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# Brazil, Russia, and Turkey: How New Democracies Deal with International Models of Higher Education?

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## Introduction

The issue of higher education in developing countries has attracted increased attention from international institutions, as evidenced by several reports published by the World Bank and academic centers since 1994. There is also a great deal of research concerning developing countries in general, and BRICS in particular. This vast literature focuses on the issues of access and equity, higher education and social cohesion, and the internationalization of higher education (Altbach and Peterson 2007; Forest and Altbach 2011). Internationalization can be conceptualized across different

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A. M. de Albuquerque Moreira et al. (eds.), *Intercultural Studies in Higher Education*, Intercultural Studies in Education,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-15758-6_2

dimensions (Knight 2007): student mobility, teaching in other countries, multinational research groups, etc. For this study, internationalization will be considered as the integration of an international, intercultural, and/or global dimension (Knight 2007, p. 207) into models and conceptions of higher education systems.

The objective of this chapter is to address the issue of the internationalization of higher education in Brazil, Russia, and Turkey—three emerging countries with very different geographical and historical contexts. This issue will be addressed from the angle of national translations of international influences and trends in higher education systems, as well as resistance to such paradigms. These three countries share the characteristic of being a young democracy—something that for a variety of reasons represents an important challenge to their higher education systems.

The consolidation of young democracies is often based on a strong national sentiment that may be at odds with the global dimension of education. This question will be addressed in the first section of this chapter.

After a brief comparison of the resources devoted to education by the three countries, we will present the role played by existing models in the construction of national educational systems, before moving on to the three dimensions considered strategic by the doctrine of international institutions, particularly the World Bank and the OECD, namely "diversification of the system," "access and affirmative policies," and "institutional autonomy."[1]

## Young Democracies, Nationalism, and the Internationalization of Higher Education

According to Anderson (2006), who defines the nation as an "imagined community," national sentiment appears as an important cement when a new nation is born, whether it is newly created, after a colonial period, or when it emerges as a new entity through a process of democratization.

[1] See for instance the report prepared in 2000 by the Task Force on Higher Education in Developing Countries, convened by the World Bank and UNESCO: "Higher Education in Developing Countries: Peril and Promise."

As Freyburg and Richter (2008) stated, national identity plays an important role in the democratization processes because, in the nation-building phase, it can empower democratic forces to fight an autocratic regime. However, at the same time, it can also undermine democratization when it is used against ethnic differences.

As Hammond (2016) argues, national identity may at some point contradict the vision of a global higher education—consideration here should be given to Japanese and Chinese cases. The same issue can be considered when comparing Brazil, Turkey, and Russia. These three countries are in three different continents, South America (Brazil), Europe (Russia), and Asia (Turkey). Each has its own history but all share the similarity of being emerging countries and new and fragile democracies, which may give them a peculiar perspective on nationalism and globalization. This issue will be considered via the national translations of international influences and trends in higher education systems as well as through resistance to the paradigms they represent.

To be a young democracy often means going through periods of political turmoil and economic growth, with its ups and downs. In some circumstances, building a new democracy may involve dealing with different people and minority groups and fighting against the adverse interests of other countries. In such contexts, the promotion of a national feeling by public authorities represents a means of consolidating the nation. Nationalism constitutes the glue that unites a new country. Nevertheless, this fundamental nationalism can constitute an obstacle to internationalization, be it the internationalization of economic exchanges or the normalization of ways of life, dimensions that we find today in the context of globalization. Although one would expect that higher education, because of its association with science and knowledge, would be less affected by nationalist resistance, it is significant to see how these three new democracies, with different histories and cultural contexts, have dealt with the dimensions advocated by international organizations for higher education.

The history of these three countries, though different in terms of time and conditions of emergence, show remarkable similarities concerning the fragility of democratic life and the influence of nationalist ideas.

Brazil, after its independence in 1822 and the emergence of the First Republic in 1889, experienced a turbulent history with civil conflicts,

alternating phases of democratization and authoritarian governments, and periods of both economic growth and crises.

In Brazil, democratic life was suspended during the 21 years of the military government (1964–1985). The return of democracy did not bring with it a peaceful political life, as shown by the violent political tensions after the Lula presidency (2003–2011). After many political crises and the largest economic recession ever, Brazil currently faces the possibility of electing a military professional as its president.

Nationalism was more marked in the periods of the constitution of the Republic (Lessa 2008) and found its translation in certain socioeconomic theories (Cardoso's theory of dependence). The nationalist feeling in Brazil today is far from those times (Cleary 1999), however, it remains sensitive, as revealed by recent episodes in Brazilian politics (Sousa 2015) and the strong appeal of national populism in the campaigns for the 2018 presidential elections (Lamounier 2016).

In Russia, democratic life, which emerged after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, reached its limit with the autocratic power of Putin, which relies partly on a new nationalism, as distinct from the nationalism promoted by the socialist regime. As Khazanov (2002) stated, "Russian nationalism, as a post-imperial syndrome, shows common traits with those of other countries which experience political uncertainty and economic hardship. The Russians would not yet have overcome the identity crisis brought about by the disintegration of the Soviet Union." "Indeed, Russian nationalism remains anti-modernist, anti-Western, anti-democratic, illiberal, authoritarian, and offensive, although nowadays sometimes in a defensive disguise." The author reminds us that a large number of people in power today in Russia were indoctrinated with ideas of Russian nationalism, before the *perestroika* period.

Some authors see common traits between the modern nationalism of Russia and Turkey, because of historical similarities: at the end of the Russian and Ottoman Empires people feared the potential dismantling of their countries and were driven to an almost paranoid vision of foreign influences.

