Marks of color/race in upper secondary education and their effects on higher education in Brazil

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Abstract

Over the past decades, there has been an increase in the participation of *negros*[2] students in higher education in Brazil, which points to a change in the racial-ethnic profile. This new scenario is the result of pressure from black social movements and the achievement of different inclusion policies through quotas, initiated in the 1990s and strengthened in the 2000s. Despite such initiatives, in comparison to the total population, the participation of the *negros* is still far from the desired percentage. To understand this reality, it is necessary to bring quantitative information to the discussion in order to characterize the trajectory of young people in upper secondary education and the marks of the differentiation of schools attended by whites and *negros*. To complement the analyses of racial belonging, it is necessary to include other social markers, such as gender and social status. Therefore, we have worked on intersectionality and the constitution of four analysis groups: white men, white women, *negro* men, and *negro* women. As a contribution, this article presents data provided by IBGE, from the 2000 and 2010 Demographic Censuses, as evidence of the changes observed in higher education institutions in Brazil regarding ethnic-racial diversity. These data measure the challenges still present and that need to be overcome with a view to quality education for all.

Keywords

Equity – Access to higher education – Upper secondary education – Blacks.

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2- *Negro* will be used hereafter to refer to blacks and other people of colour, and will thus stand for the national census' category "*pretos e pardos*" (black and brown).

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Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century has been marked by significant changes in the profile of higher education students in Brazil. There has been an increase not only in the number of people who access, attend and complete undergraduate and graduate courses but also a change in the student profile, both in aspects of social origin and ethnic-racial belonging. For this characterization, the possibility of an intersectional analysis of gender and color/race markers is an equally important element (FRASER, 2002; CRENSHAW, 2002; MCCLINTOCK, 1995; PICITELLI, 2008).

The theory of intersectionality, which was coined by Columbia University law professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, has become an important reference in racial studies in Brazil. For the author, intersectionality is "a concept that attempts to capture the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination" (CRENSHAW, 2002, p. 7). It specifically addresses how racism, patriarchy, class oppression, and other discriminatory systems create basic inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes, and others.

Before Crenshaw herself, Brazilian Lélia Gonzalez (1983) also discussed the social spaces occupied by women, especially *negro* ones,[3] establishing the interrelationships between the axes of oppression: gender, color and class. She articulated two distinct lines of social thought: race and class; and gender and class. In this analytical correlation, Gonzalez managed to anticipate in Brazil the perception of what would, a decade later, be called intersectional approach. It should be noted that this approach appears in the midst of a reaction of *negro* feminist and intellectual women to a systematic absence of the race category in studies on the condition of Brazilian women and in the debates and political agenda of both the feminist movement and the black movement.

In 1985 Sueli Carneiro and Thereza Santos denounced the absence of the color variable in theoretical production, although statistical data from the 1950 to 1980 censuses could demonstrate the unequal socioeconomic position of *negro* women in relation to white women and white men.

The criticism of the eighties remains current and challenging, especially for white researchers in the field of gender studies and inequalities and, in our case, of educational inequalities, whose intersection with race and gender needs to be considered as a totality and as a structuring element in the understanding of social inequalities and discrimination.

Historically, the discussion of inequalities in access to education based on the markers of gender and color/race has been conducted by several authors (ARTES, 2016; CARVALHO et al. 2009; ROSEMBERG, 2001; RICOLDI; ARTES, 2016)[4]. It is important to emphasize that analyzing the access or the completion of stages of schooling considering gender and racial belonging markers consists not only of quantifying the differences observed between groups of men and women, and of whites and *negros*, but also of considering the situations of power/submission present in social relations, and which, as a consequence, hierarchize the social relations between men and women and between

3- The self-declared blacks and browns, in IBGE surveys, are considered *negro*, as described by Guimarães (2002).

4- This study does not analyze the economic dimension (income). Regarding analyses with the markers of gender and color/race for the discussion of income in household surveys, see Souza (2015).

whites and *negros*. Although it is outside the scope of this article, another aspect deserves to be mentioned: the way *negros* and women experience and signify racism and sexism in different social spaces, among which the school and higher education institutions (HEI).

