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Efeitos da comercialização na expansão do Ensino Superior Privado brasileiro em comparação ao sul coreano

Effects of commercialization on the expansion of Brazilian private higher education compared to South Korea

Efectos de la comercialización en la expansión de la educación superior privada brasileña en comparación con Corea del Sur

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Resumo: Este artigo explora as divergências na mercantilização do ensino superior no Brasil e na Coreia do Sul, com foco na criação de instituições privadas de ensino superior em ambos os países e suas implicações na qualidade educacional e oferta de mão de obra. A análise busca compreender o crescimento de um país emergente (Brasil) em contraste com uma nação reconhecida por seu excelente sistema educacional. Discute-se que a Coreia do Sul apresenta uma proporção maior de graduados e menores taxas de desemprego, especialmente entre os com diploma universitário, em virtude de políticas governamentais bem-sucedidas que incentivaram a educação e a capacitação profissional.

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Palavras-chave: Mercantilização, IES, Coréia do Sul, Brasil, Educação, Financeirização.

Abstract: This article explores the divergences in the commodification of higher education in Brazil and South Korea, focusing on the establishment of private higher education institutions in both countries and their implications for educational quality and workforce supply. The analysis seeks to comprehend the growth of an emerging country (Brazil) in contrast to a nation renowned for its excellent educational system. It is discussed that South Korea boasts a higher proportion of graduates and lower unemployment rates, particularly among those with university degrees, owing to successful governmental policies that have encouraged education and professional training.

Keywords: Mercatilization, HEIs, South Korea, Brazil, Education, Financialization.

Resumen: Este artículo explora las diferencias en la mercantilización de la educación superior en Brasil y Corea del Sur, centrándose en la creación de instituciones privadas de educación superior en ambos países y sus implicaciones en la calidad educativa y la oferta laboral. El análisis busca comprender el crecimiento de un país emergente (Brasil) en contraste con una nación reconocida por su excelente sistema educativo. Se discute que Corea del Sur tiene una proporción más alta de graduados y tasas de desempleo más bajas, especialmente entre aquellos con títulos universitarios, debido a políticas gubernamentales exitosas que fomentaron la educación y la capacitación profesional.

Palabras clave: Mercantilización, IES, Corea del Sur, Brasil, Educación, Financiarización.

Introduction

This study is an analysis of the implications of the supply of labor with higher education in Brazil and South Korea. The study aims to fill a gap in the literature regarding the implications of the private sector on the supply and demand of labor with higher education between these countries. Even though there are studies with premises similar to the general objectives of this study, the specificity of analyzing the private sector as a creator of a supply of specialized labor with higher education is still little explored.

The study is also relevant because we have a very marked disparity in relation to basic education, measured by the PISA index (Programme for International Student Assessment) set out by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). This is the index that usually allows South Korea to be classified as a country of excellent quality. South Korea stands out as a leader in education quality, as evidenced by its performance in PISA 2022, where it excelled in the areas of mathematics, reading and science, along with other countries such as China, Japan, Switzerland, Estonia and Canada. The country is recognized

for its rigorous education system and the academic excellence it promotes. On the other hand, Brazil faces significant challenges in its educational area. In PISA 2022, the country was in the last positions, with scores well below the averages recorded by OECD countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). Despite maintaining a stable performance compared to 2018, Brazil is still well below the OECD average in mathematics, reading and science (G1, 2023).

As general objectives, we intend to analyze the process of Brazilian and South Korean higher education, highlighting the main market and social differences. As a specific objective, we propose to analyze the dynamics of private HEIs between the two countries in relation to the demand for labor with higher education, verifying the hypothesis that Korean higher education has lower unemployment among this population category, and highlighting previous studies by the authors on the Brazilian process of formation of oligopolies and the supply of higher education without a possible alignment with the labor market. To delve deeper into the topic, we highlight previous studies such as: "Commodification of higher education: an analysis of the impact of student financing on the educational mercantile process" (Ferreira, 2022; "Market Analysis of Mergers and Acquisitions By Brazilian Educational Groups" (Ferreira, S. M. L.; Sindeaux, R. V., 2022). We also highlight a previous study carried out on comparisons of Brazilian and Argentine higher education: "Comparisons between Argentine and Brazilian higher education: histories and effects of commodification", (Ferreira, S. M. L.; Sindeaux, R. V.; Oliveira, J. C., 2023).