After the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and foreign domination following the defeat of 1918, the Attatürk Republic promoted nationalism as the beginning of the constitution of a new nation. However, "Compared

with the more secular nationalism seen under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's presidency and earlier governments, this new nationalism is assertively Muslim, fiercely independent, distrusting of outsiders, and sceptical of other nations and global elites, which it perceives to hold Turkey back" (Halpin et al. 2018).

Has the political instability and resurgence of nationalism, which seems to constitute to varying degrees, features common to these three countries, influenced their higher education policy? Further, how does their position in relation to the major trends in the evolution of this level of education compare to that promoted by international organizations more generally?

## The Resources Devoted to Education

The three countries belong to a group of upper middle-income countries (56 countries), as defined by the World Bank, with a GDP per capita in 2016 of US$8650 for Brazil, US$8748 for Russia, and US$10,863 for Turkey. They have all benefited from strong growth in the last 20 years, despite a slowing down in Brazil and Russia in more recent years. They represent one quarter of the total GDP of upper middle-income countries and they absorbed 28% of the total foreign investment to this group of countries. They became important international economic partners from 2000 onward (Table 2.1).

Of the three countries, Brazil appears to be the country concentrating most effort into education—devoting almost 6% of its GDP to education (the world average for 2012 being 4.6%). In this respect, Russia's expen-

**Table 2.1** Government expenditure on education and students (2012)

| | Government expenditure on education total (% of GDP) | Government expenditure per tertiary student (% of GDP per capita) |
|---|---|---|
| Brazil | 5.80 | 26.5 |
| Russia | 3.86 | 14.6 |
| Turkey | 4.06 | 23.4 |

*Source* World Bank

diture appears lower—the same being true for its expenditure per higher education student.

## The International Dimension of the Origin of Universities

In Turkey, as in Brazil, the idea of attending university is relatively recent, dating back to the 1920s. This is for different reasons: the weight of religious tradition in Turkey and the colonial legacy in Brazil. The first universities in Russia were created in the eighteenth century, following European tradition.

In Turkey, the first higher education institutions (HEIs) were two madrasahs, teaching science and medicine, founded at the end of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the sixteenth century by Mehmet the Conqueror and Suleiman the Magnificent. However, these prestigious madrasahs in the Ottoman world faced, over many centuries, a decadence due to bigotry and nepotism—those involved living behind closed doors without any concern for surrounding society (Umunc 1986).

Since Ottoman power needed military engineers, it established engineering schools in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Other specialized HEIs formed since 1839 in the fields of economics, law, and civil engineering. The first university was founded in 1865 but burned down and closed the same year. Due to conservative movements in society, it had a succession of openings and closings. It was inaugurated for the fourth time in 1900, with its academic level being on par with the level achieved during the decadence of the Ottoman Empire (Umunc 1986).

A law on higher education, promulgated in 1933, following the foundation of the Turkish Republic by Attatürk in 1923, reorganized the Istanbul University with a clear administrative, fiscal, and pedagogic framework. "This was the first time the word University appeared in Turkish law" (Dogramaci 2010). University reform had been conducted on the advice of a Swiss professor of education, Albert Malche, invited as an expert by the Turkish government. Subsequently, and through his intervention, some 30 prestigious German professors, fleeing Nazi persecution, joined Istanbul University, and helped to create a modern university system (Ege and Hagemann 2012).

Later, the major reform of 1981, which established the present structure of Turkish higher education, emphasizing the university as a unique educational structure, was of American inspiration. As proclaimed by one of its drafters, "I emphasized the importance of the USA model at every opportunity" (Dogramaci 2010). This was right after the military took power in 1980.

Institutions of higher education were not allowed in colonial Brazil. In contrast to the Spanish Conquerors—the first American University was created in Santo Domingo, in 1538—the Portuguese monarchs prohibited higher education in Brazil until 1808, when they came to the country fleeing Napoleon and established two courses in medicine (in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro) and a Naval Academy in Rio (Martins 2002). Courses in law, engineering, the arts, and agriculture were opened during the time of the Brazilian Empire (1822–1889).

The first Brazilian university, in 1920, was the University of Rio de Janeiro. It was not considered a true university since, in order to bestow the title of *doctor honoris causa* to the king of Belgium during his visit to the country, the federal government had to join three isolated colleges under the title of a university (Vonbun et al. 2016). In many states/provinces the same model of merging pre-existing colleges was used from the 1920s to the 1950s.

The University of São Paulo, created in 1934, independent of federal government, could be viewed as the first attempt to have an institution conceived to operate as a higher educational structure. Young European professors, especially French, were called upon to strengthen the foundations of this new university.

A new model of the higher education system was stabilized during the military government, with the University Reform of 1968. An attempt to modernize Brazilian higher education, the reform kept institutions under the dependency of the Ministry of Education, but introduced many traits similar to those of the American universities: the old "chair" system was replaced by academic departments, full-time contracts for faculty members were adopted, and sequential courses were substituted by a credit system in undergraduate education. It also created a legal and institutional framework for graduate education (Neves 2015, p. 74).

The first universities in Russia were established in the eighteenth century and initially followed the German education system, subsequently known as the "Humboldt" model of autonomous HEIs, grouping together research and higher education training. However, two distinctive features were then introduced: a separation between higher education and research (the Russian Academy of Science was founded at the same time as the first university and it started the separation between higher education training and research which has been sustained further over time, including during the soviet period) and a strong state control over HEIs (already at this time, the autonomy of HEIs in Russia was considerably less important in comparison with that of European universities) (Saltykov 2008, p. 8). The separation between research and higher education was reinforced during Soviet times. At the beginning of the 1930s, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR was transferred from Leningrad (currently Saint Petersburg) to Moscow and placed under direct authority of the government. It became de facto a ministry in charge of all fundamental research; while universities were placed under the authority of the Public Commissariat for Public Education (Narcompros)—its role was limited to the training of engineers and researchers. There were a few exceptions to this organization: the Moscow Institute for Physics and Technical Engineering (known as "Fiztech"), Novossibirsk Public University, and Moscow Institute for Electronic Engineering. In these institutions students could take part in research during their studies, notably through their close links to research offices or centers ("NII—nautchno-issledovatelskiye instituty"; "KB—kostruktorskiye buro") under the authority of the Academy of Sciences or the military industrial sector (Saltykov 2008).