Dealing with equitable access in the different stages of schooling leads to the concept of social justice. Universal, timeless and complex, the idea of justice is present in the thinking of philosophers of all times. In contemporary times, we resort, in a punctual way, in this article, to the thinking of John Rawls (1992), which, by associating justice with equity, helps us to reflect on the current challenges for a fair and diverse education. Nancy Fraser is another important reference because she associates the concept of justice with the concept of recognition (of injustices/cultural differences) and that of redistribution (of socioeconomic injustices/inequalities) as central to tackling the inequalities that characterize, in the scope of this article, school trajectories.

Historically, different concepts of justice have shaped social and philosophical thinking, economic relations and life in society. While, in the 18th and 19th centuries, the perception of justice was associated with the expansion and consolidation of capitalist system and republics, in the 20th century, justice started to include other dimensions, which are indicative of markers in addition to economic ones. For Rawls (1992), for example, the principles of justice should be established based on a common agreement between subjects under formal conditions of equity. The principles that make up a liberal understanding supported by fundamentally broad concepts of justice are articulated based on the idea of social contract, whereby real income and wealth inequalities are bounded by reasonable moral principles. For the author, a fairer society can only be constituted based on a condition of equal opportunities offered to all, thus, in conditions of full equity. Therefore, the conditions and supply of social goods should be passed on preferentially to the least privileged in society, to the socially disadvantaged. From this perspective, Rawls understands that justice and equity mean, first of all, supporting the underprivileged, correcting existing inequalities.

From the perspective of Nancy Fraser (2002, 2007, 2009), the concept of justice has a two-dimensional character: the dimension of the recognition of the other, of the different or of the diverse with regard to values, culture and principles (which is called symbolic justice); and the dimension of redistribution aiming to correct inequalities, which can be measured, for example, by educational indicators. It is important to note that for Fraser these dimensions are intertwined in the tackling of injustices. A broad conception of justice, guided by the norm of participatory parity (parity as a condition of being a peer, of being in equal condition, of starting from the same place), includes both the dimensions of redistribution and that of recognition. Thus, overcoming injustices means dismantling institutionalized obstacles that prevent the participation of everyone on an equal footing.

Fraser argues that solutions of redistribution of economic and political injustice invariably contribute to the indifferentiation of social groups. Likewise, solutions to the injustice of cultural appreciation intensify differentiation between social groups. An example is thinking about how the feminist movement and anti-racism movements could claim redistribution and recognition simultaneously. The historical context of both movements shows that it was necessary for *negro* women to vehemently claim a place of speech, a political occupation of the different political spaces, including the scientific field.

Although there are affirmative solutions to injustices, which attempt to correct the unfair effects of the social order, in Fraser's view, such solutions do not alter the underlying system that generates the effects. In contemporary times, affirmative solutions to cultural injustices have been associated with predominant multiculturalism: revaluing the identities of devalued or unrecognized groups, while leaving underlying inequalities intact.

For Fraser, the State's affirmative redistribution policy is compatible with the policy of affirmative recognition of predominant multiculturalism: both tend to promote group differentiation.

According to the author, addressing gender and race injustice requires changing both political economy and culture in order to undo the vicious circle of economic and cultural subordination. Considering the case of affirmative redistribution combined with affirmative recognition, Fraser argues that we would have to include, as an affirmative action, the effort to ensure that women – and, we add, *negro* women, from an intersectional perspective – are provided with a fair proportion of educational opportunities, while not changing the nature and number of these opportunities. Therefore, the affirmative recognition that combats racial injustice in culture needs to ensure that *negro* women have the same place and privileges as white women in their school and professional trajectories, for example.

The prospects for redistribution and recognition make it possible to make socioeconomic, gender and race inequalities visible in the structuring of a system that reproduces and perpetuates sexism and racism and that need to be faced or made visible so that society really becomes more just.

A change in redistribution associated with the recognition of identity groups, such as the *negro* population, has mobilized in recent years, especially in Brazil, a series of struggles proposed by different social movements, but mainly and strongly by the black movement, for affirmative policies in the field of education, such as quota programs for access and permanence especially in higher education and inclusion in graduate studies.

Brazilian education is marked by historical inequalities. The educational indicators available and of public knowledge prove a significant part to this statement. Hasenbalg (1999) already indicated that the educational level of the population is low and unevenly distributed and that such reality should not be justified only by the different economic conditions of the population groups; rather, one should consider racial marks, and, to those we add, gender marks.

