# Access to higher education in Brazil: inequalities, educational system and affirmative action policies

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## I. Introduction

In the last fifteen years Brazil has gone through transformations of different types which have contributed to the reduction of social inequalities.

There have been structural changes relating to economic stability and growth and their effects on the employment market - increase in formal employment, social security contributions and in the value of the minimum salary - and changes of a demographic nature such as the continuous fall in fecundity, new family arrangements and changes in the patterns of the Active Population Age.

However, there have also been changes that are a consequence of the implementation of social inclusion policies. Although the effect of these changes are also associated to structural changes, it is worth stressing that the expansion and reformulation of the social policy agenda in Brazil has been extremely important for the reduction in the number of people in poverty, as well as for the reduction of social inequalities.

In this respect two inclusion policies have stood out in the public debate about inequalities and contribute to characterizing this phenomenon in Brazil: the *Bolsa Familia* Program - an income transfer policy - and inclusion policies in higher education directed towards groups selected on a social and ethnic-racial basis. These two policies focus on two distinct social groups and, therefore, aim to act upon two inequality mechanisms which co-exist in the Brazilian class structure: inequality of conditions (access to income and wealth) and inequality of opportunity (social fluidity).

This report takes this scenario of change as a backdrop and aims to provide a framework of the Brazilian educational context, focusing on higher education in Brazil and issues related to educational policies of access to higher education. The fundamental principle on which this research is based is that there are obstacles which become more significant the further individuals follow the path of their educational trajectories where sex, color/race and income become prominent.

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Data of different types will be presented here. Information on individual and family characteristics from *Pesquisa Nacional de Amostra Domiciliar*[2] [PNAD - Brazilian National Household Sample Survey] and information on the characteristics of the system in which data from *Censo de Ensino Superior*[3] [Higher Education Census] are used. In order to evaluate the social policies related to higher education access it was made a searching of laws and documents produced by the Brazilian government concerning to implementation of these policies, particularly those which were responsibility of Ministry of Education (MEC) and Secretariat of Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality (SEPPIR).

This report is divided into four sections. In the first section I make a brief contextual summary of the characteristics of education in Brazil and then I present data on the educational characteristics of the Brazilian population The third section has information about the Brazilian educational system and finally, in the fourth part, I will discuss affirmative action policies for entering public and private higher education.

## II. National Context

The theme of education in Brazil has always received attention on political debates within social movements as well as in the scholarship produced in areas of social sciences and education mainly due its importance in comprehending and facing the social and racial inequalities of the country. In general lines, in order to understand the educational issue in Brazil is necessary look at: i) the history of structure of opportunities regarding to access to higher education and the outcomes of its expansion in recent years; ii) the distribution of this structure of opportunities among different social groups, i.e., the inequality of access in terms of class, sex, race, regions of the country and; iii) the quality of education institutions marked by a dichotomy between public and private system, the low performance of students measured by national and international evaluations and, lastly, the dropout rates and insufficient performance in all levels of undergraduate courses.

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[2] The Brazilian National Household Sample Survey - *PNAD* studies on an annual and permanent basis the general characteristics of the population, education, employment, income, housing and other characteristics, with variable periodicity, according to the information needs of Brazil, such as migration characteristics, fecundity, marriage status, health, food security, among other themes. Source: www.ibge.gov.br

[3] The Higher Education Census is carried out annually and brings together data about higher education institutions in their different academic organizational forms and administrative categories; graduation courses (presential or distance learning); places offered; registration; enrolment; students entering and completing; as well as information about teachers' functions. Source: www.inep.gov.br

In the last fifteen years, the indicators of access to education in Brazil have progressively improved specially for elementary school. Access to high school and higher education has grown also, but still remains inequalities among social groups (class, sex and race). In addition, data have shown the need of policies to improve the persistence of individuals to high school and undergraduate courses and, therefore, increasing the rates of conclusion in these two levels of education. According to report of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Brazil has made a significant effort increasing investment in education but it has not been enough to raise numbers of students in higher education. The report states that Brazil has already lower   rates of students enrolling in higher education than that OECD average. If these low rates among 25-34 year-olds were maintained, is likely the proportion of adults who have a high education degree will fall further behind that of other OECD countries (OECD, 2011).

In historical terms Brazil is a country characterized by very late investment in the educational advancement of its population, whose cumulative process of social disadvantage has, consequently, led to a scenario of greater inequality in accessing higher education. Although some faculties have existed in the country since the 19th Century, the first Brazilian university was created in 1920.  It brought together in administrative terms the "profession" faculties already in existence without, however, offering alternatives to the profile strongly directed towards "the professions" and geared towards the country's elites. Educational gains for the majority of the Brazilian population were achieved gradually and slowly[4]

The compulsory and free nature of primary education was only regulated by *Leis de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação* [Education Regulation Law] in 1996[5]. This late investment translated into a very precarious educational scenario, as follows.

- In Brazil, 9,8% of population with age above of 10 years old is not able to read and write despite of a continuous tendency of decreasing in illiteracy rates in the last years. Nonetheless, there are huge differences in how this illiteracy is distributed through different regions: in the Northeast, the poorest region in the country, the rate reach 19,4% of population while in Southeast, the richest region, it reach 5,8%. Brazil's average of years of schooling of the population, 7,1 years, is lower than the number of years necessary to individuals complete the elementary education (9 years) and

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[4] Olive, Arabela Campos. Histórico do Ensino Superior no Brasil. In Soares, Maria Susana Arrosa (Org.). A Educação Superior no Brasil. Brasília: Capes, 2002. PP. 1-42.

[5] The Brazilian education system is comprised as follows: i) pre-school education; ii) primary education; iii) secondary education (which includes professional courses) and iv) higher education (Graduation, Masters and Ph.D.). Stages i, ii and iii are considered basic education. However, free and compulsory education, guaranteed by the State, is primary education (1st to 8th grade and 9th grade which is being adapted for inclusion).

it also keeps far from the average of other Latin American countries such as Chile (10,9%), Peru (10,6%) and Argentina (10,5%).

- At present access to school is almost universal. Schooling rates for 5 and 6 year old children (pre-school education) and children between 7 and 14 years of age (primary education) are high. Nevertheless, even in this initial phase, we still find significant regional inequalities and levels of educational performance and conclusion which are insufficient and unequal. Primary education presents serious problems of educational flowing, that is, there is universality of access but there are strong obstacles in relation to conclusion.

- The average number of years of education of the Brazilian population is still low. In 2008, it was 7.1 years with a maximum of 9.4 years for the 25-29 age group. This average is even lower for younger age groups (10-14) - 4.1 years of education - as they are just starting their studies and for the older age group - 4.0 years of education - as this population did not benefit from the expansion of primary level education which took place at the end of the 1960s.

Access to secondary education only increased significantly during the 1990s. Obstacles found in educational progression in primary education, the lack of adequate investment (especially in poorer regions) and the need for young people to enter the employment market are some of the factors which contribute to the scenario of late growth in secondary education. According to data from *IPEA* [Institute of Applied Economic Research] based on the PNAD-2008, the net rate of school attendance of young people between the ages of 15 and 17, considered the ideal age to be educated at secondary level, was 50.4% for the whole of Brazil with strong regional variations - 36% in the North East region, racial variations - 61.2% for whites and 42% for blacks and sex variations - 44.4% for men and 56.8% for women[6].

Access to high school kept very restricted until the 1990s mainly due the high rates of dropouts and insufficient performances in the elementary school. The youngsters from lower class families used to leave the school in order to engage precociously in the job market or tried to conciliate work and studies having as outcome a low performance in the school.

At the same time, access to higher education also had kept very excluding to poor and non-white individuals until the beginning of the 1990s contributing for an increase of social and racial

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[6] According to IBGE (2008) the **gross education rate** is the proportion of people of a particular age group who go to school in relation to the total number of people in the same age group. The **net education rate** is the proportion of people of a particular age group *who attend school at an adequate grade -* according to the grade-age fit of the Brazilian educational system - in relation to the total number of people of the same age group.

inequalities. The expansion of higher education has intensified since the 2000s, but it still remains insufficient in terms of access when compared to existent demand. Furthermore, this expansion has happened along with a visible drop in the quality of education provided by the institutions.

Absence of resources does not figure prominently in this scenario. According to the last survey made by the Ministry of Education, public stipends with students in 2009 reached 5% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The Ministry has updated the direct public expenditure in education per-pupil forecast, which settled on an average of R$ 3.353.00 (US$ 1.842.30) for all stages of learning. In elementary school the state's per-pupil expenditure was of R$ 2.948 (US$ 1.619.78), and in higher education R$ 15.452 (US$ 8.490.11). This disparity, according to the Ministry, dropped from 11,1 times to 5,2 times within the last 10 years. Such data shows that the crucial issue in Brazil shall not be increasing expenditures on education, but rather improving the use of existing and allocated resources.

## III. Individual and family characteristics

In this section we analyze the educational characteristics of the Brazilian population, focusing on the issues addressed in this report. Data considered relevant for the understanding of education in Brazil will be presented, particularly in relation to access to higher education. Thus, some questions which guided our analysis were: How are individuals distributed in terms of educational level in Brazil? What are the characteristics of Brazilian students at different educational levels? What are the characteristics that have helped or created barriers to their educational trajectories and to their access to higher education?

