

THE ADMISSION OF WOMEN TO UNIVERSITIES IN BRAZIL (1940-1980)

*O INGRESSO DE MULHERES NAS UNIVERSIDADES NO BRASIL (1940-1980)*

*EL INGRESO DE LAS MUJERES A LAS UNIVERSIDADES EN BRASIL (1940-1980)*



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**ABSTRACT:** The study aimed to investigate how women entered higher education institutions in Brazil in the period between 1940 and 1980. The period studied coincides with the greater insertion of women in the labor market and, as a result, the need for professional preparation. The stipulated historical cut covers a period of forty years and considers the data provided by the General Censuses from the years 1940 to 1980, to identify the composition of the student and teaching staff and the courses most attended by women. The research has a bibliographical and documental character. The results showed that the entry of women, as students or professors, into higher education occurred gradually, being little observed in the 1940 and 1950 censuses, growing in 1960 and 1970 and, finally, almost equaling to the number of men in 1980.

**KEYWORDS:** History of Education. Higher Education. Woman. Brazil. General Census.

**RESUMO:** O estudo teve por objetivo investigar como ocorreu o ingresso das mulheres nas instituições de Ensino Superior, no Brasil, no período compreendido entre 1940 e 1980. O período estudado coincide com a maior inserção das mulheres no mercado de trabalho e, em decorrência disso, da necessidade de preparo profissional. O recorte histórico estipulado abrange um período de quarenta anos e considera os dados disponibilizados pelos Recenseamentos Gerais dos anos de 1940 a 1980, no intuito de identificar a composição do quadro de discentes e docentes e os cursos mais frequentados por mulheres. A pesquisa tem caráter bibliográfico e documental. Os resultados evidenciaram que o ingresso de mulheres, como discentes ou docentes, no Ensino Superior, ocorreu de forma gradativa, sendo pouco observado nos censos de 1940 e 1950, vindo a crescer em 1960 e 1970 e, por fim, a quase igualar-se ao número de homens em 1980.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** História da Educação. Ensino Superior. Mulheres. Brasil. Recenseamento Geral.

**RESUMEN:** El estudio tuvo como objetivo investigar cómo ocurrió el ingreso de las mujeres en las instituciones de enseñanza superior en Brasil en el período comprendido entre 1940 y 1980. El período estudiado coincide con la mayor inserción de la mujer en el mercado de trabajo y, en consecuencia, la necesidad de formación profesional. El corte histórico estipulado abarca un período de cuarenta años y considera los datos proporcionados por los Censos Generales de los años 1940 a 1980, con el fin de identificar la composición del personal estudiantil y docente y los cursos con mayor asistencia de mujeres. La investigación tiene un carácter bibliográfico y documental. Los resultados mostraron que el ingreso de mujeres, como estudiantes o profesoras, en la educación superior se dio de manera paulatina, observándose poco en los censos de 1940 y 1950, creciendo en 1960 y 1970 y, finalmente, casi igualando el número de hombres en 1980.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Historia de la Educación. Enseñanza Superior. Mujeres. Brasil. Censo General.

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## Introduction

The research deals with women's access to Higher Education<sup>3</sup> in Brazil, investigating the number of women teachers and women students in this type of education, in the period between 1940 and 1980. The historical cut is justified by corresponding to the years in which there was an increase in the entry of women into the job market and, consequently, the need for professional preparation to occupy positions with better salaries. The study also contributes to the discussion on gender equality in the job market.

In Brazil, as Louro (2004, p. 471, our translation) observes, “the last decades of the 19th century point [...] to the need for education for women, linking them to the modernization of society, the hygiene of the family, to the construction of citizenship among young people”. Permission for women to attend Higher Education establishments<sup>4</sup>, granted by Decree no. 7,247, of April 19, 1879 (Carlos Leôncio de Carvalho Reform), in its 1st article, by making “higher education throughout the Empire” free (BRASIL, 1879), it was just the first step for them to access training higher. Despite this possibility, in the final decades of the Empire and in the first half of the 20th century, women's participation in Higher Education was still not very representative. Consistent data regarding the composition of the number of students and teachers in the censuses and which courses were most attended by women, however, were obtained in consultation with the General Censuses of the years 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980 (IBGE, 1940, 1950a, 1960, 1970 and 1980), which were compelled to obtain an answer to the research question: how did women enter Higher Education institutions in Brazil in the period between 1940 and 1980?

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<sup>3</sup> This article derives from one of the chapters that make up the thesis entitled “ Tensions between what is permitted and what is achieved: trajectory of teachers in the Education Sector of the Federal University of Paraná (1950-1973)” (RIBEIRO, 2023b). Thesis defended by the author of the article and supervised by the co-author.

<sup>4</sup> Although the focus of this article is on women's entry into Higher Education, the lack or difficulty of access is also evident in the previous stages. The law of October 15, 1827 introduced several provisions relating to public instruction. The text of the law addressed the creation of schools, the organization of teaching and the distinction between the formal education of boys and girls, as well as examinations, admissions and teachers' salaries. The law of October 15, 1827 (BRASIL, 1827) established that in “[...] all cities, towns and more populous places” there would be sufficient primary schools, as well as schools for girls in the most densely populated locations, in which the presidents in council deemed it necessary to establish such institutions, as well as masters to teach in women's schools and masters for men's schools. In practice, according to Louro (2004), there were few schools for girls, while the number of schools for boys was greater; some schools were administered by male or female religious congregations, while others were maintained by lay people, with mistresses and masters. Almeida (2011) highlights that, according to official statistics, throughout the Empire in 1832 there were 162 schools for boys and only 18 for girls, with 32 schools for boys and 8 schools for girls not operating due to a lack of teachers. According to Almeida (2011), the official report from the Ministry of the Empire lamented the fact that schools for girls were poorly attended and, in the view of the imperial ministry, parents did not want their daughters to learn to read, justifying that female instruction should be limit yourself to household chores and sewing. In short, the ideal of creating these institutions did not materialize in society.