The use of social indicators in the area of education is an important mechanism for identifying inequalities. In the last decades, the increase in the use of new information technologies by public and private institutions has facilitated not only the collection, but also and mainly the dissemination of information on groups and populations; it has also made access to such records by the non-specialist public friendlier. In Brazil, the online pages of Instituo Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE [Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics]) and, in the area of education, the website of Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira (INEP [National Institute of Educational Studies and Research]) provide a rich set of consolidated information and indicators that allow assessing the educational situation by different sections (population

groups, regional distribution, stages and levels, among many others), which allows not only characterizing reality but also monitoring public policies.

As for the *negro* population in particular, it is important to contextualize the changes brought about by affirmative action policies[5] consolidated over the past 15 years and adopted by governments (both at the federal and state levels) and private educational institutions in Brazil. These political measures resulted from social pressures that started in the 1990s and have been strengthened by specific legislation, such as Estatuto da Igualdade Racial [Racial Equality Statute], Act 12.288/10 and Lei de Cotas [Quotas Law] 12.711/12. In private institutions, Programa Universidade para Todos[6] (Prouni – [University for All Program]) and Fundo de Financiamento Estudantil (Fies [Student Loan Fund])[7] prioritize the entry of these "historically minority" groups in higher education.

Rawls and Fraser's theories, among others, have been used to support reflections on affirmative action policies and the search for greater (racial) justice in academic spaces, with a view to tackling the inequalities (redistribution) observed in the differentiated occupation of these spaces of social prestige.

Moehlecke (2004, p. 762) shows this approximation:

> Dialoguing with the issues of his time, his difference principle (Rawls) has several points of approximation with affirmative action policies, even though they are not the same thing. For Rawls, birth inequalities, natural gifts and less favored positions arising from gender, race, and ethnicity are undeserved and have to be compensated in some way.

On the other hand, Rosemberg (2014) problematizes contemporary discussions that oppose the right to difference or diversity and the access to social goods by tackling existing inequalities. According to the author:

> [...] it is commendable that some identity and also redistributive policies are situated in the school scope; however, other redistributive policies must go beyond school and demand political action in other spheres and with other strategies. (ROSEMBERG, 2014, p. 749).

On the same path of Rosemberg, this article intends to focus on the structural aspects that mark the inequalities observed in educational processes, especially in higher education and in its interface with the trajectory in upper secondary education.[8]

5- The concept of affirmative action used is "[...] a remedial/compensatory or preventive action, which seeks to correct a situation of discrimination and inequality imposed on certain groups of the past, present and future for a limited time. The emphasis on one or more of these aspects depends on the target group and the historical and social context." (MOEHLECKE, 2002, p. 203).

6- Programa Universidade para Todos (Prouni) was established by the Ministry of Education of Brazil in 2004. It aims to provide full and partial scholarships (50%) for undergraduate and sequential courses of specific training, in private higher education institutions, to Brazilian students who have not graduated from college yet. Established by the Federal Government in 2004 and institutionalized by Law 11,096, on January 13, 2005, Prouni offers, in return, tax exemption to the institutions that adhere to the Program.

7- Fies is a program of the Ministry of Education aimed at financing undergraduate education of students enrolled in non-free higher education courses under the terms of Law 10.260/2001. Students enrolled in higher education courses which have a positive evaluation in the processes conducted by the Ministry of Education may apply for funding.

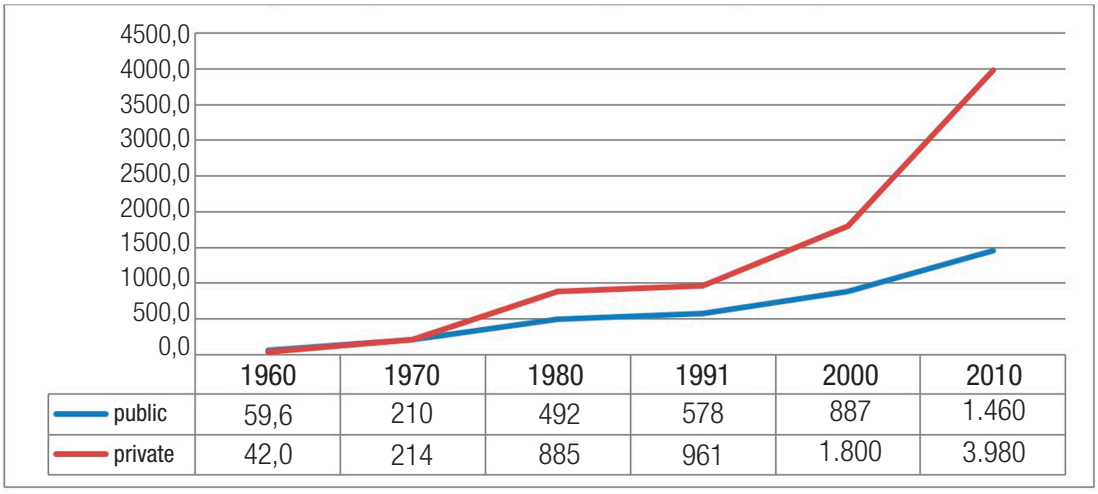
8- Using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), in Brazil, compulsory education comprises three stages: (i) ISCED 0, or early childhood education, which includes provision for children aged 0 to 5 years; (ii) ISCED 1, or primary education, for children aged 6 to 10

