



PUBLIC POLICY OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE IN BRAZILIAN HIGHER EDUCATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR NEW HABITS IN UNIVERSITIES

POLÍTICA PÚBLICA DE ASSISTÊNCIA ESTUDANTIL NO ENSINO SUPERIOR BRASILEIRO COMO UM INSTRUMENTO PARA NOVOS HABITUS NAS UNIVERSIDADES

POLÍTICA PÚBLICA DE ATENCIÓN ESTUDIANTIL EN LA EDUCACIÓN SUPERIOR BRASILEÑA COMO INSTRUMENTO PARA NUEVOS HÁBITOS EN LAS UNIVERSIDADES

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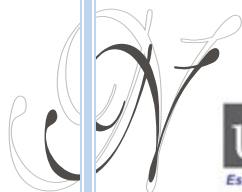
ABSTRACT: This article presents the results of a research inserted in the field of discussions on student assistance policies in higher education in Brazil and adopts as an analytical axis the concepts of access and permanence in public universities. Based on the discussions of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, it seeks to reflect on the influence of student assistance policy in higher education as an instrument for the formation of new habitus in Brazilian universities. Therefore, through a qualitative approach, a bibliographic and documentary research was carried out. In addition to data from the literature in the area, data from the 2020 Higher Education Census/Inep were collected. These materials were problematized from the content analysis. The study makes it possible to point out that public educational policies aimed at guaranteeing access and permanence in higher education are crucial for overcoming educational inequality and also for changing the elitist habitus historically established in the country's universities, since that, committed to the insertion of benefits to the popular classes, it is possible to provide the conditions to democratize the educational symbolic capital, as can be seen in the discussions in Pierre Bourdieu.

KEYWORDS: Student assistance. Cultural capital. Higher education. Habitus. Educational policies.

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RESUMO: Este artigo traz os resultados de uma pesquisa inserida no campo das discussões sobre as políticas de assistência estudantil na educação superior no Brasil e adota como eixo analítico as concepções de acesso e permanência na universidade pública. Ao tomar como base as discussões do sociólogo francês Pierre Bourdieu, busca-se refletir sobre a influência da política de assistência estudantil no ensino superior como um instrumento para a formação de novos habitus nas universidades brasileiras. Para tanto, mediante abordagem qualitativa, foi realizado uma pesquisa bibliográfica e documental. Além dos dados da literatura da área, foram coletados dados do Censo da Educação Superior/Inep do ano de 2020. Esses materiais foram problematizados a partir da análise de conteúdo. O estudo permite apontar que as políticas públicas educacionais voltadas para a garantia do acesso e da permanência no ensino superior são cruciais para a superação da desigualdade educacional e, também, para a mudança do habitus elitizado estabelecido, historicamente, nas universidades do país, uma vez que empenhadas na inserção de benefícios às camadas populares é possível propiciar as condições para democratizar o capital simbólico educacional, conforme se faz observar nas discussões em Pierre Bourdieu.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Assistência estudantil. Capital cultural. Ensino superior. Habitus. Políticas educacionais.

RESUMEN: Este artículo presenta los resultados de una investigación inserta en el campo de las discusiones sobre las políticas de atención a los estudiantes en la educación superior en Brasil y adopta como eje de análisis los conceptos de acceso y permanencia en las universidades públicas. A partir de las discusiones del sociólogo francés Pierre Bourdieu, busca reflexionar sobre la influencia de la política de asistencia a los estudiantes en la educación superior como instrumento para la formación de nuevos habitus en las universidades brasileñas. Por ello, a través de un enfoque cualitativo, se realizó una investigación bibliográfica y documental. Además de los datos de la literatura en el área, se recolectaron datos del Censo de Educación Superior/Inep 2020. Estos materiales fueron problematizados a partir del análisis de contenido. El estudio permite señalar que las políticas educativas públicas dirigidas a garantizar el acceso y la permanencia en la educación superior son cruciales para superar la desigualdad educativa y también para cambiar el habitus elitista históricamente establecido en las universidades del país, ya que, apuestan por la inserción de beneficios a las clases populares, es posible brindarles las condiciones para democratizar el capital simbólico educativo, como puede verse en las discusiones en Pierre Bourdieu.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Asistencia al estudiante. Capital cultural. Enseñanza superior. Habitus. Políticas educativas.