Using a historical perspective, it was decided to carry out bibliographical and documentary research. The studies by Matos and Borelli (2016), Rosemberg (2016), Cunha (2016), Pinsky (2016a) and Romanelli (2017) contributed to the understanding of the historical context. Documentary research, based on Brazilian censuses that present statistical studies relating to the population through the collection of various information, consisted of strong support for the qualitative approach. Following the studies by Flick (2009), quantitative data was taken as the first movement and, as the second, qualitative analysis. Firstly, the censuses published and made available by IBGE were searched, followed by an analysis to identify the relevant indicators for the topic in question. In order to collect and store the data, spreadsheets were created filled with information extracted from the censuses: these spreadsheets are available in Ribeiro (2023); subsequently, the collected data was analyzed qualitatively, observing the historical context and other studies. This combination between the two approaches made it possible to obtain “broader knowledge about the research topic, compared to the knowledge provided by a single approach” (FLICK, 2009, p. 46, our translation). However, it can be stated that the qualitative approach predominated, considering that, in studies on the situation of women, it is considered the most appropriate.

General Census carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) was considered, up to the fifth census carried out by the same institute. The analysis was established until the 1980 census, since this document presents significant data about the expansion of Brazilian Higher Education that occurred in the 70s of the 20th century. During this period, the gradual entry of women into Brazilian Higher Education can be observed.

Previous research has focused on the phenomenon of women entering Brazilian Higher Education institutions. Romanelli (2017) contributes with his research on the reform of Higher Education through census data and based on legislation, but does not problematize the entry of women into this type of education. Guedes (2008), based on the analysis of demographic censuses from the years 1970, 1980, 1990 and 2000, discusses the female presence in university and postgraduate courses, revealing the significant entry of women into traditionally male courses. Santos and Costa (2021), equally, analyzed the massive entry of women into Higher Education based on national censuses published between the years 1970 and 2010, taking issues of gender, race and class into perspective. Audi and Cortela (2020) sought to present the training and gender profile of students graduating from PPGEC between the years 1997 and 2016. Queiroz and Santos (2016) examined the participation of black women in courses of high social

prestige present at UFBA, in years 2006 and 2010. Despite the contributions to the theme, the studies mentioned analyze other issues or are based on different time frames.

### **Women: Not allowed to attend Higher Education**

Women's access to education, at its various levels, occurred slowly and late in Brazil. Cunha (2016) highlights that, in Bahia, in 1550, Theology and Arts courses were taught to male children of: civil servants, planters, cattle breeders, artisans and, in the 18th century, miners. There was a prohibition in Portugal for universities to be created in its Colonies, as the aim was to prevent university students from instigating independence movements. Furthermore, Cunha (2016) points out, there was no way to provide teachers for potential universities in colonized countries.

However, Higher Education institutions in the currently established model are not the result of Jesuit activities. “The currently existing Higher Education institutions resulted from the multiplication and differentiation of institutions created at the beginning of the 19th century, when Brazil was granted the *status* of United Kingdom to Portugal and Algarve” (CUNHA, 2016, p. 153-154, our translation). It is noteworthy that in 1808 the School of Surgery was created in Salvador, and the Anatomical, Surgical and Medical School in Rio de Janeiro. Instead of universities, chairs of Medicine and Engineering were created “[...] in establishments of extreme simplicity”. Matos and Borelli (2016) attest that, in this context, women who had economic conditions and wanted to become doctors needed to attend universities outside the country.

In 1827, legal courses began in Olinda and São Paulo, “[...] which completed the triad of higher professional courses that for so long dominated the panorama of Higher Education in the country: Medicine, Engineering and Law” (CUNHA, 2016, p. 153-154, our translation). Higher Education, in the Imperial Period, was intended to prepare elites and bureaucrats who would work in the State apparatus. Romanelli (2017) adds that Higher Education was established during the period of stay of the Portuguese Royal Family in Brazil, between 1808 and 1821, but it was only in 1920 that the University of Rio de Janeiro was created, by determination of the Federal Government. After the first Higher Education institutions were founded, it took practically a century for the first university to be established in Brazil. During this period, what mattered was having a higher institution that prepared “[...] political elites and higher-level professional staff in close accordance with the political and social ideology of

the State, in order to guarantee the 'construction of order', the stability of monarchical institutions and the preservation of the oligarchic regime" (SUCUPIRA, 1996, p. 67, our translation). It can be seen that, due to the purpose for which these institutions were created, access to women was not allowed.

Until the final decades of the Empire, women were denied entry into Higher Education establishments in Brazil, however, there were those who advocated changes. Among the defenders, Hahner (2011) cites Tobias Monteiro, who used examples of European women who completed their medical studies and refuted physiological theories about the size of the female brain; and Joaquim Monteiro Caminhoá, who, in addition to supporting archetypes of European doctors, also highlighted the benefits of having women in the profession to assist other women who were shy about sharing their illnesses when examined by men.

In the 1870s, debates began in favor of admitting women to medical schools. With Decree no. 7,247, of April 19, 1879 (BRASIL, 1879), which dealt with the Reform of Primary and Secondary Education in the Municipality of the Court and Higher Education throughout the Empire, the prescriptions were regarding the admission of students and the opening of institutions. The decree, arising from the so-called Leôncio de Carvalho Reform of primary and secondary education at the Court and Higher Education throughout the Empire, "[...] exempted non-Catholics from religious classes and opened the education system to the private sector, promising changing the spirit of higher education, but freeing the enrollment of women in medical schools" (HAHNER, 2011, p. 470, our translation). Regarding the opening of institutions, the text provided: "Art. 20: The association of individuals is permitted to found courses that teach subjects that constitute the program of any official Higher Education course" (BRASIL, 1879). From these words, it is understood that the State gave the possibility for private initiatives to open Higher Education institutions as long as they followed the official course programs.

