

Brazilian higher education policy: internal and external stakeholders

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This chapter explores how different stakeholders in Brazilian society shape their expectations toward higher education and how the interplay between these stakeholders and the diverse internal sources of governance present in the different institutional environments shapes Brazilian higher education as a whole. Thus, its main goal is to map what are the main demands different sectors in Brazilian society have toward higher education and to understand how these external and internal demands bear upon the inside dynamics of different kinds of higher education institutions.

A distinctive feature of higher education in many countries is the high differentiation of types of institutions and stakeholders. This is also a main feature of Brazilian higher education. Brazilian higher education is a known case of extreme diversity, in terms of both institutional settings and ownership. Among its more than 2,300 institutions, one can find examples of almost everything: from small, family-owned, isolated professional schools to huge research universities with annual budgets of more than two billion dollars. As one would expect, this institutional maze gives rise to extremely diverse institutional environments. While in general, public universities are better endowed and more institutionalized, there are strong differences even among institutions belonging to this sector: universities with stronger commitment to graduate education tend have a more active research profile, and thus are more susceptible to values and expectations linked to disciplinary cultures. Public institutions committed to undergraduate education are more susceptible to the agenda

supported by the union movements (both academic and staff unions). Federal institutions (and the most part of the state owned institutions) are more vulnerable to pressures coming from governmental bodies, while the powerful São Paulo state universities tend to sustain strong autonomy vis-a-vis any kind of governmental interference.

Inside the private sector, market forces and governmental regulations are the main drives for growth, differentiation and institutional development. Nevertheless, even inside this sector one will find diversity. As a rule, private institutions are confined to a mass education market, where the lower price charged for education is the main differential. In this segment, the most usual institutional format is the small isolated professional school offering few undergraduate programs in the same professional track. Most are family owned institutions with poor infra-structure for students and academics. These institutions have little room for institutional development and tend to be at the mercy of government regulations; especially those produced by the federal bodies that have the right of authorize its operation. Nevertheless, in the last 10 years, this segment experienced a strong consolidation process that gave origin to a number of huge for profit universities, offering dozens of different undergraduate programmes in a diverse array of fields, and exploring new market niches such as life-learning and taught master's programs. These huge mass oriented universities still operated under the iron law of a commodity like market but they have resources for different responses targeting to specific demands for undergraduate and vocational education. Being recognized as universities also gives them more autonomy vis-a-vis the bureaucratic controls imposed by government. Another relevant segment in the private sector is the one composed by a small number of elite private institutions catering for children from affluent middle class families. Some of them are highly innovative both in teaching "adopting new learning technologies and innovative problem-oriented undergraduate programs " and in exploring their staff's competence to offer professionally-

taught masters and other graduate programmes, as well as consulting services for enterprises and private clients. These institutions operate in a more differentiated market where quality and not price is the main issue. They have developed strong channels connecting with their clients allowing for a detailed map of the diverse expectations and demands presented in their external environment.

Data for this chapter come from different sources: first there is the data collected in a national survey of the Brazilian academic profession held in 2008, which was explored in order to capture the main differences of attitudes and opinions held by academics working in different institutional environments described above¹. Another relevant source of information comes from official documents and studies produced by different stakeholders and published at Internet. Information were also collected in news papers and magazine in order to produce a good picture about the debates that are going on in Brazil regarding Higher Education policies.

Conceptual framework:

This paper combines the approach developed by stakeholders analysis methodology and the Advocacy Coalitions Framework that have been developed by Sabatier and collaborators since the beginning of 1990s. As stated by Brugha and Varvasovsky (2000, 2000b) it is a tool developed mostly by scholars in management and administration fields, aiming to evaluate how stakeholders (individuals, groups and organizations) that have an interest in an organization will react to a project or policy (see also Crosby, 1992). Typically, stakeholders analysis employ different research instruments to map the more relevant stakeholders, to access the stakeholders' interests and beliefs the resources each of them

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control and to appraise how the relevant stakeholders will react to the proposed project or policy, either by forming coalitions supporting changes in the organization one or another directions, either by employing their resources to support or oppose the proposed change. As noted by Weible (2007), the main shortcomings of the stakeholder analysis comes from its focus on just one policy venue or program, which tend to make its results quickly outdated. Furthermore, these studies fail to present sound theoretical basis for understanding the nature of the links that held together different stakeholders when acting in alliance to support (or fight) a project, political venue or program.

In order to overcome this problem, we will combine the use of stakeholders techniques with the more general approach proposed by the theoretical framework known as “Advocacy coalitions”, developed by Paul Sabatier and collaborators (Sabatier 1988; Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith 1993, 1999, Weible, Sabatier and McQueen, 2009). Advocacy coalitions framework (ACF) departs from two main premises: first, it focus on a “policy subsystem”, ie, the interaction of actors from different institutions interested on a policy area with a substantive scope, and thus, that have a stake on the policy area. Second, that public policies can be conceptualized as belief systems, in the sense that that public policies and programs incorporate implicit “theories” about the nature of the problem that is (or should be) addressed by the policy, perceptions related to causal relationships, the way a given program or policy will operate, its consequences and so on.

Another relevant assumption is that the political beliefs are organized into a three tiered hierarchical system. In the first tier there is the normative core beliefs that cover multiple policy subsystems and articulate the more general values and attitudes that guides the actor’s views of the policy process. In the middle, there is the proper policy core beliefs that span the entire policy subsystem. Finally, in the lower tier, there is the some secondary beliefs that are most susceptible of change.

