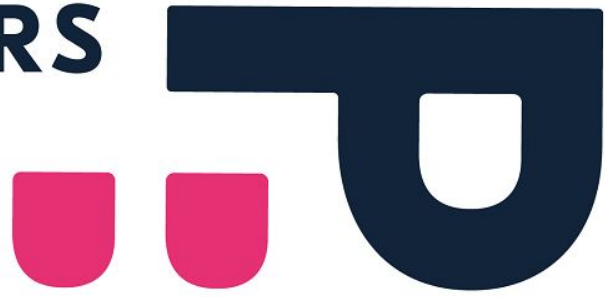


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**Book Review: *Democratização do  
Ensino Superior no Brasil*  
by Raimundo Nonato da Silva  
Filho**

**Samara Zauhy  
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Contact [info@prowibo.com](mailto:info@prowibo.com)

Drawing on his own experiences as an undergraduate scholarship student in Brazil, Raimundo Nonato da Silva Filho wrote *Democratização do Ensino Superior no Brasil* (i.e. *Democratisation of Brazil's Higher Education*), where he explores the problems within Brazil's post-dictatorship educational reforms. The book focuses on how scholarship programmes such as *Fundo de Financiamento ao Estudante do Ensino Superior* (Fies), *Programa Universidade Para Todos* (Prouni) and *Educafro* have failed to truly democratise higher education in Brazil.

Raimundo Nonato da Silva Filho holds a Masters in Educational Policy Management and is a specialist in Teaching Portuguese and Literature by the Universidade Tecnológica Federal do Paraná (UFTPR) in Inclusive Education by the Universidade Estadual de São Paulo and in Planning, Implementation and Management in Education by the Universidade Federal Fluminense. He graduated in Portuguese and Spanish Language and Literature in 2005 at the Universidade Metodista de São Paulo and, since 2007, works as a Portuguese and Literature professor in the State Secretary of Education in São Paulo.

The book is divided into four separate sections that together aim to answer the following two questions: does the distribution of full-time or part-time scholarships guarantee access and permanence to those who enter higher education because of it, and what are scholarship holders' strategies to successfully concluding their studies? In order to develop the central thesis, Nonato carries out his research using a biographical approach. He interviews three Teaching students at different stages of their university degree who were able to take on higher education due to scholarships.

In the first section of the book, Nonato explores the theoretical basis for Brazil's alleged democratization of higher education, with his own story used as template for his research's further use of a biographical methodology. The second section of the book delves into the social, political and educational spheres of the process of democratisation of higher education in Brazil. The third section focuses on three interviews carried out with scholarship students on their 2nd, 4th and 6th terms at universities in the South of Brazil, all of which were studying to later work in education. In the fourth and final section, Nonato focuses on the methodological treatment of the life stories he got from his three subjects in the previous chapter.

The author makes a compelling case as to why so many scholarship students choose to drop out of university. He highlights four main factors as principal causes: lack of content domain stemming from a weak secondary school education; socioeconomic difficulties that are highlighted by incomprehensive scholarship funding; a poor and disconnected professor-student relationship, and personal/family problems. With all that said, the author should have given more emphasis on the importance that a weak secondary school foundation has in the failures of democratising higher education in Brazil.

All in all, Nonato successfully intertwines theory with real-life, concluding that there is still a lot to be done in the way of democratising Brazil's higher education. He engages the reader with the human repercussions of an educational system that, since its very inception, has failed the poorer sectors of the Brazilian population and has privileged the rich and private ones. However, the author fails to arrive at a practical solution to the problems in the democratisation of Brazil's higher education. Although his qualitative-based research provides relevant insight into where that democratisation has failed, it does not provide a suitable alternative to remediate the problem.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Samara Zauhy is a student at Regent's University London with a major in International Relations and minors in Journalism and English. She is originally from São Paulo but moved to London in 2017. Samara is interested in education, travelling and mental health issues and would like to work as a foreign correspondent and author when she finishes her studies.

## **REFERENCES**

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