Regarding registrations for Higher Education, the text provided: "Art. 20: pre - registration; present an examination certificate"; "prove a person's identity" (BRASIL, 1879, our translation). To enroll in a Higher Education institution, it was necessary to be qualified – presenting secondary education exams – and have an identity record. It can be seen that there were no restrictions regarding the sex of the students, nor in relation to the economic, social or

cultural situation for entering this type of teaching. With this decree, women were allowed to enter colleges and higher education institutions<sup>5</sup>.

However, limits and restrictions were imposed: women had to stay in separate places and classes. Rita Lobato was the first white woman to graduate from the Faculty of Medicine of Bahia, in 1887. Maria Falce de Macedo, the first woman to graduate in Medicine in Paraná, in 1919, declared that other Curitiba girls did not speak to her, since “it was ugly” for a woman to handle naked corpses in the presence of men. Mirtes de Campo was a pioneer in the field of Law, graduating in 1899, and obtained her registration at the Instituto dos Advogados in 1905. The resistance she faced “[...] to be recognized in the profession provoked her engagement in the fight for the rights of women” (MATOS; BORELLI, 2016, p. 136, our translation). Regarding black women, the obstacles were even greater: only in 1926 did Maria Rita de Andrade obtain a Bachelor's degree from the Faculty of Law of Bahia and Enedina Alves Marques was the first black woman to graduate in Civil Engineering from UFPR. As for indigenous women: in 2006, “Maria das Dores de Oliveira, from the Pankarau ethnic group, was recognized as the first indigenous woman to obtain a doctorate” (ROSEMBERG, 2016, p. 337, our translation). It took a lot of courage for these pioneers to receive their Higher Education degrees.

The group of pioneering women who attended college was small and they constantly faced male hostility with aggressive words, states Hahner (2011) based on studies of newspaper publications of the period aimed at a female audience. Matos and Borelli (2016) also attest that the first Brazilian doctors experienced great hostility during the exercise of their profession, suffering less opposition in the specialties of Gynecology, Pediatrics and Obstetrics. Doctor Maria Falce de Macedo, due to prejudice against female doctors, did not find the possibility of practicing and, as a result, pursued an academic career and became the first woman to occupy a university chair in Brazil, as narrated by Ganz (1994). It is true that there might not be, for women, normative restrictions regarding entry into Higher Education, however, the social context of the time, marked by pressures and prejudices that sought to subject them, resulted in

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<sup>5</sup>Warde and Rocha (2019) recall that in North American and British Higher Education, women were the first group of excluded people who gradually broke the monopoly of the contingent previously exclusively composed of white and male people. “The North American historiography in which they are inserted discusses this issue from the notion of *separate spheres*, and analyzes the different ways in which women left the private sphere of caring for children and the home and moved into the public sphere of the market. For both elites and middle-class women, inclusion in Higher Education was fundamental so that this transition implied both an occupation 'appropriate' to the female role and to their social position” (WARDE; ROCHA, 2019, p. 71, our translation).

there being few and not without challenges those who formed until the first decades of the 20th century. In this sense, building resistance on their part was fundamental for changing behavior.

In 1930, political changes again interfered in the university field. The Francisco Campos Reform was implemented by the newly created Ministry of Education and Public Health. Among the implementation of normative actions, Decree no. 19,850, of April 11, 1931 (BRASIL, 1931), which provided for the organization of Higher Education in Brazil and the adoption of a university regime. The first university to be created and organized, “[...] according to the norms of the University Statutes, was the University of São Paulo, created on January 25, 1934” (ROMANELLI, 2017, p. 134, our translation). In 1935, the University of the Federal District was created, extinguished in 1939 when it was incorporated into the University of Brazil, “[...] into which the University of Rio de Janeiro became, since 1937” (ROMANELLI, 2017, p. 134, our translation). Also in 1935, the University of Porto Alegre was created, according to Fávero (2010). Due to policies aimed at Higher Education, more institutions were implemented in Brazil.

Before the decree, there were few universities in the country and they were not organized according to the new statute. The University of Rio de Janeiro had been founded in 1920 and the University of Minas Gerais, which brought together the Schools of Law, Engineering and Medicine, in 1927. The University of Paraná, which was created in 1912, was no longer recognized <sup>6</sup>as such in 1915 and became official again through Law no. 1,254, of December 4, 1950 (BRASIL, 1950), which provided for the Federal Higher Education System. Among the establishments maintained by the Union, in addition to the Universities of Minas Gerais, Recife and Bahia, was the Federal University of Paraná. After the 1930s, “[...] public and private universities began to emerge throughout the national territory, with a number that, in 1969, already reached 46” (ROMANELLI, 2017, p. 134, our translation). It is possible to have an understanding of how the student body was composed and the number of diplomas

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<sup>6</sup>The University of Paraná “[...] was recognized on March 27, 1913, by virtue of Law No. 1,284, of the State Government, under the presidency of Carlos Cavalcanti de Albuquerque. This included the following courses: Legal and Social Sciences, Civil Engineering, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Commerce and Obstetrics. Its statutes were approved on September 18, 1913, based on the aforementioned Federal Decree No. 8,659, adding six courses: Propaedeutics, Industrial Engineering, Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, Agronomy, Veterinary, Medicine and Surgery” (GLASER, 1988, our translation). Regarding the Federal University of Paraná, the consolidation process spanned more than four decades. Wachowicz (2006) demonstrates the entire process of genesis and consolidation of the University of Paraná. The University of Paraná was created in 1912, comprising the Faculty of Law, Engineering, Dentistry, Pharmacy and Commerce. In 1915, it was no longer recognized because it did not meet the Federal Government's determination to open higher education schools only in cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. In 1938, the University of Paraná founded the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Paraná and the Instituto Superior de Educação Annex. In 1941, due to financial difficulties, he became the director of the FFCL, to the Marist Brothers Teaching Association.



provided in each course offered by the Universities through an analysis of the General Censuses of the years 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980 (IBGE, 1940, 1950a, 1960, 1970 and 1980).

