The Politics of Higher Education in the BRICS Countries: A Critical Investigation of the Developments, Policies and Perspectives

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Abstract
Education for leadership is provided via higher education. Future leaders are greatly influenced by the virtues and ideals practiced at colleges. Numerous universities exhibit distinction not just in academic areas but also in community participation, green campuses, a variety of ethical curricula, and the orientation of the board, teaching staff, and students toward values. However, basic principles and virtues are also transgressed at many colleges and institutions worldwide. The main topics of this paper are the advancements, regulations, and outlooks about higher education in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) nations. Because of their stark differences, the BRICS' political significance is far from certain. Still, there are some traits that they all have in common that make them worthy of attention. In addition to their increasing economic power, they all wield great influence in their local communities and are modernizing their societies, with the state actively supporting socioeconomic development and the institutions that support it, such as education. This paper looks at four main issues related to higher education in the BRICS countries: supply and demand, stakeholders, governmental policy, and research and innovation in light of globalization and international trends. It does not focus as much on the institutional aspects of the universities as it does on the broader context (e.g., operational and regulatory). It examines how the extraordinary global expansion in higher education, especially in the last ten years, has affected the BRICS, how the higher education sector has changed to deal with the exponential growth in student enrollment and institutions, and the key players influencing the initial and subsequent structures of higher education systems. This paper examines the policies being adopted by the governments of the BRICS countries in response to the dynamic relationship between increasing demand and various stakeholders. More precisely, it illustrates how governments have addressed concerns related to social relevance, finance, quality certification, and accessibility, among other things. This paper looks more closely at how higher education establishments are adjusting to the effects of globalization and internationalization, with a focus on how they affect the nation's capacity to engage in the rapidly evolving fields of innovation, science, and technology that are currently reshaping local and national economies all over the world.

Keywords: BRICS, Education, Higher Education, Development, Policy, Stakeholder

Introduction

Every human settlement revolves around education. It is essential for young people's character development. Education makes it possible for people to realize their place in society and gives them the power to access additional opportunities, resources, and authority. Any country's value chain grows as its citizens obtain education. This explains why practically every nation in the world still views education reform as a top concern. It is urgent to modify the world's educational institutions to intentionally change and evolve to assist the crucial shifts and transitions taking place all around the world during such transformative times. It is the responsibility of the educational system to provide workable answers to the problems that humanity is now facing (Brown, 2023).

The previous several decades have seen an unparalleled expansion in higher education, which has resulted in an increase in enrollment and productivity at most universities and colleges. Simultaneously, there has been a significant increase in the socio-economic and political calls for higher education. The funding and facilities of higher education institutions have not increased proportionately to reflect these improvements (Shattock, 2022). As a result, there is now an imbalance between the sector's institutional capacity and aspirations for higher education. The conventional agreement between higher education and society has grown challenging, which is one of the underlying developments. The rather unique and protected status that universities have held in our communities for a very long period is no longer accepted by society. Public investments in higher education are no longer primarily justified by the knowledge-based social and cultural goals of higher education institutions. These days, it is required of universities and colleges to perform effectively, to add to national and even international trade balances, and to support sustainable economic growth at different levels. Furthermore, they must demonstrate that they continue to provide high-quality instruction, research, and services while adjusting to the increasingly demanding demands of their surroundings and a declining per-capita financing basis. All of this is consistent with the so-called phase of transition that is currently occurring in our societies as they go from being manufacturing-based to becoming knowledge- or information-driven. Although it's maintained that universities are essential to the developing knowledge society, it's unclear exactly what these institutions are for, how they fit into it, and what changes they must make. Many scenarios and projections have been created, but there is sometimes a dearth of knowledge that prevents more accurate and legitimate assessments of the changing processes that define higher education today.

This is where research on higher education becomes relevant. Over the past 30 years, this relatively new subject has grown quickly, producing an expanding body of information on higher education. But there are still a lot of fundamental problems with higher education that have to do with knowing what strategies, laws, and other tools are effective and ineffective. One instance of such an issue is how higher education affects economic development. The topic of the best institutional governance frameworks for colleges and universities serves as another illustration. The major reasons these sorts of concerns have not been well addressed up to this point are the relative lack of research funding for these kinds of questions and the restricted research capability resulting, among other things, from the somewhat fragmented organizational foundation of the field. Many

attempts have been made in the field to make better use of the capacity and resources that are available.

The trends, policies, and outlooks about higher education in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries are the primary focus of this paper. To draw attention to the rising significance of Brazil, Russia, India, and China in the global economy, Jim O'Neill of the Goldman Sachs Economic Research Group invented the acronym "BRIC" in 2001 and said that these countries should be included in the primary fora for global economic policy-making. They were predicted to increase at extremely high rates in the next years, and at the time, they already accounted for 23.3% of the global GDP at purchasing power parity (O'Neill 2021). These nations began to meet in 2008 to form a political organization. South Africa joined in 2010, making it the fifth member of the formal BRICS group. At that point, it was evident that the selection process had been largely arbitrary and that other developing nations—such as those that Goldman Sachs had dubbed the "next eleven"—such as Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Turkey, South Korea, and Vietnam—may have been included.

Because of their stark differences, the BRICS' political significance is far from certain. Still, there are some traits that they all have in common that make them worthy of attention. In addition to their increasing economic power, they all wield great influence in their local communities and are modernizing their societies, with the state actively supporting socioeconomic development and the institutions that support it, such as education. Except China, all of them uphold the political democratic procedures, however imperfectly, and they are all making progress in eradicating social discrimination, promoting the rule of law, and advancing human rights. In addition to providing access to the resources of contemporary science and technology and human capital, education—and especially higher education—plays a significant role in this transformation by facilitating social mobility and promoting the ideals of scholarship, intellectual freedom, and personal autonomy.

Table 1.1 The BRICS Countries: GDP and GDP Per Capita Stated in Purchasing Power Parity Terms (US$)

	Population	GDP	GDP Per Capita
Brazil	198,656,019	2,252,664,120,777	11,339.52
Russian Federation	143,533,000	2,014,774,938,342	14,037.02
India	1,236,686,732	1,841,709,755,679	1,489.23
China	1,350,695,000	8,227,102,629,831	6,091.01
South Africa	51,189,307	384,312,674,446	7,507.67

Source: World Bank Indicators, 2021

In the literature, higher education is typically discussed from two basic angles. The first, which is widely accepted by economists and international organizations, addresses how higher education may help society meet its demands for "human capital" (OECD, 2018; World Bank, 2020b, 2021; Carnoy et al., 2019). When economists view education as a productive element that needs special

measures to increase and enhance its relevance and quality, they are undoubtedly correct. However, education—and in our case, higher education—also occurs in odd establishments, such as universities and other organizations, which have a lasting impact on the lives of those who use their services or work there. In addition to governmental policies, these institutions are shaped by intricate processes of social transformation and institutionalization that both exceed and define the bounds of what the government and policymakers can do (Maassen & Olsen, 2023).

As defined by UNESCO and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as ISCED-5 Programmes (OECD, 1999), higher education now encompasses a wide range of institutions offering various certifications, ranging from vocational to doctorate degrees. These institutions can be found in traditional universities, institutes, academies, professional schools, and distance education organizations. However, universities continue to be the center of higher learning and the most useful conceptual model for comprehending the dynamics of this sector. Founded on the traditional ideals of autonomy, success, and camaraderie, universities are knowledge-intensive establishments. To function effectively, they require the presence of professional communities that possess a shared sense of identity, fiercely defend their intellectual and professional independence from authorities, religious institutions, employers, and the general public, and validate their unique position in society through their accomplishments in research and teaching (Clark, 1987; Teichler, 2016; Kehm & Teichler, 2023). As Burton Clark has argued in his texts on the entrepreneurial university, these values have existed since the establishment of the first universities in Europe in the late Middle Ages (Ridder-Symoens, 2022). They are also present in the most successful higher education institutions of today (Clark, 2021). Despite the stark contrasts in breadth, size, and structure, this is what ties them to their beginnings hundreds of centuries ago. Universities are also dependent on the society in which they operate, with their shifting values, expectations, and limitations, for both financial support and other advantages. Higher education institutions have had to reevaluate their "social pact" with society and make significant changes to their traditional organizational structures, internal and external relations of authority, power, and responsibility, all while maintaining their core values and practices (Gornitzka et al., 2017; Maassen & Olsen, 2023; Maassen, 2018; Pin & Sten, 2022).