Data presented here come from *PNAD* for the 2006-2007-2008 years in a single database. This methodological decision was made so that these findings would be compatible with discussions about the employment market. In order to do so, the analysis of people with a higher education level in employment - using sex and color profiles - would require a larger number of cases. First, the Brazilian population during the period analyzed was characterized as follows:

**Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the Brazilian population**

| Age groups | % | Sex | % |
|------------|-----|------|------|
| 0 a 9 | 16,0 | Men | 48,7 |
| 10 a 14 | 9,4 | Women | 51,3 |
| 15 a 19 | 9,1 | Total | 100,0 |
| 20 a 24 | 8,9 | **Race/color** | **%** |
| 25 a 29 | 8,5 | Indigenous | ,3 |
| 30 a 29 | 14,8 | White | 49,0 |
| 40 a 49 | 13,1 | Black | 7,1 |
| More than 50 | 20,1 | "Yellow" | ,5 |
| Total | 100,0 | "Pardos" | 43,0 |
|  |  | Total | 100,0 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

The Brazilian population was made up of 51.3% women and 48.7% men. With regard to race/color, those interviewed declared themselves to be: 49% white, 7.1% *preto*[7], 43.0% *pardo*, 0.3% indigenous and 0.5% "yellow"[8]. Since 2007 the *preto* and *pardo* population of Brazil together make up 50.1% of the population.

With regard to educational characteristics, the age groups were reclassified according to the ideal age for each level of education. These also guide education policy targets: 7 to 14 years, as the ideal period for primary education, 15 to 17 years, ideal for secondary education and 18 to 24 years for higher education (undergraduate).

Table 2 shows us the distribution of the Brazilian population by age groups and educational levels and this distribution also includes those not in education.

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[7] *Preto* - means "black" or the population which considers itself to be afro-descendent. *Pardo* - means "mixed race". The Brazilian race system is defined by color. The population of *pretos* and *pardos* together is known as "negro" a word which in Portuguese also means "black". We have left "*preto*" and "*pardo*" in Portuguese and have translated "*negros*" as black when this word is used in the text. In Brazil, those of Eastern Asian descent are described as "yellow".
[8] Given the small size of the "yellow" and indigenous groups, for the analysis of racial inequality the groups considered were whites, *pretos* and *pardos*. The question asked in the study was: What is your color/race? Answers were pre-codified and classified by the respondents themselves.

**Table 2: Distribution of the Brazilian population both in and out of education, including educational levels.**

|  | 0 a 6 | 7 a 14 | 15 a 17 | 18 a 24 | 25 a 30 | More than 30 | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-school | 28,5 | 1,8 |  |  |  |  | 3,3 |
| Adults literacy courses |  |  | 0,1 | 0,2 | 0,3 | 0,5 | 0,3 |
| Fundamental | 6,6 | 94,8 | 33,2 | 4,4 | 1,8 | ,9 | 17,7 |
| High School |  | 1,1 | 48,7 | 12,2 | 2,6 | ,8 | 5,0 |
| Higher Education (included MA and PhD) |  |  | 0,6 | 13,2 | 7,1 | 1,7 | 3,2 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission |  |  | 0,2 | 1,1 | ,2 | ,0 | ,2 |
| Out of school | 64,9 | 2,3 | 17,2 | 69,0 | 87,9 | 96,0 | 70,3 |
| Total | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| School attendance | 35,1 | 97,7 | 82,8 | 31,0 | 12,1 | 4,0 | 29,7 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

These data show that the only age group where school attendance is practically universal (97.7%) corresponds to primary education, 7 to 14 years. For the 15 to 17 age group, attendance rates are high, though lower than the former age group, 82.8%. From this age group onwards rates fall, reaching 4% for the over-30s age group. In the age group ideal for attending higher education (18 to 24 years), only one third are studying and only 13.2% of those belonging to this age group are in higher education. It is worth noting that the target established by the National Education Plan was to have, by 2011, 30% of the 18 to 24 population in Brazil in higher education. However, it looks like this will not be achieved.

Tables 3 and 4 have information on the attendance rate for each age group, broken down into sex and race. It can be observed that inequalities of race and sex increase among older age groups and higher educational groups, demonstrating that there is high selectivity of those who remain in the system. Different races stand out in the 18 to 24 age group, where whites have an attendance rate of 34.6%, *pretos* 26.6% and *pardos* 27.9%. With regard to differences between men and women, they are small and benefit women.

**Tables 3 and 4: School attendance rate by sex and color in each age groups.**

| Sex | AGE GROUPS | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **0 a 6** | **7 a 14** | **15 a 17** | **18 a 24** | **25 a 30** | **More than 30** | **TOTAL** |
| Men | 44,3 | 97,5 | 82,1 | 29,9 | 10,7 | 3,2 | 31,1 |
| Women | 44,5 | 97,9 | 83,5 | 32,2 | 13,4 | 4,7 | 30,2 |

| | **0 a 6** | **7 a 14** | **15 a 17** | **18 a 24** | **25 a 30** | **More than 30** | **TOTAL** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Whites | 45,3 | 98,4 | 85,6 | 34,6 | 13,4 | 3,6 | 29,1 |
| Blacks | 48,6 | 96,9 | 80,9 | 26,6 | 11,5 | 4,7 | 26,9 |
| pardos | 43,1 | 97,3 | 80,5 | 27,9 | 10,7 | 4,4 | 33,2 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

The following set of tables (tables 5 to 8) contains important information on educational dynamics and inequalities. In order to do this they present in a more detailed way the characteristics of students broken down into level of education, age groups, sex and color, organized in the following way: i) level of education and age groups; ii) level of education according to sex and color; iii) level of education, age groups and color and level of education, age groups and sex.

The distribution of students in educational levels according to age groups (table 5) show that - except for the 7 to 14 age group in primary education - there is a strong divergence between year-grade in all age groups and educational levels. The concentration of older people at lower levels of education stands out: 34.8% of the 25-30 age group and 44.4% of the over-30s age group were still studying at primary and secondary level during the period analyzed. In the 18 to 24 age group, 43.5% of students are in higher education (undergraduate), 39.1% are in secondary education and there are still 13.3% in primary education. The proportions for this age group are important indicators which represent a significant and recent gain, but show how much still needs to improve in relation to higher education.

**Table 5: Distribution of students, level of education and age groups**

| Level of education | Age groups | | | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0 a 6 | 7 a 14 | 15 a 17 | 18 a 24 | 25 a 30 | More than 30 | |
| Pre-school | 83,5 | 1,8 | | | | | 13,7 |
| Adults literacy courses | | | 0,2 | 0,6 | 2,2 | 11,3 | 0,9 |
| Fundamental | 16,5 | 96,9 | 39,4 | 13,3 | 14,4 | 24,4 | 57,9 |
| High School | | 1,3 | 59,5 | 39,1 | 20,8 | 20,0 | 16,3 |
| Higher education (undergraduate) | | | 0,7 | 43,5 | 55,7 | 38,7 | 10,1 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission | | | 0,2 | 3,0 | 1,7 | 0,7 | 0,5 |
| MA and PhD | | | | 0,5 | 5,2 | 4,9 | 0,6 |
| TOTAL | 100,00 | 100,00 | 100,00 | 100,00 | 100,00 | 100,00 | 100,00 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008.

**Table 6: Distribution of students by level of education according to sex and color**

| Level of education | Total | Whites | Blacks | Pardos | Men | Women |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-school | 13,7 | 14,30 | 11,60 | 13,30 | 14,20 | 13,20 |
| Adults literacy courses | 0,9 | 0,6 | 1,5 | 1,1 | 0,7 | 1,1 |
| Fundamental | 57,9 | 52,3 | 58,7 | 63,4 | 60,3 | 55,5 |
| High School | 16,3 | 16,8 | 18,6 | 15,5 | 15,1 | 17,5 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission | 0,5 | 0,6 | 0,5 | 0,4 | 0,4 | 0,6 |
| Higher education (undergraduate) | 10,1 | 14,4 | 8,7 | 6,0 | 8,8 | 11,5 |
| MA and PhD | 0,6 | 1,0 | 0,4 | 0,2 | 0,5 | 0,6 |
| TOTAL | 100,00 | 100,0 | 100 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008.

When analyzing the distribution of students in educational levels according to sex and color, it can be seen that there is a greater concentration of blacks (*pretos* and *pardos*) and men at primary level, little distinction between these groups in secondary education and greater presence of whites and women in higher education (table 6). When breaking down this information in age groups (table 7), an increase in the discrepancy between race groups and between men and women can be observed. That is, the effect of attributes becomes more evident in educational inequality as we look at the distribution in educational levels for each age group. Difficulties increase for men and blacks (*pretos* and *pardos*) as we evaluate older age groups and the proportion of these groups at higher educational levels.