Introduction

In modern societies, higher education plays a central role in the process of hierarchy and social mobility. Individuals with higher education degrees are much more likely to get the best jobs in terms of wages and working conditions than people who have not completed higher education.

The influence of family conditions on the formative itinerary of the offspring has repercussions on school success or failure, as shown in the studies of Pierre Bourdieu, since the “inequality of educational opportunities influences the intergenerational reproduction of social inequalities, as education is an important means of social and social ascension”. economic” (MENDES; COSTA, 2015, p. 72, our translation). In this regard, the authors claim that aiming for more valued occupational and status positions than those of parents has become possible, among other factors, thanks to the assured possibilities for access to cultural capital of distinction based on educational levels. Therefore, higher education has become, therefore, a symbol of equal opportunities.

According to Bourdieu (1983), education in modern societies is intertwined with relevant aspects of the relationship between family heritage, especially cultural, and school performance; in addition to establishing a considerable relationship between the role of the school and the reproduction and legitimation of social inequalities in the context of capitalism. For the author, middle-class or upper-bourgeois students, due to their proximity to “erudite” culture and also due to the cultural or linguistic practices of their family environment, would be more likely to succeed in school. This is what Bourdieu sought to demonstrate, based on research carried out in France, that there is a relationship between culture and school inequalities. Therefore, the elitism present in universities resulted in the formation of a selectivity habitus, that is, a symbolic capital of distinction between social classes.

It can be said that in Brazil it is no different, since, historically, access to Higher Education “has been an important factor of status or class differentiation, as it influences occupational possibilities, which, in turn, will determine the socioeconomic stratum of destination” (MENDES; COSTA, 2015, p. 72, our translation). Despite the presence of public policies for access and permanence in higher education, the fact of being in the university environment is still a privilege for few (OLIVEIRA, 2007). And it is in this sense that





government actions, policies and programs have asserted themselves in order to meet the political and economic interests of a dominant social class.

In this direction, the study aims, from the sociological framework of symbolic capital of Pierre Bourdieu, to understand the power relations established in the guarantee of public policies of student assistance aimed at access and permanence in higher education. Therefore, through a qualitative approach, a bibliographic and documentary research was carried out. In addition to data from the literature on the subject, data were collected from the Census of Higher Education/Inep for the year 2020. The analysis of the findings was conducted through reflection on the content.

The symbolic capital in education

Education has a fundamental role in society, however, the school does not always provide the individual with opportunity and uniformity in teaching. Until the mid-twentieth century, studies on the Social Sciences had a very optimistic view of the concept of education, attributing a central role to schooling in the process of overcoming economic backwardness, class privilege and authoritarianism. Thus, education was given expectations about the formation of a new, fair, meritocratic, modern society, that is, centered on reason and scientific knowledge, in addition to being democratic, based on individual autonomy (ALMEIDA, 2007).

In line with this thought, with the creation of free public schools, it was believed that, according to Almeida (2007), the problem of access to education would be solved and, thus, guaranteed, in principle, equal opportunities for all citizens. - through the availability of vacancies to serve all social strata. Along these same lines, it was assumed that individuals would compete within the education system on an equal footing. Thus, those who excelled in their studies would be awarded, as a matter of justice, with progress in the school years and, later, with the occupation of a privileged status in the social hierarchy.

It so happens that, in the mid-1960s, views on education and their conceptions of systems were reinterpreted, abandoning the idea that school performance simply depended on individual gifts; and moving to an understanding that relates performance to students' social background.

According to Bourdieu, education loses the role of transforming and democratizing societies and starts to be seen, mainly, as one of the main institutions in which social





privileges are legitimized through symbolic capital. For the author, the school institution treats the social mismatch as natural, because the school privileges those young people who already have a cultural background from their families.

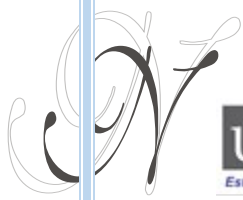
Symbolic capital is symbolic/invisible power that intervenes in the fundamental power relations of the social order, thus, "[...] it is the power attributed to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be able to impose recognition" (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2014, p. 167, our translation). This practice is transmitted through family life and the school system and can be observed in three ways: incorporated, objectified and institutionalized.