Higher Education in Brazil

To support the analysis and reflection proposed here, we have processed, using SPSS Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, some information made available by IBGE, and produced the graphs and tables analyzed throughout the text. We also present information obtained from Banco Multidimensional de Estatísticas (BME [Multidimensional Bank of Statistics])[9], which has enabled us to build cross-sectional gender and color/race data,

The economic context in which different groups are included is an important and historically key element in the analysis of inequalities. According to Souza (2015), although small, there are discrepancies between the main surveys carried out by IBGE, with an over-dimensioning of the income of the poorest and an under-dimensioning of the income of the richest. As the economic factor is not essential in the analysis that we will present, we chose to work with information from the Human Development Index organized by the United Nations Development Program. Graph 1 indicates the expansion of enrollments in higher education in Brazil. These data do not work on color/race and gender data and aim only to contextualize the social markers studied.

Graph 1 - Enrollments by administrative category (public or private), 1960 to 2010



	1960	1970	1980	1991	2000	2010
public	59,6	210	492	578	887	1.460
private	42,0	214	885	961	1.800	3.980

Source: IBGE. Data from Censo Demográfico 1960 a 2010. (prepared by the authors).

years, and ISCED 2, or lower secondary education, for children aged approximately 11 to 14 years; and (iii) ISCED 3, or upper secondary education for students aged 15 to 17 years, when there is no age-grade distortion.

9- Banco Multidimensional de Estatísticas (BME [Multidimensional Statistics Bank]) is a database formed by microdata originated in statistical research carried out by IBGE. The microdata corresponds to the quesitons in the survey. Each questionnaire constitutes one or more records of information. To facilitate the handling of microdata, some derived variables are added. BME web interface is very user-friendly and is able to resolve several issues to avoid query failures, which allows users to freely choose their variables of interest, geographic space, and reference period of the information. (https://www.bme.ibge.gov.br/apoio/produto_bme.html, access on Feb 28, 2020).

The number of students grew from almost 100 thousand in 1960 to 5.4 million in 2010, and reached 8 million in 2015/2016.[10] The period of greatest expansion occurred after the years 2000, with a growth rate of 116.4% from 2000 to 2010. In terms of administrative categories, the expansion reached 64.5% in public institutions and 121.1% in private institutions (NEVES; MARTINS, 2016).

The expansion in both public and private higher education is due to the policies developed in compulsory education[11] (policies to expand the service in upper secondary education and regularize the flow in primary and lower secondary education, and the consequent increase in the number of potential students in upper secondary education) and in the governments of Luíz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003-2010) and Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) of expansion policies for higher education institutions (HEI), especially REUNI[12] in public HEIs and student financing programs in private HEIs.

Despite advances in educational indicators for access to higher education, a more careful analysis also indicates a distance from the rates obtained by countries with an economic situation close to that of Brazil (OCDE, 2016).

The distribution of students by gender and color/race markers is an important indicator of inequality. *Negro* men are the least present in higher education academic spaces. This exclusion begins in the stages prior to schooling. Several studies deal with this issue focusing on the diversity of cultures experienced at school and reveal structural racism (GOMES, 2002, 2010; GONÇALVES, 2013). According to Valente (2005, p. 64), when discussing compulsory education:

> [...] age-grade distortion is smaller for whites, and this difference becomes more dramatic as the student's age increases; *negro* students or poor students are absorbed by the school system differently from the middle class or non-poor students, and, once this clientele is formed, teachers act to reinforce the belief that poor and *negros* students are no longer educable.