In the 0 to 6 and 7 to 14 age groups, there is no evidence of racial or sexual inequalities during the initial stages of the education system and, in particular, for the age group where education is compulsory and free (7 to 14). However, for higher age groups, there are very significant differences. For students between 15 and 17, the age considered ideal for secondary education, 45.9% of men and 32.6% of women are in primary education. Racial inequalities become evident when we observe that 47.7% of *preto* students and 48.9% of *pardo* students, aged between 15 and 17, are in primary education. For the white group this percentage is 28.4%.

**Table 7: Distribution of students by level of education, age groups and color**

| Level of education | Age groups and race/color | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **0 a 6** | | | **7 a 14** | | | **15 a 17** | | |
| | **Whites** | **Blacks** | **Pardos** | **Whites** | **Blacks** | **Pardos** | **Whites** | **Blacks** | **Pardos** |
| Pre-school | 83,7 | 86,2 | 83,1 | 1,4 | 2,2 | 2,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 |
| Adults literacy courses | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,1 | 0,2 | 0,2 |
| Fundamental | 16,3 | 13,8 | 16,9 | 96,9 | 96,9 | 96,9 | 28,4 | 47,7 | 48,9 |
| High School | | | | 1,7 | 0,7 | 1,0 | 70,0 | 51,8 | 50,4 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission | | | | | | | 0,3 | 0,2 | 0,2 |
| Higher Education (undergraduate) | | | | | | | 1,2 | 0,2 | 0,4 |
| MA and PhD | | | | | | | | | |
| | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

| Level of education | Age groups and race/color | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **18 a 24** | | | **25 a 30** | | | **More than** | | |
| | **Whites** | **Blacks** | **Pardos** | **Whites** | **Blacks** | **Pardos** | **Whites** | **Blacks** | **Pardos** |
| Pre-school | | | | | | | | | |
| Adults literacy courses | 0,4 | 0,9 | 0,8 | 1,2 | 2,9 | 3,5 | 7,2 | 12,9 | 15,8 |
| Fundamental | 7,5 | 18,5 | 20,0 | 8,8 | 17,9 | 21,9 | 18,0 | 29,5 | 30,5 |
| High School | 29,6 | 51,7 | 49,9 | 15,1 | 27,1 | 28,0 | 18,5 | 21,7 | 21,5 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission | 3,5 | 2,4 | 2,2 | 1,1 | 2,2 | 1,9 | 0,6 | 0,8 | 0,7 |
| Higher Education (undergraduate) | 58,3 | 26,4 | 26,9 | 65,7 | 48,3 | 43,0 | 47,9 | 32,0 | 29,5 |
| MA and PhD | 0,7 | 0,1 | 0,2 | 8,2 | 1,6 | 1,8 | 7,8 | 3,0 | 2,0 |
| | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

**Table 8: Distribution of students by level of education, age groups and sex**

| | Age groups and sex | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **0 a 6** | | 7 a 14 | | 15 a 17 | |
| | **Men** | **Women** | **Men** | **Women** | **Men** | **Women** |
| Pre-school | 83,8 | 83,2 | 1,9 | 1,6 | | |
| Adults literacy courses | | | | | 0,2 | 0,1 |
| Fundamental | 16,2 | 16,8 | 97,1 | 96,8 | 45,9 | 32,6 |
| High School | 0,0 | 0,0 | 1,0 | 1,6 | 53,0 | 66,1 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,2 | 0,3 |
| Higher Education (undergraduate) | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,6 | 0,9 |
| MA and PhD | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 | 0,0 |
| | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |
| | Age groups and sex | | | | | |
| | **18 a 24** | | **25 a 30** | | **More than 30** | |
| | **Men** | **Women** | **Men** | **Women** | **Men** | **Women** |
| Pre-school | | | | | | |
| Adults literacy courses | 0,7 | 0,5 | 2,6 | 1,9 | 9,8 | 12,2 |
| Fundamental | 15,9 | 10,8 | 14,7 | 14,3 | 22,6 | 25,5 |
| High School | 41,2 | 37,2 | 20,2 | 21,4 | 19,2 | 20,5 |
| Courses for Higher Education admission | 2,7 | 3,2 | 1,2 | 1,7 | 0,6 | 0,7 |
| Higher Education (undergraduate) | 39,0 | 47,8 | 56,4 | 55,2 | 41,9 | 36,7 |
| MA and PhD | 0,4 | 0,5 | 4,9 | 5,5 | 6,0 | 4,3 |
| | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 | 100,0 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

By focusing our analysis on the higher age groups, where the presence of people studying in higher education is greater, we can see that in the 18 to 24 age group, (considered ideal for graduation in higher education) of the total number of white students, 58.3% are in higher education. For *pretos* and *pardos* these figures are 26.4% and 26.9% respectively.

It is in the 25 to 30 age group where a greater proportion of **students** in higher education (55.7%) are found. In this age group whites concentrate 65.7% of their group, *pretos* 48.3% and *pardos* 43.0%. 8.2% of whites are studying at Masters and Ph.D. level, 1.6% of *pretos* and 1.8% of *pardos*. However, in this age group we can also see the disadvantages blacks face: half of black students between the ages of 25 and 30 are still in primary or secondary education, whereas this proportion is only 23.4% for whites.

Although it has not been possible within the scope of this report to make a systematic comparison with the end of the 1990s, there can be no denial of the advancements that have taken place in the educational characteristics of the Brazilian population during the last ten years. Nevertheless, there is still a long way to go and there is a need not only for an improvement in access, but also in the distribution of education.

In the next stages of this section, two more specific analyses will be made in order to understand the educational situation in Brazil: analyses of student flow and of stock.

*III. I Flow analysis and stock analysis*

The purpose of this analysis is to separate the students (flow) from others that have already completed higher educational cycles (stock) and to examine their socio-economic characteristics. In the first case, we are interested in discovering the characteristics of students who are: i) entering primary ii) in secondary education and iii) in higher education. In the stock analysis, our purpose is to identify the characteristics of students who have: i) completed secondary education and ii) completed higher education. These will be analyzed according to demographic, family and economic characteristics. It is worth noting that these data are not broken down by age. The only profile used was educational status.

*Flow analysis*

Corroborating with earlier analyses, the age factor is an important aspect in characterizing the Brazilian educational system and the late investment in education access policies. Among students, the average age for the 1st year of primary education was 7.8 years; for secondary education, 19.4 years and for higher education, 26.3 years. Taking as reference the age group considered ideal for each educational level and the averages shown here, only the average for primary education is adequate, which means that there are a large number of students adequately entering the system, but over time there is evasion, which creates a very specific pattern for the age distribution of each educational level being studied. There are no significant distortions with regard to the proportions according to sex or color for students in primary and secondary education. This only occurs in higher education where 57.5% are female and 66.2% are white.

**Table 9: Flow analysis: characteristics of students in the 1st year of primary and students in secondary and higher education.**

| | FLOW | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Age** | **Fundamental** | **Secondary** | **Higher Education** |
| Average | 7,8 | 19,4 | 26,3 |
| **Sex** | | | |
| Men | 52,9 | 45,8 | 42,5 |
| Women | 47,1 | 54,2 | 57,5 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Race/colour** | | | |
| White | 41,4 | 48,2 | 66,2 |
| Black | 58 | 51 | 32,6 |
| Outros | 0,6 | 0,8 | 1,2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Family status** | | | |
| Reference person | 0,6 | 8 | 19,8 |
| Spouse | 0,4 | 2,3 | 14,7 |
| Son or daughter | 88,8 | 86,8 | 58,8 |
| Other family member | 10 | 8,3 | 5,5 |
| Outros | 0,3 | 0,8 | 1,2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Family income per capita (R$ august/2008)** | | | |
| Average | 295,00 | 487,00 | 1.143,00 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008.

With regard to their family status, most students are sons or daughters and this is the most adequate position for investment in education[9]. In primary and secondary levels, almost 90% of students are in this position. Among those in higher education, 19.8% are a household reference person, 14.7% are spouses and 58.8% are sons or daughters. That is, university students have different roles and do not make up a group which invest primarily and exclusively in education.

The educational level of the reference person is an important factor in studies about education because in general it indicates the family conditions (cultural and social capital) to be invested in education. Students in secondary and higher education have a "reference person" who is educated at a higher level than the students in secondary and primary level. Family income per capita of students in primary, secondary and higher education levels are: R$295.00, R$487.00 and R$1,143.00 respectively[10]. This characteristic is related to earlier data which is the superimposition of the condition of someone who is a reference person/student/active for students in higher education.

With regard to those that have already finished their secondary and higher education cycles, socio-economic characteristics vary a lot both in relation to students (flow) and between students (completed secondary education and completed higher education).

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[9] IBGE questions about family position are: person of reference (old head of household), spouse, son or daughter, other relatives, others. In general, the number of men who declare themselves to be spouses is small and women tend to appear more as persons of reference when there is no spouse. A sexist culture predominates where the man is taken as reference independently of his income.

[10] Data about income were updated for 08/2008 and were deflated by the *IPCA* [Extended National Consumer Price Index]. *This* index is used officially by the Federal Government to measure inflationary targets and is calculated by the *IBGE*.