Since World War II, there has been a significant global increase in access to higher education. Globally, there were over 500,000 students seeking higher education in 1900; by 2000, that number had increased to almost 100 million (Schofer & Meyer, 2020). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates that this number rose to 190 million in 2015. Globally, the proportion of these pupils rose from less than 20 to 40 per 10,000 people between 1940 and 1960. It more than quadrupled to 85 per ten thousand between 1960 and 1980, and it doubled again in 2000, topping 160 per ten thousand. The increasing need for top-notch human capital in contemporary economies is frequently used to explain this increase, although this functionalist explanation falls short. Growth occurred in both developed and developing economies, with the majority of this growth occurring in nontechnical fields like the humanities and social sciences. As a result, graduates of higher education are finding it difficult to find employment in many countries, forcing them to migrate abroad or take jobs that require lower qualifications. However, the private returns on higher education are often larger in developing nations than in developed economies as compared to those

who just completed secondary education, providing very tangible incentives to pursue further education.

After a thorough examination of worldwide data, Schofer & Meyer (2020) provided a comprehensive explanation based on the interplay of several elements. According to them, a new social paradigm was established following World War II and was "reflected in trends toward increasing democratization, human rights, conscientization, and development planning." The hyper-expansion of higher education was made possible by these institutional, societal, and global changes (p. 900).

The traditional acceptance by the populace that societies were naturally stratified in terms of wealth and opportunities, that each person had a predefined place in the social hierarchy, and that knowledge and wisdom were the exclusive domain of a select few was undermined by the expansion of democracy and human rights, which were linked to the expansion of mass communications. These days, everyone may aim for anything, and education is seen as a means of achieving social mobility and justice. Modern civilizations do not demand everyone to become a scientist, despite "scientistization," the rising conviction in the value of scientific and technological knowledge for improved public policy and income creation. The concept of "development planning," which holds that societies should plan their economies and, in turn, the development of their human resources, was first implemented in the Soviet Union and subsequently in other Communist states. It was also partially imitated in a few other nations, including France and Brazil, but it never really gained traction outside of centrally planned economies.

These ideas contributed to the common belief that nations ought to support higher education institutions and enable them to grow, but they did not result in considerable demands on the higher education sector to produce more scientists and planners. Perhaps more importantly, however, was the role played by international organizations like the World Bank and UNESCO, private organizations like the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations, and numerous international agencies established in the developed world following World War II (like the French Development Agency and CIDA in Canada, ORSTOM and the Canadian Development Agency in France, GTZ in Germany, USAID in the United States, DFID in the United Kingdom, SIDA in Sweden, and others) to assist the postcolonial nations and spread the gospel of education. While basic literacy and secondary education were prioritized by many of these agencies above higher education, the sheer growth of general education raised demand and ambitions for higher education. Perhaps more significant than anything else was the remarkable economic prosperity of the USA and Western Europe in the immediate aftermath of World War II, which was linked to the welfare state's expansion and generated a global optimism wave. Developing nations could undoubtedly achieve the same goal shortly if rich nations could do it today. In Tony Judt's words:

The state thus lubricated the wheels of commerce, politics and society in numerous ways. And it was responsible, directly or indirectly, for the employment and remuneration of millions of men and women who thus, had a vested interest in it, whether as professionals or bureaucrats. Graduates from Britain's leading universities, like their contemporaries in French grandes écoles, typically sought employment not in private-sector professions, much less industry and commerce, but in education, medicine, the social services, public law, state monopolies or government service. By

the end of the 1970s, 60 % of all university graduates in Belgium took up employment in the public services or publicly subsidized social sector. The European state had forged a unique market for the goods and services it could provide. It formed a virtuous circle of employment and influence that attracted near universal appreciation (Judt, 2016, p. 362).

Together, these factors—optimism and elevated expectations, new educational approaches and the scientific gospel, as well as the power of international organizations—explain how the spread of higher education became a global phenomenon. This phenomenon also took place in the BRICS, albeit at different rates and with varying consequences. The increase meant that, in addition to the fact that more and more individuals were pursuing higher education, it also meant that they were choosing university degrees over less prestigious and fulfilling vocational and technical programs. As a result, there was a tendency toward "academic drift," in which various establishments made an effort to obtain university status for both themselves and their pupils (Neave, 1979; Van Vught, 2018). In addition to their formal degrees, they also aimed for the market and the professional advantages that came with them. They saw access to higher education as a right or entitlement that should be given by governments, preferably at no cost. To address historical cleavages that are frequently linked to unequal access to educational opportunities and achievements, the drive for access to higher education in societies marked by cultural, ethnic, and linguistic cleavages took the form of demands for cultural and ethnic compensation or special support. The growth of the "grey" or "black" markets for university admission, degrees, and certificates was another effect, leading to the proliferation of academic corruption (Heyneman, 2019).

Because education is largely a "positional" good—that is, the advantages of one depending on one's relative standing in the educational hierarchy relative to others—none of the governments were able to meet all of these aspirations. Additionally, the costs of education are increasing and never stop (Brown, 2023; Hollis, 1982). Although privileges granted to holders of education credentials play a significant role in the social standing, benefits, and employment opportunities that come with higher levels of education (Collins, 1979), in the long run, these factors also depend on the productivity of the holder and society's willingness to pay for them. As the demand for higher education increased, governments had to pay more attention to how much it was costing and to the benefits it brought to the society.

The answers differed according to the political system, history, and culture of each nation, but they were all faced with the same issues: insufficient resources and the need to ensure that public and private funds were not being squandered in an extravagant Ponzi scheme. In addition, they had to deal with the political clout and sway of educators, learners, and government workers—many of whom were affiliated with unions and other groups and had close relations with local authorities, political parties, and social movements. Governments in every nation alternated between giving universities more freedom and more control; forcing them to find resources on the market or giving them more public resources; giving them equal status or picking some for higher missions and more public resources; and requiring them to establish stronger ties with the productive system or letting them set their own objectives and research and teaching focus. The five main policy challenges can be summed up as follows: how to address the growth, equity of access, and diversification of enrollments, participation rates, number, and types of institutions; how to address

budgetary constraints, especially in times of economic downturn or stagnation; how to control the expanding market for private higher education; how to hold higher education institutions more accountable to their staff, students, and the public at large; and how to preserve and enhance the standard and social relevance of teaching and research in higher education institutions (Johnstone et al., 2008, p. 2).

As previously said, the trends, policies, and perspectives of higher education in the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries are the main focus of this paper. The political significance of the BRICS alliance is far from certain, and the groupings are significantly different from one another. But they all have some things in common that make them worthy of attention. In addition to their increasing economic power, these nations also hold great regional influence and are undergoing significant social change as a result of modernizing their societies. The State is a major player in promoting socioeconomic development and the institutions that support it, such as education. This paper looks at the higher education systems in the BRICS nations, focusing more on the operational and regulatory aspects of the larger context than on the institutional aspects of the universities. The four main issues examined in this paper are supply and demand, stakeholders, governmental policy, and research and innovation in the context of globalization and international trends. The impact of the remarkable global expansion in higher education, especially in the last ten years, on the BRICS is examined, along with how the higher education sector has changed to accommodate the exponential rise in student enrollment and institution size and the key players who shaped the initial design and subsequent evolution of higher education systems. This paper examines the policies being adopted by the governments of the BRICS countries in response to the dynamic relationship between increasing demand and various stakeholders. More precisely, it illustrates how governments have addressed concerns related to social relevance, finance, quality certification, and accessibility, among other things. This paper looks more closely at how higher education establishments are adjusting to the effects of globalization and internationalization, with a focus on how they affect the nation's capacity to engage in the rapidly evolving fields of innovation, science, and technology that are currently reshaping local and national economies all over the world.