Each of these forms has its meanings related to the cultural capital inherent to it. It is the capital incorporated into the dispositions of the body, that is, the way of sitting, eating, walking, talking, among other examples. The objectified state, on the other hand, is the materialization of the cultural asset, such as the possession of books, paintings, among others. And, finally, the institutionalization of cultural capital occurs through school titles and university degrees (BOURDIEU, 1990).

Additionally, according to Bourdieu (1990), the agent also absorbs from phenomenology the process of construction of the social fact as an object and the idea that social agents build social reality, although he maintains that the principle of this constitution is structural. Bourdieu (1996) developed a model in which social relations take place in a social space that is, at the same time, a symbolic space. In this model, a social agent (any group), historically situated in a society, occupies a set of social positions, linked by a homology relationship to a set of activities or goods, also defined in a relational way. This model is the condition for the analysis of the relationships between social positions, dispositions (*habitus*) and positions taken (choices) made by social agents in different domains of practice.

In this way, Bourdieu and Passeron (2009) observe that the action of social structures on individual behavior occurs from the inside out and not the other way around. Such action takes place, at first, in the social and family environment, evidencing a specific position in the social structure. In this scenario, individuals incorporate a set of practices for the typical action of this position, typical of a family or class *habitus*, and, later, they start to lead them over time and in the different environments of action. From this point of view, actions, behaviors, choices and/or individual aspirations do not derive from calculations or planning, as they are, rather, products of the relationship between a *habitus* and the pressures and stimuli of a conjuncture.





[...] The social field determines the behavior of social agents, so that their attitudes, their ways of acting, socially explainable, socially constructed, do not pass through the conscience of those who act. This is what the French sociologist calls habitus, that is, when there is no need to reason in order to orient oneself in a rational way in a given field (CRUVINEL; TAVARES NETO, 2020, p. 404, our translation).

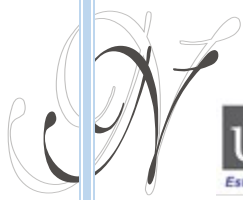
In this sense, for Bourdieu and Passeron (2014), the accumulation of family practices includes certain components that become part of the individual's own subjectivity, above all, cultural capital in its incorporated form. According to Bourdieu, cultural capital constitutes, especially, in its incorporated form, the element of family baggage, which would have the greatest impact on the definition of the school destination.

Formal education has acquired increasing importance in modern societies, whether in terms of socialization or in determining the social roles of individuals. If this happens, and considering that the school is not the first nor the only socialization environment attended by individuals, there are also factors outside the school that help to determine the school trajectory. [...] There are several factors external to the school or to the educational system itself that condition, influence or limit the educational reach of different social groups. Family Resources and the original occupational stratum of individuals' parents are commonly identified as relevant factors in determining educational longevity (MENDES; COSTA, 2015, p. 73-74, our translation).

So, it can be understood that the fact that the agent chooses to be part of an education system is to be ahead of its decision. For the sociologist, teaching is not transmitted in the same way to all students, as institutions make it seem. According to the author, students belonging to the most favored social classes bring from birth a heritage, which he called cultural capital. For him, culture is the values and meanings that guide and give personality to a social group. Therefore, cultural capital is a metaphor created by Bourdieu to explain how culture in a society divided into classes becomes a kind of currency, which is used by dominant social classes to accentuate differences. Thus, culture becomes an instrument of domination, since the dominant classes impose their own culture on the dominated classes.

According to Bourdieu and Passeron (2014), society is the construct of a relational set linked to capital hierarchies, and this capital is divided, in particular, at the heart of economic relations, related to economic capital; the symbolic relationships that are linked to symbolic capital; from social relations, to social capital and, finally, from cultural relations, to the cultural capital of the agents – thus privileging, to a large extent, individuals who belong to groups that share a large volume of capital. Thus, the accumulation of symbolic goods,





including education, is concentrated in the structures of individuals' thoughts, as well as in the manifestations externalized by their actions (BOURDIEU, 1983).

Within the analyzes carried out in the field of educational policies, the concepts of habitus, field and symbolic power, both by Bourdieu (2003); enable a better understanding of the conservation and reproduction mechanisms that operate in human activities and in different social spaces, since we are agents when we act and choose the principles that generate and organize our practices, actions, representations and thoughts.