Thus, assuming that “individuals get involved in policy at least in part to translate their beliefs into public policy” (Sabatier, 1988, pp.132), the ACF propose to understand the pattern of alliances that contributes to form the institutional architecture of a given policy subsystem. Given the strength and long lasting nature of the core beliefs that sustain an advocacy coalition, the dynamics that characterize a given policy system should be quite stable. Thus, the main objectives of ACF is to map beliefs present in a given policy system, analyze how beliefs are connected with the policy options perceived by the stakeholders, map resources and patterns of network, so it is possible to understand the main policy dynamics that characterize this subsystem.

Figure 1, bellow, resumes the main assumptions of the advocacy coalition framework.

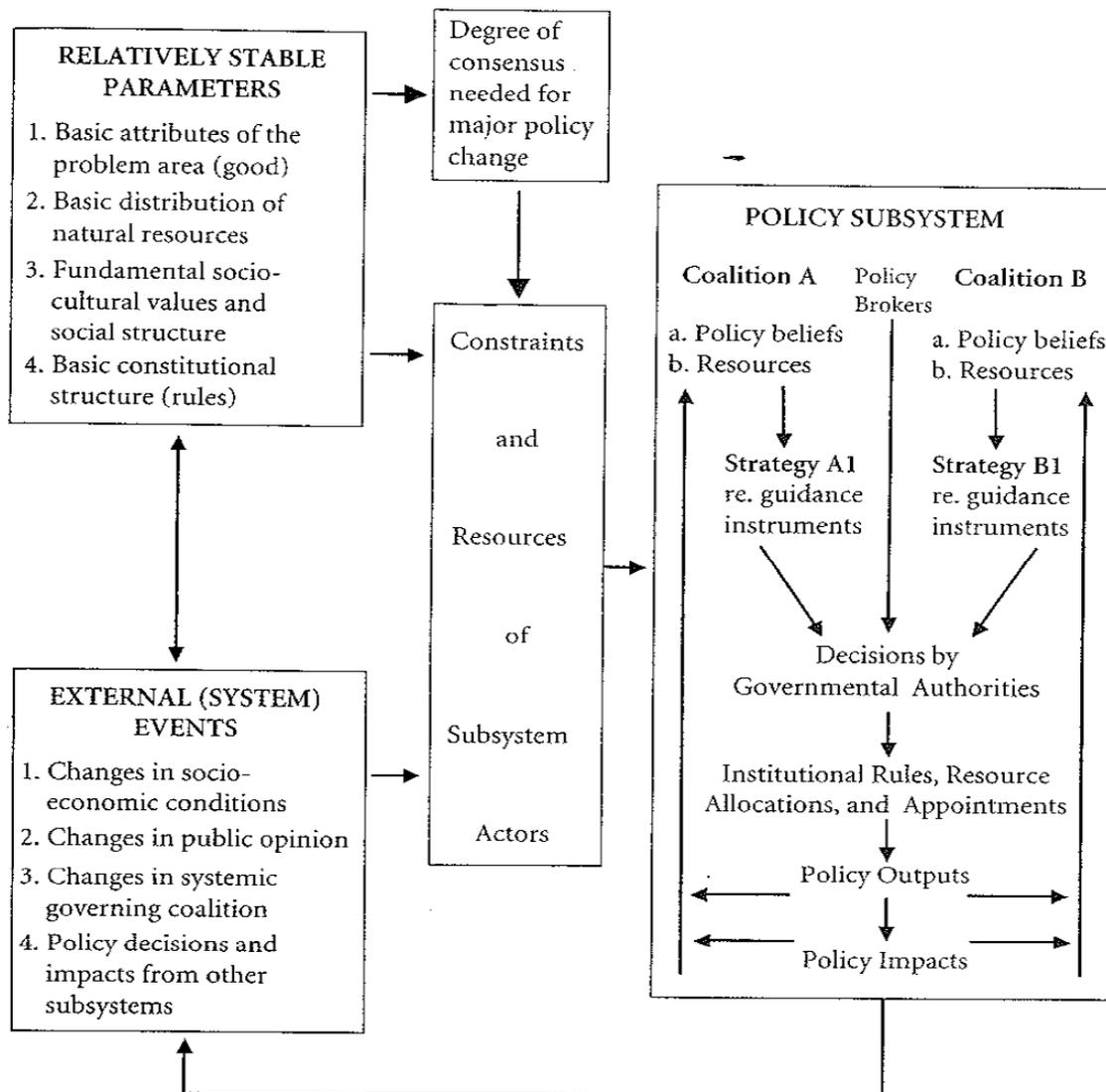


Fig. 1: Diagram of the advocacy coalition framework.
 Source: Sabatier, 2007, pp. 191

The framework supposes that the main stakeholder are specialized in one policy subsystem and that their options are bounded by cognitive constrains that organize their perception of what is at stake in the policy arena and what are main gains and looses associated to main policy alternatives. Also, stakeholders tend to search alliances with other stakeholders with similar beliefs with whom they engage in a “non trivial degree of coordination” (Weible, 2009, p. 99) in order to promote policy venues that favor their values in the policy arena.

Changes in policy dynamics and beliefs may be produced by three different sources: first, changes in the overall social parameters of the country in question; second, by political events that impact the distribution of political resources inside the policy system and, third, by the very impact of the policy outputs, which may reconfigure the main issues that are at stake, redistribute resources, mobilize new actors and create opportunities for learning that may impact parts of the beliefs systems that organize the dynamic of conflicts inside the policy system.

In the next session we will use the framework presented above to analyze the policy dynamics in Brazilian higher education. We will start with the new social and political environment brought by the country's experience with democratization and the economic reforms that shaped the contemporary features of the country since the end of 1980s.

Mapping the main issues in Brazilian higher education policy:

In the last decade of the XX century, Brazilian society was re-shaped by the combined forces of two long lasting macro-political and economic processes that had strong impacts over the policy dynamics of higher education. The first one is the democratization process that made possible to the country to overcome a long lasting authoritarian regime and build up a quite solid democratic regime in the country.