Since the growing economy of the Soviet Union needed engineers for industrialization, the number of graduates in fundamental sciences was much higher than in human sciences—numbers being 7–10 times higher. In the United States, numbers of both types of graduates were similar. Despite this organizational rigidity, the Soviet Union accomplished considerable progress in enlarging access to higher education: the number of students rose from 127,000 in 1914/1915 in the Russian Empire to 811,000 in 1940/1941; the number of HEIs grew from 105 to 817 over the same period.

## The Quantitative Evolution of HE Systems and Their Diversification

Enrollment has grown remarkably in all three countries since 2000, both in terms of number and enrollment ratio for Brazil and Turkey and in terms of enrollment ratio for Russia. Today, at 95.4%, Turkey is one of the countries with the highest tertiary enrollment ratio in the world (according to UNESCO statistics for 2015), ahead of South Korea (93.3%) and the United States (88.9%) (Table 2.2).

These positive developments are due to the proliferation of institutions, the diversification of supply, and the implementation of equity policies.

Over the past 15 years, the number of HEIs has doubled in Brazil and has increased by 2.6 times in Turkey. If universities are considered the only institutional form of higher education in Turkey (vocational higher education schools are officially attached to them), then greater diversification is found in Brazil. Similarly, private higher education, although dynamic in Turkey, occupies a much more important place in Brazil (Table 2.3).

Since 1996, when the Brazilian Education Act (LDB) was passed, many laws and minor regulations have been introduced to allow for academic diversification and some social inclusion. The Brazilian higher education system has become a complex system of public (federal, state, and municipal) and private (religious, communal, philanthropic, and private for-profit) institutions. In terms of academic organization, institutions have different levels of autonomy and are divided into universities, university

**Table 2.2** Evolution of enrollment

| | Total enrollment | | Gross enrollment (%) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2015 | 2000 | 2015 |
| Brazil | 2,781,328 | 8,285,475 | [a]18.2 | 50.6 |
| Russia | 5,751,539 | 6,592,416 | 55.8 | 80.4 |
| Turkey | [a]1,464,740 | 6,062,886 | [a]25.3 | 94.7 |

[a]2001
*Source* UIS

**Table 2.3** Number of HEIs

| | Brazil | | Turkey | | Russia | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 | 2015 | 2000 | 2017 | 2000 | 2013 |
| Total | 1180 | 2364 | 72 | 185 | 965 | 969 |
| Public | 176 | 295 | 53 | 112 | 607 | 578 |
| Private | 1004 | 2069 | 19 | 73 | 358 | 391 |

*Source* INEP Brazilian Census of Higher Education; YÖK and Digest of Education Statistics in the Russian Federation, 2014

centers, and non-university institutions (integrated and isolated colleges). The last group lack the autonomy to create and reorganize courses. For years the most common format for the private sector has been the small, isolated professional school offering a few undergraduate courses. In the last 10 years, a consolidation process has led to the creation of some large, for-profit institutions (Balbachevsky 2015). Many such institutions gained autonomy as university centers or universities—one has more than a million students.

This expansion driven by the growth of private higher education is similar to higher educational development in other countries. While the public sector grew by 80.5% (1980–2000) and 120.7% (2000–2014), rates for the private sector were 104.1 and 224.6% for the same periods. Nowadays, the country has 2364 HEIs, of which 87.5% are private. Private colleges cater to 75.7% of all undergraduates in the country, most of them attending for-profit institutions (41.5%) (Higher Education Census 2015). During the 1990s, the expansion of this sector occurred through the creation of new small- and medium-size institutions, however, since the 2000s there has been a strong movement of acquisitions and mergers, led by large business groups, with foreign capital participation (Sampaio 2011; Corbucci et al. 2016).

In Turkey, one of the authors of the 1981 law lamented not to be able to promote private institutions (Dogramaci 2010), since an article of the constitution stated that universities could only be established by the state through an act of parliament. But in 1982, an amendment to the constitution allowed private universities to be founded, provided they were strictly non-profit. Nowadays, Turkey has 68 private universities as part

of its 180 universities in total, representing 15% of the total enrollments (from undergraduate to doctorate).

Independent of the statistical importance of the private sector, it is worth considering the role of this sector. As Gürüz (2006) mentions "Private universities have contributed only slightly to overcoming the chronic supply-and-demand imbalance in Turkey." However, among the 68 private universities, Koç, Sabanci, and Bilkent fall within the highest ranked and can be considered world-class research universities. Despite the fact they require fees of around US$15,000, these universities are in high demand for social sciences, science and technology, and medicine. Most other private universities attend to the requirements of the fragment of candidates unsuccessful at entering no-fee state universities.

In Brazil, diversification of higher education has also meant an improvement in the supply of vocational courses at the tertiary level, the technological ones. Since the LDB 1996, three types of degrees are available: bachelor or graduate/professional, teaching license, and technological degree. Despite the remarkable preference for the first, technological courses are increasing their enrollment (from 2% in 2000 to 14% in 2015). In Turkey, for the same period, enrollment in post-secondary vocational schools attached to universities and in independent post-secondary vocational schools climbed from 16 to 39% of the total of undergraduate enrollment.