Higher Education in Brazil

Brazil, which has 200 million people living in it, is a big nation with significant levels of socioeconomic inequality, but it lacks the diversity of languages and ethnicities that characterizes South Africa, China, India, and Russia. From 1500 to 1822, Brazil was a Portuguese colony. The Portuguese discovered a vast native population scattered across a vast tropical region, speaking various languages. They had not yet developed the sophisticated agricultural economy, governmental structures, and dense population that characterized the Maya, Aztec, Inca, and other pre-Columbian cultures in Mexico, Central America, and the Andes. While the Portuguese in Brazil either wiped out, assimilated or forced the native population to retreat to isolated areas and remain in isolation, the conquistadors in Spanish America forced the locals to labor on their plantations and mines. The only exception was a small group that came under the auspices of Jesuit priest-organized "missions" in the South of Brazil and in what is now Paraguay, where the majority of the population speaks Guarani, one of Brazil's pre-Colombian languages (Livi-Bacci & Maeder,

2019). The Portuguese sent millions of African slaves to labor in their gold mines in the highlands and sugar plantations in the Northeast, making Brazil the main destination of the American slave trade (Klein, 2009). In Brazil, Portuguese men typically arrived alone and intermarried with native women, creating a sizable free mixed-blood population that frequently outnumbered both the European settlers and their slaves. In the Northern countries, European settlers arrived with their families and kept the slave population segregated (Klein 1969). After the slave trade ceased in 1850 and slavery was deemed no longer economically viable, it was officially abolished in 1899. By that time, waves of immigrants had begun to arrive in Brazil from Italy, Germany, and eventually Japan, among other nations. They came mostly to work on the coffee plantations in the Southwest and South of the country, eventually relocating to the cities.

Brazil's history explains why the country became very unequal, yet without obvious divisions between racial, ethnic, or linguistic groups. Portuguese overtook English as the primary language at the end of the 19th century. The majority of European and Japanese immigrants who arrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries also assimilated and did not pass on their native languages to their offspring. The native languages had either vanished or were restricted to small, isolated indigenous groups. African slaves did not retain their languages, except for some religious and other expressions that were incorporated into Brazilian Portuguese. The Brazilian Census Office asks respondents how they identify their "color"—white, black, brown, or yellow, with the last grouping into native Brazilians and Orientals—to obtain an idea of the ethnic makeup of the country's population. 46.3 percent of respondents to the 2013 national household survey identified as white, 45.0 percent as brown (or "pardo"), 8.0 percent as black, 0.3% as native Brazilians, and 0.5% as Orientals. Compared to people who identify as black, brown, or native Brazilians, white or Oriental people are typically wealthier and more educated. These differences are largely due to social origins and place of residence rather than biological ancestry (Parra et al., 2020).

Brazil remained largely illiterate under the Portuguese, except for a small number of priests, businesspeople, and officials. 57% of those who had been alive for five years or longer were illiterate by 1950. The earliest universities in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro date from the 1930s; the first higher education establishments were a few law, medical, and engineering schools founded in the 19th century following independence. In several state capitals, basic public education began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries; nonetheless, primary school coverage became universal only in the 1990s.

Some states and private organizations took the lead in establishing public colleges while the federal government proceeded slowly in that direction. The majority of the wealth created by the coffee plantations and early industries was concentrated in the state of São Paulo, which established its schools of engineering, medicine, agriculture, and other subjects in the late 19th century. In 1936, the nation's first university was established, bringing professors from Europe to teach and conduct research in the social and natural sciences. The Catholic Church, which was already active in elementary and secondary education, founded its first university in the 1940s. Additionally, local communities in several states organized to start their own legal, medical, and engineering institutions. According to Claris Baet Nev (2023), there have been two rounds of enrollment

growth in Brazil. The first notable expansionary phase took place between the middle of the 1960s and the start of the 1980s. In 1960, there were just 93,000 enrolled pupils, with 55.7 percent attending public schools. Enrollment increased to 425,478 pupils in 1970. Four9% of this total were employed by the government. There were 1,072,548 kids enrolled as of 1975, with around 62% attending private schools. Seventy-five percent of Brazil's 7.3 million higher education students were enrolled in private institutions as of 2020 (Shattock, 2022; Nilsson, 2023).

In the 1940s, the national government launched an ambitious project to build a National University in Rio de Janeiro, the Federal Capital, which would serve as a model for other states to follow (Schwart et al., 2015). This was the first attempt by the national government to create a policy for higher education. The federal government took control of several small universities established by state and local governments in earlier years (apart from São Paulo) after World War II, amid a new wave of economic growth and urbanization. This led to the creation of a network of Federal Universities, which, along with the growing private sector, was responsible for the first wave of expansion. The National University of Rio de Janeiro, which eventually merged to become only one of several Federal Universities, first established the organizational model that these universities were required to adhere to. This model comprised a Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences, and Letters that was intended to prepare teachers for secondary education and conduct research, as well as a collection of professional schools in the traditional fields of law, engineering, medicine, architecture, dentistry, and other fields (which, in practice, existed only at the University of São Paulo, in some medical schools in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, and in some federal research institutions). At the secondary level, at "normal schools" that were eventually elevated to schools of education, teacher preparation for basic education was conducted. There were no graduate programs or undergraduate universities in the traditional American or British sense. Most university professors were working professionals who taught a few hours a week and made the most of their money from other jobs. However, they were hired as civil workers by the government and progressively organized to seek equal pay and other advantages of their jobs.

The second reform was implemented in 1964, a year marked by significant changes. At that time, Brazil was ruled by the military, and Brasilia served as the country's new capital. Because university students had previously been involved in left-leaning organizations, the government of Brazil felt that the institutions needed to be reformed. The government chose to convert the Brazilian universities to the American model with the assistance of US advisors (Atcon, 1966). This included establishing graduate schools, allowing students to work toward credit rather than following set course sequences, and requiring professors to combine research and teaching in addition to their doctorates.

The reform made a grave mistake by modeling itself after the American research university rather than the community colleges or a hybrid of the two. Under the new arrangement, students were still required to enroll in 4- to 6-year professional school courses before becoming eligible to pursue graduate study, if such programs were offered. The creation of graduate programs in a hurry resulted in the proliferation of people with low-quality degrees and the hiring of "provisional" professors who could not be fired from their positions. The reformers failed to take into account the fact that Brazil lacked enough qualified professors to teach full-time and conduct research. The

Brazilian state universities are by far the most expensive in Latin America due to the government servant status that is accorded to all academic personnel. The biggest mistake, though, was failing to see that Brazil's demand for higher education was about to soar and could not be met by the small, pricy public universities that were now in place. The answer was to restrict admission to public universities by imposing extremely difficult entry requirements and to provide the private sector unrestricted growth.

The 1964 reform resulted in severely stratified higher education in Brazil, while on paper it was unified under the single paradigm of the American research university. A few institutions approached the goal more closely, keeping their professional schools at a high standard and, especially from the late 1970s, developing excellent graduate programs in the social and scientific sciences. Included in this group were a few federal institutions as well as the better-funded state universities in São Paulo, which followed the same concept but remained autonomous. It also had at least one private university, the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro, whose graduate and research programs were temporarily supported by the federal government. The majority of federal and state universities that were primarily used as teaching facilities and were never able to expand graduate education were placed in the second tier. The majority of the private institutions that made up the third category paid their instructors per hour. It offered inexpensive evening courses in one or two social professions (usually law, administration, or education). The government may designate large organizations as "universities," but smaller ones would continue to be referred to as "faculties" or "schools." According to Brazilian law, all of the degrees offered by these schools are equally legal regardless of who owns them or their formal status. Better secondary school graduates, often from wealthier backgrounds, had access to the most prominent positions at the top public universities, which were and still are tuition-free. These students were able to attend elite private schools and pay for coaching and training. Poorer students could only enroll in evening programs offered by private companies or, at most, the least competitive courses offered by public institutions in subjects like social work and education. These students were primarily from low-performing public schools and frequently had to work during the day.