This is not the place to recount history of the process of democratization, but is enough to point out two main features that are relevant for understand some of the most important impacts on higher education. First of all, one must consider the relevant role played by some of the most important Universities' internal actors in the struggles for democratization. As noted by Schwartzman (1993), political activism in Latin American universities is an ingrained tradition, dating from the last decades of the XIX century. At the end of the XX century, the fight for democracy in Brazil mobilized all organized sectors in the country,

among them, the leaders from the student movement and the most prestigious academics in the country. Fighting for democracy unified all the political forces inside of Brazilian public universities and also in the most prestigious catholic universities. One of the legacies of this fight is the great visibility and strong legitimacy public universities have in front other political actors, which made all the country's political forces wary of strong movements against the universities' *status quo*.

The democratic pact that funded the new regime included a strong demand for equity and social inclusiveness. In the eyes of Brazilian society, one of the most relevant sources of illegitimacy of the military government was its inability for sustain the country's economy and provide prosperity for the society. Thus, the fight for democracy was also a fight for a brighter future, better living standards and prosperity for all. Thus, policies related to social inclusiveness have strong legitimacy in Brazilian society. This issue is present in all policy systems and faces no resistance. It is also a pervasive issue inside the debate of higher education policies in the country.

The second process mention above is the long lasting effects of the economic, financial and fiscal crisis that hit the Brazilian economy in the 1980s. For many annalists, one of roots of the crisis is the exhaustion of the growth strategies based on import substitution policies (see, for ex., Bacha, 1986, and Davis, 1984). Brazil is, perhaps, one of the world's most successfully historical experiences in adopting the import substitution strategy for economic development. Since the 1930s until the end of the 1980s, the country's industrial growth was based on such logic and the results, in a broad perspective, was very successful. But such success also has had its hindrances. The basic tools in import substitution policies are the barriers against foreign competition and the protection of infant industries. Even if successful, this strategy leads to an autarchic industrial policy

pattern, and tend to foster rentist behaviors in the productive sector, depressing the pressures for innovation in the economy (Cimoli et al., 2007)

Policies related to higher education and the science and technology adopted at that time may be also traced to the import substitution heritage (Schwartzman, 1995). The primary goal of Brazilian technology policies was to free the national economy from the *technological encirclement* of foreign governments and multinational firms. Therefore these policies valued the development of deviant technological trajectories that could reinforce barriers against international competitor. The strategy to fulfill these objectives was to concentrate investments on a few large technological projects. Little attention was paid to the technology diffusion process (Schwartzman et al., 1995). Even though Brazil never sought to advance a “national science”, the most important goal for its endeavor in scientific fields was to develop adequate scientific capability in all fields, even when this implied to scatter scarce resources among a large number of small research groups, covering, helpfully, all field of human knowledge.

From the point of view of educational policies, this paradigm led to a “trickle-down” perspective where the most important goal was to prepare the elite of scientists and engineers needed to implement the large projects. This, in turn, led to policies that concentrated resources and quality control at the top of the educational pyramid, while paying little attention to the lower layers. Annalists are unanimous in diagnosing a sharp decline in quality that accompanied the expansion of basic education in this period (Castro, 1990 and Durhan, 1985).

The so-called lost decade of 1980's had strong impact over the country's science and the higher education landscape. For the governmental agencies in charge of funding, supervising, and regulating both science and higher education, the struggles for preserving the budgets in a scenario of diminishing resources and high inflation rates create very

dangerous dynamics. The first years of the next decade found these agencies disorganized, depleted from their best human resources and disconnected from the core decision structures of the federal government. For the public universities, the 1980's were years of penury, when academic salaries and resources for maintaining the infra-structure conditions for teaching and research were drastically reduced.

When the country finally recovered from the crises in mid 1990s, the scenario totally changed. The economic reforms, a successful monetary stabilization plan, the new regulatory framework by the Constitutional reforms of the mid 1990s and the opening of the country's economy, exposed the Brazilian enterprises to an unusual high degree competition. In this new environment, some enterprises failed, others were sold to international corporations, but many survived adopting innovation and a new entrepreneurial perspective. In the new scenario two new stakeholders were mobilized for higher education area: the business sector and the families with children in conditions to attend the programs offered by the higher education institutions. Together, these two stakeholders put pressures in two directions: one pulling the system from an elite formation perspective toward a general work-force qualification perspective. This increased the demand for quality control, especially at the undergraduate level, including the mass-oriented private sector. The second direction pulled the academic research system from an inner academic self-orientation to a more demand driven orientation.

The governmental regulatory agencies, both at the federal and regional levels, also recovered from the lost decade's experience by developing a new, more pro-active profile than before, assuming a more strategic approach to funding science. The harsh times experienced by these agencies in the 1980s lend a lasting lesson to their high bureaucracy: in order to assure access to the needed funds for their operation it was not enough to assert the relevance of science in general, or trust in the prestige of science in general.

Science should be steered to address the relevant problems that were perceived as central in the country's quest for development. In the 1990s, the S&T agencies evolved to become corporate actors (Braun, 1998), with an identity and a policy agenda of their own

This is the general framework of the reforms in the S&T agencies and policies that took place at the end of the 1990s. These reforms had a strong impact over public universities, where graduate education and research is better institutionalized. Their main features were the adoption of instruments for steering research toward economic and societal relevance, the reform of the agencies' portfolio of programs, imposing a more competitive environment for research support, and the reinforcement of the instruments for evaluation. The reforms enlarged the space for autonomous decision by the agencies' specialized bureaucracies, amplified competition and put a premium in team networking and publish profile among researchers. In the reformed arena for science policy, new players have also gained leverage: the public universities' authorities and high bureaucracy, and the regional interests. In fact, the 1990s saw the beginning of many initiatives from regional and, subsequently local authorities. Into the 2000's many states had launched or strengthened regional research foundations, and established new administrative branches in charge of local S&T policies.

