AND AFTER THE ACCESS (OF "NEW PUBLICS" TO HIGHER EDUCATION): THE REVOLUTION IS NOT OVER[1]

José Pedro Amorim[2], Joaquim Azevedo[2], Joaquim Luís Coimbra[3]

> *"E, afora este mudar-se cada dia,*
> *outra mudança faz de mor espanto,*
> *que não se muda já como soía."*[4]
>
> Luís de Camões, 1598/1994, p. 162

Are we assisting, by any chance, to an unbridled contest for the search of the signifier that best apprehends the essence of the hypercomplex human mesh? As if we, in a flash, will come to represent what we are: "What can I know? What ought I to do? What may I hope? What is Man?" — as Kant said (1800/2009). The will is Olympian — and it seems to suffer from what we can call the chronocentric perspective.[5] Through chronocentrism (from χρόνος, time in Greek) we think we are privileged in History, that is to say, we tend to believe that there have never been, in any time, societies that are so … The qualifiers in this dispute are well known: post-modern (Lyotard, 1979/1989), of the individuals (Elias, 1987/2001), empty (Lipovetsky, 1989), risky (Beck, 1992), de-socialized (Touraine, 1997), liquid (Bauman[6], 2000), invisible (Innerarity, 2004), adrift (Castoriadis, 2007), just to quote a few among the plentiful examples existing. We transform our time into the time of complexity, of the feelings of uncertainty, of the ultimate move through which we can win or lose the future.[7] Some even sing the "hyperinflation

---

[2] Portuguese Catholic University.
[3] Faculty of Pshychology and Education of the University of Porto.
[4] Aren't these untranslatable words?
[5] We will leave for another opportunity the explanation of what we understand to be the corocentrism (from χώρος, space), which we think that can be found in the "Clash of Civilizations" by Samuel P. Huntington (1997) and alike — Roger Scruton (2002), for example — far distant from more complex and comprising perspectives, such as the ones from Amartya Sen (2007) and Amin Maalouf (1998/2009). In a nutshell, we would say that, apart from the centre of the time, we believe to occupy the centre of the space. A historical example: we rejected the heliocentrism, after imagining that we were the axis around which the entire Universe revolved.
[6] Zygmunt Bauman also writes about a "fragmented" (1995), "individualized" (2001) and "under siege" (2002) society.
[7] Is this an effect of retaining, since the advent of nuclear technology, the very risky power to destroy all organic life on Earth (Arendt, 1958/2001: 188)? In other words, and again according to Hannah Arendt, only "homo faber" conducts himself as lord and master of the whole Earth (1958/2001: 179).

of time" and, measuring it by what we will experience, foresee a 21st century with 20 thousand years (Cross, 2007, p. 1)!

"This is the time of the *new*", says Roberto Carneiro (2001, p. 23), "new culture, new economy, new media, new knowledge, new policies, new science". Suddenly, it seems that mankind saw novelty in (almost) all the spheres of its action and reflection, dehistoricizing them. Obviously, Education was not forgotten. Manuel Castells (2003), for example, in "*The Internet Galaxy*", pleaded the need for a "new pedagogy", based, after all (being not that new), "on interactivity, personalization, and the development of autonomous capacity of learning and thinking" (p. 278).

This is the time of change! Among the epithets of the actual *Zeitgeist*, this is perhaps *primus inter pares*. Given the success it spreads, the concept of change has served multiple purposes, from the electoral propaganda to the discourse of sciences. Doesn't the idea that everything changes rapidly sound consensual and contemporary? Yes, but change will not be a new trait of the "human condition": Luís de Camões, by the end of the 16th century, and long before the technological, electronic, cybernetic advent, said that "all the world is made of change".

It would be wrong to evaluate the change of humankind by the incessant electronic renovation (inscribed on the culture of hyper-consumerism), translated by the idea that, when it is launched, the last model is already outdated. Nevertheless, we remain "human, all too human", as Nietzsche would say (1878/1996), sometimes against this (electric) current that surrounds us. Let us focus on the example of life expectancy: as the life expectancy of electronic gadgets is decreasing, the human life is increasingly longer — and it is so long that this becomes problematic: the public social security systems succumb to the burden of the aged society, that apparently doesn't hold nor produce wealth (which could even be advantageous, if not paradoxical, considering that most of those who supposedly could produce it, the youth, also have no jobs). So, and as Joaquim Azevedo puts it: "the world has changed a lot, but the foundations are still in the same place" (2010, p. 19).

History does not begin here and now

> "*It would be worthwhile going back as far as the world of classical antiquity and studying, from the point of view of lifelong education, the role not only of the public but also of the chorus in Greek drama. That would enable us to see that these questions are not altogether new, and to take account of any significant trends in particular socio-economic periods.*" (De Sanctis, 1984, p. 267)

It is not possible to dare to understand a little bit more of the present in the ignorance of History. Consequently, our first glance turns towards the past — also in an attempt to prove (or not) the innovation (in the limit, the unprecedented character) underlying the "opening" of higher education to "new publics", as a result of recent educational policies (especially the Decree-Law No. 64/2006 of March 21). This is not, by far, the first time that, in Portugal, adults have access to higher education.

Therefore, we propose an analepsis in three moments.

In the first one, we will retrocede one hundred years, until a very particular moment in the Portuguese History, to remember the — often forgotten — Popular Universities. Curiously enough, these Universities cherished a vision and a mission that could be transferred to the present, while they experienced, as well, a set of difficulties that can easily be transferred to present times.[8] For that reason, we can't avoid problematizing the rhetoric and the apparent consensus that involves the idea of pedagogical, organizational and political innovation underlying the so-called "openness".

