (2001) these institutions established as a criterion for admission the need to pass an entrance course that lasts on average four months. Such selective processes, as Fanelli pointed out, were similar to the CBC of the University of Buenos Aires. In her view "the differences between the two are more political in character than clearly academic" (Cited by Azevedo, 2001, p. 56).

Another interviewee continued to describe how some universities as the University of La Plata have exams for some courses, such as medical school. Other universities had preparative courses to university, such as the University of Cordoba or the University Entre Ríos.

> There are other universities, like the University of La Plata, that use entrance exams for a few degree programs. Like medicine, for example. There are universities, like the University

> of Córdoba, or the University Entre Ríos that have programs that are called university preparation programs, where you enroll and are given classes (Interviewee 16).

Duarte (2009) conducted research about the requirements of universities to select their students in Argentina in 2003 and 2004. The data covered 30 national universities, which were responsible for 92% of enrollment in higher education. She proposed classifying the admission policies in three categories:

> 1) Admission with loose requirements: characterized by a limited number of seats (i.e. quotas) given to applicants that were selected and ranked by their entrance exam scores along with a few other criteria. This was called competence-based admission given that the primary characteristic was comparing one applicant's aptitude to another.
> 2) Admission with fixed requirements: In this system, all applicants that met certain minimum prerequisite academic criteria established by the institution had the right to enroll. It was called qualification-based admission as it was based on the university creating enrollment requirements.
> 3) Admission without requirements: A system in which all those that had graduated from the previous school system could enroll as students. This was called open admission (p. 36-37).

She found out that 60% of institutions have an open admission, 31% have qualification-based admission, and only 1% have competence-based admission. She could not obtain data for 8% of the institutions (p. 41). The open admission, in her view, implied that education was a non-scarce good, and that students who finish high school were able to access higher education. The admission per qualification also had as a principle the idea that education was a non-scarce good, but differed in relation to the qualifications to access higher education. Some interviewees, as she mentioned, talked about the different paths students took during high school and the need to homogenize their knowledge in relation to specific contents. Finally, the admission per competence saw universities as institutions with limited material conditions to receive students. These universities took into consideration restrictions linked to the number of students per teacher, books, laboratories, and other resources (p. 50-52). In Duarte's (2009) classification, the University of Buenos Aires was an institution that adopted admission per qualification, as opposed to the open access mentioned by many interviewees.

One of the interviewees thought that open access to higher education in Argentina was an illusion. In her opinion this practice deceived students because more than 50% of them would

dropout in the first year. In fact, according to Marquina (2011), a recent study of the University Policies Secretariat showed that "the dropout rate throughout the university system in 2007 reached 60% and the graduation rate was extremely low, around 20%" (p. 66).

In Gluz's (2011) perspective, the open access in the country expressed how social selectivity can operate also through supposedly democratic policies. She pointed out that unrestricted access did not necessarily ensure more democratization; quite the opposite, in some cases it only postponed the selective process (p. 232-233). It is interesting to mention the concept of implicit selection, cited by Duarte (2009). According to the author, "all systems of higher education that are facing demand pressures answer with some kind of selective process: an explicit one that takes place during the admission, or an implicit one that is diluted along the university education and that it is stronger in the first years of the program" (p. 31).

> It is complicated. In truth it is an illusion, it is an illusion, you could call it a deception, because dropout is over 50%, way over, maybe 60%. So enrollment does not at all guarantee graduation (Interviewee 17).

Another interviewee thought that open access was a little more democratic because it did not exclude anyone at the beginning. On the other hand, she said, in some institutions the conditions were not the best for students to succeed. She illustrated this by noting that some classes had around 200 students. They had lectures with the professor and resolved their doubts with teacher's assistants. Those that did not come with a good qualification from high school would have more challenges in understanding and would have to study much more at home. Some of these students, however, worked and did not have much time outside classroom to study. This led them to drop out in her opinion.

> So this approach is more "democratic" because it does not exclude anyone. On the other hand, you will go into classrooms with 200 students. You will see a professor give a class and then their assistants will answer questions. With 200 students in a class, you won't understand anything unless you've had education, you will need to study a lot, and if you work and study at the same time, you will not have the time to sit at home studying and preparing yourself to overcome these difficulties. At the end of a one-year period you will still have failed, or will give up (…) So is that really more democratic? It is. But in some ways it is a sieve. Because someone that has a lot of trouble, whether it be a lack of prior

> knowledge, or a lack of financial support, of family support that would let them study without working, that student will have a lot of trouble. It will be very difficult for them (Interviewee 7).

González and Claverie (2007) explained that that open access brought financial restrictions to universities. These restrictions had powerful consequences

> for study conditions for university students, above all for the dedication of faculty and the relationships they develop with their students; also for the provision of resources and infrastructure. Under these conditions, there are disadvantages for those that arrive with a deficit education from the secondary school system, lacking training in studying independently and the resources to acquire study materials, which results in a situation where they quickly fail and leave the system (p. 7).

Fanelli (2005), cited by González and Claverie (2007), said that there were three facts that characterized the increase in enrollment as a result of an open admission policy: low system efficiency rates, where a large number of students were enrolled but only a few graduated; unequal demand, where four big universities had more than 50% of enrollment; and little development of the private sector to absorb the demand (p. 3).

One interviewee explained that historically universities in Argentina had open access. She said that this was a tradition since 1885 with the Avellaneda Law. During dictatorships, however, this practice was always reversed, as military governments would introduce entrance exams to avoid a massive access. The fact that in times of democracy Argentina opted for an open access to universities, while in time of authoritarianism it opted for restricted access, has created an important ideological barrier to the idea of entrance exams.

> The university historically, because of this law I mentioned, which since 1885 has been the Avellaneda Law, has presented itself as an institution that is open to students. I mean that enrollment had to be direct. "Direct" means open, that a student that graduates from secondary school had to enroll in university, this was the law. After the military dictatorships, this always happened in the military dictatorships, they closed open enrollment and put in a policy of enrollment tests and quotas. Why? Because the military dictatorship wanted to avoid large-scale access and they wanted to make sure that those that enrolled in university were closely controlled. So in Argentina the idea of enrollment exams and quotas is associated with authoritarian governments (Interviewee 16).

One interviewee said that it was very hard to know whether the idea of having an entrance exam to higher education was good. In fact, Duarte (2009) also underlined the lack of official data

that could support deeper analysis about which access policies were best for students (p. 33). There were several opinions about that and these opinions depended on people's standpoint. In the long term, the interviewee thought that an exam would be important to stimulate students to make a bigger effort. But at the time of the interview, after several periods of social exclusion, the interviewee found it was complicated to limit access to higher education. He thought that some universities at the time were doing for students what high schools should have done.

> In Brazil the university is free but there is no right to enrollment, it has always been selective. Is it good or bad that it is selective? We do not know, there are many opinions, the perspective depends on where you look. I believe that ultimately, when we achieve a higher level of real inclusion…we will have to move to a selective enrollment process that we really have to enforce…But now, when we are still coming from recent eras of social exclusion, the 90s and so forth, if we put in a complicated enrollment system, the truth is that we would be discouraging students and forcing their hand, because we also have problems at the secondary level and so forth. We would be discriminating those that could not resolve their problems with education…of course, we would need something to help at the secondary level, right? Today universities try to do this for free, some do it better, others not so well, because here the degree programs are sufficiently intense or extensive, but then again, there are proposals like this (Interviewee 14).

> In the long term, well, it is probable that yes, if things stabilize well, if secondary improves, the system will also adapt to the times that will come … (Interviewee 14).

This interviewee believed that to impose an entrance exam for universities in Argentina would reduce the number of enrollment and not necessarily impact dropout rates. More than that, he felt it was likely that wealthier students would be approved while students that didn't go to a good high school would fail. Universities, then, would not be able to help these students to make progress in their studies. Such a policy, in his view, would be counterproductive.

> But I believe that today in Argentina, to put in an enrollment test to see if we improve retention would produce an effect where we lower enrollment and retention does not improve. Why? Because in reality due to the problems we have with secondary what we are going to do is lower enrollment. We would see the social class of those that enroll go up, because those that will enroll will be those that went to very competitive secondary schools that are normally costly and private, aside from three or four top state schools we have, there are the other kids that went to a mediocre secondary school that can pay for private tutors, academic services and other things that will prepare them for the test. But for those kids that cannot pay for these things, those students who cannot pay will be those that fall out. And you won't even have the possibility of seeing them prosper. I think this would be counterproductive (Interviewee 14).

The direct access to universities brings a heterogeneous group of students to classrooms. These students have different social origins, previous academic preparation and expectations. Mollis (2007) asserted that the Argentine universities regulate themselves. In other words, those that have real access to a university are the sons of some professionals that have more changes to graduate. In her view, "the biggest responsibility in social selection inside universities is related to the economic aspect that excludes the poorest Argentines" (p. 70).

Another interviewee explained that independent of the entrance system adopted by the university, the same behavior occurs: around 50% of student's drop out. He believed that there should be an entrance police that combines three things: an articulation with high school; an exam after high school that check whether students have the required competences to access higher education; and that universities adjust themselves to deal with knowledge in a more comprehensive way, allowing students to make a decision about their career later than they do today.

> In any case, whatever the university enrollment system is, the behavior of those that enroll is the same: 50% drop out in the first year. In other words, for every two that come in one drops out in the first quarter. I personally believe that there would be a university enrollment policy that should have a dose of three different strategies, three different tools: One is linkages with secondary school. Another is a final secondary school exam that gives students the necessary competencies to get in to university. And the third is addressing knowledge in the university that is more comprehensive than monodisciplinary, that is, that the choice of a degree program should come later, or should come after getting in to university—a bit of the North American system and a bit of the European system. What we call CBC, the Common Core Cycle of the University of Buenos Aries, addresses portions of this, where you get into a root discipline and are then trained for a multiplicity of different degree programs, at least (Interviewee 15).

As he explained, the way it works today in most institutions is that students are asked about their profession before entering higher education. Thus, their path inside higher education is pre-defined and leads toward the degree. He then gave an example:

> I'll give you an illustration: Let's ask some 18 or 19-year-old kids, Dear child, what do you want to be? Lawyer, doctor, engineer, accountant? This way we force them to decide on a degree program in the moment they first get into university. Then the child is in a closed tunnel, where the only value they see if the little light at the end called the diploma, the degree. But all the time they spend in the university does not do anything for them besides get them this degree (Interviewee 15).

He asserted that today the knowledge approach inside universities should be more comprehensive. There are disciplinary fields that are created daily. Universities should focus on giving a strong basic training to their students as well as on the ability to change strategies. He noted that in the past people would pick one profession and go with it for life. Nowadays students change careers several times along their professional experience and they need to be prepared for that.

> It seems to me that the way we teach subjects in the university today needs to be more comprehensive because there are disciplines and fields of study being created daily and we live today with an environment of knowledge creation where what we really need to give them is a strong basic education and the ability to adapt and change (Interviewee 15).

He noted that it is not possible to teach for a job market that no longer exists. Students need to be taught to change, to manage themselves, to be entrepreneurs. These issues, in his view, are missing in the higher education system of Argentina. Under the many roles under these institutions it is the traditional role to train professionals needed by society.

> You can no longer teach to a professional market that does not exist. So you have to train students to adapt, you have to teach them to manage themselves, to manage their own work, to be entrepreneurs…this type of discussion is completely absent in the Argentine university admissions process (Interviewee 15).

To another interviewee, the Argentine university does not think the issue of access in a systemic way. He explained what he meant by noting one has to take a few dimensions into consideration when dealing with access to higher education: leveling students, orientation, selection, and planning.

> I would say that the Argentine university in general has had a problem in that they haven't thought systematically about admissions, or to say it another way, they haven't thought up an admissions system. What do I mean with this? When you think of university admissions, I think you have to take several dimensions into account (Interviewee 13).

The first dimension he mentioned is leveling students. Students come with different qualifications and in his judgment the university should have policies in order to minimally level them.

> You have to think about the leveling aspect, that is, boys and girls come from different educational experiences, some that are very highly qualified and others that aren't, and universities have to create a policy to level these in some way (Interviewee 13).

The second dimension is what he called orientation. Many students access university in courses that they do not really know, so sometimes these courses do not match their expectations. There is not enough flexibility to allow students to change courses in one same area and this illustrates a problem of orientation to the interviewee.

> Secondly, there is the question of what we could call orientation, a dimension of student guidance. This supposes that many of those that enroll in universities enroll in a degree program that they do not in reality understand and their expectations are typically given a shock when they begin to see what the degree program really is. And these children have difficulty changing, that is, in most cases there is little flexibility in switching between subject areas or programs, and there you see a problem of lack of orientation or guidance (Interviewee 13).

The third dimension is related to the selective process. He noted that some courses need a specific selective process and that universities should be able to do it. As an example, he offered that of a medical course. As already mentioned, institutions in Argentina have the possibility to define which kind of access they will adopt.

> Thirdly, I believe another dimension we have to think about in terms of enrollment is that of selection. For some degree programs some qualifications and competencies are required that not all enrolled students have and so the university has to maintain some selection criteria, particularly for a few degree programs, like doctors and so forth (Interviewee 13).

Finally, he mentioned the dimension of planning in the entire system. He communicated that there are courses that are repeated a few miles away from each other while others that might also be required are not present in that territory.

> Lastly, I would say you have to have a planning dimension and I return to my earlier point, that is, there are degree programs that are few kilometers distant from one another and at the same time you lack degree programs that could be needed in that same area (Interviewee 13).

He concluded by saying that Argentina does not have a system of access that takes into consideration all these dimensions. Universities try to face these issues individually, some being more successful and some less so.

> So, an enrollment system that combines these elements, of leveling, of selection, of guidance and planning, we do not have this. We do not have it, and I think there's a need. Each of the universities, in their own way, tries to respond to these problems, some in more organized ways than others, but I believe that universities and the higher educational system fail when they do not think in a more systematic way about enrollment (Interviewee 13).

Puiggrós (2010) defended that all students should have the opportunity to continue their studies in higher education. She underlined the relevance to plan that access having in consideration many aspects. In her words:

> We should plan their distribution among universities, institutes, degree programs and specialties; we should design a device that could guide them, taking into account their personal motivations and their prior knowledge, but also the needs of each discipline, each teaching institutions capacity to offer certain programs and the job prospects within the professions themselves (p. 164).

As this subsection showed, nowadays there are different policies to grant access to higher education in Argentina. Most students have access through the so-called open access system, but interviewees questioned this term. As they explained, the expression can sometimes be misleading because in practice there is a selective process inside universities. The theme is polemic and there are resistances to the idea of selective processes to allow access. This happens, among other things, because open access in the history of higher education in Argentina is associated with democratic government, while restrict access with military government. The interviewees offered suggestions on practices that universities should adopt, such as to articulate with high schools, help students in their transition from high school to higher education, deal with knowledge in a more comprehensive way, among others. The next subsection will focus on measures adopted by the federal government in Argentina to expand and democratize access to higher education.

3.2.6 – Measures to expand and democratize access to higher education

One interviewee noted that until 1946 higher education in Argentina was more elitist. From this year on, during Peron government, the notion that higher education should include all started to flourish. In his view this idea since then has always been present in the country, except during dictatorships.

> It was not so much a right, although in the Peron era, around 1945 or 1946 there began to spread this idea that higher education should include all. Before it was more elitist in its scope, it was the place for training the leadership class. It wasn't for all. Now no, because in the Peron era the leadership class also supposed that they had to be laborers…that is, from all social classes. Except during the dictatorship, this thinking has more or less been maintained since (Interviewee 14).

Increase in enrollments and in number of institutions in Argentina, although constant, was more intense in two moments, according to D'Almeida, Mataluna and Catani (2005). The first moment occurred between the end of the World War II and 1960s, when free instruction and free access was established. The second occurred after the last dictatorship, in 1983, when free access was reintroduced (p. 90).

It is important to clarify here that this dissertation focuses on policies and programs implemented by the federal government. Universities, in their autonomy, have the authority to create their own policies to increase and democratize access to higher education. According to one interviewee, the Argentine universities are very autonomous and programs from the federal government can affect a few aspects related to access but the most important part of the job lies on universities.

> You can see how powerfully autonomous the Argentine education system is when you see what it does with universities, how some policies that come from the federal government can affect the issue of access to a degree, but most of the work lies with each university institution (Interviewee 13).

In fact, the dialogue with some interviewees made it clear that the notion of university autonomy is very strong in Argentina. When questioned whether the federal government has

adopted any effective policy to increase access to higher education in the country, one interviewee said that this question presupposes that the federal government would have a relationship of intervention in relation to higher education. In other words, university autonomy seems to be a challenge for the government to implement such policies.

> Well, this question supposes that the federal government can intervene in higher education or with the universities, as if autonomy wasn't a problem (Interviewee 16).

She mentioned, however, that there was a change in the historic university autonomy. Universities used to be in charge of their own policies, of their relation to popular sectors of society and their service programs. As she explained, until the early 1990s each university would create its own policies to democratize access.

> What I want to tell you is that in the last 15 years what has changed has primarily been relative to the university's historical sense of autonomy, that they set their own policies, their own relationships to popular classes, their own university service programs. Until the 90s this issue of democratizing access was left to each university. Each university had their own policy (Interviewee 16).

During the 1990s, as she explained, there was an emergence of an *evaluator state*[23]. To the interviewee, in Argentina this can be seen in the creation of the University Policies Secretariat (SPU) inside the Ministry of Education in 1993, and also of the CONEAU in 1995. The creation of this secretariat, in her analysis, clearly shows a willingness of the government to intervene in the university activities. She noted that some policies were created by the new secretariat and implemented in universities that were not used to this practice.

> To the extent that the state's role as evaluator continued to be strengthen and this happened a lot in the 90s when the nation-state created an office called the Office of University Policy, this clearly shows a desire to intervene in university circles and this has to do with the processes of evaluation and accreditation and has to do with the growth of CONEAU. So these policies were created by the state for universities that were not used to state intervention, except in the case of the dictatorships (Interviewee 16).

Another interviewee criticized the Law of Higher Education, approved in 1995, saying that

[23] This expression – evaluator state – is very common both in Argentina and Brazil. It makes reference to the emergence of national evaluations of K-12 education and also higher education during the 1990s, carried out by the federal government.

it intended to create an educational market such as the one that exist in Colombia and Chile. Universities, as he clarified, resisted and this plan failed. He explained that now some graduate programs – specializations and masters – do work as markets because students pay for their studies. It is interesting to have the opinion of this particular interviewee on this not only because he is part of the government now but also because he believes that the current government is committed to a notion that education is a public good and higher education is a state responsibility. The Kirchner governments, in his view, reassure these traditional principles in relation to higher education.

> The intent of the law was to create a market like in Colombia or Chile, and universities resisted this and it didn't happen. Yes, graduate education in Argentina functioned like a market, in master's degrees and specializations, it did. In doctoral studies, no. But what happened was Juan Carlos Pugliese[24] came along, and it continued with Kirchner, and you know that with the Kirchner government the policy is clear that higher education is a commitment of the state and it does not need to be managed by the market, right? The thing is, they had to guarantee as the state that university education is a right and a public good…all of which was part of the traditional conception of the university in Argentina (Interviewee 14).

Some interviewees mentioned the creation of new public universities, particularly in the Conurbano Bonarense (the metropolitan area of Buenos Aires), as an important policy to increase and democratize access. This area has, according to one of them, many low-income students that now can benefit from higher education.

> Later another inclusion policy, that was more recent, was expansion. First, they created new universities, and they are all in areas where the social class of the population is very low (Interviewee 14).

> Well, the other issue is the creation of new universities, especially in the urban cone, that permit greater access to people that didn't have access before, as in a context of economic upturn it is clear that a higher number of people from vulnerable populations will want access to the university. At any rate, I believe that this should continue, the results are not important (Interviewee 15).

[24] Juan Carlos Pugliese, lawyer, was Secretary of University Policies from 2002 to 2005. He was rector of the Universidad Nacional del Centro de la Provncia de Buenos Aires (1984-1992); Educational Management Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Education (1987-1989); and a member of the National Commission of University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU) (1996-2002), being the president of CONEAU from 2000 to 2002.

Another interviewee agreed that the most important measure to increase access was the creation of new universities. In her analysis, however, these institutions boosted access for low-middle class students. She was not sure about the inclusion of popular segments of society though.

> I believe that the most important indicator of access has been the creation of these new universities, because they bring the university very close to your home, but if they are the popular classes, I'm not sure. It seems to me that these universities are filled by many from the lower-middle class that were not able to send their children to Buenos Aries, to the center, we might say. So are they are using these universities, are the popular classes doing so in the sense that they are the children of workers, of immigrants….Well, this is not what they say, or what the numbers are saying, which show this to be the exception. They have only opened up access to the lower-middle class, in my opinion (Interviewee 17).

As seen in section 3.1, since the end of the 1980s many new public universities were created. Table 16 shows these institutions by government and year:

Table 16 – Universities created during different governments (1983-2013)

Government	Universities
Raúl Alfonsín Radical Civic Union (10 December 1983 – 8 July 1989)	Universidad Nacional de Formosa (1988)
Carlos Menem Justicialist Party (8 July 1989 – 8 July 1995)	Universidad Nacional de la Matanza (1989) Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (1989) Universidad Nacional de General San Martín (1992) Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (1992) Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia Austral (1994) Universidad Nacional de la Rioja (1994) Universidad Nacional de Lanús (1995) Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero (1995) Universidad Nacional de Villa María (1995)
Fernando de la Rúa Radical Civic union / Alliance for Work, Justice and Education (10 December 1999 – 10 December 2001)	-
Adolfo Rodríguez Saá Justicialist Party (22 December 2001 – 30 December 2001)	-
Eduardo Duhalde Justicialist Party (2 January 2002 – 25 May 2003)	Universidad Nacional del Noroeste de la Provincia de Buenos Aires (2002) Universidad Nacional de Chilecito (2003)*
Néstor Kirchner Front for Victory / Justicialist Party (25 May 2003 – 10 December 2007)	Universidad Nacional de la Plata (2005) Universidad Nacional del Chaco Austral (2007)
Cristina Fernández de Kirchner Front for Victory / Justicialist Party (10 December 2007 – Present)	Universidad Nacional de Río Negro (2007)** Universidad Nacional Arturo Jauretche (2009) Universidad Nacional de Avellaneda (2009) Universidad Nacional de José Clemente Paz (2009) Universidad Nacional de Moreno (2009) Universidad Nacional de Tierra del Fuego, Antartida e

	Islas del Atlantico Sur (2009) Universidad Nacional de Villa Mercedes (2009) Universidad Nacional del Oeste (2009)

* The Decree of creation of this university is from 12/16/2002 and the law from 11/5/2003.
** The university was created in 12/19/2007, days after the new president took office.

The increase in the number of public universities in Argentina continued during the Menem government (1989-1999), despite the recommendations of the World Bank to reduce the participation of the state in higher education. That increase took place before the promulgation of the law of higher education, in 1995, and then stopped. After this government, the tendency of growth sustained. Only in 2009, as it is possible to see, seven new universities were created.

Rasetti (2012) analyzed the logic behind the establishment of national universities since the promulgation of the law of higher education, including the new universities created in 2009. He believed it is possible to find a hidden rationality in this process, that he called a *"logic of combined political opportunities".*

> - The Executive Power does not intervene in the Ministry of Education until the law is passed or partially vetoed.
> - The project does not adhere to any known planning that has been developed by an official petition. (...)
> - The feasibility study establishes their conclusions separate from the project and only interfaces with the system tangentially, focusing on the proposed university.
> - The project claims a condition of geographic equivalence with other proposals that have gained legislative support, and must meet this condition to a certain degree. This condition can be verified in several ways: if the proposed project is a university for a province that does not yet have one (…), or (if the province already has a university) if the new proposed institution is for a different location than the capital that is still important to the province, or if both conditions apply (…).
> - There are local actions that, independent of their original intention, can be converted after the fact into a justifiable preceding configuration.
> - There is, in the legislative arena, a coalition of support from various different political factions (even if within the same party).
> - Local supporters enjoy a political position with some national impact.
> - The principal sponsors are solidly positioned within the pertinent political circles. This characteristic as well as the former is what can gain legislative consensus and draw the support of the Executive Power.
> - There exists, in the region or municipality where the university is proposed, a lack of satisfactory or insufficient local tertiary development (p. 12-13).

It is important to note that the expansion of universities does not happen only through the creation of new institutions. Particularly after the law of higher education there has been an increase through the expansion of existing institutions. Rasetti (2007) categorized several strategies adopted

for institutional expansion. These strategies include the creation of new campuses, extensions and university centers; the development of regional or national systems; partnerships with higher education programs or with colleges; filing of university programs with IES, in colleges or educational institutions from other levels; partnerships with universities; partnerships with public institutions; and partnerships with state-level agencies (outside of education).

Rasetti (2012) identified a number of criteria that help to explain these strategies of institutional expansion. Among the many mentioned by the author, two are market dynamics and what he calls opportunism. In relation to the first, he said that

> For private institutions as well as state ones, the dynamic of the market is a dominant one, with very few exceptions (like when expanded services are offered to students free of charge). But even in a few of these cases, when costs are financed by an outside organization (whether by an agency, the municipality, or a union), what determines whether the expansion is possible is the feasibility of financing it and stimulating the faculty with funds that come from the expansion itself (and not the treasury) (p. 17).

In relation to the second, Rasetti (2012) stated that "Expansion does not come from planning intended to satisfy institutional social objectives or from diagnostics that establish priorities and needs of different regions and areas. Management establishes opportunity". Once the opportunity exists, the author continued to explain, the university decided what to offer taking into consideration what is economically and politically more adequate, "understanding that these two poles are the extreme ends of a continuum in which private institutions tend towards the first and state institutions towards the second" (p. 19). In his view, the expansion of higher education cannot be left to the market if the goal is to achieve a more equitable development of the system. This requires, as he says, state investment and also the coordination of a planned expansion of the system (p. 19).

A look at the enrollment in public universities from 2000 to 2010 illustrates the increase during the last years. It is important to include also information about enrollment in private universities during the same period in order to compare the increase in both sectors:

Table 17 – Undergraduate and graduate students by administrative category (2000-2010)

	Public	Private	Total
2000	1.138.503	201.237	1.339.740
2001	1.209.328	203.671	1.412.999
2002	1.257.707	204.612	1.462.319
2003	1.273.832	215.411	1.489.243
2004	1.299.564	237.089	1.536.653
2005	1.295.989	257.711	1.553.700
2006	1.306.548	279.972	1.586.520
2007	1.270.295	298.770	1.569.065
2008	1.283.482	317.040	1.600.522
2009	1.312.549	337.601	1.650.150
2010	1.366.237	352.270	1.718.507

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 40.

As table 17 shows, enrollment in the end of the first decade of the XXI century is bigger than in the beginning of the decade. From 1.339.740 students in 2000, universities went to 1.718.507 students in 2010, which represents an annual average growth rate of 2.5%. It is important to notice that the private sector increased much more during this period. While the annual average growth rate for the public sector was 1.8%, it was 5.8% for the private sector.

Despite the fact that Rasetti (2012) noted a similar logic under operation in the Menem administration and Nestor and Cristina Kirchner's government in relation to the creation of new public universities, he stressed that these two governments are very different. As he explained,

> The antagonistic position these two governments hold towards the "90s," shown in their public statements, their actions which have tended to recuperate the role of the state, and their promoting and regulatory actions, have impacted their relationships with the tertiary sector in a convincing manner, especially with state universities. More specifically, the state has made clear its commitment to sustain and develop higher education, which is reinforced by its similar commitment to scientific and technological development, which impacts universities as well. The main point here is financing, in which an adjustment and change in orientation towards the market can be seen relative to the neoliberal policies of the preceding years (p. 20-21).

Another aspect mentioned by the interviewees relates to funding of public higher education. One interviewee explained that since 2003 there has been an increase in the university budget and also in teacher's salary. The working environment of some teachers also improved, according to him, and this had a positive impact on the reduction of students per teacher in Argentina.

> At any rate, I'll point to a policy, to several policies that seem important to me. Well, without any doubt, in the last few years, I'd say especially since 2003, there has been a

> strong policy of expanding the university budget and the faculty salary has been especially well recovered. This has permitted in many cases creating special programs to increase faculty support, and this without doubt allowed a larger amount of faculty relative to students which I think has without doubt had a positive effect, allowing the possibility of better student-teacher ratios in the different programs (Interviewee 13).

This increase of the university budget and improvement in teachers' salaries was pointed out by another interviewee as the most important effort made in Argentina in the last years. He mentioned that the financial situation of university teachers was dramatic until 2003, when the government started to recuperate it.

> What has been the biggest step Argentina has taken with the university system? Financing, financing and improving faculty salaries. That is, faculty salaries were painfully low until 2003, and from 2003 on, there began to be an increase and after some time, the joint system went out that had influenced faculty salaries, and today rebuilding faculty salaries is seen as important. It's still lacking, but it's a lot, lot closer to what a Brazilian professor makes. Before being an Argentine professor was a tragedy. You were almost poor if you were a professor. Now, you aren't rich of course, but it's a much more noble salary (…) So, salaries improved, university budgets improved. I don't know by how much, but it's impressive, at least 10 times bigger than the budgets were 10 or 8 years ago (Interviewee 14).

Table 18 presents the budget allocated to national universities and the Gross Domestic Product of Argentina between 2001 and 2010. These data show the evolution of the participation of the budget of national universities in the GDP of the country in the last decade.

Table 18 – Budget provided to national universities compared to Gross Domestic Product (in millions of Argentine pesos)

Year	Budget of national universities*	GDP*	University budget as percentage of GDP
2001	4,147	675,717	0,61
2002	3,265	642,499	0,52
2003	3,484	662,047	0,53
2004	3,621	755,041	0,48
2005	4,420	818,321	0,54
2006	5,571	907,836	0,61
2007	6,952	1,035,594	0,67
2008	8,802	1,212,323	0,73
2009	11,052	1,265,284	0,87
2010	12,844	1,442,655	0,89

* Inflation adjusted values, base year 2010.

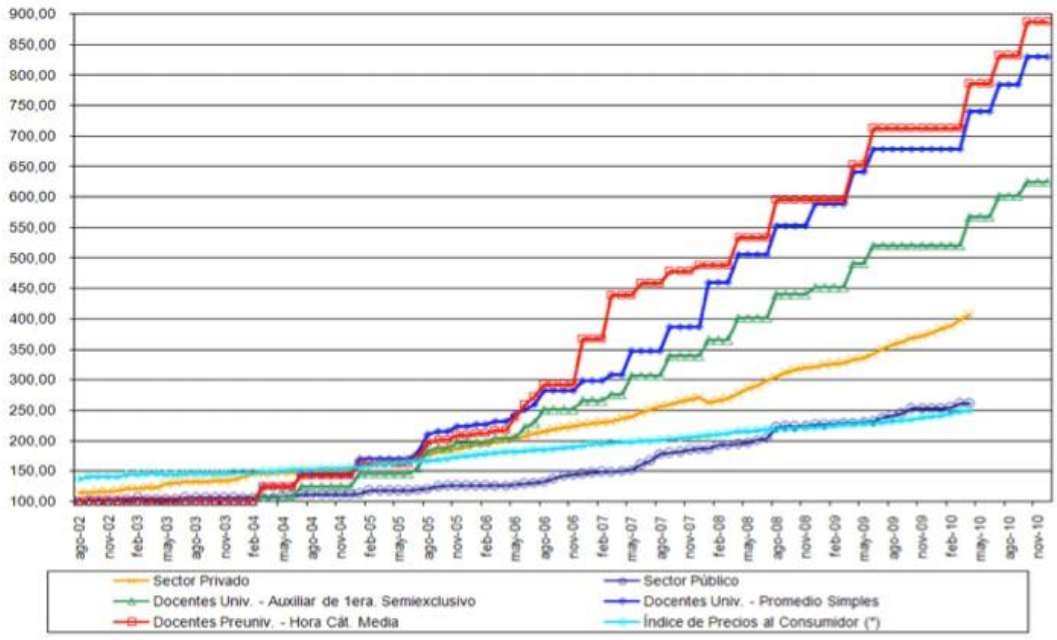
1 US dollar = 5,31 Argentine pesos (06/11/2013)

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2005, p. 210, and 2010, p. 68 and 204.

During the 1990s, the GDP of Argentina and also the budget of national universities were stagnated. There was no important increase in these two indicators, and the participation of national universities in the GDP ranged between 0,40 and 0,61 percent (University Statistics Yearbook, 1997 and 2003). As it is possible to see in the table 18, the budget of national universities in Argentina increased during the first decade of the XXI century. During the first part of the decade, however, the GDP of the country progressed at a faster pace. From 2001 to 2004 there was a reduction in the participation of national universities in the GDP of Argentina. The value of 2001 was only recovered in 2006, and from that moment on there was a growth in investments in public higher education. From 2006 to 2010 public university expenditure climbed from 0.61 to 0.89 percent of the GDP.

It is important to underline that most of the public universities' budgets would go to payment of personnel. In 2010, the expenses in that category represented 77% of the budget (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 69). In relation to faculty salary, the chart 1 helps to visualize the increase that happened in the last years:

Chart 1 – Evolution of the salary of university and pre-university teachers, in the public and private sectors (2002-2010)



Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 200.

In relation to the funding of public universities, Azevedo (2001) made a relevant remark. He said that it was necessary to consider that from 1993 on, when SPU was created, the Ministry of Education developed a new policy to allocate resources in public universities. Many programs started to be implemented in these institutions through additional transfers. That was the case with programs to improve the quality of universities or to financially support teachers that develop research (p. 73). Thus, although these resources were not included in the university budget provided by the federal government they were important to support the activities of public universities.

One interviewee explained that the growth of the university budget in some institutions resulted in more policies that benefit students, such as the increase in university restaurants and student housing[25].

> It seems positive to me what has been done to universities, the improvements in the public budget, increasing the public budget, which in some cases has been transferred to support what now is called student welfare: university eateries, expanding university eateries and even student housing. These student welfare policies are critical to improve access and retention, above all retention of students from the interior that have come to the big urban centers (Interviewee 13).

The interviewee gave the example of the National University of La Plata. The interviewee said that this university expanded university restaurants and created, for the first time, university housing in 2011. It is important, though, to take into consideration the impact of these measures. The university housing mentioned by the interviewee, according to information provided by the university, and had only 36 students as of February of 2012 (El Albergue..., 2012). As the interviewee mentioned, however, this policy at least brought attention to the fact that the university needed to work along these lines to increase not only access but retention of students.

> For example, the University of La Plata has had a very important policy relative to this, they have expanded their university eateries and this year, or last year, they inaugurated student housing for the first time. That is, before this they didn't have student housing or the expectation that there would be student housing. Now at least there is recognition of the need to work in this area to improve student access and retention. Not only this, but I believe there are other curricular aspects that need to be addressed, but these social aspects, or these

[25] It's important to note that in Argentina, like in Brazil, university restaurants tend to be subsidized. Students pay a very low price to use these restaurants. Housing, along the same lines, is typically free, or students pay a small symbolic fee.

> student social welfare programs, I believe that these are key to building a medium- to long-term policy that can improve enrollment and retention for university students (Interviewee 13).

This interviewee mentioned other important welfare policies for students. As he said, some fellowships were created, some of them for more advanced students to work with research projects. This, in his view, helped to keep these students in their programs.

> But there have also been assistance policies, I would say, especially scholarship policies. Scholarships, whether student scholarships, or research-based scholarships for advanced students, that have picked up in recent years. These to me seem like a very important strategy because they help retain students (Interviewee 13).

Another interviewee also underlined that in the last five to eight years SPU created some fellowships for which universities could apply. The interviewee had a positive view about this program since it helped low-income students.

> There was a situation, I would say, of maladjustment until the last five years, five to eight years, in which the state and the secretaries of university policies and of higher education began to produce scholarship programs, scholarships and mentorships that each university could voluntarily apply for and could, through these programs, improve enrollment of young people that, shall we say, have economic difficulties. So, I have a positive view of these recent policies to the extent that they have helped students from certain social classes enroll in university (Interviewee 16).

One interviewee mentioned that the number of fellowships from 1995 to 2002 was very small, and only after 2002 did the Ministry of Education start to increase the amount of fellowships available. Some fellowships, as he explained, focused on courses considered to be relevant for the country, such as engineering.

> So if you look at this time period, from 1995 to 2002, the scholarship policy was of 2000 scholarships of, I suppose we would say now, around 300 pesos a month. 300 pesos a month then, or around 200 pesos a month now for a student does not do anything, it isn't a scholarship that really improves your life and leads you to decide whether to study or not. That'll pay for your photocopies and your transportation, if you're lucky—if you're lucky. I would say that since that time what has appeared has been different. After 2002 is when the scholarship program really began to grow, which has had a significant response, one which continues to grow. Also, it has helped improve student guidance at matriculation, guiding students towards programs that are in the national interest, like in the case of engineering there are bicentennial scholarships just for the training of engineers. We have opened a way so that enrollment is intensifying, and I think these policies that have been introduced are important tools (Interviewee 15).

Until 2007 there was only one program of fellowships supported by the Ministry of Education, with a reduced number of beneficiaries. The number of fellowships in this program increased considerably during these last years, and two other programs have been created. The National University Scholarship Program (PNBU) or University Scholarships was created in 1996, through Resolution N. 464. The goal of this program was to promote equality of opportunities in higher education by giving fellowships to high-performing students with scarce economic resources in undergraduate courses at national universities or university institutes. Part of these fellowships was set aside for indigenous students and students with disabilities. Students would receive $3000 (Argentine pesos) during 10 months.

Table 19 - National University Scholarship Program – fellowships and investment (2002-2010)

Year	Number of fellowships	Investment* (Argentine peso)
2002	2,453	14,385,204
2003	1,709	12,680,557
2004	3,848	14,505,651
2005	7,279	18,460,484
2006	6,966	23,027,469
2007	10,077	31,866,143
2008	11,352	31,330,565
2009	10,960	36,319,577
2010	15,021	45,063,000

* Inflation adjusted values, base year 2010.
1 US dollar = 5,31 Argentine pesos (06/11/2013)
Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 254

The Bicentennial Scholarship Program for Scientific and Technical Careers, or Bicentennial Scholarships was intended "to increase enrollment and also incentivize retention and graduation of students coming from homes with low university enrollment, in programs that are considered strategic for the economic and productive development of the country". The fellowships were intended for students that graduated from public institutions and were later enrolled in courses from the applied sciences, natural sciences, exact sciences and basic sciences, as well as advanced engineering students that were in their last two years and only lacked between 3 and 10 courses to finish their studies.

Students received a different amount depending on their course and year in their program. In

the priority courses (Degrees, engineering, university professorships): $ 5,000 in the 1st and 2nd year of the course during a 10 month period; $ 8,000 during the 4th and 5th year; and $ 12000 in the 5th year. In scientific-technical programs/tertiary professorships: $ 3,500 in the 1st and 2nd year of the course during a 10 month period and $5,000 in the 3rd year. In 2010, the Bicentennial Scholarships benefitted 34,370 students. As one can see, this program offered more than double what was offered through the National University Scholarship Program in 2010. This represented an investment of $ 168,988,022 in Argentine pesos (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 255).

Finally, there was the National Scholarship Program for Undergraduate Studies in ICT Areas (PNBTICS), also known as ICT Scholarships. This program sought to increase the number of undergraduate students in the fields of technology of information and communication. Students in this program also received a different amount depending on their year in the course: $ 5,000 in the 1st and 2nd year of the course during a 10 month period; $ 8,000 during the 4th and 5th year; and $12,000 in the 5th year. In 2010 the program offered 1,099 fellowships, with a total investment of $6,726,000 in Argentine pesos (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 256).

The number of funding for scholarships and fellowships increased considerably in the last few years. The table 20 helps to illustrate this point:

Table 20 – Amount allocated for scholarships, by source of funding

Year	Total* (Argentine peso)	Amount from national treasury (%)	Institutions own resources (%)	Other sources (%)
2007	62,648,103	55,02	27,96	17,03
2008	52,434,201	54,7	8,2	37,1
2009	65,393,705	62,0	27,6	10,4
2010	526,669,057	47,0	46,0	7,0

* Inflation adjusted values, base year 2010.
1 US dollar = 5,31 Argentine pesos (06/11/2013).
Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2007 to 2010.

As the data show, in 2010 there was a significant rise in the amount allocated for scholarships in Argentina. The impact of this investment will probably be seen in the next few years if it is continued. During this period there was an increase in the investment made by the Ministry

of Education, but also an important expansion in the participation of public institutions in the offer of scholarships.

One interviewee also mentioned improvements in funding for research. He noted the creation of the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Productive Innovation in 2007, but argued that even before that investments in research had increased. He criticized the government (of which he was a part) for not implementing an effective policy to avoid dropout, but recognized that the increase in the university budget, which also increased the number of fellowships and investments in research, resulted in greater inclusion.

> And then there is the whole topic of research. There's the creation of the Ministry, but even before creating the Ministry of Technical Science, so much more money was put into research, so many more doctoral fellowships…much more has come to the university. While I criticize even my own government for lacking a good policy addressing retention, access and so forth, it is also true that there are inclusive policies that are improving the university, inclusive policies that are resulting in universities having better buildings, better… student housing for those that go to public university, more research, which is better and more fully funded…All of this comes back to the students, as around 70% of them in fact go to public university. Private universities in Argentina have only a little over 20% of the student body, nothing more. That sector isn't very strong (Interviewee 14).

Despite the mentioned improvements, one interviewee believed that the university was no longer an institution that promoted social mobility. In his view, in the past the universities had that role, but at the time of the interview they reproduced social inequalities. He recognized that there were many important things happening in universities – expansion, fellowships, and enhancements in salaries and in the university budget – but he argued that the results of these were modest.

> There have been improvements, but the general trend hasn't changed. Before the university was conceived as a means of social mobility, but today generally the university reproduces social inequality. There is no social mobility through the university, but I believe that these tools that have now been created, partnership programs with secondary schools that were put in place in 2000 and 2004 have contributed to some mobility. That is, partnership programs, scholarship programs, the institutional expansion of higher education, improvement in salaries, increased budgets…All of this helps the university bring in social classes that before could not access tertiary studies. That said, I insist that these improvements in inclusion are modest (Interviewee 15).

Another interviewee thought that policies focused on grant fellowships were important. She said, however, that such policies did not have a very large impact on the system, particularly for

low-income students. Many of these students, she said, had a prior barrier to overcome: graduating from high school. She felt these programs did not help low-income students because many of them could not even make it to university.

> This does not mean that these policies have quantitatively had an impact, because what has been shown and what we have evaluated is that, even if these policies have some potential, they haven't had much impact in terms of helping less-favored social classes to enroll. Because these social classes have a bottleneck that they aren't able to get through: they do not finish secondary school. So, for as much as the state promotes scholarships, assistance, mentorship and tutoring...all of these policies are positive for the democratization of education but in reality the popular classes were already excluded long before this, they become excluded at the secondary level and the university isn't able to do much in this regard (Interviewee 16).

One interviewee believed that there had not been any effective policy to increase access to higher education. Along the same lines of the previous interviewee, she said that the main issue in her view was that many students could not graduate from high school.

> I believe that there were not any effective policies for expanding access, as I told you before. These can't be effective because they aren't even finishing secondary school. There's a program that lets you enroll in university without secondary school, but that's only for people over 25. (...) You have to take a special test, and more than that you have to have particular work experience. It is really … this isn't a program that will have a big impact (Interviewee 17).

Mollis (2008) introduced an important aspect in this debate: the possibility of offering alternative routes to students other than higher education. These alternative courses could receive a large number of students and could increase graduation rates in higher education in relation to enrollment. In her words,

> The problem with Argentine higher education isn't the lack of large-scale enrollment in itself, but rather the lack of adequate structure to satisfy growing popular demand for higher education. To accomplish this, it is essential to create a higher education system linked with secondary that offers diverse "routes" of training, with communication between them (p. 515).

This dissertation focuses on policies adopted by federal governments in the area of higher education. Some interviewees, however, underlined that in Argentina it was mainly up to universities to propose and implement policies related to increase and democratization of access,

due to their autonomy. Many interviewees pointed out the creation of new universities by the government as an important policy meant to include students. They also mentioned the recent increase in university budgets as significant because it allowed institutions to implement more policies to benefit students, such as fellowships, university restaurants and student housing. While most interviewees acknowledged that there had been policies that promoted democratization in the last 15 years, there were some that thought that despite many policies, there had been limited results. In the following subsection the perception of the interviewees in relation to federal policies intended to assure quality of education will be discussed.

3.2.7 – Measures intended to assure quality of higher education

In the discussion about quality of higher education in Argentina the notion that this issue was more related to the universities than to the government appeared in one interviewee's statements. When questioned whether the federal government had adopted any effective policy to improve higher educational quality in the country, the interviewee expressed that the question assumes a natural relationship between the federal government and universities, when in practice until 1995 this was not the case.

> Your question assumes that it is natural for there to be a relationship between the federal government and universities, and in reality it isn't natural because until 1995 we had a philosophy of autonomy (Interviewee 16).

She made reference to the Avellaneda Law. This law, according to her, basically said that the state was in charge of funding universities while they remained autonomous. This, in her view, set the philosophy of universities in Argentina: they were funded by the state but the state could not have any interference in these institutions. This was the rule, except during dictatorships. She said that the Law of Higher Education came 100 years after this first law and had a strong reforming impact on the system.

> This law I told you about, the Avellaneda law of 1885, was the first law governing the entire university system and this law recently had a real impact and was reformed in 1995, or rather, it was in force for 100 years. It had four articles, which stated: The national state should finance universities; the second was, universities are autonomous; the third was that they had autarkic capacity, which means they could govern themselves; and the fourth was that the previous articles would be written and enforced. In other words, it was a law that practically said the state was obligated to pay, but the university was autonomous. So the philosophy of our universities was always, We are financed by the state, but the state does not intervene in anything. The state was not a political actor within universities, unless we're talking about during the military dictatorships (Interviewee 16).

Another interviewee also made reference to university autonomy, especially in particular universities. She gave the example of the University of Buenos Aires, as this institution was very large and in her view worked like a conglomeration of schools. These schools had some autonomy and each one of them implemented their own programs. She said that some of these schools created programs related to quality but they were small and experimental. In her opinion, there were no policies that had been in place long enough to be evaluated and show results.

> UBA is like a federation of colleges, really. So there are programs that each college implements (…). The colleges have a bit of autonomy, even though the appointment of professors is done centrally by the rector. Research subsidies are also granted competitively by the rector, but within each college there's a certain amount of autonomy. So there are colleges that have created programs to deal with quality, to deal with retention, but these are generally small programs that are intended to be experimental. There's nothing going on that could be evaluated or that lasts long enough to base judgment on, you know? They haven't lasted long and they weren't evaluated, but in all of the colleges these programs exist (Interviewee 17).

From a national perspective, in her view there was no important policy in place at the time of the interview to ensure quality of higher education. She thought that there had been a few policies during the Menem government, but these had lasted three or four years and disappeared. All other interviewees, however, made allusion to current evaluation efforts, as well as some projects to fund improvements as a result of evaluations.

> Yes, but these policies only lasted 3 or 4 years and then disappeared. The policies of the Menem government disappeared afterwards, and they weren't taken up again by the next government. There is something people refer to as a policy related to quality, but it is not systematic. I would say it does not exist—it does not exist. These policies haven't existed, and if they existed, they were short-term, and didn't last long (Interviewee 17).

According to Mollis (1994), during the second half of the 1980s it became clear that the quality of higher education in Argentina, as in many other countries, was deteriorating. The problem of quality was mainly associated with the spread of higher education, which happened at a very fast pace at the country. From that moment on, the educational system in Argentina had to try to solve the apparent contradictions between growth and excellence (p. 217). Since that decade there has been a continuing concern regarding evaluation of higher education.

This concern was explicit not only in the agenda of the government but also of universities. In 1988, for instance, the University of Buenos Aires carried out an internal evaluation entitled the Evaluation Program of the Volume and Quality of UBA's Offer. In 1991 the National University of Salta organized the First Interuniversity Conference about Evaluation of Quality. In the following year the Second Interuniversity Conference about Evaluation of Quality took place at the National University of Rosario. In this event consensus was reached around the notion that evaluation was a clearly political activity, besides also being technical and methodological (Mollis, 1994, 226).

The first initiatives of evaluation that came from the federal government, according to Mollis (1999) took place in 1987, during the Alfonsín government. As she stated, in that moment the Ministry of Education made an agreement with the World Bank "to obtain funds, with the purpose of financing the administration and management of national universities" (p. 7). During the Menem government this agreement was implemented. In 1991, the Ministry of Education and the National Inter-university Council "finalized the Protocol of the University Coalition, whose objectives included an audit of the national universities, as happened in the rest of the public sector" (p. 7). At the same time, Mollis (1999) continues, "the federal government set an agreement with CIN to implement the Program to Strengthen University Management and Administration, known as Subproject 06." This project, created with the financial support of the World Bank and the cooperation of PNUD, had several initiatives, including the evaluation of institutional quality (p. 7).

Mollis (1994) explained that since that time a new phase started in the history of Argentine universities, which she characterized as "assessment under suspicion." The problem as she saw it

was that the initiative to develop this evaluation emerged outside universities and was funded by a project with the World Bank. This evaluation, in her words, "was originally tied to economic-financial reasoning that wasn't necessarily focused on 'improving university quality' as much as preoccupied with budget distribution" (p. 225). Krotsch (1994) also underlined that "unfortunately, this focus on evaluation did not come from an internal impulse to strengthen university institutions, but rather was tied to a general political climate focused on limiting social spending" (p. 129).

One interviewee talked about the emergence of an *evaluator state* during the 1990s, which was responsible among other things for the approval of the Law of Higher Education. The *evaluator state* was in essence a neoliberal state; one that required universities to achieve certain goals while at the same time reducing its commitment to those institutions, particularly with regards to funding. Under the neoliberal perspective, as Barriga (1994) clarified, evaluation was seen as an instrument to control academic activity. Through evaluation the neoliberal state sought basically to promote a new relationship between the state and higher education institutions (p. 21).

This new state, however, faced strong resistances inside universities. As one interviewee explained, there were several social movements against the Law of Higher Education. This law established as mandatory the realization of evaluations for institutions in both the university and non-university subsystems.

> This change in the 90s came from a state focused on evaluation, but it came with strong resistance from universities. It went so far that in '95 there were student movements, a professors' movement, with responses from the agency of rectors. All social actors were against this law because they said it annulled autonomy, this law, which was Menem's law, the last higher education law (Interviewee 16).

In relation to the non-university subsystem, as mentioned in section XXX, the law stated that "the government and organization of higher education, in the university and its respective competency areas, belongs to the provinces and the Municipality of the City of Buenos Aires." The law specified the responsibilities of the provinces and the city of Buenos Aires, which included "developing regular and systematic modalities of institutional evaluation" (Art. 15). Finally, in relation to these institutions the law provided that the "Federal Council of Culture and Education

will agree upon the adoption of common criteria and foundations for the evaluation of higher education institutions, particularly those that offer degrees that train graduates to engage in activities regulated by the state" (Art. 25).

In terms of the university subsystem, the law establishes that these institutions have to develop internal institutional evaluations, seeking "to analyze their achievements and difficulties in fulfilling their functions, and suggest means for their improvement" . These self-evaluations will be complemented with external evaluations carried out by the National Commission of University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU), an agency linked to the Ministry of Education, or private entities created with this finality. The external evaluation includes aspects related to teaching, research, service, and, in what concerns national universities, also institutional management (Art. 44).

CONEAU has 12 members appointed by the government, with the following distribution: three members of the National Inter-university Council, a member of the Council of Rectors of Private Universities, one person from the National Academy of Education, three from each of the National Chambers of Congress, and a representative of the Ministry of Education (Art. 47). This commission has as its function:

> a) Coordinate and carry out external evaluation (…);
> b) Accredit undergraduate programs (...) (those that are priorities of the state), as well as graduate programs, whatever their area of focus, according to the standards established by the Ministry of Culture and Education, in consultation with the University Council;
> c) Rule on the consistency and viability of the institutional project that requires that the Ministry of Culture and Education authorize each new national university institution and recognize provincial university institutions;
> d) Prepare the necessary information to grant provisional authorization and definitive recognition to private university institutions, as well as the necessary information to evaluate the provisional functioning of such institutions (Art. 46).

According to a document produced by CONEAU, there are three antecedents that gave impetus to the activities developed by the commission:

> - First, the doctrine on relevant aspects of university quality that arose from the National Inter-university Council, in the plenary agreements 50/92 and 133/94.
> - Second, beginning in 1993 the Ministry of Education created 16 agreements with national

> universities, two with faculty associations and one with a private university to plan and implement institutional evaluation processes. These agreements assumed that the Ministry could provide input in the auto-evaluation phase, which was left up to these same institutions. It also assumed Ministry assistance in creating and coordinating external evaluation committees. In 1995 three national universities were evaluated through these agreements. CONEAU took on responsibility for the external evaluations associated with the other agreements.
> - In 1994, the Ministry of Education created a Graduate Program Accreditation Commission. In 1995, a voluntary call was held to accredit Master's and doctoral programs. This Commission accredited two thirds of the applications with positive results, and classified the accredited programs according to their quality in three categories. The Ministry transferred this responsibility for accreditation to CONEAU after the Commission stopped functioning (La CONEAU, 2012, p. 14).

One important characteristic of the external evaluations carried out by CONEAU is that they take into consideration the institutional project of each university. A previous president of CONEAU explained that this commission sees universities as complex institutions with peculiar identities, and thinks that quality is related to the educational processes. "In this sense, the notion of quality does not just refer to final results, but also incorporates the perspective of those actors involved, as well as the historical and contextual dimension of each institution, its identity" (Villanueva, 2002, p. 77).

One interviewee mentioned that there were many debates within the academic community about the benchmark of quality to be adopted in the evaluation proposed by the state, and more generally the definition of quality as a construct. According to this interviewee, such debates impacted the evaluation implemented by CONEAU that today is much more qualitative than quantitative. This dynamic, in her view, helped CONEAU to dialogue more with universities. CONEAU is a complex group that has been built in the light of conflicts.

> We had a movement of academics and very important people that debated a great deal regarding how we would define quality, and why quality was so heavily discussed, and what quality meant in university terms. There was a great deal of debate and this helped CONEAU a great deal because due to this debate, today the way we evaluate quality isn't the traditional way, and you have in Brazil, which is a more quantitative way. We have qualitative evaluation models, which evaluate the institutions with other parameters and this dynamic helped CONEAU to be able to open a more open dialogue with higher education institutions. It isn't only quantitative, in CONEAU we had influence (...) from those that wanted more quantitative work, and who wanted it to have an impact on funding … And all of this resulted in our current institutional evaluation which is not strictly quantitative but addresses the institution as a whole. What is evaluated is the fulfillment of ends and

> objectives. This is a more North American model, central, also similar to the French ... this makes the CONEAU complete, interesting, completed because it is been built through the light that has come through conflict (Interviewee 16).

