

sizeable systems. Second, several of the countries (Greece, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan) allow an international or cross-border presence that is basically private. PHE registers there as zero enrollments simply because there is no state-recognized degree. Similarly, isolated domestic PHE programs exist without culminating in officially recognized degrees.

THE TENUOUS TEN

Moreover, several of the 10 countries (e.g., Myanmar) already have active public discussion about private creation. Enabling legislation has sometimes been drafted. In Algeria, the largest of the systems, concrete proposals for private development have existed for a few years. Licensing applications are often precursors to actual PHE.

One salient political observation illuminates the present list, with implications for its persistence. The political regimes are markedly inclined to the left (however nebulous this term). True, we have seen that leftist orientation is no guarantee of public monopoly; the compatibility of leftist regimes with PHE is a striking sign of our times, of the contemporary precariousness of public monopoly. It does not, however, negate the reality that the group of 10 is far more to the left than the great bulk of the 169 other countries.

Cuba is the clearest illustration. The only country in the Americas with a Communist regime is the only one with no PHE. Indeed, Cuba has so far not had any serious discussion of potential PHE. The last of the other traditionally identified 20 republics of Latin America to have broken public monopoly was Uruguay—in 1985. Like Uruguay in its region, Greece long stood out in Europe for an atypically strong norm of statism in social welfare fields. Turkmenistan has been generally on the left among the “stans” (a similar generalization apt for Tajikistan, which only recently broke public monopoly). Myanmar is politically best characterized in its half-century of independence as repressive, but also with a socialist orientation. Algeria’s public monopoly can be related not only to its French colonial tradition (generally less receptive than British colonial tradition to privateness), but also to its leftist leanings. The fact that so many other leftist regimes have broken public monopoly does not bode well for persisting public monopoly; nor do the incipient activities related to potential private creation in several of the countries. Broadly speaking, the contemporary era has a notable inclination toward privatization on various social fronts.

An independent perspective, less about political ideology than about organizational or world-system tendencies, might simply highlight how forms, once established, tend to spread. Public higher education once existed in only some countries before spreading to almost all; private sectors are now doing the same, not unlike the way public and then pri-

vate sectors of higher education spread from one to several to almost all parts of individual countries. But whether or not the days of public monopoly are numbered, or whether they are ever to return, the main point here is not prediction. For one thing, prediction in private–public matters is fraught; when public monopoly was a strong norm, how many sage prognosticators identified the dimensions of the coming PHE surge? The main point here is to highlight a potent reality. Dual sectors are the dominant new norm, already spread to almost the entire world. The PHE surge is notable not just for its aggregate size but also very much for its near ubiquity. Public monopoly has become rare. ■

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Reconsidering Private Higher Education in Brazil

TARGINO DE ARAÚJO FILHO

Targino de Araújo Filho is professor, Federal University of São Carlos, Brazil, and currently a visiting scholar at the Centre for Higher Education Internationalisation (CHEI) at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy, supported by a CAPES–PGCI scholarship. E-mail: targino@ufscar.br.

Two recent articles on Brazilian higher education in *International Higher Education* focused on private higher education: one presenting concerns about the growth of the for-profit segment of the private sector, and the other classifying this sector as the fuel of Brazilian economic growth. Although the private sector accounts for 76 percent of more than 8 million undergraduate enrollments—placing Brazil among the countries with the highest proportion of private enrollments worldwide—that consideration deserves a better analysis.

In fact, the expansion of higher education in Brazil has always occurred with the participation of the private sector, mostly composed of community, religious, and philanthropic higher education institutions (HEIs), and playing a role complementary to that of the public sector. Over time, the situation progressed and in 1997, the private sector was responsible for 61 percent of enrollments. With the legalization of for-profit institutions, the system gained a new dynamic, resulting in 2,364 HEIs in 2015, among which 2,069 were private, with for-profit HEIs accounting for about 50 percent of enrollments.

THE ADOPTION OF A COMMERCIAL LOGIC

With the support of—mostly foreign—investment funds, a subsection of the for-profit HEIs has begun to acquire smaller institutions, merging with others, launching their shares on the stock exchange, and turning into large commercial groups. Eleven of these groups hold about 40 percent of enrollments, with one among them holding almost half of that percentage. Only four of these main HEI groups have not launched their shares, while three others are North American enterprises. The remaining four of the main HEI groups, including the two largest ones, are Brazilian open capital enterprises that, having international investment funds as main shareholders, constitute one of the most profitable segments of the Brazilian stock exchange (BM&FBovespa). Indeed, these two groups tried to merge in 2016, but this was prevented by the Administrative Council for Economic Defense (CADE). Unquestionably, what is observed is an oligopolization of the private education sector with all the risky implications that are associated with it.

While the private sector accounts for 76 percent of all enrollments, the percentage of academics in private institutions is only 57 percent of the total instructional pool, which points to a probable precariousness of labor conditions.

Looking at market niches within the HEI sector, the biggest investment is in low-cost programs that do not require laboratories or highly paid professors, such as in the social sciences, business, and law. These programs absorb 38 percent of the country's total enrollments, with the private sector responsible for 86.8 percent of that share. Most of these programs are offered in the evening and have as target group a considerable proportion of the population above the expected school age (non-traditional students). Moreover, in relation to undergraduate online learning programs, the hegemony of the private sector is remarkable, at about 91 percent of enrollments. Here again, the highest concentration of admissions is in the area of social sciences, business, and law (44 percent), followed by education (38 percent).