In the same period, also the the Ministry of Education, in charge of the Federal Universities and in overseeing all the private sector, experienced a strong process of professionalization, developing new capabilities for institutional and programs' evaluation. In 1994, the Ministry of Education took the first steps toward an effective evaluation of undergraduate courses. At that time, it implemented a National Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs. In 2002, the newly elected President, Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, from the leftist Workers Party (PT), introduced changes in the Exam, nesting it in a larger evaluation framework, designed and implemented by a new agency, the National System of

Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES). SINAES oversees the periodical evaluation of freshmen and graduating students, accreditation procedures for institutions, plus the traditional bureaucratic procedures that officially recognized each bachelor program, granting the legal value to the diploma issued by the higher education institution

Contemporary stakeholders of Brazilian higher education: an overview

The new scenario produced by the developments described above created a new, more complex network of stakeholders for higher education policies in the country. In this session we will describe the profile of the main stakeholders, exploring some of the most relevant issues that mobilized each of them to higher education

Internal stakeholders: the academic profession

The most conspicuous internal stakeholder in any higher education policy system is the academic profession. In the case of Brazil, nevertheless, one should be aware of the peculiar circumstances that make the Brazilian academic profession as diverse and stratified as the higher education institutions in which they worked. All data collected in national surveys of the academic profession have consistently provided indications of the presence of at least 4 different professional profiles inside Brazilian Universities.

Professional oligarchy : The first one is the traditional professor as was earlier understood in Brazil at the time the first professional schools were created: a scholar distinguished in his profession. Professors with this profile dedicate most of their time to the practice of their profession. They are committed to their School or Faculty and to the bachelor program that is responsible for training the new generation of professionals. For these academics, the more relevant issue is the autonomy of their school vis-à-vis the university's central authorities. The ideal governance mode for them is a university as a "confederation of schools and faculties", where each sub-unity could have as much independent decision

making space as possible.

In the late 1970s, it was inside some of these professional schools and faculties that the most relevant institutional innovation in the public sector was created. It is the so-called “Foundations” (Fundações, in portuguese). The “Foundation” is a non-for-profit private institution, founded by academics from one school. They are independent and private from the legal point of view, but in practice, they are identified with the school, and hold relevant links with the faculty’s decision making structure. As such, they function as an operational arm: They are in charge of services like consulting, performing contracted research, offering training in continued education programs and professional post-graduate education (including MBA), and so on. They benefit from the School’s prestige and, in exchange, create a source of third stream resources (Clark, 1998) that make possible to the School to sustain up-dated facilities for teaching and research, expand and qualify its staff and supplement academic salaries, which may be a critical asset when it comes to attract competent professionals in a highly well paid labor market. Sustaining a high degree of internal autonomy is also relevant to protect the school’s Foundations.

For the system as a whole. The more source of influence available for the professional oligarchy are the official corporatist structures of regional and federal professional boards that hold legal powers for regulate access to protect job markets. Brazilian job market is strongly regulated and access to many activities² is regulated through special requirements, which include, in many cases, the demand of attending specific bachelor programs. The professional boards have the authority for issuing the professional register, and, by refusing issuing a register based on the applicant’s study curriculum, these professional boards have strong influence over the higher education system as a whole, specially the most

² At the moment, there is 68 different professions regulated in Brazil, and the list is growing, since regulating a profession is viewed as the best route to improve employability and, at the same time, expand the demand for a given educational path. For more information of the Brazilian regulated professions, see <http://www.mtecbo.gov.br/cbosite/pages/regulamentacao.jsf>

powerful professional boards that represent more traditional professions. They also have strong and stable channels for access to government authorities and also are relevant inside higher education institutions' governance, especially in the public sector.

Scientific community:: This stakeholder encompasses those with a profile that closely resembles the one the international literature usually identifies as the academic scholar: they have good academic credentials and a full-time academic contract, which enables a permanent involvement with research. They sustain strong networks with their peers in their field, and some of them have also strong links with the international community. They publish regularly, and also have regular access to external resources for research. Academics with this profile are more usual in research-oriented universities, but even there they are not the majority.

These academics are proud of their institution but also more or less oblivious of the occasional attempts coming from the institution's top-level administrators to control or evaluate their performance. They are more interested in the rank their graduate programme achieves in the nation-wide peer-evaluations organised by the Ministry of Education than on any internal constraints. And, since research support is mainly provided by external sources, usually from federal and local science agencies, the constraints that are more conspicuous to them are the controls and exigencies put by these agencies. Their daily institutional experience revolves around their department, research centre or laboratory where they concentrate their research activity. For them, internal autonomy is also a relevant issue. Only strongly autonomous research units could prevent interferences from the more or less politicized environment of the university. Their dependence on the external support and experience with continually designing and implement projects in order to sustain the research unit's life reinforce a strong entrepreneurial profile.

Academic with this profile tend sustain strong links with the many scientific societies and

associations in the country and abroad. The views of scientific elite are represented by the prestigious Brazilian Academy of Science (AC), and, in a minor role, by the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science (SBPC). This stakeholder sustain a very specific position of power inside the agencies for support research in the country, both at the regional and Federal level, through the many peer-review committees that play a decisive role in the decision-making process of these agencies. They have been also a major actor in defining the policies for graduate education in the country. They were the more relevant player when it comes to organize the evaluation system of graduate programs in Brazil in late 1970s, and even now, the work of these committees have relevant impact even in the cognitive development of science in Brazil, since the peer-committees inside the science agencies function as a major forum for establishing quality standards for research and academic career, for legitimising subjects of study, theories and methodologies, and for evaluating international links and publishing patterns (Balbachevsky 2004, Coutinho, 1996).