Maria Helen Cast (2023) demonstrates how this mismatch between the law and reality led to an unsolvable issue with regulation and quality control. The Ministry of Education has attempted to force the private sector to adhere to the formal criteria of the research university model since the 1990s. These requirements included the need for full-time faculty members with graduate degrees and for them to do research, which proved to be unachievable for the majority of them. The Ministry also devised a clever evaluation procedure for graduating students in many disciplines (Schwartzman, 2020). The Ministry ranked course programs and institutions based on these results and other indications, threatening to terminate those that consistently failed. The Ministry had no control over its universities, which were legally established, autonomous, and staffed by well-organized teaching unions. While some private universities were punished with suspension or even closure, public universities were subject to the same assessments.

Like in most other nations, Brazilian law assumed that all private universities were charitable or nonprofit. While this may have been the case for some community-based and Catholic universities, it was not the case for the majority of universities founded after the 1980s (Levy, 2006). The

government acknowledged this reality and let universities to register as for-profit organizations, so triggering taxes, while requiring those that stayed nonprofit to exhibit their altruistic qualities. Due to this legislation, the private sector began to grow into enormous conglomerates through acquisitions of smaller companies or the establishment of new ones. A few of these conglomerates attracted significant domestic and foreign investors, went public with shares on the stock exchange, and used cutting-edge management and instructional technology to save expenses and standardize their output. Currently, twenty percent of Brazilian students enrolled in higher education are the product of five of these firms. They have the clout to negotiate additional flexibility into the Ministry of Education's policies and to influence Congress. If necessary, they can even take the Ministry to court.

The Ministry of Education's and the private sector's initiatives to bring federal universities closer to public institutions and enforce greater accountability on them both failed in the 1990s. Following 2002, under Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva's populist administration, the government decided to increase funding, develop public institutions, and establish a scheme that exempted the private sector from taxes in return for providing low-income students with fellowships. In another move to address socioeconomic disparities in access to higher education, quotas for low-income and non-White students at public colleges were established. The Brazilian Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial quotas in 2012. The same year, Congress approved laws mandating that 33% of public university vacancies be designated for students from public schools, with a preference for non-White applicants. Additionally, the number of admissions to Federal Universities climbed by 33% between 2008 and 2021; nevertheless, this did not lessen the influence of the private sector, which expanded by 43% during the same period—a far smaller rise than (Kehm & Teichler, 2023, p. 112).

The effects of these new policies are still up for debate. The Federal Universities have complained that they were compelled to grow without adequate planning or resources and are unable to handle the influx of new students and faculty members who were hired under conditions that did not meet previous standards.

Affirmative action proponents assert that these students' academic performance is on par with or superior to that of students admitted through traditional means. Opponents counter that the best way to increase access to higher education for students from low-income families who could not afford a good secondary education is to give them financial support so they can attend classes full-time and expand the options for professional and vocational education, which are scarce in Brazil and virtually nonexistent in federal universities. Critics also claim that courses are being forced to lower their academic standards and that the official use of race in public policy violates the constitutional principles against discrimination.

Another critique is that the government has disregarded academic quality concerns and is not investing as much in its best institutions as other nations do, in an attempt to achieve international academic excellence, despite the public issue of access receiving so much attention. Indeed, the University of São Paulo and the University of Campinas, both state universities that enjoy generous support from the state government and are unaffected by federal policies, are the only two Brazilian universities listed in the international rankings, albeit not in a very high ranking. In recent years,

Brazilian graduate education and research programs have demonstrated remarkable achievements, producing over 12,000 PhDs annually and increasing Brazil's share of international scientific publications. These programs, even when housed within universities, have their own systems of assessment and support. Though there are several drawbacks to this industry, such as low levels of citations, inadequate connections between research and the productive system, and a relatively small number of patents produced, Brazilian graduate education and research remains by far the most advanced in Latin America.

Thanks to a constant stream of scholarships from the Brazilian government as well as from international foundations and foreign governments, the majority of top scientists in Brazilian universities obtained their degrees from universities in the USA and Europe. Unlike the other BRICS, Brazil does not experience a major brain drain; few undergraduate students choose to study overseas, and the majority of those who do so with scholarships eventually come back. Nonetheless, there is a significant gap between the worldwide flow of students, institutions, and information and Brazilian higher education as a whole. Except for a few elite business and economics institutions, all instruction is conducted in Portuguese, there are very few international students, it is challenging for a non-Brazilian to secure a permanent teaching position in the nation, and Brazilian colleges do not actively seek out new hires abroad. There was a lot of enthusiasm when the government recently unveiled its grandiose "science without borders" initiative, which was intended to send 100,000 Brazilians to study overseas for four years. Upon closer inspection, nevertheless, it becomes clear that this program was primarily intended for students on short visits; many of them were sent to Portugal or Spain due to their lack of proficiency in either French or English (Cast et al., 2019).

Higher Education in the Russian Federation

While higher education began to spread in Brazil, China, India, and South Africa in the late 20th century, Russia inherited an extremely complex higher education system from the Soviet Union that underwent significant transformation and began to resemble that of the other countries after 1990.

According to the functionalist view of higher education as a component of production, the Soviet Union was maybe the most radical attempt yet to regulate higher education through personnel planning. The majority of universities had ties to certain businesses; the government decided what needed to be produced, by whom, and how much labor was needed to get the job done. Technical staff was given precedence, but the soft sciences were as important. Every significant progress in the national economy, as well as in social and political life, was accompanied by a matching development in the higher education sector, according to Isak Frou and Yaroslav Kouz (2023). For instance, the government established "communist party schools" to train state and party apparatus following World War II. In addition, the Academy of Social Sciences was founded to educate social scientists and ideologists. These establishments were recognized as universities. To train professionals in diplomacy and international trade, specific institutions were established. Two prestigious universities, the Moscow Physics and Technology Institute, and the Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute, as well as numerous engineering departments and universities

with a focus on nuclear physics and space research, were established as a result of Soviet nuclear production and space development initiatives.

This implied that, in theory, students did not need to hunt for employment because, with little option, they were placed in the area and industry in which they had graduated. This organizational structure was linked to a distinct hierarchy of higher education: national sectoral universities, associated with particular economic sectors (such as mining and transportation), frequently reporting to sector ministries; regional sectoral universities, affiliated with their respective national institutions; and more conventional universities meant to educate local political elites and educators. Comparatively speaking, the Soviet Union's higher education system had 4900 students per 100,000 people in 1990, which was similar to the developed West's 4000 students, 3400 in Finland, 3500 in the UK, and 5000 in the USA (Palfreyman & Tapper, 2019). The 1980s saw a strain on this intricate organization due to the breakdown of centralized planning. According to Mark John (2023), the Russian government was forced to "reinvent" higher education following the fall of the Soviet Union and the advent of the market economy. This resulted in erratic behavior that alternated between attempts to give universities complete autonomy and expose them to market competition and attempts to regain full centralized control of the higher education sector. The loss of centralized planning resulted in two significant changes: first, there was a sharp decline in the funding for postsecondary education; and second, the conventional manpower planning method was no longer able to establish priorities that would direct the distribution of available resources.

The Russian government let higher education grow in the first ten years following *Perestroika* with little to no attempt to steer it in a particular direction, little to no interference, and diminishing support. However, under President Putin, higher education became more important after 2000, accounting for 23.1% of the nation's education spending, up from 16.1% in 2000. At the same time, the percentage of GNP per capita spent on education increased from 10.9 to 14.2% (John, 2023). This new focus was linked to other initiatives to expand the central government's influence over the higher education sector and implement procedures for quality certification. A uniform admission test for postsecondary education in particular disciplines, competitive funding for research and creative institutions, and a clear separation between federal and municipal universities were among the new initiatives. Furthermore, institutions were convinced to collaborate with both public and private enterprises, implement business-like administrative techniques, and explore alternative revenue streams outside government grants. A three-tiered structure of higher education institutions has been the focus of government efforts in recent years. Ten or fifteen very competitive federal colleges that were among the best in the world were at the top. Second, the majority of funding for 150–200 regional universities came from local governments; third-tier schools, on the other hand, were left on their own and would soon vanish. To strengthen relations between Russia and Europe, the government joined the Bologna Process of higher education reform, and there was also a push to connect elite institutions with the Academy of Science-based research infrastructure (Trow & Burrage, 2023).