Carvalho (2005, p. 88) follows the same path, but adds reflections on the importance of observing the differences in everyday processes, when considering gender and color/race to understand the worse school performance of *negro* boys:

> [...] race heteroclassification is influenced by the existence or not of school problems – disciplinary or learning ones–, considered as part of the child's status, with a clear articulation between belonging to the *negro* race, masculinity and difficulties at school.

Whereas these inequalities can be measured not only in the daily lives of compulsory education schools by observing school spaces, another set of information stimulates studies based on educational indicators. Soares and Delgado (2016) present measures to quantifiy inequalities based on assessment systems, considering in particular the

10- 2015/2016 information was collected from the INEP website – Censo da Educação Superior (www.inep.gov.br, access on July 29, 2019).

11- Translator's note: The term *educação básica* has been translated as compulsory education, which in Brazil ranges from early childhood education to upper secondary education.

12- On Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e Expansão das Universidades Federais (Reuni [Support Program for Restructuring and Expansion Plans of Federal Universities]), see http://portal.mec.gov.br/reuni-sp-93318841, (access on Nov 13, 2018).

performance in Saeb (Sistema de Avaliação da Educação Básica [Compulsory Education Assessment System]). For the authors, results below expectations indicate that the right to education, constitutionally guaranteed even before the enactment of the 1988 Federal Constitution, is not actually provided to the entire population. According to the authors:

> There are many students who, although enrolled in a primary and lower secondary school, do not learn what is necessary for their lives; and there are great differences in learning between groups of students, defined by sociodemographic criteria, such as gender, color-race, socioeconomic level, and region of residence. (SOARES; DELGADO, 2016, p. 756).

Gender and race inequalities are built from cultural markers of differentiation/devaluation since compulsory education, and can even start in early childhood education, according to a classic text by Eliane dos Santos Cavalleiro (2004). Aiming to contribute to the analysis of gender and race inequalities in education, we present below some data on the participation of young people (demarcated by the intersectionality of gender and color/race) in higher education in Brazil and the influence of upper secondary education in their school career.

Table 1 indicates that only 13.2% of the population aged 18 to 24 years (estimated age for attending higher education) is enrolled in an undergraduate course and that only 32.1% of the public at this stage is made up of *negros*,[13] while the net enrollment ratio for whites (NER)[14] is more than double that of *negros*. This situation was described by Paixão (2010), Dalfon, Feres Júnior and Campos (2013), among others.

Table 1 – Participation in higher education by color/race and NER, Brazil, 2010

	Color/race	N	%	NER
Brazil	White	2,089,870	**66.3**	**19.6**
	Negro	1,012,110	**32.1**	**7.8**
	Total*	3,152,330	**100**	**13.2**

Source: prepared by the authors, using data from BME, IBGE, CD 2010.
Note*: The total includes self-declared indigenous and yellow. Thus, the sum of *negro* and white amounts to 98.4%.

In the gender section (Table 2), women are the majority, as already described by Beltrão and Teixeira (2004) and Rosemberg and Madsen (2011). In the analyses regarding

13- It is worth mentioning that *negros* make up more than 50% of the population (data from 2010 Population Census indicate 50.9% and PNAD 2015, 53.9%).

14- Net Enrollment Ratio: number of students in the official age group for a given level of education enrolled at that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population belonging to this age group. *Relatório de Monitoramento Global Educação para Todos 2003/2004*, (UNESCO, 2004, p. 287).

the participation of women in higher education, studies indicate differences in the distributions by gender in the different courses, with a greater presence of women in "less prestigious" ones[15], especially in the areas of education and health, and a smaller presence in courses in exact sciences and technologies (such as Engineering and Computer Science, among others).

Table 2 – Participation in higher education by gender and NER, Brazil, 2010

	Gender	N	%	NER
Brazil	Men	1,353,799	**42.9**	**11.3**
	Women	1,798,542	**57.1**	**15.0**
	Total*	3,152,341	**100**	**13.2**

Source: prepared by the authors, using data from BME, IBGE, CD 2010.
Note*: The difference of 11 subjects between the total of table 1 and 2 is due to the estimate that generates the total number of the population and that represents only 0.0003% of the sample, which may be disregarded in the results.

Based on data from the 2000 and 2010 Demographic Censuses, table 3 discriminates gender and color/race and generates four groupings – white woman and white man; *negro* woman and *negro* man – not only to present attendance in undergraduate courses, in higher education, but also to demonstrate gender and color/race inequalities.