Academic unionized lecturers: this group refers to academic who have stable and full-time contracts with public universities but do not meet the standards of professional achievements of Type II. Most of them have no doctoral degree, and are not involved in research and publishing. They not only publish less but when they do publish, they have access only to less relevant channels, with small, if any, impact. As such, they face difficult to assure access to funds to support research activity. They are almost entirely disconnected from the national and international community of peers. Thus, their professional identities are not defined by their professional degree, as with type I, nor by their individual achievements as an independent scholar and researcher, as with type II. Their professional identity is based in their affiliation to the institution and to the small group of colleagues with whom they share daily problems, concerns, and successes. In a sense, they tend to have a semi-professional identity, as depicted by Etzioni and collaborators

(1969): they tended to emphasize intrinsic rewards — such as the personal satisfaction of being a good teacher — as opposed to extrinsic ones. This explains why scholars with this profile so intensely opposed any attempts to introduce intra-institutional differentiation based in merit and prestige. For them, the only acceptable bases for differentiation are the ones produced by externalities in principle accessible to everyone, like seniority. The strength of this subculture inside the public universities enables us to understand the roots and the centrality of the egalitarian demands inside Brazilian academic culture, which are sustained by the academic unions inside the public universities.

Academic with this profile tend to be strong supporters of the academic unions inside public universities. These unions are strong not only at the level of university's governance structures, but, given the centralized way career and salaries are defined in the federal sector (and in most state level sectors), they also sustain stable and channels with authorities both at Federal and regional levels, as well as, good access to the media.

Academics in the private sector. consists of the academics teaching in private institutions. They cannot count on job stability and spend long hours in the classroom in order to earn a living. In the past, these professionals had no further education aside from the bachelor level and were almost entirely ignorant of the rules of the academic life. The new regulatory demands introduced by the reforms adopted by the federal government since 1990s introduced relevant changes in the profile of these professionals. Since the end of 1990s, the proportion of academics with good academic credentials working in the private sector has been increasing, introducing new dynamics and tensions inside the private institutions. Some of these institutions have reaped from the new opportunities. They targeted a new market niche composed by students from wealthier families, diversified their profile by launching programs with a better fit to the need of the labor market, and explored life-long education. These dynamics created an elite oriented private sub-sector, where competition

is mostly based on the differential their programs create to their alumni's curriculum and not on the low value of the tuitions charged to students.

But most of private sector is still confined to a kind of commodity-like market of mass undergraduate education, where they compete for students offering the less expensive education possible. For the academics working in these universities, the most relevant issue is to improve conditions of contract and expanding their autonomy inside classroom. In the last decade, the country's have witness trends for consolidation inside the mass oriented private sector, with the growth of mega teaching-only universities. The growth of these mega for-profit universities also introduced new dynamics in the academic market. One common feature of undergraduate instruction inside these institutions is its commoditization: all courses are framed in the same way, conformed to a fixed number of classes. Lessons' contents are standardized in handouts distributed to all students attending similar courses. As one may expect, the growth of for-profit universities contributed to lower salary levels of the academic personnel and to increased the level of turn-over in the academic market of the private sector.

Academics in the private sector are weak stakeholders. In the elite oriented institutions they may have stronger position inside the institutions, but that is all. Because of the Brazilian laws, they have no access to public funds for research, so are more or less permanently excluded of the more dynamics areas of research development. In the mass oriented institutions they have no power at all. While some of these institutions may value a good teacher and support some of his/her professional needs, as a whole, they are commodities, to be hired in times of growth and dismissed in bitter times.

Other internal stakeholders:

Student movements and unions: organized students movements and unions target students from the public universities. In the past, these movements were strong players, not only in

the subsystem of higher education but also in the major political arena. Nevertheless, the last time these movements played a relevant and independent political role was in the 1980s, at the time of the struggles for country's democratization. Since then, these movements narrowed their agenda to the internal life of the public sector and lost influence and visibility in the whole society. They support a highly politicized agenda, centered around the issues of maintaining the public institutions free of tuitions, supporting a radical understanding of the democratic governance for institutions in the public sector, electoral processes based in the rule "one person, one vote"³ for selecting the central authorities in the public universities, and pushing for expanding the amount of public resources compromised to education in general, and, as a consequence, for the public universities. This is, by the way, the most relevant present flag for this stakeholder at present: the demand for compromising at least 10% of the country's GDP with education expenses. Even if less relevant in the present than they were in the past, the students' movements still controls some decisive resources: In alliance with the academic and employees unions, they may play a decisive role for the results of the internal elections that select universities' rectors in almost all public universities⁴. They also have good access to the media and, most of all, they have "troops" that are easily mobilized for the fight and ready for radical actions that could contribute to expand and magnify any conflict. So, it comes as a no surprise that all stakeholders in the system tend to be wary of not to arouse the ire of this stakeholder

Employees unions: In the 1970s and 1980s most of the public universities have witness the

³ While many academics in the public sector tend to support governance rule for the public universities, they tend to favor weighting arrangements that could would accrue more strength to the academic staff inside the university, and also rules that would prevent non-academics for reaching the more relevant positions inside the university, which is also opposed by the most radical sectors in the students' movements.