**Table10: Stock analysis: characteristics of individuals that completed Secondary Education and those that completed Higher Education.**

| Age | Secondary | Higher Education | Total ( more than 16 years old) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Average | 34 | 41,5 | 39,8 |
| **Sex** | | | |
| Men | 45,4 | 43,7 | 47,9 |
| Women | 54,6 | 56,3 | 52,1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Race/colour** | | | |
| White | 57,9 | 76,8 | 50,4 |
| Black | 41,1 | 21,2 | 48,7 |
| Outros | 1,0 | 1,9 | 0,9 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Family status** | | | |
| Reference person | 37 | 46,9 | 43,6 |
| Spouse | 26,6 | 29,1 | 28,3 |
| Son or daughter | 30,9 | 20,4 | 22 |
| Other family member | 4,6 | 2,8 | 5,3 |
| Outros | 0,9 | 0,7 | 0,8 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| **Family income per capita (R$ august/2008)** | | | |
| Average | 804 | 2.176 | 645 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

It is worth stressing that, looking at these data, the weight of a higher education certification in the lives of individuals is clear and that it involves a population that is older and more consolidated in the employment market. The average age is high (34 years for completed secondary education and 41.5 for completed higher education) and more female (54.6% for completed secondary education and 56.3% for completed higher education).

With regard to race there are two important considerations: in the case of secondary education, comparing the proportion of blacks (*pretos* and *pardos*) who are students (flow) and who completed secondary education (stock), it can be seen that among students this group is equivalent to 51.0% while those with completed secondary education correspond to 41%, indicating that perhaps there are greater barriers for the

black population with regards to completing their education. However, the most significant race difference is among those who have completed higher education: 76.8% are whites. As this data is not broken down by age, but only by education, stock data show an older populational group where the level of racial inequality is higher.

*Eligibility and odds ratio*

One of the main aspects of a public policy is to delimit its target public. In general, in the debate about affirmative actions for entering higher education general data about the over-10s population is usually used, looking at the proportion of individuals in higher education or who have completed this stage. However, entering higher education presupposes the completion of an earlier stage, secondary education, which, as can be seen, is an important barrier. In this section we will attempt to determine the characteristics of this group.

Given the characteristics of the relation age-grade, we consider as eligible the universe of people between the ages of 18 and 30 who have completed secondary education, in education or not, and who do not have a higher education certification. This proposed profile encompasses 75% of individuals who completed secondary education.

In demographic and socio-economic terms (see tables attached) numerical estimations found that this group corresponds to 18,197,507 individuals, where 45.5% are men, 54.5% are women, 55.1% are white and 44% are black (*pretos* and *pardos*). In terms of their position in the family 53.0% are sons or daughters, 20.6% are reference persons and 19% are spouses. The family income per capita is R$675.00.

With regard to study and work, this group is strongly inserted within the employment market where in the 18 to 24 age group, 62.3% "only work" and in the 25 to 30 age group those who "only work" make up almost 80%. 1/3 of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 study and work, while only 13.7% of adults between 25 and 30 study and work. Men and women show similar tendencies of difference between the two age groups although women tend to be more closely in touch with the educational universe than men, as has already been shown in this study.

**Table 11: People between 18 and 30 years old with completed secondary education and without completed higher education, according to their activity and educational status.**

| | TOTAL | | MEN | | WOMEN | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 18 - 24 | 25 - 30 | 18 - 24 | 25 - 30 | 18 - 24 | 25 - 30 |
| Only study | 5,0 | 1,3 | 4,1 | 0,8 | 6,3 | 1,8 |
| Study and work | 22,2 | 10,7 | 21,2 | 9,4 | 23,5 | 12,5 |
| Only work | 62,3 | 80,4 | 67 | 84,8 | 56,2 | 75,1 |
| Not study and not worky | 10,5 | 7,6 | 7,8 | 5 | 14,1 | 10,7 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 2006-2008**.**

*Odds ratio for entering higher education: binary logistic regression analysis.*

In this section the first results of the binary logistic regression analysis will be shown in order to estimate the odds ratio for entering higher education.

The sample was made up of people between 18 and 30 years (around 75% of those who completed secondary education) eligible to enter higher education courses (completed secondary education, currently studying or not) and who do not have a higher education certification. The dependent variable (dummy variable) separates people who were in higher education (our category of interest) from those eligible to enter higher education but who have not done so (classified as reference category).

Three models were constructed: i) for the total number of this population, ii) for men and iii) for women. These models show the differences in the odds ratio, controlling for all other effects. Therefore, it is not possible to assert that an independent variable can be a better explicative than others, rather how much each attribute increases or decreases the odds ratio. For example: with this model it is possible to state that "being a man or a woman increases or decreases the odds ratio" or that "to have more or less income increases or decreases the odds ratio". But it is **not** possible to say that the income variable is a better explicative than the sex variable.

The data in the table below allow us to assert that the odds ratio for entering higher education, taking account the characteristics analyzed, are as follows:

- With regard to sex and race attributes: being a man decreases by 40.3% the odds of entering higher education and being white increases by 43.6% the odds of women and 47.4% the odds of men;

- With regard to family status: being a son or daughter increases the odds of both women (89%) and men (70.6%), where women benefit more from this status. However, the condition of being a spouse decreases by 51% the odds of a woman starting higher education and by 38.7% the odds of a man.

- The occupational status of the reference person and family income: individuals whose household reference person is in the higher Occupational Groups (OG) and in families with a higher income per capita have greater odds of entering higher education. In the case of occupational groups (G5 to G9) the odds of entering higher education decrease for both men and women. The same happens with income, there is a very significant increase in the odds ratio as income increases, where the odds of women are always greater than those of men.

- In the case of geographic variables: urban status increases in a very different way for women and men: 29.4% and 88.1% respectively.

## IV. The higher education system in Brazil.

The intention of this section is to show how the configuration of Brazilian higher education system tends perpetuating but also points out the challenges to be faced by educational policies[11]. The higher education system in Brazil is constituted by undergraduate (*graduação*) and graduate programs (*pós-graduacão*). Undergraduate students expend between 8 to 12 semesters – 4 to 6 years – pursuing bachelor's degrees that enables them to work as professional (lawyer, economist, physician, engineer, etc.) of a specific area. Graduate programs are organized in two types: *strict sense* (master and doctorate) and *lato sensu* (specialization and MBA). The former prepares individuals to work as scholars teaching and doing research in universities while the latter enables professionals acting within regular job market to acquire expertise in specific niches of their *métier*.

There are three important characteristics for the analysis of access to the system of higher education in Brazil: its size, its distribution and its quality. In general terms, in Brazil, higher education has been growing continuously, its distribution is very unequal

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[11] In this section I present data from the Higher Education Census. This information has administrative character and was collected along with higher educational institutions. Through the years, some new variables were included into the questionnaire what make difficult an historical analysis taking all information available. 2008 Census is the latest with available access. There have been only selected data from classroom education, leaving long distance courses out

in regional terms (although this characteristic has improved) and quality is one of the greatest challenges still to be faced.

Some important information relating to the size of the higher education system is: the number of existing institutions, the number of student enrolments, the number of students entering and completing education.

Currently both within the public and the private sector, each institution has autonomy to establish its own selective process. According to data from the 2008 Higher Education Census, 72.5% of those entering the higher education system gain entry through each institution's selective process (*vestibular* - university entrance examination) which consists of examinations assessing knowledge acquired in primary and secondary education. Candidates applying to these institutions face differences in process format and level of competitiveness. Currently, the Brazilian government is making an effort to use the marks of the *Enem* [Secondary Education National Examination], created in 1998, in the selective process of public higher education institutions and private institutions which are part of its university inclusion programs.

Analyzing the characteristics of Higher Education Institutions (from here on HEIs) it can be seen in the table below that 89.5% are private. If we separate them according to academic organization (university, university centers and faculties) 53% of universities in the country are public (which are totally free) and 93% of faculties and university centers are private[12].

The number of HEIs has been growing in a very significant way. In 2002, there were 1,637 HEIs, in 2008 this number was 2.252, a variation of 39.2%. Private institutions continue to show a tendency of growth, independently of academic organization (universities, university centers and faculties).

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[12] Higher education institutions according to their academic organization are accredited as follows: faculties; university centers and universities. Institutions are initally accredited as faculties. The accreditation as a university or as a university center depends on the particular accreditation of the institution that is already accredited, working regularly and with a satisfactory standard of quality. Universities are characterized by the indissociability of teaching activities, research and extension. They are pluri-disciplinary institutions to educate at higher education professional level and conduct research and extension. They must have an institutionalized intellectual production with at least one third of their teaching body with academic certifications at Masters or Ph.D. level and one third of the teaching body working full time. University centers are pluri-curricular higher education institutions ranging over one or more areas of knowledge which are characterized by the quality of the teaching offered, qualification of their teaching body and the academic working conditions offered to the education community.