Growing enrollment in distance education also contributed to the expansion of the Brazilian higher education system. Students in distance education represented 18.9% of the total enrollment in 2015 (mostly in private sectors) and represented roughly one third of matriculation at teaching license courses (Barbosa et al. 2017).

In Turkey, more than private universities, the Open University copes with demand from students not attending traditional universities. The Open Education Faculty was established in 1982 by Anadolu University. Today, this large university registers 3.1 million students, representing 45.5% of the total undergraduate enrollments.

Like many other countries, Russia has experienced a sharp rise in higher education participation rates over the past 25 years. After a decrease in the

1980s and the beginning of the 1990s,[2] demand for tertiary education began to grow sharply from 1994 onward, driven by demographic dynamics (the number of births increased rapidly in the second half of the 1970s and early 1980s before stabilizing around 1983–1987), a relative economic revival in the mid-1990s, and the appearance of the private sector.

Despite the economic crisis in August 1998, demand for higher education continued to rise in the beginning of the 2000s: between 1997 and 2003, the participation rate more than doubled, from 3,248,000 to 7,065,000; the rise continued until 2008, peaking at 7,513,000. The number of universities increased as well: from 880 in 1997, to 1046 in 2003, and 1134 in 2008 (Rosstat data, various years of compilation).

The steady progression in higher education participation rates was largely permitted by the rise of the private sector in higher education. Private HEIs had existed in Russia since the eighteenth century, before disappearing during Soviet times (Kastouéva-Jean 2013, p. 261). The Law on Education of 1992 allowed for the foundation of non-public HEIs and set out procedures for their licensing and accreditation. Since then, the number of private HEIs and enrollment numbers have progressed rapidly: in 1993, there were 78 private HEIs with 70,000 students enrolled. Numbers continued to grow: from 302 HEIs with 202,000 students in 1997 to 474 HEIs with 1,298,000 students in 2008 (Kastouéva-Jean 2013).

Although showing rapid growth, the private sector in higher education does not benefit from a good image in society. "Students and their parents want a solid and reliable higher education. That is why they choose public higher education institutions," said a former Minister for Education and Research, Mr. Andrei Foursenko, in 2009 (Kastouéva-Jean 2013, p. 255). This citation illustrates the generally negative perception of private higher education in Russia. The situation of private universities appears unequal to public universities that benefit from public subsidies and do not depend solely on tuition fees from students. Relying on income from students and their parents, in the context of a weak development of study loans, kept private universities dependent, allowing them little freedom for student selection.

[2]Between 1980 and 1993 tertiary enrollments in absolute figures diminished from 3,046,000 to 2,543,000, and in terms of the number of students per 10,000 inhabitants, decreased from 219 to 176 students.

Because of a sharp demographic decrease, the higher educational system appeared oversized by the end of the 2000s. This context was a real challenge for universities: the number of first year places available at universities being 25% higher than the number of secondary school graduates. As a result, between 2008 and 2011, around 20 HEIs disappeared (notably as a result of closure, but also reorganization and merging) and the number of students dropped by 460,000 (Kastouéva-Jean 2013, p. 21).

Another distinct feature of the expansion of enrollment rates in Russia was a sharp increase in the number of regional branches of universities, multiplying 10 times between 1993 and 2008 (Mototva and Pykko 2012, p. 27). Most such branches were situated in small- and medium-size cities making higher education accessible in remote areas and serving local demand for higher education. During the 2010s, several branches were closed as the quality of their educational provision was not considered good enough by the government.

In Russia, the shift in economic structures generated a new demand for higher education graduates. This led to a sharp increase in enrollment numbers in human sciences, with a very weak interest for exact sciences. Enrollment structure in terms of field of study changed. While Soviet education emphasized mathematics and science, and downplayed the humanities, the new market economy of Russia drove the development of human and social sciences. Increasing demand for these fields was observed throughout the 1990s, up to the middle of the 2000s, while demand for engineering courses strongly dropped. The Russian economy in the 1990s could be described as "merchant capitalism," in which buying and selling, rent seeking, short-term financial speculation, and personal services were the main sources of economic gain—not production or long-term investment. At that time, many big former socialist enterprises, plants, and factories closed or suspended their productive activities. Thus, such an economy did not need engineers and specialists with technical education, contrary to economists, accountants, and lawyers who felt a high demand in the labor market. In 2010, 528,000 students enrolled in courses in economics and management, against only 24,000 in metallurgy, mechanical construction, and metal engineering or similar energy and electrical engineering courses (Kastouéva-Jean 2013, p. 20).

# Selection Procedures and Affirmative Policies

## Selection Procedures

Access to universities is organized in the same way in all three countries and suffers from the same social bias. Selection at entrance takes the form of a competition, with prestigious institutions being the most selective. In this competition, students better prepared in top-quality high schools are best placed. However, access to these high schools is strongly socially biased.

In Turkey, access to university is based upon the results of a "student selection and placement examination," that is administered every year. Examinations administered by different universities had been implemented in the 1960s to cope with the rapid increase in student applications. In 1974, a common "Student Selection and Placement Center" (ÖSYM) was established and affiliated to the Council of Higher Education in 1982.

Competition to enter university and attain a place on a bachelor's program is particularly fierce: in 2017, there were 423,000 places for 1.5 million candidates. However, the chances of being successful differ considerably between high schools. For instance, for the same year, the probability of success for a student from a private high school was 45%, for a student from a selective public high school, 35% (Anatolian high schools), and for a student from a regular public high school, only 11% (calculations based on data from ÖSYM).