To make the reading of table 3 more understandable and at the same time to provoke a reflection on how inequalities are revealed, we propose a hypothetical exercise of an ideal type as a parameter. Let us consider that 50% of the Brazilian population is made up of women and 50% of men (2010 Population Census data indicate 51.0% women and 49.0% men), and approximately half of this population is made up of *negro* people and the other half of whites (2010 Population Census data indicate 47.5% white and 50.9% *negro*). From these approximations, we defined that each of the four groups should ideally have a proportional participation in higher education of 25%.

Therefore, considering 25% as an ideal share, white women have the best results of attendance in undergraduate courses – 44.2% in 2000 and 35.3% in 2010 –, while *negro* men represent 8.2% and 14.6%, respectively, with a significant improvement in 2010, but still equally distant from the ideal parameter of at least 25%.

An evolution in the percentage of attendance of *negro* undergraduate students can be seen in the rates of variation: more than double when compared to white students (290.7% for *negros* and 73.7 %% for whites).

15 - The definition of greater or lesser prestige for courses can be associated with competition in entrance exams / competitions, future career remuneration or social prestige.

Table 3 - People attending undergraduate courses for a set of variables, Brazil 2000 and 2010

	Attends an undergraduate course		
	2000	2010	Variation
Gender			
Man	43.5	43	**114.2**
Woman	56.5	57	**118**
Color / race			
White	78.5	66	**73.7**
Negro	19.5	36	**290.7**
Gender and color/race			
White woman	44.2	35.3	**72.9**
White man	34.4	27.7	**74.6**
Negro woman	11.3	20.7	**294.9**
Negro man	8.2	14.6	**284.9**
Total *	100	100	**116.4**

Source: Artes (2016), using IBGE microdata, 2000 and 2010 Demographic Censuses.
Note: *The total considers self-declared yellow and indigenous.

Adopting an intersectional perspective contributes to guiding the reading of this data. Students are not just men or women, or white or *negro*, yellow and indigenous, poor or rich; rather, they are simultaneously the overlap of several of these characteristics, which intertwine and influence each other, generating different possibilities of school and professional pathways. The data presented in table 3 show an advance in the attendance of undergraduate courses by *negro* students over a decade, but, in comparison to the attendance of the white population, regardless of gender, racial inequality stands out, especially for *negro* men.

In order to understand the inequalities observed in higher education, it is essential to consider the trajectory of young *negros* since the final years of compulsory education, in particular, upper secondary education.

Upper secondary education in Brazil

Upper secondary education can be understood as an intermediate stage between the appropriation and consolidation of reading and writing, as a space for training and preparation for the labor market, and as preparatory space for entering higher education. This level of education has received special attention from researchers, civil society organizations and public authorities in recent decades. Their concerns include how to understand and modify the poor performance obtained in international proficiency exams (especially PISA[16]) and

16- Program for International Student Assessment (Pisa) is a comparative assessment initiative, applied on a sample basis to students enrolled from the 7th year of compulsory education in the 15-year age group, an age most countries assume compulsory education will have been completed. Available at: http://portal.inep.gov.br/pisa. Access on Nov 29, 2018.

national ones (ENEM[17]), and how to tackle high drop-out rates and lack of interest[18] among young people in this level of education.

In view of this reality, programs and public policies have been designed. In 2009, Constitutional Amendment 59 expanded the range of compulsory education, including early childhood education (ages 4 and 5 years) and upper secondary education (ages 15-17 years). The states, constitutionally responsible for the provision of upper secondary education, were expected to have universalized access by 2016. Goal 3, defined by Plano Nacional de Educação 2014-2024 (PNE [National Education Plan 2014-2024]), provides:

> To have universalize school service by 2016 for the entire population aged 15 (fifteen) to 17 (seventeen) years and to have increased the net enrollment ratio in upper secondary education to 85% (eighty-five percent) by the end of the period of validity of this PNE. (BRASIL, 2014)[19].

The monitoring report of the National Education Plan,[20] published by INEP in 2017, indicates the challenges and progress towards achieving that goal. Part of the conclusions, described in Chart 1, point to some improvement in the selected indicators, which is still insufficient to reach the goal, though. Such conclusions also explain aspects of inequalities in the access to upper secondary education, marked by regional differences, income and ethnic-racial differences.