When looking at graduate programs, the situation is completely reversed because of the costs involved with laboratories, libraries, and academic salaries. At that level, the share of the private sector reaches only 19 percent of enrollments. In fact, the Brazilian graduate system, essentially public, places the country in the spotlight in both the Latin

American and global contexts, with the country holding the 14th position in terms of scientific production.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE QUALITY OF ADMISSIONS

While the private sector accounts for 76 percent of all enrollments, the percentage of academics in private institutions is only 57 percent of the total instructional pool, which points to a probable precariousness of labor conditions. In addition, while in the public sector 56.5 percent of the academic staff hold a PhD and 29.6 percent a master's degree, in the private sector these percentages are 20.7 percent and 48.1 percent, respectively. In terms of hiring policy, it is estimated that in the public sector 84 percent of the academics are hired full-time, while in private sector the percentage is 37 percent. As a result, a quality evaluation of HEIs presents great contrasts. Grades vary from 1 to 5, 3 being the minimum acceptable, and while among public institutions 32.8 percent have a minimum grade of 4, this percentage among private institutions is 15.5 percent. Considering only universities, the percentages are 59 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

In addition to the elements already presented—especially the high concentration of enrollments in certain programs—these indicators reveal that obtaining a diploma often becomes an end in itself. That is to say, it seems likely that students seek any diploma, regardless of the quality of the training, as their choice of program is often determined by ease of access or lack of alternative options. Further, they also reveal that the expansion of enrollments in the private sector does not imply democratization of access, since available options are quite restricted.

IMPLICATIONS

Although the process of massification of higher education in Brazil has just begun, since the net enrollment rate is only 18 percent, a new National Education Plan was approved in 2014. This plan establishes goals such as the percentage of GDP to be applied towards education—which should reach 10 percent in 10 years—and the net enrollment rate, which should reach 33 percent in the same time period, with 40 percent of new admissions in the public sector. This is a great challenge indeed, but not an unfeasible one considering the important processes of expansion and capillarization that occurred in the federal public sector in 2013–2014. These processes doubled the number of enrollments in the sector at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, and created 173 new campuses and 15 new universities. This had a significant social dimension as well, since, through the “quotas law,” federal universities reached in 2016 the expected target of reserving 50 percent of their enrollments for public school graduates. Although in Brazil a public school background indicates that pupils

are from low-income families, the law additionally stipulates that half of the reserved places must be for students from families with a per-capita income of less than 1.5 minimum wage. In addition, the law also stipulates that black, brown, and indigenous people, as well as people with disabilities, should be included in the quota in a proportion at least equal to that existing in the state where the university is located.

Unfortunately, the economic and political conditions of Brazil may prevent this process of expansion of the public higher education sector from continuing further. Indeed, the opposite may occur, as indicated by recent economic measures, such as the freezing of expenses incurred by the federal government for a period of 20 years. Furthermore, official discourses and the media are claiming again that public universities spend a lot, are expensive, and, therefore, that a country like Brazil cannot afford them. Public resources are not seen as investments to build a sovereign country, able to produce solutions for the problems faced by the different regions. This is an extremely delicate moment, because prospects are pointing to stagnation or the continuation of low-quality massification, which will bring little benefit to the socioeconomic development of the country.■

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Student Mobility and Employability: The Ethiopian Experience

WONDWOSEN TAMRAT AND DAMTEW TEFERRA

Wondwosen Tamrat is associate professor and founding president of St. Mary's University, Ethiopia. E-mails: preswond@smuc.edu.et and wondwosentamrat@gmail.com. Damtew Teferra is professor of higher education, leader of Higher Education and Training Development, University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, and founding director of the International Network for Higher Education in Africa. E-mails: teferra@ukzn.ac.za and teferra@bc.edu.

Conversations are currently abuzz with concerns about employability, as institutional, national, regional, and international organizations frantically gear up to respond to the ominous realities of youth bulge, “mass” enrollment, and graduate unemployment. Everywhere, the explosive growth of the number of graduates is resulting in massive challenges, with implications for their academic preparation.

For those who can afford or get the opportunity to do so, studying in another country is perceived as a mechanism to improve one’s employability. This has become one of the major pull factors in student mobility. In addition to its positive impact on academic development, international study offers enhanced opportunities for employability, providing a variety of advantages, including linguistic improvement, personal development, cultural experience, global awareness, and marketable skills.

While student mobility has received much attention as a dimension of internationalization, studies related to the link between internationalization and employability, particularly on the perceptions and expectations of international students, remain inconclusive. This is specifically true in the context of Africa. This article reports the findings of a larger study conducted on international students from Ethiopia to gauge their views on the impact of their training on employability.

CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Despite the lack of reliable statistical data on the subject, thousands of Ethiopian students are believed to be studying outside the country. Mobility through government scholarships, or arranged with the help of family or individually appears to be on the rise. Yet, there is little information on mobility patterns, purpose, and possible plans.

In addition to featuring their educational profiles, the study aimed at exploring the perspectives of Ethiopian students on the link between study abroad and employability by examining such factors as motivations for studying abroad, employability attributes and their mastery, and students’ plans after graduation.

PARTICIPANTS’ PROFILES AND MAIN OBSERVATIONS

Out of 124 international students contacted for the study, just over 50 percent responded to the questionnaire administered online; six participants volunteered for a Skype interview. The majority of the students, 80 percent, were between 18 and 29 years old. Only 11 percent were older than 30, and 59 percent were women. In terms of educational background, 88 percent had completed their secondary education in Ethiopia, while the remaining 8 percent had attended high school elsewhere in Africa; 4 percent studied outside the continent. Fifty seven percent of the students had attended private high schools; 21.5 percent, international community schools; and 16.9 percent had graduated from public and religious schools.

At the time of this study, the students were attending 39 postsecondary institutions on four continents: North America (50.8 percent), Asia (21.5 percent), Europe (18.5 percent), and other parts of Africa (9.2 percent). The main strategies the students used to select their respective host universities