She expressed that she always argued that the funding of the university or the general budget of the university should not be linked to the evaluation implemented by CONEAU. This would hurt the autonomy of universities and undermine their quality and excellence. On the other hand, it would be helpful if the focus was to evaluate institutions academically and scientifically in order to improve their practices.

> As I wrote, the policies when CONEAU was created, that CONEAU would evaluate universities and their financing would depend on this evaluation, this was deceitful and didn't help us work towards quality at all. If CONEAU was to assign resources according to evaluation results this would not work, because this would work against autonomy and quality and excellence. On the other hand, if CONEAU were to only occupy itself with evaluating pedagogy academically and scientifically in universities, focusing on programs and projects without intervening in financing, doing so actually would contribute (Interviewee 16).

Currently, this same interviewee believed that CONEAU is legitimized. This legitimization was built along the last ten years, after the rupture of the logic of the 1990s, which associated evaluation to funding of universities. There are private universities that are not created today due to the evaluation of CONEAU. Public universities are accredited and this is considered to be a legitimate process.

> And in fact today CONEAU does this, the universities have a link… You see, CONEAU has been legitimized. So, I'd say, in the last ... 10 years CONEAU has been pursuing a legitimization process that has not advanced over autonomy and is having a positive influence. Today private universities aren't being created because CONEAU evaluates and qualifies them. And the public schools believe that the accreditation process has a great deal of legitimacy, no-one today doubts the criteria that CONEAU uses to distinguish category A, category B, category C, there is a very respected process in place today in terms of evaluation and accreditation. In my opinion, this is because luckily the logic of the 90s has been disrupted, which was a perverse logic that wanted to evaluate quality and use that to determine the financing that would be given or not given to universities (Interviewee 16).

From the perspective of the CONEAU, three elements helped to consolidate the evaluation and accreditation of university institutions. The first element is that evaluation is mandatory to all institutions. The second is that "the accreditation of undergraduate courses that are found to be in

the public interest, far from excluding those that present difficulties, should involve such courses through the development of improvement plans under the same accreditation process" . Evaluations conducted by CONEAU and also the plans of improvement help SPU/ME to identify priority areas for investments. Finally, positive results come from "the constitutional collegial body, the stability and professionalism of the technical team and the participation of academic communities in the creation of pairs" (La CONEAU, 2012, p. 8).

Another interviewee noted that debates continue today about which kind of evaluation should be conducted, who evaluates, and what are the purposes of the evaluation. The fact that it is necessary to evaluate and that quality is a shared issue, however, is largely accepted.

> Of course after affirming a different discussion arises, a discussion about, well, what kind of evaluation we're talking about, what is evaluation like, who evaluates, why do we evaluate. But what is discussed less is the fact that we have to evaluate ourselves and that educational quality is a shared problem (Interviewee 13).

Other interviewee agreed with this statement. He explained that in the last 15 years the different actors of the university life in Argentina accepted that assessing the quality of teaching, the quality of the processes, and the quality of research is a shared goal of education policy. He noted that around 15 years ago the assessment was mostly resisted, yet today it is a largely accepted premise.

> Well, I believe that in the last 15 years, if I had to summarize them, I believe that it has been accepted by the different actors in university life in Argentina that evaluation of teaching quality, that evaluation of procedural quality, that evaluation of research quality, that all of this is a shared objective in education policy. Of course there are differences, of course there are nuances and different ways of seeing things, but if 15 years ago evaluation was largely resisted, today it is a commonly accepted premise (Interviewee 13).

The Law of Higher Education was harshly criticized, and more recently projects were implemented to reform this law. One interviewee said that among the projects that have any chance to be implemented, all of them include some agency to evaluate higher education.

> So I would say that this is interesting if you compare the projects to reform the higher education law. There was a higher education law passed in the mid-90s that was highly debated and very criticized, and in the last few years a number of reform projects have

> arisen. Of those reform projects that I know of, and those that have any possibility of changing the law—we will still see if this happens—all these projects include an institutional request for higher education evaluation. It does not matter if you call it CONEAU or if it will be some other thing but those projects that, shall we say, are official, sponsored by the majority caucus, that have driven the secretary of university policies, that is, those projects that one can see as having some possibility of gaining important policy backing, all of these include a request for evaluation. So this seems to me to be a key element, that in all these years in which the worldview and positions held by academics in general have changed, I would say that academics have also changed their minds on the question of quality evaluation (Interviewee 13).

In another's interviewee assessment, the inclusion of the evaluation in the Law of Higher Education, the creation of CONEAU, and the actual evaluation of institutions and courses of public interest all resulted in a better quality of higher education.

> I believe that there are two things that are along this same line. To me it seems that during the 90s, the inclusion of evaluation in the higher education law, the creation of CONEAU, and especially institutional evaluation, evaluation of institutions but above all evaluation of degree programs, of critical degree programs, that is, degree programs related to the public interest, this seems to me to be a policy that resulted in higher quality in higher education (Interviewee 14).

He noted that before the existence of CONEAU the private sector could create institutions without any specific requirements related to quality. Now these institutions must undergo evaluations as well. This even reduced the creation of new private universities.

> At the same time the fact is CONEAU can intervene in the creation of private institutions. Before the law was passed, private institutions were founded without an important technical analysis about professors' expectations of quality. After the passage of the law it became obligatory that CONEAU intervene and conduct an evaluation, and this to an extent reduced the flood of newly founded private universities (Interviewee 14).

One interviewee asserted that evaluation today has a different meaning than its inception. In his view, evaluation was introduced in Argentina through the hands of a neoliberal state, and it was seen from a market perspective. Higher education was evaluated by the state as the state evaluates food products. With the results of evaluation, institutions would either be accredited or not. Now the state, in his opinion, is closer to a welfare state and evaluates to diagnose problems and propose solutions. As he explained, evaluation of public institutions is associated with additional funding to resolve problems.

> Well, you see, before this was thought of in terms of ... of stimulating the market, I would say, just as you can see that the state evaluates the quality of foodstuffs, but does not intervene in what you decide to eat, the same occurs with universities. You see, they accredit you or they do not, and if they do not then you need to go after market funding, because the government will not fund you to improve, and if you do not improve you do not have students and the whole thing goes down the tubes. The Argentine university isn't fee-payable, and while they made it legal to be charge fees, with autonomy they cannot make that mandatory. So this created a lot of pressure to ... that is, evaluation was seen as a tightening, as pressure to charge fees, because if you do not, you cannot compete with the others. Universities have resisted and not charged fees, like the publics, you know? And when the government changed hands, the paradigm shifted again, that is, now we do not subscribe to economic liberalism anymore or the Washington consensus, but to the contrary, we see the state as a benefactor ... so again we ask, what changed? Evaluation continues, but now evaluation is accompanied by funding. These are the improvement programs (Interviewee 14).

This same interviewee spoke about a new conception of evaluation introduced at the Ministry of Education after 2002, particularly in relation to engineering courses. According to him, universities participate in the evaluation and the results will guide funding in order to introduce improvements.

> In 2002 we had President Duhalde, who was an interim president, and with him the Secretary of University Policies was Juan Carlos Pugliese. Pugliese began policies that related to improving the quality of the Engineering schools ... that is, he attached funding to evaluation. Evaluation no longer qualified schools as competent for competition in the market, but rather evaluation became a state commitment in which universities participated and were evaluated and afterwards as part of the evaluation the necessary improvements were funded. It is a completely different concept, do not you think? (Interviewee 14).

He believed that there have been advances in promoting quality in higher education. These advances were brought about by the evaluation and also by the project to fund improvements after the evaluation. He explained that when evaluations began in Argentina, and also in Brazil, institutions would receive their results and if they were negative they would be required to improve, but public institutions would not receive any help from the government. In the current government, however, public institutions started to receive money to address their issue, such as to buy needed equipment or to train teachers in graduate programs. This is a drastic change in his view.

> Yes there have been significant improvements in terms of quality improvement, especially after the appearance of evaluation, and even more so after evaluation started being accompanied by funding for improvements. The state evaluates, but afterwards the state puts

> forward the funding so that the improvement plan suggested by the evaluation can be carried out. So this is different than what was approved in Brazil, or when evaluation first started here, which was similar, in which they'd give you a grade and if they didn't give you a grade they'd say to you, Well, you are doing poorly, you aren't accredited and you need to put yourself in order. This even happened with the public universities. That is, the state didn't supply funding to buy the equipment that was lacking, or train the professors who lacked graduate training, this was the big change that happened later in terms of evaluation, which I believe started with the current administration (Interviewee 14).

Another interviewee agreed that in this area the government made real progress. The accreditation of undergrad courses was consolidated, in his view. Additionally, he mentioned the importance of programs such as the Project for the Improvement of Engineering Teaching (PROMEI).

> Well then yes, the accreditation processes for undergraduate courses have been very consolidated under CONEAU and what was done was financing was provided for improvement plans that came out of these accreditations. This has persisted and this has had very concrete results, very concrete improvements and that's why CONEAU keeps working on this. I think this is one of the most important achievements, what was first called PROMEI (Program for Improvement in Teaching Engineering), through which the Secretary of University Policies financed the recommendations for quality improvement which CONEAU's accreditation experts had made. This is very important (Interviewee 15).

The Ministry of Education, through the University Policies Secretariat, is implementing the Program of University Quality. This program has as its official goals:

> Promote and improve quality in the teaching and learning process and its results, so as to ensure high quality training of human resources, both in the professional and scientific sectors; Promote and improve the processes of producing and transferring knowledge, contributing to a national innovation system; Promote and improve the quality of the system's outreach in terms of how it meets the demands and needs of society, as well as in terms of the pertinence and equity universities should promote in fulfillment of their social role; Promote and improve institutional quality, strengthening capacity and university management mechanisms with their distinct processes (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 231).

Within this program there are some lines of action, one of them being Projects of Teaching Improvement. "They conduct non-competitive enrollment campaigns for degree programs that are declared to be priorities and which have passed the CONEAU accreditation process" . The resources of these projects can fund several activities such as: teaching improvement, virtual classes, human resource training, faculty consolidation, support for improving academic

management, support for exchanges of faculty, students and technical personnel, and improvements in infrastructure, equipment and bibliography (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 233).

The projects developed through the program so far are: PROMEI I and II; Project for Improving Teaching in Agronomy (PROMAGRO); Project for Improving Teaching in Pharmacology and Biochemistry (PROMFYB); Project for Improving Teaching in Veterinary Medicine (PROMVET); Project for Improving Teaching in Architecture (PROMARQ); and similar projects in the area of medicine (PROMED); dentistry (PROMOD); and Forestry, Natural Resources Management and Zoology (PROMFORZ). The table 21 presents some data regarding these projects:

Table 21 - Projects for improving teaching

Project	Universities benefited	Courses benefited	Implementation	Funding (in Argentine pesos)
PROMEI I y II	-	250	2005-2010	365.000.000
PROMAGRO	22	22	2007-2010	40.000.000
PROMFYB	12	24	2008-2010	33.000.000
PROMVET	10	10	2009-2011	33.000.000
PROMARQ	9	9	2010-2012	30.000.000
PROMED	11	-	2011-2014	-
PROMOD	7	-	2011-2014	-
PROMFORZ	11	-	2012-2015	-

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 233; and
http://portales.educacion.gov.ar/spu/calidad-universitaria/proyectos-de-mejoramiento/
1 US dollar = 5,31 Argentine pesos (06/11/2013)

One interviewee referenced PROMEI, which was the first project to be implemented, starting in 2005, and it is by far the project with most investment. A total of 250 courses of higher education benefited from this project. The table 22 presents more detailed data about the results of PROMEI:

Table 22 – Changes in advancement of students in PROMEI I and II, between 2003 and 2009
Engineering students with improvement plans in public universities *

Student type	2003	2009	Growth between 09/03
First-year	19,900	22,743	14%
Continuing	67,720	81,752	21%
Total	87,620	104,495	19%
Advanced (With more than 26 courses)	13,048	20,878	60%
% Advanced / Continuing	19%	16%	
Graduates	3,119	3,859	24%

* The 19 universities included are those that were accredited and had improvement programs.
Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 235.

It is important to mention, however, that before the existence of PROMEI, which is a part of the Program of University Quality, the Ministry of Education had measures seeking to improve the quality of higher education. The Fund for University Quality Improvement (FOMEC), funded in part by the World Bank through the Program for the Reform of Higher Education (PRES), was created in 1995 and ran until 2004. Stewart (2007), as a matter of fact, defended the thesis that "the policy learning which occurred as a result of FOMEC and the bureaucratic capacity installed as a result of 1990s reforms in Argentine higher education facilitated the formulation of PROMEI to the extent that its design was incremental in nature" (p. ii). She asserted that the implementation of FOMEC, and also the creation of CONEAU, led the government to create PROMEI. The problems in the implementation of the first program, to the author, contributed to the formulation of the second (p. 136).

One interviewee mentioned that to ensure quality is to make sure universities in periphecical areas have a similar quality than central institutions, or the best institutions in the country. Improving the system of higher education from a federal criteria, according to the interviewee, will help a true inclusion.

> You see, we guarantee quality with the effective action of the state financing improvements, and guaranteeing quality means we're making equal the situations of students in central universities, like say Campinas or Sao Paulo in Brazil, with peripheral universities like, continuing with the Brazilian example, the city of Fortaleza, or here in Argentina one example is my town, which is Río Gallegos, and which has the Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia Austral. In this university of mine, obviously it is newer, so it is harder to get professors ... that is, if you compare it with universities in Buenos Aires or La Plata, it is obvious that our conditions are worse. This policy that was approved, this seeks to help us

> improve that, it provides funding to make up for these inequalities, leading indirectly to democratization, or we could say, inclusion. That is, those that are included will then have access to higher quality instruction, right? That is, improving the system as a whole through the use of federal criteria and so forth, this makes it so that the inclusion promoted through rural universities becomes truly inclusive, meaning it is high quality, it is better, and so forth (Interviewee 14).

In addition, the interviewee mentioned that today there are many constructions going on in national universities, after years without investments, and this in his view has an impact on quality.

> The other new thing that mattered a lot to quality is that they are now doing a lot of infrastructural work that was pending. For so many years there was no new construction in universities, no improvements (...) For years no construction was done for universities. Buildings, laboratories, and so forth (Interviewee 14).

In fact, the federal government implements some programs to support the infrastructure of public institutions. These programs are fairly recent and it is worth mentioning them. The Program of Support to the University Infrastructure Development was created in 2005, in a partnership of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology; the Ministry of Planning, Public Investment, and Services; and national universities. The goal of the program is to increase the number of buildings in order to accommodate new students and also to recover the infrastructure of some institutions. "Classrooms were built, laboratories, libraries, scientific and technological centers, spaces for outreach and cultural activities" (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 324). The following table highlights data about the implementation of the program:

Table 23– Program of Support for University Infrastructural Development - 2010

	Number	Percentage	Investment (Argentine Peso)
Finished projects	120	43,3	254.397.673
Works in progress	40	40,3	233.417.531
Pre-allocated projects	12	6,8	40.151.670
Projects in bidding process	6	3,9	23.145.036
Projects with confirmed contracts	6	5,6	32.978.012
Total	184	100	584.089.922

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 324, 345, 346.
1 US dollar = 5,31 Argentine pesos (06/11/2013).

The Security Program was created in 2006, through Resolution SPU N° 157 passed on November 29, 2006. It was organized in two stages. The first stage, which took place from 2007 to 2010, focused on the "evacuation of university buildings, so that buildings used by students can be

confirmed as secure". In this stage "contracts were drawn up with 27 universities, with more than 100 buildings under construction for $29.019.520". The second stage, which started in 2010, focuses on the "electrical installations". "Contracts were drawn up with 11 universities for projects totaling $ 22.439.390" (p. 323).

Finally, there is the Accessibility Program in National Universities, which was created in 2010 through Resolution SPU No 770/10 and will continue for several years. The objective of this program is to identify which buildings on national university campuses are accessible and secure for all users. This includes the creation of access ramps and elevator platforms, accessible bathrooms, and elevators, among other things. In 2010, 37 campus and building construction projects were funded. Contracts were drawn up with 21 national universities for a total of $ 9.849.897 (p. 323).

Almost all interviewees related quality to evaluation and also to funding improvements needed by universities as pointed out by evaluations. It is interesting that none mentioned policies related to teacher's qualification, for instance. The situation of the professoriate has a very strong connection to the quality of the activities developed in higher education. As Mollis (2008) underscored in relation to the university system of Argentina: "in those academic institutions were more teaching responsibilities lie with professors than with adjuncts, where more teaching hours and more positions are filled by faculty with graduate degrees and certificates, the quality of instruction in courses increases" (p. 522). Due to the relevance of the professoriate to a better quality education here some relevant data will be introduced.

Fanelli (2012) explained the situation of the faculty in Argentina regarding salaries and labor contracts. At the public sector, salaries and benefits are fixed by collective bargaining between faculty union and the Council of Public University rector, as well as the Ministry of Education. Only afterward direct negotiations between local unions and university authorities take place. The government allocates a lump sum to each public university, and institutions have to plan

their human policy resource having this constraint in mind. As Fanelli noted, "nearly 85 percent of these funds are distributed to cover salaries for faculty and other staff" (p. 42).

Wages in public institutions take into consideration the professional category, the workload, and seniority. Among the benefits are health plan, paid vacations, and retirement funds. The government also impacts salaries through special rewards such as financial benefits to those that develop research, "as well as recently granting bonuses to those who have PhD and master's degree" (p. 42).

Fanelli (2012) noted some initiatives that contribute to differentiate faculty salary. One of the most important is the Program of Incentives for Research-Teachers. In addition to that, many professors teach at graduate level, which helps to improve their wages. Finally, faculty develops extra activities such as "consulting and technical assistance to businesses, the government, social organizations, communities, and individuals" (p. 45). Mollis (2006) believed that the differentiation between faculty-researchers and faculty that only teachers produced a strong segmentation in the profession. The faculty-researchers, a minority group in the system, "complete the highest demands in the academic realm, but not necessarily using the capacities associated with 'good university teaching,' which is oriented towards developing responsibility, autonomy, and thinking that is critical, innovative and solidary" (p. 98).

These salary complements, however, are not incorporated during retirement. "An additional fringe benefit was incorporated in 2010. Faculty retirement benefits now amount to 82 percent of the average real wages earned during the last 10 years of teaching" (Fanelli, 2012, p. 46).

Fanelli (2012) also mentioned that the recent increase in wages in real terms, from 2004 to 2010, helped full-time faculty at public universities to enjoy a middle-income standard of living (p. 38). As she explained,

> Non-full-time public university faculty earn their living thanks to professional and academic activities at other public or private organizations or are self-employed as, say, consultants and physicians. Part-time faculty enjoy the same condition as full-time faculty regarding their labor contracts (stable positions) and fringe benefits. (p. 38).

One important aspect explained by the author is that part-time faculty positions were meant to allow some professors to continue their professional activities while teaching. During the last decades of the XX century, however, this started to be used as an instrument to hire professionals at lower costs, seeking to answer the demands of professional due to the expansion of higher education. This situation, however, brought problems. As Fanelli wrote, during the 1980s and 1990s

> public universities offered few opportunities to work as full-time faculty. Moreover, the average academic wages at the moment were quite low. This context contributed to Argentina's "brain drain" problem. An estimated 6,500 Argentine researchers resided abroad (especially in the United States) in 2003. These researchers represented about 18 percent of the total number of researchers residing in Argentina (p. 38).

The following data help to develop a better characterization of the situation of the professoriate in Argentina. Table 24 shows the number of teaching positions per workload and category of contract.

Table 24 – Faculty occupation structure. Faculty posts per workload and type of contract (2010)

	Full-time	Half-time	Part-time	Total
Full professor (*Titular*)	4,594	4,289	8,006	16,889
Associate professor (*Asociado*)	2,092	1,115	3,103	6,310
Assistant professor (*Adjunto*)	6,418	7,542	21,043	35,003
Senior assistant (*JTP*)	4,890	10,880	27,179	42,949
Assistant (*Ayudante 1*)	1,937	5,731	32,359	40,027
Teaching assistant (*Ayudante 2*)	-	-	10,407	10,407
Total	19,931	29,557	102,097	151,585*

* There are an additional 6,330 faculty posts under other types of contracts (e.g. Ad Honorem), which makes a total of 157,915 posts.
Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 169-170.

In terms of workload, most have a part-time job (102,097 posts, which represents 65% of the total posts). Only 13% have a full-time job and 19% have a half-time job. This data is highly important. As Azevedo (2001) mentioned, "to create a university with a well-developed climate for teaching, research and outreach, it is essential that a substantial portion of the faculty work full-time" (p. 64). In relation to their type of contract, most are in intermediate positions in the hierarchical structure. Many are senior assistants (42,949), assistants (40,027) and assistant professors (35,003). A smaller number is assigned to full professor (16,889, which represents 11% of the total posts).

Table 25 presents information about the evolution of positions per workload in the last years:

Table 25 – University faculty salary scale (2006-2010)

	Full-time	Half-time	Part-time	Total
2006	17.059	28.671	82.584	128,314
2007	17.928	28.631	88.567	135,126
2008	18.641	28.711	95.415	142,767
2009	19.461	29.256	98.266	146,983
2010	19.931	29.557	102.097	151,585
Change between % 06/10	16,8	3,1	23,6	18,1

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 171-174.

As it is possible to see, there has been an increase in the number of faculty positions in university institutions in the last years (from 128,314 positions in 2006 to 151,585 in 2010). The variation in the total number of positions for 2010 in relation to 2006 is 18.1%. The part-time position was the position that increased the most in this period (23.6%), followed by the full-time positions (16.8%). The growth in half-time position was very small (3.1%).

Faculty quality is another essential element to achieve a better quality in higher education. The table 26 accounts for the number of positions for faculty with a doctorate degree in university institutions

Table 26 – Number of positions for doctoral-level faculty, by category and time commitment (2010)

	Full-time	Half-time	Part-time	Total
Full professor	1,437	493	854	2,784
Associate professor	759	128	280	1,167
Assistant professor	1,700	622	1,404	3,726
Senior assistant	881	436	1,069	2,386
Assistant	183	135	618	936
Teaching assistant	-	-	14	14
Total	4,960	1,814	4,239	11,013*

* The universities have 9,764 teachers with a doctorate degree, which represents 8.70% of the total of teachers.
Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 183.

Most of the positions for faculty with a doctorate degree include a full-time workload (4.960%), followed by a part-time workload (4.239%). In relation to the working contract, most of them are for assistant professors (3.726%) and full-time professors (2.784%). It is important to

address the fact that the number of positions for faculty that hold a doctorate degree represents only 7% of the total number of faculty positions (11,013 of the 157,915 total).

The tables that follow display the percentage of positions for faculty that have doctorate degrees in relation to the total number of positions per workload and type of contract within university institutions in 2010.

Table 27 – Percentage of positions for doctoral-level faculty relative to total positions by time commitment (2010)

	%
Full-time	24. 9
Half-time	6.1
Part-time	4.1

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 184.

There are 4,960 positions for full-time faculty that hold a doctorate degree out of 19,931 full-time positions in university institutions in Argentina. This represents 24.9% of the positions. The number of positions for faculty with a doctorate in half-time and part-time job is much smaller (6.1% and 4.1%, respectively). In relation to type of contract, the data is presented in table 28.

Table 28 – Percentage of positions for doctoral-level faculty relative to total positions by category (2010)

	%
Full professor	16.5
Associate professor	18.5
Assistant professor	10.6
Senior assistant	5.6
Assistant	2.3
Teaching assistant	0.1

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 184.

Incentives to research create an expectation that this will bring positive results in terms not only of the production of knowledge but also of teaching practices. Of course this relationship is not linear but teachers that research are likely to bring a good contribution to their classrooms. The Program of Incentives for Research-Teachers, previously mentioned, was created through the Decree 2.427 (11/19/93) and has been implemented since then, seeking "to promote in national universities that research tasks be integrated into teaching, to contribute to the highest level of training for students" (University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 269). The following illustrates data

regarding the number of researchers who benefited help to see the dimension of this program:

Table 29 – Change in total number of faculty researcher beneficiaries of incentive program in national universities (1994-2009)

	Number
1994	11,199
1995	15,900
1996	18,878
1997	17,993
1998	16,905
1999	16,017
2000	18,704
2001	19,507
2002	18,142
2003	16,662
2004	16,545
2005	19,778
2006	19,974
2007	19,846
2008	19,614
2009	19,187

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2000, p. 250, and 2010, p. 270.

The number of beneficiaries of the program has varied since its creation. From 11,199 teacher-researchers receiving the financial award in 1994, the program went to 19,187 in 2009. In 2009, as already presented, there were 146,983 positions for full, half and part-time faculty. This means that only around 13% of the faculty obtained the benefit. Table 30 presents the teacher-researchers that receive the incentive per workload and category of investigation.

Table 30 – Total number of faculty researcher beneficiaries of incentive program in national universities, by research category and time commitment (2009)

	Full-time	Half-time	Part-time	Total
I	1,370	183	277	1,830
II	1,814	374	260	2,448
III	4,189	1,315	592	6,096
IV	2,865	1,615	308	4,788
V	1,728	1,866	431	4,025
Total	11,966	5,353	1,868	19,187

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010, p. 275.

As the data show, the benefit serves primarily full-time faculty (11,966 faculties, which represent 62.4% of the total). Half-time faculty represents 27.9% of the group, and part-time faculty only 9.7%. The program classifies teacher-researchers in five levels. Most of the beneficiaries are in the last levels. Only 9.5% of them (1,830 beneficiaries) are in the level I.

In relation to the area of the teacher-researchers that are receiving the benefit, as table 31 presents, in 2009 32.4% were in the natural and exact sciences area, followed by social sciences (22,4%) and others. A small number constitutes the medical area (7.5%) (p. 276).

Table 31 – Percentage of faculty researcher beneficiaries by subject area (2009)

	Number	%
Agriculture	2,190	11.4
Humanities	2,363	12.3
Medicine	1,440	7.5
Natural and exact sciences	6,226	32.4
Social sciences	4,289	22.4
Engineering and technology	2,670	13.9
Total	19,187	100.0

Source: University Statistics Yearbook, 2010.

The University of Buenos Aires and the University of La Plata have the largest number of teacher-researchers that receive the financial support (12.4 percent and 11.5 percent, respectively), followed by the University of Cordoba (7.5 percent) and others with a much smaller participation (p. 280).

Along these lines, Azevedo (2001) made an important observation. Analyzing data from 1994, the year in which the program started to be implemented, and 1997 he showed that the percentage of full-time faculty in university institutions went from 12.1% to 13.4%. He concluded that "this incentive policy didn't have a significant effect on the general statistics on time dedicated to teaching and research". Although when he did his analysis it was probably too soon to see the real effects of this policy, today the data confirms his statement. In 2010, as seen previously, the full-time faculty continues to represent 13% of the total faculty. As Azevedo (2001) defended,

> To outline true policies that can increase scientific production, first the SPU (or McyE) must demonstrate that it sincerely wants to increase the number of full-time professorial faculty focused on teaching and research, starting with a wide-reaching training program for professors (at the Master's and doctoral level), as well as a position and salary-based incentive policy for those faculty that seek further education and dedicate themselves to university life, with the PDI (Institutional Development Plan) as a supplementary policy to stimulate academic dedication (p. 71).

Regarding private institutions, Fanelli (2012) explicated that there is no data available for the whole sector. Academic salaries in private institutions are determined via individual negotiation,

and seniority is not an important aspect in career progression. Usually their staff is hired under two types of contracts:

> First, a group of faculty, especially but not only those with full-time contracts, is hired under a wage relationship – that is, stability regulated by private law and the inclusion of social benefits like a health plan, paid vacations, and retirement plans. These contracts usually provide faculty with some stability for a minimum of three years. Second, another group of faculty particularly those hired on an hourly basis, has a fixed-term contract, falling under the legal form of services contract or autonomous relationship. Under a fixed-term contract, the professor has no right to any social benefits or severance pay (p. 43).

The private sector depends mostly on students' tuitions and fees to support their activities, and in some cases from private donations. It is also important to mention that private institutions and their faculty can apply and receive funding from the government for their research development.

As it was possible to notice, a few interviewees reported that there were no important policies to ensure quality of higher education in Argentina. Most of the interviewees, however, referenced the external evaluation conducted by CONEAU. This evaluation changed along the years, and from being resisted in the beginning it became largely accepted today. A new conception of evaluation emerged around the beginning of the XXI century where state evaluation if followed by investments to support improvements in specific areas. One interviewee mentioned that it is essential to assure that peripheral universities have similar quality than central institutions. It is surprising the lack of references to policies related to faculty qualifications.

This chapter examined higher education in Argentina. The first part of the debate focused on the development of higher education, and the second part on the current situation of higher education in the country. It was possible to see the impact that different governments had on policies for this level of education, on the one hand, and the opinion of specialist about higher education in their countries, on the other hand. The next chapter presents a similar analysis focusing on Brazil.

CHAPTER 4 - HIGHER EDUCATION IN BRAZIL

This chapter focuses on higher education in Brazil. The first section examines some important elements related to the emergence and development of higher education in this country, and it is written mainly based on the literature. The second section discusses the current situation of higher education in Brazil, based on interviews with relevant actors in the field of higher education.

4.1 – The development of higher education

Many authors point out the fact that in Brazil higher education developed late relative to other countries. This is true particularly if one looks at the development of universities. Most authors note that the first higher education courses were created in the beginning of the XIX century or around three centuries after the arrival of the first colonizers (Oliven, 2002; Durham, 2003; Morosini, 2005; Ghiraldelli Junior, 2008). There are authors, however, that identify the existence of higher education courses before that time. Cunha (1980), for instance, considers as higher education the courses of philosophy, theology, and even mathematics carried out during the colonial period (p. 14).

In terms of relevant background, Brazil was a colony of Portugal from 1500 to 1822. From 1549 to 1759 there was a strong presence of the Jesuits and the implementation of a religious education in Brazil; from 1759 to 1808 the Jesuits were expelled from Brazil and there were implemented reforms that came to be known as pombaline reforms (as they were implemented by a minister commonly known as Pombal, as will be explained more fully hereafter); and 1808 to 1821 encapsulated the period in which king João VI of Portugal brought the court to Brazil.

According to Cunha (1980), the first higher education courses in Brazil were part of the Jesuit colonial project. Jesuits arrived in Brazil in 1549 and installed educational institutions in four levels: elementary course, humanities course, arts course and theology course. The elementary

course lasted one year or more and it focused on teaching to read, write and count, besides teaching the catholic doctrine. The humanities course lasted two years and included the study of grammar, rhetoric, and humanities. The course of arts or philosophy lasted three years and encompassed the teaching of logic, physics, mathematics, ethic, and metaphysics. Finally, the course of theology, which granted the title of doctor, lasted four years and included teaching moral theology and speculative theology (p. 27-28).

Cunha (1980) explains that "all 17 schools founded by the Jesuits in colonial Brazil had elementary courses; a smaller number offered courses in the humanities and only eight had courses in the arts, offering also (whether completely or partially) courses in theology" (p. 28). These courses were intended for an ecclesiastical career but also open to those that wanted to continue their studies in Portugal. "The arts course in particular was a prerequisite to professional courses as the University of Coimbra (in medicine, canonical law or law) (p. 29). Some authors defend that the Jesuits were responsible for introducing something that would be the hallmark of Brazilian education over the years: elitism and exclusion (Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009). "Jesuit work in education, practically speaking, was reduced to the instruction of a miniscule lettered social class that, through their dominion of erudite knowledge and European practices of the day, in turn oversaw more complex activities and took on a central role disseminating knowledge, beliefs and values" (Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 3).

The first Jesuit school in Brazil was created in Bahia in 1550. In 1553, it started offering a course in humanities and in 1572, courses in the arts and theology. In 1589 there were 216 students, most of them in elementary courses (120), followed by humanities (57), arts (24) and theology (15) (Cunha, 1980, p. 30). "While those studies offered at the school in Bahia (what is referred to as their arts course) were identical to those offered in the Jesuit school in Évora, a city in Portugal, the degree offered by the former was not given the same 'value' as that of the latter" (p. 31). During the second half of the XVII century there were movements to bring to the Bahia school the same rights

of the Évora school and also the University of Coimbra, but there was also resistance coming from these institutions. As Cunha (1980) says

> The state finally, through a charter in 1689, gave legal recognition to the Jesuit schools in Brazil. Students that graduated in philosophy no longer had to go to complementary courses or subject themselves to "equivalency" exams if they wanted to enroll in courses in law, canonical law, medicine and theology at the University of Coimbra (p. 33).

Other schools in Brazil offered higher education courses during the colonial period. Cunha (1980) points them out. The school of Rio de Janeiro, created in the XVI century, began to offer philosophy courses in 1638. "In the last years of the XVII century, the schools in Rio de Janeiro and Bahia integrated their curricula in philosophy, so that each offered a part of the curriculum" (p. 33). The school of Olinda, also created in the XVI century, started to offer higher education courses in 1687. The school of Maranhão began offering higher education with its course in theology in 1688, and the school of Pará began an arts course in 1695, so as to functionally complement the school of Maranhão. In São Paulo courses of philosophy and theology were installed in Piratininga in 1708. There are some evidences of the existence of higher education courses in Recife in 1721. The last higher education courses created by the Jesuits took place in a seminar in Mariana, where they installed the courses of philosophy and theology in 1753. "In the middle of the XVIII century, when Jesuit educational activity in Brazil was interrupted, 300 students were taking the philosophy course in all of the schools, with a third of them in the school of Bahia" (p. 35-36).

In 1759 the Society of Jesus was expelled from Portugal and its colonies for a number of reasons[26]. This had serious implications for education in Brazil. According to Cunha (1980), "this was not a transformation or substitution of a system or type of pedagogy with another; rather, it was a scholastic organization that was extinguished without accompanying provision of an adequate

[26] In 1750 Sebastião José de Carvalho e Mello, also known as of Pombal, was appointed minister of the king of Portugal, and implemented many structural reforms seeking to improve the economic and political situation of Portugal. He is identified as responsible for the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal and its territories. Cunha (1980) explains that his economic policies encouraged the development of manufactures in the metropolis, the accumulation of public and private capital and also the replacement of ideologies oriented towards a feudal society by ideologies aiming at a capitalist society. In his view, the expulsion of the Jesuits intended to increase the real power in order to achieve these economic goals. Thus, regalism, or the intent to subordinate all institutions to the king's power was an important motivation. The author also mentions illuminism as another possible element that contributed to the expulsion of Jesuits (p. 39-43).

substitute" (p. 51). After the Jesuits were thrown out of Brazilian territories, "those that were interested and had the resources to pursue higher education had to take on the risks of travel and attend the reformed University of Coimbra or other European institutions" (Ribeiro, 2000, p. 35). Portugal during the colonial period forbade the creation of universities in Brazil. The dependence of Brazil in relation to the University of Coimbra was an important element of the colonial pact (Mendonça, 2000; Durham, 2003, p. 193; Fávero, 2006, p. 18; Cunha, 2010, p. 152). Mendonça (2000) says, based on Anísio Teixeira, that until the beginning of the XIX century this was "the Brazilian university", graduating more than 2.500 students born in Brazil.

In Vieira and Farias' (2003) perspective, "the reign of Pombal marks an important moment in the history of Brazilian education, when the public power of the state entered the scene as the agent responsible for the definition and direction of this field" (p. 37). Pombal created the so-called "aulas régias," or royal schools, and set in place a tax for the maintenance of primary schools called the literary subsidy. The main critique to this reform is that it generated a fragmentation of the educational system, allowing a number of isolated classes.

Cunha (1980) explained that "in terms of higher education, the closing of Jesuit schools in Bahia, Recife, Olinda, Piratininga, Rio de Janeiro, São Luís, Belém and Mariana coincided with the opening of isolated programs and the creation of structured higher education courses in Rio de Janeiro and Olinda" (p. 53). The course in Rio de Janeiro was created by the Franciscans in 1776, authorized by a royal charter. "There was, in truth, a school modeled after the University of Coimbra in the structure of Pombal's reform" (p. 53). A higher education course in this institution lasted about seven years. The so called *estudos menores* could be completed in one year or more. The *estudos maiores* were organized into two courses: philosophy, which lasted three years, and theology, which required another three years (p. 54).

The course in Olinda was greatly influenced by José Joaquim da Cunha de Azeredo Coutinho's ideas, a Bishop educated in the reformed Coimbra University. In this institution the first step was a course of grammar that lasted three years, followed by a course in rhetoric of one year.

Then there was a course of philosophy that lasted two years and one of geometry in one year (Cunha says that it is not possible to know if the geometry course was later or concomitant to philosophy). The last step included a course of theology during three years (Cunha, 1980, p. 58). Those educated in Rio de Janeiro and Olinda played an important role in the process of independence of Brazil in 1822 (p. 61).

In 1808 the Portuguese royal family arrived to Brazil with its court of nearly 15,000 people. The royal family left Portugal merely days before the Napoleonic forces invaded the country due to the Portuguese alliance with the United Kingdom. There were local demands to create a university in Brazil at that time, but instead several higher education courses were created to meet the demands of the crown. These courses were created in isolated non-university institutions and had primarily a vocational focus. Higher education in Brazil in its nascent stages was strongly influenced by the French model, with secular institutions more focused on teaching than research (Oliven, 2002, p. 25; Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 3; Cunha, 2010, p. 153).

The first official courses of higher education in Brazil, thus, were created in the beginning of the XIX century. In 1808 the *cátedra*[27] or course of surgery was created in Bahia and the courses of surgery and anatomy in Rio de Janeiro. These courses were the basis for the creation of the schools of Medicine and Pharmacology. In 1810 the Royal Military Academy was created, which later became the basis for the first course of engineering. These courses were strongly related to the concerns with the military defense of the colony, which was now seat of the Portuguese kingdom (Cunha, 1980; Mendonça, 2000, p. 134; Oliven, 2002, p. 25; Durham, 2003, p. 194; Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 3-4).

Other courses were created during this period. Mendonça (2000) mentioned a number of them:

> In Bahia, there was a chair of economics (1808), and courses in agriculture (1812), chemistry (1817) and technical design (1817). In Rio, there was a chemical laboratory

[27] A cátedra was a course organized by a trained professor, with a lifelong position, and his assisting professors. These *cátedras* were abolished from Brazilian higher education during the university reform of 1968, when they were recreated in university or departmental settings.

> (1812) and a course in agriculture (1814). Several separate courses were created in Pernambuco in 1809 (in higher mathematics), in Vila Rica in 1817 (in design and history), and in Paracatu, Minas Gerais in 1821 (in rhetoric and philosophy), as an attempt to overcome gaps in the instruction given by the royal schools (p. 134).

In relation to the organization of these courses, Cunha (2010) explained that

> These were extremely simple teaching units, consisting of a professor that would teach students using his own resources in improvised settings. It was the schools, academies and colleges (which arose later), rather than these isolated *cátedras*, that were higher educational units with specializations, programs that were systematized and organized according to pre-established criteria, with non-teaching staff, means of teaching and their own proper locations (p. 154).

In 1822 Brazil declared its independence from Portugal. In an unusual situation compared to other Latin American countries, king João VI returned to Portugal and established his son Pedro I as the monarch of the newly independent country. This is the beginning of a period known as the empire in Brazil. In 1824 Dom Pedro I granted the first Brazilian constitution. According to some authors, there was a stark difference between the values proclaimed in this document – that tried to incorporate the liberal ideals in vogue in Europe and North America - and the values in practice in Brazil (Freire, 1993, cited by Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 5). The constitution had only one article dealing with education, which said that

> The inviolability of the civil and political rights of Brazilian citizens (...) is guaranteed by the constitution of the Empire in the following way: § 32 – Primary instruction is free to all citizens; 33 – Colleges and universities, where the elements of the sciences, arts and letters will be taught (Art. 179, in Vieira and Farias, 2003, 58).

In 1827 two courses of law were created, one in Olinda and the other in São Paulo. These courses trained students to integrate the legal apparatus of the new national state. There were many attempts to create a university during this time; none of them successful. Some authors said that the situation did not change drastically in relation to the previous period (Cunha, 2010, p. 155). According to Mendonça (2000), "in terms of higher education, there were few concrete initiatives by the imperial government, and these were limited to the maintenance and regulation of existing institutions" (p. 134-135). Durham (2003), based on Teixeira (1969), said that "in 1889, there were no more than 24 schools of professional training" (p. 195). Other authors had a similar perspective:

> The initiatives (…) that resulted in the creation of the School of Mines in 1875 in Ouro Preto (created for training of specialists in mineralogy, geology and mines) and the reorganization of the Central School (which came to be called the Polytechnic) in 1874 in Rio de Janeiro, which was focused on specializations in civil engineering, mines and mechanical arts, coincided with the country's demand and need for more professional schooling to support incipient and recent industrialization. These were the only imperial higher education initiatives that provided instruction of a scientific character, breaking with the traditional and pragmatic teaching that was in vogue at the time. Even so, these initiatives (…) were not sufficient to change the general educational landscape in the Empire, which reproduced the elitism and exclusion that began during the colonial period, and which did not address popular desires for education even at the most basic levels, much less in terms of higher education (Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 9).

In the end of the XIX century the political regime of Brazil transitioned from an empire to a republic. The so-called First Republic or Old Republic lasted from 1889 to 1930. In relation to that period, Vieira and Farias (2003) noted that "this was an agitated period, marked by constant changes in presidents and feelings of insatisfaction. Even though it represented the advent of democratic and federalist ideas, the First Republic was also strongly influenced by old rural oligarchies and their leaders" (p. 71). The authors explain that the proclamation of the republic did not bring immediate changes to economic plans.

In 1891 the first constitution of the Republic was enacted. This constitution was federalist in nature, giving ample autonomy to the states. This situation impacted education, which needed to undergo a process of decentralization. The National Congress was given the exclusive legal prerogative to legislate with regard to higher education and other services provided in the nation's capital. It was the federal government that had responsibility to create secondary and tertiary educational institutions in the states, and to govern all educational levels in the capital. The states were left to legislate regarding primary and secondary education, and to build and maintain primary, secondary and tertiary schools. The document established the important principle of separation between the state and the church, and also the secularity of education (Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 10; Vieira and Farias, 2003, p. 80; Neto, 2009, p. 6). As Fávero (2006) pointed out, higher education is a responsibility of the federal government, but not exclusively (p. 21).

During this period the higher education system was decentralized "and, in addition to federal schools there appeared others, both public (run by both states and municipalities) and private" (Durham, 2003, p. 193). The First Republic was also marked by various reforms: The Reform of Benjamin Constant (1890), the Reform of Epitácio Pessoa (1901), the Reform of Rivadávia Corrêa (1911), the Reform of Carlos Maximiliano (1915) and the Reform of João Luis Alves or Rocha Vaz (1925). These proposals, as Vieira and Farias (2003) explained, "did not always correspond to an organic set of measures, but were rather decrees intended to reform specific aspects of educational organization" (p. 76-77).

The Reform of Benjamin Constant involved the implementation of three decrees: the first instituted the Statute of Primary and Secondary Instruction in the Federal District, in 1890; the second involved the Statute of the National Gymnasium, also in 1890; and the third created the Statute of the Council on Higher Education, in 1891. This reform was strongly influenced by the positivist ideals of the time and reached the main extant higher educational institutions (Vieira and Farias, 2003, p. 77; Cunha, 1980, p. 132; Neto, 2009, p. 5). Cunha (2010) explained that this reform promoted matching the establishment of higher education institutions to those schools maintained by the federal government. In this way, "the schools created and maintained by state governments or by private entities had the same curricula as federal schools, and thus they could grant diplomas that guaranteed the right to work in those professions regulated by law" (p. 158). This facilitated the creation of new schools and thus granted access to higher education. As Cunha (2010) explained, from 1891 to 1910 27 schools of higher education were created.

The Reform of Epitácio Pessoa arose from the approval of the Code of Official Institutions of Higher and Secondary Education in 1901, and the Statute of the National Gymnasium, which was passed in the same year. The former document, with 384 articles, was extremely detailed and provided rules and regulations for the administration of Schools of Law and Medicine, as well as the Polytechnic School, the School of Mines and the National Gymnasium.

The Reform of Rivadávia Corrêa in 1911 arose from the approval of the Organic Law of Higher Education and Primary Education of the Republic, and the Statute of the School of Pedro II. First, the reform was meant to restrict access to higher education for students that were not considered to be prepared for such. The School of Pedro II and the schools matched to it lost the privilege of guaranteeing their matriculants access to institutions of higher education. At the same time admissions exams were instituted, which were created as "a written test verifying knowledge of the subject matter students should already know and an oral exam on languages and sciences" (Cunha, 2010, p. 160). Second, the reform promoted deregulation of higher education, which from that point on had more autonomy (Vieira and Farias, 2003, p. 78; Oliveira, Vogt and Leffer, 2009, p. 6; Cunha, 2010, p. 159). As Cunha (2010) explained,

> Officially established institutions came to be autonomous corporations, whose members were able to elect their directors and enjoy complete didactic, administrative and financial autonomy. If state-level higher education institutions had sufficient resources on their own to function, dispensing with government grants, they were free from all official dependency or supervision, both short- and long-term (p. 159).

The decentralization put forward by the constitution of 1891 and also by the Reform of Rivadávia Corrêa made it possible for universities to be created in a few Brazilian states. Specifically, around this time the University of Manaus was created in 1909, the University of Sao Paulo was created in 1911, and the University of Parana was created in 1912. These institutions, however, were short-lived (Mendonça, 2000, 136; Fávero, 2006; Oliveira, Vogt and Leffer, 2009, p. 6; Cunha, 2010, p. 162).

Vieira and Farias (2003) noted that the reforms that came after the Reform of Rivadávia Corrêa attempted to reorganize the Brazilian educational system (p. 78-79). Such was the case of the Reform of Carlos Maximiliano in 1915. This reform, according to Cunha (2010), maintained elements of the former reform. Students from the School of Pedro II and the schools matched to it no longer had guaranteed admission into higher education and had to pass admissions tests, now called *vestibulares*. Those changes that came with this reform, however, were profound. In addition to passing the *vestibular*, students had to present proof that they had passed all subjects of the

gymnasium course offered by the School of Pedro II or the state schools matched to it. Students from the private sector had to take these tests at one of these state institutions as well (p. 160).

The decentralization of education was abolished and the federal government reclaimed control of the educational sector. "Universities lost their 'status' and their courses came to be offered in isolated or 'free' schools. 'Free' schools were subject to strict official governance, and they had to be didactically and administratively organized in a manner identical to that of official federal schools" (Oliveira, Vogt and Leffer, 2009, p. 7).

The Reform of Rocha Vaz in 1925 prohibited any and all political or ideological demonstrations, whether on the part of students or professors, in an attempt to contain the social and political crises that resulted in the revolution of 1930 (Cunha, 1980, p. 170; Oliveira, Vogt and Leffer, 2009, p. 7). This reform, like its predecessor, continued to restrict access to higher education. According to Cunha (2010) there was an intensification of the selective character of vestibular. He explained that

> According to the policy in place at the time, there were not a limited number of openings for admission into a given school. All students that were approved had the right to enroll. The reform of 1925 established that the director of each school had the duty to determine the number of available openings each year. As a result, students were enrolled according to their test classifications, until all openings were filled (p. 161).

According to some authors the positivist influence in Brazil was intensified during the end of the Empire and beginning of the Republic. Some say that this positivist influence was responsible for the delay in the creation of a university in the country. The positivists favored creating secular courses with a vocational/technical orientation (Mendonça, 2000, p. 135; Oliven, 2002, 26; Cunha, 2010, p. 156). It is important to mention that there was some resistance to this perspective. The creation of the Brazilian Academy of Sciences in 1916 and the Brazilian Association of Education in 1924 are examples of this resistance (Oliven, 2002, p. 27; Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 13).

The University of Rio de Janeiro, created in 1920, is considered by many authors the first university of Brazil (Decree 14,343, 7/12/1920). This institution was created by bringing together

courses from law, medicine and the polytechnic school. The bringing together of these institutions into a university, however, did not promote any real integration between them. There was no alteration in their curricula or their practices. They continued to be more focused on teaching than research, their courses maintained a vocational orientation and they remained essentially elitist organizations (Mendonça, 2000, p. 136; Neto, 2009, p. 10). Some argue that one of the reasons this university was created due to a visit from the king of Belgium, and resulting interest from the political class in granting him an honorary doctorate (Oliven, 2002, p. 26-27). The University of Minas Gerais, created in 1927, followed the same path of the first university: it was the result of an association of pre-existing institutions.

In relation to the number of institutions and students in the first republic, Melo, Santos and Andrade (2009) stated that

> Despite its oligarchic character, this was a fertile period for the expansion of higher education. From 1907 to 1933, the number of higher educational institutions increased from 25 to 338, with 17 universities. The number of students increased from 5,795 to 24,166[28]. However, despite this expansion, the level of schooling in the country was very low, with only 0.05% of the country's whole population (which was around 17 million) enrolled in higher education (p. 11).

The Brazilian Revolution of 1930 marked the end of the Old Republic. Subsequently, the Vargas Era began, a period between 1930 and 1945 in which Getúlio Vargas was in power. The Vargas Era comprised three political phases: the period of the Provisional Government (1930–1934), when Vargas governed as head of the Provisional Government; the period of the Constitution of 1934, when Vargas was elected by the Constituent Assembly and governed as President; and the Estado Novo period (1937–1945), that started when Vargas imposed an authoritarian Constitution in a coup d'état. If the previous period was defined by decentralization, during this time the central government proved again to be the primary actor to determine educational policies (Vieira and Farias, 2003; Durham, 2003, p. 197; Fávero, 2006, p. 23).

Soon after the beginning of his government, in 1930, President Getúlio Vargas created the

[28] Durham (2003) asserts that the total number of students in 1933 was 33,723.

Ministry of Education and Health. “This institution engaged in activities related to various governmental ministries, like health, sport, education and the environment. Before this, work related to education had been handed by the National Department of Education, which was part of the Ministry of Justice” (Retrieved from http://portal.mec.gov.br. 04/18/2013). Francisco Campos was named as the first minister of education, though he stayed in the position for less than a year. This tenure, however, was sufficient for him to implement a series of policies, such as passage of the Statute of Brazilian Universities, the creation of the University of Rio de Janeiro and the formation of the National Council on Education (Fávero, 2006, p. 23; Neto, 2009, p. 9).

In 1931 the Statute of Brazilian Universities was approved (Decree 19.851, passed on April 11), which remained in effect until 1961. According to Mendonça (2000), “the reforms embodied by the so-called Statute of Brazilian Universities brought with them a certain ambiguity, a result of the conciliatory character of this government project” (p. 137). This document was the first to contain regulations for the functioning and organization of universities. The document established that higher education would preferably be offered by the university system, though it could also be offered in isolated institutions (Vieira and Farias, 2003, p. 92). In terms of universities, these could be official, publically run institutions (whether federal, state or municipal in nature) or free/private schools. They should “also include three of the following courses: Law; Medicine; Engineering; Education, Sciences and Letters. These different courses or schools would be connected through a rectorship and administrative ties, though they would still maintain their legal autonomy” (Oliven, 2002, p. 27). In Mendonça’s (2000) perspective,

> The main innovation inherent in the statute was the possibility (though it was not mandatory) to include among the schools that would make up the university a school of education, sciences and letters, a somewhat hybrid institution that should include on one hand a focus on high culture or pure and unbiased science, and on the other hand be primarily an Educational Institute focused on the training of teachers, especially for the primary and secondary levels (p. 138).

In 1932, a group of Brazilian intellectuals that came to be known as the New Education Pioneers put forward a Manifesto to the People and the Government. This document, which was

important for the history of Brazilian education, defended the idea of a secular and free education offered by the State (Vieira and Farias, 2003, 93; Neto, 2009, p. 1). In this proposed educational reform, according to Mendonça (2000), the authors suggested the creation of "true" universities and defended the central focus that research should maintain in such institutions. The author explained that

> Speaking generally, these were the principles that informed the work developed by educators attached to this reformer group in two university settings. Namely, by a group of intellectuals at the University of São Paulo (known as USP, created in 1934) that were all affiliated with the newspaper O Estado de S. Paulo, including Fernando de Azevedo, and another group at the University of the Federal District (UDF), created by Anísio Teixeira in 1935 as part of a large push for reform he began while secretary of education in Rio de Janeiro (Mendonça, 2000, p. 138).

In 1934 the University of São Paulo was created, an important event in Brazilian higher education. To make this university possible, various traditional and independent schools were brought together: the School of Law; the School of Medicine; the School of Pharmacology and Dentistry (derived from the Free School of Pharmacology of São Paulo); the Polytechnic School; the Institute of Education (known since 1969 as the School of Education); the School of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters; the Institute of Economic and Commercial Sciences; the School of Veterinary Medicine (derived from the Veterinary Institute); the Luiz de Queiroz; and the School of Fine Arts (Retrieved from http://www5.usp.br/institucional/a-usp/historia/linha-do-tempo/. 04/18/2013). The School of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters was intended to function as an integrating hub for the rest of the university, around which all the other schools could orient themselves (Mendonça, 2000, p. 139). This institution counted on foreign researchers and professors, who principally came from Europe (Cunha, 1980, p. 241; Oliven, 2002, p. 30; Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009).

Another interesting institution that emerged in 1935 was the University of the Federal District (UDF). This university was created through a municipal decree by Anísio Teixeira, who at the time was the Director of Instruction in the Federal District. Anísio Teixeira was a student of John Dewey and a fervent defender of public schools that were secular in their orientation and free

for all. He supported stimulating the development of culture and the training of critical individuals through a higher educational institution that is autonomous and favorable for conducting unbiased studies. Scientific activity was important for this institution. However, because of its innovative character, the many attempts by the Catholic Church to resist the initiative, and the authoritarian government of the time, this institution was short-lived. It was made defunct by presidential decree in 1939 and its programs were transferred to the University of Brazil (UB), which was the new name given to the school previously known as the University of Rio de Janeiro (Mendonça, 2000, p. 139; Oliven, 2002, p. 28; Fávero, 2006, p. 25; Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 15).

As Mendonça summarized (2000), "the common idea behind USP and UDF was to have universities to train the elites that would, on the basis of their authoritative knowledge, know how to direct the nation (placing these universities, in a certain way, above the State). In the context of the New State (or *Estado Novo*), this was considered dangerous. The federal government was interested in having a monopoly on the training of these elites and for this reason it wanted to take custody of the university as an institution" (p. 140). In was in this context that Gustavo Capanema, then minister of education, proposed forming the University of Brazil in 1937. This institution was set up as Brazil's model university. "What model is this that was patterned in the UB? It was once again a model based on the university being a conglomerate of professional schools" (Mendonça, 2000, p. 140-141).

Fávero (2006) observed that the law which created the University of Brazil did not discuss autonomy at all. This law stipulated that "both the rector and the directors of teaching establishments would be chosen by the president of the Republic, from among those professors that are trained and named by commission" . The law went further to prohibit "university professors and students from sharing any opinion of a partisan political character or appearing at university functions wearing clothing supporting political parties" (p. 27). Later on, in 1945, a decree by law would give this university back its administrative, financial, didactic and disciplinary autonomy. Through analysis of university documents from that period, however, Fávero (2006) concluded that

such autonomy was never implemented (p. 28).