### Censuses: women in universities

The census had its first occurrences in the years 1890, 1900 and 1920, however, the inaugural milestone of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics was the General Census of 1940, which brought with it new opportunities for studies (IBGE, 1940). As in other countries, the census is carried out every decade. In order to fulfill the research objectives, data obtained from censuses carried out between 1940 and 1980 were organized into spreadsheets to facilitate analysis. As a result of this approach, four tables and a graph were created, which will be discussed later. Table 1, entitled “Education: attending Higher Education in the years 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980”, presents part of the results extracted from the demographic censuses.

**Table 1** – Education: attending Higher Education in Brazil in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, 1970s and 1980s<sup>7</sup>

	1940			1950			1960			1970			1980		
	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres
População	41.236.315	20.614.088	20.622.227	51.944.397	25.885.001	26.059.396	70.191.370	35.059.546	35.131.824	92.341.556	45.754.659	46.586.897	119.002.706	59.123.361	59.879.345
Não sabem ler nem escrever	21.295.490	9.908.255	11.387.235	24.907.596	11.645.573	13.262.023	27.578.971	12.978.840	14.600.131	30.718.597	14.592.133	16.126.464	32.731.347	15.900.859	16.830.488
Cursando ensino superior	40.294	32.655	7.639	sem informação			56.970	42.644	14.326	607.688	349.668	258.020	1.325.808	673.633	652.175
Cursando Mestrado e Doutorado	sem informação			sem informação			sem informação			sem informação			36.398	19.662	16.736

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided in demographic censuses (IBGE, 1940, 1950a, 1960, 1970, 1980)

By analyzing Table 1, it is possible to observe the very small proportion of people attending Higher Education. In the 1940s<sup>8</sup> and 1960s, Higher Education students represented less than 0.10% of the Brazilian population, a percentage that increased to 0.65% in 1970 and 1.12% in 1980. On the other hand, the percentage of people who could not read or write in the country was significant compared to the total population: in 1940, it was 51.64%; in 1950,

<sup>7</sup> Translation: Homens: Men; Mulheres: Women; População: Population; Não sabem ler nem escrever: Illiterate; Cursando ensino superior: Superior Education student; Cursando Mestrado e Doutorado: Master and PhD student.

<sup>8</sup> In the 1950 census, it is not possible to obtain specific information about the number of people who attended higher education. This is due to the way the data was collected and recorded, with the specification provided by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) at the time. The 1950 census focused on people present, aged 5 or over, who were attending or had attended some type of course, categorizing this information by sex, age groups, level of education and the last grade in which they passed. Therefore, there is no data available in this census that directly indicates the number of people studying Higher Education.

47.95%; in 1960 <sup>9</sup>, 39.29%; in 1970, 33.26%; and in 1980, 27.50%. These results show that attending Higher Education was an opportunity for few over these five decades, especially when compared to the large number of people who did not have reading and writing skills.

In the state of Paraná<sup>10</sup>, the panorama did not differ significantly from the results presented by the national census in relation to the percentage of people who knew how to read and write and those who attended higher education. In relation to the total population of the state, the percentage of people who could not read or write was 48% in 1940, 45% in 1950, 36% in 1960, 31% in 1970 and 22% in 1980. Those who attended the Higher education represented, in comparison with the total population of the state, 0.38% in 1950, 0.39% in 1970 and 0.91% in 1980. From these data, it can be inferred that, in Paraná, it was also Access to Higher Education was restricted, which gave professional advantages to those who had this training.

Table 1 also shows the progressive entry of women into the university environment. Between 1940 and 1960, women represented 18.96% and 25.15% of university students, respectively, indicating that universities were mostly made up of men. However, the two subsequent demographic censuses revealed a balance in the university scenario, as in 1970 the percentage of women in the student body was 42.46%, and in 1980, this number increased to 49.19%. There was a slow entry of women until the end of the 1950s, followed by significant progress in the 1960s and 1970s. A century after allowing women to enter Higher Education, they represented approximately half of the student body in 1980.

This analysis based on changes that have occurred over the decades can help to understand the phenomenon in question. As described by Pinsky (2016a), representations of the role of women impacted socially adopted practices in each historical period. In the period covered in this article, two different models of representation can be identified: one in which models of femininity were consolidated, from the beginning of the 20th century until the beginning of the 1960s, and another with greater fluidity, from the mid-1960s. 1960 to the

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<sup>9</sup> There are interesting data on enrollment in basic education in the 1960s, as presented by Romanelli (2017). In 1965, there was a greater number of enrollments in private education, totaling 1,121,158, compared to public education, which registered 1,033,272 enrollments. The 1964 school census revealed that 33.7% of people aged between 7 and 14 did not attend school, with the majority due to a lack of educational institutions. From these data, it can be seen that the State served less than 33% of the population in this age group that should be attending public education, since 33.7% did not attend any institution and the other portion was served by institutions individuals.

<sup>10</sup> Census data from Paraná were compared with Brazilian results to understand the trajectory of teachers in the UFPR Education Sector.

present day, when the ideals of the previous period were questioned and began to coexist with new references.

From this perspective, we can understand that the results presented in the censuses are aligned with the models described by Pinsky (2016a). Until the 1960s, women, especially in urban centers, began to coexist with men in public spaces, such as streets, bars, cafes and cinemas. Marriage was still seen as a goal for most women, as having a family, children and a harmonious home was considered the feminine ideal. Some women (although in small numbers) attended universities in search of continuing their studies, better professional opportunities or to complement their cultural capital, which was valued in the marriage context. However, the university course could not compromise femininity or marriage, as a woman with higher education was seen as “very demanding, and no husband wants to be overshadowed by his wife” (PINSKY, 2016a, p. 509, our translation). Therefore, attending a Higher Education institution was not among the priorities or possibilities for most women until the mid-1960s. The “rigid models” of representations about being a woman were present in the discourses and practices adopted by them.

