

Example of the effect of the enlightenment and colonialism on education in the co...

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Abstract

This paper illustrates in detail on the effect of the enlightenment and colonialism on education in the country of Brazil. Historical issues, events, institution and its current practices in higher education are enumerated in order to help the reader have a hint on what is happening in the education system of Brazil. The relevance of the paper is illustrated and the purpose of the topic on issues related to the study of higher education in Brazil as having advanced, based on the fact that it was the last country in South America to have a University. There is also the synthesis of the political influences of the historical period, which shows its effect on the topic in general. The Effect of the Enlightenment and Colonialism on Education in the Country of Brazil

The Countries Colonizing Nation

The term Enlightenment according to Tehie (2007) describes the “ gradual eradication of superstitious beliefs in society as a new emphasis on education and an increase interest in literature, mathematics, science, art, and advances in medicine occurred” (p. 1). A main component of the Enlightenment period was that God did not have to make all the decisions because people now could use their ability to reason. The thought behind this new reason is that every individual had its own unique powers to improve their lives here on earth, and improve the lives of future generations through education, specifically the advancement in science (Tehie, 2007). The colonizing of Brazils educational system focused on and centered on its “ geographic, economic, and social characteristics” (Tehie, 2007). Much the

like the effect of colonization on higher education in Africa were there was an attempt to create individuals who would be “ dominated, manipulated, exploited and oppressed” (p. 484) the Portuguese focus was no different. The conquering countries objective when setting up Colonial schools was to promote a slave, master mentality which was encouraged by the promoting of ideals that before the host country was occupied by the oppressor there was no host country. Quite simply put Colonial education in Brazil, designed to create loyal Brazilians, who would understand their role within their new environment (Zachernuk, 1998, p. 485).

Pedro Alvares Cabral a Portuguese navigator landed on the Brazilian coast in April 1500 staking his claim to this new territory for his home country of Portugal naming it Ilha de Vera Cruz, which means Island of the True Cross. A typical practice at this time, due to insufficient number of people to inhabit all of Brazil, the Portuguese would take control and occupy enough space a trading post and the surrounding area to draw on their wealth and resources (Hudson, 1997).

Type of Higher Education Imposed

In the sixteenth century the first educational institutions were founded by the Jesuits in Brazil, a Catholic denomination of the time. Till today higher education in Brazil remained mainly privately until the 1950's which were owned and operated independently as institutes (de Siqueira, 2009). The emerging middle class seeking for better social and cultural conditions has increased the overall investment into public higher education, but the private investment in higher education is historical in Brazil, dating back to

its founding by the Portuguese (Lucchesi & Malanga, 2010).

Influenced by the philosophy of colonialism of the minimum state, the expansion of higher education has prevailed well into the 21st Century. Since higher education has become a priority in Brazil constant debate between public versus private has been going on. The challenges of both options have been dealt with in a number of ways: (1) Public investment has dramatically increased, but needs more support; (2) The rigid control of the state over the private investment is more of priority than ensuring teaching excellence; and (3) ensuring underprivileged students have access to financial aid (Lucchesi & Malanga, 2010).

The Changes Colonialism Necessitated

The extreme centralization of decision making and the lack of adequate delegation of power during this time period was evident then and is still today in the educational system. This administrative structure and behavior pattern shows the origins of evolution since Brazil's colonial administration to present day with its many checks and balances designed to safe guard, but ends up hindering forward progression (Baer, 1969).

De Siqueira would suggest that due to Brazils original occupation it allowed for future control of its people, like when the military controlled Brazil for twenty years from 1964 to 1985 (de Siqueira, 2009) During this period of turmoil " state political parties were abolished and Congress closed, there was persecution, death, and the cancelling of social, political, and human rights" (de Siqueira, 2009). However, due to the ideology of the military government seeing the country of Brazil as a great power, education became

a national priority. The first graduate courses were created within public universities; standards were increased for teachers, and the encouragement of basic and applied research was introduced (de Siqueira, 2009).