During the Vargas Era two constitutions were promulgated, one in 1934 and another in 1937. The constitution of 1934 was short lived. This document was meant to organize a democratic regime, and according to Vieira and Farias (2003) it was the first constitution to include a chapter devoted to education and culture. The authors highlighted how this constitution portrayed the clash between liberals and Catholics existing in Brazilian society. It included, for example, that it was a responsibility of the federal government to draw the guidelines of national education and establish the national education plan, providing among other things mandatory and free elementary education, as liberals wanted. On the other hand, it guaranteed the possibility of optional enrollment for students in religious education and assured tax-exempt status for free private educational institutions, both at the primary and professional level (p. 95). In terms of higher education, this constitution established that it was the federal government's responsibility to maintain secondary and higher education in the Federal District, as well as "determine conditions for official recognition of establishments focused on secondary and higher education, exercising a necessary supervisory role over such" (Art. 150, b and d).

The Constitution of 1937 was the first republican authoritarian constitution of Brazil. Fascist-inspired, it promoted a great centralization of power in the executive. In relation to education, the document reflected a clear setback if compared to the previous constitution. As Vieira and Farias (2003) explained, the role of the state in this area was secondary. Public education was conceived as an alternative for those who had no resources, and the government's priority was now pre-vocational and professional education (p. 97). There were no clear references to higher education.

It is important before continuing further to reference the creation of the National Student Union (UNE), a group that would have a strong participation in the fight for democratization of higher education in Brazil throughout the years. In fact, their political participation went beyond the walls of the university, and was connected to larger social movements both nationally and

internationally. In 1937 the first National Student Congress was held, with an agenda to debate political and social themes. It was during the second National Student Congress in 1938 that the UNE was formed. According to Durham (2003)

> This organization was not formed in the absence of the State, but rather was an initiative of the Vargas regime, which sought to copy in Brazil the corporate organizations of Italian fascism. This relationship guaranteed students financial resources and the power to dialogue with the State. This strange relationship with the State, however, did not result in the domestication or pacification of the movement. Much to the contrary, the organization was quite combative following in the Latin American tradition, and Brazilian students, like those from the other countries on the continent, tended to consider themselves to a degree the political, social and cultural vanguard of the nation, seeing themselves as spokespeople for popular interests (p. 202).

Cunha (2010) in fact says that the educational proposal of the students was completely different from the one implemented by the authoritarian government of Vargas. They defended a university open for all, the reduction of fees charged by the university, more autonomy for the universities in relation to the government, among other things (p. 169). Many of their claims were actually incorporated to an important reform of higher education that happened during the 1960s.

In relation to enrollment in higher education, Cunha (1989) explained that

> In 1945, Brazilian higher education consisted of five universities, in the strict sense, and 293 isolated institutions, with 27,253 total students enrolled. (...) After the multiplication of isolated schools that had occurred during the first three decades of the republican regime, growth in higher education seemed to stagnate. In 1932 there were 20,739 students in the whole country. As can be seen, growth was substantially reduced during the Vargas era, with a 31.4% drop in enrollment in 13 years, or a 2.4% drop on average each year (p. 15).

Brazilian higher education went through various periods of expansion and competition for enrollment, as a result of the demand for such and the formal ties that had been established between the public and private educational sectors (Sampaio, 2003, p. 144). This began in the end of the XIX century and reached its peak in the 1930s, when private institutions accounted for a significant number of offerings in higher education. Durham (2003) noted that "in 1933, when the first educational statistics were calculated, the results indicated that private institutions accounted for around 44% of enrollments and 60% of institutions of higher education" (p. 197).

In the 1940s the first Catholic universities arose in Brazil, many of which would come to have a strong position on the Brazilian national stage in higher education. In 1946 the first Catholic university was created in the country, the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, which brought together the Catholic School of Philosophy, the Catholic Law School and the Social Service School, all of which were based in what was then the Federal District. In the following year this institution was recognized as Pontifical. In 1946 the Catholic Pontifical University of São Paulo was founded, and in 1948 the Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul was established, which was also made Pontifical two years afterwards. After this time, other similar institutions were established in Brazil.

The period from 1945, when Vargas was deposed, to 1964, when a new dictatorship was installed in Brazil, has been given various different denominations: the Second Republic, the Populist Republic, the Period of Redemocratization, among others. Vieira and Farias (2003) believe that "another term that would adequately describe this period would be limited democracy, as at this time the country oscillated between moments of lesser and greater political openness, without ever reaching full democracy" (p. 103-104). Brazil had eight presidents during this time, some of them governing for a very brief period: Eurico Gaspar Dutra (1946-1951); Getúlio Vargas (1951-1954); Café Filho (8/1954-11/1955); Carlos Luz (11/8 to 11/1955); Nereu Ramos (11/1955-1/1956); Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961); Jânio Quadros (1961); and João Goulart (1961-1964).

With regard to education during this period, as Vieira and Farias (2003) mentioned, conservative and liberal tendencies coexisted, expressed in the Constitution of 1946 (p. 110). This document established that the federal government was responsible for legislating the guidelines and bases of national education (Art. 5, XV, d). In relation to higher education, it pointed out as principles that: "for the provision of professorships, in official secondary schools and official or free higher educational institutions, there must be competition using titles and evidence. For those professors admitted through such competition, tenure will be assured" (Art. 168, VI) and "the program's liberty guaranteed" (Art. 168, VII).

The creation of the Aeronautical Technical Institute (ITA) in 1947 was another important

event in Brazilian higher education. This institution, which is recognized to this day for the quality of its work in both teaching and research, represented a first step in the process of modernizing Brazilian higher education and utilized an innovative model of academic organization inspired by universities in the United States (Mendonça, 2000, p. 143; Cunha, 2010, p. 173). As Cunha (2010) wrote, "the most innovative characteristics of this institution were its absence of lifetime professorships, its departmental organization, its graduate offerings, and the exclusive dedication of its faculty to teaching and research through a flexible curriculum" (p. 173).

Mendonça (2000) underscored that the Brazilian scientific community flourished and started to organize itself. In 1948 the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science (SBPC) was founded, as was the Brazilian Center for Physical Research (CBPF) in 1949. In 1951, two important institutions that supported the development of research and grant fellowships for students to earn their masters and PhDs in Brazil and abroad were created: the National Research Council, now called the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq), and the Campaign for Professional Development at the Tertiary Level, now called the Coordination of Professional Development at the Tertiary Level (CAPES) (p. 143). During the 1950s several measures were adopted to facilitate access to higher education. First, there was a "progressive lowering of rates charged by public universities, which in the early 1950s reached the point of being completely free" (Cunha, 1989, p. 89). This in part contributed to higher enrollment of middle class students in public higher educational institutions; however, other barriers to their participation remained.

The educational policy that was in place during the *New State*, as Cunha (1989) explained, "created a dual structure for secondary education, with a secondary branch that would lead directly and indirectly to higher education and professional branches whose diplomas wouldn't allow students to enroll in higher education" (p. 77). In a way it was possible for students enrolled in the professional branches to apply to higher education programs, but first they needed to fulfill additional requirements. Even after doing so they were restricted in the programs to which they

could apply.

In order to overcome these barriers to higher education, several laws were put forward that sought to equalize secondary schools and professional programs. These so-called "equivalence laws" are: Law 1,076 (03/1950), "which assured those who graduated from commercial, industrial or agricultural programs in the first cycle of secondary school the right to enroll in classical and scientific courses (the second cycle of secondary school), with the established restriction that such students must pass exams in those secondary-level subjects they did not receive during the first cycle"; Law 1,821 (03/1953), which facilitated enrollment in the classical or scientific tracks during the second cycle of secondary school "to those who completed the first cycle of normal school (a teacher training program), as well as those who completed training courses for the military police, both those working with the states and in the Federal District"; and Law 3,104 (1957), which "extended to graduates of the official military police training courses (specifically, those programs that maintained attendance in middle school as a pre-requisite) the right to apply to any higher education program" (Cunha, 1989, p. 78-80).

The decade of the 1960s saw important changes in Brazilian higher education. From the beginning of the decade the theme of university reform was on the agenda, whether in student meetings organized by the National Student Union (UNE) or within the Ministry of Education (Mendonça, 2000, p. 145-146). Students, who had been organized nationally since the end of the 1930s, petitioned for more access to higher education, especially in public universities. "This pressure began to see results in the beginning of the 1960s, when enrollment rates increased" (Durham, 2003, p. 201).

In 1961 the University of Brasília (UnB) was founded, an innovative project that arrived on the heels of the founding of the new Brazilian capital in 1960. The founding of this institution showed that the process of modernizing higher education, which had begun with the founding of ITA (as mentioned earlier), was continuing and intensifying. According to Cunha (2010), UnB was founded for two reasons: first, it was designed to maintain and train a reserve of highly trained

specialists for the recently installed bureaucratic government in Brasília. Second, it was intended to push forward a modern university paradigm within Brazilian higher education. As Cunha (2010) mentions, UnB taught in many more subject areas than the previously established ITA (p. 175). Mendonça (2000) explained that the structure of UnB "was composed of central institutions and individual schools that were organized into departments. The institutes offered two or three years of introductory courses, which was then complemented by more specialized training in the individual schools or departments. Above and beyond this, the institutes were also responsible for research training courses and graduate-level offerings" (p. 144). Mendonça (2000) also confirmed that UnB was built very rapidly, with a very high quality faculty (p. 145).

The early 1960s also witnessed the introduction of the first Law of Directions and Fundamentals for National Education (the LDB, or Law 4,024, passed December 20, 1961). The passage of this law, according to several scholars focused in this area, was a powerful victory for private interests at the expense of public educational institutions (Cunha, 1989; Vieira e Farias, 2003; Durham, 2003; Cunha, 2007). Several of the laws' articles provide evidence for this assertion: in the second article of the law it is defined that "education is a right of all and will be given in the home and in the school," with the following clarification in this single-paragraph article that "it is up to the family to decide the type of education to provide for its children". This phrasing provides an opening for private institutions, as the clause that the family should be able to decide the education its children receive implies that there should be alternatives to state education. In two following articles (the fourth and fifth) which fall under the heading "on freedom of education," the defense of private interests becomes even more explicit. In the fourth article "it is assured to all, by law, the right to teach and transmit knowledge" and in the fifth article "it is assured to both public and private legally authorized teaching establishments that such institutions will have adequate representation on state educational boards, and notification of all studies conducted by such entities (whatever their purpose)".

The LDB of 1961 introduced some changes to higher education, two of which shall be addressed here: the creation of the Federal Education Council and the consolidation of the so-called "equivalence laws."

As the National Education Council (or CNE, created through decree 19.850/1931) had been made defunct, the LDB of 1961 created the Federal Education Council (CFE) as a substitute. The old CNE had been created as a "consulting arm of the Ministries of Education and Public Health, focused on subjects related to teaching" (1st Article). When it was removed and replaced later by the CFE, the role of the institution changed considerably. Among the 16 responsibilities attributed to the group by law were: governance of higher education institutions (including isolated units as well as federal and private institutions), and recognition of universities, pending approval of their statutes and (in the case of isolated higher education institutions) their establishments (9th Article, parts a, b). Although these acts were dependent on the ratification of the Minister of Education and Culture (9th Article, 1st §), one cannot deny the power that had been delegated to the CFE. It was then up to the Minister of Education and Culture at the time to "supervise the observance of education laws and the decisions made by the Federal Education Council" (7th Article). Cunha (2007) analyzed this change from the CNE to CFE:

> The systemic structures of education provided by the first LDB favored private interests by given to education councils (both at the federal and state levels) important competencies that were previously given to holders of executive positions. The members of these councils, named by the President of the Republic and state governors, tended to be chosen under pressure from the private sector. On the other hand, these councilmembers became exposed to diverse pressures and temptations. That said, as these councils divided and decentralized decision-making power, it became harder to resist pressures and the appeal of private educational institutions (p. 812).

Another provision of the LDB that greatly impacted higher education was Article 36, which included several guidelines for curriculum in secondary education. The third § of this article says that "secondary courses will have legal equivalence and will entitle graduates to furtherance of their studies". According to Cunha (1989), the LDB of 1961 was the last in a series of partial measures intended to "facilitate, directly or indirectly, student candidacy for higher education," which

according to this author, means it could be considered "the true equivalence law" (p. 82). From this point on, graduates of any secondary course could enroll in any higher education course.

However, while some barriers to higher education were removed with the LDB, others remained. Although the law allowed all secondary graduates to enroll in *vestibular* courses, "the chances of passing such courses were unequally distributed," with those graduating from secondary schools whose curriculum "was all focused on continuing one's studies" having a much more favorable chance of passing (Cunha, 1989, p. 83). In this way, "the *vestibular* exams became a large, visible wall obstructing middle-class students' path to a tertiary degree," and those efforts that were put forward to facilitate access to higher education began to focus on support for these exams (Cunha, 1989, p. 84).

Another effort from this period intended to facilitate access to higher education was the CFE's interpretation of the LDB with reference to the *vestibula*r. This council adhered to a "principle of non-interference in *vestibular* exams, preferring to have the procedures and content associated with such be determined by individual institutions of higher education" (Cunha, 1989, p. 84). The council also recommended "that *vestibular* exams be used to classify candidates according to the limited openings of each course" (Cunha, 1989, p. 86), but after negative reactions from the Ministry of Education (or MEC) and university professors, this recommendation was rescinded. In its place, the council proposed "creating criteria for qualifying students for higher education as well as enrolling them in particular courses" through the *vestibular* (Cunha, 1989, p. 86). At this time (and before the passage of the LDB), a serious problem had been the "leftovers:" students that had passed the *vestibular* but were not enrolled for lack of openings. It should be remembered that some institutions had combined their *vestibular* exams, a policy that was applied nationally in the reform of 1968 (Cunha, 1989, p. 88-89).

Between 1945 and 1964, many isolated higher education institutions were integrated into the larger system and became universities. In 1964, as Cunha (1989) clarified, 65% of enrollments were in institutions classified as universities. At the same time a number of public institutions at the state

and municipal level, as well as some private institutions, were federalized. Enrollments during this period increased considerably, with 27,253 students in 1945 and 142,386 students in 1964, "or in other words, a linear annual increase of 12.5%. It was the expansion of enrollment in existing public institutions, as well as the creation of new public institutions, that accounted for most of this growth" (Cunha, 1989, p. 93).

In 1964 Brazil was devastated by a new military dictatorship, which remained in place until 1985. With regards to higher education, this political regime took contradictory steps. On one hand, the regime intervened violently in university settings, with the placement of interveners, the firing and imprisonment of professors, the disbanding of the student movement, and the banning of books, among other things (Durham, 2003, p. 204; Melo, Santos and Andrade, 2009, p. 19). On the other hand, the regime implemented one of the most important reforms in Brazilian higher education, which partially included the demands of the academic community. As Mendonça (2000) affirmed, "it was not possible for the government to control the process of transforming the university, if not for pressure from the middle class to increase enrollment (...) as well as the government's own needs for its plan for economic modernization" (p. 147).

Urban population growth, industrialization, the redefinition of the role of women in society and the raising of educational requirements for many available positions in the workforce contributed to the growing demand for higher education, which had already been steadily increasing since the 1940s (Cunha, 1988, p. 86). As Cunha (1988) stated, the military government put in place in 1964 was not indifferent to this demand, both because the middle classes that had supported the coup wanted reform, and because of the many popular demands for such at this time (p. 88). Because of these pressures (according to Cunha [1988]), the MEC persuaded federal universities to increase their openings for enrollment.

The effort to create openings to satisfy this increasing demand was not restricted to the public sector. Cunha and Góes (2002) noted that during this period transfers increased, which moved public students to private institutions, even if such transfers were not open or transparent.

According to Cunha and Góes (2002), in the case of higher education, "this same transfer policy allowed the private institutions taking these students to receive their corresponding student scholarships, residencies and grants" (p. 42).

The end of the 1960s was notable for a series of policy changes that began a process of significant university reform and expansion throughout Brazil. Some scholars asserted that this reform was responsible for the emergence of the university in Brazil, with a philosophy based in German idealism and an organizational model based on the North American university system (Cunha, 1988, p. 11 and p. 18). Durham (2003) explains that this reform "incorporated the demands of the student movement that coincided with the academic consensus of the time, which was highly regarded by researchers in the Ministry of Education who were strongly influenced by the North American model" (p. 205).

The university reform of 1968, officially called Law number 5,540 (28th of November, 1968), was preceded by the passing of two Law-Decrees (Number 53 on November 18, 1966, and Number 252 on February 28, 1967) that brought profound changes to higher education. In truth, these decrees included many of the innovations that would become part of the larger reform of 1968. In Law-Decree Number 53 (in 1966), which "determines organizational principles and norms for federal universities and provides other arrangements", several of the most relevant changes of the law of 1968 are included, such as a prohibition of using duplicate means for identical purposes; the inseparability of teaching and research; the separation of professional teaching and research in distinct units; the removal of schools of philosophy, sciences and letters; and a suspension of guarantees of tenure, continued employment and stability for public employees of federal universities (Trindade, 2004, p. 829). In turn, Law-Decree Number 252 (in 1967) established similar norms to its predecessor, Law-Decree Number 53. Number 252 "made departments into the smallest portion of the university structure, whose chairpersons should be tenured faculty. These chairpersons, together as a group, constituted the departmental council of each institution" (Trindade, 2004, p. 829).

Anísio Teixeira was one of the educators who participated extensively in criticism of the reform project formulated at that time. In the various publications he wrote and circulated on the subject, according to Cunha (1988) his primary argument was focused on "denouncing a reform process for Brazilian higher education that came through legislation, without transparency regarding the legislative process that could exist in Brazil, as well as other countries" . In the words of Cunha (1988), "this process of 'legalistic' reform began with Law-Decrees Number 53 (from 1966) and 252 (from 1967), and continued with the drafts of the higher education reform law written by the Working Group of 1968" (p. 308).

As Mendonça (2000) affirmed, Law 5,540 in 1968 made the university the ideal form of higher educational organization, and made the teaching, research and outreach functions of these institutions inseparable. From Mendonça's (2000) perspective, "from then on, universities, especially public ones, (...) began to be consolidated. Though they were still somewhat irregular in the aggregate, they were all helped significantly (...) by the institutionalization of the teaching profession, and even more so by the definitive creation of graduate courses" (p. 148).

Although the 1968 reform emphasized the university as the model of the development of higher education, speaking practically the decades that followed saw proliferation of non-university institutions of higher education (Mendonça, 2000, p. 148; Oliveira and Dourado, 2005, p. 57). In Vieira's (2005) words,

> The organizational structure defined by the university reform of 1968 was based on the contemporary structure of the university, which was oriented around the principle that teaching and research are inseparable. This legislation, however, was not able to stop a strong trend towards heterogeneity throughout the higher educational system. On one hand, there are the first-tier institutions that are in sync with the university pattern: federal universities, some state-level ones (especially those in São Paulo) and some private schools. On the other hand, you had the second-tier schools, most of which were private, which only offered teaching (without research), which was often low in quality. While this whole system was governed by the same legislation, it contained profound internal differentiations (p. 18).

Some scholars argue that the 1968 reform was responsible for the disorganized expansion of private higher education. It is important to highlight, however, that "it was not the reform which

was responsible for such rampant expansion, but rather the policy for authorizing courses that was adopted by various governing bodies, particularly the Federal Education Council" (Vieira, 2005, p. 19).

In the beginning of the 1960s, Brazil had 93,202 students enrolled in higher education, 55.7% of which were in public schools and 44.3% of which were in private institutions. Until 1964, the number of public enrollments continued to rise, with public enrollments making up 61.6% of total enrollment in 1964. After that year, this level of participation slowly declined, until at the end of that decade only 52.1% of students were in public institutions, which is slightly less than at the start of the decade. During this entire period, aggregate enrollments continually rose. In 1968, the higher growth rate of enrollment among both private and public is reached at around 30.7%.

It is important to note here that during the military dictatorship the so-called Brazilian economic miracle occurred, which was a period of significant economic growth. According to Durham (2003), this economic prosperity, along with the middle class support for the military regime, help to explain why Brazilian higher education grew during the dictatorship, which was the opposite of what occurred in other Latin American countries like Argentina and Chile (p. 208).

In the 1970s, the impact of the policies adopted in the previous decade began to be felt more profoundly. During this period, which is known as the first great cycle of expansion for higher education, there was a notable increase in higher education enrollment, both in the public and (even more so) in the private sector.

Over the course of the 1970s, tertiary enrollment grew from 425,478 students in 1970 to 1,311,799 students in 1979. During this period, while enrollment in first-tier institutions more than doubled, enrollment in second-tier schools nearly quadrupled. The public sector, which until the 1960s dominated higher education, lost ground to the private sector. In 1970, the private sector accounted for 50.5% of enrollment, a number that continued to grow steadily over the decade, reaching 64.8% in 1979.

Private institutions not only came to account for the majority of enrolled students, but they also experienced considerable changes. Aside from the traditional non-profit religious schools, a large number of for-profit institutions were created. These institutions, or educational companies chose primarily to offer undergraduate courses in isolated higher educational institutions (Ximenes, 2003, p. 73; Durham, 2003, p. 192). During this time frame, the so-called "new" Brazilian higher education emerged (Martins, 1998). As Martins (1998) explained, "these new private institutions that arose in the 1970s came to organized their academic activities primarily around earning money and accumulating capital" (p. 39).

The 1980s, in contrast to previous decades, was marked by stagnation in growth relative to higher education, in the public sector and more particularly among private institutions. This slowing of enrollment growth was a consequence of a significant economic crisis that hit the country during this time, ending the so-called Brazilian economic miracle that occurred in the 1970s[29]. Not only Brazil, but all of Latin America was immersed in economic recession during this time, a fact which has led the 1980s to be referred to in Latin American history as the "lost decade."

This economic crisis that hit the country had the immediate consequence of slowing enrollment growth in higher education, as the data from this period show. In 1980 Brazil witnessed highest enrollment of the decade, with enrollments increasing 5% from the previous year. In 1989, this growth from the previous year slowed to 1%. In 1984 and 1985, for the first time (at least since the early 1960s) enrollment rates showed a negative trend (-2.7% and -2.3%, respectively), both in the public (-0.8% and -2.7%) and private sectors (-4.0% and -2.0%). Aside from the economic crisis and the resulting enrollment reduction in higher education that have already been mentioned, it cannot be confirmed that the financial support for the IFES was reduced during this period[30]. As Velloso (1994) pointed out, the budgetary support for the federal university system (commonly

[29] Particularly for private tertiary institutions, Sousa (2006) argues that their process of expansion was limited by legal factors. The author notes several decrees from this period suspending or prohibiting the creation of new courses (p. 153).

[30] This is a frequent argument in the literature, as illustrated in the work of Braga (1989), who argues that the lessened financial resources for maintaining public institutions and the relative drop off of enrollment in higher education are the most visible manifestations of the financial crisis of the 1980s.

referred to as IFES) dropped between 1980 and 1984, but in 1985 the budget reached the same level it held in 1980 and then progressively grew. In fact, in 1989 the budget doubled in size from the beginning of the decade[31].

In the 1980s, the public sector experienced modest growth in its representation of total tertiary enrollment, from 35.7% in 1981 to 38.5% in 1989. Over the same period, the private sector dropped from accounting for 64.3% of total enrollment to 61.5%. This slight reduction relative to the private sector, however, did not compromise its continued significant presence in higher education.

The early 1990s, in addition to the effects of the so-called lost decade, also experienced stagnation in tertiary enrollment growth. However, the need to expand access to higher education was recognized by the public pronouncements of the government of the time. This expansion, as will be seen later on, actually occurred throughout the 1990s, although the reasons for this expansion are debatable.

Within the administration of President Fernando Collor de Mello, expanding access to higher education was put forward as one of his five action items for education as a whole. As Corbucci (2004) noted, "if the Collor government defended, through its rhetoric, expanding openings for enrollment in public institutions, from the beginning of its administration its actions favored expansion in private institutions" (p. 680). According to Corbucci (2004), this position was obstructed by the then-called Federal Education Council (CFE), which at the time was responsible for recognizing and credentialing higher educational institutions.

When various groups pushed to impeach President Collor, the government was handed over to then-vice president Itamar Franco. During the Franco administration the Federal Education Council was disbanded and recognized as the National Education Council (or CNE) (MP n. 661 of 1994, converted into Law n. 9,131 of 1995). The new CNE was given "normative, deliberative and other responsibilities focused on providing assistance to the State Minister of Education and Sport"

[31] What happened in the 1980s relative to the IFES' budget in a change in the nature of expenditures. In 1980, personnel costs accounted for 85% of the total budget, while capital and other expenditures accounted for 15%. In 1989, the former represented 96% of total expenditures, while the latter only accounted for 4% (Velloso, 1994).

(Article 7). There are those that argue that this change created a more welcoming climate for the following administration of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, which was then able to delegate the primary responsibility for expanding higher education to the private sector (Corbucci, 2004).

Fernando Henrique Cardoso only had one education minister during his two terms (from 1995 to 2002), Paulo Renato de Souza. In an article on education during the Cardoso administration, an advisor to Paulo Renato de Souza that served during his entire administration affirms that the university was a secondary priority in education at that time (Castro, 2010, p. 270). In Castro's (2010) words, the minister's strategy was to "promote basic education and avoid accidents in higher education" (p. 271). The biggest policy change relative to higher education during this period was the creation of the *Provão* (or "big test") in 1995, which was an exam administered to all graduates to assess the quality of their instruction.

Additionally, there was an increase in enrollment in both the public and private sectors during the Cardoso administration. The federal public sector, despite having its funding significantly reduced during these eight years, created approximately 164,000 new openings on classroom courses during the same period. This expansion, however, was driven more by the efforts of federal higher education institutions than by any explicit federal government policy. To offer a comparison, the following administration of President Lula created approximately 267,000 classroom course openings in federal universities during its eight-year tenure. The private sector during the Cardoso administration, however, more than doubled its openings during that period, offering more than a million new slots. During the Lula administration, the private sector created approximately the same number of new openings. A number of factors combined were what led to such enrollment growth during the Cardoso administration, especially in the private sector. Among these factors, perhaps the most prominent were as follows: an increase in demand for openings; the easing of the legislature in allowing the founding of new types of higher education courses and institutions, which was balanced by a key focus on quality evaluation; and the reduction of the budget for the public sector. Each of these factors will be briefly explored here.

As has been argued throughout this study, an increase in demand for positions by prospective students is a recurring theme in the history of Brazilian higher education. Oliveira and Catani (2006) make the following argument in their analysis of changes in enrollment in secondary and tertiary education in the 1990s and early 2000s:

> It can be seen that the rhythm of accelerated growth, at this moment, is set by higher education. However, the significantly higher number of open positions for students in secondary education makes it so that a portion of secondary graduates have no place in higher education. It is this fact which creates tension in terms of systemic expansion and tends to stir things up over the following years, as the number of secondary graduates continues to be higher than before (p. 8-9).

The improvement in terms of statistics relative to secondary school completion over the last few decades, as well as the gradual expansion of access to secondary school (both of which are associated with society's increasing demands for a trained workforce), resulted in increased pressure for access to higher education. As will be seen hereafter, responses to this demand came without delay.

In the second year of the Cardoso administration, a second Law of Directions and Fundamentals for National Education was put forward (Law 9,394, ratified on December 20, 1996). This law, which had a profound impact on the organization of the entire school system, included some changes for higher education. Several of these changes will be discussed here, namely: regulation of provisions in the 1988 constitution about the possibility for for-profit educational institutions to be created; deregulation of the possible types of higher education institutions and courses and the introduction of a governmental mechanism for evaluation of higher education quality.

As Cunha (2007) asserted, the LDB of 1996 "formalized, for the first time in Brazilian legislation, the possibility for private for-profit educational institutions, which were strictly defined as being separate from previously existing non-profit private institutions (that were community-based, religious or philanthropic in nature)" (p. 816). However, the precedent for this change was found in the 1988 federal constitution. Until that time, education had been a concession of the state,

and could not be offered in a for-profit setting. The inclusion in the constitution of the principle of "co-existence of public and private educational institutions" (Art. 206, III) and the specification that "education is open to private initiative" so long as it is "authorized to function through an evaluation of its quality by the government" (Art. 209, II), "ended up replacing the funding role of government with one focused on authorization and quality evaluation" (Cury, 2003, p. 475). The LDB of 1996 simply removed this guideline, adding that self-financing is one of the conditions private institutions must fulfill (Art. 7, III).

For Oliveira and Catani (2006), entrepreneurship in education (which had already long existed) increased after the passage of the 1988 constitution and the LDB of 1996 (p. 60). The impact of this change that came with the new LDB materialized quickly: private institutions organized as for-profit "made a great deal of headway compared to non-profit private institutions (community-based, religious and philanthropic), accounting for 39% of all private enrollment in 1997 and 52% in 2002" (Pinto, 2004, p. 740).

The deregulation of types of institutions and courses that can be created is another topic worthy of discussion. The discussion of this deregulation here will focus on the content of articles 44, 45 and 80 of the LDB of 1996[32].

The coverage of higher education courses and programs is determined by Article 44 of the LDB of 1996[33]. Above and beyond traditional undergraduate, graduate and extension courses, this article addresses "sequential courses by field of study, with differing levels of coverage, open to candidates that meet institutional pre-requisites"[34]. These sequential courses came out of the CNE

[32] Pinto (2004) mentions several innovations in how higher education enrollment openings are offered: namely, the creation of sequential courses (Art. 44) and the possibility for higher education distance learning (Art. 80) (p. 741). Sousa (2006) argues that a concern with the need to expand the higher education system is expressed in articles 44 and 45 of the LDB, "to the degree that through them the existence of other types of institutions that could become responsible for new types of tertiary instruction was made possible" (p. 169). As Souza (2006) argues, diversification of institutions and courses is one of the strategies used by developed countries in order to more fully democratize access to education.

[33] Article 44 was ratified by Decree n. 3,860, passed on July 9, 2001. It discusses higher educational organization, evaluation for courses and institutions, and other issues. This decree, in turn, was revoked by Decree n. 5,773, passed on May 9, 2006, which discusses the exercise of regulatory, supervisory and evaluatory functions for higher education institutions, tertiary courses, and sequential courses in the federal education system.

[34] Law n. 11,632 (passed in 2007) inserted the expression "as long as they have completed secondary school or the equivalent" to this item.

in 1998, as developed by then-counselor Jacques Velloso. As one can see, these courses reflect "legislators' preoccupation with the flexibility which should be enjoyed by educational systems and institutions, in their organizational structures and areas of responsibility" (Resolution n. 672, 1998, p. 2). This reporter believed that a lack of specific guidelines for sequential courses represented an invitation for educational institutions to be innovative and open the way for more systemic diversification.

From the perspective of Ximenes (2003), the creation of sequential courses represented "a first try in the 1990s at diversifying and expanding Brazilian higher education" (p. 89). These courses "represent an alternative for those that want training that is fast and focused on the job market" (Ximenes, 2003, p. 90). As much as this type of so-called fast job market training is an easy target for many critiques from scholars of higher education, speaking practically society demands professionals with this type of training, just as much as it demands college graduates and academics. This is a policy change that has surely offered new alternatives for increasing private higher education options. It is thus not an accident that spokespeople for private interests point to these sequential courses as "one of the most important and significant innovations" of the LDB of 1996 (Neiva e Collaço, 2006, p. 127).

Next, Article 45 [35] specified that "higher education would be administered in higher education institutions, whether public or private, with varying degrees of coverage and specialization" . This possibility of having institutions with different degrees of coverage/specialization seems to fit within the larger trend towards innovation that was seen earlier with sequential courses. So as to regulate these and other articles of the LDB, the federal government sent out Decree n. 2,306, on August 19, 1997. That Decree, in its 8th article, established

[35] Article 45 was ratified by Decree n. 2,207, passed on April 15, 1997 (which regulates, for the Federal Education System, the provisions contained in Articles 19, 20, 45, 46 and § 1, 52, single paragraph, 54 and 88 of Law n. 9,394, passed on November 20, 1996, and handles other issues). This Decree was later revoked by successive decrees, namely Decree n. 2,306, passed on August 19, 1997 (which regulates, for the Federal Education System, the provisions contained in Article 10 of the provisional n. 1,477-39, passed on August 8, 1997, and Articles 16, 19, 20, 45, 46 and § 1º, 52, single paragraph, 54 and 88 of Law n. 9,394, passed on December 20, 1996, and handles other issues); Decree n. 3,860, passed on July 9, 2001 (which discusses higher educational organization, evaluation for courses and institutions, and other issues); Decree n. 5,773, passed on May 09, 2006 (which discusses the exercise of regulatory, supervisory and evaluatory functions for higher education institutions, tertiary courses, and sequential courses in the federal education system).

that Higher Education Institutions within the Federal Education System could be classified using the following titles, in terms of their academic organization: universities, university centers, integrated colleges, colleges, and tertiary institutes or schools[36].

The innovation here is the creation of a new academic organizational model, the university centers. These were defined as "higher education institutions with multiple curricula, covering one or more disciplines, that are characterized by the excellence of the instruction offered, as verified by the quality of their faculty and the academic working conditions offered to the university community" (Art. 12). University centers had autonomy to create new courses without needing to create research institutes, as was the case with universities. In terms of the logic of the market, Pinto (2004) argued that this model has a higher cost/benefit ratio, at least in the short term (p. 740). According to Schwartzman and Schwartzman (2002), "the private sector already saw that university centers were a more appropriate option for their financial situation" (p. 22).

The effects of this legislative change did not take long to appear. According to Pinto (2004), between 1994 and 2002 one can see a progressive reduction in participation in isolated and integrated colleges as a portion of private tertiary enrollment, while at the same time noting a slight increase in students at universities and an explosion within university centers.

Lastly, Article 80[37] determined that "the government would incentivize the development and placement of distance education programs, at all educational levels and involving all teaching modalities, including continuing education" . From that point on, distance education (which had previously only been permitted in primary or secondary settings) began to also be implemented in higher education.

If deregulation of higher education offerings seems to have typified the new LDB, evaluation of instructional quality represented the other side of the coin (Durham, 2003). Another innovation within the LDB of 1996 had to do with the introduction of a regular process of

[36] This decree was revoked by Decree n. 3,860 (passed on July 9, 2001), which was in turn revoked by Decree n. 5,773 (passed on May 9, 2006). According to this last decree, which is still in force, higher education institutions can be credentialed as universities, university centers or colleges (Art. 12).

[37] Regulated by Decree n. 5,622, passed on December 19, 2005 (Regulates article 80 of Law n. 9,394, passed on December 20, 1996, which established the guidelines and bases for national education).

evaluations of undergraduate courses and higher education institutions themselves, with their respective credentialing and re-credentialing being dependent on these evaluations (Durham, 2003, p. 23).

Along with an increased demand for higher education, during the 1990s one could also note a progressive reduction in resources dedicated to maintaining federal higher education institutions. This led to serious difficulties within these institutions, reflected "in the precariousness of the faculty and the deterioration of infrastructural working conditions" (Martins, 2006, p. 1013).

Corbucci (2004) summarized the situation this way:

> The higher education expenditures of the MEC, in particular those intended for maintenance of the federal university system, were systematically audited throughout the 1990s. Also, their cost structure was significantly changed, in that costs went up for inactive and pension recipients, limiting the amount of money that could be spent on active personnel and infrastructure. By strangling the IFES' ability to grow, the stage was set for the growth of the private sector (p. 681).

In this context, in which demand for higher education was increasing, new alternative courses and institutional structures were being created, and public funding for higher education was reduced, private enterprise found a great deal of room to expand. The statistics from this period are telling in this regard. In the early 1990s, higher education appeared in the official statistics to be a largely private enterprise, with this situation only worsening near the end of the decade. In terms of enrollment, the public sector increased from 578,625 students in 1990 to 832,022 in 1999. The private sector also grew from 961,455 students to 1,537,923 over the same time period. While growth in public sector enrollment was 43.8%, enrollment constituted 60% in the private sector. At the end of the decade, 35.1% of college students were enrolled in public schools, while 64.9% were students of private institutions.

In the beginning of the XXI century the National Education Plan, or PNE, was published (Law n. 10,172, passed on January 9, 2001), building on the 1988 constitution and LDB of 1996 that came before it[38]. The plan established guidelines, objectives and goals to be followed by all

[38] According to the Constitution of 1988 "the national education plan will be established by law, for decennial periods, with the objective of guiding the national education system through collaboration and defining guidelines, objectives,

educational levels and modalities, and was in place for 10 years after its publication. With reference to higher education, the PNE was based on a recognition of gradually increasing secondary graduation rates and an expected increase in demand for higher education (Plano et al., 2000, p. 84). The PNE also mentioned the low level of access which most of the Brazilian population had to higher education, which also implied a need for expansion (p. 87).

Based on these facts, the PNE included objectives and goals directly related to the challenge of expanding Brazilian higher education, as well as several objectives that indirectly led to that end. Of these objectives and goals, the following section will discuss several of them, namely the objectives to "expand, by the end of the decade, enrollment in higher education to at least 30% of 18 to 24 year olds (the first stated objective); establish an expansion policy that would diminish inequalities in access for different regions of the country (the third stated objective); establish an interactive distance education system, using such to increase chances to participate in classroom-based courses, as well as regular courses and continuing education offerings (the fourth stated objective); diversify the higher education system, favoring and valuing non-university establishments that offer quality instruction and serve clients with specific training needs, like technology, professional training, new job skills, teacher training or general studies (the tenth stated objective); and diversify instructional offerings, incentivizing the creation of night courses with innovative proposals, offering sequential or modular courses with certification, permitting more flexibility in training and expansion of instructional programs (the thirteenth stated objective)".

The PNE recognized the ability of the private sector to attend to growing demand for higher education in the country, "so long as it guaranteed quality". It also pointed out, though, that "maintenance of typical university activities, like teaching, research and extension, that provide necessary support for the scientific, technological and cultural development of the country, will not be possible without strengthening the public sector" (Plano, 2000, p. 87).

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oals and implementation strategies to assure the maintenance and development of education at its various levels, stages and modalities" (Art. 214, Constitutional Amendment n. 59, from 2009; translated from the original Portuguese). The first PNE was in effect from 2001 to 2010. A bill with the new PNE for 2011 to 2020 was sent by the federal government to the National Congress in 12/15/2010. This document, however, has not turned into law.

Among the objectives and goals in the document, though, none supported this guideline to strengthen the public sector. The only objective pointing in that direction was one which proposed "expanding public sector university offerings so as to assure that they account for no less than 40% of all open slots for enrollment, working in partnership with the states to create new higher educational institutions". This objective, however, was vetoed by the president, based on the argument that this amendment was not in accordance with the constitution[39].

As Pacheco and Ristoff noted (2004),

> It is important to note that the expansion supported in the PNE was originally supposed to be associated with a significant increase in public spending on education, with the hope that such spending would reach a minimum of 7%. "For this, funds should be increased annually at 0.5% of PIB in the first for years and at 0.6% in the fifth year." As this goal was vetoed by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso, the government's ability to increase openings for students was seriously compromised, which led that expansion to be almost exclusively up to and dependent on market forces (p. 8).

Despite the fact that many critics say that during Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government there was a continuation of neoliberal policies implemented during FHC's government, in practice this does not hold true in the area of education, and of higher education in particular. The private sector continued to grow and there were federal policies to support this process, but the public sector received financial support to increase and innovate again. The government also tried to introduce a new conception of evaluation of higher education, moving from the implementation of one exam to students, the *Provão,* to the creation of a National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES), which includes the evaluation of students, courses, and also institutions.

During the first term of Lula's government there was a strong debate coordinated by the Ministry of Education to implement a specific law for higher education[40]. Durham (2005b) noted that the previous government had extremely favorable conditions for such a discussion that could lead to higher education reform and chose not to engage in such. He argued that the then-current

[39] According to the justification put forward for the veto, there was not "in the Multiyear Plan (PPA), or the Budgetary Law, plans to increase openings in public institutions in the education levels proposed, as that proposal, due to the immediate impact it had, was shown to be incompatible with the constitution, as well as the guidelines of the Fiscal Responsibility Law " (Plano et al., 2000, p. 190).

[40] Nogueira (2008) does a detailed description and analysis of this process.

Lula government accepted such a challenge. Truthfully, this topic was always on the Lula administration's agenda, albeit in a not very systematic form at first. That said, with the passage of time it came to occupy more and more of the administration's efforts.

In 2003, during the administration of education minister Cristovam Buarque, the MEC helped organize three big events whose main purpose was to rethink the university. According to Trindade (2004), "during the first year of this government this issue was debated in national and international conferences and summits, without any commitment to a schedule for actions to be taken or implemented" (p. 833). However, several concrete measures intended to define a course of action were taken in 2003. Specifically, the federal government instituted an Inter-ministerial Working Group to "analyze the current situation and present an action plan intended to restructure, develop and democratize the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (or IFES)" (Decree of October 20, 2003, Article 1). The Group produced a document called "Foundations for confronting the emergency crisis of federal universities and a guide for Brazilian university reform," though it was never officially released.

Months afterward, another Working Group (GT) was assembled to develop proposals for the organization and regulation of a national higher education system, which was given 90 days to present a final result of their work (Ordinance n. 3,620, passed on December 4, 2003 and Ordinance n. 3,858, passed on December 17, 2003). This working group was made up of 15 people, seven of which held chief positions at the MEC and eight of which were from other entities, a fact which displayed some of the heterogeneity in the field of higher education. This diversity showed that in fact, policy-making (both generally speaking and specifically with regard to higher education), is "a process of constant negotiation between public and private actors, who trade resources and information with the objective of influencing political outcomes" (Bonafont, 2004, p. X).

With a change in the ministry that came in the beginning of 2004, the general direction of reform that had been followed to that point changed. Soon after taking over the education sector, Tarso Genro suspended the work of the previously assembled working group for 70 days

(Ordinance n. 351, passed on January 29, 2004), and in its place appointed an Executive Group for Higher Education Reform (Ordinance n. 351, passed on January 29, 2004) and a group to provide Support and Technical Assistance to this Executive Group (Ordinance n. 127, passed on March 11, 2004). Both of these groups, in contrast to the previous working group, comprised primarily of management and technical staff from the MEC and its subdivisions (like CAPES and INEP). The only exception was the president of the National Association of Directors of Higher Education Institutes, or ANDIFES. Explicitly this new group, designated to coordinate and systematize reform efforts for higher education, represented a much more institutional character. This could have been done because, speaking generally, it is easier to take concrete actions within a group restricted to participants from the same institution, who tend to share similar opinions and worldviews.

The Executive Group was directed to map out concrete guidelines for higher education reform and create the necessary normative instruments to implement their proposed changes (Art. 1). According to the ordinance that formed it, the Executive Group's coordinator could invite representatives from other entities or organizations, public or private, to participate in its meetings and events (Art. 4). The previously established working group was ordered to collaborate with the Executive Group, after presenting the final results of their work (Art. 8). In this sense, the Executive Group continued in the same vein as the previous working group, working to develop a reform proposal that included the participation of various actors interested in the subject. What changed was the strategy used to accomplish this task.

Aside from involving a large number of different actors, higher education also involves a number of different structural dimensions. In June of 2004, while the MEC was still under the management of Tarso Genro, the main guidelines for the reform that would be proposed by the MEC were organized around the following themes: the Mission of the University, Autonomy and Financing, Access and Permanence, Structure and Management, Content and Programs, and Evaluation (Reforma et al., 2004). Two months later, in August, a new document was published with the title "Higher education reform: reaffirming principles and consolidating guidelines for

higher education reform".

In December of 2004 a preliminary version of the Draft of the Higher Education Law was released, which gave continuance to a number of conversations already happening throughout the country. The MEC defined a deadline by which the people, entities and institutions involved in the reform process could debate the text and send in their recommended changes. The second version was published in June of 2005. The text, which was shorter this time (the number of articles had been reduced from 100 to 72), had taken into account previous feedback and was once again made available for further critiques and suggestions. Throughout this review process, as had been stipulated by an explanatory memorandum of the document, "nearly two hundred institutions, from the academic and scientific communities, business and worker entities, and both urban and rural social movements" participated. The release of the third version of the draft in July of 2005 came at the same time as a change in education ministers, from Tarso Genro to Fernando Haddad. From that point on, a long debate process on reform began within the federal government itself.

Society continued to debate the draft and take positions both in support and against various points within it. One of the sources of greatest controversy and debate involved the executive branch itself. That is, the reform proposed a series of changes that involved other ministries, and it was not important to obtain consensus between these groups so that a finalized text could be sent to the President. Finally, in June of 2006, the President presented the proposed reform law to the National Congress (Bill 7.200/2006) so that it could be debated and brought up for a vote. It is important to note, however, that the document sent by the executive to the legislative was not the final draft that had arisen out of debates between the government and civil society (e.g. the third version of the drafted reform law). The proposed law differed from the third draft of the law in various aspects, with items that had been both added and excluded.

It is also important to note that the process of reforming Brazilian higher education began even before the proposed law had been sent to the National Congress. Various measures were adopted by the Lula administration, before, during, and after the process of developing and debating

the higher education reform law. This process led Nogueira (2008) to conclude that the government implemented a "reform before the reform". Some of the most important measures adopted during Lula's government were the expansion of the federal network of higher education institutions, the creation of the Program of Support for Plans to Restructure and Expand Federal Universities (REUNI), the creation of the program called University for All (PROUNI), the reformulation of the Student Financing Fund (FIES), and the creation of the National System of Evaluation for Higher Education (SINAES). All these programs will be discussed in the next section.

4.2 – Current situation of higher education

The previous section presented some important historical facts of the development of higher education in Brazil. It was possible to notice how more or less educational opportunities were created in the country through the years. The section also began to discuss the current situation of this level of education, pointing out many challenges that remain to be faced nowadays.

This section examines the current situation of higher education in Brazil, based on eleven interviewees conducted with Brazilian professionals in Portuguese between January and March of 2012. Among them are professors and researchers that are specialists on higher education, as well as representatives of the Ministry of Education. These professionals present their perception about the same themes discussed in Chapter 3: the most positive and critical aspects of higher education in their country; the diversification of institutions and courses; and the process to access higher education. Finally, they all share their view on the main policies implemented by the federal government in Argentina to expand access to higher education and assure quality of this level of education. The analysis of these interviewees, as in the previous chapter, is intertwined with the literature and current data collected by the National Anísio Teixeira Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP), an agency linked to Brazil's Ministry of Education.

4.2.1 – Characterization of the Brazilian higher education system

Higher education in Brazil is regulated by the Constitution of 1988, and the Law 9.394, December 20, 1996 (Law of Directions and Fundamentals for National Education or LDB). Legislation in the area of higher education is fragmented in the country, and there are many other laws and decrees that regulate specific aspects related to higher education. There is also a National Education Plan that was approved in 2001; it sets the objectives, priorities, guidelines and goals for all levels of education in Brazil. The plan was created through a participatory process involving the civil society, government and Congress, and was effective from 2001 to 2010[41]. States and the municipalities in Brazil are also given recommendations to create their own plans, in line with the national plan.

According to the Constitution of 1988 and also to the national law of education, instruction will be provided on the basis of the principle of coexistence of public and private institutions (Constitution, Art. 206, II; Law 9.394/1996, Art. 3, V). Private institutions, however, have to follow the national educational regulation and are subject to governmental authorization and evaluation (Constitution, Art. 209, I and II; Law 9.394/1996, Art. 7, I and II). Higher education in Brazil can be public or private (Law 9.394/1996, Art. 19). Public institutions can be federal/national, state, and municipal, depending on their administrative vinculation and maintainer. Private institutions can be private in the strict sense of the word (meaning for-profit), community-based (meaning non-profit), religious or philanthropic (Law 9.394/1996, Art. 20).

The law states that the Federal System of Education includes institutions funded by the federal government and institutions of higher education created and maintained by the private sector (Art. 16). The states and the Federal District systems encompass institutions created and maintained by them as well as higher education institutions maintained by municipalities. In this dissertation, as explained in the introduction, the expression “higher education system” is used to make reference to

[41] The new plan, valid from 2011 to 2020, is waiting to be approved in the National Congress.

the set of public and private institutions of higher education in Brazil – public including federal, state and municipal institutions, and private including for-profit, non-profit, religious and philanthropic institutions.

In relation to the academic organization, institutions are classified as universities, university centers and colleges, according to Decree 5,773 passed on May 9, 2006. It is important to mention that the Law 11,892, passed on December 29, 2008, created the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology. These Federal Institutes have many purposes, such as providing professional technical education at the secondary level. In the area of higher education, their purposes are to offer:

> a) tertiary courses in technology intended to train professionals for the different sectors of the economy;
> b) licensure courses, as well as special training programs in pedagogy, focused on training teachers for basic education, especially focusing on science and mathematics, as well as professional education;
> c) undergraduate courses in engineering and other subjects, focused on training professionals for the various sectors of the economy and academic disciplines;
> d) general graduate courses focused on training specialists in the various disciplines;
> e) specific Master's and doctoral programs that promote further research in education, science and technology, with the purpose of promoting technological innovation (Art. 7, VI).

Universities, as established by the Constitution of 1988, enjoy didactic, scientific, administrative and financial autonomy, and maintain the principle of inseparability between teaching, research and extension (Art. 207). The national law of education says in addition that "universities are multidisciplinary institutions supporting the professional domains of higher education, research, and the extension, dominion and cultivation of human knowledge" (Art. 52). They are characterized by institutionalized intellectual production focused on the systematic study of those themes and social problems that are most relevant, from a scientific and cultural perspective, both regionally and nationally; with at least one third of the faculty holding an academic title at the Master's or doctoral level; and at least one third of the faculty working full-time (Art. 52).

The national law of education stipulates that "the federal government, the states, the Federal District and the municipalities will collaboratively organize their respective organizational systems" (Art. 8). Among the responsibilities of the federal government are: elaborate a National Education Plan, in collaboration with the states, the Federal District and the municipalities; organize, maintain and develop the official institutions and divisions of the educational system, both at the federal level and in the territories; ensure a national process of evaluation of school achievement at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels; reduce general norms for undergraduate and graduate courses; ensure a national process of evaluation of higher education institutions, with the cooperation of those systems that are responsible for this educational level; and authorize, recognize, credentialize, supervise and evaluate, respectively, all courses in higher education institutions and the larger higher educational system (Art. 9, I, II, VI, VII, VIII, IX).

It is important to look at some data of higher education regarding the public and private sectors. The table 32 shows the number of institutions of higher education existing in Brazil in 2011:

Table 32 – Number of higher education institutions, by academic organization and administrative category (2011)

	Public					
	Federal	State	Municipal	Total	Private	Total
Universities	59	37	6	102	88	190
University Centers	-	1	6	7	124	131
Schools/*Faculdades*	4	72	59	135	1,869	2,004
Federal Institute and CEFET[42]	40	-	-	40	-	40
Total	103	110	71	284	2,081	2,365

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

In 2012 there were 2,365 institutions of higher education in Brazil. Only 284 of them were public (12%), while 2,081 were private institutions (88%). In relation to the academic organization, the majority of institutions are schools/*faculdades* (2,004 or 85% of the institutions), followed by universities (190 or 8% of the institutions). Most of the federal institutions are universities, while

[42] The Law 11.892/2008 created 38 Federal Institutes, from existing institutions linked to the Ministry of Education (Federal technical schools, federal centers of technological education and agrotechnical schools). Only two federal centers kept themselves independent of the new Federal Institutes: the Federal Center of Technological Education named for Celso Suckow da Fonseca - CEFET-RJ and another in Minas Gerais - CEFET-MG.

schools are the predominant organizational model in state and municipal institutions, as well as among private institutions. The table 33 presents information about enrollment in all these institutions:

Table 33 - Enrollment in classroom and distance courses, by academic organization and administrative category (2011)

	Public				Private	Total
	Federal	State	Municipal	Total		
Universities	929,847	555,758	56,366	1,541,971	2,090,402	3,632,373
University Centers	-	1,623	13,275	14,898	906,121	921,019
Schools/*Faculdades*	1,463	61,973	51,384	114,820	1,969,851	2,084,671
Federal Institute and CEFET	101,626	-	-	101,626	-	101,626
Total	1,032,936	619,354	121,025	1,773,315	4,966,374	6,739,689

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

As with the number of institutions, with regard to enrollment the private sector also has the majority of students in Brazil. In 2011, from the 6,739,689 students enrolled, 4,966,374 were in the private sector (74%) and only 1,773,315 in the public sector (26%). Despite the fact that the majority of institutions are schools (85%), there are more students in universities. This occurs because schools in general are smaller and have fewer students. To give an idea of the dimension of enrollment in Brazil, it is important to look the gross and net levels of schooling held by higher education students between the ages of 18 and 24. In 2009, the gross schooling rate was 26.7, while the net schooling rate was 14.4.

As important as to look data about enrollment is to consider the number of students that graduate from undergrad courses. Table 34 brings these data:

Table 34 – Graduates of classroom and distance courses, by academic organization and administrative category (2011)

	Public				Private	Total
	Federal	State	Municipal	Total		
Universities	98,563	80,548	8,936	188,047	334,881	522,928
University Centers	-	151	1,872	2,023	150,660	152,683
Schools/*Faculdades*	242	7,187	8,514	15,943	312,807	328,750
Federal Institute and CEFET	12,352	-	-	12,352	-	12,352
Total	111,157	87,886	19,322	218,365	798,348	1,016,713

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

Higher education institutions in Brazil graduated 1,016,713 students in 2011. The data regarding graduation is similar to the data regarding enrollment. The private sector, which enrolls a larger number of students, also has more graduates. 798,348 students or 78% of the total graduates come from private institutions. Most of the graduates come from universities, followed by schools.

The table 35 shows the number of students enrolled and graduates per area of knowledge:

Table 35 – Enrolled students and graduates in classroom and distance courses, by subject area (2011)

Subject Area	Enrolled Students			Graduates		
	Public	Private	Total	Public	Private	Total
General Studies	16,914	81	16,995	-	-	-
Education	584,301	770,617	1,354,918	74,620	163,977	238,597
Humanities and Arts	56,482	98,433	154,915	6,967	19,061	26,028
Social Sciences, Business and Law	388,291	2,409,998	2,798,289	56,250	373,880	430,130
Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science	157,896	265,476	423,372	15,448	40,523	55,971
Engineering, Production and Construction	243,040	516,833	759,873	22,664	42,265	64,929
Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine	98,199	57,417	155,616	12,092	7,893	19,985
Health and Social Welfare	200,987	730,584	931,571	26,839	124,857	151,696
Service Provision	27,205	116,935	144,140	3,485	25,892	29,377
Total	1,773,315	4,966,374	6,739,689	218,365	798,348	1,016,713

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

An important number of students are enrolled in Social Sciences, Business and Law (1,354,918 students) and graduate from programs in this area (430,130). Another area that has a large number of students is Education, which includes courses of pedagogy and teacher training programs in several fields (1,354,918 students enrolled and 238,597 graduates). Areas with fewer students are Service Provision, which encompasses programs related to sports and tourism, followed by Humanities and Arts, and finally Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine.

The purpose of this subsection was to provide a succinct introduction to the Brazilian higher education system. In the following subsections the characterization of this system will be discussed more fully.