Commodification, a topic that has been much debated in the literature, is also one of the central themes of this study. Commodification refers to the transformation of goods, services or activities into commodities, subject to the laws of the market and the logic of profit. This process involves the commercialization of areas of social life that were not previously considered as commodities. The commodification of higher education is a global phenomenon that has been the subject of much discussion in academia and in society in general. In this context, commodification implies the transformation of educational institutions into profit-seeking entities, often to the detriment of the quality of education and equal access (Carvalho, 2013; Diniz; Oliveira; Lima, 2021; Oliveira, L. S.; Carvalho, 2016; Serafim, 2011).

In Brazil and South Korea, this process presents some significant differences in relation to the creation of private higher education institutions and the quality of education and the supply of labor in the market. In this sense, for the analysis of the topic, this article is structured in five sections, with section two characterizing Brazilian higher education and

section three characterizing South Korean higher education. Section four compares the two and, finally, section five presents the final considerations.

Theoretical references

For the theoretical framework, we propose to analyze the implications of higher education formation in both countries in order to emphasize the offer of private higher education courses. With this, the history of the sector will be contextualized both in Brazil and in South Korea, in order to bring the main points of the rise of HEIs in both.

With this analysis, we highlight the objective of elucidating the role of population demand for higher education in the supply of courses, verifying how Brazil dealt with this issue and how the process also occurred in South Korea, which, as mentioned in the introduction and will be discussed in more detail throughout the article, has a quality of basic education substantially superior to that of Brazil. Brazil, as better evidenced in the following sections, during the 1990s made attempts to prioritize higher education to the detriment of basic education and, furthermore, opened doors for the private sector to promote the sector and, later, develop a market dynamic with the creation of large oligopolies of conglomerates of Higher Education Institutions.

The growth process of Brazilian private higher education

The private higher education in Brazil, since its early days, has emanated the characteristics of a reactionary system, which depended directly on the market to implement a consolidated business model.

There are three distinct moments to characterize what these education systems have become, and we will work with them: the demand of students for a supplement to public higher education, the implementation of public student financing systems, the consolidation of large educational oligopolies.

The rise of a reactionary market

The first point that highlights a reactionary market is the creation of the Law of Guidelines and Bases of Education - LDB of 1961 and the University Reform of 1968. To outline the scenario in which private educational institutions (IES) emerged, we must

emphasize that until the 1970s, higher education was formally public, however, with few institutions, limited access and a curriculum that was not very attractive to students.

In the 1960s, the shortage of university places was evident, with a large number of students who passed but were unable to enroll. To meet this growing demand, the military regime began to encourage the creation of higher education institutions, especially those focused on specific areas. The 1961 Education Guidelines and Bases Law and the 1968 University Reform were important milestones, opening the higher education system to the private sector. These measures allowed the creation of private institutions, as long as they met the requirements of the Federal Education Council, and introduced private universities, with autonomy to offer various courses and academic programs (Eapes, 1969; Martins, 2009).

With the University Reform of 1968, higher education in Brazil began to be divided into two distinct systems. The first, public in nature, was meritocratic and selective, with a strong emphasis on research and postgraduate studies. The second system, in turn, was composed of private and isolated institutions, offering shorter and more distinguished education, with no connection to research (Corbucci et al., 2016).

According to Sampaio (2011), the creation of higher education systems contributed to increasing the supply of places, but resulted in heterogeneity in the quality of courses. The disorderly expansion of the private sector generated problems such as lack of supervision and low-quality courses. In view of this, it was necessary to create a student financing system to enable access to higher education for those without financial resources (Schwartzman & Schwartzman, 2002). Despite the challenges, the University Reform was an important milestone in improving the quality of courses and promoting integration between teaching and research.

Table 1 – Evolution of enrollments in public and private higher education between 1961 and 1970

Year	Total Enrollments	Private Institutions Enrollment	Public Institutions Enrollment	% of public registrations over the total
1961	98.892	43.560	55.332	56%
1962	107.299	43.275	64.024	60%
1963	124.214	47.428	76.786	62%
1964	142.386	54.721	87.665	62%
1965	155.781	68.194	87.587	56%
1966	180.109	81.667	98.442	55%
1967	212.882	91.608	121.274	57%
1968	278.295	124.496	153.799	55%
1969	342.886	157.826	185.060	54%

1970	425.478	214.865	210.613	50%

Source: adapted from Levy (1986).

By analyzing the table presented, it is possible to note that higher education in Brazil underwent significant changes during the 1960s. Although public institutions lost ground to private institutions over time, they still remained the majority until the 1970s, when private institutions still had an exclusive non-profit status.