Habitus then emerges as a concept capable of reconciling the apparent opposition between external reality and individual realities. Capable of expressing dialogue, the constant and reciprocal exchange between the objective world and the subjective world of individualities. Habitus is then conceived as a system of individual schemes, socially constituted of structured (in the social) and structuring (in minds) dispositions, acquired in and through practical experiences (in specific social conditions of existence), constantly oriented towards functions and actions of acting daily (SETTON, 2002 p. 63, our translation).

As the individual contributes to the formation of social structures, such structures interfere in the individual's life. Bourdieu tries to decipher how society manages to reproduce its political, moral and ethical structures in individuals. And he argues that, many times, reproduction happens without realizing it, from an unconscious incorporation of structures, which is possible to perceive in the different ways of acting, according to the environment in which one remains inserted. For the author, the social world is the object of three modes of theoretical knowledge, namely: phenomenological, objectivist and praxiological. They are defined as follows:

[The phenomenological considers] the truth of the first experience of the social world, that is, the relationship of familiarity with the family environment, apprehension of the social world as a natural and evident world, about which, by definition, one does not think, and which excludes the question of its own conditions of possibility. The knowledge that we can call objectivist (of which structuralist hermeneutics is a particular case) (which) constructs objective relations (that is, economic and linguistic [sic]), which structure practices and practical representations at the price of a rupture with this knowledge first and, therefore, with the tacitly assumed assumptions that give the social world its evident and natural character [...] Finally, the knowledge that we can call praxiological (which) has as its object not only the system of objective relations the objectivist mode of knowledge builds, but also the dialectical relations between these structures and the structured dispositions in which they are actualized and which tend to reproduce them, that is, the double process of interiorization of exteriority and exteriorization of interiority (BOURDIEU, 1983, p. 46-47, our translation).



Thinking about the relationship between individual and society based on the category habitus implies affirming that the individual, the personal and the subjective are, simultaneously, socially and collectively orchestrated. In a way, Bourdieu's contribution to education applies to breaking common-sense paradigms, on the other hand, it legitimizes the idea that social mechanisms are endowed with constructions and structuring that aim to maintain the cultural heritage. In the symbolic field, education focuses on establishing the domination of one social class over another.

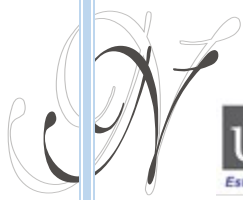
Policies of access and permanence in higher education in Brazil: for a new habitus in universities

Since the beginning of the history of education in Brazil, what has been observed are students from privileged social strata with access to well-regarded schools, which were better able to prepare subjects for admission to public universities or prestigious private universities. Thus, based on Bourdieu, it becomes possible to verify that these students are in the legitimate environment of perpetuation of the symbolic order, that is, of the dominant culture.

According to Nogueira (2000), the fact that the bourgeoisie enter the university is already part of their school destiny, since the habitus of these young people is conditioned to their entry into higher education. In addition, Bourdieu (2012), when dealing with themes about economic and cultural elites, shows how these individuals are offered greater conditions to enjoy school environments, in particular, this is due to the fact that school success, for these families is seen as something natural, which does not depend on a great effort of family mobilization. In addition, it must be considered that the objective conditions established are part of a significant volume of economic, social and cultural capital, making school failure quite unlikely.

The theoretical system, according to Bourdieu (1983), is based on showing how the conditions of social participation of individuals are based on their social inheritance, which is constantly reproduced in a given society - which he calls the structuring structure. In other words, society would be a structuring structure insofar as its deepest relationships are constantly being restructured based on the actions of its individuals. Thus, the accumulation of symbolic goods, including education, focuses on the thought structures of individuals, in addition, on the manifestations externalized by their actions.





For Bourdieu (2013), the problem of social classes offers a particularly favorable opportunity to capture the opposition between two perspectives, that is, it lays bare the apparent antagonism between those who want to prove and those who want to deny the existence of classes. Such antagonism thus reveals that classifications are an object of struggle, capable of hiding a more important opposition, concerning the theory of knowledge of the social world.