For these reasons, demand for "elite" high schools is high. Because graduates from these schools are more successful at university entrance exams they find themselves in high-quality, "respected" universities with high demands. Secondary education statistics and surveys reveal that access to these schools in Turkey is more dependent on socioeconomic factors. For example, 42% of the students in Anatolian high schools (the most prestigious ones) come from families with the highest socioeconomic status, whereas 30% of the students of regular secondary education institutions have the lowest socioeconomic rate of 20% (Bülbül 2017, p. 164).

In Brazil, entering higher education requires not only a secondary education certificate but also approval as a result of a selection process.

Selection processes used to be conducted in each institution, but scores at ENEM (National Secondary Education Examination) increasingly replaced them in both the public and private sectors. In 2017, 4.5 million students participated in selection. ENEM allowed enrollment into most of the best public institutions (universities in São Paulo finally included a percentage of students selected via ENEM) and allowed the students to be funded in private universities. Thus, ENEM is key to the analysis of the two sides of expanded access to higher education: the selectivity of elite public universities and the funding of courses at private institutions.

According to Neves (2015), the expansion of higher education in Brazil was limited by the terrible situation of secondary schools and by the negative consequences of the social game played at the transition from secondary to tertiary education: educated middle classes being able to afford good secondary schools for their children and so guaranteeing them access to free public universities. Children from less privileged parents receive a poor (or even very poor) secondary education and therefore cannot gain access to such elite universities.

Good universities tend to be selective in terms of access to their courses. In the case of Brazil, tuition-free public universities are those with the most challenging access requirements (20 candidates for 1 seat in federal universities in 2014).

One important factor behind institutional selectivity is the possibility of offering evening courses: Paul and Valle-Silva (1998) showed that with identical achievement, poor students choose to enter less prestigious careers for which there are evening classes. In 2015, after two waves of expansion, 51% of enrollment was via evening classes and 85.5% of evening class students enrolled in private institutions.

In Russia, during the early Soviet times, a democratization of access to higher education took place to provide the new country with a highly qualified labor force. In 1925–1926, the children of workers and peasants accounted for 50% of the total enrollment numbers in higher education. In the 1960s, an overproduction of higher education graduates, combined with a lack of workers and mid-level qualifications covering only one quarter of the country's economic needs, brought about more selective access to higher education, that was increasingly socially biased. Some

60% of higher education students in this period were the children of intelligentsia, who represented only 20% of the total population.

During the 1990s, the emergence of newly opened private universities and fee-charging programs in public universities enabled the expansion of access to higher education, although mostly to those classes of the population that could afford tuition fees (varying in terms of annual fees from US$200 for the most inexpensive, US$1500 for the more prestigious, and up to US$10,000 for the most prestigious). Since the middle of the 2000s, a worsening of the demographic situation, which resulted from a sharp slowdown in birth rate during the 1990s, put pressure on university enrollments and forced them to enroll students with more diverse academic levels and backgrounds in their study programs. This new expansion of access to higher education mostly benefited the more socially favored, while their low motivation for study and academic achievement had a negative effect on the quality of higher education in the country in general.

In parallel to greater access to fee-charging programs and HEIs, competition for those rare places that were still covered by the state budget (amounting to around 20% of total enrollments) became fiercer and facilitated corruption and bribery practices. In 2008, according to an opinion poll, 80% of Russians estimated that entry to higher education depended on money or parental relations, with only 17% believing that academic knowledge could guarantee university admission (Kastouéva-Jean 2013, p. 18). To eradicate the illicit behavior that gradually became widespread in the Russian higher education system, a unified national testing system ("EGE—edinyy gosudarstvennyy ekzamen") that aimed at tackling corrupt practices, enabling an equal assessment of competences at the end of the general education cycle, and permitted a unique system of university recruitment throughout the whole territory, was put in place in 2009. The new mechanism proved somewhat efficient, although it attracted much criticism from different classes of society in Russia, regarding its assessment methods—mostly in "test" form (with a predefined number of answers)—while the Russian academic tradition is mostly based on an "essay-writing" culture. Still today, this examination raises polemics and public debate. Evidence of "incoherent" marks (abnormally high in some cases) that arise in the media or are witnessed by university staff also

raises questions regarding its effectiveness as a tool against corruption and bribery in the national education system.

## Affirmative Policies

Both the World Bank and the OECD advocate that affirmative policies are needed to enhance equity in tertiary education. As stated in a World Bank report (World Bank 2002), "The limited base of research findings, however, does seem to indicate that many affirmative action interventions at the tertiary level come too late to assist the vast majority of disadvantaged students, who have already suffered institutionalized discrimination in access to primary and secondary education." An OECD (2008) report recognizes that there is a trend toward the use of affirmative action for selected under-represented groups.

In Turkey, one concern of the Muslim party, AKP, has been to promote easier access to universities for disadvantaged populations, from a regional or social point of view. Polat (2017) mentioned that a clear effort has been made to set up universities in less developed regions of Anatolia.

This expansion not only favored the less developed eastern provinces but markedly changed the gender composition of enrollment between 2000 and 2016, in favor of females whose representation climbed from 41 to 47%. Authorities also increased dormitory facilities, particularly important for female students from conservative family backgrounds. The end of the headscarf ban also facilitated easier access for female students to universities.

By the end of 2012, nearly 1.5 million students gained access to education credits, grants, or fee waivers. In 2013, university fees in public universities were abolished for all students.

The study conducted by Polat (2017) concluded that "comparing the periods before and after expansion, we find that college access has increased with college proximity and this expansion led to a re-distributive effect in favour of girls with low paternal education background."