The public funding and the consolidation of Brazilian private HEIs

The 1980s were marked by an intense retraction in the economic activity of the Brazilian State. During this period, the country faced a series of economic difficulties, which resulted in negative variations in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The 1980s in Brazil were marked by a serious economic crisis, known as the Lost Decade. It was characterized by a drop in GDP, rising inflation, high external debt and industrial stagnation. Hyperinflation and growing public debt were central problems, influencing the governments before the Military Dictatorship; economic recovery only began with the Real Plan, implemented in 1994 (Bandeira, 2002).

In the 1990s, amid global economic recessions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) established guidelines that prioritized financing for basic education over higher education, as detailed in the document "Prioridades y estratégias para la educación" (Banco Mundial, 1996). This resulted in a shortage of investment in public higher education and boosted the growth of private education, which became more attractive due to the lack of resources in public education. This policy had significant impacts on the training of professionals and access to higher education, reflecting on the country's socioeconomic inequalities.

Table 2 – Evolution of enrollments in face-to-face undergraduate courses – Brasil (1960 to 2020)

Year	Public	Private	Total	% Public	% Private
1960	59.624	47.067	106.691	56%	44%
1970	210.613	214.865	425.478	50%	50%
1980	492.232	885.054	1.377.286	36%	64%
1990	578.625	961.455	1.540.080	38%	62%
2000	887.026	1.807.219	2.694.245	33%	67%
2010	1.461.696	3.987.424	5.449.120	27%	73%
2020	1.956.352	6.724.002	8.680.354	23%	77%

Source: Prepared by the author based on data from INEP.

Above, we can clearly see the stagnation and decreasing behavior of public higher education, which after the 1980s resulted in a relative decrease in enrollments. Private higher education, on the other hand, remained the main source of use for students, which became even more pronounced in 1999 and 2010, possibly with the creation and expansion, respectively, of student financing programs.

With the stagnation of public higher education, Brazil faced the need to expand private higher education institutions (HEIs), a movement that had been taking shape since the 1980s. This expansion was driven by the creation of the Higher Education Student Financing Fund (FIES) in 1999, aiming to facilitate access by low-income students to private education (Sguissardi, 2005). FIES sought to promote social inclusion and reduce educational inequalities, while at the same time encouraging the quality of private education, linking financing to the General Market Price Index (IGP-M). Although it faced challenges with transfers and defaults, the program contributed to the significant increase in access to private higher education from the 2000s onwards, especially with the implementation of programs such as the University for All Program (PROUNI) during the governments of Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, and with the economic growth of the period (Corbucci et al., 2016).

Table 3: Number of FIES loans and transfers – 2010/2020

Year	Number of financings by FIES	Total FIES Transfer to Private HEIs	Total FIES Transfer to Private HEIs (adjusted to the IGP [3] of 2020)
2010	75901	R$ 246.601.425,74	R$ 515.450.714,25
2011	154065	R$ 1.299.644.196,46	R$ 2.564.019.168,57
2012	377372	R$ 3.915.055.856,51	R$ 7.221.124.383,03
2013	559259	R$ 8.053.175.441,11	R$ 14.066.181.159,54
2014	731957	R$ 13.585.099.517,84	R$ 22.890.213.432,58
2015	287347	R$ 13.232.647.375,36	R$ 20.143.803.709,42
2016	203392	R$ 16.213.050.443,83	R$ 23.041.022.614,27
2017	258395	R$ 18.058.665.710,43	R$ 25.887.411.516
2018	258395	R$ 14.414.386.250,54	R$ 18.840.329.314,52
2019	85037	R$ 7.986.389.678,78	R$ 10.043.797.319,56
2020	32323	R$ 3.901.783.839,24	R$ 3.901.783.839,24

Source: Adapted from Ferreira and Sindeaux (2022), based on data from FNDE.

[3] IGP-M (FVG) index used, calculation based on the Central Bank of Brazil tool, Citizen Calculator, available at: https://www3.bcb.gov.br/CALCIDADAO/publico/corrigirPorIndice.do?method=corrigirPorIndice

The table presents relevant data on the evolution of FIES over the last ten years, highlighting the number of loans granted and the transfers made to private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). When analyzing the numbers, it is possible to see a significant growth in the number of loans granted, especially between 2013 and 2014, when there was an increase of more than 30%. However, from 2018 onwards, there was a drop in the total amount of transfers, which can be justified by the changes implemented by the government, such as the reduction of the program's interest rate and the limitation on the number of loans granted (Filizola, 2019). Below, we can see the impact of FIES on the main Brazilian educational groups and the clear relationship between the amounts of state financing and the growth and consolidation of this large oligopoly.