The second moment concerns the possibility of entering higher education by means of "*ad hoc* examinations", created by "pedagogical experiences" that date back to the 60s (cf. Decree-Law No. 198/79 of 29 June). This process included, before an interview and a specific exam, a national test on Portuguese Language "to assess the candidate's ability to interpret, expose, express and imagine" (Ordinance No. 122/94 of 24 February). Judging from the results (see Table 1), only one third of the candidates possessed these abilities in amounts considered to be at least sufficient and properly combined. That is to say that the Portuguese Language test used to leave out about 70% of the candidates, along with other 10%[9] (subtracted) in the remaining steps of the "selection". At the end, only 20% of candidates used to survive.

---

[8] Cf. texts by Jaime Cortesão, from the years 1912 and 1914, in the numbers 3, 4, 5 and 21 of the magazine "*A Vida Portuguesa*" ("The Portuguese Life"), but also Caraça, 2002; Coimbra, 1922/2009; Fernandes, 1993; Manso, 2003, 2009; Pintassilgo, 2006a, 2006b.
[9] Which represent, however, about 40% of the candidates admitted in the Portuguese Language test.

Table 1
Figures concerning the *ad hoc* examinations

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Candidates that carried out the Portuguese Language (PL) test	3026	2762	3009	3459	3180	3227	3794	3360
Candidates not admitted in the PL test	1956	1720	1929	2178	2045	2287	2539	2489
Candidates admitted in the PL test	1070	1042	1080	1281	1135	940	1255	871
% of admissions in the PL test	35,4	37,7	35,9	37,0	35,7	29,1	33,1	25,9
Candidates approved in the Exam	575	584	632	702	647	578	732	-
% of approvals in the Exam	19,0	21,1	21,0	20,3	20,3	17,9	19,3	-

Source: Simão, Santos & Costa, 2004

The Decree-Law No. 64/2006 of March 21st granted each higher education institution (HEI) the responsibility for the access. This change of policies appears to justify, in itself, the undeniable increase in the number of adults enrolled in higher education between the academic years of 2004-2005 and 2006-2007, around 434% in public universities, 1959% in public polytechnics and 3828% in private HEI (Amaral & Magalhães, 2009).

It should be pointed out, then, and despite the selective and exclusionary nature of these examinations, the lack of studies about the thousands of students that gained access to higher education through this route. Having been an educational "phenomenon"[10] throughout four decades[11], it is certainly significant that they have remained "no man's land"!

The third moment of the analepsis is related to the evolution of the Portuguese policy of access to higher education, which, according to Magalhães, Amaral and Tavares (2009, but also Amaral & Magalhães, 2009), can be organized into three distinct periods. The first, "more is better" was an expansionist period of 20 years between 1974 and mid 1990s.[12] In fact, the number of enrolled students increased from 57 thousand to more than 340 thousand. The second period (1997-1998 to 2007-2008), "more is a problem" was triggered by a decline in private higher education, followed (in 2003-2004) by a decrease of enrolments in the public sector. The third and current period, referred to as "more but different", represents, according to these authors, the emerging change from equality to equity, and from quantity to quality, as well as the diversification of the existing programmes and the focus on wider audiences (Magalhães et al., 2009).

---

[10] Weren't they "new publics" in higher education? Non-traditional adult students? Couldn't they have "benefitted" from the formulas that are now being diffused?
[11] Because they enter the 21st century, these decades should be equivalent to light-years…
[12] The authors subdivide this period into three different moments.

In addition to diachrony, it is imperative to consider the synchronic axis of analysis — and thus the influence of globalization and transnational regulation in this phenomenon whose "Portuguese case" we are trying to understand. Now, as we said before, "whether we admit the existence of a World Education System, converging on its most significant aspects, whether we consider that harmony is only superficial or apparent (Azevedo, 2007), the 'opening' of higher education to 'new publics' gains centrality in the (world) education agenda" [13] (Amorim, Azevedo & Coimbra, 2010, p. 84).

But who are these "new publics"? This is actually the first of the questions and, moreover, the first difficulty. Is it possible to tell who the people who make up these publics are? Are they "clusterable" according to certain features?

In 1984, Filippo M. De Sanctis argued that the term "public" was becoming vulgarized and established in the international literature on lifelong education, notwithstanding its semantic uncertainty and the subsequent difficulty in defining it. Concomitantly, the author drew attention to the fact that only a "new public" — at that time (as well as nowadays) in development — could "establish a concept of lifelong education based on the direction and control of the educational processes" (1984, p. 274), that is, a public capable of passing from the condition of "readers" to the condition of "authors" (and masters, for that reason, of the pen they use... and of themselves) (cf. p. 276).

In a much more recent definition attempt, Santiago, Rosa and Amaral say that the distinction between "traditional" and "non-traditional" students and courses may be somewhat artificial and require a scientific legitimacy conferred by its inclusion in a more comprehensive theoretical framework (2002, p. 11).

Correia and Mesquita defined non-traditional adult students as adults who have left school without qualifications, have been away from the education system for a long time, have no previous experience of higher education and come from economically and socially disadvantaged groups (one or more of these factors may apply) (2006, p. 37).

It's not our intention to develop this issue here, but there are two notes to register. Firstly, it seems that the "new publics" are composed not only of adults, but also of children and young people (involved, for example, in the Open Days, the Junior Universities, the Academies of

---

[13] Cf., for example, Abukari, 2005; Askling, Henkel & Kehm, 2001; Correia & Mesquita, 2006; Fejes & Andersson, 2008; Jallade & Mora, 2001; Peters, 2005; Souto Otero, Hawley & Nevala, 2007; Stenlund, 2009; Yoshimoto, Inenaga & Yamada, 2007.

Holidays, etc..), that are future "customers" of higher education. Secondly, it is crucial to try a positive definition — of the people that constitute these publics, as well as of the knowledge they possess — and to avoid the negativity that (almost) always surrounds these definitions: "non-traditional adult students", "non-formal education", "non-qualified adults", "non-educated adults". As Joaquim Azevedo said: since when and until when is *non* a principle of encounter and dialogue, of teaching and learning (2009, p. 5)?