Though the majority of students were steered into engineering, production, and construction courses during the Soviet era, today almost half of them are studying the humanities, social

sciences, business, and law. The demand for higher education is not likely to decline because, on average, a university degree still translates into a significant salary increase (one estimate puts the percentage at 55% for women and 98% for men) as well as protection against unemployment (Gerber & Schaefer, 2021). There are notable variations, though, contingent upon the specialization, gender, and reputation of the schools; males who can gain admission to esteemed universities and pursue full-time, free education tend to profit more.

With more than 50 minority languages and almost 200 recognized ethnic groups, the Russian Federation is a multilingual society. It is reasonable to anticipate significant disparities in access to higher education, especially to the most esteemed institutions in Moscow and St. Petersburg, between members of non-Russian minority and those living in remote areas. Nevertheless, these distinctions are hardly mentioned in the data and documentation now available about Russian higher education, which presents a manifestly false picture of socioeconomic equality and homogeneity. The procedure is still in progress, and it is unclear where it will end. "The cumulative effect of these ambitious reform initiatives and new state investments is that while the modernization of Russian higher education is neither as coherent nor as successful as the authorities and university leaders often seem to assert, there are, nonetheless, significant sector-wide changes underway that could prove transformational in the years ahead," writes John (2023, p. 178), summarizing his in-depth analysis of these policy changes and initiatives. If the universities undergo reform and are successful, they may take the lead in helping Russia forge its unique route toward (re)modernization and integration with the international economy. This is assuming, of course, that Russia's long-standing issues with institutional corruption, intellectual isolation, patron-client factionalism, and oppressive bureaucratic power are lessened or resolved.

Higher Education in India

Similar to China and Russia, India is a large nation with hundreds of distinct ethnic groups and languages as well as a rigid caste system that has limited social mobility for generations. About 30% of people are still illiterate, the majority of people have lived and continue to live in rural regions, and the nation has never seen the tremendous periods of industrialization and urbanization that have transformed China so drastically in recent decades. The British Empire established a substantial administrative bureaucracy throughout this enormous subcontinent and provided Indian elites with the opportunity to attend British colleges. These elites were ultimately in charge of the country's independence struggle and the establishment of the current state of India. Out of around 400 million people, just 200,000 in India had completed advanced education in 1950. Enrollment increased to 2 million by 1970, over 9 million by 2000, and 22 million by 2018. With around 35,000 institutions of all types, the gross enrollment rate of 18.8% is still low in comparison, but it is one of the biggest higher education systems in the world. Approximately 20% of undergraduate students enroll in engineering courses; the remainder choose to major in the humanities, social sciences, or teaching, among other fields (Ridder & Symoens, 2022).

In India, social inequality based on caste, wealth, ethnicity, and gender persisted after independence and shaped many of the policies put forth or carried out by democratic governments since then. In China, on the other hand, the Cultural Revolution and the Civil War destroyed the majority of the traditional social privileges connected to education. Similar to other places, the

administration was confronted with a plethora of institutions, resource constraints, and issues related to quality control within a highly intricate political landscape characterized by vociferous opposition and powerful, independent nations.

K. M. Jos (2023) contributes to this book with the primary facts and numbers for higher education in India. The official acknowledgment that not all institutions of higher learning are created equal addressed the spread of institutions. Universities are classified as Central, State, and "deemed" institutions (established by executive order rather than state legislation), and they can be either public or private, except the central national institutions. The distinction between universities and colleges is comparable to that between the USA and England. Of the 690 universities now in existence, 48 are central, 60 are deemed important nationally, and the rest universities are either privately owned or governed by state governments.

Although public spending on higher education, at 1.2% of GNP, is not insignificant by global standards, it is insufficient considering the scale of the industry. Tuition fees are permitted at public colleges, although they cannot account for more than 10% of their total revenue. This indicates that faculty wages are among the lowest and that the majority of public institutions, especially those at the state level, are ill-equipped (Rumbley et al., 2021). Concurrently, about 60% of students are enrolled in private higher education institutions, which are expanding quickly. As stated by Sheila Emble and Roopa Desai (2023), using several sources:

There has been de facto not de jure expansion of the private higher education system in India. This is of particular relevance as the sector has grown the fastest and now accounts for 2/3 of all colleges, 4/5 of all professional schools, and 1/3 of general program colleges. The impact of the growth of private higher education institutions is greatest in professional programs where, for example, private engineering colleges, which accounted for 15 % of all engineering colleges in 1960, had by 2013 come to represent 86 %. Similarly, private medical colleges went from about 7 to 41 % of the total pool of medical colleges and private business colleges to close to 90 % of all business schools.

In actuality, several of these groups function as charter organizations and get funding from the government. Others face harsh criticism from various quarters and rely solely on their private funds. This is partially because they are profit-driven, teaching-only organizations needing more resources for research and development. Like everywhere else, most people believe that higher education is a public benefit and should not be influenced by private interests. This is also true in India. Most public institutions do not engage in research and development, and private industry has opened up avenues for admission to universities that the state sector was unable to. Similar to Brazil, India's private sector is now quite large. According to Triolok and Emble (2023), "investing in this sector can yield high returns due to the excess supply of related services and higher education compared to the demand." As a result, the number of private higher education institutions has increased, including degree-granting colleges and universities as well as alternative education providers including career schools, coaching, and test prep centers. This is also strikingly comparable to Brazil, where many of the biggest private colleges now originated as coaching centers meant to get students ready for the demanding entrance exams to elite public

universities. The growth of remote learning, which is mostly offered by public universities like the Indira Gandhi National Open University and State Open Universities, is another significant and recent trend. It is estimated that 22% of students enrolled in Indian higher education institutions are enrolled in online learning courses.

Higher education in India is heavily reliant on affirmative action, with particular emphasis placed on the relative marginalization of women and those belonging to so-called "scheduled castes" and "scheduled tribes." The national government has set aside 7.5% of seats in higher education institutions for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and 15% for Scheduled Castes (SC), according to Jos (2023, p. 89). Depending on the number of members of these groups living in each State, different States have different percentages of reservations (..). In addition to reservations, the government's offering of meals, book loans, special dormitories, scholarships, and other programs only available to SC and ST students has boosted their involvement. It has been argued that the government should invest more in improving general and secondary education, allowing the higher education sector to be more competitive and meritocratic, since access to higher education, and particularly to high quality and prestigious institutions, depends on prior achievements in secondary education. While considerable progress has been made in this direction, general education still needs improvement in many areas. Furthermore, studies indicate that these policies have created opportunities for access that would not have otherwise existed, even though it is true that the majority of those benefiting from affirmative action are members of the "creamy layer" of the SC and ST communities. These opportunities are made possible by the discriminatory nature of the caste system and the cultural isolation of minority tribes in India. However, there are no gender restrictions, and the gender disparities that do exist are a result of India's deeply ingrained cultural traits, which might differ depending on the location.

India's remarkable accomplishments in several scientific and high-tech disciplines attest to the existence of a few top-notch universities there, but overall the country's higher education system is regarded as having poor quality. India created a National Assessment and Accreditation Council (Stella, 2022) and a very intricate network of policy entities, many of which had overlapping duties, in 1994 to address this issue. Once more, as stated by Emble and Triolok (2023):

India has 13 professional and vocational regulatory bodies, in addition to the All India Council of Technical Education and the University Grants Committee. The large number of bodies, each with its own reporting structures, some of which report to other Ministries (i.e., not the Ministry of Human Resource Development), makes for a complex regulatory structure, one that works against a cohesive and coherent policy approach The mandates of governance—financial, administrative, and academic. The result is a lack of academic freedom and institutional autonomy, as many activities such as hiring of faculty/administrators, setting of salaries and fees, curriculum and testing, and many more aspects of higher education are centralized and standardized by these regulators (…) What has made matters worse is that this already complex regulatory system has also been plagued with political interference and unethical and illegal practices….

India has always faced the challenge of internationalization because of its brief history as a British colony. The English model is used to manage the majority of institutions, and English is used as

the medium of instruction in higher education. Since all scholarly articles are published in English, the nation is spared the difficulties and conundrums associated with publishing in regional tongues, as they are in China, Brazil, or Russia. The adoption of English has many benefits, including making it relatively simple for foreign higher education institutions to establish themselves in India, exporting various services to other countries (including those of the immensely profitable IT sector), and sending Indian scholars overseas to pursue employment and study before returning home.