Thus, when dealing especially with higher education, it is observed that the university space, as an institution, has a peculiar ambivalence: at the same time that it proposes to be universal, traditionally, it is an institution aimed at a part of society, an elite from an economic or intellectual point of view.

Therefore, individuals from the popular social strata, who were part of public schools, have another way to go amid educational disparities, since these students are conditioned to school practices and the job market to ensure financial survival.

At the beginning of the 21st century, in the history of Brazilian education, from a process of expansion of higher education, there was a need to think of strategies for an effective democratization of education, which included the expansion of access and the strengthening of teaching. public education, in addition to policies that allow students to remain in the higher education system (BRITO; SOUZA; ALMEIDA, 2021).

In this context, together with the expansion process, discussions about student assistance policies emerged, albeit under neoliberal expectations, imposed by the logic of capitalism and with the influence of international organizations, which indicated higher education as a lever for economic development. In this context, the expansionist policies of the period provided the expansion of admission to university for a portion of society, previously prevented from attending educational institutions, due to low socioeconomic status (ALMEIDA, 2007). Such policies contributed to the diversification of the public entering higher education and provided the creation of spaces for clashes and demands in favor of the role of the State in the development of assistance policies as a right of students.

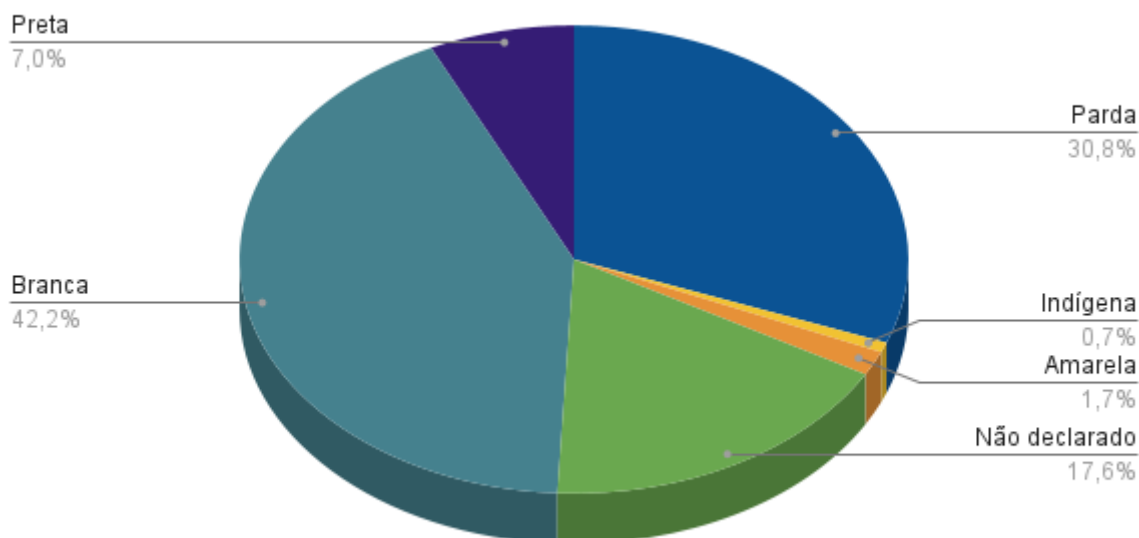
One of the biggest reflections of the way these policies impact the (re)organization of these spaces can be observed, for example, in the percentage of academics enrolled in Brazilian public universities, considered to belong to smaller groups, in 2019.

In Graph 1, below, it is possible to observe a data collection made, based on the 2020 Higher Education Census, on how the vacancies occupied by higher education students already bring an important ethnic-racial diversity, based on a study that takes color/race as



categories in higher education, according to students' self-declaration; which thus reveals a presence, albeit small, of these smaller groups in accessing academic banks.

Graph 1 – Percentage of statements related to the student's color/race variable (in relation to enrollment) - Brazil – 2019



Source: Prepared by Deed/Inep based on data from the Higher Education Census (INEP, 2020)

Based on the graph above, composed of information collected from statements delivered at the time of enrollment in undergraduate courses in Brazil referring to the 2020 Census, it appears that they still represent the highest percentage, with 42.6% , the number of academics who declare themselves as white. However, considering the validity of quota policies, a modified scenario is observed in these spaces, with the presence in Brazilian public universities of 31.1% of people who declare themselves as brown, alongside these, there are 7.1% of people who self-declare as black, or 1.7% of people who self-declare as yellow and, finally, 0.7% are self-declared indigenous. There is also in this group a total of 16.8% who did not declare themselves belonging to any of these groups.