We look back, therefore, to the "four broad, and overlapping categories" of "new learners" proposed by NIACE in 1993: (i) the "deferred beginners", generally "in their 20s", enter "the system later than is traditional"; (ii) the "returners", "typically in their 30s", "often seek in higher education a new direction"; (iii) the "developers" "are over 30 and under 50" years and "are using higher education to enrich an extend their knowledge, skills and understanding within a chosen career patern"; and (iv) the "enrichers" that "are adding new strands to their education or career development outside the frame of immediate employment" (e.g., voluntary or community roles, retirement, etc.) (p. 19). Altogether, a feature that these four groups have in common is that they all possess significant life and work experience that should (and must) be recognized, in a more or less formal process, oriented towards development, credited or not (cf. Lueddeke, 1997). This fact enlightens the inadequacy of defining by means of negative words (and of deficit) someone who, after all, has such a positive wealth.

Here and now: the sight of figures

We have looked for differences, in the available statistics, among the four subsystems of higher education: public universities, public polytechnics, private universities and private polytechnics. With that aim, we focused primarily on the access.

Table 2
Percentage of people "over 23"[14] enrolled in the first year for the first time (2006-2007 to 2009-2010)

Subsystem of Higher Education	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Public	8,3%	10,2%	8,9%	8,2%
Universities	4,3%	6,4%	5,6%	5,0%
Polytechnics	13,9%	14,9%	13,0%	12,4%
Private	29,6%	24,1%	23,7%	24,6%
Universities	31,8%	23,2%	22,2%	22,6%
Polytechnics	25,4%	26,0%	27,2%	29,8%
TOTAL	**14,8%**	**14,2%**	**12,8%**	**12,3%**

Source: Office for Strategic Planning, Economic Policy and International Affairs (GPEARI), 2011

The reading of Table 2 enables us to conclude that:

1. The private sector enrols nearly three times as many students through "over 23" than the public sector;

2. Among the four subsystems of higher education, the private polytechnics obtain the highest percentage of "over 23" enrolled (except for the year 2006-2007, where these figures fell to private universities). At the opposite pole are the public universities, with a proportion about five times lower than those;

3. Finally, the gradual decrease of "over 23" enrolled throughout the four academic years should be emphasized.

---

[14] These adult students got the same designation as the access route through which they entered the higher education system, which was being over 23 years old. For that reason, we use the term "over 23" to refer either to the students or to the access exams.

Table 3
Percentage of candidates that enrolled with the "over 23" exams in the public sector (2009-2010)

Public Universities	%	Public Polytechnics	%
Univ. of the Azores	20,6	Polytechnic Inst. of Beja	26,3
Univ. of Évora	9,2	Polytechnic Inst. of Portalegre	20,7
Univ. of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro	8,8	Polytechnic Inst. of Tomar	19,8
Univ. of Algarve	7	Polytechnic Inst. of Santarém	19
Univ. of Madeira	6	Polytechnic Inst. of Guarda	16,7
Univ. of Minho	5,5	Polytechnic Inst. of Viseu	16,1
Univ. of Aveiro	5,1	Polytechnic Inst. of Castelo Branco	15,4
New Univ. of Lisbon	4,8	Polytechnic Inst. of Leiria	13,8
Univ. of Lisbon	4,3	Polytechnic Inst. of Cávado and Ave	12,5
Univ. of Beira Interior	4	Polytechnic Inst. of Coimbra	12,5
ISCTE – Lisbon Univ. Inst.	3,8	Polytechnic Inst. of Lisbon	9,9
Univ. of Porto	3,5	Polytechnic Inst. of Viana do Castelo	9,8
Technical Univ. of Lisbon	3	Polytechnic Inst. of Bragança	9,2
Univ. of Coimbra	2	Polytechnic Inst. of Porto	8,9
		Polytechnic Inst. of Setúbal	8,9
		Higher School of Nursing of Oporto	5,2
		Higher School of Nursing of Lisbon	4,5
		Higher School of Hotel Management and Tourism of Estoril	3,4
		Higher School of Nursing of Coimbra	0,9

Source: GPEARI, 2011

In the public sector, the highest and lowest percentages of "over 23" occur in the polytechnics: 0,9% in the Higher School of Nursing of Coimbra and 26,3% at the Polytechnic Institute of Beja. Nevertheless, there is only one university, the University of the Azores, to 10 polytechnics that have a percentage higher than 10%. At the lower limit, below 5%, for example, there are only seven universities and three polytechnics.

In the private sector,[15] in turn, there are 23 universities (60,5% of all private universities) and 39 polytechnics (69,6%) with percentages higher than 20. In 6 of those universities (15,8%) and in 12 polytechnics (21,4%) the students "over 23" represent the majority of enrolments, i.e., the percentage is higher than 50. At a private university it is even 100%. At the opposite pole, there are three universities (7,9%) and nine polytechnics (16,1%) where this percentage is below 5.

---

[15] To cope with text length limitations, we present the respective tables in the annex section.

Table 4
Percentage of "over 23" students approved (2006-2007 to 2009-2010)

Subsystem of Higher Education	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010
Public	77,3%	77,9%	77,7%	77,6%
Universities	74,4%	79,9%	70,6%	68,4%
Polytechnics	78,6%	77,0%	81,7%	82,1%
Private	89,1%	91,5%	94,4%	96,1%
Universities	88,2%	90,8%	93,7%	95,8%
Polytechnics	91,7%	92,9%	95,7%	96,9%
TOTAL	**83,7%**	**82,7%**	**83,6%**	**83,9%**

Source: GPEARI, 2011

The data in Table 4 indicates that:

1. The percentage of "over 23" has shown little variation: 83-84%;
2. It is clearly a positive percentage (83,9%), although it is lower in public universities (68,4%) and higher in private polytechnics (96,9%);
3. In the private sector, the approval rate has increased gradually and steadily.