As noted by Pinsky (2016a), representations of women began to undergo transformations in this context. Crafts and domestic work, which were once common and provided extra income, began to disappear, leaving a significant number of women without this source of income. At the same time, interest in the female workforce has increased, especially in the service sector, such as bureaucracy, banks, commerce, media and independent professionals. These changes led to the appreciation of women's education, even though conservative values were still present.

The “rigid models” began to be challenged in favor of “flexible models” of women’s representation from the mid-1960s onwards. Just like men, women studied, worked, traveled, read newspapers, had access to national information and international, drove cars, among other activities. Cinema began to portray new possibilities of pleasure, the contraceptive pill<sup>11</sup> allowed family planning, lifelong marriage began to be questioned and the job market offered positions previously occupied exclusively by men. Higher Education institutions have also become accessible places for both sexes. Some women now have the possibility of choosing professions that are not linked to domestic care. Given this scenario, it is possible to understand that the numbers presented in the 1970 and 1980 censuses reflect an increase in the number of

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<sup>11</sup>The contraceptive pill arrived in pharmacies in 1961, as Pinsky (2016a) attests.

women who felt encouraged to enter the university environment, driven by new job opportunities.

The data presented in the Paraná census corroborates the results found in the national censuses in relation to the presence of women in Higher Education. In 1950, women represented only 11% of the student body, but this number increased to 42.14% in 1970 and reached 48.68% in 1980. These numbers reflect a similar trend to that found in Brazilian censuses, showing that, from By the end of the 1960s, women already made up almost half of university students in Paraná. Thus, census data from Paraná confirm the national trend of greater female presence in Higher Education and reveal significant growth in the number of students throughout the 1960s and 1970s, despite the low percentage in relation to the country's total population.

Furthermore, through the data shown in Table 1, there was a significant increase in the number of students throughout the 1960s and 1970s, despite the low percentage in relation to the total population of Brazil. The number of people studying Higher Education increased from 56,970 at the beginning of the 1960s to 1,325,808 at the beginning of the 1980s. These data demonstrate the results of the expansion of Higher Education during this period.

The expansion of Higher Education in the 1960s and 1970s brought with it challenges and problems related to the capacity of institutions to deal with increased demand: the pace of development of institutions was not as fast as the demand for the service offered. There was a surplus of students and a lack of resources. “The crisis was embodied in the growing protest of teachers and students due to the impossibility of carrying out normal work within the classrooms of crowded higher education schools, above all, overcrowded and devoid of resources” (ROMANELLI, 2017, p. 215, our translation). There was a demand for senior staff to govern universities and, therefore, Higher Education institutions needed to be restructured.

With Law no. 5,540, of November 28, 1968<sup>12</sup>(BRASIL, 1968), the rules<sup>13</sup> for the organization and functioning of Higher Education and its articulation with secondary schools were established. This law represented a significant change in the Brazilian university system, which until then followed the Napoleonic model. The objective of Higher Education was

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<sup>12</sup> “The education reform of the 1960s and 1970s was linked to the precise terms of the new regime. Development, that is, education to form 'human capital', strict link between education and the job market, modernization of consumption habits, integration of educational policy into general development and National Security plans, defense of the state, repression and political control -ideological aspect of the country's intellectual and artistic life” (SHIROMA; MORAES; EVANGELISTA, 2011, p. 29, our translation).

<sup>13</sup> “With regard to educational legislation, a series of laws, decree-laws and opinions relating to education were implemented, aiming to ensure an organic, national and comprehensive educational policy that would guarantee political and ideological control over school education at all levels and spheres” (SHIROMA; MORAES; EVANGELISTA, 2011, p. 29, our translation).

described in “Art. 1st – Higher Education aims to research, develop sciences, letters and arts and train university-level professionals” (BRASIL, 1968, our translation). In relation to the teaching staff, research with a scientific content began to be counted: “Art. 32 – §2º Will be considered, on a preferential basis, for entry and promotion in the teaching career of higher education, the university titles and the scientific content of the candidates’ work” (BRASIL, 1968), just as the chairs were abolished: “ Art. 33. Teaching positions and functions, even those already created or filled, will be disconnected from specific fields of knowledge. [...] § 3. The *chair* in the organization of Higher Education in the Country is extinguished” (BRASIL, 1968, our translation). These changes promoted by Law no. 5,540 of 1968 contributed to the modernization of Higher Education institutions in Brazil, directing them towards the production of scientific knowledge, the training of professionals and the flexibility of the academic structure.

The 1968 reform in Brazilian Higher Education, as described by Martins (2009), had as its main objectives the expansion and modernization <sup>14</sup>of public institutions, especially federal universities. Through Law no. 5,540, of November 28, 1968 (BRASIL, 1968), conditions were provided for articulating teaching and research activities; the abolition of lifetime professorships; the introduction of the departmental regime; and the institutionalization of the academic career, since the relevant legislation linked teaching entry and progression to academic qualifications, characteristics that also promoted the entry of female teachers into the professional ranks of Higher Education.