⁴ Almost all public universities in Brazil adopt the democratic governance. The weighting rule of the different corps vary from one institution to another, but the democratic rules are almost a taboo in higher education policy agenda in Brazil. Only one public university does not adopt this rule, which is the University of São Paulo, the most prestigious university in the country.

growth of employees unions organized to represent the interests of their non-academic staff. While most of these unions are in general focused in internal affairs that are relevant for their audience, and tend to sustain an agenda mostly related to conditions of contract and work, career and salaries. They also sustain a more general, system level agenda, which revolves around the issues of preventing tuition fee in public universities, sustaining democratic governance for the universities, and expanding the conditions and status of the public services to all people working in the universities, including those performing contracted work, and against any kind of performance related evaluation and career decision.

While employees unions are weaker than the other stakeholders inside the universities, and have less opportunities for mobilizing their constituencies for the fight (except when it comes to salary issues), they are good allies both for the academic staff unions and for the students movements, easily adding their forces to any struggle inside the university and even at the system level. They also play a relevant role in the university's politics, especially at election times.

Public universities high authorities: in all public universities, the higher academic authorities come from the university's academic staff and tend to share the views of the academics. In some public universities, in general the more research oriented ones, and with strong commitment to PhD education, these authorities usually comes from the professional or scientific elites, share the views supported by these groups and tend to advance an agenda that reinforces the commitment with academic values, performance, and so on. Inside these universities, the channels linking the university with the agencies for support science and graduate education tend to be relevant, and issues related with research and graduate performance are also highly visible and compete with the problems of undergraduate education, which are pressed by the Brazilian society.

In other public universities, more teaching oriented and where graduate education is only a minor endeavor, these authorities tend to hold stronger links with the unions (both academic staff and employee unions) and advances an agenda more strongly related with the egalitarian values that were described above.

Nevertheless, no matter the university's profile, all universities' authorities have to face the demands and impositions coming from the high authorities both at the Ministry of education, The Federal Council of Education, and the Ministry of Science and Technology. Federal universities are highly dependent on the resources provided by federal government⁵. The employees' payroll (academics and non academics) is controlled by the Ministry of Planning, while most of the resources for current expenses come from the Ministry of Education, and budget is under rigid control.

Resources for improvements of the university's buildings, information infra-structure, and equipments must be negotiated with the ministry of education. It comes to no surprise the strong leverage power held by the ministry of education for influence the future of these institutions. In the recent years, the government has used intensively this power to introduce relevant changes in public universities. It has imposed programs for increasing the ratio of students per academic staff, for introducing evening programs catering for non-traditional students, cota programs for poor students and minority groups, and for unifying the entrance examinations that control access to undergraduate studies at these universities into a nation-wide exam with contents and questions defined and designed by the Ministry's officials.

⁵ Most of the state universities also sustain the same pattern of dependence toward their state government. However, a note must be added regarding the situation of the most prestigious universities in the country, the three universities owned by richest state, the State of São Paulo. In 1987, these universities reached a comfortable situation of ample and unrestricted autonomy. From that year on, the three universities had guaranteed access to 8% of the major state revenue, a tax applied to all commercial or service transaction occurred inside the state. The autonomy then granted to the São Paulo state universities resulted from a long and aggressive strike that united the academic staff and employees' unions from the three universities, as well as the student movement. Nevertheless, even these Universities were not altogether free from external pressures.

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Managers at the private sector. The management bodies inside private sector are torn between two different forces: the demands coming from the market and the impositions posed by the public authorities.

As in many other countries, private higher education in Brazil is under strict and detailed control coming from the public authorities. While private universities have more autonomy⁶, they still depend on the Ministry for recognize the degree's they confer, and even for maintain their university's status and even stay in business. In the last 10 years, relations between the private sector and government have been marked by an adversarial

⁶ To be considered a university, a higher education institution has to meet a series of requisites related to the number of professors with doctoral degrees and full-time contracts and at least two doctoral and four MA degree programs. Public universities can be created by law, but private institutions can only accede to university status after a formal assessment and approval by the Ministry of Education. Degrees provided by university and non-university institutions have the same legal value; universities, however, have the autonomy to create new course programs, while non-university institutions depend on case-by-case authorizations.

relationship and legal confrontations. The government's initiatives to this sector have a permanent *leit-motif*: to push strict control and restrictions. One usual instrument for this policy is to impose over teaching-oriented and tuition dependent institutions the attainment of high-academic standards that are to be found – if they are to be found at all - only in richly endowed research oriented public institutions. The rationale behind these demands is that teaching quality could only be assured by having similitude in the inputs. But the effects tend to be the opposite. For most institutions, answering these demands creates budgetary burdens that can only be faced by shortening the major item in their expenditures: academic salaries.

But these institutions also operate in a market where they must strive for students willing to pay tuitions in exchange of education. They need to consider the needs of current and would be students, search for alternatives to increase their share in a highly competitive education market. Many of the new developments in Brazilian higher education come from the responses provided by entrepreneurial institutions in the private sector to the new demands for professional and specialized training in the labor market. New programs exploring special skills⁷ in need are being organized by these institutions, which is one of the most striking developments of Brazilian higher education in the last few years.

External stakeholders

The most relevant issue and well articulated issue coming from the Brazilian society as a whole, especially from the more organized sectors, relates to access to higher education. Education has always been regarded as the major alternative for social mobility in the country. Above, this paper argued that the demand for expanding access to higher education has its roots in the social pact that supported the fight for democracy in the 1970s

⁷ Sampaio (2012) has explored this dynamics inside the private sector, arguing that these institutions are now exploring vocational training programs, like fashion design, *cheff*, event manager, and so on, offering it in a bachelor format.

and 1980s, and is a core issue in the policy arena of higher education.