4.2.2 – Strengths of the higher education system in the country

As one interviewee points out, one first aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is that institutions of higher education in Brazil are diverse. He believes it is hard to make generalizations about a system when institutions are so distinct in terms of social role and organization.

> It's very hard to make generalizations about the Brazilian higher education system when you have institutions that are very distinct with regards to their social function, both in terms of their organization and whether they are public or private (Interviewee 4).

The same interviewee also made a general assessment of this level of education in Brazil. He says that higher education is highly heterogeneous and institutions play different roles depending on their sector: public or private. Although in his view public institutions are strategic for the country—as predominately in charge of the development of research and technology—the majority of the students are in the private sector. The private sector is itself heterogeneous, but overall offers an education that does not have university characteristics, and whose social relevance needs to be better understood:

> I see Brazilian higher education as an educational level (...) that is very heterogeneous and plays distinct functions. While the public sector plays a very strategic role, because most fieldwork in science and technology comes from public universities, we have an enormous number of students coming from various kinds of private institutions, though we can say in a general sense that these institutions do not have university characteristics, but have a social relevance that needs to be more fully studied (Interviewee 4).

Another interviewee states that there is an international trend to privatize higher education or to put higher education at the service of the market. In his analysis, this is already in place in developed countries but affects particularly peripheral countries around the world. In Brazil, as he explains, despite the fact that the majority of higher education is provided by the private sector, there is still a public system of higher education that is funded with public resources, is exemplary, and it is committed to the public good.

> A public system of higher education was organized in Brazil, which is the system that has quality, that has structure, that has some financing, that has a commitment to the public interest (...) fulfilling a role to do relevant research, studies that aren't necessarily tied to market interests (Interviewee 1).

Some interviewees mention as positive the fact that higher education is free of charge in Brazilian public universities. Another positive aspect identified is the decentralization of these institutions. As one interviewee underscores, federal and state institutions of higher education are spread all over the country, in capital cities and in the countryside.

> If you look at a map of Brazil and put one over another (the federal system and the state system) it's possible that we are one of the countries of our size that has higher capacity in terms of public higher education in the interior and in the urban centers of Brazil's interior (Interviewee 3).

Public institutions have a very relevant role in training students and developing research. One interviewee describes that public institutions are also heterogeneous, but most of them have graduate programs and institutional research being developed in several fields of knowledge. He states that the most qualified professional in the several fields of knowledge in general come from public institutions.

> The public universities, while they are also very heterogeneous, are institutions with very distinct histories and trajectories, some that have done research for a long time, others that have only begun doing research more recently, above all the majority of public universities have graduate programs, they conduct the country's institutionalized research, and they also fulfill a very important role in the country by providing the technical and technological training for the Brazilian workforce (Interviewee 4).

Some think that the most positive dimension of higher education in Brazil lies in the graduate system, which is very well structured. In fact, Brazil today has a graduate education system that is considered exemplary among developing countries (Oliven, 2002, p. 36; Durham, 2003, p. 207). Institutions that support the development of research in universities such as CAPES and CNPq, both created in 1951, are also positively appraised. Besides that, one interviewee mentions that the evaluation of graduate programs conducted by CAPES is an area in which Brazil has achieved important advances.

> More positive is our graduate work, certainly. It's a structured graduate system that has advanced a lot in terms of evaluation. There's still a lot that needs improvement, but it doesn't compare to what you have in the rest of Latin America, Mexico and so forth. Even compared to some European countries, our graduate evaluation system is much better. And it is important because our evaluation system has the capacity to promote change (Interviewee 5).

It is important to mention that in Brazil universities and research institutes are the main centers that develop research, especially the public sector (Silva Junior, 1996, p. 14; Oliven, 2002, p. 34). This illustrates the relevance of the public sector of higher education to the development of knowledge and of the country.

According to the Constitution of 1988, universities are institutions that develop teaching, research and service. In one interviewee's opinion, many private universities should be not considered universities, since they do not fulfill this constitutional determination. In his assessment, most private institutions do not develop research, and in addition offer an education that he describes as of reduced intellectual, theoretical and cultural sophistication. In fact, this situation is not peculiar to Brazil. In a comparative study that involves 28 countries in all continents, Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván (2012) found out that private universities (with rare exceptions) tend to be entirely devoted to teaching (p. 6).

> These institutions (private ones) in a general sense are not institutions that become involved in research. And many of them ensure a level of training that graduates us with less sophistication or training, speaking intellectually, theoretically, and culturally. I insist that there are exceptions, but in a general sense we can say that most of these institutions don't have the characteristics of universities, these private ones. While there are a significant number of private universities, these universities, according to the federal constitution, shouldn't be classified as such. Because there is no inseparability of teaching, research and extension (Interviewee 4).

Some interviewees positively identified contemporary achievements in higher education; consequence of recent policies. One mentioned in particular the increase in enrollments, both in the public and private sector. He says that there is a national effort to meet current challenges, allowing Brazil to become a competitive country in the world scenario, as well as to offer education for citizenship.

> So this growth is late, but it is positive. Our university here, since the 90s we have quadrupled our students. And this has occurred generally, in a lot of public and private institutions, which was the strategy of the Fernando Henrique government, to essentially offer conditions or permit that private schools fill this gap between what the publics were able to accomplish and the objective to have a large number of youth in university or post-secondary institutions (Interviewee 6).

> You see a national effort to take on this challenge, so that Brazil can more and more be a competitive country on the global economic stage, and can provide a complete education to its citizens (Interviewee 6).

Other interviewees preferred to emphasize as positive the expansion of the public sector. One interviewee explains that with Lula's government there is a resumption of public higher education. She says in addition that the country started to invest more in research again.

> In the last few years, especially since the beginning of the Lula administration, there has been an effort to revisit public higher education, and so I think this is one of the most positive things in higher education today, (...) I believe there has been a resumption of financing research, which had been reduced significantly, basically scrapping public higher education. Public universities were waning, and then this process was reverted (Interviewee 7).

Also according to this same interviewee, during Lula's administration some important discussions were included in the governmental agenda, such as the issue of quality of higher education, the existing system of access to higher education, the need for diversification of the student body (inclusion), and the social responsibility of institutions of higher education.

> There is a bigger discussion about higher education quality, (...) a discussion about modality, about means of access (...) and some new subjects, like the need for inclusion, (...) which is tied to the idea of social commitment. Several themes related to higher education were absent during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and with the start of the Lula administration they were on the agenda and began causing a series of changes (...) in the structure of higher education (Interviewee 7).

One additional element that was brought up by the Lula administration in the interviewee's perspective was the possibility to innovate inside the federal universities. For example, she notes that in the past state universities of São Paulo were quite innovative. Today it is possible to notice more innovation in federal universities, after the implementation of REUNI. As she elaborates, innovation can bring both positive and negative results, but the possibility to innovate is essential to higher education institutions.

> Federal universities have made some changes that we don't see in the state-level institutions. 10 years ago, despite all the difficulties you'd say, look at the state universities in São Paulo, they're on the cutting edge, they're innovating. Now, no. Now you can say that some federal universities have innovative processes, whether in terms of their academic structure, interdisciplinary bachelor's degrees and so forth, or their access and student selection process. They are now much more interesting than the state universities in São Paulo that were always the reference point (Interviewee 7).

A final remark cited by one interviewee reflects a more current trend of flexibility to access higher education. He explains that traditionally the system of access to higher education in Brazil was very selective and elitist, based on an exam called *vestibular*. This exam is criticized for not taking into consideration the history of the student during high school, and for being many times decontextualized – dealing with contents disconnected from real life. He is making reference to new modalities to access higher education that will be discussed in subsection 4.2.5.

> The Brazilian system now has a higher level of flexibility in terms of student admissions. This is already positive, as until very recently admissions were very elitist. Admissions were very rigid and elitist, based in the vestibular, not taking into account the growth of the student as they progressed through basic education until getting to university. So many times the tests were totally decontextualized from anything else. So I think it's a positive thing, the rapid change that is occurring in terms of admissions processes (Interviewee 2).

As illuminated in this section, an interviewee starts by explaining that the public and private sectors in Brazil are heterogeneous between and within them. Although universities are required to develop research and service in addition to teaching, not all of them perform these activities extensively. Many interviewees point out as positive the fact that the public sector is strong – it has good quality, a very well structured graduate system, and it is committed to the public good, despite having only a minority of students. The decentralization of federal and state universities is also seen as a strength. Some interviewees mention recent achievements positively. Such is the case of the increase in enrollment, the possibility to innovate in federal universities, and the inclusion of important themes in the governmental agenda such as quality of higher education and student's inclusion. In the next subsection, interviewees will mention the critical aspects of the higher education system from their perspective.

4.2.3 – Critical aspects of higher education in the country

Brazilian public universities, according to one of the interviewees, have a structural problem. The universities do not result from a process of bourgeois revolution, similar to what happened in other countries. In many countries such as France or Germany, the bourgeoisie had a national project and the university was seen as a strategic institution for society. In his view, that is not the case in Brazil. He mentions the case of the French Revolution, in which the country quickly moved from an agricultural to an industrial society. In his interpretation, the university played an important role in skipping the stages of the industrial revolution.

> The French university and the creation of the *Grandes Écoles* in France were decisive in igniting the stages of the industrial revolution. Why? Because you are in a process of bourgeois revolution in which the bourgeoisie has a national project. They have a self-propelled national project, an internally developed national project. And for this they understand that the university is a key institution, it is a strategic institution. And this creates a Napoleonic university, which is one of the conceptual models of the university in the modern era. That means it is a professional university, but it is a professional university that advances superior knowledge in subjects like physics or chemistry, so that the chemical industry in France undergoes extraordinary growth in the 19th century (Interviewee 4).

He goes on to detail the case of Germany and the creation of the University of Berlin. The bourgeoisie in this country, according to the interviewee, also understood the relevance of supporting an autonomous institution that would be in charge of producing knowledge.

> In Germany, in the process that led to unification, we had the creation [of the] University of Berlin, which was conceived as an autonomous institution in which the bourgeoisie understood that it was important to support an institution that would have liberty, autonomy from the government, etc., because it could be a space of the free flourishing of knowledge. This is part of the bourgeois project. This is part of a self-propelled project, using the expression of Florestan Fernandes, of a national project. So it's an institution that receives resources, it's an institution that while it opposes the government, they understand that it is an important institution for the nation, it is a strategic institution for the nation. So, the university counts on support so that the conditions of the development of knowledge, etc., would be the best possible, with all of the limits and contradictions (Interviewee 4).

He says that the bourgeoisie in Brazil, on the contrary, developed a subordinate and dependent national project. As a consequence of this, the first universities would be created only in the 1930s (there were institutions of higher education before, some of them even called universities,

but in his view the first university in a *strict sense* is the University of Sao Paulo, founded in 1934) and the first funded research agencies are founded in the 1950s. In his view the university is seen as important but not strategic.

> In Brazil we never had this, because we never had a classical bourgeois revolution. Our bourgeois revolution, as Florestan Fernandes shows, is a bourgeois revolution *sui generis*. In Brazil the bourgeoisie are bringing about a dependent national project. So, we only had the first organizations to promote research in the 1950s. In reality the first true Brazilian universities came about in the 1940s. Officially it existed before, but university in the strict sense of the word is the University of Sao Paulo, 1934, that is, you have a very recent institution, and that is born as an institution in which the bourgeois understand that it is an important institution, but that it is not a strategic institution. The university is not part of a model of national development, of a national project, in which this institution has to be strongly supported, strongly enlarged, a rapid increase in secondary education so that the students who are qualified can develop intellectually, which is important to national development (Interviewee 4).

Some authors agree that part of the problems experienced by the university today is related to its creation. According to Fávero (2006), "it is important to remember that the university was created not to attend to the fundamental necessities of the reality of which it was a part, but rather was thought up and accepted as a cultural good offered to minorities, without a clear definition in the sense that, through its own functions, it should be founded as a space of scientific investigation and knowledge production" (p. 19). The surmounting of such impasses – or in other words the democratization of the university and the integration between university and research – was achieved later by some institutions, but is a contemporary challenge for many others.

A more strategic conception of the university in Brazil surprisingly comes with the dictatorship. The military governments, as the interviewee explains, helped to increase and develop graduate programs in the country. Upon establishing the inseparability between teaching, research, and service, the creation of full time positions in universities and the exclusive dedication of faculty to teaching and research, the university reform implemented during the military government "enabled the professionalization of the teachers and created favorable conditions as much for the development of graduate studies as for the scientific activities in the country" (Oliven, 2002, p. 33-34).

The interviewee, however, criticizes the kind of research supported by these governments. They encouraged research in strategic fields such as energy and agriculture, but did so within a model of associate development, or in other words, within an economic model subordinated to the hegemonic countries of capitalism.

> We only had a more strategic idea for the university during the time of the military dictatorship. That is when we had the creation of graduate studies. So that you can have an idea, in 1963 we had 50 graduate programs, more or less – master's and doctoral. In 1985, the last year of the dictatorship, we had 1,080 programs, so it's an extraordinary increase. But what is the research that's done here? It's a development of research in strategic areas, energy, agriculture, but within a subordinate associated model. Within an economic model subordinated to the hegemonic groups of capitalism. Thus, this is also a *sui generis* institution. Because the university doesn't result from a bourgeois revolution that has promoted the university as something very central to the country's life (Interviewee 4).

There are other voices along the same lines. Rampinelli and Ouriques (2011), for instance, say that "the university, instead of becoming central to the creation of critical thought, an important weapon in promotion a national revolution, established priorities in the field of science, knowledge, and technology that result in establishing even more so our peripheral condition" (p. 10). Melo, Santos and Andrade (2009) too believe that at that moment modernized higher education was an additional element that could contribute to an associated and dependent development in relation to the hegemonic countries of international capitalism (p. 19).

The interviewee explains that from their origins Brazilian universities are influenced by the way Brazil is inserted in the world economy or by the way the local bourgeoisie is associated with the hegemonic bourgeoisie. The local bourgeoisie had a more instrumental view of the university, according to him. Higher education courses were created seeking to meet the market's immediate demand. In his analysis this created a situation of cultural subjection. There is important research being developed by universities, but in a context where this institution itself is not considered to be strategic.

> From its origin our university has been an institution greatly affected by the unique way in which Brazil is inserted into the global economy, in the way in which the national bourgeoisie or local bourgeois groups associate with the hegemonic bourgeois groups. What did they want from the university? A much more active perspective. That is, what is our

> most immediate need? We need to increase the work force now in the area of engineering, in this kind of agronomy (Interviewee 4).

A huge problem identified by some interviewees is access to higher education. The percentage of students that attend schools of higher education is still very low compared to other countries, such as Argentina. To one interviewee, the most negative aspect is that the public sector in higher education is not universal, and since the 1970s this sector's participation in the whole system has shrunk. At the beginning of the 1970s, for instance, public institutions accounted for 49% of enrollment. At the end of the 1970s, this sector accounted for 35% of enrollment. In 2010, the public sector accounted for only 27% of enrollment.

One interviewee believes that public education and public universities are still secondary institutions in the country. This situation, according to his hypothesis, led to the idea that the massification of education should take place through the private sector.

> the fact is that public education and the public university are secondary institutions in national life, among institutions. This logic, according to my hypothesis, is what led to the idea that massification should happen through private institutions. Because for the bourgeoisie there no longer existed the idea that we had to have a workforce with a particular profile, with fixed characteristics that only a public university could bring about (Interviewee 4).

He explains that the bourgeoisie did not believe that Brazil should have a work force with specific qualifications that only public universities could offer. In his analysis, for the bourgeoisie those coming from low-income families should have more basic qualifications. He says that these qualifications being offered in Brazil, even though minimal, are still important to people.

> the idea that ordinary youth should be educated in more simple institutions is an expression of the logic of bourgeois revolution here in Brazil. Or rather, there is not a project in which you foresee that the workforce, social rights, the concept of citizenship requires a more sophisticated education. It is a minimalist, simplified education. Is it an education lacking in value for people? No, I don't think so. It has value for people. It has subjective value, but surely it is not an institution that is educating for complex work. It has another vision (Interviewee 4).

One negative aspect mentioned was the lack of public investment in higher education in the past. As a consequence there was a fast and unorganized increase in the private sector. The growth of higher education institutions was not well planned.

> Consequently there was an expansion where the lack of state [support] was compensated for by the private sector in a very accelerated manner and today we pay a very high price for this lack of control over the too-rapid expansion that has been largely concentrated in the hands of the private sector (Interviewee 2).

There was a new expansion of private higher education during the 1990s, and this process continued throughout Lula's government. One interviewee describes as problematic the fact that the private sector continues increasing, particularly the for-profit sector. He adds that Brazil is not controlling enough of the private sector.

> [one problem is] the growth of the private sector, and particularly in recent years the for-profit private sector. Uncontrolled financial capital, clearly speculative, that is a disaster. (…) We aren't controlling the private sector. I don't even know if we'll be able to control it at any point (Interviewee 5).

One interviewee explains that two important measures stimulated the flourishing of the private for-profit sector. The first was the provision in the Constitution of 1988 that opened education to the private sector (Art. 209), as seen in section 4.1. He says that before the constitution, only non-profit private institutions could offer education. The second measure took place at the beginning of the 1990s, during Collor's government. According to the interviewee, with Collor the state was no longer in charge of controlling tuition at private institutions.

> You have two very important changes that contributed to the expansion of private schools. First, the constitutional change that conceptualized that education is open to the free market. I think that it's article 209. That changed because before higher education in Brazil was philanthropic, (…) that is non-profit; communitarian or religious. With the 1988 constitution a private, business sector arose, for-profit. (…) The second change is absolutely central. As soon as Collor took office in 1991, (…) he got rid of the state of control of tuition. Tuition is a contract between the person who buys and the person who sells. This is the first boom. For you to have an idea, in 1992-1993 we had 400 non-profit institutions: philanthropic, communitarian or religious. In 2009, we had 420, 440 philanthropic, communitarian or religious institutions. But in 1992-1993 we had 380 for-profit. Today we have 2,000 for-profit. So what grew in Brazil was the commercial sector. That is a change that will accelerate enrollment (Interviewee 4).

Another interviewee strongly criticizes both FHC's and Lula's governments. These two governments, in his words, were against any effectively responsible action in the field of higher education, science and technology. He explains why. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, he says, vetoed important items related to financing education in the National Education Plan(PNE), basically preventing the execution of the Plan. He says that PNE, approved by the National Congress in 2001, had funding goals below the real needs of the country, and yet these goals were vetoed. He mentions in particular the goal of progressively increasing public spending on education, until it constituted a minimum of 7% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

> What Fernando Henrique did for education was to effectively make the PNE, approved by congress in 1999, unviable. [Congress] approved 7% of the GDP for education. What Brazilian society wanted was 10%; congress approved 7%. Fernando Henrique, tied to the university, education, etc. did this, sanctioned the plan, but vetoed all the items and pledges for financing. This was the great policy that FHC really created for higher education in the country. It was to boycott the PNE (Interviewee 1).

Lula, in his view, contributed to the privatization of higher education. He says that one of the measures the president adopted allowed private institutions to manage projects linked to public research agencies.

> Lula's government, like the government of Itamar Franco, strengthened the constitutional legislation that permitted private institutions to interfere in public institutions. Up until Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government private institutions couldn't manage the programs and projects linked directly to the large research and development agencies, Capes, Cnpq, Finep, etc. He introduced legislation that [allowed] these institutions to contract a private support entity, without licitation, to manage their budgets (Interviewee 1).

The interviewee is making reference to Law 12,349 (passed on 12/15/2010), which changes the Laws 8,958 (passed on 12/20/1994) and 10,973 (passed on 12/02/2004). Both laws contain a new article that says that the Financial Supporter of Studies and Projects (FINEP), the National Counsel for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) and the official financial agencies for development/advancement can carry out accords and contracts with the support foundations (Article 1-A and Article 3-A, respectively). Support foundations are, according to Law 8,958 (1994), institutions created with the goal of supporting research, teaching, and service projects that

are of interest to federal institutions of higher education. These foundations are nonprofit private institutions that must be accredited by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science and Technology.

These support foundations are in practice tools that public institutions of higher education use to have more flexibility to develop their projects. They allow public universities, for instance, to hire professionals to teach in specific programs as fellows. Many scholars that defend public universities harshly criticize such foundations. They see the organizations as a way to privatize public higher education. Correia (2011) says that the role of these institutions is to "encourage the expansion of private control over university activity" (p. 110). According to the author, "it's common to look to justify the ties between private institutions and public institutions of higher education as a way to overcome the alleged lack of flexibility in the rules that apply to the public sector and the possibility of harnessing private resources to benefit the public university" (p. 113). He finds in these institutions' statutes, however, a better description of their actual activities: "the promotion of the university-business integration, the promotion of fields, courses, research and the furnishing of services, the improvement and training of human resources, mediating between public and private entities, etc. (p. 114).

Correia (2011) cites some findings by the National Union of Teachers of Higher Education Institutions (ANDES-SN) with relation to contracts and agreements between public universities and such support foundations: these institutions are basically funded by public resources; although these institutions cannot generate profit they do make a profit, and most of it goes to pay teachers linked to their projects; some of these foundations acknowledge that they are enterprises; the amount of resources going from support foundations to universities is very low; and these institutions are developing all sorts of paid courses in public institutions that should offer free education, among others findings (p. 114-116). He also mentions irregularities within the support foundations that are linked to a number of major universities in the country.

Another measure adopted during Lula's administration, one which is hardly criticized by the interviewee, is the continuation of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's Social Security reform.[43] He says that this reform reduced the public sector's ability to attract teachers and other professionals.

> What Lula did was to decrease the ability to bring teachers to the public university and in various areas of the public sphere through Social Security reform, which took away rights and any sense of stability once you take away the guarantee of retirement for the whole public sector and put it in the perspective of retirement supplemented by a private fund with a defined contribution, but with no defined income. Which is the system that broke Chile, broke Argentina, that Argentina already got rid of and Chile is discussing how to deal with the problem. Which was Fernando Henrique's reform that Lula fought and that didn't pass in the Henrique [government] only because of the opposition of the PT [Workers Party] associated with social movements. From there on, Lula's government is elected and enacts the reform that he had helped to fight, that now has no opposition, and that he helped to disorganize the social movements that fought with him against the Social Security reform (Interviewee 1).

The increase in enrollment in higher education, according to one interviewee, took place without assuring its quality. He associates what is happening in higher education with what happened in public K-12 education in Brazil. In the past, when K-12 was reserved for a small part of the population, public schools used to be considered good. After the enrollment increased dramatically, this changed. He believes that in the history of Brazilian education, expansion and quality never came together. In part, he suggests, these are the challenges related to expansion. The interviewee has a critical opinion about the quality of higher education today. In his view, the Brazilian educational system is falling behind in that area.

> The problem of quality is a very serious problem. Today we are implementing in the master's level what we should be doing in the undergraduate level. And our undergraduate level today is almost an improved basic level (Interviewee 2).

[43] Leopoldi (2009) explains that during the 1990s Brazil witnessed an incremental process of mini-reforms in its Social Security System, which has encompassed the health care system, the pension system, and social assistance since the Constitution of 1988. Elements of this incremental reform include the reform of the pension system in 1998 (Constitutional Amendment 20/1998); the reform of the INSS (public pension system), and the introduction of the Social Security Index (*Fator Previdenciário*) in 1999; and the reform of the complementary private pension system in 2001. According to the author, the missing part of the reform failed to address the retirement and pension system for civil servants and Lula made this a priority in his first term. The Constitutional Amendment 41, as she says, "brought several changes to the pension regime of civil servants. It implemented the tax over the retired civil servants. The age to retire remained the same: 60 years for men and 55 for women. Limits were established for high retirement pensions, a privilege remaining from the old pension system. Some privileges were reduced, bringing more revenue to public social security funds. The press contributed to by disseminating information about who earned high pensions and pointing to the unequal pension system for civil servants, compared with the INSS system. Incentives were given to the officials who would stay in office beyond the age of retirement" (p. 14-15).

These comments give the impression that there is not enough regulation of the quality of higher education in Brazil. In the past this could be true, but now the situation is quite the opposite. There is strong criticism with relation to the excess of governmental regulation coming from both the public and the private sectors. According to one of the interviewees, there was no regulation of higher education in Brazil until the 1960s. This forced the Ministry of Education to create many laws to deal with the disorganized growth of the system. This excess of regulation, however, is seen as negative by the same interviewee.

> It's a negative effect (...) the excess of regulation. MEC had to create thousands of laws that regulate [everything] from elementary education to higher education, by the strength of this contingency Brazilian education comes to life in a completely uncontrolled way, random, through its own history. (…) You don't have regulation, you don't have organization of Brazilian education until the 1960s (Interviewee 2).

He mentions as a particular problem the excess of regulation in the area of distance education. To him, distance education in Brazil receives that same treatment that classroom (face-to-face) education does, when it should be different due to its circumstances.

> Brazil still confronts and treats distance education with the same degree of regulation [of face-to-face education], and our model of regulation in distance education (…) it's as if you were virtually in the face-to-face learning model (Interviewee 2).

Another interviewee criticizes the excess of regulation and the lack of autonomy of federal universities. The excessive regulation, in his view, reduces the autonomy of universities. According to him federal universities, despite their constitutional autonomy, are not autonomous in practice. They are regulated through and through.

> Something else that there is in Brazil that I think is an error, but that I think is part of the culture, is excessive regulation. The constitution says that the university is autonomous, but that is simply a small label you occasionally wear. The university is regulated throughout (Interviewee 6).

Federal universities have to apply for funding through programs coordinated by the Ministry of Education (MEC) or the Ministry of Science and Technology (MCT), and when they are affiliated with their programs they have to follow the Ministries' rules. The interviewee says that

universities basically implement these institutions' policies. As he explains, universities in general do not develop their own initiatives because they do not have enough funding to do so.

> In the case of public universities, management was taken away from them. So the universities essentially joined the government programs, whether MEC or MCT, and tried to administer the policies of these organizations from within and to society. (...) The idea of the autonomous university, a university integrated into its community, is today a distant dream. Today it's like this: MEC has so many millions for something [and] you go there, you make the request, if it's approved then you will do that. There you will have a program for one thing, a program for something else. MCT is similar. It defines its research policies and then you have no autonomous activities, under your own initiative, because the university doesn't have the resources for this. No one comes and says, here's a budget, do it better. It's not like that (Interviewee 6).

The lack of autonomy in federal universities is particularly explicit with regards to administrative matters. Faculty and staff are paid and have their careers overseen by the federal government, through the Ministry of Planning, Budget and Management (MPOG).

> Don't even talk about administrative autonomy. Our personnel are administered (…) by the Planning Ministry. Our resource[s], our budget comes in pieces. It's very interesting because the universities basically turn into the MEC's campus in whichever state. The rector [becomes] the guy that comes to Brasilia to look for resources inside program X, takes it, and implements it here in his university. Not a manager in the full sense of the word (Interviewee 6).

The same thing happens with graduate programs, as he clarifies. In fact, the lack of autonomy in this area seems to be even greater. He uses strong words to describe the situation of graduate programs, saying that they do not belong to universities – they belong to the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel (CAPES), an agency linked to MEC.

> Graduate school doesn't belong to us, it belongs to CAPES. CAPES comes here and says who can and who can't, who can do what and who can't, it's a regulation that even calculates the amount of materials. And this created a world of wasted professors, hangers-on, because they didn't pass the quantitative criteria to be part of the graduate studies, professors with doctorate degrees, with history, with much to contribute. This contribution is not respected (Interviewee 6).

This interviewee identifies another problem in higher education in Brazil: the hyper specialization during undergrad. This, in his view, is not something imposed by the government. Instead, institutions of higher education opt for this model, some of them with a mercantilist view.

For some private institutions, this is a way to attract students. Some public institutions, on the other hand, are resistant to increasing their traditional courses and are also looking for new niche markets.

> This idea of hyper specialization isn't imposed by the official model, it's not from CNE, it's not from MEC, it's the institutions that design the courses that way. Some with a marketplace vision, private institutions wanting to offer something that will bring in the paying public, or something like that. And public institutions resisting the idea of increasing their traditional courses, and also searching for niches that aren't economic in the same way as the private schools, but that are niches nonetheless (Interviewee 6).

The interviewee describes the problems associated with excessive specialization – people specializing in a subfield of a subfield. First of all, it is not clear yet if there will be jobs for them in the future. Even more important is the fact that this basically equates to training technicians, and that is not the role of universities. These students are taught to perform some activities, but not to think about their realities or develop a deeper notion of citizenship.

> Engineering schools, so you can have an idea, instead of having 3 specialties, already have 10 or 12. What does that mean? It means that this young person will leave as a specialist in a subfield of a subfield. And we'll figure out later whether there will be work for this person. But at the same time, which kind of professional is being molded? It's essentially a technician. (…) And this young person isn't offered the opportunity for a broader discussion of anything, not the addition of his or her job in society, nor the role of the professional, nor the broader questions that are the foundation not of the professional technical activity but of citizenship (Interviewee 6).

He mentions that this hyper specialization is taking place even in institutions like the University of Brasília (UnB), which was created with the purpose of fighting this. UnB was founded in 1961 and its main goal was the "development of national culture and technology linked to the developmental project. This was the first Brazilian university that was not created via the amalgamation of preexistent schools; its structure was integrated, flexible, and modern and opposed itself to the university divided into professional courses" (Oliven, 2002, p. 32-33). The original idea of UnB, according to the interviewee, was to offer a more general and interdisciplinary education to students in the beginning of their programs, and then to specialize in the last years.

> This tendency is present even in institutions like UnB, which was created in order to stand against all this (...) So you will find in the original concept of UnB the idea that higher education, instead of being the education of specialists, should be a broad interdisciplinary

> education, comprehensive, and later this student will specialize. So beforehand he or she has a more general higher level education, not simply a secondary education review (Interviewee 6).

He says that under the Program of Support for Plans to Restructure and Expand Federal Universities (REUNI) there was the idea of promoting a reformation of institutions in this direction. And in fact some of the new federal universities created during Lula's government adopted the interdisciplinary bachelor's degree.

> In REUNI's discussion, at the beginning, in which I had the chance to participate, the discussion was along these lines (of interdisciplinary education). That REUNI wouldn't just be the addition of open spaces in the university, but a reformation of the patterns of this philosophy. Today at some institutions there are interdisciplinary bachelor's degrees, there are universities in this framework, such as ABC, such as West Pará, to some extent that of Mercosur, and the interdisciplinary bachelor's degree was implemented in other universities, like in Bahia (Interviewee 6).
>
> In the universities that were created during this time this kind of idea has a chance, but in the already-established universities like UnB and many others this vision of hyper specialization unfortunately prevailed according to my point of view and we will see the societal consequences of this (Interviewee 6).

At UnB, as he describes, this idea was rejected. The institution chose to continue with its traditional courses. In his view this was a mistake and the consequences of that decision will be seen soon.

> This idea was rejected at UnB and so we opted for the traditional model that creates ever more specialized courses. I think that it was an error, that there isn't an easy remedy and that it will create ramifications for society that will be seen in the future (Interviewee 6).

In relation to the most critical aspects of higher education in Brazil, some interviewees mention historical circumstances while others make reference to contemporary issues. An interviewee, for instance, says that Brazilian universities have a structural problem; they were not seen as strategic from the beginning. Besides their late creation, their first courses were created in order to meet the market's immediate demands. An important problem pointed out by many interviewees is the small percentage of the Brazilian population that has access to higher education. The public sector is very small in relation to the private sector. Some interviewees explain that the growth of the system was not well planned, and today many see the privatization of higher

education as problematic. Some interviewees mention the excess of governmental regulation as negative, on the one hand, but acknowledge the existence of quality issues, on the other hand. At federal universities in particular, restrictions on the universities' autonomy seem to be a problem. A final element brought up by one interviewee is the early and excessive specialization of students during undergraduate courses. In the next subsection, the views of the interviewees on the diversification of higher education will be considered.

4.2.4 – The diversification of higher education

In Brazil there is a debate among educators as to whether the diversification of higher education institutions and courses is good or bad. The diversification of institutions means basically the creation of institutional types different from the current university model. The diversification of courses, in turn, means the creation of higher education programs different from the traditional four- or five-year undergrad programs. Some view this as a negative trend because it creates institutions and courses with different roles and statuses. The argument is that this might contribute to segregate students, as they are already segregated into distinct social classes. In the end, the result would be that elite institutions and courses would be available to *some* versus the popular/second-class institutions and courses that would be open to many, especially to the economically disadvantaged. Others view this as a positive trend, which can help to create more opportunities in higher education. One of their arguments is that diversification could generate a variety of institutions and courses for people with diverse interests, vocations, and abilities.

The diversification of higher education is certainly a theme that polarizes the opinions of academics. This polarization was evident in the interviewees' differing perspectives. There are those that see this change as unavoidable, those that support this approach, and those that are against the trend it for several reasons.

According to one interviewee, the diversification of higher education is not only necessary but also inevitable. According to him, it is impossible to expand higher education using the university as the only model because this is a very expensive alternative.

> It's not as much necessary as inevitable. Inevitable why? Because you won't have the conditions to have a public policy for expansion of the model university. It's very expensive. If you throw more money into education you will have to play around with the basics, it doesn't allow for playing with higher [education] much more than what you're playing now. So you have to have a mechanism to diversify in order to have expansion at the lowest cost (Interviewee 5).

Another interviewee agrees that traditional higher education courses in Brazil are expensive. He adds that many people that go through that training work in different areas after they graduate. In his view there is a strong tendency toward continuing with the current model.

> What I think will happen is that there is going to be an intensification of an education that is expensive in terms of cost, in terms of time and investment by the student and by the institution for them to labor outside of that area. This will stay the same or will increase, I think. But we will only know this when the data has been around for some time (Interviewee 6).

According to another interviewee, Brazil has a very traditional system not only in undergraduate but also in graduate programs. In his opinion it takes a very long time to graduate with a Ph.D.

> I'll give you an example: you take a profession like engineering, law, dentistry, pharmacy, that take 5 years for the bachelor's degree, requires 2 more years to do the master's degree, plus 4 in order to do the doctorate. It takes 11 years to graduate as a doctor, so a very long time. You take Europe today, you produce a doctor in 8 years (Interviewee 3).

Other voices suggest that Brazil currently needs new kinds of undergrad courses; or that the country needs to create alternatives to the traditional courses, such as medical school and engineering. One interviewee says that there is a taboo in this area. According to her, the research university not necessarily offers the best qualification. In addition to that, more time in higher education does not always mean better qualification.

> It doesn't mean a worse education because you are finishing a course of study in 3 years. There's no guarantee that because I stayed at the university 5 years that I'm much better

> prepared. I think that this is an illusion. (…) You have people that are sometimes staying longer, 4 years, only paying a portion. And perhaps even if he or she stayed there 10 years, it wouldn't improve anything in his or her life (Interviewee 7).

In her perspective, diversification is positive and necessary. It makes it possible to offer faster courses to meet market demands, including distance education courses. She thinks that the problem is that the process of diversification happened along with massification and without taking into consideration the issue of quality. These courses started to be offered by private institutions without a commitment to the quality of education and, as a result, this goal/idea became a myth. That is why, in her view, today there are many people that see the research university as the only standard for quality.

> I think that [the diversification of higher education] is a very necessary and positive process. What's the problem? The problem is that this process of diversification occurred at the same time as the massification (…), a massification without quality. So what should be a positive process in my view, because you're offering the opportunity of a technological education, (…) [becomes negative because it] begins to be undertaken basically by private institutions without any commitment to the quality of the education (…) The process was done in a way that didn't allow the assurance of a minimum [of quality] in the education. And with that the discussion about diversification became a myth. As if the only model for quality were the research universities (Interviewee 7).

She defends the idea that diversification brings more opportunities to students and is also a sign of respect for their desires.

> It's a question of respect for the student's desire. At time the student doesn't want 5 years of education in order to practice some kind of professional activity within a technological area. But he has to complete 5 years of engineering. No. You have to have another quality education and that will also give the student access to other careers and eventually to the university (Interviewee 7).

Some interviewees state that there is not enough diversification in higher education in Brazil. New institutions in the country, as one of them explains, mean one more institution, not a new kind of institution.

> In various ways we don't diversify this matter of access to higher education. Today we badly and poorly offer the technology course. For every three new accreditations, one is a course of technology in CNE. This is a very high rate. And the others are bachelor's (…) Look at the federal institutions that the government created, the same as the technological

> ones, they are already moving into another area that isn't theirs. Everyone wants to copy [traditional universities] (Interviewee 2).

This same interviewee thinks that excessive regulation is a hindrance to the emergence of innovations in terms of institutions and courses. As an example, he mentions the distance education courses, which today are subject to governmental regulation. It is necessary to recognize, however, that the regulations for distance education (whether excessive or not) were generated due to several problems identified in this area.

The interviewee also criticizes the way that technological courses were created in Brazil. There is a catalog created by the Ministry of Education specifying the kinds of courses that can be offered. In his view this is the same as creating something new through the lenses of the old.

> The technological courses come already set by a highly controlled catalog, because our tendency is to create the new by looking to the past (Interviewee 2).

He continues by saying that the Brazilian model is not flexible. For instance, the National Counsel of Education (CNE) defines curriculums and specifies the number of hours for each course. He believes that the country should have shorter courses, to meet some regional demands and some present-day demands.

> The Brazilian model is very closed, (...) for example, (…) a curriculum is drawn up by the National Counsel with so many hours, so much that ends up impeding this "versatility" to some extent, so I see that we will have to have, for example, shorter courses to answer the demand, some regional demands and demands of the moment. So I think that a shorter course today would serve an important market in the country (Interviewee 3).

In his opinion there should be a national debate about curriculum. He mentions that a curriculum that is adequate for a state in the north of Brazil might be inadequate for another state in the south. Today, according to him, there is great inflexibility.

> This is a challenge that would need to be discussed at the national level. (...) Many times you have a fixed curriculum, but it is very inflexible. (…) We have different situations, the country is one continent, so the curriculum that works for Amazonas doesn't work for Rio Grande do Sul, that works for Sao Paulo doesn't work for Bahia, and today there is a great deal of inflexibility (Interviewee 3).

There is also great resistance to the idea of diversification coming from students. As one interviewee underlines, this is part of the country's culture. Students only believe they can gain status through a regular four- or five-year course, which gives them the title of bachelor.

One interviewee sees diversification of higher education as part of the logic of subordination of the country to powerful circuits in the international economy. In his analysis Brazil has become industrialized, but its production continues to be subordinated. The country is not inserted into the production chains in knowledge-intensive areas. For instance, it produces aluminum and other minerals needed to produce computer chips, but not the chip itself.

> From this logic comes the subordination of the country to powerful circuits of the international economy. Today Brazil more and more is positioning its economy more strategically toward commodities. What this means is orienting the production equipment toward [producing] commodities, producing soy, ethanol, cellulose, producing animal protein, meat, that is primary products that can be reindustrialized. They aren't the primary products of the 19th century, not the ancient colonial pact that existed in the 19th century, it is an industrialized process, but it is subordinated, that is, here in Brazil we aren't producing [computer] chips. We're producing aluminum, we're producing necessary minerals, (…) but we aren't inserted into the chains of production in the intensive-knowledge areas (Interviewee 4).

This economic subordination of Brazil still, according to the interviewee, has an impact on education. There is a notion in effect according to which a small percentage of the population needs more sophisticated training, while the majority of the workforce only needs a basic level of education. Most of those who do go on to higher education, according to this logic, should have access to shorter courses. He associates these shorter courses with those offered in the U.S. community colleges or in the first-cycle of the European courses after the Bologna Process.

> Looking at this picture, what need is there to educate the workforce? What is being discussed in countries like Brazil, Portugal, Spain, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico? It's that the most sophisticated education, we could say, is for 3 or 4% of the workforce. Ten or 15% a tertiary education, and the rest a secondary education or basic education. These students that are in tertiary education must be directed to short-term educational institutions, after the model of U.S. community colleges, with a more condensed education, that is very similar to the first bachelor's cycles that existed in the Bologna process. A first-cycle education like in France (Interviewee 4).

Another interviewee agrees that the diversification of higher education does not seek to meet social demands or to strengthen an educational system that meets the demands of society. To him, diversification has as its fundamental goal meeting market demands. It consists of cheaper courses that are faster and more instrumental, targeted to a specific and circumstantial market demand.

> The fundamental tenet (...) of proposing market-based alternatives in the sense of cheaper education modules (…), whether public or private, is that they answer [market demands] in the most rapid and instrumental way. [This is] an education directed at a certain circumstantial market demand, from commerce and industry (Interviewee 1).

In his opinion, this does approach not promote social development. On the contrary, it keeps the national economic system subaltern to more powerful economic systems (those that are at the core of the world system). In order to have a strong economic system, in his view, it is necessary to have a highly qualified population, and this takes place in good universities and courses. He mentions that the diversification of higher education has been implemented in many countries, and that this will bring future problems.

> The United States based its university system on policies, at times even circumstantial, meant to strengthen the states' public universities and also on policies of mass higher education, particularly after the war. And this gave them a great jump in the capacity to develop socially, scientifically, technologically, and industrially throughout the 1940s until the 1960s. And there too the different possibilities for education are being fragmented and access to quality institutions becoming increasingly difficult. This will result in problems, without a doubt, even according to the analysis of American educators (Interviewee 1).

The Brazilian university, in its beginning, emulated the French model of higher education, as one interviewee explains. This model was designed to train specialists during undergrad. Students start their programs knowing what kind of professionals they are going to become in four, five, and sometimes six years. For instance, they may choose to become physicians, lawyers, or engineers, among others. There are those in favor of a more general education during undergrad. They support, for instance, courses known as interdisciplinary bachelor's degrees. Others prefer to continue with the traditional specialized courses that are most common in Brazil. Finally, there are some that defend the idea of even more specialization, or training students in specific subfields.

According to one interviewee, with the recent expansion of federal universities, these institutions had the chance to decide to continue to offer traditional courses or to change them. Universities could continue to offer courses that lead toward specialization, but many of them chose to create subspecializations. In other words, they decided to continue to train specialists, but now in subfields of knowledge. In his view this was a mistake.

> The elitist model, essentially French, the idea of advanced studies schools, is the idea of training specialists. And this is the history of Brazilian universities. With the undergraduate education you will be training professionals in professions that are going to be regulated (…) The young person enters the university already knowing that he or she will leave a psychologist, a teacher, or a doctor. And with the expansion of the universities there was a dilemma. Either we will open more vacancies in the same courses, or instead of opening 50 vacancies in psychology, 200 or 300, or we will create specialties and continue training people as specialists now in subareas of knowledge. This was especially promoted by REUNI and other expansion propositions from the past government including creating subspecialties of knowledge, offering along with the schools a new course, a course that attracts students, etc. And also so we don't keep producing more of the same [professionals]. This was a strategy that was mistaken and is now very difficult to change (Interviewee 6).

This was the option of many universities, according to him, including the University of Brasilia (UnB). He points out that the global trend of knowledge today is toward integration not specialization. The process of subspecialization will lead many people, in his assessment, to underemployment or unemployment.

> It was the decision, not even a conscious one, it was made in the in rush of this expansion process and ended up being implemented here at UnB. And this will have its consequences for society, and they will only be understood, comprehended with the passing of time, to the degree to which you look back and reflect on this process. This, in my opinion, was an error. It is essentially to condemn a good part of this youth to subemployment and to unemployment. (…) The worldly tendency in knowledge today is not toward narrowing, it is toward integration (Interviewee 6).

He supported the idea of reformulating higher education as proposed by Anísio Teixeira.[44] This idea, however, met with resistance in society. According to the interviewee, the model of subspecialization prevailed in most universities.

[44] Anísio Teixeira was one of the most prominent Brazilian educators. He was one of the signatories of a famous manifesto in Brazilian educational history in 1932, entitled "Educational Reconstruction in Brazil: To the People and the Government," which became known as the Manifesto of the Pioneers of New Education. In summary, this manifesto "advocated the adoption of an educational system that was public, free of charge, compulsory and secular" (Cury, 2000). He held many public positions as a professor and as an administrator; and was one of the masterminds of

> The idea that I defended (...) was that we could have a reasonable reformulation of higher education in the patterns of Anisio Teixeira, of the named bachelor's. But this didn't have much space. I believe that it is even an idea so revolutionary that in our own society there should be some resistance. I'm following to some extent the case of Bahia, which should be turning out the first graduating classes now, and it's a problem. So what is done today is this, is subspecialization. We have areas of traditional knowledge from the centuries like biology and others, but we also have subspecialties and we'll see the consequences of this (Interviewee 6).

In his opinion, universities are not supposed to prepare people for specific corporations. In fact many companies today have their own programs to prepare graduates to work for them.

> If you take a look at the bigger world, the large companies have their own universities. And they select their employees from among those exiting other universities and they give them a new education, in order to [prepare them to] work in that specific business. (…) Because the university doesn't prepare [one] for this (…). Indeed it can't prepare for this (Interviewee 6).

Another interviewee brings a different perspective. He criticizes what he calls a fantastic enthusiasm for the educational reforms taking place in Europe, expressed in the creation of the interdisciplinary bachelor's degree.[45] In his view, there is a huge mistake happening in Brazil, which is the disqualification of the disciplinary courses. He says that the interdisciplinarity only makes sense if there is a disciplinarity. That is the epistemology that needs be followed, according to him.

> the elimination of the disciplinary courses [is a mistake]. Of this kind: the creation of a bioethics course (…) devalues biology and devalues philosophy. There no longer exists biology nor philosophy, now it's bioethics. So the interdisciplinarity only makes sense if there were disciplinarity. I think that this is the best epistemology that we can have. And this type of thing is being eliminated in a very intense way (Interviewee 8).

The interviewee criticizes the fact that the interdisciplinary bachelors programs are being implemented in Brazil simultaneously along with the traditional courses of higher education. These traditional courses have been in place since the beginning of higher education in the country, as mentioned before, and have a professionalizing tendency. This duality inside the system is the worst

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the University of Brasília, created in 1962.

[45] He is making reference to the Process of Bologna. "The objectives of the Bologna Declaration do not address issues of disciplinization directly, but the disciplinary order is being affected by the implementation process in most countries" (Suárez and Suárez, 2005, p. 15).

thing that can happen, from his point of view.

> [the interdisciplinary bachelors] are being created along with the courses of professional character that we have had for 200 years. I am against this niche. Changing all of the higher education teaching models to implement the interdisciplinary bachelor's like in the North American colleges is an alternative, I think it's not a good alternative for Brazil. But it's an alternative. Now the worst thing is to have (…) the duality of these two types of teaching. Professional education from the first year of higher education (…) next to the interdisciplinary bachelor's programs. I think this is very bad (Interviewee 8)

In relation to institutional diversification, as explained in subsection 4.2.1, in Brazil institutions of higher education can be classified as universities, university centers, or schools (*faculdades*). In addition to that, in 2008 the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (Federal Institutes) were created during Lula's government. One interviewee mentions that the university centers are not a good institutional model. Although they do not have the same status and responsibilities as universities—to develop research and service besides teaching—they share the same privilege—the autonomy to create new courses.

> In Brazil this odd figure of the university center was created, an institution that doesn't have university status, but has all the advantages of a university: autonomy to register its own diploma, and it is a sector of very low quality (Interviewee 8).

There are different perspectives in relation to the Federal Institutes, which will be better considered in subsection 4.2.6. Some interviewees associate these institutes with the U.S. community colleges. While some consider this an important advance, others have a more critical viewpoint.

One interviewee thinks that Brazil is going toward an interesting model with the Federal Institutes. He believes that it is important that research universities be more selective, and non-university institutions in the public sector be open to more students. In his opinion, there should be a better integration between the Federal Institutes and the federal universities. He mentions what happens in the U.S., with the community colleges and the universities.

> In the recent period, with the expansion of Federal Institutes, from the CEFETS, I think that we are moving toward a model that would be more adequate, or rather, you have research institutions, which are more selective, and you have a more decentralized system, of the

> people, of non-university courses of higher instruction in the public sector. So I think that this tendency for growth in the Federal Institutes in the Lula government just as in the Dilma government is very positive (Interviewee 5).

> It is lacking, and in that regard the American model is good, it is a better integration of the Federal Institutes with the universities. Or rather, you have a mechanism for selection within the Federal Institutes for the students who wished to continue the university model to have transition mechanisms. It's what you have in community colleges for the universities (Interviewee 5).

Another interviewee talks about the connections between reforms taking place in Brazil and international trends. He mentions in particular the creation of the Federal Institutes and its similarity to the U.S. community colleges. According to him, this is due to an agreement for technical cooperation between Brazil and the U.S. (the MEC – USAID agreements). He also refers to the diversification touted by the World Bank in many of its publications.

> This logic here in Brazil is already in practice in Federal Institutes, which have an education more and more akin to the community colleges, and it's not casual because there is an agreement between MEC and USAID, in the sense that USAID is helping with the diffusion of the model of the community colleges for the federal network of technological education. This model is defended to the universities. (…) It is not being implemented in a generalized manner because it has faced resistance, criticisms, in an institutional culture within the universities that resist this, that doesn't accept this logic. But anyhow this form is a diversification that is already foreseen in the documents of the World Bank beginning in 2002. Curiously, if you analyze the material you perceive that the World Bank doesn't speak any more about higher education in Latin America. It only speaks of tertiary education. And what is tertiary education? It is post-secondary education, it is something after high school (Interviewee 4).

As is possible to see, the interviewees have different views regarding the diversification of higher education. Some consider it positive and needed because it creates more opportunities for students with different goals and abilities; and the university model is very expensive to for all students to attend. Others believe that the creation of new types of institutions and courses meet market demands, and not necessarily social demands. While some think that higher education courses should become more interdisciplinary, others defend the opinion that they should continue to be focused on disciplines. An interviewee underlines that courses are becoming even more specialized in Brazil. The theme of the next subsection discusses policies to grant access to higher education.

4.2.5 – Policies to grant access to higher education

Access to higher education in Brazil, as one interviewee explains, comes from a very elitist tradition. There was an idea that this level of education was reserved for a few – those that would take control of the country. This notion persisted for a long time, and only during the end of the 20th century did things start to change. Although today access is increasing at a fast pace, higher education still includes only a small percentage of the population.

> Brazil essentially founded its higher education within an elitist framework. Higher education would be for a few, these few would be well educated and they would take the reins of the country. And it was done like this for many decades. (…) Access comes from a history that is still (…) very elitist, from a history still tied to a Brazilian culture of not having a tradition in the area of higher education. That is now changing, and at a very fast rate, but I think that it is still very segmented, it is very closed, still very oriented toward a certain portion of the population (Interviewee 2).

To illustrate how exclusive the higher education system in Brazil is even today, an interviewee uses data about the number of students that apply per vacancies offered in his institution. He says that each year they have around 30,000 candidates for 2,000 vacancies, or 15 students per vacancy. In some courses that are very difficult to get access to the ratio goes up to 60 students per vacancy.

> Our traditional model is essentially exclusive. We have 30,000 candidates for 2,000 openings. That is, 15 to 1, 15 have to die for 1 to enter. And in some courses, the number is 60 or 100, that is, it's extremely elitist in the sense that higher education is for a few (Interviewee 6).

It is true that the process to gain access to higher education in Brazil is highly selective, particularly in some public universities and some courses. In the last *vestibular* of the University of São Paulo, for instance, the number of students per vacancy for international relations course was 64.5 to 1; for medical school it was 70 to 1; and for advertising and market it was 80 to 1 (Anuario…, 2012). The general figures for the country, however, are different.

Table 36 – Number of vacancies offered and students that applied for classroom undergraduate courses, per sector (2011)

	Vacancies offered	Students that applied	Students that applied per vacancy
Brazil total	4,453,431	9,963,763	2.2
Public sector	531,489	5,257,898	9.9
Federal	300,808	3,754,023	12.5
State	163,510	1,413,082	8.6
Municipal	67,171	90,793	1.4
Private sector	3,921,942	4,705,865	1.2

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

In 2011, there was a rate of 2.2 students per vacancy in Brazilian institutions of higher education. If one looks only at the public sector, there were 9.9 students applying per vacancy. In the federal institutions the rate is even higher, 12.5 students per vacancy. This higher rate of competition for vacancies in public institutions is due not only to the fact that instruction is free, but also to the overall better quality of education that they offer. In the private sector, there was a rate of around 1.2 students per vacancy. That is why one interviewee said that access to higher education in the private sector today is very easy, particularly in some institutions. The challenge is to get access to a higher education of quality. This is still reserved for a few.

> Access today is facilitated by the private sector. The private sector finds a market with this pent up demand. Today access in terms of simple access is easy. Now access to quality education is difficult. It is restricted to a few (Interviewee 2).

According to one interviewee, higher education could and should be made universal. In his opinion, the moment that the government decides not to invest in public higher education, it has to spend a lot of effort to decide who is entitled to access higher education and who is not. In other words, instead of including all, the government keeps discussing and amending its exclusion criteria. All selective exams, in his view, are ways to select and exclude. His conclusion states the obvious, that those who have a better economic situation and have access to a better K-12 education will have an advantage.

> The moment in which the government adopts a policy of not investing sufficient resources to universalize higher education, it continues to refine the different policies of selecting who has the right to access higher education and these policies in general are perverse and favor the person who from their early education had more opportunities to quality education,

> which is very few people. And thus you continue refining criteria of exclusion about who can access the higher education that should be, and could be, universal (Interviewee 1).

Since higher education is not universalized in Brazil, there needs to be a selective exam. In the beginning of higher education the vacancies were basically reserved for students that attended traditional high schools. In 1911 the Minister of Justice and Business introduced an exam for access to higher education, which in 1915 started to be called the *vestibular*. For years this exam worked the way it was created, until a phenomenon known in Brazil as the *crise de excedentes* (crisis of surplus) happened. Around that time, students were being approved with the minimum grade required by the *vestibular*, but there were no vacancies in institutions of higher education for them. The law 5.540 (11/28/1976), which reformed higher education in Brazil, said that the *vestibular* was required to access undergrad courses and that this exam should be unified per institution (each institution having only one exam) (Art. 17 and 21). A subsequent regulation dictated that the *vestibular* should operate though the classification process, accepting students up to the limit of the vacancies offered by institutions and courses (Decree 68.908, 07/13/1971).

The *vestibular*, as one interviewee points out, is supposedly a meritocratic exam that selects the most prepared students. In essence, as Nogueira (2008) explains, the *vestibular* can be understood as an exam that seeks to identify the best academically prepared students so that they can follow their scholarly trajectory at the higher level. At the core of this exam is the notion of merit as a determining element in the definition of who will or will not have access to this level of education (p. 132).

The author recalls, however, that there are different kinds of merit. Barrozo (2004), for example, makes a distinction between instrumental and personal merit. The first, according to his explanation, refers to the possession of determined abilities, acquired, generally, through a school education. The second, also according to the author, is related to the performance of people in certain situations, taking into account the opportunities that they have had throughout their lives. The traditional *vestibulares*, no doubt, adopt the instrumental merit as resources for identifying future students of higher education institutions. For this reason, they are rightly appointed as an

elitist instrument of selection, taking into consideration that instrumental merit has a strong relation to the socioeconomic conditions of the person (p. 132).