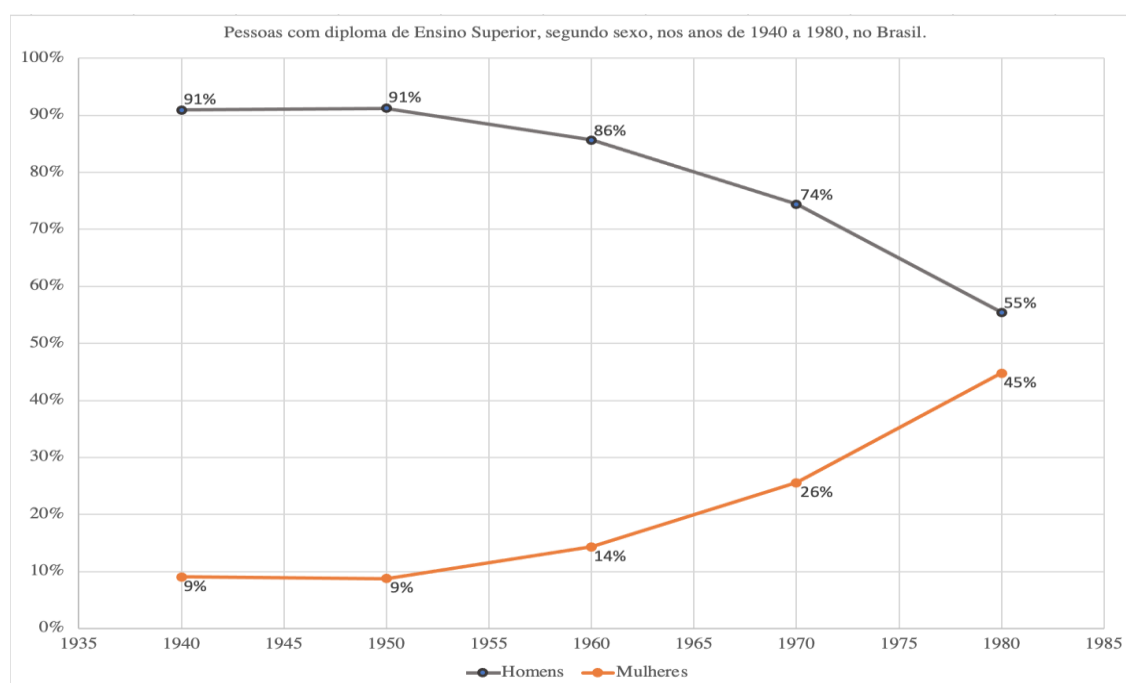
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<sup>14</sup> “The modernization of Higher Education in Brazil, according to the standards in force in the United States, has been associated with the Military Coup of 1964, as if that were its cause, with the intermediation of foreign consultants. The lack of a project for Higher Education would have led the new occupants of power to look for consultants in that country to outline the guidelines for teaching reform for this degree. In fact, in the almost five years that passed after the March-April 1964 coup, no legal document was produced for the educational sector – particularly for Higher Education – expressing a policy for the sector” (CUNHA, 2007, p. 23, our translation). American universities were relatively new at the beginning of the 20th century. “ Emerged in the mid-19th century, American universities stabilized and grew significantly from the 1890s onwards, gaining a certain homogeneity in their denomination and the function performed ” (WARDE; ROCHA, 2019, our translation).

## People with Higher Education diplomas in Brazil

It is worth observing the balance in relation to the number of people with a completed course diploma in this type of teaching before entering and exploring the data about Higher Education teachers. The Figure 1, entitled “People with a Higher Education diploma, according to sex, in the years 1940 to 1980, in Brazil” illustrates the increase in the number of individuals in Brazil who had a Higher Education diploma, broken down by sex, during the period from 1940 to 1980.

**Figure 1**– People with a Higher Education diploma, according to gender, from 1940 to 1980, in Brazil



Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided in demographic censuses (IBGE, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980)

Based on Figure 1, there is a notable increase in the percentage representation of women with completed Higher Education. In the 1940 and 1950 censuses, women made up only 9% of the total number of people with higher education degrees. In the 1960 and 1970 surveys, women's participation rose to 14% and 26%, respectively. However, it was in the 1980 census that the proportion of men and women with completed Higher Education became more balanced, with 55% for men and 45% for women. It is noticeable that, compared to the number of men with the same qualification, there were few women with completed higher education in the 1940 and 1950 censuses. This percentage became more significant in the 1960 and 1970 surveys and, in the 1980s, reached to be practically equivalent.

When examining the same category – the proportion of men and women with Higher Education diplomas – in the Paraná census during the same period, we observe that the results are quite similar to those in the national censuses. Data referring to Paraná are presented in Table 2 – People with a Higher Education diploma, broken down by sex, in the years 1940 to 1980, in the state of Paraná.

**Table 2** – People with a Higher Education diploma, according to gender, from 1940 to 1980, in Paraná

Paraná	1940			1950			1960			1970			1980		
	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres
Curso completo	2.730	2.548	182	5.125	4.770	445	13.668	11.921	1.747	25.962	20.018	5.944	94.004	51.841	42.163
porcentagem		93%	7%		93%	9%		87%	13%		77%	23%		55%	45%

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided in demographic censuses (IBGE, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980)

There was an insignificant variation when compared to the results of the Brazilian censuses. The data reveal that, in Paraná, the percentage of women with completed higher education was quite low in the 1940 and 1950 censuses. However, there was a significant increase in this number in the 1960 and 1970 censuses, reaching almost the same in the 1980 census. Therefore, the growth in the number of women with Higher Education diplomas in Paraná followed the pattern observed throughout the country.

In the 1960s and 1970s, there was a significant increase in the expansion of Higher Education in Brazil, accompanied by an increase in the proportion of women with higher education in relation to men. This expansion began to be evident in the 1970 census, when the number of women with completed higher education began to increase. Since the permission to attend these courses, granted with Decree n°. 7,247, of April 19, 1879, until the final years of the 1950s, the number of women with completed Higher Education was significantly lower than the number of men. According to Guedes (2008), the expansion of education and the increase in the number of places in Brazilian universities in the last three decades of the 20th century were phenomena observed with greater intensity in the female contingent. Between 1970 and 2000, women “[...] managed to reverse a situation of historical inequality and consolidate a new reality, in which they are more educated than the male contingent” (GUEDES, 2008, p. 118, our translation). However, it took practically a century from the permission for women to attend Higher Education courses in Brazil until there was equivalence between men and women with diplomas in this type of education.