**Table 12: Institutions of Higher Education by academic organization and administrative category - Brazil – 2002-2008**

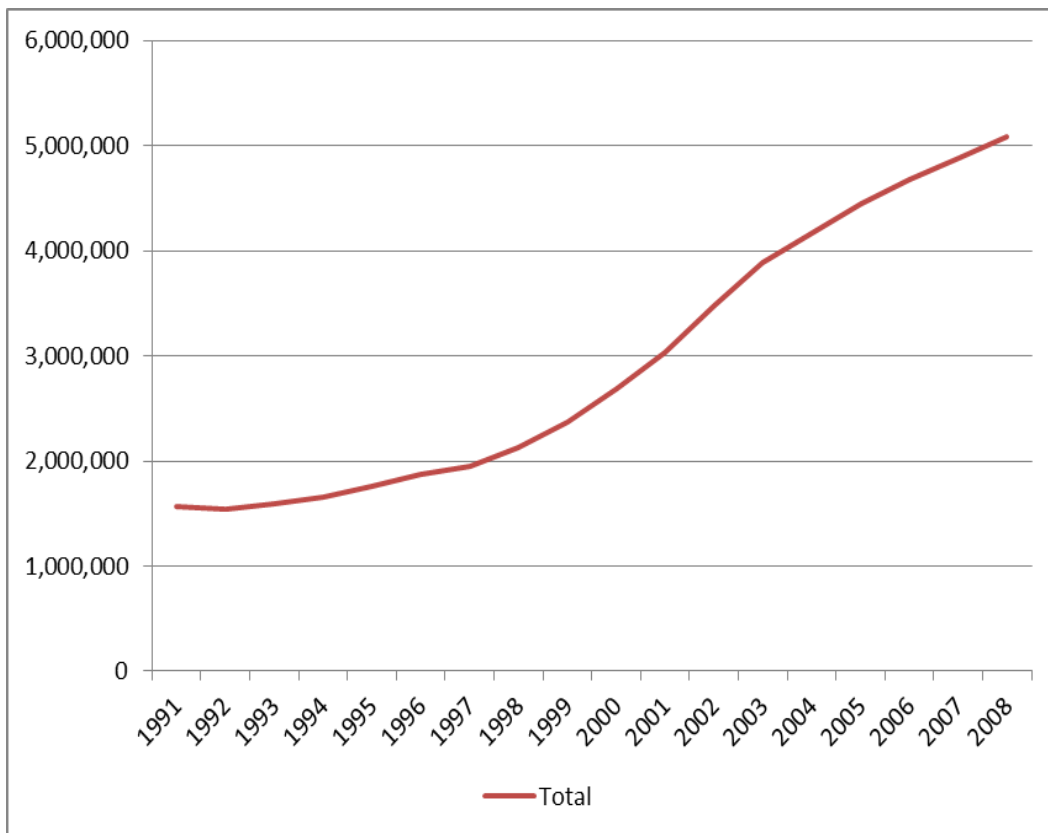|  |  | 2002 | | 2008 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | N | % | N | % |
| University | Public | 78 | 48.1 | 97 | 53.00 |
|  | Private | 84 | 51.9 | 86 | 47.00 |
| University Center | Public | 3 | 3.9 | 5 | 4.00 |
|  | Private | 74 | 96.1 | 119 | 96.00 |
| Other Colleges | Public | 114 | 8.1 | 134 | 6.90 |
|  | Private | 1,284 | 91.9 | 1,811 | 93.10 |
| TOTAL | Public | 195 | 11.9 | 236 | 10.5 |
|  | Private | 1442 | 88.09 | 2,016 | 89.5 |
|  | **Total** | **1637** | **100.0** | **2252** | **100.0** |

Source: Higher Education Census.

With regard to the number enrolments, we can see a trend of growing expansion. Until the start of the 1970s, the number of students enrolled in higher education was 425.000 students. This number continued to grow throughout the 1970s, reaching 1.377.000 enrolled students at the beginning of the 1980s. Between 1980 and 1990 there is a period of stagnation where a little over 162.794 students were added to the system. During the 1990s, growth is impressive: at the start of the 1990s, there were 1.565.056 enrolled students; in 2000 this number reached 2.694.245 and, in 2008, the number of enrolled students was 5.077.403. This growth can be seen from the graphs below.

## Graph 1: Enrolled students by decade



| | 1970 | 1980 | 1990 | 2000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Enrollments | 425.000 | 1.377.000 | 1.540.000 | 2.694.000 |
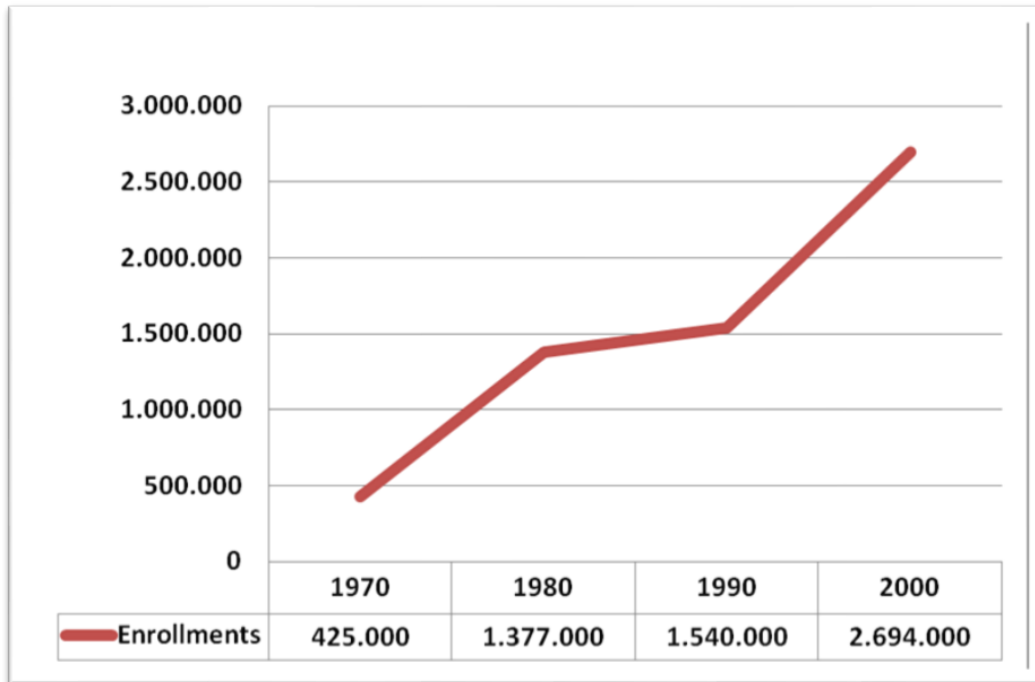
Source: Higher Education Census.

## Graph 2: Enrolled Students 1991-2008



Source: Higher Education Census.

With regard to regional distribution, it can be observed that half those enrolled in higher education are concentrated in the South East region of the country, although all North and North East have showed an expressive growth in the number of enrolled students (70% and 68%, respectively). However, proportionally these changes are not very significant with modest movements in the scenario's configuration, a slight increase in the number of enrolled students in the North East and a small decrease in the South East and South regions.

**Table 13: Enrollments, by regional distribution, 2002-2008**

|  |  | 2002 | 2008 | Growth Rate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mid-West | N | 323.461 | 444.431 | 37.4 |
|  | % | 9.3 | 8.8 | |
| North East | N | 542.409 | 912.369 | |
|  | % | 15.6 | 18.0 | 68.2 |
| North | N | 190.111 | 323.190 | |
|  | % | 5.5 | 6.4 | 70.0 |
| South East | N | 1.744.963 | 2.510.231 | |
|  | % | 50.2 | 49.4 | 43.9 |
| South | N | 677.655 | 887.182 | |
|  | % | 19.5 | 17.5 | 30.9 |
| Total | N | 3.478.599 | 5.077.403 | 46.0 |
|  | % | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Source: Higher Education Census.

So far we have presented information on access to higher education based on enrolment data. As has been pointed out earlier, the capacity of the Brazilian educational system in retaining students is low at all levels and this characteristic is worse in higher education. Therefore the number of students completing their courses is low when compared to the number of those enrolled.

**Graph 3: Number of undergraduates who completed their courses, 2002-2008.**
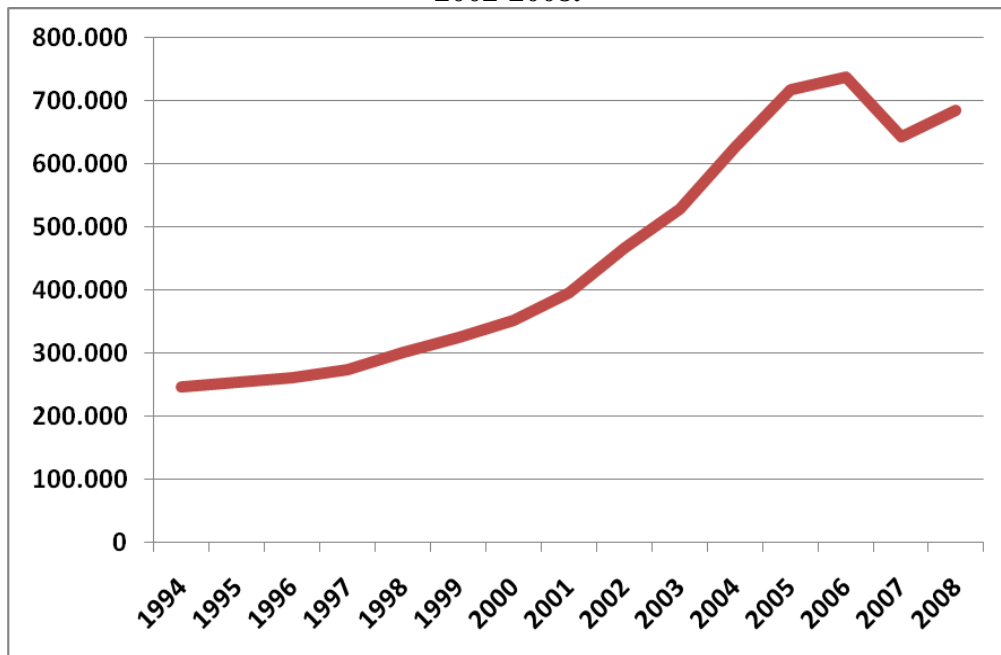


Source: Higher Education Census.