This demand poses a particular challenge for the public universities. The standard description of the differences between the public and private sectors in Brazil tends to be as follows: public universities are free from tuition, but to be admitted, students have to pass very competitive entrance examinations. Private institutions charged tuition but admission is easy. Because of these differences, students from higher economic and education backgrounds tend to enter public universities, while the children coming from poor families, whose education background limited their ability to compete, enter the private sector. Even if this description was never fully accurate, the images associated to it are strongly rooted in the public imagination and contribute to weaken the stand of public universities in the policy arena and, particularly, damage the legitimacy of the option of limiting the growth at the undergraduate level in order to strengthen the research and graduate profile, especially, doctoral education. For most of the stakeholders in policy subsystem, the best way to appraise the social relevance of a public university is to assess their intake at the undergraduate level, assuring, at the same time, that at least some of the children from the poor families are attended. From this perspective, however, public universities are always on the defensive.

The issues of access and inclusion are particularly relevant for a small but highly organized and belligerent actor: the non-governmental organizations and grass-roots movements that fight for racial issues in Brazil. Because of its past history of slavery and colonization, the Brazilian society has always been marked by a strong correlation between race and social status. While the country never experienced racial segregation as a policy or even as a strong cultural trait, a degree of prejudice has always been present in the country's culture and in its social relations, creating special challenges for mobility and social esteem for the blacks, in particular, for those persons with strong African features. Thus, racial issues

produced the emergence of a number of grass-roots movements that strongly support an active policy for inclusion of minorities with the adoption of special quotas for minority children in the public universities.

In the major arena and especially among the politicians, racial quotas have mingled with the demand for social inclusiveness, creating pressures for special measures that could assure privileged access to public universities for the children of low income families, and, in particular, those that combine being poor and belonging to a politically relevant minority. Answering to these pressures, the National Congress passed a law imposing a quota of 50% of all places at the undergraduate level in Federal universities for students from low income families and minorities groups. The proposal faced no relevant opposition in the Congress and was enacted by the Executive in a record time. Other initiatives were also implemented by the government in order to face the demand for access. In 2002, the government launched the program “University for All”, which exchanged fiscal benefits for tuition exemption for low income and minority students in private sector. In 2007, the federal government launched a major program for the Federal Universities. The program exchanged support, funds and new academic positions with enlarging the number of enrollments, opening new bachelor programs and, in particular, establishing evening courses targeting non traditional students. Under this program, REUNI, enrollments in the federal system increased 35.6% in three years and the number of entrance positions for accepting freshmen in bachelor programs in Federal universities grew 108%, but the number of academic positions grew only 25.4%

Increasing the number of professionals with higher education qualifications, assuring that their training fits with the needs of the labor market and improving the quality of general education in Brazil are also the coming from the business sector. While some business leaders have also dedicate some time to the issue of increasing the entrepreneurial

capabilities of the students, in particular students at the graduate level, this is not a central demand often mentioned. The central issue revolves around the needs of the private enterprises for qualified manpower. The lack of quality of education both at basic and higher education levels is frequently mentioned as one of the major handicaps that jeopardize the Brazilian industry when facing the new demands of a globalized and dynamic global environment. In spite of all that, this stakeholder is a weak one, because it lacks a clear roadmap for implement the needed changes. In absence of a unified voice around clear cut demands, this stakeholder have small changes of prevail in the policy bargain.

Nevertheless, improving the quality of education at the undergraduate level is also an issue of high visibility in the agenda of government authorities. The question reached the public opinion in 1994, when the Ministry of Education implemented a National Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs, where the performance of all graduating students in the same career path was measured nationwide. Even though individual students' scores were not made public, the average performance of students in each institution was widely publicized and won great media coverage, with strong impact over public opinion. In 2002 the initiative was reformed and merged into a larger evaluation framework, the National System of Higher Education Evaluation (SINAES). SINAES initiatives includes periodical evaluation of freshmen and graduating students, accreditation to institutions, plus the traditional bureaucratic procedures that officially recognized a bachelor program, granting the legal value to the diploma issued by the higher education institution.

The high bureaucracy of the Ministry of Education and of the Agencies in charge of supporting science, technology, innovation and graduate education have a particular agenda related with research profile of the public universities. This agenda is partially informed by the debates that are present in the international forums and those advanced by

main players at this level, like the conferences organized by UNESCO or Documents and analysis issued by the European Union, the World Bank and so on. Improving the country's performance in the main science and higher education indicators is part of a wider agenda focused in reinforce the relative strength of the agencies vis-a-vis other bureaucratic bodies in government. After the crisis of the 1980s, these agencies developed an agenda for improving the country's performance in the many indicators that are internationally recognized as a way to reinforce their bargain power in front other bodies in the Government. For achieving this objective, they changed the mode of delegation in funding policies by setting incentives in order to guide the academic research to themes that are perceived as strategic for the country. The reforms has concentrated resources in some major initiatives that tend to favour consolidated research groups working in network with emerging ones, and established a competitive environment for research and graduate programs support in general.

It is also worthwhile a note on the influence of the political interests sustained by the dominant party in the Government's alliance. The election of Luis Ignacio Lula da Silva as president, in 2003, weakened the process of neo-liberal reforms implemented by the previous government, which was centered in introducing quasi-market dynamics for steering higher education in the desired direction. His party, PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores, the Workers Party) has wined the major elections in the country since then and is still the dominant force inside the government's alliance. PT has strong links with the unions and social movements. Thus, PT's proposals to higher education are strongly based on the demands made by public university teacher's and employee's unions. One of the most salient values sustained by these forces regards the importance of higher education as a public good, averting all debate regarding the private benefits accrued by the beneficiaries of the public investments in the area. Faced with the reality of the fact that a large part of

these investments in fact goes to children from privileged families, the answer is the adoption of quotas that would reserve the access to public higher education to children from underprivileged families.