One interviewee explains that during the dictatorship, when the private sector of higher education experienced a boom, this sector started to adopt a unified selective system (the same exam would be used to select students for the public and private sectors). And in fact unified selective processes were created, but not nationally.

> The public university in Brazil is a selective institution, not a universal institution. Free access doesn't exist. So there has to be a criterion for selection. And the criterion for selection is meritocracy, in which the system of evaluation, called the *vestibular*, in theory would be selecting the best students because of their intrinsic merit. This was the logic of the *vestibular*. During the dictatorship we had an expansion of the private schools. What was the drama? We didn't have many students in high school. The private sector began to grow. And so what does the private sector demand? That the system of evaluation be the same as the public universities'. This was imposed, it wasn't a decision of the universities. (…) Or rather, the vestibular was unified, but not nationally. And this was the imposition of the dictatorship and the private sector (Interviewee 4).

According to the interviewee this led to the creation, for instance, of CESGRANRIO and to the unified selection process for public and private institutions in Rio de Janeiro. Students who were not approved for public institutions because of their exam grades would in many cases go to private institutions. They were already approved, so some families would make an effort to pay for their studies.

> [With] the creation of the CESGRANRIO system, a private institution that created a unified *vestibular* [for] private and public [schools], whomever didn't pass the public went to the private. They had already passed, so the family sacrificed, and [the student] ended up going [to college] and such (Interviewee 4).

He continues to explain that with redemocratization of Brazil, public universities started to refashion their *vestibular*. In his analysis, the unified exams were not adequate in terms of their requirements. With their new *vestibular* universities put more emphasis on critical thinking about the content and in his opinion the exams were improved.

> With the redemocratization the public universities once again made their *vestibular* exams, starting in 1982, 1984. Various universities started writing their own *vestibular* exams, they left the unified system. Why did they leave? First, because they determined that this form of

> selection wasn't adequate, the type of question, the way it was organized, all multiple choice, it didn't allow for the students to better explore their knowledge, it didn't value the students' writing very much, it was impacting high school [curriculum] in an inadequate way, it didn't value the students' textual education. (…) So the universities turned to making *vestibular* exams that emphasized critical thinking over content, over science. It again gave a certain weight to open-ended questions, there was a better movement toward dialogue with the public networks to know what was happening in high school, how the tests could be changed to incorporate changes to middle school [curriculum]. In sum, the *vestibulares*, in my opinion, improved in quality (Interviewee 4).

The *vestibular,* however, continued to be very criticized by many specialists and also by students. The main critique is that the exam focuses too much on academic context and not enough on the connections between its content and real life. Despite the widespread idea that the *vestibular* allows universities to select the best students, in one interviewee's opinion there are no elements that assure that. To him, in practice the *vestibular* seeks to select a number of students equal to the number of vacancies institutions have.

> So this is the notion of the *vestibular*: If I am able to make the number of approved candidates equal to the number of open vacancies, I've done well. But I don't know whether I selected the best prepared. I will intuit it. And the manner of doing this intuitively is the way many people graduate (Interviewee 6).

This interviewee questions the way the traditional *vestibular* is formulated and implemented by institutions of higher education. Each year exams are created with the expectation of selecting the best students, but it is not possible to know if they are succeeding.

> The *vestibular* in the universities is an initiative, from the technical point of view, [that is] totally intuitive. Every time the test is different, made by people who are selected for this, and if they succeed they are able to differentiate students to enter. Now if this has to do with a greater capacity in terms of knowledge gained in secondary school, among those who do or don't enter, no one would know this. No one will ever know. Because every test is torn up, thrown in the trash (Interviewee 6).

He says that traditional universities such as the University of Sao Paulo and the University of Brasilia think that they know how to best select their students, but in practice this was never tested. The reason is the same: each year they elaborate a new exam based on people's ideas of which kind of items/questions would be best to measure a student's knowledge. This, as he explains, can and should be scientifically tested.

> Traditional universities like USP, UnB, and others have the idea that they know best how to select their students. And in fact this was never tested. Because of this, every vestibular is a test that starts from ground zero, from nothing. It has no basis except in people's heads. Oh, I think that this question will tell me who's the best student. But this was never tested. It was never tested. This can be scientifically tested (Interviewee 6).

The proposal of a unified *vestibular* that was introduced during the dictatorship and rejected by the public universities came back, but this time with the support of these institutions. And now it is back as a national exam coordinated by the Ministry of Education. It is interesting to note that the idea of a national *vestibular* in Brazil was considered more than 30 years ago, and strongly objected to by some. The National Commission of the Unified Vestibular (CONVESU) was created in 1970 by the minister Jarbas Passarinho to implement aspects of the Law 5.540 (1968). In a paper written around 1984, the then-president of CESGRANRIO and professor of an important private institution in Rio de Janeiro, Carlos Alberto Serpa de Oliveira, said that "some absurd ideas were proposed to CONVESU." In his words,

> There were, for example, those that suggested to MEC the idea of a "mega/grand *vestibular*", a proposal like this: "we will make one vestibular in the country, in only one day, for the whole world, to distribute to vacancies all over the country." Utter craziness, as you can see (Oliveira, 1984, p. 17).

As time passed, however, this project of a *vestibulão*[46] was revisited. Today, despite many criticisms, the idea has been supported by important groups, as soon will be mentioned.

MEC had given/possessed an exam entitled National Exam of High School (ENEM) since 1998. This exam, according to MEC, was created "in order to assess student performance at the end of K-12 education, seeking to contribute to improving the quality of schooling" (http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/enem/sobre-o-enem). The participation of students in the exam was voluntary, and some universities could use ENEM as part of their selection process to access higher education. That is why one interviewee explains that ENEM was created with two purposes: to evaluate high school graduates and select students for higher education. This double purpose, which is present in similar exams in other countries, was never seen as positive by the interviewee.

[46] *Vestibulão* is the superlative of *vestibular*.

> [ENEM] was created with these two purposes: evaluate graduates from secondary school and those entering higher education. From the beginning this double rationale didn't please me. This double rationale also exists in France with the *Baccalauréat* or in Germany with the *Abitur* (Interviewee 8).

In fact, Castro (2010), an assessor of the minister of education, declares that he perceived considerable ambiguity in the proposal of ENEM. As he says: "there was no clarity in terms of its uses. But anyway ENEM was created, disconnected from the curriculum of secondary school and seeking to evaluate more 'generic' levels of competency of students" (p. 273).

In the interviewee's perspective, ENEM was a good idea as an evaluation of high school graduates. The exam could have a positive impact on changing the focus of high school: to prepare students for things other than higher education.

> ENEM was, I think, an excellent idea as a high school exit exam. (…) I think that in the case of Brazil our exam had an enormous importance in changing the content of high school toward a different direction of preparation for higher education (Interviewee 8).

The interviewee continues to explain that there has always been pressure to use ENEM as a mechanism to select students for higher education. This pressure started during FHC's government and continued during Lula's.

> The bad thing was the pressure so that ENEM was at the same time a mechanism of access to higher education. This pressure began with former minister Paulo Renato's and continued and grew a great deal with Lula's ministers, Haddad especially. And there I think was the great harm of ENEM, because I liked it as a high school exit exam (Interviewee 8).

The representative of MEC explained that ENEM was already being used as a selective process for students in private institutions, through PROUNI. In his view, it would make sense to use it to select students for public institutions as well. In order to fulfill this mission, however, ENEM needed to be reformulated. For instance, he mentioned that the exam, which previously took place during one day, now takes place over two days. The number of questions increased from 90 to 180 in four areas of knowledge.

> We began to see the following: PROUNI was already using ENEM to select students in private universities in 2004. Why not use ENEM as a criterion for the selection of students

> in federal universities and institutions? So we did a project with INEP and verified that it was possible, for this we had to make changes to the test, because before it was only one day, it had only 90 questions, and now it changed to have 180 questions in four areas (Interviewee 9).

This reformulation, according to the previous interviewee, made ENEM lose its relevance as an evaluation of high school graduates and as a catalyst of change at this level of education. What MEC claims, however, is that ENEM never achieved the goal of positively impacting high school, and this is precisely what the New ENEM tries to do, as it will be presented soon.

> Higher education put enormous pressure on changing the methodology of ENEM, in the sense of requiring knowledge in some disciplines, since it was already aimed at selecting students for higher education. And this removed the characteristics of ENEM as a non-disciplinary mechanism of evaluation, I think that this was its great advantage, of high school (…). The ENEM now lost this characteristic. So it was depleted. We lost a chance to do a great thing (Interviewee 8).

The representative of the Ministry of Education described how the idea of using ENEM as a national exam emerged. He said that MEC presented this proposal to public universities and they had the chance to offer suggestions. MEC presented a report on the New ENEM that was approved by both the National Association of Directors of Federal Institutions of Higher Education (ANDIFES) and the National Education Council Secretariats[47] (CONSED). According to this document, the exam focuses on four areas: Languages, Codes and their Technologies (including an essay); Human Sciences and their Technologies; Natural Sciences and their Technologies; and Mathematics and their Technologies. There are five cognitive axes that are common to all four areas: Master languages; Understand phenomenon; Confront situations-problems; Construct arguments; and Develop proposals. Each one of the four areas, then, requires some competencies and abilities (Matriz…, 2009).

The replacement of the *vestibular* by the New ENEM was also well received by the National Student Union (UNE). Although, as the MEC representative explains, the idea of the New ENEM emerged from discussions with representatives of universities, claims to replace the *vestibular* by

[47] The Ministry of Education is in charge of managing education at the federal/national level. Each state and each municipality has a Secretariat of Education in charge of education at the state and local government levels. CONSED is the association of secretariats of states.

ENEM were presented by UNE during the discussion on university reform, in the first term of Lula's government. Nogueira (2008) says that this was a requirement of students at the time, but it never came to be part of the reform proposal coordinated by MEC and the bill sent to the National Congress (p. 133).

Universities can still decide how to use the results of the exam. They can use them as the only selective process or as part of their own selective processes. There are four options to use the exam: as the only step, with the unified selection system, computerized and online; as a first step; combined with the institution's *vestibular*; as an only step for the remaining vacancies arising from the *vestibular* (Retrieved at http://portal.mec.gov.br/. Date: 11/14/2012).

MEC discussed with federal universities the idea of using ENEM to select students for higher education, and many of them collaborated with the reformulation of the exam. In the proposal that MEC presented to ANDIFES there were two reasons mentioned for the reformulation of ENEM and its use as a new selective process: to induce the restructuring of high school curriculum and to democratize the opportunities to apply for vacancies in federal institutions of higher education. There were also concerns about the mobility of students.

According to MEC, the New ENEM could create "a positive relation between high school and higher education, through a debate focused on the guidelines of the exam" (Proposta…, 2009). One important issue at stake, as the representative of MEC explains, was the fact that the *vestibular* influenced the curriculum of high school. Many schools focus on preparing their students for higher education and thus their curriculum was based on contents required by universities in these exams. This influence, according to the interviewee's opinion, was mostly negative, since the traditional *vestibular* usually requires knowledge in a great number of subjects but with a limited depth. The idea with the new exam is to positively impact the high school curriculum.

> The proposal came about from our discussion with the universities, in a proposition from MEC so that there would be another form of selection for the universities. Because the *vestibular* in a way influenced the high school curriculum, in a non-positive way because we have a very large combination of subjects at a very surface level (…) we began a discussion around the issue of the *vestibular* that resulted in a proposal that we would in reality have,

> beginning with evaluation, a change also in the content of the high school curriculum (Interviewee 9).

Another interviewee agrees that there is a need to reformulate high school. According to her, to teach academic subjects such as Portuguese and Math is important, but it is also necessary to develop some specific competences in students, as proposed by ENEM.

> You also have to begin to stir things up in high school. Begin to work with other questions that aren't just those from the Portuguese and Math subjects, but the issue of proficiencies. I think this is extremely important (Interviewee 7).

The Law 9.394 (1996) addresses the connection between selective processes to access higher education and their impact in high school. According to this law, "the institutions of higher education credentialed as universities, upon deliberating about the criteria and norms of selection and admission of students, will take into account the effects of these criteria regarding the orientation of high school, in partnership with the normative institutions of the educational system" (Art. 51). There were other attempts to reformulate the high school curriculum. In 1999, the national curriculum guidelines for high school were approved, but in practice things did not change in schools. Schools, especially those in the private sector, argued that they could not implement modifications in their curriculums because they needed to prepare students for the *vestibular*. The fact is that the high school curriculum was in practice guided by *vestibular*. MEC says it changed the exam, among other goals, to stimulate changes in high school curriculums.

Also, according to the document that MEC presented to ANDIFES, "the decentralization of the selective processes, on the one hand, (…) favors candidates with greater acquisition power, capable of diversifying their options in the fight over offered vacancies. On the other hand, it restricts the capacity of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (IFES) to recruit students, disfavoring those institutions located in smaller cities". The new exam, thus, would bring about benefits for both students and institutions (Proposta…, 2009).

Students from the upper classes can go to different states and apply for different institutions, while students from lower classes in general have more difficulties in travelling, and thus their

options are limited. One interviewee says that one similarity between ENEM and SAT is that a student can use his or her results to apply to several institutions. He believes this is good for universities because it increases their chances to get better students. The access becomes more national than it currently is, because most students only apply to institutions in their own states.

> Something else from ENEM that SAT also offers is that you can enroll in several institutions in various courses. I know a colleague's daughter who did the *vestibular* in four different universities. She travelled to Sao Paulo, she travelled to Rio de Janeiro, she took it at UnB. If there were a unified test, like ENEM, she wouldn't need to. She could simply say, send my results to those universities. This is better for the university, because it increases its probability of having the best candidates, not only those that present themselves on the day, at the test. Nationalize access, so that the student from the northeast can make a claim to a university in the south. I think it has many advantages (Interviewee 6).

This comment is also related to the idea of a student's mobility, another concern expressed by the document of MEC. This document says that "data from the 2007 National Household Sampling Survey (PNAD/IBGE) show that, of all the students enrolled in the first year of higher education, only .04% have resided in the state in which they are living for less than one year." In the United States, in comparison, around 20% of students move from one state to another in order to access higher education (Proposta…, 2009).

Other interviewees agree that Brazil needs to make progress regarding the mobility of students particularly inside the country, and outside the country as well, if possible. The New ENEM is very connected to the Unified Selection System (SISU), an electronic system that coordinates the number of vacancies offered by public institutions with a student's results on ENEM. Through this system students can now, taking into consideration their New ENEM grades, apply to whatever institutions and courses they want all over Brazil. Their grades, in relation to other students' grades and the number of vacancies offered by a specific institution and major, will determine whether they have access or not to higher education. SISU, according to the interviewee's perspective, does not assure students' mobility, but it is an important step in that direction.

> I think that Brazil needs to advance a great deal in this way of thinking about mobility, and the SISU gives an opportunity for that, it allows that. We need to start to bring together more students, and also the views of different people, of cultures (Interviewee 7).

In many European countries students have to spend some time outside their universities, and some of them even go outside their country, as part of their academic program. The interviewee thinks that Brazil has to encourage similar practices. The biggest challenge is that the country is still poor compared to others. She mentions UNILAB as an example of an institution that is making progress in that area. In this institution, half of the students come from Africa and after their program they are required to return to their countries. There are plans to create mobility requirements for Brazilian students as well.

> In some institutions it is mandatory to spend six months at another institution. (…) We need to start doing that. But that is a challenge, we are still a poor country, we can't do that, but I think that universities need to make progress. UNILAB has that. Those from other countries have to return to their country. And if they don't return to their country they have to go somewhere else, they can't stay in UNILAB. And this will also be required of Brazilians. You have to go somewhere (Interviewee 7).

There are challenges with the process of stimulating mobility, however. An example of a huge problem is the level of students in different parts of the country. The New ENEM, according to one interviewee, helps to optimize the process of access to higher education. In his words, students after taking the New ENEM are holders of a "license" and can search for institutions that match their situation.

> The widespread admittance of young people had to be organized and optimized. So, the idea of the unified *vestibular* that was there in the dictatorship and was criticized by the public universities, returns to the scene. Why wouldn't a national unified *vestibular* be good? Because you take this populace as one whole, everyone takes the same test, employing a particular evaluation criterion, and now they are holders of a license to find a potential institution. So this created a demand, organized a demand. So you now have students that have credit in hand, a grade, X number of points. Then he or she goes to the medical major at university X, no, here their points don't let them enter. They go for the medical major at university Y, there it works. It didn't work here for medicine, I'll go to nursing. In other words, the student now has the mobility to find a place. This optimized and gave a new efficiency to the private sector (Interviewee 4).

This worked for the private sector, as two interviewees agree. One of them explains that private institutions now receive good students that were not able to get into public institutions, though programs such as PROUNI.

> PROUNI helped these private institutions to have a good student from a low-income family. Because PROUNI also is selective. It's based on [the grade of] ENEM. If it's based on ENEM it will take the best student from ENEM. (…) If you take PUC-Rio, for example, which is a sought-after institution because of its quality, from the ENEM competition you will get a natural selection. It will have an excellent low-income student, very well qualified. The result is there. The ENADE[48] of PUC is very high because it has a good student being admitted (Interviewee 2).

In relation to the public sector, some problems start to emerge. One interviewee gives an example regarding students that intend to go to medical school, most of them coming from the upper classes. They check if their grades will allow them to be accepted into their top choice institution, and when this is not possible they can start to check their performance another institutions. In many cases, according to the interviewee, it is financially a better idea to move to another state and study in a public institution rather than pay for a private institution in the state in which they current live.

> There is a management-related problem, which is increasing the efficiency of access. This was solved with the ENEM – a wonderful thing, in the private schools. In the public schools, problems began to appear. (…) In São Paulo you only have medicine in public universities at UNICAMP, USP, São Paulo medicine, I don't know if UNESP has now created this major. But let's say [that these institutions offer] 400 (…) vacancies per year. You will have a group of people that are relatively well educated, and you have 10,000 people wanting to study medicine, that have income and some level of education. Let's say 1,000 enter the public schools. The student is there with the ENEM test. With the ENEM, 1,000 obtain a place. If I leave here and come to Rio, my grade that didn't let me into São Paulo—let's say the last ENEM grade that allowed for entry into the vacancy, let's assume that it was equivalent to an 8 grade—but in Rio the last of the city's students to have filled those 1,000 vacancies would be someone who got a 7.5 grade, "Even having gotten a 7.9 in São Paulo, I was going to pay for a private school." A private school today, in a high quality medical major, costs around 4,000 or 5,000 *reais* per month. They come study here [in Rio de Janeiro] at UERG, at UFRJ, at UFI, they pay for accommodations, 1,000 *reais* per month, plus 1,500 allowances, 2,5000. A better university (Interviewee 4).

[48] The National Student Performance Exam (ENADE) is an exam that students take in Brazil at the end of their undergraduate course. This exam is part of a national evaluation of higher education conducted by the Ministry of Education, as it is going to be discussed in subsection 4.2.8.

This creates a problem in some parts of Brazil. According to the interviewee, in the last selective process for the Federal University of Rondonia (UNIR), in the north of Brazil, none of the students accepted for the medical major were from Rondonia. This happened because the grades of the students from Rondonia in the New ENEM were lower than the grades from students coming from other parts of the country. He says that students from high-income families have more mobility. Many of them are already used to seeking educational opportunities in other states, but now this process is easier and they go where they have the chance to fill the vacancies they want. This is particularly true for the more prestigious courses.

> I was in Rondonia. No medical student [approved in the last selective process] was from Rondonia. Everyone was from outside the state. Because the grades of the students in Rondonia on the ENEM were lower than the grades of those who had an ENEM paper and headed to Rondonia. How many people went to Bolivia to study medicine, in a course that who knows if it's recognized, paying a lot of money? You can study in Rondonia. Of course, the major still isn't mature, it needs to improve, but it is public. It's free. So in the public schools this problem begins to appear, that whoever has more mobility is whoever has a higher income. This is obvious. So there begins to be a migration of a student with a higher social profile, with more income. He or she begins to relocate in order to fill the vacancies in the majors. This is true not in the pedagogy major, social services, but in the so-called higher prestige majors: dentistry, medicine, law, communications, geology, this happens. There begins to be migration between the states (Interviewee 4).

He talks about the social consequences of this migration for some states. Students that graduate from medicine in Rondonia, for instance, will tend to go back to their own states or to states where they can have a better quality of life. This will have negative consequences for the state.

> Is there a social consequence in Rondonia with no medical student being from the state? There is! The person will graduate and immediately leave. What will he or she do there? Well, one person falls in love with a Rondonian girl, from Porto Velho, and stays, but the majority won't stay. He or she finishes the courses and immediately leaves, doesn't have roots there. So this is the consequence (Interviewee 4).

Another interviewee agrees that the New ENEM and SISU can be regressive in terms of democratizing higher education. He mentions that there can be a migration of students from the Southeast of Brazil to the northeast. It would be worthwhile for some students to migrate

temporarily from the richest to the poorest areas of the country to attend, for instance, medical school.

> [ENEM and the SISU] have the possibility of being regressive because particularly in the most difficult courses you can have an inverse migration. Or, students from the southeast going to the north and northeast. For example, studying medicine is maybe worth it. Because you have inequality at the high school level, in proficiency in high school education. So you can have the opposite influence, not a process of democratization, but to increase the concentration (Interview 5).

There are those that think that there is no difference between the *vestibular* and the New ENEM. To one interviewee, the New ENEM is a selective process similar to the *vestibular*. Those who do well on the *vestibular* will also do well on the New ENEM. The new exam, in his view, has no impact on the democratization of higher education.

> [Replacing the *vestibular* for the ENEM] makes no difference. It continues to be selective. (…) in 1990s, when you begging to use the ENEM as a criteria for access to universities, that is, it was used as a percentage, the convergence was practically 100%, whoever did well on the ENEM did well on the *vestibular*. So this business about the national ENEM democratizing, that is a false conversation. It makes no difference (Interview 5).

As Nogueira (2008) says, the ENEM tests, just like those that are adopted in large part from the selective exams to have access to higher education, are formulated on the basis of multiple choice items/questions in the different areas of knowledge. What differentiates this test from another, according to the info from INEP, institution responsible for its implementation, is that the ENEM test, "is interterdisciplinary and contextualized. Just as the *vestibular* tests encourage placing an excessive value on memory and the subjects themselves, the ENEM puts the student in front of the situations-problems and asks that more than knowing the concepts, he or she knows how to apply them" (p. 134).

Another interviewee says that the New ENEM dissimulates the *vestibular*. He says that many people now are saying that the *vestibular* is over, when in practice it is not. In fact, MEC itself recognizes the legitimacy of the *vestibular* when it proposed the new national selective process. What the ministry proposed was to nationalize the process (Proposta…, 2009). The

interviewee also says that now universities in many cases "wash their hands" in relation to selective processes.

> I don't see it as a good option as an entrance exam for higher education because it dissimulates the *vestibular*. You see a lot of people saying in the press that the *vestibular* is over. In other words, the university washes its hands, a significant expression, in ideological terms, with relation to the selection process (Interviewee 8).

One interviewee states that the New ENEM tries to do the same thing that the SAT does. Exams are formulated using a specific methodology – the Item Response Theory, and the items/questions are tested before being used. The exams, in his view, are perfected by this testing process. One important aspect in his opinion is that the exam is comparable to previous exams.

> What the ENEM tries to do, on a national scale, is repeat what is done in the USA with the SAT. They are tests that are perfected through a testing process and when they are used for university entrance the items have already gone through some assessment. And also [they are more] sophisticated [because of] the techniques that exist today for that. So when a young person goes to take that test he or she is not taking a test that was made up in an hour by some specialists that think that those questions are important. He or she will take a test with items that were perfected and that show they are more adequate, etc. (Interviewee 6).

He compares the scale of the ENEM in relation to SAT. While the SAT is usually taken by 300,000 students, now the ENEM is being taken by around 4 million. Since the exam is taken by a huge number of students in Brazil, he believes that this increases chances of having problems such as fraud. A possible solution would be, in his view, to offer the exam more often, like the United States does.

> Now the ENEM is an undertaking much bigger than the SAT. The SAT is 300,000 candidates per time, more or less. Here it's 4 or 5 million. In a country with a very heterogeneous, even fragile, infrastructure, you can imagine that this test has to be administered in places that can only be reached by boat. So doing this in Brazil is a herculean task. Maybe it's an impossible task. The probability of having some type of fraud is very high, because of the size of the task. So if this had a solution, the solution would really be [offering] multiple [versions of the test] like the SAT does.

The New ENEM had many problems during the first years of its implementation. In 2009, some days before the date of the New ENEM, the tests were stolen and released to the press. MEC was forced to postpone the exam and this had an impact on the ways universities used the results.

Some of them were not able to use them in the process of selection this first year. In 2010, printing errors were identified in some tests, among other serious problems. In 2011, one of the problems was that students from one school had access to some questions of the exam beforehand. Apparently teachers from this school were part of the commission that created some questions and they reproduced these questions in course readers. According to the interviewee, in this last exam MEC convinced the courts that it was possible to create a new exam that could be compatible with the one previously implemented and apply it only to students that had prior access to the exam. He says that this was a milestone in how lawyers deal with the issue in Brazil. In previous public contests it would have been necessary to apply the exam to all students again.

> Fernando Haddad achieved something I didn't expect – he was able to [convince] the court There was fraud in the ENEM and they said it would have to be repeated, costing 250 million or something like that. He was able to avoid that. And he convinced the court that it was possible to have equivalent tests without having the same items/questions. This was the first time that this happened in Brazilian courts, regarding public tests. The public tests that we did here at UnB a long while back, the questions had to be completely new, they had to be thrown out and had to be equal so that everyone could take the tests. The conditions had to be exactly the same, only they didn't require the same temperature in the classroom, but it gets to that type of exaggeration. So when the government, the MEC, was able to convince the courts that it was not necessary to redo the test for all the students, but that it was possible to apply another test for a small group with a similar effect, this was an incredible effort because I didn't believe, because I really followed these things, and in the court, there was always this thing: treating the candidates the same way means making the same items/questions. And this is a great accomplishment for the ENEM (Interviewee 6).

One interviewee thinks that many of the problems the exam is facing are related to its centralization. In his view, MEC should use the experience of public universities to improve the system. All federal and state universities, after all, have experience conducting their own *vestibular*. As he explains, many of these institutions are in charge of big public contests to select public employees that take place all over the country.

> I, for example, as president of ABRUEM [Brazilian Association of Rectors from State and Municipal Universities], suggested to minister Haddad at the time, that [ENEM] be decentralized a bit. It's very centralized, so some problems were due to centralization. The MEC could use the structure of the federal and state universities themselves throughout the country to work on this process (Interviewee 3).

He believes that the results of the New ENEM in the long run will be better than the results of the *vestibular*. In his words, despite all the criticism, the program is being perfected. The questions/items of the exam, for instance, now are more diversified.

> The ENEM, despite having received lots of criticism, it's a system that is being perfected, that maybe has to go through some changes. (…) It has already improved. The elaboration of the questions is already becoming a bit more diversified (…). The ENEM will be a system that, despite previous imperfections and criticisms, (…) will bring better results than the traditional *vestibular* (Interviewee 3).

To the representative of MEC, although the press says that there is an effort to discredit the New ENEM, due to the problems that the exam faced in the first years of its implementation, there has been an increase in the number of students that take the exam, and in the number of institutions that participate in SISU.

> It's a process that in my opinion is virtuous, that has helped, has grown, although the press says that there is (…) a discredit with relation to the new ENEM. In reality there were some problems, but the fact is that the numbers demonstrate that there is a process of growth, of constant adhesion to ENEM. But in the end, I think that (…) in five years we will probably have a very small number of institutions using the *vestibular*. I think that the country gains a lot with this (Interviewee 9).

In relation to the impact of the New ENEM since its recent creation, the MEC representative says that some State Secretariats of Education are already changing their high school curriculums. He also mentions that schoolbooks are also in a process of adjustment.

> We already have some reports from state secretariats of education that with this new ENEM they have been able to change the high school curriculum, the teaching material too. The high school textbooks are also undergoing change because of this (Interviewee 9).

Of course it is too soon to have a solid assessment of the real impact of the implementation of the New ENEM and SISU. It is important to closely monitor the changes in order to maximize their positive effects and reduce or eliminate the negatives.

The interviewees also mention other alternatives to the *vestibular* besides the New ENEM. The Law 9.394 (1996), which replaced the Law 5.540 (1968) and now regulates higher education, no longer talks about the need for the *vestibular* as a requirement to access higher education. This

law says that undergrad courses are open to those who have finished high school or the equivalent and have been approved in the selective process (Art. 44, II). It is up to the institutions now to decide which selective processes they adopt.

There are voices that think that it is necessary to take into consideration the previous academic history of students. One interviewee says that the selective process for higher education should be flexible and take into consideration the progress students make during high school.

> I think that the selection process needs to be more flexible, and that it should take into account the student's high school progress, so that access to higher education takes into account this student's curricular history (Interviewee 2).

There is an alternative system to the *vestibular* in place in some public universities in Brazil that is very interesting. This system, sometimes called the serial *vestibular*, assesses the performance of students throughout all years of high school. According to one interviewee, it is not a perfect system, but it is a good alternative to the traditional *vestibular*. In his university, in Paraná state, they call it Serial Selective Process. Students take an exam at the end of their first, second, and third year of high school. Only in the last year do they decide which higher education course they want to apply for.

> We have a very interesting system starting at UNB — it was the first experience in Brazil, more than 10 years ago, and in Parana we adopted [it] at my university in 2004 and [at] a few other universities in the country — which is a system that people call PSS—Serial Selective Process. (…) The student takes a test at the end of his or her first, second, and third year [in high school]. It takes away a bit of that pressure from the *vestibular*. So it's an interesting system, that it is not perfect, but in my view, it's better than the traditional *vestibular* system (Interviewee 3).

The debates about new modalities to access higher education started around the mid-1980s, according to Schlichting, Soares and Bianchetti (2004). The authors explain that between 1992 and 1995 CESGRANRIO got an authorization from MEC to implement the Progressive Evaluation System for Admission in Higher Education (SAPIENS). In 1995, the Federal University of Santa Maria created the Program for Admission to Higher Education (PEIES) and in 1996, the University of Brasilia (UNB) started to implement the Program for Access to Higher Education (PAS). These

institutions were pioneers in implementing entrance policies that take into consideration students' performance in high school. After seeing their example, others started to discuss and adopt similar policies (p. 116).

As this subsection described, since the beginning of the 19th century public and private institutions of higher education conduct an exam called the *vestibular* to select their students. The *vestibular* changed throughout the years and more recently the federal government proposed to replace it with the New ENEM in federal universities. This measure is associated with the creation of the Unified Selection System (SISU), an electronic system that coordinates the number of vacancies offered by public institutions with the students' results on the ENEM. There are different perspectives about the impacts of this proposal. Some think that this is a positive because it will democratize access to federal universities and positively impact the high school curriculum of high school. Others say that this exam is similar to the *vestibular* and it can be regressive because it helps students from wealthier parts of Brazil to migrate to poorer parts seeking vacancies in good courses at free federal universities. It is also important to mention that Brazil has other strategies to select students that take into consideration their previous academic history. The next subsection will discuss measures adopted by the federal government in Brazil to expand access to higher education.

4.2.6 – Measures to expand access to higher education

Nogueira (2008) explains that the increase in access to higher education can be understood as the creation of new vacancies in institutions that offer this level of education, in the public as well as the private sector. Some defend the idea that the openings should be greatly expanded in higher education institutions, without taking into account the administrative sphere in which this growth will happen. In a general way, expansion, in this case, is had as an essential element in the train the personnel that can collaborate for the development of the country, without necessarily mattering where this education happens.

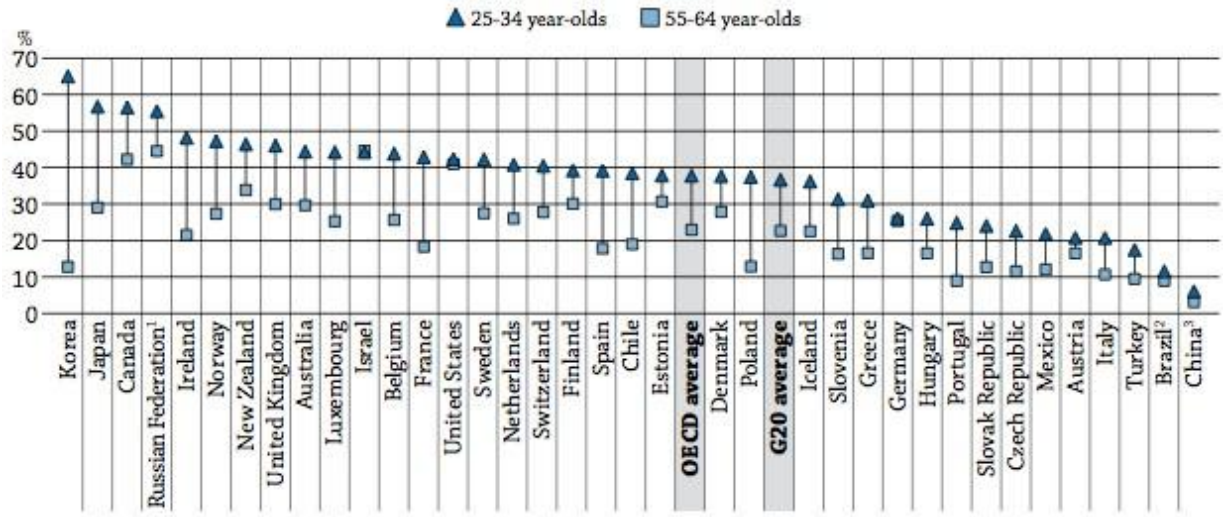
Other positions observed in the literature, however, express their belief in the best adequation of one or another administrative sphere (public or private) as a vector of higher education system growth. Thus, there are some that are in favor of increasing vacancies in public institutions, while others in private institutions. Among those who defend the expansion of the public sector, some of their main arguments are: public institutions of higher education function in a state logic, and not in a market logic; they offer a better quality education and develop essential activities to the education of their students and the development of the country, such as long-range research projects. Among those that defend the expansion of the private sector, some arguments offered, among other, are: the government should prioritize K-12 because the returns are greater; investment in higher education are greater and, in general, those who attain this level of education are those with greater power of acquisition; the private initiative is more efficient in the utilization of resources, with a considerably lower cost-per-student than the public sector. In this group, the intense participation of international agencies must be mentioned, for example, the World Bank and the InterAmerican Bank for Development.

In the current literature there is an explicit consensus about the need to increase access to higher education in Brazil. The analyses undertaken by scholars on this topic show, in general, underline the low percentage of participation by the Brazilian population at this level of education, particularly among young persons 18-24 years old (Corbucci, 2004; Pinto, 2004; Pacheco e Ristoff, 2004; Oliveira e Catani, 2006; Moehlecke e Catani, 2006; Política..., 2007). Among the interviewees this idea was also present. One of them talks about the importance of expanding access to higher education in Brazil. He says that the country is lagging behind other countries such as Korea in that area.

> The expansion of higher education is something desirable, necessary. (…) It's necessary, it's urgent. (…) Korea, countries that 10-15 years ago were in a very similar situation [than Brazil] today are in a very different situation, because they decided, they bet on the expansion of higher education and took that issue seriously (…) I think that to elevate the educational level is vital in terms of strategy for the country (Interviewee 6).

In fact, a look at Brazil's situation with relation to other countries is very illustrative of this statement. In Canada, 51% of the population between 25 and 64 has attained a tertiary education (9,447 people); in the United States, 42% (67,207); in Korea, the country mentioned by the interviewee, 40% of this population attained higher education (11,397); the OCDE average is 31% of the population; in Chile 27% of the population has attained tertiary education (2,289) and in Argentina 14% (2,209), while in Brazil 11% of the population (10,502). The chart 2 shows the percentage of the population that has attained higher education by age group in several countries.

Chart 2 – Percentage of the population that has attained tertiary education, by age group (2010)



1. Year of reference 2002.
2. Year of reference 2009.
3. Year of reference 2000.

Source: OCDE, 2012, p. 36.

The solution proposed to expand access to higher education involves creating new vacancies, as many interviewees say. They agree that during the last years there have been policies to increase the number of vacancies, particularly during the government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, FHC (1995-2002), and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010). Some think that the policies during these two governments were effective, while others believe that only the increase of the public sector during Lula's government was effective. One interviewee says that there were no effective policies, since these two governments in his opinion did not take into consideration the quality of education offered.

FHC increased access to higher education through the private sector, and Lula did the same through both the public and private sectors. These policies offer, according to one interviewee, an answer to the growing demand of the population, and to Brazil's need to develop.

> There is, yes, an intervention from the state, a concrete policy oriented toward this expansion. You can take into consideration practically all that FHC's and Lula's governments did in the area of education. It's a desire of the state today, principally in the current [Lula] government, that there be (…) this expansion of higher education in Brazil. All of these policies of expansion, both the level of projects that depend on the federal government and those at the private sector level, are happening today in a very accelerated manner. Even to account for the demand and Brazil's own need to grow, we'll say, to be a modern country today (Interviewee 2).

As one interviewee says, the strategy FHC adopted was to offer conditions for the private sector to flourish.

> The strategy of Fernando Henrique's government was to essentially offer conditions or allow the privates schools to fill the gap between the public and the objective of having this large number of young people in university or post-secondary institutions (Interviewee 6).

Nogueira (2008) explains that during the 1990s there was a loosening of the regulation to create new types of institutions and new courses. The Law 9.394 (1996) creates, aside from traditional undergraduate, graduate, and extension courses, "sequential courses in the field of knowledge, with a wide range of levels, open to candidates that met the requirements established by the learning institutions" (Art. 44). The law also establishes that "higher education will be administered in higher education institutions, public or private, with various ranges of levels or specialization" (Art. 45).

In the next year a decree to regulate this article was published, which established that, with regards to the academic organization, the institutions of the Federal System of Higher Education are classified as: I. Universities; II. University Centers; III. Integrated Schools; IV. Schools; V. Institutes of Higher Learning or Schools of Higher Learning (Decree 2.306[49], 08/19/1997, Art. 8). What is new is the creation of a new model of academic organization, the university centers. Such centers possess autonomy to create new courses, without the requirement to be constituted as

[49] This decree was changed and today decree n. 5.773 (9/52006) is in force, according to which institutions of higher education are credentialed as: universities, university centers, and schools (Art. 12).

research institutions, the opposite of what happens with universities. Article 80 of LDB, at last, determines that the "Public Power will incentivize the development and the transmission of distance-learning programs, at all levels and modalities of education, and of continuing education." Distance education, before restricted to K-12 education, instead become authorized to higher education as well (p. 34-36).

Two interviewees mention that during the FHC period federal universities worked under hardship in terms of investment and conditions to hire new faculty and staff. The public sector, according to one of them, barely survived.

> Under Fernando Henrique Cardoso's management, the federal universities (...) underwent a period of difficulties in terms of investment, replacing professors and staff (Interviewee 3).
>
> During FHC's government the public university sector survived. You will observe that there was a decrease in the number of teachers, because there was retirement without filling the vacancies. Very few areas grew, very few sectors grew during FHC's government, from the public [side] (Interviewee 7).

In a context of growth in demand for access to higher education; the creation of new alternatives of types of institutions and courses; and the reduction in public investment at this level of education, the private initiative found a privileged space in which to expand.

Other interviewees say that the only effective measure in the last years was the expansion of the public sector. They explain that Lula's government was responsible for increasing the number of public vacancies, as well as for an increase in investments in federal institutions. During Dilma Rousseff's administration this process has continued.

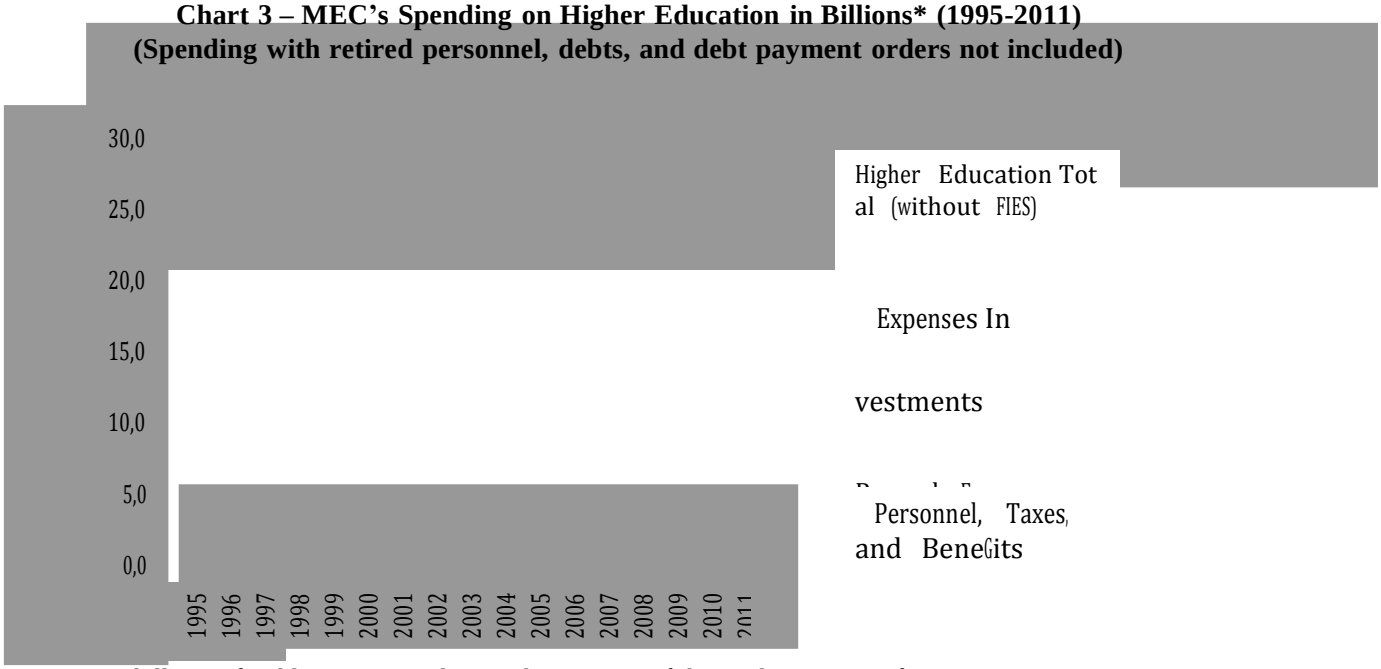
> An important measure: the increase in the number of vacancies in public institutions, unquestionably. And [in that area] the governments of Lula and Dilma made all the difference. All. Compared to FHC's government, in which there was a process of containment, not of reduction, but of containment, Lula and Dilma made all the difference. And maybe all of their ministers acted in this way: (…) the introduction of those programs, as much as they have elements that I criticized, as REUNI has (…) the increase of vacancies was very large. In addition to that, the public universities have had a significant increase in resources for expenses and capital. They are incomparable with the FHC period (Interviewee 8).

We had that whole process of bettering the conditions of the universities, in terms of expenses, in terms of personnel, because the university found itself in a very difficult situation, practically sold for scrap (Interview 9).

In Lula's government, I think that the great leap was given in the area of investment. Because you don't have education without investment (Interviewee 3).

Data about investment in higher education during FHC's (1995-2002), Lula's (2003-2010), and the first year of Dilma's governments can illustrate the interviewees' comments.[50]

Chart 3 – MEC's Spending on Higher Education in Billions* (1995-2011)
(Spending with retired personnel, debts, and debt payment orders not included)



* In billions of stable *reais* according to the estimate of the Medium IPCA of 2012.
1 US dollar = 2,15 Brazilian reais (06/11/2013).
Source: SIAFI/STN - Base de Dados da Consultoria de Orçamento/CD e PRODASEN.
Prepared by: CEAD/CGP/SPO/SE/MEC.

Resources for federal universities went from 12.7 billion in 1995 to 11.6 billion in 2002. After decreasing in the first year of Lula's government (10.7 billion in 2003), these resources were incrementally increased every year until 2010 at 24.3 billion. In 2011 it continued to increase and went to 26.1 billion. As it is possible to see in chart 3, if one looks at the expenditure of MEC without including spending with retired personnel, debts, and debt payment orders, this expenditure was slightly reduced during FHC government, and more than doubled during Lula's government.

[50] It is important to keep in mind that the financial resources the Ministry of Education allocated to higher education are directed towards the funding of federal institutions of higher education. They represent only a part of the total investment in higher education. States are in charge of funding state institutions; municipalities are in charge of municipal institutions; and the private sector is funded with private resources, most of it coming from students.

Finally, there is also an interviewee that believes that the federal government adopted measures to increase the number of vacancies, but did not take into consideration the quality of education. He mentions that many of the new vacancies were created in the private sector, including those for students in second-level schools that would become cheap labor for the market.

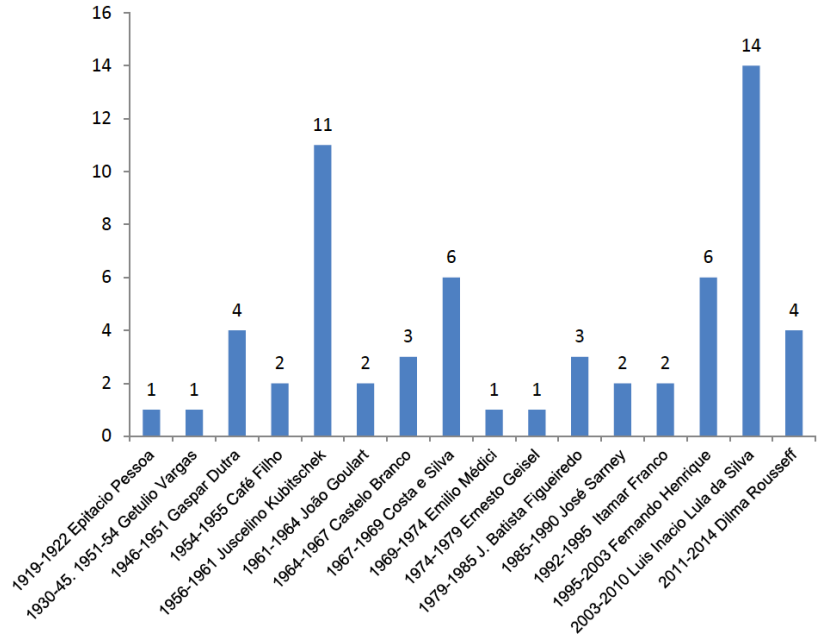
> There were effective measures in the sense of expanding without looking at the conditions and quality, and advertising that. In the sense of effectively structuring and increasing quality higher education in the country, miserably, no. (…) These 100,000 programs from our Ministry of Education aim to fundamentally say that access to higher education is being universalized, but giving opportunity through processes like PROUNI, etc., scholarships for economically disadvantaged students, to study in a second-rate school and turn into a cheap laborer for the market, which is the best thing in the world for the market's interests (Interviewee 1).

This subsection focuses on five policies developed during FHC's and Lula's governments, all of them mentioned by the interviewees: the expansion of federal institutions of higher education, the Program of Support for Restructuring Plans and the Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI), University for All Program (PROUNI), Student Financing Fund (FIES) and distance education. The first two initiatives are related to the public sector and PROUNI and FIES to the private sector. Distance education is taking place in both sectors.

Expansion of the Federal Institutions of Higher Education

The chart 4 shows the creation of federal universities during different governments in Brazil:

Chart 4 – Timeline of the creation of federal universities by government



Source: Relatório…, 2012, p. 25.

One of the most visible initiatives in Lula's government, in the field of higher education, has to do with the expansion of the federal network of higher education. During the 8 years of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government 6 federal universities were created, 2 of which were implemented during the next government. During Lula's government 14 federal universities were created; some of them created through transformation, using campuses of existing universities, while others were created from nothing.

- Universidade Federal do Tocantins (created in 2000, implemented in 2003)
- Universidade Federal do Vale do São Francisco (created in 2002, implemented in 2004)
- Universidade Federal da Grande Dourados (2005)
- Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia (2005)
- Universidade Federal do Triângulo Mineiro (2005)
- Universidade Federal Rural do Semi-Árido (2005)
- Universidade Federal de Alfenas (2005)
- Universidade Federal dos Vales do Jequitinhonha e do Mucuri (2005)
- Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (2005)
- Universidade Federal do ABC (2006)
- Universidade Federal de Ciências da Saúde de Porto Alegre (2008)
- Universidade Federal do Pampa (2008)
- Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará (2009)
- Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul (2009)
- Universidade Federal da Integração Latino Americana (2010)
- Universidade Federal da Integração Luso-Afro-Brasileira (2010)

The expansion during Lula's government happened not only with the creation of universities, but also with new university campuses. In 2003 there were 148 campuses in 114 municipalities. Between 2003 and 2010 126 university campuses were created, so that in 2010 in Brazil had 274 campuses in 230 municipalities. As it is possible to see, this expansion has doubled the number of municipalities with federal university campuses or academic units.[51]

The idea of the decentralization of public universities was an essential element in the decision to expand the system. Decentralizing of these institutions was mandated by the original Constitution of 1988, and excluded through an amendment to the Constitution approved in 1996 (the second year of FHC's government). Despite not being a constitutional mandate any more, during Lula's government there was pressure to put this idea into practice, as one interviewee explains.

> You have the important question also that is, there was also in the federal constitution an article that said that the federal universities should be decentralized, it was later repealed by Fernando Henrique's government, there was a repeal of this constitutional device, and after the next phase, in Lula's government, there was a strong movement in the sense of accomplishing this expansion and this decentralization (Interviewee 9).

As the representative of MEC explains, President Lula was in favor of the idea to decentralize federal universities, and MEC started to implement it. In the beginning, the government started to support the initiative of some federal universities to expand. MEC then decided to better structure this investment and created REUNI, which was open to all federal universities.

> President Lula liked, started this process, it was a process still very much brought about by demand [of universities]. When we released the PDE [Plan for Development of Education] we decided to organize this investment. And the organization of this investment came about through REUNI itself. REUNI emerged from our need to organize and structure a specific expansion for the federal universities, in the sense of increasing the number of vacancies, of giving more opportunities for young people (Interviewee 9).

[51] Dilma Rousseff's government promissed to create 4 universities and 47 new campuses up until 2014. On 06/05/2013 president Rousseff signed into law the creation of four federal universities: Universidade Federal do Cariri, Universidade Federal do Sul Sudeste do Pará, Universidade Federal do Oeste da Bahia, and the Universidade Federal do Sul da Bahia.

It is important to also mention the creation of the Federal Institutes of Education, Science and Technology (Law 11,892, 12/29/2008). Pacheco (n.d) explains that

> There are 38 institutions, with 314 campuses spread throughout the country, aside from various advanced units, offering technical courses (50% of the vacancies), in their majority in a form integrated with high school, bachelor's programs (20% of the vacancies) and technology degrees, still able to offer specializations, professional master's degrees, and doctorates mainly oriented toward applied research and technological innovation (p. 9).

REUNI

The Program of Support for Plans to Restructure and Expand Federal Universities (REUNI) was instituted by the decree n. 6096 (04/24/2007), in the core of actions by the Plan for Development of Education (PDE). The purpose of REUNI, according to Art. 1 of the decree, is to "create conditions for the expansion of access and permanence in higher education, at the undergraduate level, for the improvement of the physical structure and of existing human resources at federal universities".

The implementation of REUNI on the part of the federal universities was voluntary and was done through the preparation and presentation of a restructuring plan to MEC, which was then approved by the superior council of the proposing institution. In REUNI, the universities could make a claim for additional resources up to 20% of their global budget, committing to, as a counterpart, reach the Program's goals, that is: "gradual elevation of the rate of completion through classroom undergraduate courses to 90% and the ratio of undergraduate students to professors in classroom courses to 18, at the end of 5 years from the beginning of each plan" (Art. 1, § 1). The strategy and stages for achieving these objectives should be previewed in the restructuring plan. (Art. 4).

Even though the program's goals were related to the elevation of the average rage of completion in classroom undergraduate classes and the student-to-professor ratio, REUNI has guidelines that involve other dimensions of academic life, which are: reducing dropout rates, filling unused vacancies, and increasing vacancies, particularly during the evening; increasing student

mobility; revising the academic structure, diversifying the undergraduate modules; increasing the policies of inclusiveness and student assistance; and promoting the integration of undergraduate with graduate programs, and higher education with basic education (Art. 2).

According to MEC's representative, a plan similar to REUNI was presented to the previous government (FHC's) by federal universities. The plan, which included expanding these institutions while improving some indicators, was never implemented.

> The REUNI project in reality had been presented to the former government. The universities had already presented a project seeking to expand the network [of federal universities] and at the same time improve some indicators, such as student-teacher ratio, evening courses, a number of things. This was not put into practice (Interviewee 9).

During Lula's government, MEC embarked on a joint venture with federal universities in order to increase the number of vacancies and to improve some university indicators, as outlined in the REUNI guidelines. The proposals presented by the universities resulted in documents that established the values to be received by each institution, conditioned upon the fulfillment of the established goals. Despite adherence to the program being voluntary, in a scenario of lack of resources any addition represents something important for the institutions. Such is the case that months after the program's inauguration, all of the institutions joined it[52].

In the beginning, as the representative of MEC explains, there was a strong political resistance to the program inside universities. Some rectors' offices were raided, rectors were falsely detained, there was also physical aggression, among other things. The resistance, in his analysis, was coming from more extremist leftist political parties, such as PSOL and PSTU.

> We initially had strong political resistance, particularly within the universities. So that in order to approve REUNI, the universities' adherence REUNI, we had the invasion of rectors' offices, rectors that were detained and kept against their will, physical aggression. There was a lot of resistance, especially in the more leftist sectors of the student movement. PSOL, PSTU (Interviewee 9).

Another interviewee mentions that there was also resistance coming from university managers. He shares the testimonial he received from a vice-rector of a federal university in the

[52] According to a report released by the MEC on 12/21/2007, all 53 federal institutions of higher education joined REUNI until the 20th of December, months after the public call put out by MEC.

Northeast of Brazil. His complaints, according to the interviewee, were related to the fact that the university, in order to receive more funding, had to create new courses and vacancies, when the courses already existing needed investments and improvements. He questioned the fact that the university was required to increase the number of students per teacher in all courses, while only some were receiving additional resources. In his view, this would compromise the quality of education.

> Before implementing REUNI, when the implementation was beginning, when I was visiting the country's universities, running for the presidency of the ANDES at the beginning of 2008, I never will forget the conversation I had with the rector of the Federal University of (…) at the time. He told me the following: we are perplexed by this government proposal, where the university has to participate in a selective process in order to receive funding for its growth. And for this we have to open new courses, and hire new teachers for these areas, when we are already struggling to keep up this institution that is lagging behind in terms of laboratory for the existing courses, infrastructure, classrooms, etc. (Interviewee 1).

It is necessary to bring up the fact, however, that adherence to the program was wide scale, as mentioned before. The representative of MEC says that, in his evaluation, the overall university community received the program well. Rectors faced problems while implementing REUNI, but most of them were reelected or had their candidates elected in the following elections.