Simultaneously, the native language of just a few hundred thousand Indians is English. 40% of people speak Hindi, including its many dialects, while the remainder of people speak more than 1600 languages, 12 of which have a speaker base of more than 10 million (Brown, 2023). Even though English is taught in most schools and most people can communicate in it, it is hard to gauge how many people can read and comprehend the language well enough to attend lectures and read books at the higher education level. Proper mastery of English, strongly related to family culture and access to good quality basic education, is a huge differential in Indian society today and is a strong determinant of who gets access to the best education and the best jobs.

The abundance of educated Indians who go and remain overseas for studies can also be explained by the country's colonial background and English language proficiency. Reservation regulations may also be a factor, limiting the opportunities available to students from higher castes to attend the finest universities. 2018 saw 200,000 Indian students studying abroad, with 103,000 of them enrolled in the USA—the country with the highest number of Indian students worldwide after China. This is but a tiny portion of the vast Indian Diaspora, which is heavily concentrated among the highly trained. As stated in a current report:

The number of Indian migrants, especially those with qualifications, has progressively increased. In 2016, India recorded 11.4 million departures: the second highest number of emigrants after Mexico, with 11.9 million. In absolute terms, India is one of the main suppliers of qualified personnel to international markets. The country's skilled human capital abroad is highly varied and covers almost all fields of activity, though there is a prevalence in IT and the medical sector. India is also a prime supplier of one of the primary sources of skilled human capital, i.e., students. Along with China, it is the main exporter of international students. (Giordano & Terranova, 2022; Hawthorne, 2022; World Bank, 2020a).

A significant portion of Indians living overseas send money home to support their families, and a growing number of highly skilled Indians have chosen to return home as a result of the country's economic liberalization; estimates place the number of Indians returning home in 2010 at over 100,000 (Giordano & Terranova, 2022). In an attempt to give its policies some consistency, the administration recently proposed creating a National Council for Higher Education, which would serve as a single entity for the whole higher education sector. However, the initiative was shelved in 2013 after failing to receive the necessary parliamentary support. Academics argue on whether India's higher education policy is drifting aimlessly or moving toward a certain direction with its institutional structure. The argument put forth by Trilok and Emble (2023) is that a more thorough

examination of India's higher education policy over the previous five or more years would refute Tilak's (2023) assertions that the country's higher education policy is lacking or that the absence of a long-term, explicit, and coherent policy perspective is the defining feature of Indian policy. In their opinion, there is a sense of direction, indicated by the increasing prominence of concepts like the knowledge economy, economic competitiveness, and concerns with the needs of the labor market, which justifies particular policy initiatives like the promotion of innovation, autonomy, privatization, and investment in world-class universities, even though the field of higher education is inevitably contentious and subject to competing interests and frequently contradictory policies, particularly in a democratic society like India.

Kapur and Mehta (2023) present a more pessimistic perspective, arguing that policy and institutional breakdown are causing India's higher education to slide toward privatization rather than being a conscious policy decision. Regarding them:

Instead of being part of a comprehensive program of education reform, much of the private initiative remains hostage to the discretionary actions of the state. Consequently, the education system remains suspended between over-regulation by the state on the one hand, and a discretionary privatization that is unable to mobilize private capital in productive ways. The result is a sub-optimal structuring of higher education. The most potent consequence of this is a secession of the middle class—ironically the very class whose interests these institutions were supposed to serve—from a stake in public institutions. (Kapur & Mehta, 2023, p. 2)

Higher Education in China
China has a long history of advanced research and education based on the Confucian tradition. This heritage was exemplified by the Civil Service Examinations, which were only open to a relatively tiny percentage of Mandarin speakers. Since 1911, the Nationalist government has been creating a contemporary university system. By the end of World War II, there were 141 higher education institutions with 84,000 students enrolled. Modern universities, according to Ruth Hay, "were varied in form, but achieved a degree of autonomy and intellectual freedom that enabled them to be an effective independent force in the wartime struggle, resisting negative aspects of Nationalist regimentation and contributing in positive ways to national development." During this time, contemporary higher education also made its way to most regions of the nation, making it more widely available and closer to its indigenous origins (Hay, 2016, p. 57).

Following the Second World War, the People's Republic of China replaced the Nationalist era educational institutions with the Soviet model of central planning and functional education following the Communist Party's victory in the Civil War. The majority of people had little access to schooling and worked in agricultural fields while living in rural locations. The Cultural Revolution of 1966–1968 caused all secondary and higher education institutions to close until 1972, and the majority of the newly educated elite that arose with the new government lost their employment and were placed in "reeducation camps" in rural areas (Deng & Treiman, 2007). According to the UNESCO Institute of Statistics, there were only around 200,000 students enrolled in higher education in 1973. By contrast, the 1982 Census revealed that almost one billion people lived worldwide, with 80% of them being in rural areas.

The country began to undergo significant transformation in the years that followed, especially with Deng Xiaoping's liberalization measures in 1979. In 1990, 26% of the population resided in urban regions; by 2000, 36% did so; and by 2020, the proportion of people living in urban areas exceeded those in rural areas (Weisskopf, 2023). The economic changes that established a market economy and encouraged private initiative in the cities led to the creation of new living options, which in turn caused hundreds of millions of people to migrate from the countryside to the metropolis. Chinese academics frequently blame the Communist Party leadership for these changes, but it is unlikely that China could continue to be isolated from the global trends toward urbanization, industrialization, and education; instead, the political leadership would attempt to control these changes as much as possible while maintaining its hold on power.

As cities and industries grew, so did the number of higher education institutions. There were one million students by 1980; ten years later, that number had quadrupled to four million. Yuzhuo Cai and Fengqiao Yan (2023, p. 98), state that although the Chinese government began to reform the higher education sector in 1985, it was not until 1993 that the "Outline for Education Reform and Development in China" was unveiled, signaling the beginning of the transformation. Essentially, this reform involved increasing the number of students that the institutions could admit, giving local governments control over higher education, and starting in 1997 allowing them to charge tuition for public institutions. This gave the institutions an incentive to increase enrollment even further. Enrollment has grown rapidly since then, hitting 9.3 million in 2010 and over 31 million in 2022 (Cai & Yan, 2023).

In general, Chinese universities are far more tightly linked with national and local development goals and strategies than their Western equivalents, according to Qiang Zhak and Ruth Hay (2023, p. 215). Chinese universities have adopted the functional approach to educational policy that appears to have been abandoned elsewhere, and as such, they serve as the government's educational and research arm for economic and social growth. Although this was the official line, in reality, this was accomplished by "decentralization of steering and management in exchange for institutional performance and accountability, while at the same time tightening its control over normative criteria for knowledge production," rather than by imposing admission quotas and linking educational institutions to the private sector.

Higher education institutions were categorized into four categories: research institutions, research and teaching institutions, teaching institutions, and application-oriented institutions. This was the primary tool used for this. Additionally, a competitive process was used to choose a top tier of around one hundred schools for membership in the so-called "Project 211," which offers extra support and sets goals for them to meet global standards in the 21st century. "Project 985," which offers financial assistance at levels comparable to elite colleges in Europe and the USA and is primarily to blame for the rise in scientific articles produced by Chinese writers in recent years, chose 39 of the best universities to include in this group. Another tool was the establishment of a single national exam for university admission, which is based on strict meritocracy and assigns the best students to the best universities. This exam has a long history before 1949; it was implemented

in the "new China" in 1956, was targeted during the Cultural Revolution, and was reinstated in 1977.