Table 5
Mean of the difference between "over 23" candidates approved and enrolled (2006-2007 to 2009-2010)

Subsystem of Higher Education	$\bar{x}$
Public	3 615
Universities	893
Polytechnics	2 722
Private	1 130
Universities	836
Polytechnics	295
TOTAL	**4 745**

Source: GPEARI, 2011

There are at least two hypotheses that can be summoned to explain this "loss" of students by the public sector, mainly polytechnic: on the one hand, the different schedules of public and private sectors, with the latter getting ahead of the former; on the other, the possibility of the candidates expecting to have more success in the private sector.

Interestingly, it is in polytechnics, especially public ones (where, as noted, the difference between approved and enrolled candidates is greater), that the enrolled candidates outnumber the existing vacancies (see Table 6). It seems undeniable, at least in these cases, that the "new

publics" are accepted according to the places left vacant by the "old" (traditional and young) publics.

Table 6
Difference between the number of enrolments and vacancies (2006-2007 to 2009-2010)

Subsystem of Higher Education	No. of vacancies set for "over 23"candidates	Candidates enrolled in the first year for the first time with "over 23" exams	Difference between the numbers of enrolments and vacancies
Public	4 895	4 960	65
Universities[1]	2 060	1 727	-333
Polytechnics[2]	2 835	3 233	398
Private	5 172	5 043	-129
Universities[1]	3 669	3 357	-312
Polytechnics[2]	1 503	1 686	183
TOTAL	**10 067**	**10 003**	**-64**

Source: GPEARI, 2011

It is also important to realize the differences between the various areas of education and training. In this sense, we categorized, from the data of GPEARI and according to the National Classification of Education and Training Areas (Decree No. 256/2005 of 16 March), all the courses offered by Portuguese HEI.

A cross analysis of Table 7 and Chart 1 suggests that, in public higher education, the percentage of the "over 23" enrolled candidates is greater, in descending order (and for ranges 3 and 4, yellow and orange, respectively), in the following areas: Agriculture, Social Sciences, Business and Law, Services, and, finally, Education. It is the latter, however, that registers the highest value in range 4, which means that "over 23" students are the majority in 8% (in absolute terms, 4 in 51) of the courses offered in this area.

On the contrary, the areas of Science, Mathematics and Computer Science, Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction, and Health and Welfare record the lowest values. In all of them, more than half of the courses have percentages of "over 23" students enrolled below 5%. In the first area (Science, Mathematics and Computer Science), 69 of 94 (73%) of the courses are in the range 1. It is the only area that, by the way, has no course with a percentage exceeding 50%.
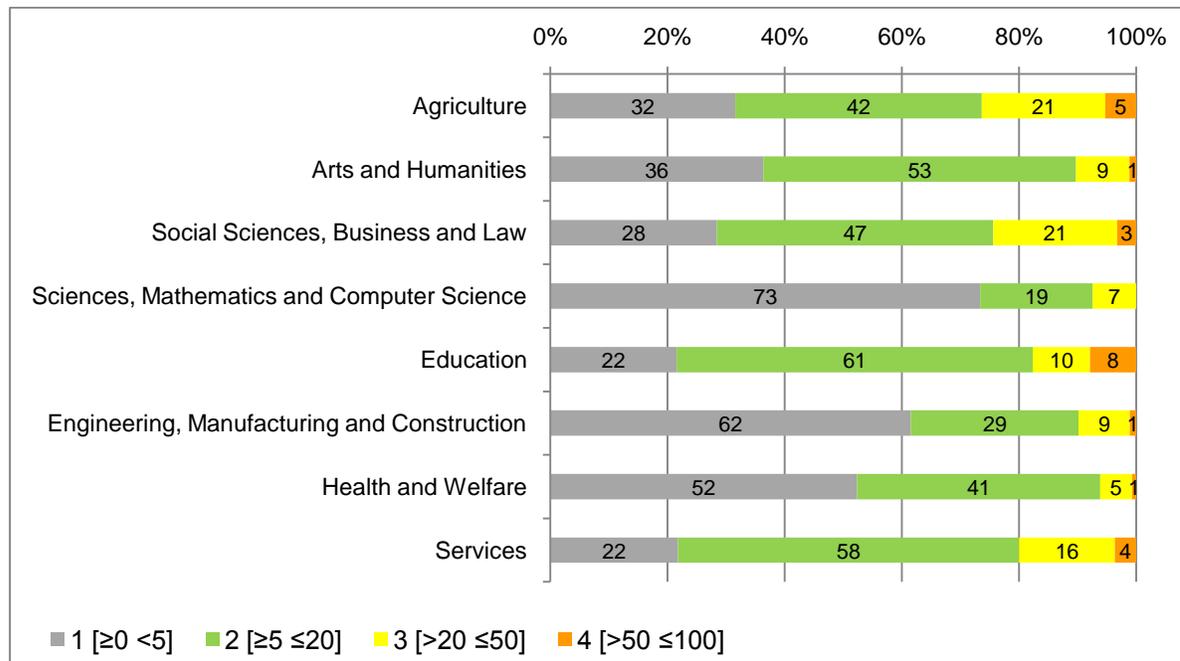
Table 7
Public higher education – Number of courses of the different education and training areas by ranges of percentages of "over 23" students enrolled (2009-2010)

Education and training areas	1 [≥0 <5%]	2 [≥5 ≤20%]	3 [>20 ≤50 %]	4 [>50 ≤100%]	Total
Agriculture	6	8	4	1	19
Arts and Humanities	64	94	16	2	176
Social Sciences, Business and Law	70	116	52	8	246
Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science	69	18	7	0	94
Education	11	31	5	4	51
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	176	82	25	3	286
Health and Welfare	77	61	8	1	147
Services	12	32	9	2	55
Total	**485**	**442**	**126**	**21**	**1074**

Note: Table constructed from data available in GPEARI, 2011

Chart 1
Public higher education – Percentage of courses of the different education and training areas by range of percentage of "over 23" enrolled candidates (2009-2010)

Note: Chart constructed from data available in GPEARI, 2011

With regard to private higher education (see Chart 2 and Table 8), the ranges 3 and 4 are much more evident, especially in the areas of Social Sciences, Business and Law, Education, and Services (repeating the results of the public sector), as well as Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction. In these four areas the range 4 (for percentages above 50%) is around or exceeds

20%. Hence, there are 64, 11, 7 and 18 courses, respectively, of those areas where the "over 23" candidates represent the majority of the students enrolled.