Looking at the data on those who completed higher education in Brazil between 2002 and 2008, the following trends can be observed, where distribution is analyzed both in percentage terms and in absolute numbers:

- A female majority predominates, though it is decreasing. In 2008, 59.5% of those who completed their courses were women. In 2002 this percentage was 62.6%. The typically female areas in 2002 (where more than 70% of those completing their courses were women) were: Education (81.6%), Welfare and Health Services (72.3%), Services (70.2%) and Humanities and Arts (68.8%). In 2008 it can be seen that there is an increase in male participation in all courses. The only area where there is no decrease in female participation is Health and Welfare. The areas where the male participation was already greater in 2002 - Sciences, Mathematics and Computing (57.4%), Engineering, Production and Construction (69.0%) and Agriculture and Veterinary Studies (58.9%) - have all shown an increase in the percentage of men in 2008.

**Table 14: Graduate by areas, 2002-2008.**

| | 2002 | | 2008 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Women | Men | Women | Men |
| Education (Pedagogy) | *81,6* | *18,4* | *75,8* | *24,2* |
| Humanities and Arts | *68,8* | *31,2* | *59,5* | *40,5* |
| Social Sciences, Business and Law | *54,8* | *45,2* | *55,4* | *44,6* |
| Sciences, Mathematicas and Computing | *42,6* | *57,4* | *36,9* | *63,1* |
| Engineering | *31,0* | *69,0* | *28,2* | *71,8* |
| Agriculture and Veterinary | *41,1* | *58,9* | *38,6* | *61,4* |
| Health and Welfare | *72,3* | *27,7* | *74,8* | *25,2* |
| Services | *70,3* | *29,7* | *65,7* | *34,3* |
| **Total** | ***62,6*** | ***37,4*** | ***59,5*** | ***40,5*** |

Finally, about the quality of higher education, the Ministry of Education introduced the *SINAES* [National System for the Assessment of Higher Education]. This system assesses students through the *ENADE* [National Examination of Students' Performance] and courses and institutions through in situ visits establishing the *IGC* [General Index of Courses]. The *ENADE* assesses the general and specific education of students entering and completing education, whereas in the assessment of courses and public and private institutions teaching conditions, in particular those that relate to the profile of the teaching body, physical installations and didactic-pedagogic organization is evaluated. One of the main criticisms of the assessment of institutions and courses is that it is lenient both in its assessment process and in requirements to rectify problems encountered.

## V. Higher Education Access Policies

Education has always stood out in studies on racial inequalities and it has also been a priority for black activists. However, despite strong social demand for improvement in access and quality of education, the scenario in which these policies are established is one of much inequality, the result of late investment, and consequently where targets are difficult to meet. Furthermore, educational policies in Brazil are considered to be badly formulated, with high costs and low effectiveness and with unequal results. With regard to increasing access, its expansion throughout Brazilian history has always come hand in hand with loss of quality and growth of private education, as can be seen above. Nevertheless, it is the issue of the implementation of

affirmative policies in accessing public university which has mainly mobilized public debate.

The first program of affirmative action in Brazil was created in 2002, at State University of Rio de Janeiro. It was adopted quota system for students from public schools who declare themselves as black or brown. Since then, several Brazilian public universities have incorporated this policy by adopting similar criteria in their selection process. In 2004, was established the Program University for All (Prouni), an affirmative action program to enroll students into private universities, designed and implemented by federal government.

The issue of implementation of policies of access to higher education, especially for public universities, has caused an unprecedented mobilization in the national public debate. The main controversy involves the use of racial categories in the selection process of beneficiaries. According to supporters of this perspective, educational policies with universal aspects have demonstrated as incapable to include poor and non-whites into higher education. The belated investment in universal access to education has reinforced inequalities, which are impossible to revert without inclusion policies that favor specific groups. Until beginning of the 2000s, the Brazilian state had not made any specific effort to extended access to higher education to the black and poor population despite all evidences presented in several studies of existent social and racial inequalities in access to education (Bernardino, 2002, Moehlecke, 2004, Guimarães, 2005). In addition, there is a political feature in this debate, which claims that the proposition of a racially informed policy would be the recognition for state and society of historical racial inequalities accumulated along the years and an outcome of slavery system (Lima, 2010).

The main criticism against this model argues that state should not develop policies using racial categories since the implementation of a legislation on these terms implicitly assume the existence of distinct "races" and reinforce the belief on them. Supporters of this perspective argue the racialization is not a reasonable exit to solve problems in the society since the best way to fight the racism is facing its theoretical premises (Fry, 2000; Fry & Maggie, 2001). A second group of criticism – mainly presented on newspaper articles and mass media in general – claims that the

establishment of these educational policies racially informed would negatively affect the quality of education provided by institutions.

Although the implementation of affirmative action policies to improve entry to higher education stand out in the Brazilian public debate, this is inserted within a wide agenda of federal government intervention in race issues involving many areas and with different ambits and characteristics (health, the surviving *quilombo* population, the employment market) and they are also present in other educational levels.

Affirmative action policies emerge within a context of lower racial inequality in elementarry education. However, there is strong evidence of discriminatory processes throughout this process (classroom, didactic material) which contribute to problems in educational performance and evasion, affecting the black student more. With regard to the presence of *preto* and *pardo* students in Brazilian higher education, until the end of the 1990s, this was, without doubt, very restricted. The table below presents information on students between 18 and 24 in higher education, at the end of the 1990s (1999) and in 2008. It can be seen that in 1999 only 7% of students in this age group were in higher education whereas this proportion for white students was 33%. In 2008, although racial inequality is still expressive, there is a significant increase in the proportions of *pretos* and *pardos* in this level of education: 28% of *pretos* and *pardos* were in higher education.

Notwithstanding the criticism, the positive impact of these policies is notable. The table below shows the effect such policies have produced on racial inequalities. It provides information about students aged 18-24 years who attend higher education in two moments: at the end of the 1990s and in 2008. The number of black (*pretos* and *pardos*) students attending college at this age until the late nineties was in fact very limited. In 1999, only 7% of this group was attending college; in 2008 these rates were 28.3% and 29.4%, respectively.

**Table 15: Distribution of students between 18 and 24 in each color group according to educational level**

|      |                | White | Black | "Parda" | Total |
|------|----------------|-------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1999 | Elementar      | 17,7  | 42,8  | 41,3    | 28,3  |
|      | High School    | 48,8  | 48,2  | 49,7    | 49,1  |
|      | *Undergraduate* | *33,1* | *7,5* | *7,9*   | *21,8* |
|      | Adults literacy | 0,4  | 1,5   | 1,1     | 0,7   |
|      | *Total*        | *100* | *100* | *100*   | *100* |
| 2008 | Elementar      | 6,3   | 18,1  | 18,2    | 11,8  |
|      | High School    | 32,8  | 53,3  | 51,7    | 41,7  |
|      | *Undergraduate* | *60,5* | *28,3* | *29,4* | *45,9* |
|      | Adults literacy | 0,4  | 0,3   | 0,8     | 0,5   |
|      | *Total*        | *100* | *100* | *100*   | *100* |

Source: National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 1999 and 2008.

It is noteworthy that there are effects of overall expansion in access to higher education; however, there is a specific effect on racial inequalities. A change of such magnitude would not have been possible without affirmative action policies both in public and private institutions.

*Affirmative Actions in higher education public institutions*

The implementation of affirmative action policies in Brazilian public universities was undoubtedly one of the most controversial debates raised by the current social policies due to the adoption of the quota system and the racial criterion to select its beneficiaries. The reason for such controversy comes from the fact the public universities of country has been through the years an institutional locus for reproducing of country elites, which are constituted mainly by whites. Even having selection processes, which were based on universal and meritocratic aspects, these institutions have excluded poor and blacks from their student and faculty bodies. Departing from this point, the debate on affirmative action and the possibility of its implementation by public universities catalyzed the interest and attention from middle and upper classes. However, there are not federal or state laws compelling public universities to adopt affirmative action policies in their selection processes. As a result, the acceptance or not for this type of policy has been a decision that involves a strong debate not just within educational institutions but also in civil society as a whole. To the same extent that the good performance of students from these programs in the educational system has

minimized more conservative criticism that believes such policies undermine education quality.