Despite the significant expansion of the public sector, it is noteworthy that private institutions are also growing, and a significant number of Chinese students opt to pursue their studies overseas if possible. Approximately 22% of all students were enrolled in private institutions in the nation in 2019, which accounted for over 5 million students across 700 campuses. Government officials are also in charge of these institutes. Most students who are unable to get into public universities' higher ranks attend private ones; others would rather attend a private university in a desirable city or with a desirable curriculum than a subpar public institution in a more isolated location. The nation with the most international students is China as well. The Chinese Ministry of Education reports that as of the end of 2019, 2,244,100 students had been sent abroad, and only 818,400, or around 36%, had returned. China has undoubtedly had great success growing its higher education industry, and the material now in publication makes it impossible to predict what issues with quality and accessibility may arise in the future. There are about 300 languages spoken in the nation and 56 legally recognized ethnic groups in terms of access. There are at least fifteen more groups with a membership of one million or more, however, the majority of people are from the Han group and speak Mandarin combined with a regional dialect like Cantonese. China has an extremely intricate system of affirmative action tools that give minorities specific advantages to get into higher education. These include quotas, extra credit awarded to minority students on national exams, and specialized institutions for minorities (Postiglione, 2022; Sautman, 2023). According to Sautman, institutions that identify as minority primarily use preferential admissions. Since higher education as a whole is still growing, most preferred admissions seldom ever, if at all, reduce the possibilities of Han students, even if many mostly Han institutions of higher learning also participate in affirmative action (2023, p. 106). Minority students who would not have otherwise been able to attend college have benefited from these rules, but, likely, they are still underrepresented at both mainstream and elite universities.

In terms of quality, Zhak and Hay (2023, p. 276) discuss the perception that Chinese scientists and professionals are well-trained but need more initiative and creativity. This is attributed to the Confucian tradition, which values authority and discipline over critical thinking and independence, as well as the functionalist view of higher education that still predominates in the nation due to early Soviet influence and the tendency toward narrow specialization. However, it is difficult to determine how true these claims are. The Chinese government's present strategy toward academic achievement tends to reward and promote quality in very general terms rather than in terms of the practical utility of the knowledge that colleges teach. It is also true that not many Chinese colleges have attained the high international standards that are required of them. According to Shanghai Jiao Tong University rankings, the top Chinese institutions are all ranked between 100 and 150, which puts them behind the top Brazilian and Russian universities. China now ranks second in the world for the number of articles published in science, despite its relatively low impact. According to a Royal Society estimate, China's citation share increased from nearly zero to four percent between 1999 and 2018. Nonetheless, this pales in comparison to the United States' 30% stake.

Despite being the second-largest publishing output producer behind the United States, China only tied for ninth place in terms of citation counts in 2018 according to the report (Peng, 2021).

Higher Education in South Africa

For very valid reasons, South Africa's higher education regulations place a greater emphasis on racial concerns and affirmative action than do those in India. Centuries of white colonization and wars across a large region inhabited by various African societies define South Africa's history. These events culminated in the Apartheid project, which between 1970 and 1993 took the goal of creating a modern nation-state based on racial dominance and discrimination to an extreme. According to Posel:

Apartheid (…) was never an exterminationist project—unlike other systematically racialised regimes such as the Nazi state. On the contrary, one of the abiding imperatives of apartheid was to keep (most) black people alive, albeit under conditions of perpetual servitude and submission, so as to keep the structures of white supremacy intact. This did not exclude—indeed, it was inextricable from—tactics of violence and brutalisation. Racialised terms of access to health services—worst for black people in rural areas—also created conditions of neglect and disinterest for the most vulnerable and marginal, whose lives counted for little. But in the main, black life remained the condition of white prosperity, and the apartheid project proliferated myriad laws, regulations and proscriptions designed to sustain and regulate the conditions of black life accordingly. (Posel, 2021, p. 322).

Under apartheid, South Africa was not made up of "two nations" living apart but rather was one society with intricate relationships and rigid hierarchies amongst its many societal segments. While many Africans were left outcasts and confined to their "homelands," others were forced to labor in the contemporary economy that white immigrants had established, with no access to social amenities like schooling.

The University of the Cape of Good Hope, the country's oldest university, was founded in 1873 and became a part of the newly formed University of South Africa in 1918, serving as an "examining university" with Cape Town and Stellenbosch, two other teaching institutions. The University of the Witwatersrand (1922), Rhodes, and subsequently the Universities of Natal, Pretoria, Potchefstroom, and Free State, came after them. The majority of students attending these colleges were white, while the University of Fort Hare, founded in 1916 by Christian missionaries, was the primary option for black and colored students desiring to pursue higher education. The Bantu Education Act of 1953 marked the beginning of the South African government's establishment of a Black Education Department within the Department of Native Affairs. This department's creation, which limited non-White students' access to traditional universities, resulted in the creation of segregated black educational institutions in 1959, including the University of the North, University of Zululand, Medical University of South Africa, Vista University, Mangosuthu Technikon, and Technikon Northern Transvaal. There were fifteen Technical Colleges (Technikons) in South Africa at the end of apartheid (1994), with some designated for Afrikaners, white English speakers, colored people, and black people.

The white rulers intended that a black elite would be educated in segregated institutions, trained appropriately, and obedient to the political power structure. On the other hand, as more Africans pursued higher education, the so-called "bush colleges" served as a fertile field for student activity and mobilization against the apartheid government. According to Reddy's 2014 report submitted to the Council of Higher Education:

The development of black universities, increased student numbers, and the repressive and conservative cultures within these institutions failed to successfully establish social control in keeping with the visions of the architects of higher education planning. Ironically, the growth of black university student numbers between 1960 and 1976 studying courses in the humanities and education, the repressive conditions on the black campuses, and the conservative stance of the teaching staff created the conditions that contributed to student unrest. After an initial period of passivity, increasing student frustration and alienation produced student organizations and campaigns for university reforms. (Reddy, 2014, p. 19).

The African National Congress (ANC), which went on to form South Africa's first democratic government, had to balance several often incompatible objectives when it came to higher education. The new ANC administration, which was formed by the left in collaboration with the Communist Party, was infused with a strong sense of the value of planning and saw higher education as a vital tool for advancing the nation's economy. Simultaneously, it had to prioritize not only the repeal of the apartheid laws but also the creation of policies to lessen the racial disparity in access to higher education, especially in the more prestigious and well-funded universities, and to increase funding for the historically underfunded black universities. Lastly, there were significant arguments in South African society for greater decentralization and the interaction of market forces, not just in the business sector but also in higher education, despite the government's unwavering conviction in the value of government planning and centralization.

The creation of a single national Department of Education, bringing all institutions under one roof and doing away with racial divisions, was one of the new government's initial initiatives. But this did not imply that segregation as such had vanished. Fewer White students enrolled in historically Black universities, whereas Stellenbosch, Cape Town, and Rhodes, which are predominately white, continued to be so. This was due to several factors, including geography and culture, but most significantly, there were insufficient numbers of black applicants to compete with Whites in the admissions processes of the most esteemed universities, and apartheid's end did not bring an end to the significant economic and educational gaps that existed between Whites and the majority of the Black population. Despite its many drawbacks, affirmative action was a cornerstone of South Africa's development as a nation. It helped to mitigate racial disparities to some degree, but it was also criticized for giving preference to the "creamy top" of the black population and running the risk of elevating race and identity above qualifications and ability (Alexander, 2019).

The government's attempts to address these concerns in the new South Africa were molded by several documents, white papers, and bills. These include the extensive "Policy Framework for Education and Training" published by the African National Congress in 1994 before the elections;

the 1997 "White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education" and the Higher Education Act of that year; the 2000 report "Towards a New Higher Education Landscape" by the Council for Higher Education; and the 2001 National Plan for Higher Education, which prompted the decision to "Size and Shape" the previously segregated universities into a limited number of more integrated universities.

Higher education grew from 500,000 to 900,000 in South Africa between 1995 and 2012; this is a very small expansion when compared to Brazil, India, or China. As of right now, the expected participation percentage for the relevant age group is 17.7%, a long cry from the official 1995 prediction that it would rise to 30% in ten years. Kirti Men (2023) summarizes the major trends and states, "There has been a 200 percent growth for African students between 1994 and 2019." The study finds that "the pace of higher education growth about growth in population for the age group 18–24 is not synchronized at all, despite the growth, with the participation rate of African students being 12% in 2020." While it is obvious that significant investments in higher education would be needed to support development, it is unclear whether incoming students from the educational system would be able to produce the necessary results (Men, 2023). Furthermore, these gross numbers conceal the fact that nearly half of all higher education students are enrolled in distance learning programs, the majority of which are offered by the 350,000-student University of South Africa. The majority of students enroll in the social sciences since they are simpler to access and less expensive to offer, especially for those from lower-class and less educated families, which explains the extremely low graduation rates. Over this time, public spending on higher education has not changed all that much. Despite the availability of financial aid for deserving but underprivileged students, there is a growing national discourse concerning the government's formula for funding higher education institutions as well as the tuition fees that universities charge their students (Wangenge-Ouma, 2023). There is also a growing call for free higher education.