In Brazil, with the same purpose as in Turkey, the federal government's REUNI program aimed to expand the public system of higher education. According to data from the Ministry of Education, there was a physical

expansion of the federal network, with the creation of 14 new universities and 100 new campuses. In this context, there was a significant expansion of enrollment in federal institutions. In 2007, when REUNI was introduced, these institutions accounted for 12.61% of enrollments in higher education. This rose to 16.71% in 2014. In addition, the creation of evening courses, especially in the area of education, probably increased the participation of less-affluent students and those that were in work.

Perhaps more importantly, many affirmative policies were developed at all government levels to include students from public secondary schools (social quotas) as well as black and indigenous students. When access to higher education is considered, there is undoubtedly a marked openness, allowing entry by students from sectors previously excluded from this level of schooling. For example, the number of "students enrolled in federal educational institutions has doubled from 2003 to 2011; and that of blacks quadrupled between 1997 and 2011" (Neves and Anhaia 2014).

Improvement in the social profile of students in Brazilian higher education is undeniable. Black or brown people and those from the poorest strata increased their participation in enrollment in proportions higher than those of white people and the rich. Women also increased their share in higher education—however, significant differences exist among fields of study deserving a more detailed analysis of this suggestion. Anyway, according to the Brazilian Census of Higher Education in 2015, non-white students represented 27.1% (total missing data 35.4%!), women represented 57.2% (no missing data), and students from public high school (a proxy for lower income because there is no information on the topic) 64.5% (missing data 6.2%).

Affirmative policies do not seem to be at the core of public policies in higher education in Russia. There is more concern about the quality and modernization of the higher education sector, which had gone through difficult times because of previous economic turmoil and currently faced more challenges linked to increasingly intense international competition and demographic crises, as explained previously. The government passed reforms enabling the concentration of financial resources on a selection of the "best" universities (i.e., a new status of national research universities and federal universities was created with more financial resources allocated to them). However, progressively, an awareness is growing among

education-steering authorities that education is a social elevator, improving life opportunities.

Inequality is not a recent phenomenon in the Russian educational system, but it has significantly intensified during recent years. In the beginning of the 2000s, 32% of people aged 17–21 from the poorest families were HEI students, compared with 86% from the richest households. According to Gerber, in Soviet Russia the goal of social equality has not been attained. "Although the Soviet regime raised the educational level of the Russian population over the course of the 20th century, it failed to reduce substantially educational stratification based on social origins and place of residence" (Gerber 2000). He argues that if parents have Communist Party affiliations, education, and occupation they have a strong effect on the probability that their children will complete secondary school and enter HEIs—a trait of both Soviet times and new Russia.

According to David L. Konstantinovskiy, one of Russia's best-known sociologists of education, the myth about equality of life chances, like some other myths, was an important part of Soviet ideology. However, children from privileged groups of the population traditionally received education and entered professions which were most advantageous to the development of their careers. Recent investigations indicate that new conditions in Russia are not eliminating the social differentiation of the young. A series of research projects carried out in different regions of Russia from 1962 to 1998 showed a considerable rise in the inequality that exists in the system of higher education. Such inequality begins during secondary education, if not earlier, and is aggravated during transition to post-secondary education and particularly to university. "Nowadays we observe the transition to a 'parentocratic' pattern in which a child's education increasingly depends on parents' well-being and not his/her abilities and efforts" (Konstantinovskiy 2012, p. 21).

According to Morgan and Kliucharev, the Soviet education system in general, and higher education in particular, maintained a balance between two poles—egalitarian and élite. The first sector was more or less accessible to millions of ordinary people (mostly secondary school graduates), although standards and quality were not very high. The second sector, definitely high quality, had limited access, apart from children of the ruling communist party nomenklatura and local élite families, especially

prominent in the non-Russian republics of the Soviet Union. However, the huge demands of a centrally planned economy, the vast amount of natural resources, and the comparative isolation from a competitive world economy induced complacency about the Soviet system of education —driven ideologically and meeting the political and economic demands of a command economy and society (Morgan and Kliucharev 2012, p. 3).

One may also note that during the 2010s, reforms and diversification of HEIs did not generate more equity in access to higher education. On the contrary, the introduction of fee-charging forms of education intensified social differentiation. The entrance exams to HEIs are easier for graduates from prestigious high schools or those having received specialized tutor training courses. Paying for these types of preparation was unaffordable for many parents. Corruption at the entry point to university was another serious problem that affected equal access to higher education (Froumin and Kouzminov 2015, p. 116). Corruption existed at the level of individual examiners as well as at the institutional level. Each HEI operated its own entrance exams, which usually required additional training. Applicants wishing to enter specific universities could hardly expect successful enrollment without completing very expensive preparatory courses. The corruption in university entrance exam processes was widespread. The introduction of a unified national testing system ("EGE—edinyy gosudarstvennyy ekzamen") partly contributed to combating this problem (Froumin and Kouzminov 2015).

## Institutional Autonomy and the Present Political Debate

From its very first report on higher education, the World Bank (1994) proclaimed the importance of university autonomy. The OECD shares the position (OECD 2003). Nevertheless, autonomy remains a weak concept in the three countries considered in this chapter. The political debates occurring inside institutions may also reveal the limitations of academic freedom.

## Institutional Autonomy

When governance is at stake, institutional autonomy does not receive the same consideration in all three countries. In Brazil, "the public institutions operate with the traditional Latin American concept of self-government and internal democracy"; in Turkey, the Council of Higher Education exercises a rigorous and fussy control in all respects, i.e., universities, public, and even to a lesser extent private, education; and Russia sits somewhere between these poles.

In Brazil, rectors are elected by the entire academic community (academics, support staff, students, according to a college system). If the federal or state government does not intervene in the internal decisions of universities, the autonomy of public universities remains limited insofar as they depend on central power in terms of financial resources and staffing contracts.