> But (REUNI) is a consolidated process. In most institutions, although the rectors had faced challenges, they were either reelected or had their successors elected in the majority of cases, so this shows that the community reacted well to REUNI (Interviewee 9).

REUNI, as one interviewee points out, resumed the increase of the public sector that had stagnated for more than 15 years. The private sector, as she notes, continues to grow, but at least it is positive to have the public sector developing again.

> REUNI restarted the growth of public higher education, that's fundamental. If the private continued growing the same, maybe more in some regions, on the other hand the public sector left behind the stagnant growth of more than 15 years, observed since the 1980s (Interviewee 7).

Another interviewee believes that REUNI is an interesting program because it expands the public sector by optimizing the operating conditions of these institutions.

> Policies like REUNI are very interesting because they expand the public sector by optimizing the federal universities' conditions of operation (Interviewee 5).

One interviewee brings up the fact that there was a disregard for the situation of state universities in the process of expansion. In some states, as he explains, federal courses were created where similar state courses already existed. He says that there are examples of cases where professors from state universities migrated to federal universities because salaries were better.

> Something that could be better studied is the issue that many new campuses that were created by the federal system were created where there were already state campuses, it could have been better planned. This expansion of the federal system was not done based on what the states said, so in some cases in the countryside there were public state courses and a public federal course similar was created, this is something that we even told the minister. (…) Many times you even created a system in which professors from the state system would migrate to the federal, because at the moment the salary is better, (…) It's clear that this didn't occur in all locations, but in some locations there was that stratification that ended up jeopardizing the one as well as the other. So I see that a new increase in the system needs to take place in the federal system and in the state system, or in other words, you have to better discuss this issue, this integration was lacking (Interviewee 3).

The interviewee mentions another element connected to the relation of the federal and state systems of higher education. He believes that the federal government should give more attention to state systems because in many states there are more state universities than federal universities, and they have more students enrolled. According to him, higher education is not a responsibility of the states. The Law 9.394 (1996), as a matter of fact, establishes that both the federal government and the states are responsible for funding their own institutions. There is an expectation, however, that the federal government will be mostly in charge of higher education, since none of the levels of government are specifically pointed to as being responsible for this.[53]

> I think that the federal government should give a bit more attention to the state systems. (…) Parana, for example, today invests in the higher education system, science and technology, 1.5 billion reais in terms of annual budget. We have today in Parana, for example, 25,000 students in the federal network and 100,000 students in the state public network, and the higher [education] system isn't the state's responsibility. So, I first see that the government has let down the state systems, even though they have improved investment (Interviewee 3).

[53] The Constitution of 1988 establishes that municipalities are in charge mostly of elementar school and middle school, and states and the federal district of middle school and high school (Art. 211, §2 e 3; Constitutional Amendment n. 14, de 1996).

Federal universities in general have more students than state universities (833,943 students in federal universities and 524,698 in state). Most states have more students enrolled in the federal sector (the states of Amazonas, Roraima, Pará, Amapá, Tocantins, Maranhão, Piauí, Rio Grande do Norte, Paraíba, Pernambuco, Alagoas, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso do Sul, Mato Grosso, Goiás, Distrito Federal, and Santa Catarina), while some have more in the state sector (the states of Ceará, Bahia, Paraná, and São Paulo). Only a few states don't have state universities (the states of Rondônia, Acre, Sergipe) (Census of Higher Education, 2010).

It is true that there are states struggling with challenges to fund their universities. Let us take the example of Ceara. Ceara, located in the Northeast, is one of the poorest states of Brazil. During the process of expansion of federal universities the government of Ceara wanted to federalize two of its three federal universities, saying that the state was not able to properly fund these institutions. This proposal, however, so far has been unsuccessful.

Federal universities at the beginning of the implementation of REUNI faced many challenges. As one interviewee explains, after so many years without investment, these institutions were not prepared to implement their new budget. They had to hire staff and professionals such as engineers to be in charge of the new constructions, etc.

> The universities obviously faced some difficulties, especially in the first moment with the issue of the capacity to execute [their plans], because since they had gone a long time without any investment, we had to reorganize internally by hiring administrative technicians, engineers since most [universities] didn't have engineers working in the administrative area, in that area of licitation. The law offices themselves had to adjust to this model, because they hadn't, they were not being able to answer the demands that were being presented to them. But after a time I think that everyone was able to overcome that and today we have a very intense rhythm in carrying out these projects (Interviewee 9).

Other challenges were related to the execution of the new construction. According to one interviewee, some rules of the public sector limit the ability of institutions to execute their projects. She explains that when a construction company is selected through a public contest to be in charge of building something, sometimes it starts the process and for different reasons it stops (bankruptcy,

for instance). Universities, in this situation, have to deal with the problem and sometimes it takes a long time to find an appropriate solution. In her words, in many circumstances MEC and institutions are held hostage by the contractors.

> so you have a project and have a company that enters into the process and starts working and then stops. Or you have a process with one company and then another company contests the contract, and then things start getting jammed. (…) The rules in the public sector end up almost prohibiting the capacity of execution because MEC and the institutions become hostages of the businesses. (…) You don't have a mechanism, within the federal government, for the public sector to work with a company that doesn't fulfill its contract. So I contract you to complete a public job, and in the middle of the road you're going to go bankrupt, you're going to stop, be it what it may. My money is tied up with you, I can't get myself off the road at an hour's notice or recuperate the money and start other [projects]. Well, I can, but it takes so much time (Interviewee 7).

REUNI, in one interviewee's assessment, is not designed to solve the problems faced by federal universities. He says that the program promotes, associated with its supposed benefits, a disruption of the existing system. In his opinion REUNI gives visibility to investments made by the federal government but at the same time creates new problems in an already problematic system.

> The most recent programs [created by MEC] promote, with their supposed advances, a destructuring of the existing system (…). REUNI isn't a program created to deal structurally with the problem. It's a "façade program" to eventually give visibility to a supposed investment from the government creating a lot of other problems in a system that is already lacking in resources (Interviewee 1).

In a video produced by the Teachers Union of a federal university (ADUFFSIND), Lídia de Freitas claims that there was a worsening of the faculty's working conditions after REUNI. She says that the commitments of the universities (to double their enrollment) are disproportional to the commitments of the government (if there is funding, to increase the university budget by 20%) (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxctWKaFfgU&feature=share). Some of the problems mentioned by her and others are classrooms with an excessive number of students; professors with several advisees; professors with no time to develop research; inadequate conditions to teach; portable classrooms.[54] It is important to recall that adequate classrooms are not only a student's right but also a teacher's right. The educational systems have to assure adequate working conditions

[54] In the video, they say that according to the Ministry of Education, portable classrooms should be accepted only as provisory facilities. In Rio das Ostras, however, they have been used for five years.

for teachers (LDB, art. 67, VI). According to professor Katia Lima, in this video, "what seems like a very democratic policy omits, in fact, a stimulus to this process of worsening of the working conditions and the creation of hierarchies between professors, between graduate programs, between research projects and between institutions".

The representative of MEC acknowledges the existence of problems. As he explains, in any accelerated process of expansion it is expected that problems will occur. Some problems identified are, for instance, unfinished buildings, laboratories that are not ready when a specific course begins, university restaurants or university housing that are not ready yet.[55] According to him, some political sectors take advantage of these problems to oppose the program. He also mentions that the media follows the process, by reporting some problematic cases in national outlets.

> The natural consequence of an accelerated expansion is that you will have difficulties. Many times a work isn't finished, there is some stoppage of the work, there is some challenge in the execution, the rhythm of execution is not what you thought, so the university restaurant isn't ready, or you don't have a laboratory done yet for the course that's taking place, so there some sectors take advantage of this situation, part of those sectors of PSOL, PSTU, movements against REUNI (…). Resistance exists, in a certain way the media itself reports some students' account of these situations. So the media does a [good] job of overseeing this process of expansion (Interviewee 9).

The plan of the current administration of MEC, as he explains, is to continue the process of expansion of federal institutions, solving all these problems along the way.

> They have this movement trying to question the fact that a laboratory isn't finished, the fact that there is no student residence, a number of things that are being brought up, but our idea is to continue these investments, because the intention is that we continue the process of expansion, of restructuring the universities, we will face every one of these problems (Interviewee 9).

One interviewee brings up the fact that REUNI is not only related to expansion, but also to pedagogic innovation. She says that this aspect of the program was not as successful as expected, but there are positive initiatives taking place in the country such as the interdisciplinary bachelor's degree. Many of these new projects are associated with the new universities. UNILAB, for instance,

[55] University restaurants and housing are heavily subsidized for students in Brazil.

is now working under the quarter system, instead of the traditional semester that works in almost all universities in Brazil.

> REUNI is a proposal not only for expansion but also related to pedagogical innovation. Even though this didn't happen in the way it was expected. Even though 90% of the expansion only repeated already existing projects in the institutions. Innovation didn't work so much, that's a fact. Although it didn't work as expected, you have projects like the new university, in Bahia, with the interdisciplinary bachelor's degrees, very interesting. The Open University of Brazil, the University of Reconcavo, have a good experience. UNILAB has an innovative project, to work in trimesters. "Ah, there are many problems", some say. I don't doubt it at all. But we wouldn't be naive and think that every other education that is traditional is great. (…) There are several things that were tested through REUNI and that are worth it, as innovation (Interviewee 7).

Cunha (2007) comments that although REUNI has received various criticism, especially for not taking into account the peculiarities of federal universities, it can impel the growth of students in that segment of higher education" (p. 821). One interviewee explains that in fact REUNI promoted an increase in the number of vacancies, but the participation of the federal universities in offering higher education is still very small, and it is decreasing even now. In fact, in 2000 federal universities were in charge of 18% of the students in higher education. This percentage dropped to 16% in 2011 (Census of Higher Education, 2000 and 2011). The two big policies to expand access, in the interviewee's view, are PROUNI e FIES.

> Surely PROUNI and the FIES. These are the two great policies of expansion. In the case of federal universities we have the REUNI, the restructuring of the universities, but the percentage of the public schools is decreasing in Brazil. The rate of expansion in public schools is less than the rate of expansion in private schools. And it's in the last [few] years. The percentage of public schools from 2002 to now fell. So you don't have relevant growth. The relevant growth, that included a large number of students, was PROUNI, was FIES (Interviewee 4).

PROUNI

It is a fact that the expansion of higher education by way of private initiative also was begun in an explicit way by Lula's government, through the University for All Program (PROUNI). Created by the Provisionary Measure n. 213 (09/10/2004), and instituted by Law n. 11.096 (01/13.2005), the program is meant for granting full scholarships (100%) and partial scholarships

(25% or 50%) to low-income students, in undergraduate courses and sequential courses of specific majors, in private higher education institutions, either for-profit or non-profit.

According to the Law 11.096 (2005), full scholarships aim to assist students with a monthly family income per capita equal to or lower than 1½ times the Brazilian minimum wage,[56] while partial scholarships aim to assist those with a monthly family income per capita equal to or lower than 3 times the minimum wage (Art. 1). These scholarships are intended for students that attended high school in public institutions or in private institutions as recipients of full scholarships; handicapped students; and teachers of the public sector enrolled in courses to become teachers, independent of their income (Art. 2). Students are selected as recipients through their data and results on the ENEM.

According to the representative of MEC, the former minister of education, Fernando Haddad, started to formulate PROUNI when he was an assessor at the Ministry of Planning. The minister of education at the time, Tarso Genro, approved the idea and they started to implement it. The goal was to create free vacancies for low-income students using, on the one hand, the existing capacity of private institutions, and, on the other hand, the tax exemption already granted to private nonprofit institutions.

> PROUNI was formulated by minister Fernando Haddad when (…) he was working at the Ministry of Planning (…). We had minister Tarso coming to MEC and then when Fernando Haddad presented to minister Tarso the proposal he immediately liked the idea, because it was a very ingenious idea, in reality it would be using the exemption already given to the [private] institutions (…) to create vacancies for the low-income population. So immediately minister Tarso announced the [the program], took the necessary measures [t implement it] (Interviewee 9).

The private sector always had a higher percentage of unfilled vacancies than the public sector. Even today, after years of implementation of the PROUNI, this continues to be true. While only around 8% of vacancies in public institutions are not filled, around 53% of the vacancies offered by the private sector are not filled, as table 37 illustrates.

[56] The minimum wage in Brazil is adjusted annually. For 2013, the minimum wage is R$ 670.95 per month.

Table 37 – Number of vacancies offered and students that enrolled in classroom undergraduate courses, per sector (2011)

	Vacancies offered	Students that enrolled	Unfilled vacancies
Brazil total	4,453,431	2,346,695	47%
Public sector	531,489	490,680	8%
Federal	300,808	308,504	-3%
State	163,510	146,049	11%
Municipal	67,171	36,127	46%
Private sector	3,921,942	1,856,015	53%

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

The idea of a partnership between the public and the private sector, as Nogueira (2008) explains, was present in the discussion about the university reform during Lula's government. One of her interviewees mentions that at the time there were some reflections about the public use of private vacancies. The group in charge of the discussion, however, never details this proposal. In the interviewee's opinion, discussions about this matter were similar to the concept that PROUNI incorporated later.

One interviewee says that PROUNI brought a relevant discussion, not yet properly done, related to the public and private partnership. She believes that the public sector alone will not be able to meet the challenge of inclusion. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to disregard a sector that has 75% of enrollment in higher education, as the private sector has.

> [The creation of PROUNI] generated a discussion that still hasn't been fully [answered] and seems essential to me, that is the partnership between the public and the private sectors. In order to place all of the Brazilian students that we want in the university, (…) in the university model that we have today only the public sector cannot handle it. You can count on the partnership with the private sector (Interviewee 7).

In her opinion, the federal government has to engage in a partnership with other public sectors (state and local governments) and also with the private sector. In the private sector, she underlines the importance of making partnerships with non-profit institutions.

> You can think of partnerships of the federal government with state institutions, municipal, and even private too. But you are going to want to take away the private for-profit sector, which is only concerned with making money. (…) In Rio Grande do Sul, for example, you have communitarian institutions. Do they charge? They do. But they are institutions with (…) an undeniable social commitment, with a fantastic rootedness in the community. (…) So you have institutions that charge by the month and that can be a partner with the state to

> create an education at a higher level of quality, some religious, like some PUCs [Pontifical Catholic Universities] of Brazil (Interviewee 7).

PROUNI is also seen by the government as an effort to organize the tax exemption granted to some segments of the private sector. There are two proposed mechanisms for the private higher education institutions that adhere to PROUNI. The first is for philanthropic institutions that already have in place the exemption from federal taxes. These will have to transform 20% of their enrollment into undergraduate or continuing education courses, specifically into vacancies for PROUNI. Such institutions, according to rules set forth by the 1988 Constitution, already enjoyed the tax exemption, needing to apply annually a minimum of 20% of their gross income to scholarships and extracurricular social assistance programs. PROUNI, in reality, contributed to regularizing the granting of these scholarships. The second is for private for-profit institutions that today pay all the taxes due to the federal government. These should offer a scholarship for every nine regularly enrolled students in courses effectively offered in the respective institutions (Mancebo, 2004, p. 8). As a counterpoint to this adherence to the program, such institutions are exempt from some taxes.

Some people say that PROUNI was a good idea because many private universities were indebted to the federal government and they would not pay their debts. The political cost to collect this debt from private universities was too high, meaning that the private sector of higher education in Brazil is very powerful. They have many lobbyists in the National Congress, not to mention in other places such as the National Education Council. The program, however, was criticized by many academics, particularly those linked to the public sector (Mancebo, 2004; Catani, Hey e Gilioli, 2006; Carvalho, 2006; among others). Corbucci (2004) synthesize the main polemic around PROUNI:

> The main criticism directed at this government initiative is that the resources that stop being collected with the exemption of taxes could be applied to increasing the number of openings in public institutions. So, for some critics of the proposal, the State would be buying already existing and unfilled vacancies, and at the same time offering a service of dubious quality. In turn, the MEC managers argue that the degree of fiscal evasion at that business is so high the allowable levies would be irrelevant compared to the benefit offered by the increase in

access to higher education (p. 649-650).

In effect, the then minister of education, Tarso Genro, affirmed his understanding of PROUNI as an "expropriation of vacancies through an indemnity." According to this explanation, the resources not collected with PROUNI are few, and it should be taken into consideration that, still, "they are not withdrawn from the budgeted endowments of the university, they are resources that would go to the National Treasury otherwise" (Ministro…, 2004, p. 10).

Countering this argument, Mancebo (2004) points out that the program might not imply a reduction in state resources for public higher education, but it constitutes a reallocation of budgets, those that were once collected by the public sector but no longer will be. According to the author, it is necessary to emphasize the privatizing aspect of PROUNI. Although students don't have to pay tuitions in their schools, they are still private and this contributes to the increase of the already large private sector in Brazil (p. 12).

Some interviewees question the amount of money the government fails to collect with the implementation of PROUNI. One of them says that PROUNI allows the transfer of many resources to the private sector.

> PROUNI is a policy that permits to transfer a lot of resources to the private sector. For you to have an idea, if you went now to UNIFOR, if you enrolled in the law major, you would pay 800 reais per month in the law major. With PROUNI, the state pays 1,600 reais per student. It comes out being almost the double. What does this mean? The system of tributary exemption is public financial support (Interviewee 4).

In fact, a report from the Brazilian Court of Audits (TCU) supports that claim. The table 38 presents the average monthly cost of the scholarship per type of private institution:

Table 38 – Value of each PROUNI scholarship to the federal government, according to the type of private institutions (2006)

Type of institution	Number of institutions	Equivalence index (A)	Relinquishment (Millions of Brazilian reais) (B)	Annual Scholarship Cost (Brazilian reais) (C) = (B)/(A)	Monthly Scholarship Cost (D) = (C)/12
For profit	311	55.305	328,2	5.935	495
Non-profit Non-charitable	182	26.433	290,5	10.992	916
Non-Profit Charitable	126	49.350	617,6	12.515	1.043
Total	619	131.087	R$ 1.236,40	R$ 9.432,00	R$ 786,00

1 US dollar = 2,15 Brazilian reais
Source: Auditoria…, 2009, p. 32.

In one interviewee's opinion private institutions found a way to circumvent PROUNI's rules. Institutions, as he explains, had the same tax exemption independent of the number of vacancies that were being filled by students or scholarships in fact used. Tax exemptions were based on the number of vacancies offered by private institutions, not on the number of vacancies actually occupied by students. This changed recently with the Law 12,431 (2011). Now the exemption is based on the number of vacancies being filled (Art. 8, § 3).

> The private institutions learned to cheat PROUNI. (...) For a private institution if you offer one scholarship or one thousand, the exemption is the same. The exemption isn't proportional to the number of students. UNIFOR, if they have 10 PROUNI students they have a total exemption of 25% of their revenue. If they have 10,000 students, they will have the same 25%. So for the private institution the option is to swindle and reduce this to the maximum possible (Interviewee 4).

The TCU report also found that the tax exemption procedures of PROUNI give rise to opportunistic behavior on the part of the institutions. The benefits of exemptions were granted once the institution became a member of the program. Besides that, the calculation of the number of scholarships to be offered depends on information provided by the institutions themselves (Auditoria…, 2009, p. 29).

One interviewee says that PROUNI was important as an emergency measure to increase access, given the huge educational deficit of previous decades. In her opinion the program brought up important discussions about the model of higher education followed by Brazil, but its

implementation was problematic. The main concern of the interviewee has to do with the quality of education received by beneficiaries of the program. She mentions that many students have a low-quality education during high school and they are accepted to private higher education institutions that also offer low-quality education and are linked to PROUNI. These students, as she explains, will not find good jobs after graduating.

> It seems to me that (…) as a means to promote this access, given the enormous deficit from two decades ago, it was something valid (…). I think that this brought important discussions regarding the model of higher education the we have, but the way of implementing it I think didn't answer the objective, because you have students that already have a poor education in primary and secondary school, and they will have another higher level education of low quality. And they won't be integrated professionally. And there is public money in this. Why? (Interviewee 7).

She questions the fact that there is public investment in private institutions that offer low-quality education. This, in her view, creates false expectations among students. They believe their situation will improve after obtaining a higher education degree but it practice it is hard for this to happen. Many private institutions, as she says, should not be allowed to participate of PROUNI.

> PROUNI is a form of inclusion by means of private schools. (…) I have problems with PROUNI, the same way that I don't like to think that you have public money in a private institution of low quality, the lowest quality, and you give this student the illusion that with that low-quality diploma he will have professional integration, because in some cases that's how it is. It doesn't seem to me that PROUNI was implemented with that watchfulness. Okay, it's in the private sector, but which private? You have institutions that can't be receiving students with the government flinging money there and saying, look, you will have a good university education, it's not that way (Interviewee 7).

Another interviewee agrees with her. He says that many of these institutions do not fulfill their social responsibility because they don't offer a good quality education.

> The great thing that Lula did in the sense of supposedly enlarging access was PROUNI, where it first exempts the fiscal debts of all the private higher education university institutions, forgoing the rightful taxes. (…) MEC gives taxes reliefs in exchange for scholarships for PROUNI for (…) institutions that don't comply with their social role because they have no quality (Interviewee 1).

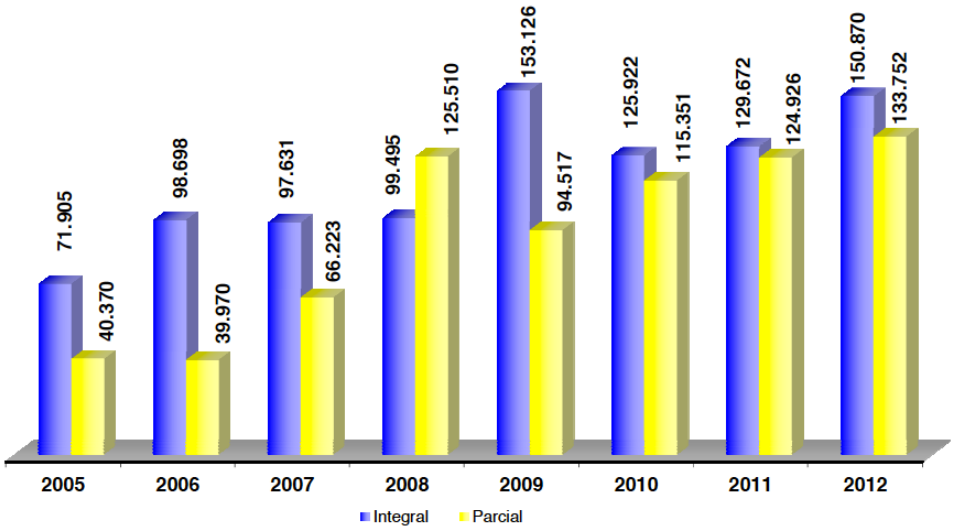
It is important to mention that MEC changed the regulation related to the requirement for institutions to participate in PROUNI. In the original law, MEC would eliminate from the program

courses majors whose performance in the National System of Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES) was considered insufficient during three consecutive evaluations. The Law 11.509 (2007) establishes that courses will be excluded from the program after two consecutive negative evaluations (Art. 7, § 4º). Students in these courses will have the chance to opt for the same or a different course in another institution.

The TCU report found that in 2009, a few years after the beginning of PROUNI, out of the 15,876 courses offered by the program, 5,501, or 34.65% of them were never evaluated by the federal government through ENADE, an exam that is part of SINAES. There were, thus, 74,951 students in courses that were never evaluated. "Using as a benchmark for the PROUNI the concept of positive evaluation of FIES, it was verified that of the 10,375 courses that offered scholarships and were evaluated by ENADE, 1.7% received a '1' rating; 19% a '2'; 40.8% a '3'; 11% a '4'; 0.7% a '5', and 17.4% didn't receive any rating, that is, 20.9% of the evaluated courses had a rating of less than '3' on the ENADE" (Auditoria…, 2009, p. 24).

Despite all the polemics around the program, from its beginning in 2005 until 2012 PROUNI benefited more than one million students. The chart 5 shows the number of scholarships available by year.

Chart 5 – Number of PROUNI scholarships by type (2005-2012)



"Integral" means a full-scholarship and "parcial" half a scholarship.
Source: http://prouniportal.mec.gov.br

The representative of MEC explains that PROUNI has created many vacancies for students since its creation, but the program has limitations in terms of growth. The new idea that was under discussion inside MEC at the time of the interview was to exchange the debt of some private institutions for more scholarships for students.

> PROUNI has a limitation, but despite this we are now discussing a proposal that will perhaps enlarge PROUNI a bit, but it doesn't have much room to grow. Since the institutions are in debt, our idea is to use their debt to exchange for scholarships, this is still being discussed, but it could grow a bit (Interviewee 9).

In fact, this plan was formalized in a recently passed law. The Law 12,688 (07/18/2012), which creates the Program for Incentivizing the Restructuring and Strengthening of Institutions of Higher Education (PROIES), allows the exchange of part of the debt of private higher education institutions through their granting scholarships to low-income students. The program targets institutions in severe economic and financial situations, as defined by the law, and the goal is to ensure conditions for such institutions that will allow them to continue their activities (Art. 1). Up to 90% of their debt with the federal government can be paid by granting full scholarship to students with monthly per capita family income that does not exceed 1 ½ times the minimum-wage.

FIES / New FIES

The Student Financing Fund (FIES) is a program from MEC meant to finance student loans in undergraduate majors. The program was instituted by the Provisionary Measure 1827 (27/05/1999), during FHC's government. This Provisionary Measure was reedited many times between 1999 and 2001, when Law 20,260 (12/07/2001) was finally approved. Students regularly enrolled at private higher education institutions registered in the program could apply to FIES.

During Lula's government, as the representative of MEC explains, FIES was reformulated several times. After 2010, the rate interest, which was 9% per year, fell to 3.4%. The deadline for repayment changed from 6 months to 1 ½ years. The deadline for payment of the contract changed

to become 3 times the duration of the financing plus 12 months. (Example: A student that completed a major in medicine that lasted 6 years will have 19 years after the period of borrowing to pay back the loan). Registration, which before only happened during specific periods, is now done by internet, any time of the year. The operating agent of FIES became the National Fund for Education Development (FNDE) replacing the Bank *Caixa Econômica Federal*. ENEM became a requirement for students graduated from high school beginning in 2010. And, finally, the Fund to Guarantee the Operation of Educational Credits (FGEDUC) was created.

> First we brought FIES, which was implemented by the Bank *Caixa* to MEC/FNDE, and, still in Lula's government, we changed all the conditions of FIES, so [the rate interest] was 9% a year [and] changed to 3.4% per year, it's the amortization schedule it's 3 times the period [of the course] plus 12 months (…). Another thing is that now students can apply for it anytime (Interviewee 9).

Applications for FIES significantly increased after its reformulation. According to MEC's representative, FIES is the new frontier for the expansion of higher education in Brazil.

> The new frontier for the expansion of higher education will be, in my opinion, FIES. FIES will grow a lot, if the treasury doesn't restrict the funding, it will grow because it is at a very high speed. We are in the third year of the new FIES. We had an average of 30,000 contracts/year of FIES (...) we changed the model of it in 2010, there were 75,000 contracts, last year (2011) 150,000 and I think that this year (2012) it will perhaps reach 300,000 (Interviewee 9).

In fact, as the data from table 39 shows, the number of FIES contracts increased dramatically in the last three years. From around 33,000 contracts in 2009, the program went to 76,000 in 2010, 154,000 in 2011, and 357,000 before the end of 2012. In this three years of the New FIES, the program signed more contracts than in the previous eleven years of its existence (564,000 contracts between 1999 and 2009, and 587,000 between 2010 and 2012).

Table 39 – Number of contracts/loans of FIES per year (1999-2012)

Year of contract	Institution in charge	Number of contracts	Total
1999	Bank Caixa	67.433	
2000	Bank Caixa	35.215	
2001	Bank Caixa	49.812	
2002	Bank Caixa	66.307	
2003	Bank Caixa	50.004	

2004	Bank Caixa	43.160	564.509
2005	Bank Caixa	78.952	
2006	Bank Caixa	58.806	
2007	Bank Caixa	49.083	
2008	Bank Caixa	33.068	
2009	Bank Caixa	32.669	
2010	MEC / FNDE	76.120	
2011	MEC / FNDE	153.708	587.271
2012*	MEC / FNDE	357.443	
Total			1.151.780

* Until December 03, 2012.
Source: FNDE.

One interviewee identifies the emergence of public programs to fund students in private institutions (FIES and PROUNI) primarily as a way to solve the problem of private institutions, which needed to increase their consumer market in order to continue to do business. In fact, Nogueira (2008) emphasized that the model of growth adopted by Brazil, strongly supported in the private initiative showed signs of being exhausted. This came about principally due to the financial limitations of their potential students. Pinto (2004) analyzing data on the number of unfilled vacancies in the private sector, comments that this reached its limit in relation to its ability to obtain new students. In the author's analysis, this situation will bring about two consequences, which will be: the "increase in fighting over markets, which should bring about more concentration of the sector and a growth in the areas of the north and the northeast, where its presence is still limited", on the one hand; and on the other "an increase in the pressure for public resources, basically by means of FIES". Not by chance was PROUNI created in this same year and, years later, FIES was reformulated.

A study on the higher education private sector, done by Schwartzman and Schwartzman (2002), points to similar aspects. According to the authors, the reaction of private enterprises to the unfilled vacancies today

> Was to foment the rivalry among themselves, through aggressive public campaigns, lowering the monthly payments, locating the teaching venues near the work or homes of the students, easing admittance, and a few institutions trying to attract student with the quality of the education (p. 20).

The authors mentions that the tendencies outlined for the private sector, such as not filling available vacancies, the high dropout rates, the growing number of students unable to pay for their education, and the growing access of students from low-income families tend to worsen in coming years. Thus, the authors conclude that FIES constitutes an essential mechanism to the survival of significant part of the private sector (Schwartzman e Schwartzman, 2002, p. 24-25).

According to the interviewee, Brazil has a second cycle of expansion of the private sector from 1995 on, this time particularly of the for-profit sector. Private institutions of higher education were offering many vacancies but there were not enough students able to pay for their studies. The interviewee believes that Fernando Henrique Cardoso tried to solve this problem by creating FIES, but in the beginning this program was very limited. There were many requirements to apply for the program.

> But recently we had this huge expansion of the private sector, starting in 1995, and it's the private for-profit sector. What's the drama in the business sector? We have an increase in vacancies that have a problem of demand. (…) The institutions grew, but there wasn't income among the population. There's no way to buy the commodity of education. This mass of students that is in this group of 18-24 years old that can buy the commodity of education, will be a part of the public and the private [schools]. The private schools must compete among themselves. The issue of expansion had to be solved, and Fernando Henrique resolved it in a very ineffective way, very fragile with the creation of FIES. But this program was restricted to a few people, it had many requirements. This creates some relief to the private sector, but FIES wasn't a wide scale program, and this will become clear as a crisis (Interviewee 4).

It was clear, according to the interviewee, that students from the upper and middle classes were already in college, many of them in public institutions and some of them in really good private institutions. There was a need to expand the consumer market, focusing on students who already finished high school but were not able to pay for their studies. In his interpretation this would produce PROUNI.

> What is identified here, in the education market? The middle class, upper middle class niche, it's all full. The PUCs, IBEMEC, the most prestigious private institutions already get those students who don't go to public schools. What has to be done in Brazil is to grow the market. How? Including those that are outside of this income group. There is a large group of young people 18-24 years old, here, that already have a high school degree, there's an expansion of high school in the 1990s, and this group, this other population group that is

> here below, is seen as a market consumer. In my opinion this produces the PROUNI. The object of the University for All Program is to open the road for this large group of young people. Because there is a demand in the private sector, that had a crisis of lack of growth (Interviewee 4).

Both PROUNI and the New FIES, in his view, created a consumer market. They included people that were not consumers before because they lacked the resources. The analysis of the interviewee is important and it makes sense but it is important to understand these programs also from the perspective of the students. There was a real demand for more educational opportunities for students in higher education. In the model of higher education adopted by the public sector – four-year courses completely funded by the government – it is impossible to meet these demands alone. Programs such as PROUNI and the New FIES help with the expansion of higher education. In order to assure a real democratization, however, it is necessary to make sure students are getting access to institutions that offer a good education.

Distance Education

The increase in the number of vacancies also came about via higher education distance learning. This learning model is in a visible expansion process and possesses a strong growth potential, by presenting ample and diverse possibilities of education and professional qualification. The 1996 LDB allowed higher education to also be offered through the distance learning model. This, in all, can only be "offered by institutions specifically accredited by the federal government". Aside from that, the federal government remains in charge of regulating exams such as the diplomas obtained in distance learning courses (Art. 80, § 1 e 2), a supposed quality control.

As one interviewee explains, a great deal of the expansion during Lula's government took place through distance learning courses. The Ministry of Education crated, in 2005, the Open University of Brazil (UAB), in partnership with the State Forum for Education. UAB is a program that seeks to establish a national system of distance learning higher education, by integrating public institutions that offer this level of education (Source: http://www.uab.mec.gov.br. 07/01/2008).

In fact, the increase in the number of undergraduate courses offered by public and private higher education institutions in this model is substantial. In 2000, there were only 20 courses. In 2010, it had already gone up to 930. With regards to the number of enrollments, the growth was also notable. From less than 2,000 enrollments in 2000, the country went up to 930,000 enrollments in 2010. This number of enrollments in distance education for undergraduates today approaches 15% of all enrollments.

According to the representative of MEC, the federal government decided to implement a very strict supervision of distance education courses. There was very rapid growth, and many people denounced the quality of these courses. In his view now that there is regulation, it is possible to continue to grow while assuring quality. He says that MEC plans to continue to increase distance education through UAB.

> MEC adopted an attitude in relation to distance education of making the supervision process very rigorous. Because there was highly accelerated growth and at the same time a lot of denouncing with regards to the quality of the courses, the setup, the institutions (…) SESU (Secretariat of Higher Education) at the time and now and SERES (Secretariat of Regulation and Supervision of Higher Education) have worked in this direction, with various institutions. Also we had some cases of de-accreditation of programs, of institutions. I think that now we have the opportunity to rethink this and grow. In fact, if we compare Brazil to other countries, it has a great growth potential. It has an initiative from MEC, from CAPES, that is UAB, but we are betting a lot on the growth of distance education in a controlled manner with relation to quality (Interviewee 9).

Although UAB is an important program to increase distance education in the public sector, here too most of the enrollments are led by the private sector. In terms of institutions, 46% are public (424) and 54% private (506). In terms of enrollment, only 20% of the institutions are in the public sector (181,6) while 80% are in the private sector (748,6).

There is a consensus among the interviewees that it is necessary to increase access to higher education in Brazil. The interviewees also recognize that during the last 15 years there have been policies to promote that increase. During Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government the expansion was promoted through the private sector and during Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva's government through the public and the private sectors. Interviewees make reference to the expansion of federal

institutions promoted by Lula, and to programs such as REUNI, PROUNI, FIES and distance education. Some interviewees see all these policies as effective, while others only see them as effective in promoting growth in the public sector. There is one interviewee that criticizes the Ministry of Education for not taking into consideration the issue of quality in the expansion. The next subsection will focus on policies adopted by the federal government to democratize access.

4.2.7 – Measures to democratize access to higher education

Besides the limited access to higher education discussed in the previous subsection, there are some historical inequalities that only recently started to be addressed in Brazil. The educational system in Brazil faces a very contradictory phenomenon. 81% of K-12 schools are public (84% of the enrollment), while only 19% are private (16% of the enrollment). According to the results of the Basic Education's Evaluation System (SAEB/Prova Brasil) in 2011, students in private schools perform better on Portuguese and Math exams in all grades assessed (5 and 9 grades of basic education and 3 years of high school). In synthesis, students from private K-12 schools have a better performance level in national evaluations than students from public schools. In higher education, the situation is the opposite. Only 12% of higher education institutions are public (27% of the enrollment), and 88% are private (73% of the enrollment).

Public institutions of higher education are known for their quality, and have highly selective entrance examinations (the *vestibular*, now being progressively replaced in some institutions by the New ENEM). It is important to mention that these institutions are completely free of charge, as determined by the Constitution of 1988. Students do not have to pay any tuition or fees to pursue their undergrad studies. The contradictory phenomenon is that those who are able to attend private education during basic education or K-12, in general go to public institutions for undergrad. In other words, those who have a better economic situation usually study in public universities without paying anything, while those who are economically disadvantaged are forced to pay for their

college education or, as happens in most of the cases, they do not have access to higher education at all.

This situation of inequality in the transition from K-12 to higher education was particularly dramatic in the past. Today it is possible to say that there are some measures to address this problem. For instance, there are social and racial quotas for students in federal universities, and programs such as PROUNI for students in private universities. These programs will be pointed out by the interviewees as not only increasing access but also including specific populations in higher education.

> We didn't succeed in skewing the historic phenomenon that (...) good basic education isn't in the public sector. Results of ENEM show that. It improved a lot. But the time when we had the *Liceus*, the *Ateneus* is gone. The good state schools are no longer offering a good education, because of historical salary problems, investing in professors, etc. Consequently you have a massive state investment in higher education that was always a small sampling. It's easier for the state to work with a small elite in higher education than to invest massively in basic education because the sample is much larger. A lot more is spent on basic education, although it's not good, than on higher education, because of quantity. What's going to happen is that you will have a good public higher education, and a not-so-good basic education. (…) Whoever can pay inverts this process and in higher education studies for free. This was worse, today it's somewhat better, because of the policies of inclusion, of quotas that are appearing, that favor the public sector for the public sector (Interviewee 2).

Nogueira (2008) explains that the concept of democratization of access to higher education is complex. In the Brazilian literature it is possible to find different perceptions about the meaning of this idea. A first concept observed in the literature associates the democratization of access to higher education with the simple increase in vacancies. If more people had access, there would be more democratization. In this sense the studies of Pacheco e Ristoff (2004) on the democratization of access in higher education in Brazil could be mentioned. The authors address this pressure for more vacancies at this level of education, the relevance of this increase for the country, the breakdown of the growth capacity of the private initiative alone, and the need to strengthen the public sector in order to make this expansion/democratization feasible. Throughout the text, the increase is made a synonym of democratization, without considering other elements of the debate.

A second concept considers that democratization of access to higher education cannot be

reduced to a simple increase of vacancies. This democratization requires that non-privileged social groups have access to the university. If the poorest enter the university more, then there is democratization.

A third concept starts from the consideration above, yet surpasses it. It considers, as before, that democratization of access requires that the poorest social sectors have access to the university, but it points to an additional criteria. This new criteria says that democratization does not refer solely to social levels, but should also take race into account. Access to the university becomes democratic when it increases access to those from non-privileged groups and when opportunities increase for Blacks to have higher income. In this sense, it is possible to highlight a quote from the report "Social Policies: follow-up and analysis", regularly published by the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA):

> So that there is an effective democratization of access to higher education, the racial issue needs to be addressed, above all on the increase of persons of African descent at this level of education. Even though the least incidence of an ethnic group in higher education is associated with the economic condition, it is true that there are differences in access between whites and Blacks belonging to the same income group. In this sense, the ideal would be the intensification of quota policies or their equivalent for the public network (of federal universities) as a way to incentivize and allow a greater social mobility for the students from this network and, on the other hand, maybe achieve an appreciation of the public schools (Políticas..., 2007, p. 192).

The differences in opinion about what comes to be democratization of access in higher education and the best means to obtain it are presented, still, in other terms. Positions on the issue seem to be basically polarized into two groups. On one side, there are those that defend democratization of access to higher education is achieved through the guarantee of access to previous levels of education, in this case to basic education, and for the improvement of its quality. On the other side, there are those that recognize that this is an essential element, but believe that additions to these other mechanisms should be adopted, as for instance quota policies.

An example of the argument used by those who situate themselves in the first group can be found in Goldemberg e Durham (2006), for whom the *vestibular* is an instrument that evaluates the students' merit, not discriminating on the basis of social, racial, or ethnic origins. For the authors, "a

correct affirmative action policy should offer students in public schools, especially Blacks and those who are poor, opportunities to overcome the flaws in their former education" (p.1)

Those that situate themselves in the second group defend, in general, the adoption of affirmative action policies, keeping in mind the need to include those whose access has been historically and systematically denied, be it due to their economic situation, or be it due to the link between this and other elements like race and/or ethnicity. Those who support these initiatives, according to Moehlecke (2002), should not have an opposition between affirmative action policies and broader universal/social policies, "but, yes, a combination between them" (p. 213).

Affirmative action policies can be succinctly defined as "a combination of actions and government positions to protect minorities and groups who have been discriminated against in the past" (Silvério, 2003). Or yet, as a set of public and private policies lacking in compulsory character, facultative or voluntary, conceived with the goal of fighting racial, gender discrimination, etc. (Gomes, 2001, apud Domingues, 2005, p. 166). There are different types of affirmative policies, such as quotas and more extreme cases. As Domingues (2005) characterizes them, quotas consist in "reserving a certain percentage of vacancies for a specific population group (Blacks, women, gays, among others), principally in university access, in the job market, and in political representation" (p. 166).

These different perspectives about what is democratization of higher education and what is necessary to do to achieve it were also expressed in the interviewees' comments. For many interviewees, to democratize is to create new vacancies. One of them says that it is important to improve high school but there cannot be democratization without an increase in the number of vacancies.

> The best solution is to increase the offer (of vacancies). Improve high school, but increase vacancies. If we keep ourselves the same size as an institution and we say that so many vacancies are reserved for public school students or for Blacks, we will continue serving a portion, because everyone else will be kept out. So for me the best solution of all, including quotas or not, is to increase vacancies (Interviewee 6).

Another interviewee says that what has an impact in the democratization of higher education

is the expansion of evening courses. The expansion of vacancies in evening courses was strongly recommended during the debates about university reform during Lula's government, as mentioned by Nogueira (2008). The interviewee makes reference particularly to the need to expand these courses in federal universities, using as an example the case of state universities in Sao Paulo.

> What makes a difference is the expansion of evening courses. This is what impacts the process of democratization. You have to expand the public sector, you have to expand the evening courses in the federal universities. The evening attendance rate at the federal universities is very low. For example, if you compare it with the state universities in Sao Paulo, that have 33% of vacancies at night, even some very elite courses like engineering, dentistry, the federal system has room to grow a lot in the evening courses (Interviewee 5).

He mentions that, according to the Constitution of the State of Sao Paulo (1989), state universities have to offer at least 1/3 of their vacancies in evening courses (Art. 253). As he explains, when the law was passed none of the state universities were offering this number of evening courses, but after some years they adjusted.

> I think that a case that it's worth analyzing it's this article of the Sao Paulo constitution that forced the state universities to set aside a third of their vacancies to evening courses. And this had a big impact. None of the three (public state universities) at the time of the approval of this article in the Sao Paulo constitution set aside a third of their vacancies for the evening courses, it took years for them to adjust to this, but it represented in fact an improvement in access conditions (Interviewee 5).

Today Brazil has 5,449,120 students in higher education, the majority of them in evening courses (63%), as table 40 shows. Private institutions have many more students in evening courses (73%) compared to public institutions (38%). Looking only at federal universities, of their 833,934 students, 28% of them are in evening courses. The state universities of Sao Paulo, to take the same example used by the interviewee, have more students in evening courses than federal institutions, but the difference is not very high (38% of their students).

Table 40 - Number of students in higher education, per period of the course (2011)

	Total	Day		Evening	
Brazil	5,449,120	1,991,640	37%	3,457,480	63%
Public	1,461,696	906,457	62%	555,239	38%
Federal	833,934	597,350	72%	236,584	28%
State	524,698	284,611	54%	240,087	46%
Municipal	103,064	24,496	24%	78,568	76%
Private	3,987,424	1,085,183	27%	2,902,241	73%

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2010.

The number of evening courses increased in all kind of institutions from 2000 to 2010. In 2000, Brazil had 57% enrollment in evening courses (compared to 63% today). Private institutions had 66% (compared to 73% now); public institutions 35% (compared to 38% today). Looking only at federal universities, it is 23% (compared to 28%). The state universities of Sao Paulo had 33% (compared to 38% now) (Census of Higher Education, 2000 and 2010).

These data show that there is still great growth potential to be explored in public institutions. The increased offerings in higher education evening classes surely represent better opportunities for young workers. If, on the one hand, it seems clear that this expansion is a strategy that can contribute to the democratization of access to this level of education, especially by welcoming student workers, on the other it is necessary to recognize that this is not a subject free from difficulties. Cunha and Oliveira (1989) comment that problems association with the evening schools have external and internal causes. As an external issue, the authors mention, for example, the socio-economic conditions of students who are on this schedule. As an internal issue they mention the lack of an adequate curriculum to the students' socioeconomic needs (p. 39). Porto and Santos (1988) observe that, along with the political decision to expand the higher education evening courses, it is necessary to develop an adequate pedagogical strategy, so that this expansion does not come to be a synonym of a decrease in the quality of education.

Some interviewees defend the notion that besides increasing the number of vacancies, it is important to adopt affirmative action in order to promote democratization. For one interviewee, affirmative action policies help to assure more equality. These policies increase the representation

of underrepresented groups, but if there is not an increase in the number of vacancies institutions will have to continue to discuss who gets in and who keeps out.

> What the affirmative action policies do, which is important, is include, increase the representation of underrepresented groups. Notably the Black population and students coming from public schools. But we still are discussing who is left out. It's not a process of democratization in the sense that more people can go, what impacts that is expansion (Interviewee 5).

At the same time there are movements and authors that argue in favor of the need for affirmative action policies to correct historic inequalities (Belloni, 2003; Gonçalves e Silva e Silvério, 2003; Galdino and Pereira, 2004; Pinto, 2004; Queiroz, 2004; Domingues, 2005; Santos, 2005; Velloso, 2007), others sound the alarm about the quota system and even question its legality (Sowell, 2004; Fry and Maggie, 2004; Fry and Maggie, 2007; Ferreira Filho, Barroso and Souza, 2006; Durham, 2005a; Fry, 2007a; Fry, 2007b; Góes, 2007; Maestri, 2007).

One interviewee underlines that the debate about inclusive policies is important, and until Lula's administration it was inexistent at the governmental level.

> They are the inclusive policies, whether racial quotas or socioeconomic quotas. I think it is essential to bring this debate to society. It didn't exist in the past. That is, in the previous Fernando Henrique government the institution didn't realize that this was a social commitment (of universities) (Interviewee 7).

As Nogueira (2008) explains, during the Lula administration the discussion about affirmative action was strongly introduced into the governmental agenda. This theme was present during all the debates about university reform. Even in 2003, first year of Lula's mandate, the government was made up of a group of interministerial workers, coordinated by the Special Secretariat of Promotion of Racial Equality Policies (SEPIR) and by MEC, made up of representatives from 8 federal governmental organizations. From the activities of this groups came the proposal that the executive power would send to the legislative, that is: the bill n. 3.627 (2004), that instituted the special system of reservation of vacancies for incoming students from public schools, especially Black and indigenous students, in the public higher education federal

institutions. This bill was attached to the bill n. 73/1999, written by deputy Nice Lobão. Recently, the project of this deputy was approved and resulted in the Law 12.711 (29/08/2012).

Law 12.711 (2012) determines that federal higher education institutions linked to the Ministry of Education will reserve, in each selective process for admittance into undergraduate programs, by program and year, a minimum of 50% of vacancies for students who have studied full time in public high schools. Fifty percent of such vacancies should be reserved for students from families with an income equal or lower than 1.5 times the per capita minimum wage (Art. 1). The law calculates that part of such vacancies will be filled by persons who self-identify as Black, mixed race, or indigenous (Art. 3).

One interviewee says that in fact today there are policies to promote affirmative action in higher education. He underlines the relevance of civil society organizations in the achievement of such policies. In many cases, as he explains, these NGOs required or stimulated institutions to adopt inclusive policies. Many Non-Governmental Organizations, as he mentions, support inclusive policies in higher education and also the debate about this theme in K-12-education.

> The policies (of affirmative action) exist. And the policy cannot be understood solely in terms of government intervention. There are NGOs that are working in higher education and that have strong stake in including minorities today (persons of African and indigenous descent). (…) Various organizations exist in Brazilian society linked with quotas in education, above all for persons of African descent. (…) Those groups are those that coopt these institutions for agreements and to adopt these policies. Many times the institution itself doesn't adopt this policy, but it will become a partner to these NGOs for social inclusion (Interviewee 2).

Nogueira (2008), among her interviewees, found that there were huge debates about which kind of quota polices to adopt. Some were in favor of social quotas (quotas for students from low-income families or for students of public schools), others were in favor of racial and ethnic quotes (for black and indigenous students), and finally some were in favor of a combination of policies for both groups. These different perspectives were also found among the interviewees of this dissertation.

One interviewee explains that social quotas are broader than racial and ethnic quotas, due to the strong correlation between income and race and ethnicity. In his view, social quotas are more appealing today.

> In Brazil there still exists a debate: should quotas be racial or social? If you understand that a large part of ethnic issues, because of Brazil's history, are linked to larger social issues, then the social issue is broader than the ethnic issue. (…) quotas for students from the public system have more support [than racial quotas], they have more impact today (Interviewee 2).

Another interviewee illustrates this perspective. In his opinion, the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro took a major stand against very strong pressure. It decided to create quota policies for students from public schools, where he believes most of the black students are, but did not create specific policies for black students. In his view, specific policies would create a racialization of society that could bring negative results.

> UFRJ made the important decision against very strong pressure. That means the following, we want to have an affirmative position against social discrimination, without focusing on this problematic issue that is the racial issue, the racialization of a social issue. This is a serious problem (…) the position of UFRJ was this, we are going to give better grades to students from public school, where persons of African descent are likely to study. In other words, we focus on social discrimination. The racial matter isn't our issue (Interviewee 8).

Other interviewees think that a combination of social and racial quotas is more adequate. The interviewee who coordinated the implementation of quotas for black and indigenous students at UnB says that these policies helped to change the face of the institution. They brought much more diversity to campus.

> The other part of access that I invested a great deal in was affirmative action. And I coordinated the implementation of quotas at UNB. It was a very bold project, it wasn't quotas for public school, it was quotas for Black and indigenous students. With a selection mechanism, etc. And it changed the face of UNB (…). It became more university (Interviewee 6).

He says that behind the resistances faced by affirmative action policies was a belief that higher education was the privilege of a few – particularly whites coming from the upper classes.

Today, however, there are many institutions adopting affirmative action and in his view the university is benefiting from this.

> And the curious thing is that a lot of the resistance we had about quotas was personal: "and my son, what will happen to him?" (…) But what is behind this is the idea that this is a social class's right. We are the middle class, the upper white middle class, and let the others get access if they can. So those processes that grew a lot in the country, and today exist in various types of selection, they damaged the model of choosing people like me [white]. And the university will certainly benefit from this (Interviewee 6).

One interviewee remarks that students from public schools who access the university through quota policies do not show a lower academic performance than other students. As he explains, in his university students who gain access through quotas, as opposed to students who access without it, have to attain a minimum grade point average in order to be approved. This, in his view, helps to assure the quality of education.

> There is an interesting piece of data, the students from public schools aren't performing worse than those from private schools who enter the university. The only thing that we did in our university is that, despite adopting quotas, we required a minimum grade point average in every course. Only the medical course can't be the same as a course on administration, or math, or vice versa. Every course has an average grade that is required. After this requirement is met the quotas come into play, so that the student also has a certain quality, to follow along in the course, because then, putting a student there with no basis whatsoever doesn't mean progress; because of that when our students enter, whether through the quota or not, they have similar or even better success (Interviewee 3).

According to the interviewee, each institution should decide which kind of policies to adopt, taking into consideration the reality of the region in which the institution is located. In his institution in Parana state, for instance, he says that the percentage of Black students that enroll is low, due to the small number of Black people in the area.

> I don't have anything against a quota for Black persons, it even exists in the university where I'm the rector, but today the percentage that enters there is very small. I think that there should be, every region has its characteristics, it's another point, universities are distinct (Interviewee 3).

Another interviewee also thinks that universities should decide about what kind of inclusive policies they will adopt, out of respect for their autonomy. Legislation could provide some guidance

by saying that universities need to take inclusion into consideration, but not establish what should be done. In her view this is important, particularly due to the diversity of the country.

> Maybe you can have someone saying that an institution has to find ways of [doing this], but not telling them what they have to do. Because the reality differs in every region. In Santa Catarina you have to have a quota for Germans, not for Blacks. (…) If in Bahia there were a quota for Blacks then perhaps some Blacks will be kept out, because proportionally there are many more Blacks in the population than whites. So I think that the institutions should always have autonomy. That the university should understand this as a compromise (Interviewee 7).

Until recently, it was up to all institutions to decide whether or not to implement quota policies. In Brazil some public universities were already embracing these policies on their own. Some have social quotas (for public school students) and ethnic-racial quotas (for persons of African and indigenous descent), whereas others only have one of these quotas. Also, in the scope of private higher education institutions quota policies were in force for some vacancies, made possible particularly by PROUNI. Now with Law 12,711 (2012), social and racial quotas are mandatory for federal institutions of higher education. State and private institution can continue to decide on their policies.

> The issue is polemic. Today it comes down to voluntary compliance by the institutions, on account of their autonomy, for their own policies or federal policies. There are institutions that adopt the quota system just as there are others that, because of their autonomy, don't adopt the quota system (Interviewee 2).

The representative of MEC says that PROUNI promoted the democratization of higher education. The program, as seen in the previous subsection, aimed at low-income students, also takes their race into consideration.

> PROUNI without a doubt is a program of great relevance to the country, because it succeeded in creating an important process of inclusion in universities. (…) The fact that beneficiaries from PROUNI have to be students from public schools or students that had a full-scholarship in private schools makes it so PROUNI has a strong characteristic of social inclusion. (…) Social inclusion and also inclusion of Blacks in the university. PROUNI posits that some of the vacancies have to take into account the Black population in the region (Interviewee 9).

Another interviewee questions whether PROUNI promoted a real democratization or not. In his opinion, in the deepest sense of democracy the answer is no. He says that some people are having a lower quality education through the program and it is impossible to talk about democracy without recognizing people's equal rights.

> Did this democratize? In the most profound sense of democracy, that has to do with liberty, with the recognition of the real humanity of all those who have a human face, in my interpretation, no. (…) It's hard to say that there is democratization. It's a very strange concept of democracy to not recognize the equal humanity of others. Why do some have a deliberately lower-quality education than others? Are they lacking in merit? Or does their merit only allow them to reach that level? Is it because of their human nature? Or are these social determinations? I think that they are social determinations (Interviewee 4).

But contradictorily, according to the same interviewee, there are social changes, and the assurance of some rights. PROUNI, in his view, has an impact on transforming reality.

> But do we have social changes that contradictorily affirm some rights in this new reality? Certainly we do. (…) We also can't make a judgment saying that this won't alter social reality. It alters it. Just as the public schools expanded in the 1970s and had democratizing consequences. Here too we have social democratizing consequences. But that doesn't mean that it is a policy of democracy (Interviewee 4).