Agriculture (contrary to what happens in the public sector), Science, Mathematics and Computer Science, Arts and Humanities, Health and Welfare are the areas where lower percentages of this type of students have enrolled. In half or more of the courses offered in these four areas, the percentage of "over 23" students is lower than 5%. It is interesting that, in the private sector, the second range is almost nonexistent, while it prevails in the public one.

Table 8
Private higher education – Number of courses of the different education and training areas by range of percentage of "over 23" enrolled candidates (2009-2010)

Education and training areas	1 [≥0 <5%]	2 [≥5 ≤20%]	3 [>20 ≤50 %]	4 [>50 ≤100%]	Total
Agriculture	2	1	0	0	3
Arts and Humanities	69	23	21	5	118
Social Sciences, Business and Law	65	41	83	64	253
Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Science	33	5	11	5	54
Education	24	2	17	11	54
Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction	29	16	31	18	94
Health and Welfare	66	29	28	9	132
Services	15	6	10	7	38
Total	**303**	**123**	**201**	**119**	**746**

Note: Table constructed from data available in GPEARI, 2011

Chart 2
Private higher education – Percentage of courses of the different education and training areas by range of percentage of "over 23" enrolled candidates (2009-2010)
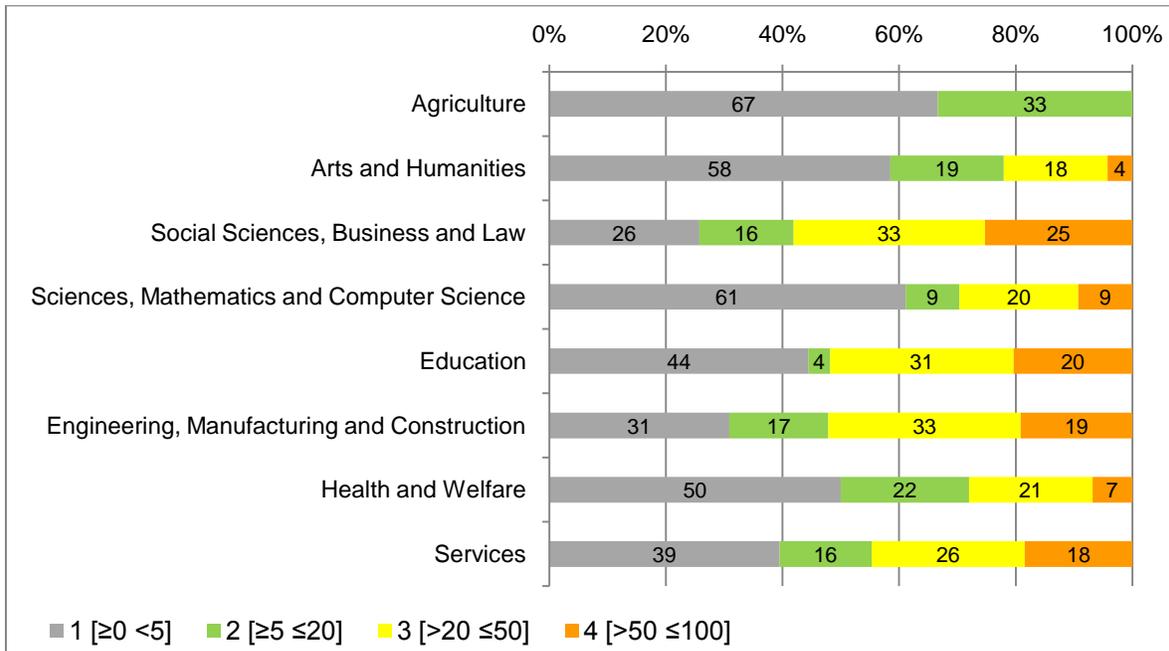
Note: Chart constructed from data available in GPEARI, 2011

The available numbers about the presence of "over 23" students in higher education relate merely to the moment of access. One might say that from the HEI's door to its inside we still don't know what is happening, although it is crucial to know the students' success — or failure, truancy, drop out. Once there is no data and no light upon these dimensions and their correlation with other variables — like age, socioeconomic status, education and training areas, level of formal (educational and vocational) qualifications, gender, employment status (before, during and after the course. Were there changes along the way?), enrolment status (working student), frequency status (full time or part time), simultaneous attendance of other courses, marital status —, further research should be of the utmost importance.

History doesn't end here and now

What we could learn from the figures allows us to reinforce the idea that, in Portugal, a significant change has occurred in terms of access to higher education for adult learners. However, it still remains unknown to what extent this increase represents a true democratization of higher education, not only in what concerns to the quantity but especially to the quality of the

13

"new publics", that is, with regard to socioeconomic status, race and ethnicity, disabilities (cf. Field, n.d.; Reay, Ball & David, 2002; Schugurensky, 2003; Troy & Sibbald, 2007). In other words, and following Michael Osborne (2003), are we really widening or just increasing participation in higher education?

We would like to propose a set of questions based on dichotomies around the "opening" of HEI to "new publics". We do not intend, however, to shape the debate with the doctrines of Manes, but rather to contribute, through the contrast of two perspectives brought to the limit, to a wider understanding of the subject of study:

— Are HEI truly and widely opening their doors… or is this no more than an "organized hypocrisy" (as Nils Brunsson puts it), nothing (or little) more than a rhetorical exercise (Amorim, Azevedo & Coimbra, 2010, but also Field[16], 2000; Garnett, Portwood & Costley, 2004; Reay, Ball & David, 2002; Rodrigues & Nóvoa, 2005; Stenlund, 2009)?