According to a previous president of the CoHE (Özcan 2011), in Turkey, the autonomy of HEIs, especially public ones, is very low—in some areas of their functioning it does not exist at all. The existing highly centralized Higher Education Law prevails for HEIs and limits their autonomy in terms of enjoying full academic and financial freedom regarding services and disclosure of their performance.

Decisions taken after the coup attempt of July 2016 strengthened the control of central power over universities. According to a decree in October 2016, the electoral system in public universities that comprised of sending the CoHE a list of the three candidates in university teacher elections, ended. From now on, the CoHE would directly propose three names to the president of the republic who appoints the rector. In private universities, the rector was appointed by the board of directors of the foundation. Now a rector is appointed by the president, based on the proposal of the CoHE.

Ideological control and centralization were characteristic traits of Soviet higher education. Strong state supervision operated in all areas: teaching (Marxism–Leninism was the unique and "right" way to think), research (including state appropriation of research results), and management of higher education. The number of graduates was defined by the Public Committee for Planning ("Gosplan").

During the transition period, Russian higher education experienced a progressive democratization and a withdrawal of ideological control over governance and educational content. More recently, a new reform had been put in place to diversify the autonomy of different HEIs. A recent federal law "On Autonomous Institutions" (No. 172, 2009; amendments came into force in 2011) introduced a distinction between three categories of HEIs: (1) "state financed," (2) "budget," and (3) "autonomous." The first group is 100% financed from the federal budget and has no right to undertake any commercial activities: all their profits to be put back into the state budget. These are institutions connected with defense, psychiatry, etc. The state as proprietor is responsible for their obligations. The second category of HEIs obtains money from the federal budget according to "state order" (i.e., for teaching a certain number of future specialists required for the economy). The remaining budget required is to be earned by the university independently, e.g., through "fee-paying" students. Most state organizations (including universities) now have this status, but in the future it seems likely that only medical institutions, schools, theaters, etc., will be able to maintain the status of "budget" institutions. Regarding institutions comprising the third group, a transfer to an autonomous status means more freedom, while remaining state property. For example, freedom to earn and invest, freedom to define the size of salaries and bonuses, to hire specialists on short-term contracts, and so on. However, at the same time, more responsibility and transparency is required. For autonomous universities, non-core activities may only be funded from profits (the state will not provide any subsidies). In turn, this means that these universities must practice outsourcing and improve university management. The Autonomous University Board comprises representatives of the Ministry of HE and other state bodies (not more than 30% members). A rector is appointed by the Ministry of HE (Block and Khvatova 2017, p. 764)

Despite differences across these three groups of HEIs, in general one may say that recent reforms have tended to increase the autonomy of HEIs, together with a demand for transparency and public accountability.

## The Present Political Debates Inside Universities

The issues within the three countries considered in this chapter are totally different. Whereas in Brazil, debates revolve around the question of the role of universities for democratizing society, in Russia, the main question at stake concerns the quality of higher education. In Turkey, nowadays, universities are confronted with issues that are far from the pure academic sphere: relating to societal problems associated with religion and, especially today, to political conflict.

In Brazil, social competition over higher education is driven by somewhat powerful stakeholders, who try to settle governmental regulations and market delimitations (Balbachevsky 2015). According to this study, such stakeholders are organized in coalitions, unified by their conception of higher education as a *public good* (egalitarian coalition) or as a *private good* (utilitarian coalition). The latter is not so powerful and brings together higher education providers, the relevant parts of business interests, regional authorities, and professional oligarchies. The egalitarian coalition is very powerful: composed of public sector unions, the student movement, most of the top bureaucrats of the Ministry of Education, central authorities at teaching-oriented public universities, political actors on the left of the spectrum, and members of the judiciary—this coalition tends to translate into administrative and academic practices and regulations in terms of the perspective of *public good*. This coalition also sustains that universities should be "an instrument for addressing social inequalities" (Balbachevsky 2015, p. 207). These values and perceptions have gained support in many areas, which might explain the under-valorization of the private sector of higher education. It might also explain the domination of a Humboldtian notion of university: according to Brazilian law, to qualify as a university, a HEI must work on teaching, research, and community outreach. Any teaching or vocational-oriented institution faces discreditation for not being able to fulfill the demands of this legal model. Interestingly enough, most public institutions follow the research university model (even if it is more a model than a reality) and most private ones effectively offer mass teaching–oriented and low-tuition courses. There are certainly many exceptions. Small and new public universities, created in the interior of the country, tend to be teaching-oriented. Community

institutions (in general, public–non state, but part of the private sector) count as some of the best quality research universities, such as the Catholic universities in Rio, Campinas, Porto Alegre, and Belo Horizonte.

The prevalence of the Humboldtian model probably explains the "academic bias" (Schwartzman 2011) that characterizes Brazilian higher education and constrains the building of a legitimate model of modern and democratic universities. The Brazilian system, characterized by the coexistence of private and public segments, with a prominence of federal institutions, concentrates the prerogative to "formulate policies, supervise, control, and evaluate the public and private systems." Even after many attempts to diversify higher education, the offer of courses and formations is only slightly differentiated and the models of funding (strongly public sources) compromise the expansion of enrollment and social inclusion (Neves 2015, p. 74).

In Russia, the problem of poor quality is one of the most actively discussed aspects of Russia's higher education (Knyazev and Drantusova 2015, p. 227). According to the Public Opinion Foundation, in 2012, only 12% of respondents thought that the quality of Russian higher education was good. Surveys of employers show that two thirds of them are not satisfied with the quality of university graduates (Knyazev and Drantusova 2015).