Obtaining higher education diplomas expanded opportunities for professional choice for both women and men. In Pinsky's (2016b) understanding, during the 1960s and 1970s, there was a process of dissolving curricular disparities between male and female students, which resulted in better opportunities for women to enter university. This period also marked a change in attitude towards female education and the search for greater education among women began to be seen as a path towards financial independence and equalization of professional opportunities between men and women (PINSKY, 2016b).

It is noteworthy that the lack of this qualification also had repercussions on the possibility of exercising certain professions. Until the 1970s, women, as illustrated in Figure 1 – People with a Higher Education diploma, according to sex, in Brazil, between the years 1940 and 1980, faced significant disadvantages when competing for positions in the job market, in which titles awarded by higher education institutions had weight in hiring. In this sense, it is equally important to analyze in which areas women began to obtain degrees.

### **People with Higher Education diplomas, according to gender and course**

The results regarding course diplomas obtained by women who entered Higher Education were presented in Table 3, entitled “People with Higher Education diplomas, broken down by sex and courses, in Brazil, between the years 1940 and 1980”.



**Table 3** – People with a Higher Education diploma, according to gender and courses, from 1940 to 1980, in Brazil

	1940		1950		1960		1970		1980	
	Homens	Mulheres	Homens	Mulheres	Homens	Mulheres	Homens	Mulheres	Homens	Mulheres
<b>N.º de diplomas</b>	<b>96.846</b>	<b>9.650</b>	<b>144.233</b>	<b>13.837</b>	<b>246.755</b>	<b>41.199</b>	<b>402.852</b>	<b>138.496</b>	<b>992.189</b>	<b>704.811</b>
<b>Nome do curso</b>										
Pedagogia (Pedagógico (normal ou pedagógico 1950)	1.665	305	3.673	4.381					13.106	133.399
Letras					5.306	8.404			17.931	105.853
Outros Cursos de Grau Superior									54.515	57.386
Direito	20.145	482	30.254	1.048	51.768	3.845	79.673	11.459	166.827	54.494
Ciências e Estudos Sociais									8.250	34.706
Administração (Serviços Administrativos 1950)	72	12					6.325	1.154	103.972	33.544
Medicina	18.042	543	24.718	1.093	36.925	3.232	48.316	5.786	104.591	33.035
Artes Plásticas - Belas Artes (1960) - Artes (1980)	581	187			461	537	1.257	3.120	6.889	28.588
Psicologia (1970)							844	1.980	4.248	26.519
Serviços Sanitários e Assistência Social (Serviço Social 1970)	42	89			154	1.704	575	5.120	940	23.680
Comunicação Social									15.498	22.762
Filosofia									9.908	21.487
Educação Física	249	87	450	465	453	465	2.138	2.586	17.773	19.700
Odontológico	10.817	1.225	15.291	2.027	24.623	3.801	29.941	6.476	41.390	18.594
Ciências Econômicas (1970)							30.930	2.971	71.981	17.544
Enfermagem (1970)							586	8.233	1.306	16.888
Matemática									11.288	16.285
Biologia (1980)									6.154	16.054
Ciências Contábeis e Atuárias (1970)							13.963	3.291	44.462	15.675
História									3.943	15.611
Biblioteconomia									844	12.028
Outros Ciências Biológicas e Saúde									1.545	10.671
Farmácia (Farmácia e Bioquímica 1970)	8.242	1.841	8.685	2.560	11.207	4.485	10.469	4.933	9.879	10.123
Geografia									2.851	9.787
Arquitetura (1950) Arquitetura e Urbanismo (1980)			1.560	78	3.504	402	5.905	1.186	12.326	7.899
Ciências (1980)									2.143	5.763
Engenharia (1950) Engenharia Civil (1980)			20.256	183	39.314	692	67.452	1.267	62.102	4.145
Química									5.799	3.368
Química Industrial (Engenharia Química e Química Industrial 1980)	1.558	125	3.095	401	4.082	380	7.502	1.227	13.077	2.873
Agronomia	3.652	47	5.735	79	9.056	217	12.857	474	26.764	2.265
Engenharia, não classificada ou mal definidos (1980)									40.032	2.221
Ciências da Computação									4.673	1.822
Veterinária	1.250	34	1.632	35	3.172	289	4.558	280	9.912	1.638
Física									3.302	1.636
Eclesiástico (teologia 1980)	4.598	86	8.535		9.471	338	12.073	907	10.092	1.416
Outros Ciências Humanas e Sociais									766	1.359
Engenharia Elétrica e Eletrônica (1980)									28.926	1.225
Ciências Estatísticas (Estatística 1980)					410	97	574	108	1.437	833
Engenharia Mecânica (1980)									32.700	553
Geologia									3.371	549
Outros Ciências Agrária									3.184	391
Outros, Exclusive Engenharia - Ciências Exatas e Tecnológicas									796	320
Militar	5.089		13.612		22.030	19	18.002	46	10.696	122
Artes domésticas (1960)					18	69				
Bacharelado e didática - outros cursos					3.787	3.610				
Ciências econômicas (contábeis e atuárias 1960)	1.735	158	5.150	371	12.141	1.269				
Geografia e História					1.472	2.491				
História Natural					732	1.013				
Matemática, Física, Química e Desenho					4.695	1.959				
Música	456	2.648								
Outros - modalidades mal definidas	4.047	1.636	1.587	1.116	1.974	1.881	22.888	20.188		
Politécnico	13.912	96								
Serviços de transporte	694	49								

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided in demographic censuses (IBGE, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980)

By analyzing Table 3, it can be seen that, in 1980, women represented 44.48% of individuals with university education. In terms of numbers, the courses in which women obtained the most diplomas were: Pedagogy, Literature, Law, Sciences and Social Studies, Administration, Medicine, Arts, Psychology and Social Assistance. Pedagogy and Literature courses, combined, corresponded to 30% of the total Higher Education diplomas earned by women.

