



## The effects of the university expansion process on the labor market: legal panorama in the state of Amazonas

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Luiz Moreira Reis- Santa Teresa College of Law School  
Paulo Queiroz

#### ABSTRACT

The growing acceleration of the growth of higher education in Brazil in recent years has led to an exaggerated number of graduates qualified to practice their professions, with a considerable increase in the number of professionals in the job market. With the aim of understanding the consequences of university expansion on law graduates, through 20 interviews with recent graduates and the analysis of secondary data, this cross-sectional study shows that the search for public examinations, the devaluation of the position of associate in law firms, the occupation of new territories in the job market and the work as an independent lawyer are common experiences. This article examines the consequences of university expansion on the job market for law graduates.

**Keywords:** Job market, Law course, Bachelor's degree, Profession.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The growing process of accelerating the growth of Brazilian higher education in recent years years led to an exaggerated number of bachelors qualified to practice the professions, with a considerable increase in professionals in the job market. In order to understand the consequences of university expansion on law graduates, through 20 interviews with recent graduates and secondary data analysis, this cross-sectional study shows that the search by public tenders, the devaluation of the position of associate in law firms, the occupying new territories in the job market and working as an independent lawyer are common experiences. The increase in the number of accredited professionals interacts with the rules of a field

highly regulated, in order to allow for increased professional competition, despite creating forms of professional entry considered unsatisfactory by graduates.

The massification of higher education has given rise to pessimistic interpretations, according to any increase in the number of new graduates leads to work in jobs outside the area of training, to optimistic interpretations in which new graduates are destined to experience favorable conditions in the labor market due to productivity gains resulting from higher education.

This article examines the consequences of university expansion on the labor market of law graduates. Law has long been among the most popular undergraduate courses popular in Brazilian higher education. Evidence shows that in 1954, 1973 and 2016, the Law was the course with the largest number of enrollments, with 18 thousand in 1954, 88 thousand in 1973, and 862 thousand in 2016. The insertion of the high number of law graduates in the job market allows not only understand the experiences of a significant portion of higher education graduates Brazilian, but also understand the consequences of university expansion on a market regulated work.

Adopting a panoramic perspective, this article shows that, in the field of Law, university expansion has had as consequences the devaluation of the associate position in law firms, the search for public competitions, have them as an education requirement minimum secondary education or higher education, diversification of occupations and acting as self-employed lawyer in a precarious manner. The rules of the legal field associated with the changes social groups were able to absorb portions of the new graduates, even at the expense of devaluation of segments of the profession, felt especially by new entrants to the market of work.

## DEVELOPMENT

University expansion in many countries was not aimed at training a workforce for the labor market. However, the consequences of university expansion on the labor market work is a relevant topic, as this topic is considered in the public debate both in order to enhance innovation and economic growth as well as, from a more democratic perspective, to provide the opportunity for a greater number of people to enter “desirable” occupations.

With university expansion, the occupational profile of new graduates diversifies. proportion of people with higher education in professional or administrative occupations has been reduced. A second consequence of university expansion on the labor market is the



overqualification, defined as a state of imbalance in which workers have a overqualification relative to the job requirements. One of the main arguments for justifying the relevance of the debate on overqualification is its association with (dis)satisfaction with the employment and well-being.

Overqualification and diversification of graduates' occupations are related phenomena. Occupations are graduated as workers with higher education, called in a initial moment of overqualified, dominate new territories in the labor market. However, how the activities of occupations of people with higher education are defined by work intellectual, manual or highly routine occupations are unlikely to be classified as occupation of people with higher education.

It is no surprise that the Law course has become one of the most sought after in Brazil, reaching 853,211 students divided into approximately 1172 courses, according to data released by the Ministry of Education in 2015. Today, these numbers are only growing, a fact motivated by illusions students' welcomes on the promise of high salaries and guarantees of renowned public positions when entering the job market, a reality rarely offered to recent law graduates. In this way, this issue has raised concerns about the future of the area, raising the fear of the Law becoming something commonplace. Currently, more people are placed in the job market than 100,000 law graduates, creating significant competition that increasingly demands moreover, the novice professional has elements of differentiation and standing out from the others.

As a reflection of this reality, the job market becomes scarcer in terms of opportunities, with wide competition and, above all, saturated with professionals. The ability to work in a group, experience and obtaining resources, the aforementioned characteristics, are essential items for that the professional environment accepts and includes the individual. Especially in the legal field, where it is crucial interaction with different people and social communication. According to Birman, (2000), the way How the labor market works determines how individuals themselves will function.

Thus, it is clear that the job market will dictate the rules and prerequisites to be met. followed so that the individual can enter it and not the other way around. In view of the problem addressed, this research will contribute to academics and undergraduates of the course of Law helping them overcome the difficulties of entering the job market, through understanding the factors that cause such difficulties and the search for effective solutions to solve them. With regard to scientific relevance, this study investigated the topic in a sociological perspective highlighting the effects of individuals' preferences and behaviors on academic environment, as well as in the job market. Regarding scientific contribution, it was chosen a subject with social and academic relevance, which offered greater clarification



about the fact, and gave a general parameter about the job market related to the legal career.

The problem faced and reflected in this present article referred to the search for answers given to the emergence of the question about what consequences were generated for the new professionals of Law after facing challenges in entering the job market.

In this study, 20 newly graduated law graduates residing in in the capital of the state of Amazonas. Of those interviewed, 10 (50%) work in the area of Law, 5 in other areas (25%) and 5 (25%) are unemployed, in second degree, preparing for public exams or in postgraduate courses. Among those working in the field of Law, 2 interviewees receive more of R\$5 thousand per month, 4 receive between R\$2.5 and 5 thousand and 4 receive between R\$1.5 and 2.5 thousand. The sample was composed of 10 males (50%) and 10 females (50%). The ages ranged from 24 to 45 years old, with an average age of 27.9 years. 8 interviewees were awarded scholarship (University for All Program – Prouni – or scholarship from the institution itself), 4 financed their studies through the Student Financing Fund (Fies) or private educational credit, 4 studied at public universities and 2 paid for university with their own resources. The method of selecting participants was the “snowball” method. The interviews lasted an average of an hour and a half, and took place between March and May 2025.

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