Table 4: Direct impact of FIES on large groups of Brazilian HEIs (2010-2016)

	Kroton		Estácio		Ser Educacional		Ânima	
Year	FIES transfer	Net Revenue	FIES transfer	Net Revenue	FIES transfer	Net Revenue	Repas e FIES	Net Revenue
2010	39,35	802,06	57,57	1.495,95	-	-	26,32	330,62
2011	192,01	833,21	14,36	1.540,55	-	-	71,85	366,91
2012	525,11	1.192,70	372,48	1.735,18	104,53	387,93	122,97	443,27
2013	926,63	1.534,53	765,78	2.231,98	210,48	588,95	245,63	538,58
2014	2.128,96	2.926,85	1.374,43	2.915,85	425,98	855	361,86	785,56
2015	2.928,73	4.151,80	1.558,46	2.824,85	532,64	1.148,32	419,24	925,82
2016	2.496,95	4.019,03	1.440,57	2.893,11	553,26	1.151,08	344,35	931,29

Source: Prepared by the author based on the article by Chaves; Santos; Kato (2020).

During the period from 2010 to 2016, there was a significant increase in FIES transfers to all groups of private higher education institutions. In 2016, Kroton led with the largest transfer, surpassing the mark of 2.4 billion reais, followed by Estácio, with approximately 1.4 billion reais. Although Ser Educacional had a small drop in net revenue in 2015 and 2016, Kroton, Estácio and Ânima showed significant growth in this indicator, with Kroton obtaining the largest net revenue in all years, reaching almost 4.2 billion reais in 2016. Thus, with the data above, we can see that FIES may have had a considerable impact on the net revenue of these institutions and that the program was fundamental for financing the education sector in Brazil during this period.

The consolidation of large educational groups into an oligopoly of private HEIs

The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), when receiving amounts of public resources, resources from investors and expanding their structures, found in mergers and acquisitions (M&A) a solution to maintain their growth.

The merger process involves the purchase of shares above market price, which is approved by the board of directors of the acquired company, with the aim of generating mutual benefits. These companies come together to form a new organization that controls all operations, while the merged companies cease to exist and a new company is created in their place. For further information on the subject, we suggest consulting: “Merger proposals, management discretion and stockholder wealth” (Peter Dodd) and “Mergers and Acquisitions from A to Z” (Andrew Sherman).

The Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), in search of solid investments, used their own resources or those from IPOs to acquire or merge with smaller HEIs (Ferreira; Sindeaux, 2022). Large groups took advantage of these smaller HEIs, many of which were in financial difficulties (Gomes; Machado-Taylor; Saraiva, 2018; Prado, 2016). Financial movements such as mergers, acquisitions and public offerings of shares on the Stock Exchange are primarily aimed at satisfying the interests of shareholders, despite contradicting educational principles (Carvalho, 2013; Oliveira; Carvalho, 2016).

he rise of the higher education market has been driven by the interest in profits, with private institutions dominating the majority of enrollments (FENEP, 2022; INEP, 2022). Large groups have been formed or established in the country in recent decades, with mergers and acquisitions between already consolidated companies, such as Kroton and Anhanguera, FMU and Rede Laureate, in addition to the entry of global companies into the market, such as the Advent International (Bezerra, 2013; Exame, 2011).

Although there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching in some institutions after they were acquired by large groups, none achieved the maximum score in the General Course Index (IGC) of 2017 (Pissinato; Coutinho, 2019). The Ministry of Education establishes deadlines for institutions with unsatisfactory evaluations to adapt, and may decertify them if they do not meet the requirements (Pissinato; Coutinho, 2019).

Across the World: The Commodification and Globalization of Higher Education in South Korea

The South Korea is a country that has been very successful in economic and technological development in recent decades. To this end, education has played a fundamental role in the formation of human capital and the generation of knowledge. The history of the creation of private universities and colleges in South Korea has its roots in the modernization of the country, which occurred after World War II.

The process of establishing public universities in South Korea began after the war, with the founding of Seoul National University in 1946. However, most of Korea's public universities were founded during the authoritarian military regime of Park Chung-hee in the 1960s and 1970s. During this period, the government invested heavily in education in order to promote the country's economic development and industrialization (Baik et al., 2011).

In parallel with the emergence of public universities, private colleges also emerged, which peaked in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The creation of these private institutions was driven by the growing demand for higher education and the government's inability to meet all the educational needs of the population (Moon, 2011).

The South Korean government has recognized the importance of private colleges in the development of higher education in the country and has adopted policies to support their expansion. The Higher Education Institutions Act of 1982 allowed private colleges to be established more easily while also establishing guidelines for the quality of education.