It is noteworthy that, in federal universities, there were significant changes arising from a set of educational policies, especially after the 2000s. Among them, Decree No. 6,096 of 2007, referring to the Support Program Restructuring and Expansion of Federal Universities (REUNI). This program represented an expansionist phase of universities and



resulted in the creation of nine federal universities, in addition to the consolidation or installation of 41 campuses, mainly in the countryside (BRITO; SOUZA; ALMEIDA, 2021).

From this perspective, in addition to expansion policies in the public sector, there was a concern with inclusion, or even, according to Veloso and Maciel (2015), with an “inclusion discourse”; with regard to the concern with the access and permanence of students with socio-economic vulnerability in higher education.

Cruvinel and Tavares Neto (2020) point out that the Brazilian university has always been against the path of the excluded, but with the advent of public policies for social inclusion, especially those aimed at student assistance, higher education has become somewhat more accessible to the historically marginalized layers. Thus, the democratization of access and opportunities for conditions of permanence triggered a gradual transformation of the habitus of the Brazilian university.

For the aforementioned authors, the historical Brazilian social inequality that affects, mainly, the black and brown population had direct repercussions on the predominance of white seats in the country's universities. This reality began to legitimize the habitus of distinction throughout history in which the white elite's access to the academic environment was natural. This symbolic capital arising from the seal of the diploma at a higher level consists of one of the dimensions of social exclusion, in which the university represented a space of segregation.

Brazilian universities, especially public ones, have become throughout history a stronghold of the country's elitism. Consequently, when all agents in a given social field share the same societal origin, it is inevitable that the habitus of distinction between social classes will not be legitimized. Cruvinel and Tavares Neto (2020, p. 402, our translation) point out that the social field is a “determining factor for the behavior of social agents, making their attitudes, their ways of acting, socially explainable, socially constructed, not pass through the consciousness of who acts”. Soon, universities were constituted in Brazil as “a social field in which their agents share the same habitus”.

The conditionings associated with a particular class of conditions of existence produce habitus, systems of durable and transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as generative and organizing principles of practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their own needs. objective without presupposing the conscious interaction of ends and the express mastery of the operations necessary to achieve them, objectively "regulated" and "regular" without being in any way the product of obedience to some rules





and, being all this, collectively orchestrated without being the product of organizing action of a conductor (BOURDIEU, 2009, p. 87, our translation).

In this aspect, it is noted that the democratization of the university provides a social and symbolic rise to historically marginalized individuals, as well as expands the diversity of the university throughout society. Class distinctions, legitimized by the deformed idea of meritocracy, are reviewed due to the defense of social justice and the democratization of higher education, as a narrative of contestation of the naturalization of the historical habitus of elitization in universities (CRUVINEL; TAVARES NETO, 2020).