— Are we witnessing the dawn of an epiphany[17] or of a make-believe that we are bridging the epistemological gap between academic and experiential knowledge?

— Will HEI try to "change" the students instead of introducing changes in their own practices (Amorim, Azevedo & Coimbra, 2010; Andersson, Fejes & Ahn, 2004; Santiago, Rosa & Amaral, 2002)?

— Are HEI really involved and compromised or are they still "on the periphery of present debates on this issue" (Alesi & Kehm, 2000, p. 285)?

— Is it the so advertised "opening" impregnated with opportunity... or rather with opportunism (Nóvoa, 2007)?

We would say, though trying to constrain the enthusiasm, that there is still much to do. And the advantage of those who do it well and quickly is undeniable — even because it is highly likely that the demand will decrease after the initial enchantment period.[18] Moreover, literature is no stranger to this "race" for the prestige of being "adapted" to the "new publics" and to the aims of

---

[16] With a suggestive title: "Why Lifelong Learning Policies Promise so Much Yet Deliver so Little".

[17] In the sense described by James Joyce in "Stephen Hero" (the precursor of "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man", from 1916): "This is the moment which I call epiphany. First we recognise that the object is one integral thing, then we recognise that it is an organised composite structure, a thing in fact: finally, when the relation of the parts is exquisite, when the parts are adjusted to the special point, we recognise that it is that thing which it is. Its soul, its whatness, leaps to us from the vestment of its appearance. The soul of the commonest object, the structure of which is so adjusted, seems to us radiant. The object achieves its epiphany" (1906/1955, p. 213).

[18] In a perfect cycle of Eternal Return (that sometimes fulfils itself), recalling, for example, what happened with the Popular Universities (cf. Jaime Cortesão, *A Vida Portuguesa*, no. 6, p. 41).

lifelong education (see, for example, Abukari, 2005; Askling, Henkel & Kehm[19], 2001; Souto Otero, Nevala & Hawley, 2008).

And more than dreaming of the Utopia we would like to reach, we should cherish the path of improvement that we want to tread. We have already gone too far to turn back and we are still too close (from the starting point) to slow down the pace.

_____

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to José Pedro Amorim, Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia, Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Rua de Diogo Botelho 1327, 4169-005, Porto, Portugal. E-mail: jamorim@porto.ucp.pt

_____

[19] These authors outline very clearly the existence of the so-called "competition", even at the international level: "It is only in France, Sweden and the UK that serious efforts have been made to take prior experience and non-formal learning and achievements into account" (Askling, Henkel & Kehm, 2001, p. 344).

References

Abukari, A. (2005). Conceptualising lifelong learning: a reflection on lifelong learning at Lund University (Sweden) and Middlesex University (UK). *European Journal of Education, 40*, 2, 143-154.

Alesi, B., & Kehm, B. (2000). The Status of Lifelong Learning in German Universities. *European Journal of Education, 35*, 3, 285-300.

Amaral, A., & Magalhães, A. (2009). Between institutional competition and the search for equality of opportunities: access of mature students. *Higher Education Policy, 22*, 505-521.

Amorim, J. P., Azevedo, J. & Coimbra, J. L. (2010). On the opening of higher education institutions to new publics: the Portuguese case. *Revista Portuguesa de Investigação Educacional, 9*, 83-103.

Andersson, P., Fejes, A. & Ahn, S. (2004). Recognition of prior vocational learning in Sweden. *Studies in the Education of Adults, 36*, 1, 57-71.

Arendt, H. (1958/2001). *A condição humana*. Lisboa: Relógio D'Água.

Askling, B., Henkel, M. & Kehm, B. (2001). Concepts of knowledge and their organisation in universities. *European Journal of Education, 36*, 3, 341-350.

Azevedo, J. (2007). *Sistema Educativo Mundial: Ensaio sobre a regulação transnacional da educação*. Vila Nova de Gaia: Fundação Manuel Leão.

Azevedo, J. (2009). *Repensar a dicotomia educação-trabalho na perspectiva antropológica e sociocomunitária do desenvolvimento humano*. Texto de apoio à Conferência proferida no Fórum Mundial da Educação Profissional e Tecnológica em Brasília, 24 de Novembro de 2009.

Azevedo, J. (2010). Como construir uma escola de qualidade para todos, onde se aprenda melhor? In J. Azevedo & J. M. Alves (Org.), *Projecto Fénix – Mais Sucesso para todos: Memórias e dinâmicas de construção do sucesso escolar* (pp. 13-29). Porto: Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

Bauman, Z. (1995). *Life in Fragments. Essays in Postmodern Morality*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *The Individualized Society*. Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2002): *Society Under Siege.* Cambridge: Polity.

Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society: towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.

Camões, L. (1598[20]/1994). *Rimas*. Coimbra: Almedina.

Caraça, B. J. (2002). *Cultura e Emancipação*. Porto: Campo das Letras.

Carneiro, R. (2001). *Fundamentos da educação e da aprendizagem: 21 ensaios para o século 21*. Vila Nova de Gaia: Fundação Manuel Leão.

Castells, M. (2003). *The Internet galaxy: reflections on the Internet, business, and society*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Castoriadis, C. (2007). *Uma sociedade à deriva: entrevistas e debates, 1974-1997*. 90 Graus.

Coimbra, L. (2009). *Obras Completas, vol. V (1922-1923), tomo I*. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional-Casa da Moeda.

Correia, A. M., & Mesquita, A. (2006). *Novos Públicos no Ensino Superior: Desafios da sociedade do conhecimento*. Lisboa: Sílabo.