Some believe that the quality of higher education has decreased because of weak selectivity regarding entry. Over the last decade, the number of secondary school leavers has declined from 1,457,800 to 789,300, while the number of state-funded places at universities has remained almost unchanged: in 2000 it amounted to 586,800 places and in 2010 to 519,000 places (Institut statisticheskikh issledovanii i ekonomiki znanii GU-VShE 2012a, cited in Knyazev and Drantusova 2015, p. 222). Thus, higher education has become accessible to practically everyone regardless of academic competence.

Driven by the will to improve quality and the attractiveness of Russian higher education internationally, but disposing of limited resources to cover the whole sector, the Russian government has favored reforms distinguishing several types of HEIs with different amounts of state support

(national research universities[3] and federal universities[4]), while trying at the same time to reduce the number of HEIs and their regional branches. In 2014/2015, there were only 950 universities (compared with 1134 in 2009)—of which 548 were state and 402 private. The number of universities is envisaged to reduce to 877 by 2020—mainly the branches of state universities and low-quality private universities will be downsized (Kommersant 2015, cited in Block and Khvatova 2017, p. 766).

In Turkey, religion has often been at stake when higher education is considered. As already mentioned, the first HEIs in Turkey, the Ottoman madrasah, were ruled according to religious principles. The university system introduced by the Republic was a secular one, without any reference to religion. The issue came to the fore in the 1980s. In 1982, the Council of Higher Education introduced a dress code that required "modern" dress at universities. This dress code targeted mainly the use of the headscarf—commonly referred to as the headscarf ban. The implementation of this ban varied from one university to another. In the late 1990s, increasing political conflict between secular and conservative parties led to a number of restrictive regulations, including a reinforcement of the headscarf ban at universities (Polat 2017).

When the Muslim Party came to power, it progressively accentuated the weight of religion in the public sphere, including universities. The headscarf ban was abolished by a decree promulgated in 2007 and the constitution changed in that respect in 2013.

This religious issue interfered with the nomination of rectors, as already discussed. In the 1990s, some rectors or winners of the rector elections were dismissed because of their religious behavior (http://factcheckingturkey.com/domestic-politics/political-history-rector-appointments-turkey-325).

Presently, a fight by President Erdogan against any form of opposition inside society and particularly universities, can be witnessed.

[3]Twenty-nine national research universities (NRU) that combine various educational and large-scale research activities. The status of federal university is awarded forever, while the status of NRU is awarded for a period of 10 years and can be withdrawn at any time if performance indicators are not achieved.

[4]Nine federal universities representing every federal district of Russia.

As the online newspaper *Al Monitor* mentioned in its February 2017 edition, more than 4000 academics have been expelled from universities across the country. The government claimed that the purges targeted supporters of the US-based preacher Fethullah Gulen, accused of being the mastermind of the putsch.

However, things changed, and academics from various allegiances, all critical of the government, fell within the hit list. A decree on February 7 expelled more than 300 academics from their universities, including signatories of a peace declaration in January 2016, that condemned the military crackdown in Kurdish-majority cities and towns.

From December 2017, hundreds of academics who had signed the peace declaration were summoned to appear before judges. Many academics resigned rather than being fired, losing their right to pensions—others decided to emigrate.

To what extent will these expulsions affect academic life and the academic performance of universities? This question is difficult to answer. Some universities are more affected than others. Probably the worst affected was Ankara University, which has so far lost about 100 academics as a consequence of signing the peace declaration.

## Conclusions

Three emerging countries in three different continents show higher education systems with many common dimensions and issues but also reveal differences that stem from both their own history and current specific political issues.

The most obvious common characteristic is the strong growth of their higher education systems since 2000. Although this dimension is found in most countries today, it is still particularly strong for Brazil and even more so for Turkey, where enrollment in higher education appears almost universal. Although the rate of enrollments has also increased in Russia, investment in tertiary education is much lower than in the other two countries, a likely result of its demographic and economic difficulties.

As recommended by international organizations, the three countries have used private education to cope with the evolution of the workforce,

with an opening up of for-profit education in Brazil. In Turkey, due to a strong and centralized administration, the weight and autonomy of private HEIs is weaker. In that country, public distance education has represented an important means to manage the growth of enrollment, as is the case in Brazil, but to a lesser extent.

Access to universities is managed in the same way in all three countries, with competitive exams: national exams in Turkey and Russia; local and national exams in Brazil. If Brazil and Turkey seem to be concerned about establishing affirmative policies, this is not the case in Russia, whether considering new Russia or during the time of Soviet Russia.

One of the most striking differences, despite all being emerging countries, is that national history and the history of their HE systems is different. Universities have an old tradition in Russia, molded by Western influences, whereas they are a rather new idea in Brazil (because of the pressure of the Portuguese colonial system) and in Turkey (because of the influence of Islam under the Ottoman regime).

Of the three countries, Turkey appears to be the most centralized in terms of the management of higher education, with direct steering organized from the presidency of the republic. We are witnessing the transition from a secular Kemalist state to a conservative Muslim state, where the central power remains extremely strong. The recent developments in Turkey tend to show that the Turkish authorities consider universities more from an ideological point of view, forgetting that they are intellectual training and research institutions, since some universities are currently unable to function normally.

In Russia, the freedom given to HEIs resulted in quality problems. Presently, the federal government has taken back control in an attempt to strengthen universities by enabling them to compete internationally, and by closing the weakest.

In Brazil, the fragility of political power at the federal and state levels, due to economic crises and corruption scandals, seems to have led to only minor importance being assigned to higher education policy, giving more freedom to HEIs.

What seems to link these three countries and explain the problematic evolution of their systems of higher education is the relative youth of

their political system, which remains exposed to conflicting, political, economic, and even religious pressures.

**Acknowledgements** The authors thank Thierry Chevaillier, IREDU, for his help in the revision of the text.

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