Since the 1990s, South Korea has undergone a series of political, economic and social changes that have affected higher education in the country. One such change was the transition from a manufacturing-based economic model to a technology and services-based model. As a result, there has been a shift in the profile of available jobs, with a growing demand for skilled professionals in areas such as information technology, engineering and financial services.

To meet this demand, private colleges have expanded their offerings of technology and business courses, attracting large numbers of students. The expansion of private colleges has also been driven by the growth of the South Korean economy, which has allowed for an increase in income and the ability to pay tuition fees.

According to Kim (2002), in 2000, the private sector’s share of enrollment was 20 percent for high schools, 55 percent for colleges, and 78 percent for four-year universities. The high degree of privatization was achieved through a coherent set of incentive

mechanisms. Financial incentives included government subsidies, tax exemptions, and other measures. The government did not provide direct financial assistance to private high schools until the 1970s, when admissions policy was reformed. As mentioned earlier, private high schools began receiving government subsidies in 1971 and private colleges in 1979. The amount of this subsidy is usually determined by the difference between the school's budget and a standard budget for a public school with the same enrollment size. The degree of privatization has increased for both high schools and colleges, reflecting the private sector's positive response to this subsidy incentive. Thanks to subsidies and other equalization policy measures, there was no discernible difference in quality between private and public schools. Since the early 1990s, the government began to subsidize private higher education institutions on a competitive basis.

Despite the importance of private colleges in the development of higher education in South Korea, these institutions have also faced challenges over time. One such challenge was the increasing pressure to improve the quality of education and ensure the employability of graduates. This pressure led to the development of policies for the establishment of high-level private universities and colleges, which meant that the government began to encourage the establishment of higher education institutions that focused on specific specializations. These initiatives paved the way for the establishment of a large number of private colleges and universities in South Korea, which gradually gained popularity and increased their reputation.

The 1990s and 2000s were particularly important for the private education sector in South Korea. During this period, there was a major shift in the structure of the country's education system, with the government working to ensure that the education system could compete globally. This shift led to the creation of more private colleges and universities, and also the expansion of existing ones.

However, the expansion of the private higher education sector in South Korea faced significant challenges. One of the biggest concerns was the quality of education. Many of the new private colleges and universities were considered to be of poor quality, with problems such as a lack of qualified teachers and inadequate teaching materials. This led to a negative perception of private education and the belief that public universities were of better quality (Kim, 2011).

Another challenge was the growing concern about rising tuition costs and inequalities in access to higher education. With rising tuition fees at private institutions, low-income families struggled to pay tuition fees and were therefore deprived of access to quality higher education (Chae; Hong, 2009).

In response to these concerns, the government began implementing policies to improve the quality of education in private institutions and make higher education more accessible to all students, regardless of their income or socioeconomic background. These policies included providing subsidies to help cover tuition fees and improving the quality of education in private institutions (Chae; Hong, 2009).

However, it is interesting to note the unique South Korean characteristic regarding the arbitrariness between public and private HEIs. There is no substantial difference between public and private institutions except in their funding, since these private HEIs are also governed by the same state regulations, with the only difference being in the form of admission. In this scenario, South Korean universities have been underfunded and regulated on a large scale by the government (Kim, 2011).

It is also worth highlighting a relationship between oligopolies and Korean higher education. In South Korea, there are large conglomerates of companies that form oligopolies or large monopolies, called chaebol (Choi, Cho, 2021; Choi; Hong, 2022; Hong, 2019). Chaebol represent a substantial share of the country's social and development intervention, being present in all areas of South Korea's actions, however, also in education.

The chaebol are largely responsible for the success of Korean private universities, with major sponsorships in HEIs' achievements, such as the implementation of Sung Kun Kwan University's Vision 2020, sponsored by Samsung Digital School. In addition to this sponsorship, the chaebols also functioned like large Brazilian groups in M&A with smaller HEIs, but in this case, the chaebols' M&A in education configures a vertical market (Kim, 2011). An example of such M&A is Chung-Ang University, a private university among the top 15 universities in South Korea, which was purchased by the Doosan Group in 2008, and Sung Kyun Kwan University is now operated by Samsung.

Implications of mercantile and globalized processes in Brazilian and South Korean private HEIs

This section discusses data, both bibliographical and from government sectors and private open data, about the main socioeconomic indicators of both countries.

This is an analysis that seeks to highlight the social differences in the higher education market in both countries, with the aim of bringing up the discussion about the effects of commodification, which are very evident in Brazil, in addition to adding topics for analysis

for later, more in-depth studies, given that the reasons for the demand and supply of specialized labor are too extensive.