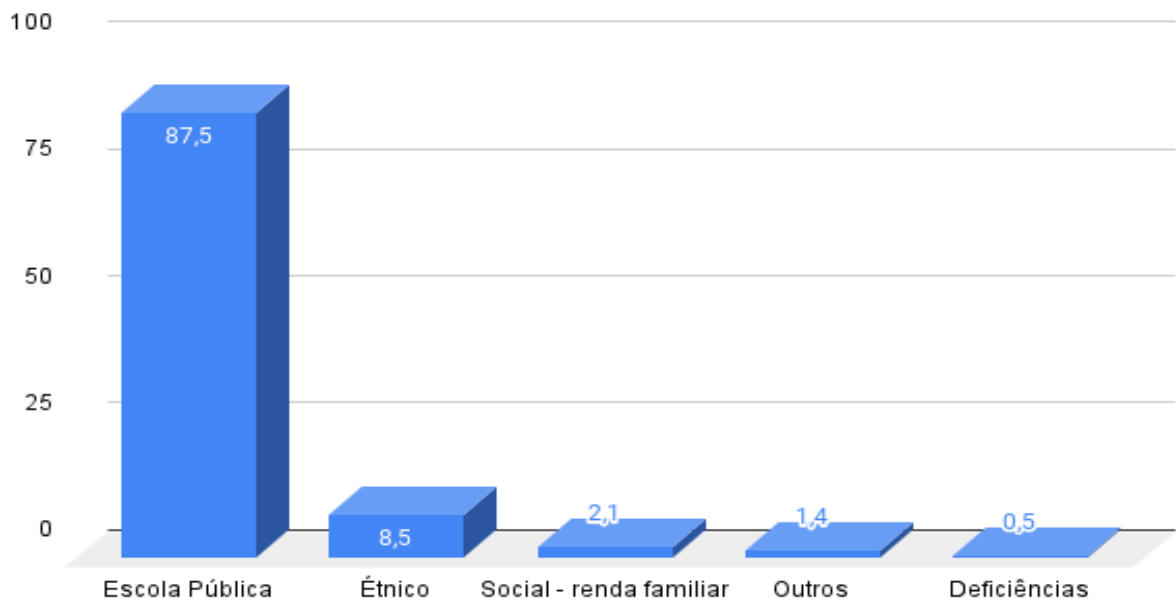
Thus, inclusion policies started with the University for All Program (Prouni), established by Law nº 11.096/2005; as well as with the Student Financing Fund (Fies), in existence since 2001, which provides funding to students to attend higher education in private institutions. Such policies prioritize admission and may favor the permanence of students who wish to take their courses at private HEIs.

In the public sector, the National Student Assistance Program (PNAES), established by Decree No. 7.234/2010, which offers financial support and assistance to students; it is one of the elements that favors the continuity of studies in higher education, that is, it contributes to its permanence. Therefore, according to Brito, Costa and Almeida (2019, p. 1865), assistance permeates all areas of social rights and “comprises actions that provide health conditions, necessary pedagogical tools and minimum resources for survival, such as housing , transport, food, culture, leisure and others”.

Parallel to these policies, Calbino, Xavier and Sabino (2020) show the adoption of different affirmative actions, which contributes, in particular, to the entry of black and brown young people into higher education, through the Quota Law, Law no. 12,711/2012, and it is possible to observe these data in Graph 2, below:



Graph 2 – Proportion of new entrants to undergraduate courses, by type of vacancy reservation - Brazil – 2019



Source: Prepared by Deed/Inep based on data from the Higher Education Census (INEP, 2020)

Graph 2 shows the proportion of new entrants to undergraduate courses in Brazil in 2019, considering the type of vacancy reservation. In descending order, those entering public schools predominate (87.5%), followed by those entering an ethnic program (8.5%), social/family income program (2.1%), others (1.4%) and students with disabilities (0.5%).

Based on these data in Graph 2, it can be said that, as the access of students from public schools and those considered to be in a situation of socioeconomic vulnerability increases, it is necessary to maintain and expand the implementation of policies that enable the access and permanence of these university students, understanding that these two conditions are inseparable and fundamental parts of a continuous training process.

Even with the introduction of the student assistance agenda in a more incisive way from the 2000s onwards in Brazil, some challenges faced by this democratic educational policy are perceived, as is the case, for example, of school dropout. Often, dropout occurs not only because of insufficient financial resources for teaching, but also because of the lack of institutional pedagogical support that makes it possible to overcome the deficiencies brought about by public high school. It is in this space that educational policies, responsible for creating conditions for the effective permanence of these academics, assume an important role in working with the courses so that this target audience does not abandon their studies.



Student assistance, even for public school students, is extremely necessary, since staying in higher education demands financial expenses, such as housing, food, resources for the acquisition of didactic-pedagogical materials, among others. Thus, in addition to the absence of symbolic capital legitimized by the elitist habitus in universities, students from vulnerable classes also have material capital limitations. Therefore, being and staying in higher education are crucial conditions to counter the culture established in this field due to the volume of capital (economic, social and cultural) of those who already belong to this space (BOURDIEU, 2004).

That said, student assistance is composed of a variety of axes of action and adopts as a proposal the articulation of different areas of human rights, which are the result of different social policies, in order to guarantee a standard of social protection. wide. These areas include actions that involve ideals, health conditions, access to pedagogical tools for professional training, monitoring of special educational needs, as well as basic needs of students, such as housing, food, transportation and financial resources.