Cross, J. (2007). *Informal learning: rediscovering the natural pathways that inspire innovation and performance*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.

De Sanctis, F. M. (1984). Problems of defining the public in the context of lifelong education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 3*, 4, 265-277.

Elias, N. (1987/2001). *The society of individuals*. New York: Continuum.

Fejes, A., & Andersson, P. (2008). Recognising Prior Learning: Understanding the Relations Among Experience, Learning and Recognition from a Constructivist Perspective. *Vocations and Learning, 2*, 1, 37-55.

Fernandes, R. (1993). Uma experiência de formação de adultos na 1.ª República. A Universidade Livre Para Educação Popular, 1911-1917. Lisboa: Câmara Municipal.

---

[20] Publication date of the quoted sonnet.

Field, J. (n. d.). *Researching HE Access, Retention and Drop-Out Through a European Biographical Approach: Exploring similarities and differences within a research team.* Comunicação apresentada na "The 6th European Research Conference. Adult Learning in Europe — understanding diverse meanings and contexts".

Field, J. (2000). Governing the Ungovernable: Why Lifelong Learning Policies Promise so Much Yet Deliver so Little. *Educational Management & Administration, 28*, 3, 249-261.

Garnett, J., Portwood, D. & Costley, C. (2004). *Bridging rhetoric and reality: accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) in the UK*. Bolton: The University Vocational Awards Council.

Huntington, S. P. (1997). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Innerarity, D. (2004). *La sociedad invisible*. Madrid: Espasa.

Jallade, J.-P. & Mora, J.-G. (2001). Lifelong learning: international injunctions and university practices. *European Journal of Education, 36*, 3, 361-377.

Joyce, J. (1906/1955). *Stephen hero*. New York: New Directions.

Kant, I. (1800/2009). *Lógica. [Excertos da] Introdução*. Covilhã: Universidade da Beira Interior.

Lipovetsky, G. (1989). *A era do vazio*. Lisboa: Relógio D'Água.

Lueddeke, G. (1997). The accreditation of prior experiential learning in higher education: a discourse on rationale and assumptions. *Higher Education Quarterly, 51*, 3, 210-224.

Lyotard, J.-F. (1979/1989). *A Condição Pós-Moderna*. Lisboa: Gradiva.

Maalouf, A. (1998/2009). *Identidades assassinas*. Lisboa: Difel.

Magalhães, A., Amaral, A., & Tavares, O. (2009). Equity, access and institutional competition. *Tertiary Education and Management, 15*, 1, 35-48.

Manso, A. (2003). Jaime Cortesão e as Universidades Populares da Renascença Portuguesa. *Teoremas de Filosofia, 8*, 55-63.

Manso, A. (2009). Bento de Jesus Caraça: a demanda pela educação integral do indivíduo. Actas do X Congresso da Sociedade Portuguesa de Ciências da Educação, Bragança, Instituto Politécnico.

NIACE – National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (1993). *An Adult Higher Education: A Vision. A Policy Discussion Paper*. Leicester: NIACE.

Nietzsche, F. W. (1878/1996). *Human, all too human: a book for free spirits*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Nóvoa, A. (2007). É preciso manter uma vigilância crítica sobre o reconhecimento de adquiridos. Entrevista. *Aprender ao Longo da Vida, 7*, 10-17.

Osborne, M. (2003). Increasing or widening participation in higher education? – a European overview. *European Journal of Education, 38*, 1, 5-24.

Peters, H. (2005). Contested discourses: assessing the outcomes of learning from experience for the award of credit in higher education. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 30*, 3, 273-285.

Pintassilgo, J. A. (2006a). Imprensa de educação e ensino, Universidades Populares e renovação pedagógica. *Cadernos de História da Educação,* 5, 83-94.

Pintassilgo, J. (2006b). O debate sobre as universidades populares na Imprensa portuguesa de educação e ensino. O exemplo de «A Vida Portuguesa» (1912-1915). *HISTEDBR On-line, 24*, 93-101.

Reay, D., Ball, S. & David, M. (2002). "It's taking me a long time but I'll get there in the end": mature students on access courses and higher education choice. *British Educational Research Journal, 28*, 1, 5-19.

Rodrigues, C. & Nóvoa, A. (2005). Prefácio. *In* R. Canário & B. Cabrito (Org.), *Educação e formação de adultos: mutações e convergências* (pp. 7-14). Lisboa: Educa.

Santiago, R., Rosa, M. J., & Amaral, A. (2002). *O Ensino Superior Aberto a Novos Públicos*. Fundação das Universidades Portuguesas.

Schugurensky, D. (2003). Higher education restructuring in the era of globalization: toward a heteronomous model? In R. F. Arnove & C. A. Torres (Eds.), *Comparative education: the dialectic of the global and the local* (pp. 292-312). Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.

Scruton, R. (2002). *The West and the rest: globalization and the terrorist threat*. Wilmington, Del.: ISI Books.

Sen, A. (2007). *Identidade e violência. A ilusão do destino*. Lisboa: Tinta-da-China.

Sibbald, A. M. & Troy, J. (2007). Lifelong Learning in Higher Education: Is There a Gap Between the Idea and its Application in Higher Education? In Michael K. McCuddy, Herman Van Den Bosch, Wm. Benjamin Martz Jr., Alexei V. Matveev, Kenneth O. Morse (Eds.), *The Challenges of Educating People to Lead in a Challenging World* (pp. 115-129). Dordrecht: Springer.

Silva, J. M. (1992). Os exames Ad-Hoc no âmbito do acesso às Faculdades de Medicina. *Boletim da FML, III*, 3, 39-41.

Simão, J. V., Santos, S. M., & Costa, A. A. (2004). *Resultados do estudo efectuado pelo Grupo de Trabalho para a Reorganização da Rede do Ensino Superior «Bolonha: Agenda para a Excelência»*. Retrieved from http://www.portugal.gov.pt/NR/rdonlyres/203947E9-9C49-445C-BDB9-A654C8F9A901/0/Est_Reorg_Rede_EnsSup_VII.pdf, in 20.2.2008.

