This study, which used as the main theoretical referential the concepts and the methodological approach set forth by Bourdieu, aimed to verify how the entrance examination to universities is treated in the discourses of the mainstream media, printed and specialized, and particularly the relationship, according to those discourses, between the fact the possession of a university degree and the social position occupied by the individual. Our hypothesis was that schooling would be useful as a justification of meritocratic character for the social position occupied by the individual.

Therefore, the specialized sections and want- ads of two major newspapers, Folha de S. Paulo and O Estado de S. Paulo were analyzed. We had in view to verify, not only the formulated hypothesis but also a likely homogeneity when tackling issues which relate schooling and job market in this medium. Our research also contemplated an observation exercise undertaken along with a magazine from Grupo Abril specialized in entrance examinations: Guia do Estudante 2008 and two editions from Guia das Profissões 2006 and 2007 (Folha de S. Paulo).

The period examined was the most recent one from the outset of the empirical research. Thus, the sections "want-ads" of the newspapers Folha de S. Paulo and O Estado de S. Paulo, as well as the sections Fovest and Vestibular (Entrance Examinations), respectively, had all their editions from the second semester of 2007 on analyzed.

From data obtained, it was possible to establish a consolidated relationship between schooling and social exclusion. Possession of one or more degrees was not presented in the surveyed vehicles as a warranty that the individual would occupy a position of social prominence, or obtain a position in the job market. On the other hand, the absence of a diploma appears, in the logic of the discourses, as a major obstacle to the achievement of a dominance or prominence in the society. According to what was found in this study, there has been a reversal of the social value of university degrees caused, at least in part, by a greater access of low-income classes to these diplomas. Diploma inflation causes their devaluation and changes the meaning of their role. Achieving a higher stage of education hasn't ceased to be a factor of social distinction. Nevertheless, it does not seem to be any longer a positive distinction that justifies privileges acquired by the elite, but a negative distinction where the absence of
diplomas of higher levels of education serves as an acceptable explanation to why significant portions of the population see themselves condemned to occupy lower social positions.

It was also possible to ascertain, in the researched discourses, a similarity between the messages presented there and the discourses of self-improvement, so that the commitment and accomplishment of certain norms appear as basic requirements for achieving academic and professional success. The acquiring of school certificates appears as the basic recipe to achieve a better social position precisely because it represents not only the mastering of certain knowledge, but also because it shows commitment and dedication.

Key words: Educacional field; journalistic field; entrance examination; schooling; job market; sociodicy