He compares this situation with what happened with public K-12 education during the dictatorship. More people were able to attend primary and secondary public schools, despite their low quality. Some of them were even able to get a good education because some public schools were good, or they had some great teachers. In some private institutions of higher education, in his view, it is also possible to have the chance to get good teachers. He mentions the example of his own institution, a prestigious public university, in which their master and Ph.D. students are already teaching in private institutions. These graduate students received a good education, and the expectation is that they are doing a good job in private institutions.

> at some private schools you will get a wonderful teacher, masters and doctoral students [from federal universities] are in many private schools, we hope they were educated sufficiently well. They have a good teacher, certainly. The working conditions are what aren't very easy. If you teach 45 hours of class per week you do your work and it's humanly impossible to do more than that (Interviewee 4).

An interesting aspect mentioned by one interviewee is that institutions of higher education have problems in adopting quotas policies. He explains why. Institutions are evaluated mainly by their students' performance. Institutions that create quota policies usually receive students with a lower academic qualification. Later these students are going to represent the institution in national exams. Unless the institution also creates programs to improve their academic performance, they are not going to get good results.

> You have a problem. If you take into account the Brazilian regulation today, the Brazilian regulation evaluates the institution through its students. The ENADE carries great weight in the evaluation of the institution as a whole. What will happen? When you create your own policies of social inclusion you will naturally have less qualified students in basic education that came to this institution. Consequently either you create programs to supplement the education of these young people or you will have the following: these young people will represent the institution in evaluations, but they won't represent them well (Interviewee 2).

In his opinion, this is a dilemma faced by many institutions: from the perspective of the evaluation, it is not a strategic idea to adopt quotas. According to him, sometimes good institutions that feel a social responsibility decide to invest in inclusion and are hit during the evaluation. He says that this happens particularly with community universities in Brazil.

> You have a great dilemma today; establishing policies of social inclusion isn't good business from the point of view of the evaluation. This student in four years will represent his institution badly. It's not his fault, but the fault of the flaws in his education (…). So sometimes you have an excellent institution that invested in a social project and is paying the price for having invested in this social project. This happens a lot, especially in the community universities, that were the first to adhere (to quotas policies), because of the nature of the institutions, because of their mission, social inclusion, programs of inclusion (Interviewee 2).

A student's performance is very important in the evaluation of institutions, as it will be discussed in the next subsection. And the regulation of the federal system of higher education, which includes federal and private institutions, depends on this evaluation. In the interviewee's analysis, the policies to stimulate affirmative action were created, but federal regulation at the same time punishes institutions that adopt these policies. To him this has less impact on federal universities because they have more qualified students, but private institutions fear these policies.

> The regulatory policy made the evaluation of students a criterion for judging the institutions. So ENADE has an important weight in the evaluation. 60% of the evaluation of the institution today depends on ENADE. And the regulatory policies depend on this. So if on the one hand there were measures in the private and public sector for poor students and minorities, on the other hand (…) the evaluation discriminates against this policy at the same time. (…) The impact of this on the federal public system is smaller because it already naturally has a portion of the most qualified students. And the private system doesn't. (…) So the private higher education institutions fear affirmative policies of social inclusion (Interviewee 2).

There are those who believe that no effective policies were created to promote democratization of higher education in Brazil. According to one interviewee, quota policies are based on a real demand, but they are opportunist policies. He believes it is necessary to increase the quality of public high schools and universalize access to higher education in order to solve the problem of access.

> From my point of view no effective measures (were adopted by the federal government), but rather opportunist policies, based on real demands, opportunist policies like the quota policy, for example. Because it is obvious that a system as exclusive as this, if you have quota policies and don't strengthen the public schools, even if you drag people who were excluded by the higher education institutions to them, which is positive in itself, this absolutely does not take care of the challenge of universalizing access to the system for the person who is most grossly excluded, those who are the low-income people. Remembering as well that because of prejudice and social exclusion directed at ethnicities and minorities, it's of course the Blacks that make up the most of this marginalized social class. And thus if you don't increase and universalize the system starting with basic education, the policy of quotas will supposedly favor a minority also privileged within that class, which has the ability to fight for a vacancy in a quality public institution (Interviewee 1).

He insists that the quota is an opportunist policy that brings positive political results in the short term. In his view, it looks like justice is being made, and some justice it is, but it does not attack the real problem that is the needed for universalization of the system.

> It's an opportunist policy, it's a policy that catches on well, it's a policy that brings short-term dividends. Because it seems that it is promoting some justice. To some degree, some localized justice is because you permit a bigger percentage of people that was excluded to have access to the quality public university. But it is perverse because it hides the main problem, and it helps the government to avoid the discussion of the main problem, which is the universalization of the system (Interviewee 1).

In fact, quota policies for access to universities—for students from public schools and for Blacks—are emergency measures, and palliative to some degree. They mitigate, but alone they do

not solve the problem. The student will be included in the university, which brings the feeling that the problem is lessened, but his education can be inferior to that of the student that has access without quotas, if necessary measures to assist that student are not adopted. The real solution to the problem has to do with improving basic education and increasing vacancies in higher education. But the benefits of this emergency policy must be recognized. It increases the ability of some social groups to continue their studies and their chances to overcome their educational challenges.

The polemics surrounding the adoption of quotas are huge, and they are related to an important tension existing in higher education, that is the contradiction between educating only an elite or larger percentages of the population, or, in other words, between excellence and democracy. As seen by Oliveira e Catani (2006):

> Excellence together with the production of knowledge and high quality education, in a perspective of pushing toward economic, political, and social development, being therefore, structurally selective and elitist. Democracy together with the perspective of the ascension of emerging economic, political, and social groups that pressure the system to increase the number of vacancies in order to accommodate them in their interior (p. 4).

There are different positions in relation to this subject. On the one hand, there are those who defend the academic merit as the most important aspect in selective processes for admittance to higher education, having into consideration that advanced courses demand a specific previous education in order to guarantee their high standard of quality. On the other hand, there are those who understand the relevance of academic merit, but believe that this should not be the only criteria adopted in selective processes. In fact, it is necessary to have minimum requirements so that students can develop the necessary activities in higher education with quality.

However, it is not possible to disregard that the idea of merit is being used in several contexts to justify existing inequalities, among which those related to access to educational opportunities in society stand out. Moehlecke (2004) defends that educational institutions need to incorporate a new definition of merit. In the author's understanding, this should be measured by the "capacity students have to, in adverse conditions, overcome encountered difficulties through their effort, although their results might be different from those of students that are in much more

advantageous situation. Merit is conceived as a just measure in the efforts of every person" (p. 774).

For Silva (2001), socioeconomic conditions are profoundly associated with admittance to higher education, above all to the most desirable careers and universities. In his view, "what this situation reveals is not the substitution of merit for the socioeconomic condition, but rather that those that have means available are more likely to meet the merit requirements" (p. 297). Pinto argues along the same lines, saying that the "'most capable,' as the Constitution defines them, are not enrolling in the universities, but rather the best trained" (p. 753). Thus, the merit principle "represents a necessary, but not sufficient, condition to answer the objectives of a true democratization" (Bernheim, 1979 apud Santos Filho, 1986, p. 21). To defend the traditional notion of merit in selective processes to access higher education without first considering the issues relative to past social inequalities at this time could contribute to reproducing those disparities.

Promoting democratization of access to higher education implies ensuring that those have interest and capacity can enroll in that level of education, independent of their socioeconomic condition. This, beyond an imperative of social justice, as Santos Filho (1986) emphasizes, represents a high social investment.

Other federal policies not mentioned by the interviewees help with the process of democratization, such as the National Students Assistance Program (PNAES) and the Permanence Scholarship. As important as it is to create new vacancies or adopt affirmative action, it is also critical to assure that students will be able to continue their studies once they enter higher education. Financial assistance is essential for many students.

This subsection starts by addressing some historical inequalities in Brazilian higher education. One interviewee sees the creation of new vacancies as an initiative that promotes democratization. He makes reference to the importance of increasing evening courses to use the installed capacity of the existing institutions and also to allow working students to attend college. Most of the interviewees, however, say that to promote a real democratization it is necessary to include populations traditionally excluded from higher education or to implement affirmative

actions. While some are in favor of social quota – to reserve vacancies for low-income students or students coming from public schools – others defend social and racial quotas. In the following subsection interviewees talk about policies adopted by the federal government to assure the quality of higher education.

4.2.8 – Measures intended to assure quality of higher education

One interviewee begins his comment by considering what is quality of education and how this has been measured. He questions whether quality is what appears in the results of evaluations. Do these evaluations have a broad view of education?

> What is quality in education? (…) Is quality what appears as a result of evaluation? (…) But could it be that this evaluation (…) carries within its criteria a much broader vision of education to attribute this to quality? (Interviewee 2).

Most of the interviewees connect policies to ensure quality of higher education with evaluation policies. Nogueira (2006), giving a short retrospective of experiences of evaluation in the field of higher education in Brazil, testifies that the oldest and most lasting initiative is that of the graduate courses and programs, developed since 1976 by CAPES. Until the beginning of the 1980s, academic production in the area of evaluation had little prominence in the country. More systematic discussions related to the matter date back to the beginning of that decade, with the participation of the National Union of Teacher of Higher Education (ANDES) (Ristoff, 1995, p. 37)

In 1983 the Program for Evaluation of the University Reform (PARU) was created, arising from a concept that understood evaluation mainly as accountability to society through resources invested by the public sector (Brasil. MEC, 2004, p. 18). In 1985 another proposal was put forth in the Ministry of Education (MEC), coming from the High Level Commission: Executive Group for the Reform of Higher Education (GERES). This, in turn, was based on a regulatory concept, in which evaluation was conceived as a counterpoint to autonomy and financing (Brasil. MEC, 2004, p. 19).

Only in the following decade, however, did the most concrete initiatives in this field begin to rise. In 1993 the National Commission of Evaluation was created in MEC and, in that context, the Program of Institutional Evaluation of Universities (PAIUB). In Ristoff's opinion (1995),

> During 1993 and 1994 the country lived through a really historic moment in terms of evaluation. The initiatives of the National Association of Directors of Federal Institution of Higher Education (ANDIFES), the Brazilian Association of Rectors of State and Municipal Universities (ABREUM), the Forums of Provosts of Education and Planning found an echo in the ideological plural team of MEC. MEC played the role not of conductor of the process, but of articulator, and, finally, of financier (p. 38).

Gomes (2003) states that "it isn't difficult to deduce that a policy of evaluation conceived and implemented under the basic principles of PAIUB wasn't formulated by the government, but by the federal universities or by a commission that represented them" (p. 131).

PAIUB was, in fact, a remarkable experience in the history of evaluative practices in Brazilian institutions. First because the universities' participation in this initiative was voluntarily. Associated with this principle, others equally important characterize its conception, such as: globalness (understanding that it's necessary to evaluate the institutions in its various dimensions), comparability (the search for a common language with and between the universities), respect for the institutional identity (the possibility to contemplate the unique characteristics of the institutions in the evaluation), non-rewarding and non-punishing (emphasis on building a culture of evaluation in its educational role), legitimacy (building of adequate indicators and of an interpretation capable of furnishing meaning to the reports at an opportune time) and continuity (in order to permit the accompanying and the compatibility of the data) (Ristoff, 1995, p. 40-51).

Nonetheless, PAIUB's principle of continuity, of following in the traditions in which it was conceived, was damaged by the eventual course taken by the evaluation. Belloni and Belloni (2003), in their evaluation of the aspects in which PAIUB succeeded and failed, believe that the

main mistake was handing over the control of the process to SESU-MEC (Secretary of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture) (p. 10-11).

In the second half of the 1990s that matter began to take up increasingly more space in the educational agenda of Brazil, in the field of basic education and also higher education. The legal documents that came to be approved in that moment offered new outlines to the question and the federal government implemented some policies in that area. Throughout Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government

> New means of evaluation were progressively implemented: the Course National Exam (ENC), taken by those concluding undergraduate courses; the Questionnaire about socioeconomic conditions of the student and his/her opinions about the education conditions of the attended course; the Analysis of Teaching Conditions (ACE); the Evaluation of Supply Conditions (ACO); and the Institutional Evaluation of University Centers (Brasil. MEC, 2004, p. 20).

As one interviewee explains, a national evaluation conducted by the Ministry of Education started in 1995, during Fernando Henrique Cardoso's government, with the National Course Exam (ENC), known as *Provão*. Before that, according to him, there was no national evaluation and thus no instrument to control the quality of the system.

> (Evaluation) started with the *Provão* of Fernando Henrique, the denomination doesn't matter, I think that no system is perfect, later the ENADE, with its improvements, in other words, I think that the universities went decades and decades without having any type of internal and external evaluation this made the system be without any quality control (Interviewee 3).

Another interviewee, however, thinks that it is important to clarify that many institutions before the *Provão* were already participating as volunteers of PAIUB. In her view, with PAIUB evaluation was focused on the issue of quality. With *Provão* the focus shifted to the issue of regulation. That is why she believes that there was a disservice in terms of quality during the FHC government. On the other hand, as she continues, *Provão* somehow led institutions to discuss what is the quality of education.

> Beginning with LDB in 1996, FHC's government promoted a very broad discussion related to evaluation. So evaluation began with e *Provão*. But it is important to say that before that a proposal for evaluation already existed, that was being implemented voluntarily (…), PAIUB. (…) It was already the consensus in many institutions in the country, in 1993, 1994, that it was necessary to do evaluation. The institutions were already doing it voluntarily. (…) When the *Provão* came, the *Provão* ends this discussion, and evaluation to the contrary begins. So if the evaluation was coming before with a discussion on quality, there it begins to be discussed in terms of regulation. (…) This was the logic of Fernando Henrique's government's expansion, you train the student and the market regulates. So I think that there was a disservice in terms of quality during the Paulo Renato government with respect to evaluation. On the other hand, in a way it made the institutions discuss what is a quality education. So it is undeniable that (…) some institutions began to minimally discuss what is a pedagogic project, how I should get a '3' rating (in evaluations), what is the minimum, there was some movement (Interviewee 7).

According to Nogueira (2006), understanding the place that the *Provão* came to occupy in the combination of public policies for education requires that these and other changes conceived in that moment be considered. The 1990s were a decade characterized by an accelerated growth in the offer of higher education in the country, brought about above all via private initiative. The central strategy adopted to make this growth possible consisted in flexibility of legislation related to the creation of institutions and courses. Evaluation represented the other side of this process.

As Durham (2005) highlights, in referring to changes introduced by the LDB, "all the efficacy of the new legislation depended on the building of a system of evaluation, and this was a main concern of the ministry, even before the law's approval" (p. 22). A main initiative of the proposed system was the *Provão*, whose objective was "to comparatively evaluate the courses from different institutions, classifying them according to the medium obtained by their students" (Idem). Institutional evaluation was abandoned in this process.

With Lula's rise to power, the evaluation of higher education constituted, in fact, a matter to which soon decisions were presented. In the midst of 2003 there was created, in the scope of the MEC's Secretariat of Higher Education, a Special Commission of Evaluation (CEA). The Commission had as its goal "to analyze, offer subsidies, make recommendations, propose criteria and strategies for reformulating the process and policies of evaluation of higher education and elaborating the critical revision of its instruments, methodologies, and utilized criteria". From this initiative resulted, in that same year, a preliminary proposal entitled, "National System of Higher

Education Evaluation" (SINAES): basis for a new proposal of evaluation and Brazilian higher education."

Next, Lula's government reformulated the evaluation and regulation of higher education in Brazil. Law 10861 (04/14.2004), was instituted by SINAES, and later regulated through the Ordinance n. 2.051 (07/09/2004). The initiative was accompanied by the Decree n. 5.773 (05/09/2006), that deals with the activities of regulation, supervision, and evaluation of institutions of higher education and undergrad courses in the federal education system.

In general terms, SINAES is composed by the institutional evaluation—that includes self evaluation and external evaluation of institutions, by evaluation of courses and by evaluation of students. Students are evaluated through ENADE, whose objective is to gauge the performance of undergrad students in relation to programmatic content, their abilities and competencies. It can be said that this is the instrument equivalent to the old ENC/Provão, although the focus and the objectives of one exam and the other are different.

If the "context of formulation of the ENC wasn't marked by preoccupations surrounding the participation, representation and political legitimacy" (Gomes, 2003, p. 138), it can be said that the inverse occurred in relation to SINAES. The ideas of integration and of participation were considered essential to "deepen the commitments and social responsibilities of institutions, and also promote democratic values, respect for diversity, the search for autonomy and the affirmation of identity" (Brasil, 2004, p. 83).

One interviewee explains that SINAES is very complex, and although it is working, it is not fully implemented. He says that there is an effort to execute the program, but its complexity makes it hard.

> The model of evaluation for SINAES is very complex, to the point that even today it's still not fully implemented (...) Because in fact how old is SINAES? It's from 2003 or 2004 and even today isn't implemented. It's working, it's being evaluated, but not in the way it was conceived, in the sense of the law, the sense of the purpose. And it's not due to a lack of effort, no, it's because of the exaggerated complexity. I think that the proposal is

> responsible, but I think it's more complicated in practice. The perfect was attempted, when the practical is more appropriate (Interviewee 6).

He believes that in conceptual terms SINAES is a good idea. As he explains, there are local and national commissions in charge of evaluating. Institutions receive *in loco* visits that give them more opportunities to show their work.

> (SINAES) in conceptual terms is very good, very interesting: you have a local commission, a national commission, the visits, all a great effort to make a complete evaluation, because this gives more opportunities for the universities to demonstrate, in terms that they offer, and gives much more data to say for society which are the institutions that are serving and which are those that could be closed. So this is an important effort (Interviewee 6).

In his view, however, SINAES tried to accomplish a very ambitious goal. He says that the system was designed as if it were to evaluate a small and homogenized country, when in fact it is quite the opposite. Another interviewee, along the same lines, points out the size of the higher education system in Brazil as something that imposes a huge challenge for the evaluation.

> It was created as if Brazil were Belgium, a small country, homogenous...it doesn't work. So there's no possibility that a system like this will function fully (Interviewee 6).

One interviewee criticizes that in the evaluation of institutions, there are no elements that recognize their social immersion. By social immersion he means their policies for regional development, or the work with their surrounding community, which will have an impact on people's quality of life.

> In the (evaluation) instrument there is nothing that takes into account the social insertion of this institution. In the sense that it develops regional development policies that work with the community in its regional involvement, that has a social impact in the regional development, that betters the population's quality of life in their surroundings by the social extension projects (Interviewee 2).

He uses the example of an institution that he recently visited in Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil. This institution develops cultural programs in the region, helping to disseminate and preserve local traditions such as the *maracatu* and the *frevo*, and this is not considered as an indicator of quality.

> The other day I was in an institution that develops cultural projects and integration projects in Recife, that has programs like *maracatu*, with *frevo*, in the mangroves, with art, and this

> isn't calculated as quality. Quality today is a pragmatic result, it's the student getting a 10 or a 4, so for me this is a problem (Interviewee 2).

The social immersion mentioned by the interviewee can be understood as their social responsibility. In fact, this is one element contemplated in the institutional evaluation proposed by Law 10.861 (2004) that created SINAES. According to this law, institutional evaluation has to consider "the social responsibility of the institution, especially considered in what refers to its contribution in terms of social inclusion, social and economic development, defense of the environment, of cultural memory, of artistic production and of cultural patrimony" (Art. 3, III).

Another interviewee also mentions the need to thinking about the social responsibilities of universities. These responsibilities, as she explains, go beyond teaching; they are also related to the production and dissemination of knowledge. As she sees it, the social responsibility of institutions is very particular depending on their history and also on the area in which they are located.

> We need to think what is the social commitment of the university. And this social commitment also have to be done case by case, according to the institution, where it is within its context. Educating professionals at the undergrad level is very little, so you have to advance in the area of service and with knowledge production, of knowledge production and the dissemination of knowledge (Interviewee 7).

She exemplifies this using the case of UNILAB. Some students were showing deficiencies in one area and the university adjusted its curriculum to address this reality. Quality, as she explains, is a fairly broad term that encompasses several things, including social responsibility.

> There was an interesting initiative here. In some classes that required math, before entering with calculus, there was a class, we'll say 1.0. We'll start with algebra, elementary, rule of 3, second degree equation, that children learn in the 5th, 6th grade. There was a lot of students that failed that class (…) Big problem, it was a class that was offered again soon. It was math at point zero, not step 1, it was point 0 (…) So I think that this is an important point for us to think about the social commitment of the university and what quality should be. So clearly, if you don't know algebra are you going to leave an engineer in the end? No. It doesn't make sense. But you also have to think about the paths to this construction, and this involved a model. What is my model? So I think that it's fundamental to go through a revision of this public structure, this system that we have. Quality is a lot of things, including social commitment (Interviewee 7).

In relation to the students' evaluation, one interviewee thinks that ENADE has a positive impact on institutions. In his view this exam made administrators, teachers, and students try to

understand why some courses were not doing well. According to him they now question if the problem is infrastructure, lack of teachers, student participation or other aspects.

> ENADE brought a positive result, because I see within the university the search of students, or professors, when a course has a worse result, to try and see what the problem was, if it's infrastructure, if it's the professor's fault, if it's scientific production, if it's student participation (…) ENADE shakes up the institution a little (Interviewee 3).

SINAES tried to change the focus from evaluating students to evaluating all aspects related to higher education: students, courses and institutions. However, as one interviewee mentions, the system was not completely implemented the way it was planned. Students' evaluations, in her analysis, continue to be more important than the other aspects of the process.

> More than simply having the *Provão*, with SINAES an evaluation system began to be thought of, that wasn't just the evaluation of the student. But it is the evaluation of the courses and institutions. And thinking that these three were going to make up something that could contribute to a vision of quality in higher education. SINAES, as designed, with these three parts, didn't succeed in being legitimated. First, because we had almost ten years of the *Provão*, and it created a dis-education, a vision that evaluating the quality of an institution is evaluating the student at the end. And not evaluating the process, and not evaluating what is more ample. But I think that SINAES really lost its initial proposal with IGC and all the rest, despite being done in a system thinking in three parts, the evaluation of the student still remains the most important (Interviewee 7).

As a matter of fact, the indicator used to evaluate undergrad courses takes into consideration several dimensions. Student performance accounts for 55% of the results, while teachers' qualification and working regime account for 30%, and infrastructure and pedagogical organization account for 15%. The evaluation of institution is defined by the performance of all evaluated undergrad courses and graduate programs.

Other interviewees agree that the evaluation focuses too much on students' performance. Besides that, one interviewee questions whether the evaluation of students only takes into consideration their academic performance, not necessarily their citizenship education, for instance. In his opinion it would be better to have a student with a regular academic performance but a more developed citizenship than a student that excels in academic terms but it is completely oblivious about his/her social context. In synthesis, the students' evaluation in his view is not holistic.

> For example, our measure of quality is very linked to the student's performance (…) I prefer an average student who has an education, a more developed social vision of citizenship than the narrow-minded genius student who gets 10 and is selfish and completely isolated from his or her context (…). Today we don't have a holistic evaluation, much more comprehensive, ample, global with all that says about the final education of the student from the integral point of view. I think this is a distortion (Interviewee 2).

One interviewee, talking about student evaluation, says that both *Provão* and ENADE have problems. He explains that the main problem with *Provão* was that it was measuring only the student's performance in the end. ENADE, in its conception, intended to solve this problem by evaluating students in the beginning and the end of their programs. The evaluation of entering students, however, was never implemented. Another interviewee agrees that the students' improvement throughout their program is not measured often enough.

> We need a more careful policy of evaluation of higher education, we don't have it. I think that there were tries, none of them worked. *Provão*, ENADE, all of these are badly supported. Why? The *Provão* for a very simple reason, it measures only at the end not before. Why? Because you have a differential in access, if no one acts foolishly it reproduces the selection from the vestibular. In general the private schools are worse than the public, if the students took the exam seriously, not having a boycott, we would be doing a more accurate measurement, we would discover the obvious, that students from public universities leave in better condition than the private students (Interviewee 5).

> Quality takes into consideration the applicant and the graduate. Who is the applicant that is coming to my institution? What is the aggregate value that I give to this student? This is not being measure enough (Interviewee 2).

Another interviewee says that ENADE also has a serious problem related to the students' motivation to take the exam. They don't receive any benefits for taking it, but they are punished if they don't take it. In his view it is difficult to think of an incentive for students. The exam cannot be an instrument to select students for graduate programs or for work in the public sector, for instance. He also points out the existence of political movements that try to boycott the exam.

> ENADE has a serious problem which is the student's motivation to take the test. The student will strive to do well on an exam, there has to be an incentive for that. It's not simply saying I like my university, I'm going to do my best so it can be said that here students learn well. And there are political movements that address that, and boycott, boycott by the half. (…) ENADE doesn't have a way to be an instrument for entry for graduate studies or public service, it doesn't have a way to be an incentive of that kind. What was created was a

> punishment, if you don't do it you will be punished, you won't receive your diploma, and this is the worst thing in the world (Interviewee 6).

According to the Law 10,861 (2004), ENADE is a mandatory curricular component of undergraduate programs. This law also provides that, "to the students with the best performance on the ENADE the Ministry of Education will give an incentive, in the form of a scholarship, or specific aid, or even some other form of distinction, with a similar objective, destined to favor excellence and the continuity of studies, at the undergraduate or post-graduate level as has been established (Art. 5, §5 and 10). This incentive element, however, was never put into practice.

One interviewee says that ENADE has a structural contradiction: it does not know if it is an exam to promote improvements or to regulate institutions. It is important to underline that promoting improvements is broader than regulating theme. To regulate is to assure the existence of a minimum standard. To promote improvements, on the other hand, is to try to ameliorate always, independent of the performance of the course. According to the interviewee's perspective, it is necessary to have an evaluation that induces improvements in the public sector, and an evaluation that regulates the private sector. The proposal of a two weights and two measures policy do not seems appropriate and in fact the Brazilian legislation with regards to evaluation and regulation applies equally to public and private institutions.

> ENADE tried to answer some of these questions but it was very jumbled and it suffers from a structural contradiction, that is the following: it doesn't know if it's an evaluation in the sense of bringing about improvements or if it's an evaluation in the sense of controlling. Why? Because we need both things. For the public sector we need an evaluation that leads to improvement. It doesn't do that very well, but we'll say, it goes toward it. And for the private sector we need an evaluation in the sense of controlling, in order to repress the abuse of the guys who go on handing out diplomas to badly educated people. And it doesn't do that (Interviewee 5).

Another interviewee says that concerns about quality today are too focused on regulation of the private sector. These institutions, when not showing good results in terms of quality, are being held accountable by the government, in his view. The reduction in the number of vacancies that they can offer, according to him, is being used as a way to call attention to the fact that they need to improve their academic project. Other measures are adopted after successive negative evaluations.

> Concerns about quality today are very focused on regulating and controlling (...) above all the private institutions so that they show results and if there were no results the federal government has fired off automatic measures, such as ordinances. The most adopted measure today is reducing vacancies. If a course receives the grade '2', MEC automatically approves a warning measure, reduce vacancies. So the reduction in vacancies today is an expedient that MEC has used believing that this will produce a shock in the institution and it will redo its pedagogical project in view of quality (Interviewee 2).

The same interviewee says that government is making an effort to assure quality, but it is using regulation to do this and in his assessment this is a mistake. According to the interviewee, when federal universities receive a negative evaluation they count on investments from the government in order to improve. Private universities, on the contrary, are punished. It is important to clarify that the rules regarding the regulation of higher education are the same for public and private institutions. Federal universities receive public investment after a negative evaluation because they are linked to the federal government. Private universities also have to receive investment after a negative evaluation in order to promote improvements, but they get it from their sponsors, not from the government. Both sectors have a period to adjust after a negative evaluation, and if they do not adjust they must be prevented from working in the area where they are performing poorly. This can be seen as a punishment, as the interviewee says, but it perhaps seems more appropriate to see this as a fair measure to assure quality.

> There is even a schizophrenia on the part of the federal government in wanting to have account for quality in a controlled way, this is already good. Only they're doing it through regulation. So today you don't evaluate to improve (…) What is it that the federal government does with the evaluations from INEP? (…) What happens (…) when a federal institution receives a bad evaluations? The federal government invests in this institution. There is a project, in that sense. It will receive resources to improve. It's not punished. What happens in the private sector? If it doesn't receive a good score it is summarily punished, with warnings. So of course you have some that have to be punished, they are pickaxes, they should never have gotten to that condition, but that's not how it is. Brazilian higher education today depends a great deal on private education: 75%. I think that the federal government has tried to guarantee the quality by using regulation. Using an evaluation for regulation (Interviewee 2).

The interviewee says that as a consequence of using the evaluation as a tool for regulating institutions are afraid of evaluation when it should be the opposite.

> So they fear the evaluation, it should be contrary, the evaluation should be a happy moment for the institution, to have their diagnosis (Interviewee 2).

Other interviewees underline more of the positive aspects of the evaluation. One of them gives an example of what happens in his institution when they receive the results of the external evaluation. He is the rector of a public university. According to him, after receiving the results, the institution acknowledged the work developed by those courses that had a positive evaluation, and tried to understand the situation of those that had a negative result.

> I'm a rector, when I receive an annual evaluation I call the course coordinators. First, I praise those that had a good result. If there is someone who didn't have a good result I ask what is happening. What are you all lacking? Look, you have infra-structure, you have professors, what is happening? Could it be that there is some lack of motivation for your students? Because it's not the student's fault, principally in a public university, where the student arrives with an excellent education. So the university receives a good student, they give a bad showing, and what's missing? Oh no, look rector, we don't have a basic lab. Structural blame. No, the professor doesn't motivate us, the professor isn't responsible, this can happen (Interviewee 3).

Another interviewee makes a critical assessment of how private institutions deal with the evaluation implemented by the government. In his opinion, they try to identify the minimum that they have to do in order to be allowed to operate. It is always important to remember that the private sector itself is heterogeneous, so this assessment does not apply to all private institutions.

> Private institutions develop a mechanism that is the following, what is the minimum that I have to do to meet the minimum required by evaluation? And so it's fake. In reality the guys come up with an outline, a preparatory course, excluding the worst students, they have various tricks that they use to do the minimum, stay in the legal limit and continue operating (Interviewee 5).

The representative of MEC says that the federal government supports the expansion in private institutions, through programs such as PROUNI and FIES, but these institutions are submitted to rigorous evaluations in order to assure their quality. SINAES, in his opinion, has a strategic role in guiding this expansion.

> In what drives PROUNI and FIES, the institutions know that they have total support from the ministry with relation to financing the expansion, using the unfilled vacancies that these private institutions have or even in some cases new investments, but they know that there

> exists in MEC a system of evaluation, regulation, and supervision that is very rigorous, so that we have financing suitable to the quality of the courses (Interviewee 9).
>
> SINAES has a fundamental role so that we can do this work of expansion. The courses that have a CPC under 3 can't be financed by FIES. And now in PROUNI two evaluations are considered, if the course were to have two evaluations under 3 this course also could no longer receive money from PROUNI (Interviewee 9).

One interviewee, however, talks about the challenges to regulate the private sector of higher education. This sector, as he explains, is very powerful in the National Congress and also in the National Education Council. He says that it is hard to increase control over these institutions.

> In the case of the private sector I think that there is an additional difficulty that is the political difficulty. Because whatever legislation that they see as an increase in power over them they don't pass in congress. Because they have a very strong lobby, allied with them, etc., and they control the higher education chamber of the CNE. So it's very difficult for you to increase control over the private sector in Brazil today, politically (Interviewee 5).

Some interviewees mention the challenge of SINAES to positively impact the quality of higher education. In one interviewee's opinion, it was created via a huge evaluation system, but its influence on quality does not seem very relevant.

> A robust evaluation system was created. But I think that the result of this robust quality evaluation system doesn't seem very important to me (Interviewee 4).

Another interviewee thinks that the system needs to be simplified. As previously discussed, the system already went through changes during its implementation. Despite these changes, the interviewee says that the data collected should be easier to understand and less expensive for the government. He says that the more qualitative evaluations, for instance, are complex and very expensive. This is, however, one important aspect of the evaluation and considered essential by many scholars.

> This process of assuring quality has this problem, that it tries to take a much bigger step than the legs and this isn't working. So the system need to be simplified in some way, it needs to be transformed into data that is easier to understand, more objective and cheaper, because of the high cost it certainly is to the state (…) The most qualitative evaluations have a much more complex logistic and a very elevated cost. Because a commission goes to the university and gathers all the data (Interviewee 6).

As one interviewee explains, SINAES is not an ideal system but it is providing an extern evaluation of institutions and this brings positive results in his view.

> There are measures to guarantee quality, for example, the system of evaluation that faced resistance in the beginning, although it's not an ideal system, it's a system that is doing an external evaluation of the universities (Interviewee 3).

While one interviewee criticizes the fact that evaluation comes from the outside to the inside, another says that the external evaluation generated a need for internal evaluation.

> Today's evaluation is understood as coming from the outside in. CPA, a self-evaluation no longer matters (Interviewee 2).

> I am in favor of an external evaluation, and why? Because external evaluation created a need for internal evaluation (…) In my opinion external evaluation is important and every university also needs to do a self-evaluation, needs to have a permanent self-evaluation too, because this is a system (Interviewee 3)

One interviewee mentions some advances in the area of regulation. According to him, for the first time some courses of higher education were closed, due to their low quality and bad performance in multiple evaluations.

> Did we progress? We progressed. For the first time, in the last two years, at the end of the Lula government, with Maria Paula as secretary, courses began to be closed in this country. So we'd had the *Provão* since 1995, 1996, 1997… courses started being closed for real. The system of quality assurance doesn't shut down courses, but on the other hand you know it's rubbish and…it's rubbish, and continues being so. (…) So I think that the system has undergone advances. Even if it isn't what I would like, what was outlined in SINAES. But I think there have been advances, yes. And it's necessary to advance much more (Interviewee 7).

Other interviewees think that there were attempts to assure quality; however, none of them were successful. According to one of them, the quality of some courses of higher education is very bad, and this is widely known. He mentions some schools of law and medical schools, for instance. MEC adopted a few measures of censure in relation to these institutions, but in his words they are far from being enough.

> You have some situations (…) public and (…) scandalous. The "façade" law and medical schools. And then the government timidly hands down a measure of censure here and there. Is it right to take some measure? It is. But again is the scale of this measure compatible with

> some structural measure? No. So I will tell you, am I against MEC taking some preventative measures? No, I'm not opposed. But I'm in favor of MEC taking much stronger measures besides that. And it's not doing so (Interviewee 1).

In his opinion, important institutions such as MEC, CNE, and the Senate are more and more linked to people committed to making money in this field, and not necessarily with promoting good higher education.

> More and more MEC, CNE, the Senate are linked to people that don't have the least commitment to quality higher education, but have interest in making money. And making money in higher education isn't related to quality. Because with education you invest in a non-refundable fund and the result comes, but comes for society as a whole and the market logic isn't the result of development for society as a whole, but it's the cheap workforce and the short-term enriching for a small portion of the population. And these last governments were completely receptive to this kind of political position (Interviewee 1).

Another interviewee believes that the federal government adopted no measures in order to assure quality of higher education. When these measures exist, they come from institutions or groups in specific courses. He criticizes CNE for having low criteria to renew institutions' accreditation.

> No, no. When these measures exist, it's not from a governmental measure, but from the local efforts of groups and institutions under university management or course coordination. (…) The reproduction of reaccreditation is done taking into account, through legislation, the institution's performance on the institutional evaluation and the students' performance on the ENADE. The problem is that the criteria that CNE accepts are the lowest possible (Interviewee 8).

Another interviewee mentions that in some moments MEC has tried to take some measures to assure quality, but these measures were limited and faced barriers at CNE, particularly due to the Board of Higher Education, where there are many representatives of private interests. For instance, MEC tried to reorganize the areas of law and the medical school, so it decided to withhold the approval of new courses in these two areas. As he informs, the minister of education went to CNE to explain the reasons why MEC wanted to do this and to ask for their support. They however refused to collaborate. His conclusion is that the government has limitations in its fight for quality of education.

> The minister of education attempted to improve the quality of some areas, like law and medicine. So what the minister did was [try] to prevent the creation of new law courses, and SESU supported this measure. But at the National Education Council they opposed this measure. And the course was approved, as simple as that. The minister at times tried to control the approval process. But the time came when it wasn't possible to control it all. Political pressure, via congress, via the president, was huge. He went a few times to the Council to ask for their help, with regards to the law program and the medical program. (…) The state and the government have limited the ability to fight to improve quality (Interviewee 8).

The interviewee says that quality is a serious problem in higher education today. To improve quality it is necessary to invest in several things, as he points out, including faculty members' qualifications.

> So the issue of quality is a serious problem in higher education today. How to solve this is a combination of activities. For example, the issue of continued education of professors. (…) Regulations today privilege institutions that have (…) masters and doctors on their boards (Interviewee 2).

Another interviewee explains that the qualification of university professors is something important that happened during the last years. In his view this created a standard or a pattern of operation for institutions. In fact, as Schwartzman (2012) explains, "the government has stimulated academics in public institutions to get higher degrees by improving their salaries and, in the private sector, by including academic qualifications of the staff as a criterion in assessment procedures" (p. 75).

> What seems most important to me in the past years? The generalization of teacher's qualification in the universities. Today, you have a high percentage of professors with doctorates. In some universities 90-something percent, almost 100%. Even at young universities, 40%, 45% are doctors. This was an essential aspect. Why was it important? Because it creates a pattern of functioning of the institution and creates a university pattern of functioning (Interviewee 4).

To have professors with Ph.D.s does not change reality completely, according to the interviewee, but it improves it a lot. As he explains, these professors conducted, in the worst scenario, at least one important piece of research (their dissertation).

> Does this mean that it changed water to wine? No. But it improves. No doubt. You have professors that did research. In the worst case, they did a dissertation. They can have deficiencies, limits, but they did a dissertation. It is someone who used scientific literature,

> it's someone who learned to have a certain discipline, that was obligated to write a paper. The professors are better educated. And this has consequences (Interviewee 4).

Increasing the number of professors with Ph.D.s also increased pressure to up the number of Fellowships for Scientific Initiation in public institutions, for instance. This is a fellowship in which undergrad students work in research under a professor's guidance.

> This also forced or increased scholarships for scientific initiation because the number of doctors went up. So the pressure to increase the number of scholarships also was very effective. This fortified the scholarship branch of CNPQ. It had a movement here that was interesting (Interviewee 4).

On the other hand, the interviewee criticizes what he calls blind productivist logic. This, in his view, has a very negative impact on quality. As an example, he mentions the strict deadlines in Brazil for students to conclude their graduate programs (master's and doctorate programs). Many other aspects illustrate this pressure to increase productivity. This value was deeply incorporated to the university, "transforming researchers in productivist machines," as Iriarte (2008) says. This author questions the criteria used to evaluate researchers' productivity, such as number of papers published, pointing out the fact that no one evaluates the quality of such production (p. 35-36).

> The limit to this is being confined by a blind productivist logic. Hyper productivity at all costs. And this will have a very negative effect on quality. If your timeline is 4 years and you haven't finished the thesis, turning in an unfinished work is frustrating. It would be much better for you to get another half a year to better write your work (…) Now if I am functioning like a kind of assembly line, if you have to turn it in within 4 years, you will turn in a worse project (Interviewee 4).

The faculty members' situation, which includes their academic qualifications but also their salaries and working conditions, is an important element in the debate about quality of higher education. Schwartzman (2012) gives an overview of the situation of the professoriate in Brazil:

> Brazilian legislation assumes that all higher education institutions should evolve to become full-fledged universities, with well-qualified, tenured, well-paid, and full-time staff – doing good-quality teaching and research. In fact, some institutions, particularly in the public sector, are moving in this direction, with some limitations. However, most of the private institutions, which account for 75 percent of the student enrollment, are not undergoing such changes. Few of their teachers have advanced degrees; most work part-time and have no job stability; and this reflects a wide gap in salaries and working conditions, when compared with those in the first group (p. 72).

Some data about higher education faculty qualification and working contract help in understanding the Brazilian context. The table 41 shows the number of teaching posts per level of qualification and type of institution:

Table 41 - Total number of teaching posts in practice, by administrative category and level of education (2011)

	No College Degree	College Degree	Specialization	Master's Degree	Doctorate	Total
Public	17	9,437	18,004	41,136	70,990	139,584
Federal	5	6,172	5,923	24,412	47,896	84,408
State	11	2,985	8,974	13,544	21,862	47,376
Municipal	1	280	3,107	3,180	1,232	7,800
Private	6	4,624	81,227	95,954	36,023	217,834
Total	23	14,061	99,231	137,090	107,013	357,418

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

As it is possible to see, most of the faculty in higher education has pursued another degree after their undergraduate degree. Out of the 357,418 teaching posts in 2011, 137,090 are occupied by teachers with a master's degree (38%) and 107,013 by teachers with a doctorate degree (34%). In the public sector, 51% of the teaching posts are held by professionals that hold a doctorate; 29% with a master's degree; and 13% with a specialized degree. In the private sector, 44% of the teaching posts are held by professionals that hold a master's; 37% a specialization; and only 16% of professionals possess a doctorate degree.

The table 42 presents the number of teaching posts per type of contract and institution:

Table 42 – Total number of teaching posts in practice, by work system (2011)

	Full time	Part time	Hourly	Total
Public	113,225	17,418	8,941	139,584
Federal	77,003	6,861	544	84,408
State	34,100	8,462	4,814	47,376
Municipal	2,122	2,095	3,583	7,800
Private	54,489	67,877	95,468	217,834
Total	167,714	85,295	104,409	357,418

Source: Census of Higher Education, 2011.

Schwartzman (2012) explains that "a full-time contract usually means 40 hours per week, which should be dedicated to teaching, research, and class preparation. Part-time contracts can be

half time or less, for teaching and other activities; per-hour contracts pay only by the number of classes actually delivered by the teacher" (p. 76). In relation to the working contracts, the situation of the majority of teachers in the public and private sectors is very different. In the public sector, the majority of teachers are under a full-time contract (81%) and only a small number are under a per-hour contract (6%). In the private sector, 44% of the teaching posts are per-hour contracts; 31% part-time; and 25% full-time contracts. Other elements contribute to the differentiation between the public and private sectors in Brazil. One of them, for instance, is the fact that "salaries in the public sector are higher, and there are more fringe benefits and a lighter teaching load" (Schwartzman, 2012, p. 81). In addition to that, "academics in public universities, as civil servants, cannot be dismissed except for grave misconduct. In the private sector, private labor market legislation allows the employee to be dismissed at any time, with some limited compensation" (p. 76).

In this subsection interviewees discussed policies implemented by the federal government to improve the quality of higher education in Brazil. Most of them, as it was possible to see, make reference to evaluation policies. The federal government has a long history of evaluating graduate programs, but only around the mid-1990s started to evaluate undergraduate students at the end of their courses with the *Provão*. This exam, strongly criticized by the academic community, was replaced in the beginning of the 21rst century by ENADE, which is part of a national system of evaluation that also includes institutional evaluation. Thus, there was a change in the conception of higher education evaluation in Brazil. Some interviewees also mention the importance of the faculty's qualification to improve the quality of education. Finally, a few interviewees do not identify any important governmental measure regarding the quality of higher education.

This chapter examined higher education in Brazil. The first part of the debate focused on the development of higher education in the country, and the second part on the current situation. It was possible to see the impact that different governments had on policies for this level of education, on the one hand, and the opinion of specialist about higher education in their countries, on the other hand. The next chapter presents a comparative analysis between Argentina and Brazil.

CHAPTER 5 – COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN ARGENTINA AND BRAZIL

Chapters 3 and 4 focused on the development and the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. The goal of this chapter it is to highlight some information previously presented in these two chapters, analyzing the main similarities and differences between Argentina and Brazil. New information about both countries is also included in order to further discuss the themes considered.

5.1 – The development of higher education

Historically, higher education has played an important role in the development of societies. Indeed, this has been case in both Argentina and Brazil. The higher education system of Argentina has a long tradition. The first courses of higher education were created with the Jesuits, and from one of them these courses emerged the country's first university, during the beginning of the 17th century. In Brazil the Jesuits were responsible for the first courses of higher education as well, but with the expulsion of this company during the colonial period the seeds of higher education in that area failed to grow. It was only with the arrival of the Portuguese real royal family, in the beginning of the 19th century, when the first official courses of higher education were established. The first university in Brazil is a product of the 20th century.

It is clear that Spain and Portugal had different educational policies in relation to their colonies in Latin America. While Spain authorized the creation of dozens of universities in its colonies, Portugal systematically blocked this initiative in Brazil. Some authors, however, appropriately bring forth a debate on the institutions' titles and the nature of their functions. Buchbinder (2010), for instance, says that in a certain way many of the Spanish institutions created in Latin America during the colonial period were more similar to schools with higher education

courses than to universities. Along the same lines, Cunha (1980) asks whether it is possible to compare the courses and institutions existing in Brazil at that time with the so-called universities in the Spanish colonies.

Officially, according to the historiography of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, at the time that the first university in Brazil was created (1920), students from the university of Cordoba in Argentina were already leading a very important reform in universities nationwide, which had an impact in several other universities in Latin America. Some of the claims of the Cordoba Reform of 1918, such as the creation of more opportunities for students to access higher education and the increase of student participation in the government of universities, were decades later incorporated into the agenda of the students' movement in Brazil.

Students, in fact, were an important force to bring about change inside universities in both Argentina and Brazil. Many of their demands were related to the university itself: claims for a more democratic institution and for a better quality of education, for instance. Students fought for a more democratic university in several dimensions. Democratic meaning more inclusive or open to more students, on the one hand, and democratic meaning managed collectively by the academic community, including significant student participation, on the other hand. It is necessary to bear in mind that students' movements across Latin America, and in Argentina and Brazil in particular, also extended beyond the walls of the university. They were connected to the political life of these countries, and in many moments to international issues.

Throughout the development of higher education in each country, there were moments of more decentralization and moments of more centralization; moments of more social inclusion and moments of more restrictions to access. The development of higher education in Argentina and Brazil is closely connected to the political history of each country. Just as each country has its own distinct history, the course of their higher education has been equally unique. Despite these peculiarities, it is possible to observe some similarities in relation to higher education in Argentina and Brazil, as well as differences.

Universities in Argentina and Brazil are heiresses of Spanish and Portuguese medieval universities. Such universities had as their main goal knowledge transmission rather than knowledge production. Accordingly, Argentine and Brazilian universities also acquired this trait. Puiggrós (2010) explains that in the end of the 19th century reforms took place in many European universities. Two main models rose out of these reforms; the Napoleonic model and the model of the University of Berlin, based on the ideas of Van Humboldt. The first model was characterized by a strong relationship between the state and universities. These institutions were mainly in charge of training professionals needed by the public and private sectors of the industrial society. The second model was oriented toward scientific production. The Napoleonic model was the model adopted in Argentina and Brazil, and universities in these two countries devoted themselves to training professionals and to creating a culture that was literary rather than scientific (p. 134-135).

Following this model, higher education courses in Argentina and Brazil have historically had a very strong professional character. That means that there is a direct association between courses and professions; students access a course knowing precisely which profession they will pursue in a specific limit of time. This tradition is still present in both countries, particularly in Argentina. In Brazil there were attempts in different moments of history to propose an alternative to this model. During the university reform of 1968, for instance, emerged the idea to stimulate the creation of courses with a more general education in the beginning, which would offer professional education later. More recently, some universities are adopting the so-called interdisciplinary bachelor degrees that have a similar perspective.

Traditionally in the history of Argentina and Brazil there has been a strong social appreciation of professionals coming from learned professions – medicine, law, engineering, etc. – and an equivalent depreciation of professionals from more blue-collar courses. The so-called mechanic arts or profitable sciences were excluded from the first universities in Argentina, for instance. This was due to the negative image of manual work existing in society at the time

(Buchbinder, 2010, p. 15). In Brazil, too, despite the existence of these courses they were considered a second option and less valued socially.

The origin of higher education in virtually all parts of the world is associated with a narrative of elitism and exclusion. That is the case in Argentina and Brazil as well. Higher education was initially a level of education reserved for a privileged few. The socio-economic situation of students was determinant in granting access to higher education institutions during many years. Argentina was able to open the doors of its institutions to the general population earlier, particularly in the case of public universities. The first half of the 19th century saw the adoption of several important policies, including the open access policy to higher education during the first Peron government in 1946. This measure promoted the inclusion of an important number of students. In Brazil there were also demands for more seats in higher education over time. However, it was only in the second half of the 19th century that more opportunities in higher education were created, particularly in private institutions. The inclusion of significant numbers of students in higher education in this country, however, is a much more recent achievement. In fact, in Argentina and in Brazil there are still struggles for a real democratization of higher education.

Along with the many similarities between Argentina and Brazil, it is also possible to identify a number of differences in their systems of higher education. Today the Argentine system of higher education is mostly public, while the Brazilian system is largely private, the sources of which can be seen in their respective histories. For example, in the 1930s the private sector in Brazil was already consolidated, being in charge of an important part of enrollment in the country, while in Argentina higher education was a state monopoly until the 1950s. Only at the end of that decade were private universities officially authorized to grant degrees. Despite this, the development of the private sector in Argentina was quite slow, while in Brazil there were moments of intense growth, such as the decades of 1970s and 1990s.

The political situation of Argentina and Brazil during the 20th century changed a lot. Different governments with dissimilar priorities for education took power, and higher education

institutions were greatly affected by these policies. Argentina had to endure many more dictatorships than Brazil, but authoritarianism was also in effect during many moments. In each country, however, democratic and authoritarian governments implemented their own specific agendas. A closer look at the last dictatorships in force in each country illustrates this statement.

The last dictatorship in Argentina was in power from 1976 to 1982. This brutal government intervened in universities, reducing their autonomy and implementing a political and ideological control that reached classrooms' syllabuses. Professors and students were among the victims of this government; many of them died, many were expelled from universities, and many went into exile. Policies to reduce students' access to higher education were implemented during this period, including fees to attend universities, the introduction of exams and a policy to limit the number of vacancies. This, in fact, was responsible for a drastic reduction in the number of students. Besides that, there was a reduction in funding of national universities (Levy, 1981; Rodríguez and Soprano, 2009; Buchbinder, 2010) and an attempt to channel activities of research out of universities. According to Buchbinder (2010), aside from the explicit intent to reduce the size of the system and control universities, there was no plan or organization of the higher education system during this time (p. 211).

In Brazil, the last dictatorship lasted from 1964 to 1985. The intense political repression in effect in society was likewise felt inside universities, with professors and students persecuted and policies designed to silence their voices. Despite that, this government was responsible for the implementation of one of the most important reforms in Brazilian higher education, the university reform of 1968. It is interesting to note that this reform incorporated many demands coming from the academic community. There was a significant increase in student enrollment during the period, and many authors say that this reform allowed the emergence of real universities, based not only in teaching but also in the development of research. The effects of the authoritarian governments for universities were, thus, contradictory. On the one hand, university autonomy was reduced and experienced professors and researchers were forced to retire, among other negative outcomes; on

the other hand, there were investments in infrastructure and research, and an increase in the number of students admitted (Cunha, 2010, p. 178-179). Clearly, in each country authoritarian governments implemented distinct policies in the area of higher education.

The return to democracy in Argentina and Brazil was a period in which contradictory forces were in place. On the one hand, there was hope that with the emergence of democracy old problems could be solved and social justice could be achieved in different areas of society. There was an expectation that universities could contribute to the process of national development, and in fact these institutions in both countries were engaged with that activity. On the other hand, this change in the political regime took place in a very difficult economic context. The 1980s are known in Latin American history as the "lost decade" due to the intense economic stagnation of many countries, including Argentina and Brazil. This of course impacted the funding of public universities in both countries, as well as higher education policies in general.

In Argentina, the process of normalization of universities was complex. At the beginning of the transition there were still remnants of the old system. According to Buchbinder (2010), "the military regime left as a legacy a university of limited significance from an academic point of view" (p. 215). Bringing back the historic relevance of these institutions was a challenge that the academic community had to face. Progressively the political participation of professors and students was resumed, in an environment more respectful of ideological differences. Many public contests took place to hire new professors, and enrollment once again increased as a result of the open access policy adopted by several institutions and the end of fees to study. However, this growth in enrollment, as Buchbinder (2010) explains, was not followed by an increase in funding of public universities (p. 218). Universities were under financial hardship and this impacted the relationship between the state and these institutions.

In Brazil, the transition to democracy was also challenging. Cunha (2010) says that, "the Brazilian universities were, at the same time, active protagonists and beneficiaries of democratization of the country" (p. 179). Professors and students started to organize themselves and

there was intense mobilization of the academic community to ensure the rights and guarantees in the country's new Constitution of 1988. In fact, this document included a long chapter on education, including for instance the principle of university autonomy in one of its articles. In terms of enrollment, different from Argentina, this was a time of stagnation in Brazil. After a significant growth in the 1970s, during the 1980s the increase in the number of students in higher education was slow, and in some years there was even a reduction in enrollments.

During the 1990s, both Argentina and Brazil witnessed the emergence of conservative governments that implemented an agenda of neoliberal policies. The recommendations of neoliberal international agencies for higher education in Latin America was clear: reduce public funding of universities, increase the participation of the private sector in the provision of higher education, and promote a diversification of institutions and courses, among other things. The main goal was to increase state control over higher education institutions, on the one hand, but on the other hand to reduce state funding of this level of education. Neoliberal governments impacted higher education in Argentina and Brazil in several ways.

In fact, it is possible to notice an increase of state control in higher education in Argentina and Brazil. In Argentina, a law of higher education was passed, somewhat compromising the traditional university autonomy claimed by these institutions. This law introduced the requirement that universities carry out internal evaluations, which should be complemented by external evaluations. The creation of the National Commission of University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU) is a landmark in Argentina higher education history. Non-university institutions also have to undergo evaluations, according to criteria presented by the Federal Council of Culture and Education. In Brazil, a general law of education with articles about higher education was also approved in mid-1990s. This law pointed out as responsibilities of the federal government ensuring a national evaluation of student performance, as well as ensuring a national evaluation of higher education institutions. In 1995 government created the *Provão*, an exam for students who were about to graduate. This exam would contribute to the evaluation of courses and institutions.

In Argentina, public universities that were majority in the offer of higher education continued to have primacy in that area, which shows that neoliberal policies were not easily implemented everywhere. In Brazil, the private sector that was already in charge of most of the students continued to increase its participation in the system. There are, however, other elements that indicate an increase of privatization in higher education in both countries. With the limitations of state funding in relation to public universities, these institutions had to search for other sources of funding to complement their budgets. In fact, in Argentina and in Brazil universities resorted to selling services in order to supplement funding.

It was also possible to see an increase in the number of private higher education institutions during the 1990s, particularly of non-universities. These institutions had distinctive characteristics. They tended to offer courses in areas that required less investment in infrastructure and academic equipment, and had a more market-oriented perspective. Most of these courses sought to meet immediate market demands, and their focus was training students for a specific profession, not necessarily the education of the citizen, as had traditionally been the aim of state-controlled universities.