Finally, the last stakeholder that must be mentioned in this review is the regional interests, specially the state level and local government. The interest of regional actors in higher education in Brazil has a long history. Since the 1940s, state level elites, in particular those from the poorer states, have been actively involved in the higher education policy, pressing for new federal universities to be created in their territory, and for funds to be directed to the universities that are placed in their space. These elites also strongly support the principle of reserving part of the resources for science and technology to be invested in the “less developed” regions.

The policy dynamics in Brazilian Higher education: the interplay among the main advocacy coalitions

The large list of the stakeholders presented above is a clear indication of how complex is the policy dynamics in higher education. Some of the convergent dynamics that can be noted are the process of intense massification of the access to higher education and the increasingly relevance of the access to higher education as a tool to improve the individual's prospects of social mobility and also as an asset for country's development. Accordingly, the system is facing strong pressures pushing for opening the policy-making process to other participants.

In spite of the added complexity created by the entrance of new players in the field, a careful exam of the main cleavages and the patterns of alliances in the area points out the presence of three main advocacy coalitions.

The first one is the *utilitarian coalition*, which encompass the perspectives from the private higher education, a relevant part of the business interests that are mobilized for the debate around the policies of higher education, and a part of the professional oligarchies. The main

value unifying the participants of this coalition is the perception of higher education as a private good, which legitimates the adoption of a utilitarian perspective for managing higher education institutions and supports the use of market mechanisms as the best way to steer higher education institutions. To this coalition, decisions about contents and formats of learning in higher education should be informed by the needs of the labor market and answer the demands of employability of the society as a whole.

The second coalition may be called the *egalitarian coalition*. The main forces present in this coalition is the unions in the public sector, the student movement, a relevant part of the authorities from teaching oriented public universities, and some relevant political actors, in particular those linked to the dominant party in the governmental coalition, the PT. While the members of this coalition sustain the perspective of higher education as a public good, the main value that distinguish its members relates to the egalitarianism as a principle that should prevail inside the universities. Members of this coalition tend to oppose to all decisions based on performance or merit assessment and are strongly in favor of decisions designed to correct inequalities and counterbalance injustices. Also they are against all modes of differentiation. The private sector is an evil that should be eradicate, or, if not possible, at least contained. But among public institutions, differentiation is bad. The ideal system of higher education for the members of this coalition is one composed only by tuition free public universities, all organized under the same model, with weak central control, supported exclusively by public funds and manned by a staff framed in an identical career structure where access to different positions would be accessible to all, based only on externalities accessible to all.

Finally, the last coalition articulate the values and perspectives of the *academic entrepreneurs*, which encompass the perspectives held by the scientific community but also a relevant part of the high bureaucracy from the agencies in charge of funding science and

graduate education, as well as a relevant part of the authorities from the research oriented universities. For members of this coalition the university is the place for supporting science. Forming the next generation of scientists is the main objective of higher learning and merit is the best way to organize hierarchies inside and between institutions. Higher education is a public good because of the social relevance of its knowledge contend.

The more efficient mode to describe the values sustained by the members of this coalition regarding the best way of organizing the university is to refer the ideal type described by Polanyi (1962) in his seminal work “The Republic of Science”. In his words:

“So long as each scientist keeps making the best contribution of which he is capable, and on which no one could improve (except by abandoning the problem of his own choice and thus causing an overall loss to the advancement of science), we may affirm that the pursuit of science by independent self-coordinated initiatives assures the most efficient possible organisation of scientific progress” (Polanyi, p. 3)

The strong individualism present in the perspective shared by this coalition also support one relevant issue for this coalition which is preserving the autonomy of the university and, inside the university, the autonomy and independence of the different unities that should work as “independent self-coordinated” bodies in search of the advancement of science. Entrepreneurialism is also a strong value inside this coalition, but it is a value attached to individuals and not to the institution as a whole.

Finally, for the members of this coalition, the social impact of science is a value with strong roots in the past, when the public support of science was justified for the relevance of science for the country’s quest for development.

Policy dynamics in Brazilian higher education:

One relevant way to understand the dynamics of the higher education policies in Brazil is to observe the pattern of alliances and conflicts that articulates the three coalitions around the

main issues present in the policy agenda. First of all, one can see how strong is the alliance that supports the perception of higher education as a public good, and oppose charging tuitions in the public universities. This position is rooted in the core values of two of the three coalitions, the egalitarian and the academic entrepreneurs.

On the other hand, a similar, but weaker, pattern can be identified regarding the debate around the mode of organization of public universities. Preserving the autonomy of the sub-unities inside the university is viewed as a vital issue for strong constituencies inside at least two coalitions: the academic entrepreneurs and the professional elites from the utilitarian coalition. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that this quest is not equally relevant to all constituencies of the last coalition, so the support for this principle cannot count with unrestricted support among the members of the utilitarian coalition.

Finally one issue that has been receiving increasing attention by all stakeholders is related to the role of higher education as a tool for the country's competitiveness and innovation. This issue brings together the ideas of the university as an entrepreneurial entity and the social and economic relevance of the knowledge produced by science. These ideas are strongly supported by the members of the utilitarian coalition but count with only a partial support from the entrepreneur scientists. For the members of the last coalition the concordance with these idea is conditional to the acceptance of the principle that preserve the initiative for building partnerships within the hands of the university's research groups. This pattern of support creates a very peculiar way of understanding innovation. In this view, the core innovation activity is the work done by the scientists. Science should provide the best solutions for the problems faced by the society and also it is science – because of its disinterested nature – that is the best judge of which are the relevant needs faced by society. Thus, in order to be relevant – and innovative – science should give attention to the strategic problems faced by society and search for solutions, which should be then passed

to the enterprises (public and private ones). The main instruments for innovation policy should be the support of research programs in areas deemed as strategic for the country.