Today's Higher Education as Influences by the Colonial Experience

The settling of Brazil by the Portuguese was different from a colonial point of view, because it was different than many American colonies established.

Those differences are very much visible today such as Brazil's language, the culture, and political union of the Brazilian territories. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for higher education in Brazil, being the last Latin American country to have a university. It was not until 1920 the first Brazilian universities were found based on the French model, " Humboldtian" established during the early years of the republic (Leite, 2010).

Despite Brazil being the last country to have its own university in Latin America, it has made great strides. They now have an enormous higher education system with enrollments topping six million. In the last few decades many changes have brought about reform in the areas of " centralization, diversification, evaluation and accreditation of the higher education system" (Leite, 2010). Referencing just the evaluation and accreditation changes had lasting leveraged transformations on a national and international scale, becoming a key factor in Brazil's " internationalization of higher education in a globalised world setting visible trends in the field of higher education in an emerging Brazil" (Leite, 2010, p. 672).

In terms of higher education the following Articles were introduced into law

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to move higher education in Brazil to compete in the 21st Century.

- “ Article 206, item V of the 1988 Constitution” recognized in public schools that tuition will be free;
- “ Article 207 stated” that universities administrative and managerial have the right to autonomy from the state, and its mission must focus on research, teaching, and service to society;
- “ Article 211, defined the role of the Federal government” in the financing of public education institutions and would serve the children’s education on the elementary level, and the states would be financial responsible for middle and high school levels;
- Lastly, “ Article 212 stated the Federal government would spend no less than 18% on funding and states and municipalities must spend no less than 25% from their tax revenues on education and by this time there was also the beginning of discussions to set a new national law on education” (de Siqueira, 2009).

What started out as institution organized as isolated establishments and most privately owned has developed into many public universities created focusing on research, activities and services desired as the best choice by the Brazilian people for higher education (Leite, 2010).

The history of Enlightenment and colonialism in contrast between the original inhabitants of Brazil to what Brazilian society is today has been a story with many chapters of hardship. From the beginning when the Portuguese first discovered and landed colonists in Brazil with the intention to seize land for its valuable resources and make slaves of its inhabitants to cultivate those resources charted a course of destruction not only for its

people but for the development of the educational system.

With effects “ to the more recent but equally damaging government policy of 'integration', whole populations have been decimated by disease, de-cultured and in many areas made landless” (Hodgson, 2004). As for the lasting repercussions on education one must take a critical approach and conclude the issues surely influenced the prolong effect that it took for education to progress into the system that it is today.

Historical issues, events, institutions and their relationship to current practices in higher education

First and foremost, the establishment of military rule in 1964, higher education policies had their aim of guaranteeing Brazil's insertion in the multiple-functionality of dependent capitalism. Therefore, in 1968, as a result of the hardening of the military administration, two significant documents were drawn as landmarks of the improvement of higher learning in Brazil. In order to put the contents of the document into practice, the institutions would have to be changed into confidential foundations (Leite, 2010). The document which was also known as the Meira Mattos Committee Report made a wide-ranging evaluation of the country's political, social and economic status. Essentially, the document proposed what was known as measures that can be used to act in response to the social demands for right of entry to the universities. As an outcome, the process introverted the dissatisfaction of students and intellectuals.

The current situation in Brazil entails that for one to access higher education, he or she requires the conclusion of a secondary school certificate, and acceptance by the higher education institutions concerned. There is no

standardized national examination for university entrance, but in some areas, there are firms that carry on unified exams for pools of institutions. The pools of institutions are often handling many students and tend to allocate them according to their abilities and preferences (Hodgson, 2004). Last, but not least, the admittance to graduate programs is more similar to the American pattern, and hence, it shows that the system of Brazil is much more advanced as opposed to their initial way of learning.