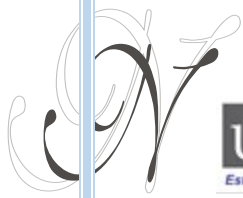
In view of the discussions on the democratization of access and permanence, higher education is a prominent theme in academic, social, political and media spaces, as well as in the official agenda of the governments of the period. The entry of these groups – public school graduates, lower classes, blacks, browns, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities – generated debates and reinforced the need for student assistance programs aimed at the permanence of students in institutions until the conclusion of their courses.

In general, they [students] point out material difficulties, but also highlight the challenges facing the perception that life transits between two worlds, in different symbolic universes. Therefore, at the same time that access to the university is celebrated and conceived as a great possibility for the perception of otherness, it can present itself as a challenge (MONGIM, 2017, p. 151, our translation).

Studies such as the one by Cordeiro and Cordeiro (2015) emphasize that university dropout decreased due to the implementation of student assistance policies to combat not only economic vulnerabilities, but also the low cultural capital of university education from their origins.

In this direction, through public policies, ensuring the reach of access and permanence of this group of students in higher education has become a fundamental element of guarantees of completion of university education and acquisition of symbolic capital, since access, through in itself, was not sufficient to provide such a condition. Thus, the main characteristics





of these educational policy programs are based on actions aimed both at access (entry) and at the permanence of students at this training level.

Given the above, knowing the elements that interfere in the access and permanence of students is a demand that must be understood beyond the individual and economic sphere. As Bourdieu shows, higher education is understood as a scientific field, “a space of relationships in constant struggle for dominant positions, for the distribution of specific capital and for the dispute over strategies and objective chances of university agents” (MATTOS; FERNANDES, 2019, p. 162, our translation).

Therefore, students from vulnerable classes tend to face the challenge of experiencing higher education with the influence of academic habitus distinct from their cultural capital of origin. This reality makes the demand for student assistance policies in higher education necessary to counter the excluding habitus, historically, present in Brazilian universities.

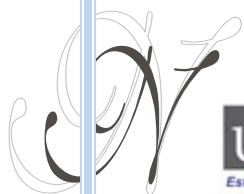
It is possible to infer, therefore, that inclusion policies in universities aimed at access and permanence tend to impact the habitus historically established within the academy. This demonstrates that, despite being rooted, a predetermined habitus is not eternally durable. In this way, the university degree becomes a status no longer restricted to the elite, but also to other layers of the Brazilian population.

Final considerations

For Pierre Bourdieu (2012), education has limitations intertwined with aspects of the relationship between family and cultural heritage and school performance. Thus, this education establishes an important relationship between the role of the school, the reproduction and legitimation of social inequalities in the capitalist context. We find in the author's works a thought about social space in the integration of collective representations and in the autonomy of cultural forms, resulting from the dialectic between the role of active subjects, marked by the distribution of symbolic capital.

Still based on Bourdieu, the university is historically seen as a space to ratify the social mechanisms that are endowed with constructions and structures that aim to maintain the habitus of the dominant cultural heritage. Thus, for the social composition of the university to be effectively changed, in order to guarantee that students have the right to education – covering its multiple difficulties, which include distributive and recognition issues –, it is necessary to debate the social function of the university and to enable the access and





permanence of less favored social strata as an instrument for building a new university habitus, in which inclusion, social diversity and democracy are pillars of training aimed at emancipation and citizenship.

In addition, it is highlighted that the search to reduce socioeconomic inequalities is part of the process of democratization of universities and society. However, this democratization cannot be effected only through access to public higher education. It is essential to create mechanisms that guarantee the permanence of students from the most impoverished social segments, who have real difficulties in completing their graduation.

At the same time, thinking about the presence of new agents in the university space requires from its managers new problematizations and understandings of issues that guarantee the permanence of these academics in the school space. In this perspective, reflecting on student permanence means bringing to the fore the social responsibility of the university as an institution, which proposes to plan and indicate solutions for the socio-educational inequalities in the country.

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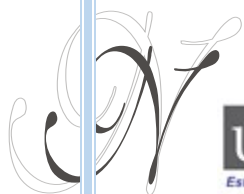
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