This study proposes an analysis of general socioeconomic indicators of unemployment and the percentage of the population with higher education. These data allow us to understand supply and demand as a preliminary contextualization of this line of research.

The quality of teaching

The investments in basic education in Brazil are significantly lower compared to countries such as South Korea, according to OECD data from 2013 (Basso, 2017). In South Korea, the government subsidizes 80% of the budget for secondary schools, while in Brazil the situation is different, with greater investments in higher education to the detriment of basic education. The universalization of primary education preceded the increase in investments in secondary and higher education in South Korea, where teachers are highly trained and receive high salaries in basic education. In Brazil, completion of secondary education at the right age is low, with worrying school dropout rates (Basso, 2017).

In South Korea, 93% of young people complete high school on time, while in Brazil only 19% do so by the age of 17 in 2014 (Basso, 2017). This discrepancy is reflected in the difference in investments in basic education between the two countries, highlighting the need for more effective educational policies in Brazil.

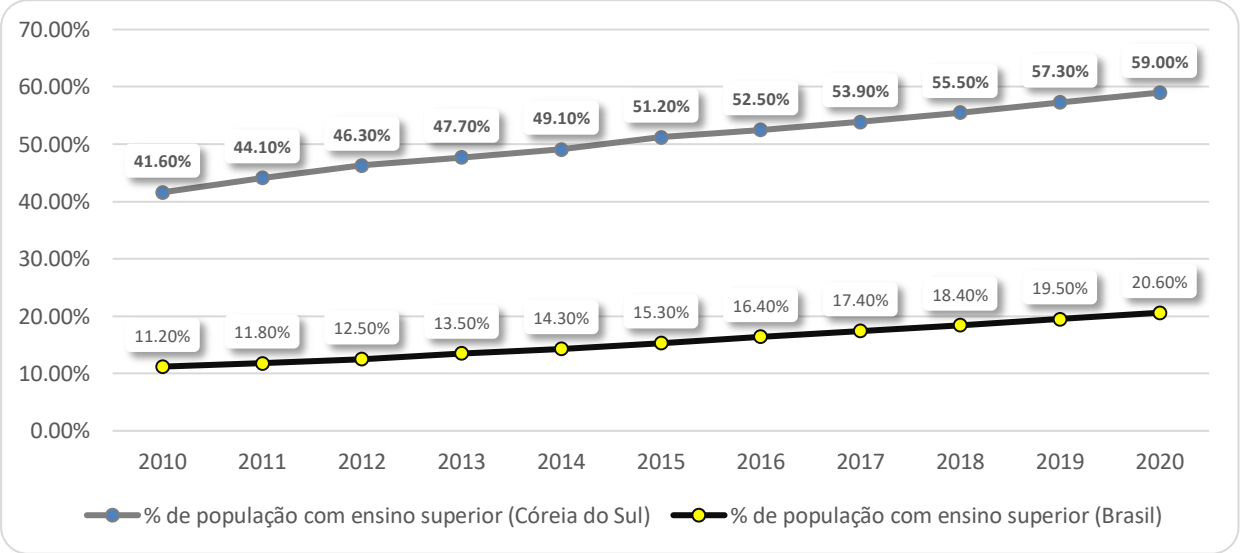
The 2018 PISA results revealed that Brazilian students scored below the OECD average in reading, mathematics and science (OECD, 2019). Although there was an improvement in average performance in mathematics between 2003 and 2018, most of this improvement occurred in the first cycles of PISA. Socioeconomic status was a strong predictor of performance, with advantaged students performing better than disadvantaged students. However, a proportion of disadvantaged students achieved high scores in reading, suggesting that disadvantage is not a determinant. Furthermore, disadvantaged schools often struggle with a lack of sufficient teaching staff, affecting their ability to provide instruction.

Regarding the economic implications of university expansion in Brazil and South Korea, both countries experienced a growing demand for university places (Kim, T., 2011; Martins, 2009). In Brazil, IMF intervention prioritized financing basic education over higher education, leading to a growth of private institutions to the detriment of educational quality (Chaves; Santos; Kato, 2020; Martins, 2009; Souza; Santos; Silva, 2020). In South Korea,

although the IMF also supported basic education, state regulation and the presence of chaebols limited the commodification of higher education institutions (Kim, 2011).

While Brazil witnessed an intense formation of financialized education markets, with a strong commercial characteristic and a depreciated quality of private higher education, South Korea supported investments in basic education, a path to great developmental returns. In summary, the basic difference between the two countries is the point at which Brazil used public financing for self-regulation of the market, almost as if it were a form of abandonment of the sector. Korea, on the other hand, continued, despite underfunding, to allocate a substantial portion of regulations to the private sector.