The purpose of the paper and the relevance of the topic to the study of higher education

The purpose of the paper to illustrate in detail on issues related to the enlightenment and colonialism on education in the country of Brazil. It shows the historical issues, events that took place in Brazil before it became what it is today in aspects of higher education. Furthermore, it shows how institutions brought up in Brazil relate with the current practices in higher education Brazil, which is a way that helps the reader to have more information on how the Brazilian education system has evolved. Essentially, the implication being enumerated in the document is to demonstrate that Brazil as a nation has come from far in terms of education. This is as it has passed through all the hardships that other colonized states have passed through to reach where they are as of today.

The paper also discusses on the historical and contemporary literature as a framework for the issues, events and institutions chose. Essentially, more detail on Brazil and aspects of how the effect of enlightenment and colonialism on education in the country of Brazil is brought into light.

Additionally, the social, economic and political influences of the historical

period in Brazil initiated in order to show their effect on enlightenment and colonialism on education in Brazil (de Siqueira, 2009). It is therefore, a good paper as it is meant to generate more meaning on how the higher education system came to be as seen in the current generation. It is true as the country has gone through a lot, but the outcome is vivid, in terms of prosperity and modernization in the education system.

Social, economic, and/or political influences of the historical period, showing their effect on the topic

When it comes to economic issues, economies that were growing at a high rate brought about new expectations to universities as local and provincial government pledged more resource in exchange. The outcome has been a demand for better roads and as a result, better modes of attending the education has been undertaken. Whereas political issues, the military played a big role as their presence led to the contribution of education in the Brazilian state. Therefore, the contributions made by social, political and economic issues in Brazil have been significant as they have led to a better higher education system in Brazil (de Siqueira, 2009). It is true as they currently have an advanced education system that is worthy to be invested in by any private investor. Research findings and their relationship to contemporary trends in higher education

The outcome of the document is very interesting based on the fact that it shows that contents of the Brazilian education system as to how it has evolved, and its significance to the country. The way the education system is operated in the education is very interested and updated based on a number of reasons (Baer, 1969). One of the reasons is that the education has its

own advanced laws that ensure that the contents of higher education are operated in the right manner and with the right rules and regulation. Basically, the current education system has been formed in such a way that everybody is free to learn as long as he is qualified a certain level. Presence of more learned individuals in the society has also played a huge role as they tend to emulate that education is the key to modern life. The presences of people who are learned tend to motivate the public to participate in learning in order to be like them or better them. Essentially, education is one of the key entities in life that moulds the society to what it is as of today (Hudson, 1997). So many people in the current generation can be named as having succeeded as a result of education. An example is president Obama of the United States who is a president because of his ability to read, write and compose himself in front of the public without any problem. Therefore, education in the current generation is the key to everything.

Conclusion

This paper enumerates in detail on the effect of enlightenment and colonialism on education in Brazil. Issues related to social, political and economic perspectives as contributors to the education system in Brazil are also demonstrated to shoe their significance to the current higher education in the country as compared to the past years. Taking possession of Brazils' educational system focused on and centered on its " geographic, economic, and social characteristics." The conquering countries objective when setting up Colonial schools was to promote a slave, master mentality which was

encouraged by the promoting of ideals that before the host country was occupied by the oppressor there was no host country (Saad & Malanga, 2010). Quite simply put Colonial education in Brazil, designed to create loyal Brazilians, who would understand their role within their new environment. Additionally, Brazil as a nation has come from far in terms of education because it has passed through all the hardships that other colonized states have passed through to reach where they are as of today (Baer, 1969). There is no homogeneous countrywide examination for university entrance, but in some areas, there are firms that carry on amalgamated exams for pools of institutions. Moreover, the admittance to graduate programs is more similar to the American pattern, and hence, it shows that the system of Brazil is much more advanced as opposed to their initial way of learning. The education structure in Brazil has been advantageous to the society as in general based on the fact that has been playing their game fairly. Evidently as per the document, the higher education system in itself does not favor anybody based on their gender status. As a result, the outcome has been that more women are learning in order to support their families in terms of employment as opposed to the previous years.

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