More recent governments in Argentina and Brazil started to resume the increase of the public sector, with the creation of new public universities and an increase in funding of these institutions, although the private sector has also continued to grow. These new governments in some cases continued or reformed old policies, and in some cases created new initiatives. It is a difficult task to characterize such governments due to the complexities of the current political moment. In many cases they present themselves as alternatives to neoliberal governments, but in fact it is possible to identify elements of continuity as well as signs of change in their policies. In both Argentina and Brazil, the main law regulating higher education was implemented during neoliberal governments. In the first decade of the 21st century there were debates about changing these laws. However, no such project has materialized in either country thus far.

This brief section has revisited some elements of the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil already discussed in the two previous chapters. As this section has demonstrated, the development of higher educational systems in each country has been quite distinct, which has important implications for the current situation of higher education in both countries. The next section will continue this effort of comparison.

5.2 – Current situation of higher education

In chapter 3 and chapter 4 the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil was discussed, based on interviews conducted with professionals in the field of higher education in these two countries. This section is an attempt to synthesize the most important aspects mentioned by interviewees, in a comparative perspective. The section is organized within the same logic of the two previous chapters, including subsections about: the characterization of the higher education system of Argentina and Brazil, the most positive and critical aspects of higher education in these countries, diversification of higher education, policies to grant access to higher education, and policies to increase and democratize access to higher education, as well as to ensure its quality.

5.2.1 – Characterization of the Argentine and Brazilian higher education system

As seen in chapter 3, in Argentina university institutions represent 5% of the total institutions in 2010 (114 institutions out of 2,243). The public sector represents 45% (1,003 institutions out of 2,243). Looking only at public university institutions they represent 2% of the total. Enrollments in university institutions represent 56% of the total (1,718,507 students out of 3,056,873). Enrollments in the public sector represent 70% (2.140,519 students out of 3,056,873). Enrollments at public university institutions alone represent 45%. This difference between the number of institutions and enrollments is due to the fact that the more traditional public universities

in Argentina are extremely large. For instance, the University of Buenos Aires alone has 305,000 students (around 10% of the total enrollment).

Chapter 4 provides data about the situation of higher education in Brazil in 2011. To make a better comparison with Argentina, data from Brazil presented here is from 2010. In Brazil universities represent 8% of the total institutions in 2010 (190 institutions out of 2,378). The public sector represents 12% (278 institutions out of 2,378). Looking only at public universities they represent 4% of the total. Enrollments in universities represent 52% of the total (2,809,974 students out of 5,449,120). Enrollments in the public sector represent 27% (1,461,696 students out of 5,449,120). Enrollments at public university alone represent 23%.

As these data show, in 2010 both Argentina and Brazil had a little more than 2,000 institutions. Argentina has about 3 million students and Brazil about 5 million. However, the populations of these two countries are quite different. In 2010 the population of Argentina was around 40 million, while Brazil's was 191 million. Thus the population of Brazil is more than four times bigger than the population of Argentina. This is why it is important to look at the gross enrollment ratio in higher education for both countries. In 2009, this number for the population between 18 to 24 years was 69.5% in Argentina and only 26.7% in Brazil. Thus, the higher education system of Argentina includes a much higher percentage of the population.

In both Argentina and Brazil the number of universities is much smaller than the number of non-university institutions. However, half of the students are in universities, which show that these institutions are in general much larger than other organizational models. In Argentina, most of the students are in the public sector, while in Brazil the opposite happens. The next subsection discusses some of the strengths of higher education in these two countries, from the perspective of study participants.

5.2.2 – Strengths of the higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil

The higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil were shaped over the years, through many struggles between the government and civil society. Some governments have acknowledged more explicitly the importance of higher education for the education of the population and the development of the country. Some were more committed to inclusive policies, others not as much. The academic community had an important role in the construction of this system, always fighting for more opportunities and for better quality. These systems today, although facing many challenges, also have many strengths.

An extremely positive aspect of higher education noted by both Argentine and Brazilian interviewees was the existence of a public sector that is strong and free of charge. Argentina is one of the Latin American countries with the strongest tradition of public higher education. Although the higher education system in Brazil is highly privatized, the public sector, despite having fewer students, is known for its good quality and plays an important role in the country. In Argentina, interviewees mentioned that the system was traditionally very inclusive. In relation to Brazil, it is possible to say that this theme of inclusion was incorporated to the governmental agenda later.

Interviewees from both countries as also cited as positive the recent increase of the public sector, with the creation of new universities and also its decentralization. Higher education in Brazil has traditionally been more decentralized than in Argentina. In Brazil, during the 1950s many public state and local universities were federalized, as well as private institutions, which increased the number of federal universities all over the country. As a result, all states have at least one federal university and some have several. In Argentina, most institutions and students are in the province of Buenos Aires. The biggest Argentine university, the University of Buenos Aires, is located in the autonomous district of Buenos Aires, which is not only the capital but also the most populous area of Argentina.

Recent policies to support students, such as fellowships, were also mentioned as positive by interviewees in both countries. In Argentina, the federal government increased considerably the number of fellowships available for undergraduate students in recent years, and this will likely bring some result in term of student permanence in higher education. In Brazil, the federal government also created new fellowships to help to ensure students' continuity in their programs, including a fellowship that allows students to attend higher education in private universities without paying tuition.

In Argentina some interviewees mentioned an improvement in funding of public institutions during the past several years. They also indicated an increase in academic staff salary, a subject that will be mentioned in section 5.2.7. An improvement in funding also occurred recently in Brazil, as the data presented in chapter 4 show, but interviewees didn't make specific reference to that when talking about positive aspects.

University autonomy is presented as positive in Argentina, and this is a theme that permeates the debates about virtually all other aspects of higher education in the country. It is necessary to recall that this right to be autonomous was always valued by the Argentine academic continuity, but in many moments of their history governments attempted to limit it. In Brazil, where according to the law universities are autonomous, as in Argentina, the lack of real autonomy is the issue most mentioned by the interviewees.

Among the strengths discussed in this section, there are also other positive aspects of higher education in Argentina and Brazil that were not discussed by study participants. For instance, public institutions in both countries are run with the participation of the academic community, an important component of the democratic management of these institutions. The elements mentioned by the interviewees, however, offer a good illustration of the strengths of these two systems. In the next subsection, some of the more critical aspects will be pointed out.

5.2.3 – Critical aspects of higher education in Argentina and Brazil

Despite the strengths existing in the higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil, there are also some critical aspects that need to be addressed in both countries. Some of these critical aspects are historical, but they have been intensified by the demands of the present moment. It is important to consider that a significant part of these issues are connected to larger social problems, thus limiting the power of action of these institutions. This section presents what interviewees saw as the most serious issues facing their countries' higher education systems.

A first critical aspect mentioned by some interviewees has to do with who has access to higher education in Argentina and Brazil. In both countries, previous access to high school and the ability to graduate seems to be a relevant barrier to pursuing higher education. Students face a number of challenges to continuing their studies, and this is definitely related to their socio-economic situation. Particularly in Brazil, the coverage of students in higher education is very low compared to other Latin American countries.

In Argentina, although the problem of graduating students from high school exists, the main issue mentioned by the interviewees was different. In this country, many students do have access to higher education, but most drop out during the first year of the program, a pattern that continues throughout the years. Precise data about dropout rates in Argentina in difficult to obtain, but specialists in the field of higher education and past representatives of the University Policies Secretariat talk about a 50% dropout rate during the first year. This extremely high figure points to the existence of significant problems in student retention.

As mentioned by one study participant, student dropouts represent a waste of already scarce resources. Besides the economic resources invested in students who do not graduate from their programs, there are also other detrimental consequences of this process. Students that have the chance to enroll in higher education and for several reasons are not able to graduate feel frustrated with their performance. In a way it appears as if these students had the opportunity to get a degree,

when in practice they were not given the real conditions – academic or material – to succeed. There have been efforts to address the issue, but interviewees seemed to agree that so far they haven't been successful.

In both countries there were also complaints about the lack of planning in the increase and development of the system of higher education. This resulted in different institutions performing similar activities, institutions concentrated in specific areas, and similar courses being offered in one area, while important courses were not present in others, among other undesirable outcomes. In Brazil, interviewees made reference in particular to the rapid and disorganized increase of the private sector.

Autonomy again appeared as an important element of the higher education policy. In Brazil, interviewees criticized what they considered to be a lack of real autonomy in universities. In relation to both undergraduate and graduate programs these institutions have had to adjust to a great number of rules from the federal government, which seem to limit their ability to define their own path in many areas. Interestingly, in Argentina, the issue that some participants mentioned as negative was the lack of coordinated policies between the federal government and universities. This might have some relation to the university autonomy, a value deeply immersed in the country's culture. This complex relation between the power of the federal government to coordinate the system of higher education, on the one hand, and the ability of universities to exercise their autonomy, on the other hand.

The high level of privatization of higher education was also pointed out as negative in Brazil. The public system of this country, which according to national evaluations offers a better quality education, is reserved for a privileged sector of the population. In Argentina, where public institutions opened their doors to the population throughout the years, the private sector found less space to flourish. There are, however, important private universities in both countries, some of which meet the demands of particular segments of society.

Another important aspect mentioned by interviewees in Argentina and Brazil is related to the situation of the professoriate. One interviewee in Argentina explained that the situation of these professionals in the country was very difficult until the beginning of the 21st century. Only more recently some policies to improve faculty salaries in public institutions started to be implemented. In Brazil interviewees didn't mention the subject when talking about negative aspects of higher education in the country, but they did make reference to this area when discussing the impacts of the recent expansion of federal institutions. With the expansion of public higher education in Brazil, a number of new professors were hired in the last few years. Some interviewees, however, complained about the deterioration of working conditions in public universities. The situation of the professoriate in Argentina and Brazil will be mentioned again in subsection 5.2.7. The next subsection will focus on the diversification of higher education in these two countries.

5.2.4 – Diversification of higher education

The theme of diversification of higher education in Argentina and Brazil is polemic, with varied and opposing positions on the subject. The term diversification used in this context basically refers to the creation of diverse types of institutions and courses in higher education. In relation to institutions, it means the existence of organizational models different than universities. In relation to courses, it means the existence of alternatives to the traditional four- to six-year courses.

It is important to remember that the first courses of higher education in Argentina and Brazil were created in non-university institutions, specifically in religious schools. In Argentina, the first school with higher education courses was converted into a university in the 17th century. In Brazil, the first higher education courses were established in isolated institutions, and they took place in such institutions for centuries. Only in the 20th century were the first universities created. Even in this country, however, the university came to become the main organizational model, a kind of standard in the higher education system.

In Argentina and Brazil, some interviewees said that the higher education system was diversified while others did not see it in such terms. Those who believed that there was already a significant diversification inside the system pointed to the fact that there are universities and non-universities; public and private institutions; institutions managed by several levels of government (federal/national, state/provincial, and local); organizations of different sizes; and secular and confessional institutions; among others distinctions. In fact, it is necessary to recognize some level of diversification. Those who thought that the diversification was less significant argued that the different existing institutions perform similar activities, offering in some cases the same courses.

Higher education courses in Argentina and Brazil, as already discussed, have a professionalizing character. This means that students enter their programs knowing which profession they will pursue after graduation or, in other words, the degree is associated with one specific profession. In both countries interviewees stressed that students still had a preference for traditional four- to six-year courses. The idea that in higher education one should become a bachelor is strong even today.

Some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil criticized this early choice that students have to make in relation to their courses and careers. Some thought that students should have the opportunity to make this decision later on in their programs. This critique about the early decision about their profession seems to be associated to another criticism, related to the structure of the courses. Some interviewees defended a more general education in the beginning of the program, and a progressive specialization towards the end. There was an interesting diversity of opinions in relation to that particular topic. While one interviewee defended continuing the professionalizing courses, which are part of the tradition of these countries, other wanted to move in the direction of a more comprehensive education, especially in the beginning of the course. What is being observed in practice, however, is a tendency towards more specialization. Institutions are creating programs that constitute subfields of knowledge.

One Brazilian interviewee, who defended a more general course in the beginning of the undergraduate program and a later specialization, said that it was important to have intermediate degrees for students during their higher education courses. In his view, this would help students who do not complete their programs but make some progress along the way. In Argentina there are also important voices in that direction. Puiggrós (2010), for instance, says that an intermediary degree would present a reachable goal for many students. She makes reference to what happens in Argentina where the system "only certifies the completed education levels and rarely confers intermediate degrees; labeling as a dropout the student who has studied incomplete cycles instead of recognizing the knowledge they have acquired and motivating them to continue learning" (p. 165).

Some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil noted that this current trend of diversification of higher education could be positive because it can contribute to the inclusion of students and in many cases can be a sign of respect for their desires. Not all students want or are prepared for the traditional four- to six-year courses. Interviewees resistant to the idea of diversification said that this process meets market demands, but not necessarily social demands. These different perspectives also reflected the different positions existing in the literature and among scholars in the field.

Despite the fact that a few interviewees expressed their ideological discordance with the idea of diversification, most of them accepted the process as natural. This was a surprising finding in this investigation, given that the literature includes many criticisms of that same subject. Particularly in the field of education, diversification of higher education in Argentina and Brazil has been strongly criticized. There is a perception that this means the existence of institutions with different hierarchies and levels of quality, training people for different positions in society: those that will lead and those that will receive orders, for instance.

In fact, the most articulated critique of the proposed institutional diversification seems to be the one that sees in this process a promotion of a social segmentation among students. Students from high- and middle-income strata would go to first class institutions, or elite research universities to mention an institutional type that usually is at the top of the institutional hierarchy,

while students from low-income strata would attend institutional types that offer shorter courses more aligned with immediate market demands. The first group would have access to a general and liberal education, while the second would be enrolled in technical and vocational courses.

On the other hand, it is important to note that many countries that have achieved high levels of participation in higher education have done so through the diversification of their systems. That has been the case for instance in the United States, which offers communities colleges as an alternative to a number of students. One interviewee in Brazil believed that it was virtually impossible to expand the system using the existing public universities as a model. These institutions, as she explained, are expensive and funded with public resources. Other alternatives are necessary, she said, if the goal is to reach a larger percentage of the population.

A certain level of diversification seems necessary and it can be beneficial to students and to society. The central issue is to have students educated in institutions with similar levels of quality, not necessarily in similar higher education institutions. In other words, a student can receive his or her education in a research university or in a teaching institution, as long as both organizations develop a high quality work in their areas of expertise. After discussing the issue of diversification of higher education, it is important to look at the policies adopted by Argentina and Brazil to grant their students access to higher education.

5.2.5 – Policies to grant access to higher education

Another important theme when discussing higher education is the policy adopted by different countries in order to grant access to higher education to their population. In Argentina and Brazil these policies changed along the years. Today, according to the legislation of these two countries, institutions of higher education can decide which kind of policies to adopt in order to select their students. In Brazil, the Law 9,394 (1996) mentions that applicants have to be approved in a selective process, in addition to other requirements that also exist in Argentina (to have a high

school degree or equivalent). Open access is adopted by most institutions in Argentina and the traditional *vestibular* is adopted by most institutions in Brazil, but it is important to mention that there are alternatives in both countries.

In Argentina and Brazil there are debates about the kind of access to higher education that should be adopted. While in Argentina this involves the possibility of open access versus restricted access, in Brazil open access is not considered as a possibility. The recent change in policy to access to higher education in Brazil in federal universities is related to the replacement of one exam (the *vestibular*) for another (the New ENEM). This change is in progress, and the benefits and issues associated with the change are getting more explicit as the experiences go on.

Opinion about these selective processes, of course, is highly influenced by an individual's standpoint. One Brazilian interviewee, for instance, said that although the selective system of access to higher education in Brazil was not ideal, in his view it was better than the open access in Argentina, taking into consideration the reality of the country. An Argentinean interviewee, for his part, believed that at this juncture open access to higher education was better for Argentina than having a selective process. Rather than defending this system to other countries, he took into consideration the particular context of Argentina. He mentioned that in the case of Brazil, for instance, he was not sure if eliminating the entrance exam would be a good option. Perhaps the path that the country is following, trying to increase the number of vacancies, is an appropriate alternative, he concluded.

Even in Brazil with a tradition of selective exams to grant access to higher education, one interviewee pointed out that selective processes are a way to exclude, supposedly on a merit base but in practice on the socio-economic situation of applicants. In Brazil, since the beginning of the 21st century, there has been a strong debate related to social and racial quotas to grant access to higher education. Important policies in that direction were implemented in the past few years, including the recent law 12.711 (2012), which makes social and racial quotas mandatory for federal universities.

The history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil helps to explain the current policies related to access. History, in fact, has its weights. While tradition in general brings knowledge, it also brings challenges. That is why some interviewees say that there is more possibility to innovate in new institutions. In Argentina, for instance, some of the new universities are adopting new kinds of access. As Duarte (2009) states, in Argentina "the tendency shown by the group of new universities suggests that the 1990s produced a rupture with respect to the defense of the system of open access system which ascribed those institutions with more transparency that do not have to deal with the weight of their history" (p. 52).

One interviewee said that, independent of the system of access adopted by each country, students have to make an effort to get real access to higher education – that means to enter and to continue in their programs. The stress that students face in Brazil prior to *vestibular*, as she explained, students in Argentina face during their first year at university. Requirements in Argentine universities during the first years, she noted, are high. In her opinion, those that do graduate from prestigious universities such as the University of Buenos Aires or the University of Rosario have a very high level of qualification.

What seemed to come out of the analysis of the interviews, however, is that there is a deceptive debate between the open access in Argentina and the restricted access in Brazil. There is a selective process in both countries, one prior to entrance and other a posteriori. As Gluz (2011) synthesizes the debate, explicit selective processes evaluate the scholarly knowledge or certain abilities of students through exams after high school. Implicit selective processes operate throughout the higher education studies and they too are highly exclusionary (p. 233).

In Argentina the idea that universities have to level students holds more weight. In Brazil this is not mentioned probably because the selective exam already establishes a basic level for students. This is not to say that there are not differences among students in Brazil. In that context, it is important to look at students and their needs (economic and academic) but also to institutions. As Gluz (2011) points out, it is necessary to achieve a better understanding of the practices of these

institutions that corroborate with the social construction of the academic failure of students (p. 237). This understanding can lead to more adequate academic practices.

As González and Claverie (2007) state, "any discussion on this subject cannot fail to mention the importance of the coordination between the secondary and higher system of education, as we suppose that the choice of high school model and the type of institution strongly determines the possibility of becoming a candidate for university" (p. 8). As a matter of fact, interviewees from Argentina and Brazil pointed out that the selectivity of higher education begins in high school. Due to their social-economic situation, many students are not able to graduate and can't even consider accessing higher education. That is why Gluz (2011) properly states that the "debate about policies to access university are associated to a broader discussion about the conditions and constraints of the process of reproduction/resistance of social inequalities and its educational expressions" (p. 231).

Many aspects are involved in the debate about access and democratization of higher education. Beyond the political and technical aspects of selection are others such as the articulation between high school and higher education and the creation of conditions for students to succeed in their studies. Both the economic and academic dimensions seem to be essential to defining which students will have real access to higher education. To democratize higher education means to ensure that students, on the one hand, have a material support to be able to study – through fellowships for instance - and, on the other hand, an academic support (Gluz, 2011, p. 234). Besides that, it is important to ensure that those who get to higher education have access to a quality education. Accordingly, the next subsection will make reference to policies adopted by Argentina and Brazil in order to increase and democratize access to higher education.

5.2.6 – Measures to expand and democratize access to higher education

The theme of access to higher education is relevant in virtually all parts of the world for different reasons. There are studies that show that attending higher education can bring personal as well as collective benefits. On a personal level, it is clear that education contributes to the individual development of people. In addition, higher levels of education are in general associated with better jobs and salaries. On a collective level, a more educated population can lead to a better-informed citizenry. There are also numerous studies that highlight the important role of higher education in the economic development of countries.

Higher education, however, must be understood as a complex field, a scenario in which contradictory forces are in action. On the one hand, there are those who see higher education as a public good, something that should be available to all with the desire and potential to continue their studies. On the other hand, there are those who still perceive higher education as a privilege, as a level of education that should be used to differentiate among people and thus reserved for a few. There is, therefore, a tension between the democratization of higher education and the defense of the *status quo*.

As previously mentioned, the origins of higher education in Argentina and Brazil are associated with a narrative of elitism and exclusion. This was initially a level of education aimed at an elite. There were, however, pressures to change this situation. Claims to a more inclusive higher education took place at different moments of the history of these two countries. In fact, the democratization of higher education is still a struggle in process. Argentina was able to open the doors of its universities to more students earlier, and the result is a massive access today. However, the issue of access is not solved in the country, as Azevedo (2001) articulates, although policies in that area are advanced in his view (p. 60). In Brazil this process was slower and it continues to take place today. Interviewees from both countries, but more strongly those from Brazil, agreed that it was necessary to increase the number of students attending higher education.

There have been policies to expand access to higher education in Argentina and Brazil during the past few years. Interviewees mentioned as important the recent expansion of the public national/federal institutions in both countries. Many new universities have been created and there is a sense that students from middle class and low-income classes are benefiting from this policy. In Brazil, the increase of the private sector continues to be stimulated though different federal programs. Brazilian interviewees also mentioned other strategies that the government is using or should use to increase access, such as the use of distance education programs and evening courses.

In Brazil, in recent years, particularly since the beginning of the Lula government in 2003, the theme of affirmative action entered the governmental agenda and policies in that direction were adopted. Public institutions linked to the federal government or to state governments were deciding by themselves if they wanted to adopt such policies and which kind of policies to implement: social quotas and/or racial/ethnic quotas, for instance. A recent law passed during Dilma's administration, however, changed this reality. This law makes it mandatory for federal universities to reserve 50% of their vacancies for students who completed high school in public institutions, and part of these vacancies have to be granted to black students, according to the percentage of the black community in a particular state. Other institutions continue to decide by themselves or to follow state regulations, but this debate in federal institutions stimulated a debate in the states. In private institutions, the government introduced quota policies through programs such as the University for All Program (PROUNI). Institutions can decide if they apply for PROUNI, but a great number of them are doing so due to the fiscal benefits that they receive.

As discussed throughout the previous chapters, while in Argentina the increase of higher education was supported by the public sector, in Brazil the private sector predominates. Although many authors have a tendency to consider the Argentine system more democratic, because it includes more students in the public sector, it is important to consider the larger complexities of the issue. For example one Brazilian interviewee made an important observation. He said that a stronger public sector presence in the provision of higher education does not necessarily mean that

the system is more democratic. In his view, it can be the opposite if the teaching and learning conditions are not adequate. This brings up the imperative connection between the issues of access and quality. To grant access without ensuring the quality of education does not promote a real democratization.

It is also important to acknowledge that there were some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil that believed that in the last years there were no effective policies to increase and democratize access to higher education. One study participant from Argentina said that the new universities are including the middle class, but that she was not sure about the inclusion of popular segments of society. The problem, according to her, lies in the previous barrier of high school, as already discussed. Similarly, another interviewee in Brazil said that the recent policies to increase access didn't take into consideration the issue of quality, and thus were not really effective. Following these observations, quality is the theme of the next subsection.

5.2.7 – Measures to assure quality of higher education

As mentioned in the previous subsection, equally important as the issue of access is the issue of quality of education. These two dimensions of education are deeply associated. A real democratization of higher education goes beyond the offer of vacancies, and it has to do with the education students receive in their institutions. The debate about quality is very complex, due to the fact that there is not a single definition of what constitutes a quality education or how to achieve it.

When discussing the issue of quality, some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil did not identify any important policy carried out by the federal government in the last 15 years in order to assure this; they mentioned only attempts with reduced effectiveness. However, this view was the minority. Most participants in both countries made an association between policies of evaluation and an effort by the government to ensure quality. In the area of evaluation in these two countries there were important measures implemented.

Interviewees from Argentina and Brazil criticized the emergence of state evaluation during the 1990s, introduced through the hands of neoliberal governments. Some institutions in both countries were developing their own evaluation experiences when they were faced with the requirement to also participate in external evaluations conducted by the state. The interviewees, however, identified positive changes during the 21st century. In Argentina, from a conception that intended to associate the performance of universities in evaluations with their funding, the country moved to a different model in which evaluation was seen as an instrument to promote institutional development. A program of the Ministry of Education even increases funding of certain institutions after evaluation in order to solve problems identified during the process. In Brazil, from an evaluation exclusively centered on the student, the country moved to a system of evaluation that includes the assessment of students, courses, and institutions. The student evaluation continues to be the most relevant part in this system, but at least there is a more comprehensive view of the higher education institutions and their work.

Evaluations in Argentina and Brazil have their specificities. In Argentina, there are different procedures in the evaluation of university institutions and non-university institutions, according to the law of higher education. University institutions have to create internal bodies of institutional evaluation, seeking to analyze the strengths and challenges in the achievement of their role, as well as to suggest improvements in their practices. These self-evaluations should be complemented by external evaluations. External evaluations, as established by law, have to consider the goals of each institution, and encompass teaching, research and service activities, as well as aspects related to the institutional management in the case of national universities (Art. 44). The Commission of University Evaluation and Accreditation (CONEAU) was created in order to carry out these external evaluations, which can be also conducted by private institutions authorized by the state (Art. 44 and 45). The Federal Council of Education and Culture in Argentina is in charge of creating criteria for the evaluation of non-university institutions (Art. 25).

While in Argentina CONEAU was created and there was an emphasis on institutional evaluation of higher education, in Brazil *Provão* was established, setting the focus of evaluation on student performance. More recently, in 2004, the National System of Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES) was created, in an attempt to shift the focus to the evaluation of students, courses, and ultimately institutions. The evaluation of students, however, continues to be more central in this process.

In Brazil the main law of education indicates as a responsibility of the federal government to ensure a national evaluation of students' performance in higher education, as well as a national evaluation of higher education institutions (Art. 9, VI and VIII). It is a specific law that created SINAES, which should be implemented in partnership with state governments, as well as with the government of the Federal District. The institutional evaluation, as in Argentina, includes an internal and an external evaluation. The evaluation of courses has several procedures and tools, including visits by committees of experts in the respective fields of knowledge. Finally, there is the National Student Performance Exam (ENADE) as a component of student evaluation. Institutions, courses, and students receive a "concept" that varies from one to five, showing the more quantitative aspect of evaluation in Brazil. The law also created the National Commission for Higher Education Evaluation (CONAES), in charge of overseeing the implementation of SINAES.

In both countries, evaluations are strongly associated with the regulation of the system. This means that the authorization and accreditation of institutions and courses depend on the institutions' performance in these evaluations. In Argentina, CONEAU and the Ministry of Education and Culture are in charge of evaluation and regulation of higher education. In Brazil, a number of institutions are involved in this process, including CONAES, the Ministry of Education, the National Council of Education (CNE), and the National Anísio Teixeira Institute of Educational Studies and Research (INEP). Currently in Brazil there is a bill sent by the federal government to the National Congress proposing the creation of an institute to deal with the evaluation and supervision of the system (Bill 4372/2012).

One important aspect that needs to be taken into consideration when talking about evaluation is the history and the tradition of the institutions under evaluation. As Mollis (1994) says, "the evaluation processes can not ignore the modus operandi that according to tradition, from the founding ideals, give meaning to the university institutions and reinforce certain practices that are transmitted in their organizational styles" (p. 229). In this process, however, it is also essential to look at the future. Evaluations have the power not only to assess what institutions are doing but also to stimulate what they could and should be doing. In that sense, the evaluation can be seen as an instrument to promote changes inside institutions. These connections between the past, the present, and the future, between what institutions were, what they are and what they can/should be are also relevant in evaluative processes.

Some interviewees in Brazil mentioned that efforts to stimulate teachers' qualification in the last years were important and would bring positive impacts in terms of quality. The situation of the professoriate in Argentina and Brazil deserves special attention, given that they are essential elements to enable the achievement of the higher education institutions' mission. "Without a strong, well-educated, and committed professoriate, no academic institution or higher education system can be successful" (Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván, 2012, p. 3). This is an essential element of any policy that intends to ensure quality in higher education.

The professoriate today, as Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván (2012) explain, are facing many challenges in many countries of the world, brought about by the massification of enrollment, privatization, and growing pressures for accountability, among other current trends. In their view, unfortunately, "the pressures of massification make it quite likely that current inequalities will persist or get worse in many countries, and the many academic worldwide will continue to see deteriorating income and working conditions" (p. 18).

The authors explain that the massification of higher education contributed to the diversification of institutions, which generated "segments devoted mainly to teaching and providing access to students, while a smaller segment focuses on research" (p. 4). The private sector, for

instance, with a few exceptions is mainly devoted to teaching. This diversification has an impact on the salaries and working conditions of the professoriate:

> At top research universities, the working conditions, salaries, and the roles of the elite professors, in most countries, differ greatly from the job of staff who teach at mass-access institutions, who are lower in the academic pecking order and who now constitute the large majority of the academic workforce (p. 4).

Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván (2012) talk about an ongoing tension between priorities in higher education. Despite the fact that most of the teachers are devoted to teaching, in order to meet the demands of expansion, "salary, promotion, and other rewards are more often based on research productivity and rarely on teaching performance" (p. 6). That is the case, for instance, of Argentina, which in 1993 created a program of financial incentive to researchers.

Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván (2012) developed an analysis of the salary of the professoriate in 28 countries around the world. Their analysis focused on public institutions due to the challenges of collecting data from the private sector in many countries. In their view, the private sector proved less transparent and accountable in relation to salaries and remuneration. Their data suggested that "public universities tend to pay better and offer superior conditions (fewer teaching hours) than private universities" (p. 14).

The authors point out the challenges in achieving an accurate view of salaries. As they explain, "academic salaries are often a complex construction of basic salary and supplements, bonuses, allowances, and subsidies – subsequently, they are extremely difficult to compare internationally"(p. 8). It is also important to remember that, "academic staff supplement their base salary with added income earned by means of teaching overloads, research productivity, nonacademic work, teaching in multiples institutions, or administrative service" (p. 3).

The data presented in Table 43 show salaries at entry level and the top of salary hierarchy with average salary in public institutions (in US$PPP) for Argentina, Brazil and the United States. The U.S. is included because the authors used it as a reference country for the study.

Table 43 – Salaries at entry level and top of salary hierarchy with average salary in public institutions (in US$PPP)

	Entry	Average	Top
Argentina	3,151	3,755	4,385
Brazil	1,858	3,176	4,550
United States	4,950	6,054	7,358

Source: Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván, 2012, p. 11.

As the figures presented above indicate, the salary condition of professors in Argentina and Brazil is clearly in disadvantage compared to countries like the United States. In Argentina, there is a small difference between the salary at the entry and at the top of the profession. In Brazil, on the other hand, there is a considerable increase in salary along the years. In general, however, the disparity between these two countries is not very high. It is surprising to find Argentina with an entry and average salary better than Brazil because there is a general perception that the financial condition of teachers in Brazil is better in Argentina. Once again, it is necessary to keep in mind that the data tell only one part of the story. "Total income in many countries is drawn from a combination of sources that provide a complete picture only when totaled" (Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván, 2012, p. 11).

Androushchak and Yudkevich (2012) explain that countries adopt different ranks in the academic hierarchy. Looking at the same countries as Altbach, Reisberg, and Iván (2012), they concluded that the number of ranks varies from 3 to 6 (Argentina has 6 ranks: full professor, associate professor, assistant professor, senior assistant, assistant, and teaching assistant. Brazil has 5 ranks: full professor, associate, adjunct, assistant, and auxiliary personnel). In order to allow a comparison among these countries they distributed faculty in three ranks: bottom, mid and top. The authors show that in Brazil a few faculty are in the bottom position, most of them are in the middle and almost the same amount, but a little less, in the top position. In Argentina the situation is a bit different. Also a few are in the bottom, but the majority is in the middle. Only a few faculty members are in the top (p. 28).

Besides salary and position in the academic hierarchy, another important indicator in higher education is the ration of students per teacher. This indicator, on the one hand, tells something about

the working condition of faculty, and, on the other hand, about students' learning conditions. Generally assumed, the lower the ratio, the more attention each student gets and, subsequently, the better the quality of educational services provided" (Androushchak and Yudkevich, 2012, p. 25). While the number of students per full-time faculty in public universities in Argentina is 72, in Brazil this number is 16 (compared to 21 in the U.S.). It is important to mention that there are programs in Brazil currently trying to increase the number of students per faculty in federal universities. In private institutions, however, the figures are very different for Brazil: 117 students per full-time faculty (compared to 17 in the U.S.). Again, it is worth remembering that "there is variation in the way countries report data and how each country defines full-time faculty" (p. 25).

As mentioned in the introduction of this subsection, the concept of quality is complex, and there are different perspectives regarding this subject. As Mollis (2003) points out, "it is necessary and urgent to clear up the concept of quality from the connotations of total quality, the financial logic of performance, efficiency and productivity, urging the social responsibility of the university with respect to its beneficiaries" (p. 212). The author further argues that, "the quality of public institutions is directly linked to the preparation of the citizenry for political, professional, cultural and scientific roles in solidarity with the 'other'" (p. 212). This comprehensive definition should guide the pursuit of quality in the context of higher education.

CONCLUSIONS

The preservation, production and dissemination of knowledge are quintessential to higher education. While knowledge has always been an important value, it has become even more relevant in today's "knowledge society." According to the new common sense, the present historical moment is the era of knowledge. This of course has implications for higher education in general, and for higher education in Argentina and Brazil in particular.

As presented in the introduction, the objective of this dissertation was to develop a comparative study between higher education in Argentina and Brazil, focusing on the notion of access as a unifying narrative thread. In order to achieve that goal, several key aspects of higher education in both countries were analyzed and elaborated throughout the five chapters that comprise this dissertation. Initially it was necessary to make clear the role of the state in relation to higher education, and discuss the impact of the emergence of globalization, not only on the state but also on higher education. Then it was important to put higher education in Argentina and Brazil in the context of higher education in Latin America. Policies carried out in these two countries share many similarities with policies in other countries in the region, while also maintaining several key differences. Higher education in Argentina and Brazil was examined individually at first, and subsequently a comparative analysis of the main aspects of each system was established.

The chapters that dealt with higher education in Argentina and Brazil, as well as the comparative chapter, shared the same logic. The first part of these chapters presented some historical facts related to the emergence and development of higher education in each country. This helped to illustrate some important characteristics of the higher education system of each country, pointing out, among other things, values that are dear to the academic community of Argentina and Brazil, as well as the challenges that they faced throughout their history. It was also possible to review briefly how different governments treated higher education along the years. In some moments, universities and other higher education institutions were perceived as essential to the

project of national development; in others, as a barrier to achieving immediate political goals. There were moments of centralization and others of decentralization; of more university autonomy and less autonomy; moments in which more opportunities in higher education were offered and moments of fewer educational opportunities. This discussion was elaborated from the existing literature on higher education in Argentina and Brazil. This is not, thus, a historical study per se, but rather a study that looks to history in order to understand the current configuration of higher education in these two countries.

The second part of these chapters focused on the current situation of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. It began with a concise characterization of higher education in these two countries and moved to specific aspects: the strengths and challenges of higher education in each country, the diversification of higher education, policies to grant access to this level of education, and finally policies implemented by the federal government in Argentina and Brazil in order to increase access to higher education and to ensure its quality. The backbone of this analysis was based on interviews with specialists on higher education from both countries. Study participants included university professors who teach and develop research specifically on this theme, as well as professionals who work in the formation and implementation of policies in that area at the Ministries of Education of Argentina and Brazil. The analysis of these interviews was intertwined with the discussion about the development of higher education in these two countries whenever relevant, as well as with data collected by institutions linked to the Argentine and Brazilian Ministries of Education.

In the chapters that discussed higher education in Argentina and Brazil individually there was a concern to present specific facts and figure, to make reference to the literature and to present precise information about the issues under examination. These chapters also included quotes from the interviews conducted with professionals from Argentina and Brazil, in order to examine their experiences and understandings of these key issues. For those reasons, these two chapters are more extensive and detailed. The comparative chapter benefited from the analysis developed in the

previous chapters and it was more general. The idea was to emphasize the main aspects already discussed, as well as to underline some similarities and differences between the cases of Argentina and Brazil.

This short conclusion intends to present some of the key learning of this research and its potential contributions, as well as to point out important themes of research that could be developed in the future, in order to continue the process of understanding higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and how these two countries can learn from each other.

Key learning of the dissertation

There are many conceptions of the State and its role in relation to education. Throughout time the State has been seen alternately as a representative of the common good, as a repressive arm of the bourgeoisie, as an instrument to maintain the status quo and as an arena of struggle, among other definitions. These distinct and sometimes opposite viewpoints have strong implications for public policies, in particular for those related to education. In this dissertation, the State is considered a space where multiples actors fight to pursue their interests. The basic tenet put forth here is that the State, despite its different perspectives, should operate as an instrument for promoting social equity within a country. Education is one of the key areas through which this goal can be constantly pursued, and thus, must be a central concern of the State.

Higher education in Latin America, as this dissertation has demonstrated, has a long history, with the first universities being established in the 16th century. The creation of universities in the region flourished in Spanish colonies, while in Brazil this project was postponed for centuries. During the colonial period, there were institutions created by the crown and others by the pope, but the difference among them in the beginning was more perceived than real due to the intrinsic relation of the State and the church. Based on Spanish universities of the time, particularly the University of Salamanca and the University of Alcalá de Henares, these institutions were strongly

influenced by the scholastic. Of course it is not possible to talk about a complete transplantation of institutions from one country to another. Higher education systems in the area developed along their own paths, sometimes following completely different directions.

With the expulsion of the Jesuits, Latin America entered a new phase in higher education, characterized by the strengthening of the public face of educational institutions. During the republican period, a slow process of secularization of universities took place. Despite the attempt of universities to contribute to the process of forging national identities, these institutions continued to be influenced by European models. The path to nationalizing and modernizing the colonial universities was by emulating French universities. Napoleonic universities were characterized by a professional emphasis, and this remains a strong feature of many institutions in Latin America today. It is important to remember that the republican university continued to be frequented by the sons of the ruling classes.

The first important questioning of Latin American universities occurred in 1918, with the Cordoba reform. This reform tried to find local answers to local problems, and create a real national university. Autonomy and co-governance were some of the most important markers of this reform. Equally relevant was the claim to open the doors of the universities to the emerging social classes. Not all demands of students were met during the period, but they certainly experienced significant achievements. Latin American countries were affected by the Cordoba reform in different moments. In Brazil, for instance, the impact came much later, when students started to organize and present their demands in relation to the university.

While in the beginning of the 20th century higher education was still a place reserved for a few, with the exclusion of popular groups, indigenous populations and women, the situation changed in the second half of the century, when there was a significant increase in enrollment in many Latin American countries. It was also the moment in which the diversification of higher education intensified. That means that the inclusion of new social segments in higher education took place not only in traditional universities but also in new institutions and courses with different

levels of quality. The increase in enrollment in the region was not always followed by an increase in investments, and this certainly impacted quality.

As this dissertation has sought to show, there is a strong connection between the political moment in which countries are living and the policies implemented in higher education. Around the 1960 and 1970s devastating dictatorships controlled many Latin American countries. Some general elements of the policies implemented by these governments were an attempt to promote rationalization in different sectors of society, exclusion, and also the use of coercion. Universities were affected by these policies. Several professors and students were persecuted and in some cases assassinated due to their political views and activism. In many cases there was a reorganization in power structures inside universities, with restrictions to the university autonomy, as well as curricular changes. These governments, however, impacted higher education in each country in unique ways. In Argentina, there was a restraint in enrollment while in Brazil there was an expansion. In Brazil, as a matter of fact, a very important reform took place in higher education, making this country an exception among other Latin American countries.

The return to democracy in the region was simultaneous with a widespread and severe economic crisis. On the one hand, there were many social demands being presented to the new governments as a result of years of repression. On the other hand, these governments were dealing with economic challenges and being forced to implement policies of fiscal adjustment that significantly compromised their ability to present adequate answers to pressing social issues. Again, higher education was impacted in distinct ways depending on the country. In Argentina, during the 1980s there was a new increase in enrollment, while in Brazil this was a period of stagnation in enrollments.

Higher education in Latin America has undergone deep transformations over the past few decades, particularly after the 1990s. Some of these transformations are directly related to an increased demand for access to this level of education, and to countries' struggles to respond to this demand. The main trends the region is facing include quantitative expansion of enrollment,

significant institutional diversification, increasing privatization, and growing restrictions to public funding. There are also problems associated with equity and the quality of education.

In Latin America, the State has presented several faces throughout history. Oligarchical governments, populist governments, dictatorships and democratic governments all influenced these faces. Latin American governments are now operating under new pressures. More recently, processes of globalization have intensified, impacting the role of the state on higher education. This is without a doubt a complex phenomenon that encompasses both potentials and limitations. Synthetically, it is possible to talk about an economically-driven globalization that constitutes a neoliberal globalization, but also about a socially-driven globalization that focuses on important issues such as democracy and human rights.

Neoliberal globalization has been so far the dominant form of globalization, and it is severely affecting educational institutions. Education is no longer seen as a public good and a right, but rather as a commodity that is available only to those who can afford it. The notion of the citizen, thus, is replaced by the notion of the consumer. This impacted higher education in several ways. The increase in privatization is one of the strongest examples of this impact. University curricula and researches have increasingly opened themselves to market pressures, for instance. Some neoliberal policies for higher education in Argentina and Brazil have begun to be reversed under leftist governments, though it is not possible to talk about a complete change in the path both governments are taking. Policies from these governments in regard to higher education were examined in this dissertation.

Through a comparison of higher education in Argentina and Brazil it was possible to see that these two countries have some commonalities as well as differences. Some of the main elements emphasized by the interviewees in relation to that can be summarized in a few points:

Positive aspects of higher education

- Argentina is one of the Latin American countries with the strongest tradition of public higher education. The higher education system in Brazil is highly privatized, but the public sector, despite having fewer students, is known for its high quality and plays an important role in the country.
- Data and analysis presented in this dissertation show that in Argentina the system is traditionally inclusive. In relation to Brazil, it is possible to say that this theme of inclusion was incorporated to the governmental agenda later.
- It is positive the recent increase of the public sector in Argentina and Brazil, with the creation of new universities and its decentralization. Higher education in Brazil is traditionally more decentralized than in Argentina.
- University autonomy is a positive achievement in Argentina, and this is a theme that permeates the debates about all other aspects of higher education in the country. In Brazil, where according to the law universities are autonomous as in Argentina, the lack of real autonomy is the most important issue.
- In Argentina, some interviewees mentioned an improvement in funding of public institutions during recent years. They also indicated an increase in faculty salary. An improvement in funding also happened recently in Brazil, but interviewees did not make reference to that when talking specifically about positive aspects.

Critical aspects of higher education

- In both countries, the ability to graduate from high school is a relevant barrier to pursuing higher education.

- In Brazil, the coverage of students in higher education is very low compared with other Latin American countries. In Argentina, the main problem is dropouts.
- In both countries, there are complaints about the lack of planning in the increase and development of the higher education system. This resulted in different institutions performing similar activities; institutions concentrated in specific areas; and similar courses being offered in one area, while important courses are not present; among other challenges.
- In Brazil, interviewees criticized what they considered to be a lack of real autonomy in universities. In relation to both undergraduate and graduate programs these institutions have had to adjust to a great number of rules from the federal government, which seem to limit their ability to define their own path in many areas.
- In Argentina, data show that it is negative the lack of coordinated policies between the federal government and universities.
- The high level of privatization of higher education is a negative aspect in Brazil.

Diversification of higher education

- Some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil said that the current trend of diversification of higher education can be positive because it contributes to the inclusion of students and, in many cases, can be a sign of respect for their desires. Interviewees resistant to the idea of diversification said that this process met market demands, but not necessarily social demands.
- In both countries some interviewees said that the system of higher education is diversified while others said that was not actually the case.
- Higher education courses in Argentina and Brazil have a professionalizing character. This means that students enter their programs knowing which profession they are going to enter

after graduation. Some interviewees from both countries criticized this early decision making process.

Policies to grant access to higher education

- In Argentina and Brazil, policies to grant access to higher education changed throughout the years. Today, according to the legislation of both countries, institutions of higher education can decide which kind of policies to adopt to select their students. In Brazil, applicants have to be approved in a selective process, in addition to other requirements that also exist in Argentina (to have a high school degree).
- Open access is adopted by the majority of institutions in Argentina, and the traditional *vestibular* in almost all institutions in Brazil, but it is important to mention that there are alternatives in both countries.
- What comes out of the analysis of the interviews is that there is a deceptive debate between the open access in Argentina and the restricted access in Brazil. There is a selective process in both countries, one prior to entrance and other a posteriori.

Policies to expand and democratize access

- In Argentina and Brazil, higher education was elitist in its origins. Argentina was able to open the doors of its universities to more students earlier, and the result is a massive access today. In Brazil, this process was slower and continues to take place today.
- There have been policies to increase access to higher education in Argentina and Brazil during the past few years. It is important the recent expansion of the public national/federal institutions in both countries. In Brazil, the increase of the private sector continues to be stimulated though different federal programs.

- In the last year, the theme of affirmative action entered the governmental agenda and new policies were adopted in Brazil.
- Some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil believed that in the past few years there were no effective policies to increase and democratize access to higher education. One interviewee from Argentina said that the new universities are including the middle class, but that she was not sure about the inclusion of popular segments. Another interviewee in Brazil, for his part, said that the recent policies to increase access have not taken into consideration the issue of quality, and thus have not been really effective.

Policies to assure quality of higher education

- Some interviewees from Argentina and Brazil did not identify any important policy related to quality in recent years. These interviewees are the minority, though. Most interviewees in both countries made an association between evaluation and quality. In the area of evaluation in both countries there were important measures implemented.
- There is a strong criticism to the emergence of state evaluation during the 1990s, introduced through the hands of neoliberal governments. Some institutions in both countries were developing their own evaluation experiences when they were faced with the requirement to also participate in external evaluations conducted by the state. There were, however, positive changes during the 21st century.
- Some interviewees from Brazil mentioned that efforts to stimulate faculty qualification in the past few years were important and would bring positive impacts in terms of quality.

A theme that permeated the entire discussion about higher education in Argentina and Brazil was university autonomy. Autonomy is an important value to the academic communities of these two countries, and interviewees highlighted that fact. As this dissertation has shown, university

autonomy was alternatively stronger and weaker in different moments in the development of the higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil. Today, even though university autonomy is ensured by the constitutions of both countries, its implementation is still a struggle. The tension between the power of the state to coordinate the system and the ability of universities to guide their practices and destiny is a constant challenge.

This section addressed some of the key learning of this dissertation, and they are related to the two research questions presented in the introduction. The first research question asked: What are the similarities and differences in the development of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and how they have affected access and equality of educational opportunity? Policies for higher education changed considerably throughout the years in both countries, and in some moments they facilitated access, while in others they restricted it. It was possible to see that higher education in these two countries developed in very peculiar ways. In Argentina, for instance, democratic governments are generally associated with the expansion of enrollments, whereas the many authoritarian governments are associated to the reduction of enrollments. In Brazil this statement not always holds true, as there was an intense increase in enrollment during and after the last dictatorship in the country. The peculiarities of Argentina and Brazil can also be seen in the way these two countries answered to the pressure for more educational opportunities in higher education. While Argentina opened the doors of its public universities, Brazil allowed the private sector to grow, mainly constituted by non-university institutions.

The second research question inquired: What are the main features of higher education in Argentina and Brazil currently, from the perspective of specialists on higher education in both countries? As this section summarized, there are both positive and critical aspects in relation to higher education. As positive it is important to mention the strength of the public sector in both countries. As critical, the challenges to promote a real democratization of this level of education. It was also possible to notice the divergent perspectives about the diversification of higher education. This process can be damaging if it only meets market demands, but it can also bring progressive

results if the goal is to include more students in higher education and quality is preserved in that development. In the last years there have been policies to increase access and assure quality of education. The effectiveness of these policies is debatable among specialists. These policies are important, particularly those that contribute to the strengthening the public sector.

Potential contributions of the dissertation

This dissertation offers some potential contributions to the field, including a deeper dialogue between higher education in Argentina and Brazil. The manuscript helped to put the higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil in the larger context of Latin America, showing some common features and challenges faced in the region. It also gives an introduction to the higher education systems of Argentina and Brazil, based on their histories and current situations. It was possible to observe the changes in higher education throughout its development in these two countries. Looking at the history of higher education in both countries is essential to understanding the present and to identifying some trends for the future.

The dissertation reveals some of the strengths and problems of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and it becomes clear that while some of these positive and critical aspects are contemporary, many of them have historical roots. The document also addresses the main similarities and differences between higher education in Argentina and Brazil, and it invites the readers to question the situation of higher education in each country, pointing out some opportunities for change. Argentina and Brazil can learn from each other in the area of higher education. It is important to remember that understanding reality is the first step toward transforming it, and in education the goal should always be to achieve a better life.

An additional contribution of this investigation was to share the insights of higher education specialists on the current situation of higher education in their countries. These professionals, as mentioned in the introduction, are highly qualified and were kind enough to share their knowledge

and perspectives on this theme. Many of them write systematically about different aspects of higher education, but the interviews created an important room for their reflections.

Research agenda for the future

Besides making reference to the potential contributions of this study it is important to point out areas of research that can be better developed in future investigations. This dissertation highlighted some these areas. One theme that can be better explored is the differences between recent governments in Argentina and Brazil. Carlos Menem in Argentina and Fernando Henrique Cardoso in Brazil are known as presidents that represented neoliberal governments in their respective countries. More recent presidents, such as Néstor and Cristina Kirchner in Argentina and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and Dilma Rousseff in Brazil, have presented themselves as an alternative to past neoliberal governments. What are the continuities and ruptures between these governments in Argentina and Brazil?

This dissertation additionally discussed some of the main impacts of globalization on higher education in Latin America. Nevertheless, similar political regimes and similar political trends affect countries in unique ways. It would be important to investigate the precise impact of globalization on higher education in Argentina and Brazil individually, and compare the similarities and differences observed. More than that, it is essential to go beyond and analyze whether there is resistance to the neoliberal globalization in effect in both countries. What are the main forms of resistance to the neoliberal globalization in place in Argentina and Brazil? Are there alternatives to the neoliberal globalization in higher education in these countries?

Another important theme when discussing higher education in Argentina and Brazil is the role of students and professors in bringing about change to universities. In Argentina students began to organize themselves in the beginning of the 20th century, and in 1918 led the reform of Cordoba, which profoundly impacted universities not only in Cordoba but also in other parts of Argentina and

in other countries of Latin America. In Brazil, students also organized themselves, and around the end of the 1930s created a central/national organization, the National Union of Students, which continues to play a significant role in the debate about higher education policy in the country. The university reform of Cordoba impacted students in Brazil later than in other countries, and this is another relevant issue that deserves further attention. Faculty unions in Argentina and Brazil also have an important voice, and it would be interesting to analyze their role in higher education in both countries.

Looking at the themes that were discussed in this dissertation, it is possible to point out elements that were not addressed. In the critical aspects of higher education, for instance, none of the interviewees from Argentina and Brazil mentioned the regional disparities existing in higher education in their countries, and this is certainly an important issue. Both in Argentina and Brazil a few universities located in some areas of the country comprise the development of research and other important academic indicators. That is the case of institutions in Buenos Aires and São Paulo. To point out the main disparities between higher education in different parts of Argentina and Brazil and to understand their causes could offer alternatives to this issue.

Throughout this dissertation, much was said about the diversification of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. This dissertation indicated when the diversification of institutions and courses started to emerge in both countries, but it would be interesting to further investigate the impact of ideologies disseminated by international agencies in the intensification of this practice. It is important to understand the origins of this process, and the ideologies behind recommendations in that direction. Does the diversification of higher education meet social needs or only market demands? In addition to that, it is necessary to look at the impact of international reforms on local reorganizations. The Bologna Process in Europe, for instance, seems to be impacting some changes in Brazilian higher education, with the adoption by some universities of the interdisciplinary bachelors. To understand these influences and its consequences is an essential initiative.

Another debate undertaken in this dissertation has to do with the policies adopted by Argentina and Brazil in terms of granting access to higher education. Dropouts are a serious issue in both countries, particularly in Argentina. Is there a connection between policies to grant access to higher education and dropout rates? Precise data about dropouts in these two countries is difficult to find and there are not many existing studies on this important subject. To investigate systematically the number of students that drop out and the reasons why would be very socially relevant. Once more it is imperative to remember that understanding the causes of a problem is the first step to proposing the right solutions.

Throughout the past 15 years there were policies implemented in Argentina and Brazil to increase access to higher education. It is necessary to study the profile of students who gained access as a result of these policies. Who is getting access to higher education currently in Argentina and Brazil, and to what kind of institutions? Was there a real democratization of higher education in both countries? In Brazil, specifically, the federal government adopted affirmative action during the past few years in order to address historical inequalities in the country. What was the effect of these policies in democratizing higher education?

The debate about democratization is also connected with the debate about quality of higher education. As mentioned, interviewees in general analyzed evaluation policies as strategies adopted by governments to promote quality. Yet there are different conceptions regarding what represents quality in higher education, as well as divergent perspectives about the role of evaluation in ensuring that quality. Evaluation, as pointed out by many educators in Argentina and Brazil, is more than a technical matter; it is a political issue. It would be relevant to study the different political conceptions behind the evaluations being carried out by the federal governments in Argentina and Brazil, as well as to compare the situation of both countries.

Another theme that needs to be more deeply addressed is the relationship between the federal government and universities in Argentina and Brazil or, in other words, the federal oversight of these institutions and its relation to university autonomy. How is it possible to develop a better

planning and coordination of the higher education system in Argentina and Brazil, respecting the autonomy that universities have to manage themselves and to guide their own activities?

While several other themes could be pointed out, those mentioned here offer a sample of the many issues that need further research in the field of higher education in Argentina and Brazil. When one thinks about the role of higher education, and the role of universities in particular, it is necessary to consider the past, the present, and the future of these institutions. This dissertation discussed some important aspects of the history of higher education in Argentina and Brazil, as well as some of the key features of these institutions in the present. Without a doubt, this discussion included many trends that pointed out, on the one hand, the direction in which higher education is going in these two countries, and, on the other hand, the path it should pursue.

This dissertation examined higher education in Argentina and Brazil, encompassing universities and other types of higher education institutions. Universities were in many moments, however, the center of the analysis due to their relevance in both countries. A look at the analysis developed in this dissertation raises some structural questions regarding these institutions:

- Can universities continue to be true to their history and, at the same time, meet the current demands society presents?
- Are universities playing the role of institutions that think about society and the world in a comprehensive way – not only to understand its path, but also to imagine its future?
- Do universities today see themselves as institutions that think about reality and act upon it in order to transform existing conditions or are they simply following the flow of external transformations uncritically?
- Are the most important questions of the present - such as social and economic inequalities, and environmental challenges, among others - at the core of the work these institutions perform?

- Will universities be able to overcome the limits of the present to become what they potentially can be in the future?

Some of these questions address the past – present relationship of universities, while others address the present – future relationship of universities. All of them in way are a reflection about the present practice of these institutions. The answers to these questions are essential to define the place of universities and higher education institutions in Argentina and Brazil in the future. But even more importantly, the answers to these questions will crucial to define the place of these two countries in a complex and challenging world that keeps changing.

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