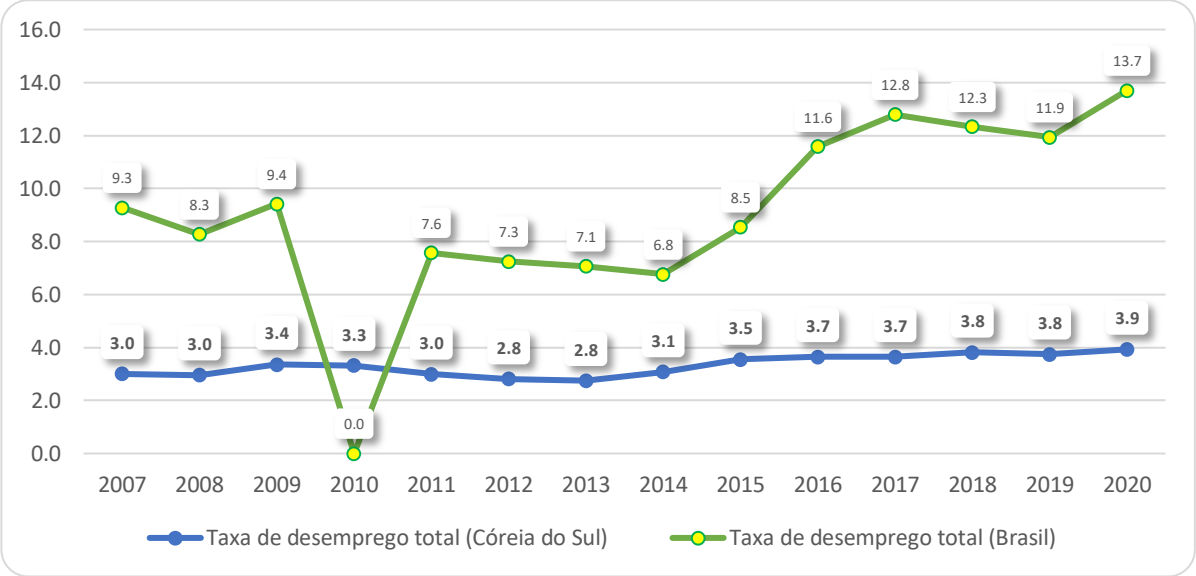
Chart 1: Population with higher education – Brazil and South Korea (2010-2020)



Source: prepared by the author based on data from the World Bank (MUNDIAL, [S.d.], [S.d.]).

The graph shows the percentages of the population with higher education in South Korea and Brazil, from 2010 to 2020. South Korea has shown a steady and significant increase in the percentage of its population with higher education, rising from 41.6% in 2010 to 59.0% in 2020. Brazil has shown a more modest increase, rising from 11.2% in 2010 to 20.6% in 2020.

Chart 2: Unemployment rate – Brazil and South Korea (2007-2020)



Source: prepared by the authors based on data from the World Bank (MUNDIAL, [S.d.], [S.d.])

Total unemployment rates in South Korea have been relatively stable over the years, while in Brazil there have been significant variations, reaching their peak in 2020. There is no data for total unemployment rate in Brazil in 2010.

There is a relationship between education and unemployment: South Korea, with a higher percentage of the population with higher education, had lower overall unemployment rates compared to Brazil. This may indicate a positive correlation between education and employability.

It is important to mention the effects of the pandemic during the last year analyzed (2020), which had significantly different impacts in both countries. In South Korea, emergency subsidies were made available in the form of aid, both in vouchers and in cash, with the aim of encouraging private consumption. In addition, budgetary support initiatives aimed at job creation, granting emergency loans to companies facing difficulties and the implementation of the Korean New Deal Project were highlighted. The latter aims to create 1.9 million new jobs and invest US$133 billion by 2025, with a focus on digital and sustainable projects (Rossi et al., 2022).