It is important to point out that there are other policies to address access to public higher education besides affirmative action The main initiative promoted by the former government was the creation of the Federal University Expansion and Restructuring Program (REUNI). All federal universities that have joined to this program presented improvements related to increase of vacancies, expansion or opening of evening classes, increasing the number of students per professor, reducing the cost per student, and promoting a more flexible curriculum and dropout prevention in return for government investments in structure and faculty replacement. More recently, in 2010, the National Unified Admission System has been created seeking to unify the process of access to vacancies offered in federal institutions, to promote the adhesion of most public and private institutions to ENEM, and to establish of the National Student Performance Exam (ENADE) and of the National System for Evaluation of Higher Education (SINAES).

The last available survey indicates that many public institutions of higher education have adopted some form of affirmative policy for admissions in undergraduate courses having black, brown and poor students from public schools as beneficiaries. Even considering the lack of legal compulsion toward their adoption and the fact such policies were implemented for the first time in 2002, these affirmative action programs have widened. Among all public institutions of higher education, 35,2% of them has adopted an affirmative action program. In the case of the 97 public universities existent this ratio is higher: 58.8% of Brazilian public universities have adopted an inclusion modality. As for regional differences, the strength o this policy is remarkable in the South region, where black population (*pretos* and *pardos*) is less expressive, which must have led to a lower number of vacancies.

**Table 16: Total number of Public Higher Education Institutions with Affirmative Action Policies**

|  | Total | AA | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brazil | 236 | 83 | 35,2 |
| North | 18 | 5 | 27,8 |
| Northeast | 59 | 22 | 37,3 |
| Southeast | 104 | 19 | 18,3 |
| South | 39 | 28 | 71,8 |
| Midwest | 16 | 9 | 56,3 |

**Table 17: Public Higher Education Universities with Affirmative Action Policies**

|  | Total | AA | % |
|---|---|---|---|
| Brazil | 97 | 57 | 58,8 |
| North | 12 | 5 | 41,7 |
| Northeast | 29 | 18 | 62,1 |
| Southeast | 28 | 14 | 50 |
| South | 19 | 14 | 73,7 |
| Midwest | 9 | 6 | 66,7 |

Source: Higher Education Census and Programa Políticas da Cor. Computed by the author

In general, the criteria for an individual being elected for affirmative action in public universities focus on racial classification – *pretos* and *pardos*, indigenous groups, and people belonging to *quilombos* (Brazilian rural settlement founded by slave descendants) – and other additional requirements such the necessity of candidate has attended public institutions during high school and comes from a low-income household. Regarding to models, 90% of universities analyzed took the quotas system (reservation of vacancies) and 10% took the bonus system (additional points to the final score to the potential beneficiary program). In both models, quotas and bonus, there is a combination of racial and social criteria.

*Affirmative Actions in higher education private institutions[13]*

In the period 1995-2002, the model of higher education expansion adopted by the federal government stimulated the expansion of the private sector, favored by a certain amount of deregulation with regard to the flexibilization of requirements to establish courses and institutions. It was during this period that many faculties and university centers became universities. However, results were not as expected, as this

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[13] This part of the research is coordinated by the author and sponsored by Ford Foundation-Brazil.

process created a large number of empty places in the private system, where supply grew more than demand. Linked to this, the fall in the purchasing power of the middle classes during the 1990s contributed to the fact that as well as places, there was an increase in the non-payment of monthly fees (BRASIL, 2007).

It is in this context that the University for All Program (*PROUNI*) emerges. PROUNI is the only university access program which is run by the federal government[14]. It is, without a doubt, the policy which has the greatest impact in numerical terms. From the beginning of the program in 2005 to 2009 almost 900,000 grants were awarded.

**Graph 4: PROUNI: Distribution of full and partial grants (2005-2009)**
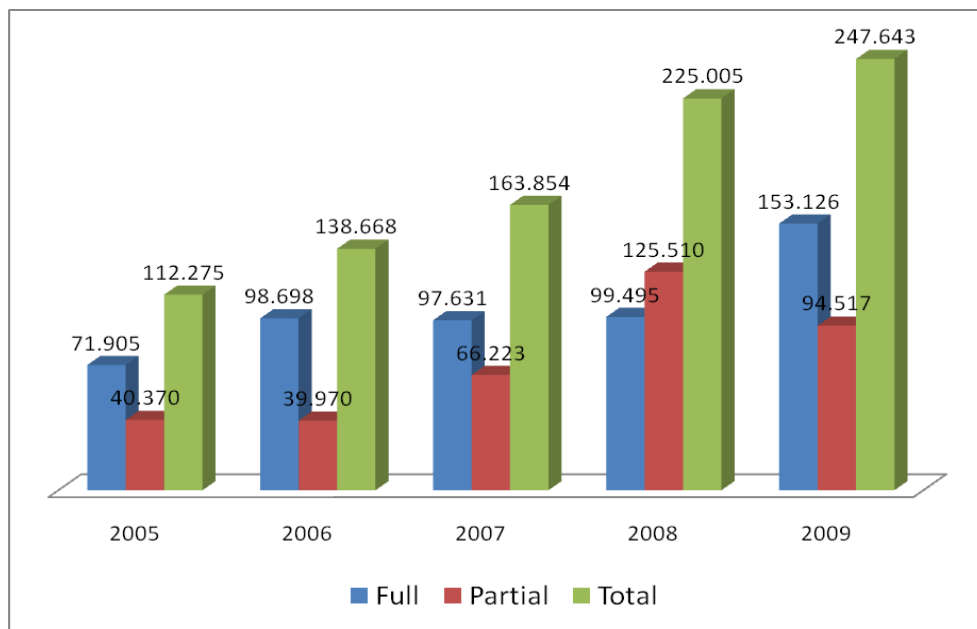


Source: www.mec.gov.br/prouni

The objective of the Program is to award full and partial study grants (50%) to low income students on graduation courses in private higher education institutions. PROUNI also has grants for those who declare themselves to be *pretos*, *pardos* or indigenous when enrolling. The percentage of grants destined for quota students is established on the basis of the number of *preto*, *pardo* and indigenous citizens per Federation Unit (State), according to the latest IBGE [Brazilian Institute of Geography

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[14] The establishment of Affirmative Actions in public universities are decisions taken by the institutions themselves with autonomy for deciding on their adoption.

and Statistics] census, where other selection criteria must also be met: family income per capita of up to 3 minimum salaries, having gone to public school at secondary level and having taken the ENEM examination. With regard to participating higher education institutions, the program is voluntary against which tax and tribute exemption can be claimed. The institution must guarantee places for PROUNI students on all courses offered by the institution in a proportional way.

**Graph 5: PROUNI: Distribution of beneficiaries by color.**
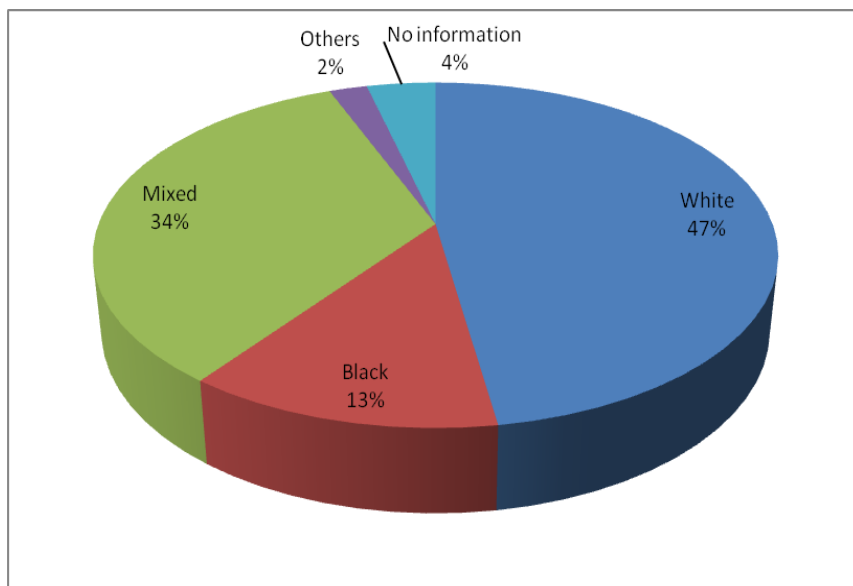


Source: www.mec.gov.br/prouni

One of the problems that this Program faces is that the way grant distribution has been designed follows the profile of the private system of higher education which is very unequal in regional terms. There is a strong concentration of beneficiaries in the South East and South regions.