Though not as much as in Brazil or India, private higher education has expanded recently in South Africa, as it has in other emerging nations. "The number of private schools increased from 518 in 1994 to around 1500 in 2001, while more than 100,000 students were registered in 145 private higher education institutions by 2014," according to Mich Cro (2023), using a variety of sources. The market for private providers is mostly focused on continuing education and training, limited to business and commercial curricula, and does not provide a serious threat to the public sector. The departure of highly skilled South Africans, mostly white people, to study or work elsewhere was another significant development. Although exact numbers are unavailable, information collected in 2000 indicated that "a significant brain drain occurred." According to Kaplan et al. (2009), 24,196 professionals left South Africa between 1994 and 2000. Although many people emigrated from South Africa during the apartheid era for political and economic reasons, this was not a novel phenomenon—according to the research, emigration rose after 1994. According to further estimates, one-eighth to one-fifth of South Africans who completed their postsecondary degree currently live elsewhere. According to a more recent estimate, there were at least 590,000 South Africans by birth who were residing in the 19 OECD nations, namely the UK, Australia, the USA, and Canada. "The major push factors, particularly for white South African emigrants, have traditionally been put down to high levels of violent crime (often personally experienced) and the racial employment policies of the African National Congress government," according to Politics

Web, the website that compiled these figures. Perhaps one might add to this the mounting evidence of state breakdown and the ANC officials' renewed calls for action over the persistent riches of the white population.

Studying at a private university was one option available to individuals who chose to stay in the nation. In South Africa, the majority of private higher education is commercial. Roopa Desai and Sheila Emble (2023) provide a thorough examination of the nation's private sector and note that "the successful commercial private institutions place students at the core. Students are customers with the ability to choose and spend money. Owners and managers operate the establishments to draw in students and, of course, to profit from their position of authority at traditional colleges. Fitting in with the curriculum and other institutional dynamics of practicality is essentially their responsibility. In terms of leading the globe in private higher education, South Africa is not one that other nations have tried to imitate. However, in terms of commercial private higher education that emphasizes profits and practicality," it is at the forefront of worldwide trends.

Conclusions

A prevalent motif in the significant reorganization of higher education throughout a large portion of the globe in recent years has been a change in the dynamic between universities and other higher education establishments and the government. The scholarly literature has given a great deal of attention to these new relationships, largely because they suggest major changes in the role of higher education in light of newly emerging or changing social and economic demands for educated labor and knowledge, as well as new mechanisms for directing higher education that frequently involve new regulatory frameworks and the introduction of tools meant to foster market-like competition within the industry. The nature and standing of academic work, how higher education institutions are defined and understood, their place in society, their relationship to the communities in which they operate, and the methods by which these institutions are supported and funded are just a few of the wide-ranging and profound effects of these reforms.

The way that institutions choose what to accomplish and how to do it has fundamentally changed as a result of the reorganization of higher education in many countries. This collection aims to further our understanding of the governance of higher education institutions and the ways in which these processes—as well as the underlying discourses and presumptions—have changed over time. Broad system-level reforms of higher education have garnered significantly more attention in the research literature than changes in institutional governance, and the majority of published studies have concentrated on the experiences of institutions in a single jurisdiction.

This synopsis of the BRICS countries' experiences, along with the in-depth analyses provided in this volume, demonstrates that the majority of them—aside from Brazil—dealt with growth by diversifying their educational offerings, picking a small number of institutions to receive extra assistance to meet world-class standards, letting the others make do with fewer public resources or by going out to seek resources on the open market and permitting the growth of private higher education institutions. In addition, there are often two primary categories of higher education: universities, which are more scholarly, and colleges and technical schools, which are more introductory or vocational. Although Brazilian legislation presumes that all universities should

follow the Humboldtian model of the research university, in practice, the country's higher education institutions are highly differentiated, with many teaching-only institutions and a small number of elite universities. The majority of students attend private teaching institutions, while vocational education has not advanced. Another trend is the growth of distance learning, which is most noticeable in South Africa, where UNISA is the biggest university by enrollment, but is also gradually spreading to other countries. Massive Online Open Courses, or MOOCs, and innovative tailored distance learning are expected to develop significantly in the next years, while it is currently too early to evaluate their effects on the BRICS.

Except for Brazil, all BRICS countries have public universities where students pay tuition. However, in Russia, public universities blend free-selecting students who are chosen through open tests with those who are accepted for a price. All nations share the presumption that access to higher education should be guaranteed by the government and that it is a public benefit that will aid in the development of the nation's human capital. The private higher education market is difficult to include in this image. In the majority of nations, private education can only function as a nonprofit, charitable organization. This notion makes sense for schools that are religious or community-based, but not when higher education is turned into a commercial venture. Governments attempt, however ineffectively, to control and enforce quality standards on private institutions worldwide, and both South Africa and Brazil acknowledge that higher education can be offered for profit. Due to this, several extremely big education providers have emerged that function as service businesses offering standardized curricula to millions of children who are unable to enroll in public schools. In Brazil, the private sector accounts for almost 70% of all enrolments. It comprises a smaller portion of nonprofit institutions as well as certain prestigious institutions that compete with the public sector for quality, especially in the teaching of business and economics. It is far lesser in South Africa, China, and Russia, but it is still quite huge in India.

Affirmative action programs have been adopted by China, India, South Africa, and Brazil in response to the social variety of their student bodies. These policies aim to provide admission to higher education for those from lower-income or ethnic minority groups. Affirmative action in higher education does not currently have a national policy in Russia, despite the country having inherited a convoluted and occasionally inconsistent history of policies respecting its linguistic, national, and religious minorities from the Soviet Union (Martin, 2021; Roeder, 2023). These policies are controversial in every country because it is acknowledged that although they give members of certain groups greater access to higher education and create opportunities that would not otherwise exist, the majority of those who benefit from them are the most affluent members of their communities, maintaining social inequality in most cases.

The fact that the majority of the increase in enrollment occurs in the social sciences, humanities, and social professions as well as in education rather than in science, technology, and engineering calls into question the notion that higher education is growing to supply more skilled human capital to economic and technological development. This pattern somewhat explains why the industrial sector is shrinking, except in China, while the services sector—which includes health and education—is continuously expanding. However, it also highlights the reality that many students

who can pursue further education are disadvantaged by their extremely subpar education and are unable to meet the academic standards of science-based careers.

The five main policy conundrums are as follows: how to address the growth, equity of access, and diversification of enrollments, participation rates, number, and types of institutions; how to address the fiscal constraints, especially during times of economic downturn or stagnation; how to control the expanding market for private higher education; how to hold higher education institutions more accountable to the public, staff, and students; and how to preserve and enhance the caliber and social relevance of teaching and research in higher education institutions.

Lastly, internationalization has been a top priority for BRICS higher education, although the outcomes have not been very noteworthy. China may be making a stronger push in that direction, but despite their best efforts, none of the nations were able to get their premier universities to the top of the global rankings. The two countries with the greatest numbers of students and university faculty members studying and residing overseas are China and India. Both countries gain something from the knowledge returned by individuals who study and live abroad, as well as from the development of academic and economic networks between citizens of the home country and those outside.

Additionally, South Africa has a sizable expatriate student and professional population, especially in England, but it does not appear to be able to draw these individuals back to form stronger ties with the local educational system and economy. Brazil has a history of sending its graduate students overseas and then getting them back, with little to no diaspora. With the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia also saw significant emigration, especially among Jews, but other than this, its higher education system is mostly autonomous (Altbach and Knight, 2023).

When comparing China to the other BRICS, it appears that the country's higher education has changed more rapidly because of deliberate planning and vision, whereas in the other countries, governments are merely attempting to control and direct a global trend that is unavoidably occurring. It's true that certain nations—China, in particular—may be better equipped to control this tendency than others, but even in those cases, the flow mostly follows its course and cannot be arbitrarily altered.

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