Souto Otero, M., Hawley, J. & Nevala, A.-M. (Eds.) (2007). *European Inventory on Validation of Informal and Non-formal Learning 2007 Update. A final report to DG Education and Culture of the European Commission*. Birmingham: ECOTEC.

Stenlund, T. (2009). Assessment of prior learning in higher education: a review from a validity perspective. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 1-15.

Touraine, A. (1997). *Podremos vivir juntos? Iguales y diferentes*. Madrid: PPC.

Yoshimoto, K., Inenaga, Y., & Yamada, H. (2007). Pedagogy and andragogy in higher education — a comparison between Germany, the UK and Japan. *European Journal of Education, 41*, 1, 75-98.

Annex

Percentage of enrolled with the "over 23" exams in the private sector (2009-2010)

Private Universities	%
Higher Inst. of Education and Labour	100
Higher School of Real Estate Studies	77,4
Higher Inst. of Languages and Administration of Leiria	66,7
Higher Inst. of Languages and Administration of Bragança	63,2
Higher Inst. of Languages and Administration of Vila Nova de Gaia	58,3
Higher Inst. of Languages and Administration of Santarém	56,4
Higher Inst. of Intercultural and Transdisciplinary Studies of Santo André, Luís de Camões Autonomous Univ. of Lisbon, Manuel Teixeira Gomes Higher Inst., Higher Inst. of Intercultural and Transdisciplinary Studies of Almada, Dom Afonso III Higher Inst., Higher Inst. of Intercultural and Transdisciplinary Studies of Viseu, Gallaecia Higher School, Atlantic Univ., Higher Inst. of Intercultural and Transdisciplinary Studies of Mirandela, Lusophone Univ. of Oporto, Lusophone Univ. of Humanities and Technologies, Lusíada Univ. of Vila Nova de Famalicão, Higher Inst. of Languages and Administration of Lisbon, Fernando Pessoa Univ., Higher Inst. of Social Services of Oporto, Lusíada Univ., Marketing and Advertising Higher School	[49,3-20,1]
Miguel Torga Inst., Higher Inst. of Applied Psychology, Portucalense Univ. Infante D. Henrique, Bissaya Barreto Higher Inst., Lusíada Univ. of Oporto, Higher Inst. of Management, Maia Higher Inst. of Higher Education, Higher School of Design, Higher School of Arts of Oporto, Univ. School of Fine Arts of Coimbra	[17,4-10]
Higher Inst. of Business Communication	8,2
Vasco da Gama Univ. School	7,5
Portuguese Catholic Univ.	4,6
Cooperative Higher Education, Polytechnic and Univ.	3,1
Egas Moniz Higher Inst. of Health Sciences	2,8

Source: GPEARI, 2011

Private Polytechnics	%
Higher Inst. of Paços de Brandão	77,1
Higher Inst. of Information and Administration Studies	75,7
Higher Inst. of Advanced Technologies of Lisbon (Oporto)	63,3
Higher Inst. of Educational Sciences	61
Higher Inst. of Administration Studies	60,3
Autonomous Higher Inst. of Polytechnic Studies	56,6
Higher School of Decorative Arts	55,8
Higher Inst. of Espinho	55,6
D. Dinis Higher Inst.	53,2
Higher School of Education of Fafe	52,3
Polytechnic Higher Inst. of the West	52,1
Higher Inst. of Advanced Technologies of Lisbon	51
Higher Inst. of Financial and Fiscal Studies (Oporto), Jean Piaget Higher School of Education of Arcozelo (Viseu), Higher Inst. of Education and Science, Higher Institute of Entre Douro and Vouga, Jean Piaget Higher School of Education of Almada, Higher School of Music of Gaia, Higher Inst. of Educational Sciences of Felgueiras, Higher School of Bank Management, Portuguese Higher Inst. of Marketing Management of Lisbon, Jean Piaget Higher School of Education of Arcozelo, Jean Piaget Higher School of Health – Algarve, Dr. José Timóteo Montalvão Machado Higher School of Nursing, Higher Institute of the New Professions, Almeida Garrett Higher School of Education, Maria Ulrich Early Childhood Educators' Higher School, Portuguese Higher Inst. of Marketing Management of Matosinhos (Aveiro), Higher School of Education of Torres Novas, Ribeiro Sanches Higher School of Health, Higher Inst. of Business and Tourism, João de Deus Higher School of Education, Portuguese Higher Inst. of Marketing Management of Matosinhos, Jean Piaget Higher School of Health /Northeast, Polytechnic Higher Inst. of Gaya, Higher Inst. of Administration and Languages, Santa Maria Teacher Training Higher School, Higher School of Technology and Fine Arts of Lisbon, Higher Inst. of Administration and Management	[50-20,8]
Higher School of Technologies of Fafe, Higher Inst. of Health Studies of Alto Ave, Jean Piaget Higher School of Health of Viseu, Jean Piaget Higher School of Health of Vila Nova de Gaia	[17,9-14,1]
Higher School of Nursing of the Portuguese Red Cross of Oliveira de Azeméis	9,4
Polytechnic Health Higher Inst. of the North	8,9
Higher School of Art and Design	6
Higher School of Health of Alcoitão	5
Higher School of Nursing of Santa Maria	4,2
Egas Moniz Higher School of Health	3,5
Higher School of Health of The Portuguese Red Cross	1,7
Higher School of Education of Paula Frassinetti	0,8
Higher National Academy of Orchestral Studies, Oporto Higher Artistic School (Guimarães), Jean Piaget Higher School of Education – Northeast, São Francisco das Misericórdias Higher School of Nursing, Saint Joseph of Cluny Higher School of Nursing	n.a.

Source: GPEARI, 2011