**Graph 6: PROUNI: Distribution of beneficiaries by region.**
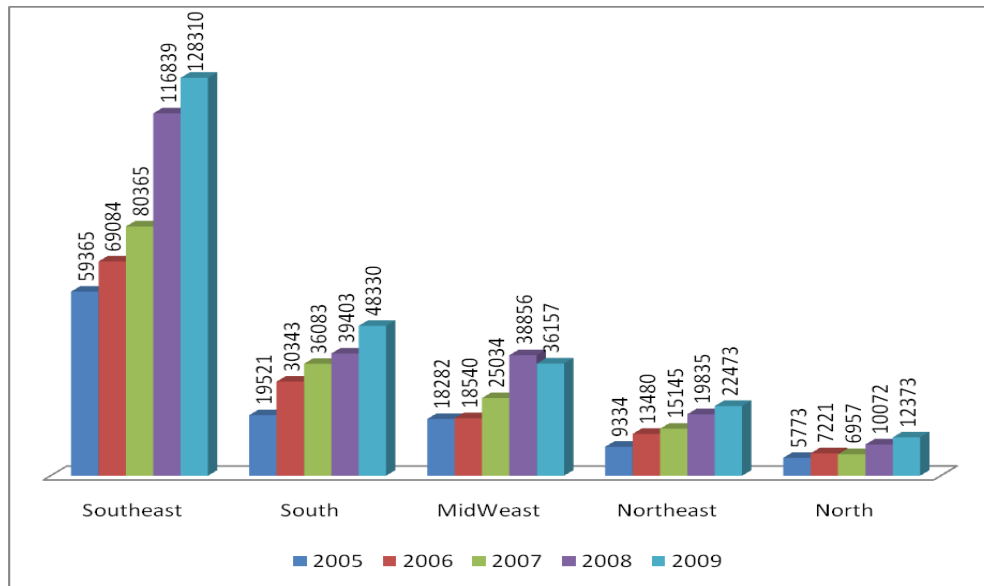
Another form of support for entering the private system is through the *FIES* [Student Funding Program] which came into being before the current government. In this program the student must repay the government after finishing the course. The *FIES* started to include the color/race requirement in the composition of its index classification, increasing the chances of black claimants to receive funding. Like *PROUNI*, its focus is the low income population and the racial criteria is applied after the beneficiary has passed the social criteria.

**Final Considerations**

This report sought to describe a general framework of the current Brazilian educational situation in three different perspectives. From the first one, educational characteristics of individuals were described, which generally account for analysis of the educational inequalities main approach. Two issues stand out with respect to this point: i) the problem of access to education persists in all levels, except for elementary school and ii) individuals' paths are marked by strong barriers to progression in the school system and the gender and color/race attributes are relevant variables to explain and understand this phenomenon.

From the second perspective, it has addressed issues concerning the structure of the higher education system and its recent growth. The main point is that higher education in Brazil is predominantly private and this feature has a negative impact on the quality of education, to students who will hold diplomas – from private schools – less valorized in the job market, and to areas of knowledge as well as for educational policies, which cannot be developed without considering an inclusion model providing access both to public and private institutions.

Regarding specifically to the educational policies, it has been noted there has occurred a huge controversy and debate on affirmative actions in public universities and in the Brazilian civil society and even so these policies have advanced. More surprisingly,  this spread of affirmative action in public school has happened in spite of lack of a federal or state legislation imposing its adoption by institutions. What this fact demonstrates is that final decision about adopt or not an affirmative action policy in public institutions is a result of political and local negotiation, which establishes who takes part in higher education in Brazil. But given the lower weight of public institutions in the higher education system, it was necessary to develop an inclusion policy, which covered the private sector. Within this context, the University for All Program (PROUNI) has been created. Even though there had been criticisms on the program, they did not focus on the existence of racial criteria, but on the fact that it is a policy that invests in the private system, whose quality of education offered, as a whole, is low and transfers resources (through tax exemption) to the private education sector (Cattani et al, 2003). One can clearly note that what is at stake is not only the use of racial criteria, but what kind of resource is mobilized and which group is favored by these policies. In this case, the policies of access to public universities – which serves a smaller public than that covered by private institutions representing a minor proportion of the higher education system – led to a much wider and controversial debate than the 900.000 scholarships granted by PROUNI.

Brazil has effectively advanced in tackling social inequalities. However, these initiatives have started in a specific historical context characterized by a high level of social inequality. By analyzing this changing scenario, it is necessary to consider under which conditions such changes are taking place, in order to grasp its characteristics and challenges.

Finally, concerning to the expansion of higher education, there is a considerable growth in the number and proportion of students enrolling in higher education in Brazil. But the fundamental feature, which affects these expansion times, is that the educational level of Brazilian population is still low and there is a significant percentage of out-of-school teenagers and youngsters. Although there has been an improvement in the students' persistence rates – a demand brought about by expanding access to high school –, it remains the challenge of increasing the proportion of youngsters in higher education and reducing the existent social and racial inequalities in access and distribution (inequalities between groups), as well as in quality.

### *Annex I:* Binary logistic regression model

**Dependent Variable**

The dummy variable which separates people who were in higher education (in the category of interest) from those eligible to enter this level of education but have not done so (classified as reference category).

**Independent Variables**

We consider the following variables to be independent. They can be organized in three groups:

**A. Individual characteristics**

- Sex: "female" as reference;
- Age: 4 categories, "18 to 21" as reference;
- Race: "black" (*pretos* and *pardos*) as reference, "white" and "others" ("yellow" and indigenous);

**B. Socio-economic and family characteristics**

- Family status: "reference person" (old "head of household") as reference, "spouse", "son or daughter", "other relative" and "others";
- Occupation of reference person: first digit of Brazilian Occupation Classification (*CBO*-household) having category 0 as reference; reference persons in the family without occupation were grouped in the "others" category;
- Family income per capita (in R$ from 08/2008, adjusted by the [Extended National Consumer Price Index] *IPCA/IBGE*): we separated the total number of people in twenty groups (twentieths) of similar sizes and, later, added the groups which in the bivariate regressions presented non-significative effects between them in relation to the dependent variable of studying in higher education. Thus, from the 1st to the 5th twentieth, from the 6th to the 8th twentieth, and the 9th and 10th twentieth were added to each other; this means that it does not matter if an individual belongs to the 1st twentieth of income (up to R$100) or to the 5th (R$226 to R$264) with regard to his or her chances of entering higher education (without controlling for any other variable).

**C. Geographic variables:**

- *IBGE* macro-regions: reference is the N (North) region;
- Census status: "rural"/"urban", with "rural" as reference;

Type of census area: "metropolitan region" or "others" which is the reference.

Annex 2: Odds ratio (%) of multivariate models.

| Variável Indep. | Categorias | Total | Women | Men |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Se | Feminino | -40,3** | - | - |
| Idade (cat.) | (18 a 21) | | | |
| | 22 a 24 | -14,2** | -9,6** | -19,7** |
| | 25 a 27 | -37,7** | -29,4** | -46,6** |
| | 28 a 30 | -49,2** | -40,7** | -58,5** |
| Raça | Negra | | | |
| | Branca | 45,4** | 43,6** | 47,4** |
| | Outros | 32,2** | 13,1 | 61,1** |
| Cond. Fam. | (Pess. ref.) | | | |
| | Cônjuge | -45,8** | -51** | -38,7** |
| | Filho | 87,3** | 89** | 70,6** |
| | Outro par. | 30,1** | 23,7** | 27,2** |
| | Outros | -2,7 | -13,8 | 6,4 |
| Ocup. Chefe | (GG0) | | | |
| | GG1 | 24,3** | 6,4 | 46** |
| | GG2 | 130,8** | 95,1** | 171** |
| | GG3 | 34** | 15,8 | 54,3** |
| | GG4 | 35,2** | 6,7 | 73,8** |
| | GG5 | -26,4** | -34,6** | -18,0 |
| | GG6 | -12,6 | -21,1* | -2,6 |
| | GG7 | -33,2** | -35,8** | -32,3** |
| | GG8 | -42,8** | -43,5** | -43,6** |
| | GG9 | -34,5** | -30,9** | -41,3** |
| | Outros | 10,1 | -10,4 | 36,8** |
| Renda (cat.) | (até 5º vintil) | | | |
| | 6º a 8º vintil | 60,1** | 68,1** | 44,8** |
| | 9º e 10º vintil | 109,8** | 128** | 79,4** |
| | 11º vintil | 138,7** | 148,4** | 118,2** |
| | 12º vintil | 186,6** | 205,3** | 157,8** |
| | 13º vintil | 219,9** | 245,5** | 181,2** |
| | 14º vintil | 288,7** | 319,8** | 242,8** |
| | 15º vintil | 352,7** | 400,5** | 290,3** |
| | 16º vintil | 408,7** | 425,1** | 376,1** |
| | 17º vintil | 515,3** | 596,5** | 424,5** |
| | 18º vintil | 646,7** | 675,4** | 588,7** |
| | 19º vintil | 938,9** | 1007,9** | 842,5** |
| | 20º vintil | 1307,4** | 1352,5** | 1198,6** |
| Região | (N) | | | |
| | NE | -11,5** | -14,3** | -8,0 |
| | SE | -36,4** | -37,2** | -35,1** |
| | S | -25,9** | -23,9** | -27,7** |
| | CO | -6,5* | -7,8 | -4,0 |
| Local | (Rural) | 49,6** | 29,4** | 88,1** |
| RM | (Ñ metrop.) | -3,4* | -11,7** | 7,6** |

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