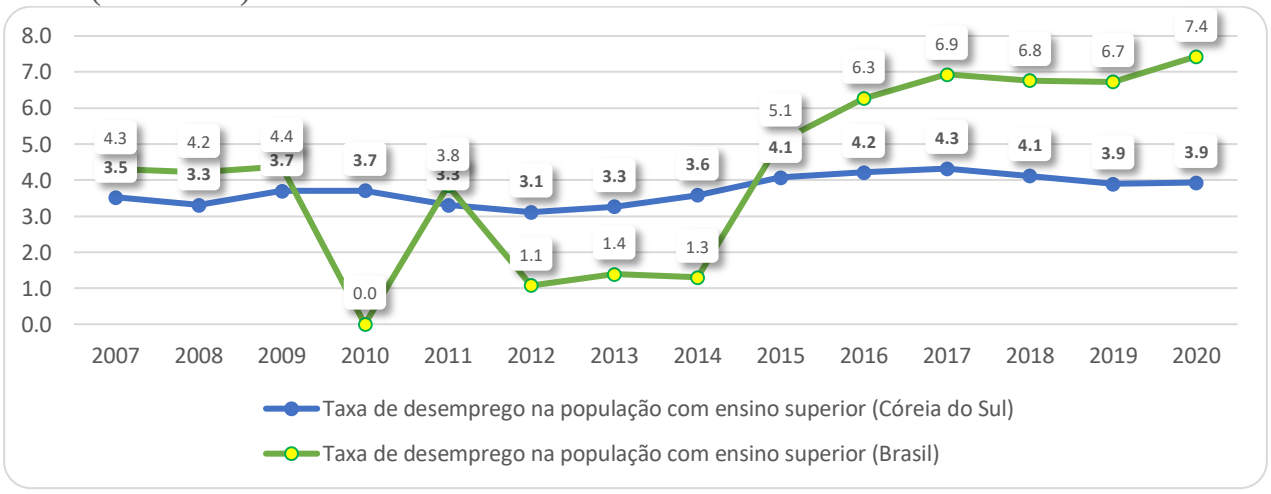
According to Rossi et al. (2022), in the field of labor, measures were adopted to reduce workers' exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace, including the development of protocols and the encouragement of flexible arrangements, such as teleworking and flexible hours. In addition, financial support was established for sick workers and their families, as well as for those who lost their jobs or income from self-employment. Companies were encouraged to

adjust their work schedules to preserve jobs, and financial support was offered to those with a drop in demand. In addition, utility bill payments, including electricity bills, were suspended.

Brazil, on the other hand, faced a very different effect, with an even greater accentuation of social inequalities. As in other nations, in Brazil, social isolation triggered rapid transformations in the employment scenario, most acutely affecting around 37.3 million people who work in the informal sector, deprived of labor rights such as the Severance Pay Fund (FGTS) and unemployment insurance. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO), the first cuts are mainly affecting those who depend on precarious work, such as outsourced workers, shop assistants, waiters, kitchen professionals, day laborers, baggage handlers and cleaning workers (Costa, 2020).

There is an even greater distinction in the indication of the use of skilled labor in both countries. Below, we can see the unemployment ratio for individuals with higher education.

Chart 3: Unemployment rate among individuals with higher education – Brazil and South Korea (2007-2020)



Source: prepared by the author based on data from the World Bank.

It is important to note that while Korea has attenuated and constant unemployment rates among the population with higher education, Brazil is completely inconsistent. We can see some very characteristic points in Brazil, after 2010, where FIES was expanded in order to supplement the market's need for skilled labor. On the other hand, after 2015 we see the decline of the labor market for skilled labor, where there is the beginning of the near-breakdown of FIES transfers and the creation of a substantially high mass of skilled labor in subfunctions (Filizola, 2019; Moreno, 2015).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

It was possible to see throughout the study that Brazil and South Korea, in a certain way, had the same triggers for the expansion of private higher education in their markets. However, while Brazil moved towards independence from the state where private HEIs took advantage of public funding resources to expand their oligopolies, South Korea invested substantially in its basic education before investing heavily in higher education, which, even in the private spheres, is highly regulated by the state.

It is also seen that while in Brazil some large publicly traded educational groups emerged, in Korea there was the presence of chaebols, which in fact have a presence throughout the market and governance in the country.

Regarding the implications of education quality, some statistics can be calculated from this data, where the average percentage of population with higher education in South Korea is approximately 48.5%, while in Brazil it is approximately 14.5%. The average overall unemployment rate in South Korea is approximately 3.4%, while in Brazil it is approximately 10.6%. The average unemployment rate for those with higher education in South Korea is approximately 3.8%, while in Brazil it is approximately 4.3%.

It is observed that, in general, South Korea has a much higher percentage of population with higher education than Brazil and, at the same time, has lower unemployment rates than Brazil both for the general population and for those with higher education.

In short, Brazil expanded its market by providing resources and autonomy to private HEIs, while South Korea formulated a plan to finance its basic education base in advance, until it began to invest in higher education and, with major regulations in HEIs, both private and public. While Brazil created a mass of diplomas without quality and market demand, Korea has the highest ratings of educational quality in the world and a low unemployment rate.

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