It is also possible to estimate the courses that were predominantly attended by men, based on the number of diplomas obtained by them in relation to the total number of diplomas awarded in each course during the 1980s. Men were the majority in the following courses: Military, with 98.87% of diplomas; Mechanical Engineering, with 98.34%; Electrical and Electronic Engineering, with 95.94%; Civil Engineering, with 93.74%; Agronomy, with 92.20%; Theology, with 87.70%; Geology, with 85.99%; Veterinary Medicine, with 85.82%; Industrial Chemistry, with 81.99%; and Economic Sciences, with 80.40%. In these areas, the male presence was significantly greater compared to women obtaining degrees.

By analyzing the proportion of diplomas awarded to women in relation to the total number of diplomas in different courses in the 1980s, it is possible to identify the areas in which women were most present. At the top of the list was Social Assistance, with 96.18% of graduates being women, followed by Librarianship, with 93.44%. In third place came Nursing, with 92.82%, followed by Pedagogy, with 91.05%, and Psychology, with 86.19%, in fifth place. In sixth place was Literature, with 85.53%, followed by Sciences and Social Studies, with 80.79%. Lastly was the Arts area, with 80.58% of diplomas being awarded to women. These data reflect the predominance of women in these areas, at least in terms of obtaining degrees, indicating the existence of spaces predominantly occupied by women within institutions, while other spaces were reserved for men.

Until the 1980s, the Pedagogy course was the most chosen by women, with a total of 133,999 graduates. This preference indicated that the course, established in 1939, offered opportunities for training and working at higher education for women. However, this trend perpetuated the model of representation of women linked to the care and education of citizens, reflecting discourses from the end of the 19th century and configuring the phenomenon of feminization of teaching.

### **Higher Education Teachers according to demographic censuses**

In the context of Higher Education teachers, Table 4 presents information on the number of female university professors in Brazil during the 1960s and 1970s, highlighting the entry of women as teachers in Higher Education institutions.

**Table 4** – Brazilian Higher Education Professors by gender, in the 1960s and 1970s

	1960			1970		
	Total	Homens	Mulheres	Total	Homens	Mulheres
Professores do Ensino Superior no Brasil	5.659	4.616	1.043	17.555	12.420	5.135

Source: Prepared by the authors, based on data provided in demographic censuses (IBGE, 1940, 1950, 1960, 1970, 1980)

Table 4 shows the increase in female presence in Higher Education teaching staff. In 1960, women represented 18.43% of all teachers, but this percentage rose to 29.25% in just one decade. Within the scope of the Paraná census, in 1960, the proportion of women in the teaching staff of Higher Education institutions was 13.90%, a value lower than that recorded in the Brazilian census. This imbalance, however, was corrected in the Paraná census in 1970, when the number of female teachers increased to 29.78%.

When comparing the increase in the percentage of women in teaching staff with the growth of women as students in Brazilian censuses, it is noted that women did not achieve the same representation as professors in academic institutions in the same proportion as they did as students. For example, in 1970, women accounted for 42.46% of students, while they occupied only 29.25% of teaching positions in Higher Education in Brazil. This disparity is also observed in the 1970 Paraná census, in which women represented 42.14% of students and 29.78% of the teaching staff. The data reveal that, in 1970, less than 30% of women held teaching positions at universities.

The country's urban, industrial, social and political transformations are intrinsically linked to the entry of women into the teaching profession, as highlighted by Louro (2004), Hahner (2011) and Almeida (2011). The process of including women in classrooms began gradually. The education of women becomes desired and they are allowed to teach classes for girls and, later, for boys. According to Louro (2004), during the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, there was a significant increase in the number of women entering normal schools, to the point that these institutions became predominantly female in the third decade of the 20th century. Although permission to attend higher education occurred at the end of the 19th century, it was only in the third decade of the 20th century, with the opening of pedagogy courses, that normal students were able to continue their studies and obtain qualifications to teach in secondary education.

Throughout the 20th century, as demonstrated through census analysis, the number of women enrolled in Higher Education grew significantly, reaching the point where they represented half of the student body of these institutions in the 70s and 80s. However, it was

only in the 70 that the path for women to work on the teaching staff of Higher Education institutions was expanded, along with the expansion of Higher Education itself.

### **Final remarks**

The study aimed to investigate the insertion of women in Higher Education institutions in Brazil, considering the historical period 1940-1980. The chosen period stands out in importance as it coincides with the greater insertion of women in the job market and the need for professional preparation to take on the new demands that arose. Based on data contained in the General Censuses from the years 1940 to 1980, it made it possible to identify the composition of the student and teaching staff, as well as the courses that were most attended by women, as shown in the tables organized by the authors.

The results demonstrate that the entry of women into Higher Education institutions occurred gradually, both occupying the position of students and forming part of the teaching staff in these social spaces. In Brazil, female training in Higher Education was only permitted at the end of the 19th century, but it was with the opening of Pedagogy courses, in the mid-1930s, that more women began to attend these institutions. Gradually, in the 70s and 80s, women began to represent approximately 50% of students enrolled in various courses at the institutions. With regard to the entry of women into the teaching staff, it is possible to see that they constituted 10% of the number of teachers in the censuses of 70 and 80. Multiple factors contributed to the fact that, at the same time that, in elementary education, the process occurred of “feminization of teaching”, the situation in Higher Education followed a different path. Such factors, however, were not the object of this study.

Some limits of this research were the impossibility of problematizing the social position of students and holders of Higher Education degrees or the access of black women to these institutions. The censuses (1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980) do not provide this data, which made discussion impossible, however, reflection on these issues is considered to be of great importance.

The data present in the censuses also do not specify in which courses women began to make up the teaching staff of these Higher Education institutions. Research into the institutional documents of Higher Education institutions, during the period studied, may help to understand how and in which courses women began to work as teachers in this type of teaching.

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