Chart 1 – Selected excerpts from the conclusions of the Report on the 2nd Cycle of Monitoring the Goals of the National Education Plan related to Goal 3

1. School coverage to the population aged 15 to 17 years grew in the analyzed period, reaching 91.3% in 2017. Notwithstanding, the goal of universalizing the service to this population by the year 2016 set in the National Education Plan has not been achieved
2. The challenge of Goal 3 regarding universalizing access to adolescents aged 15 to 17 is related to school dropout. About 900 thousand adolescents who are out of school and have not completed upper secondary education were enrolled at the beginning of their school trajectory at the appropriate age, but they faced obstacles that prevented them from remaining at school until the completion of compulsory education.
3. There are significant differences in school attendance of adolescents aged 15 to 17 according to their color/race and family income. While 93.2% of the self-declared white teenagers attended school in 2017, only 90.2% of the self-declared *negros* did so. Among the richest 25%, 94.9% attended or had completed compulsory education by 2015, and, among the poorest 25%, only 80.7% had done so. Differences related to income and race did not drop in the most recent period, and risk persisting until the end of the National Education Plan term
4. Inequalities in region, gender, place of residence, color/race, and income are increase in the adjusted net enrollment indicator, which impacts on the school trajectory of social groups and regions. In the Northeast, in 2017, only 62.7% of the young people aged 15 to 17 were in upper secondary education or had already completed it, while in the Southeast this indicator reached 77.7%

Source: Brasil (2017, p. 72).

17 - Created in 1998, Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio (Enem [National Upper Secondary Education Exam]) aims to assess student performance at the end of compulsory education. Students who are about to complete or have completed upper secondary education in previous years may take the exam. Enem is used as a selection criterion for students who intend to apply for a scholarship from Programa Universidade para Todos (ProUni [University for All Program]). In addition, about 500 universities use ENEM result as a selection criterion for entering higher education, which either complements or replaces the entrance exam. Available at: http://portal.mec.gov.br/enem-sp-2094708791. Access on Nov 29, 2018.

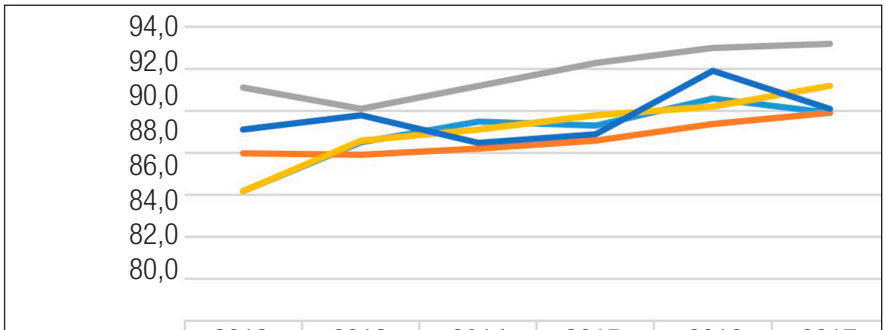
18- Barros et al. (2017) discuss the disengagement factors of young people in upper secondary education, such as school conditions as determinants of disinterest. It is not that young people are uninterested in studies; rather, sometimes the school does not present itself as interesting to young people.

19 - On Goal 3 of the National Education Plan, see http://pne.mec.gov.br/18-planos-subnacionais-de-educacao/543-plano-nacional-de-educacao-lei-n-13-005-2014. Access: March 19, 2021.

20 - In Portuguese, *Relatório do 2º ciclo de monitoramento das metas do Plano Nacional de Educação* (BRASIL, 2017).

In order to complement the analyses related to upper secondary education, we now present graphs 2 and 3 with the changes observed from 2012 to 2017.

Graph 2 – Students aged 15 to 17 years who attended school or had completed compulsory education (2012-2017)



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
North	86,2	88,5	89,5	89,3	90,6	89,9
Northeast	88,0	87,9	88,2	88,6	89,4	89,9
Southeast	91,1	90,1	91,2	92,3	93,0	93,2
South	86,2	88,6	89,1	89,8	90,2	91,2
Midwest	89,1	89,8	88,5	88,9	91,9	90,1

Source: Prepared by the authors, using data of Brasil (2017, p. 62-63).

In all Brazilian regions there was an improvement in coverage, as described in Graph 2 for Gross Enrollment Ratios[21], which, according to the National Education Plan (2014-2024), should have been universalized by 2016. As it can be seen, despite the evolution in attendance, with a better rate for the Southeast (93.3%, in 2017), no Brazilian region reached the goal set by the National Education Plan. The North region (89.9% in 2017), although still far from expected, progressed by 3.7% from 2012 to 2017.

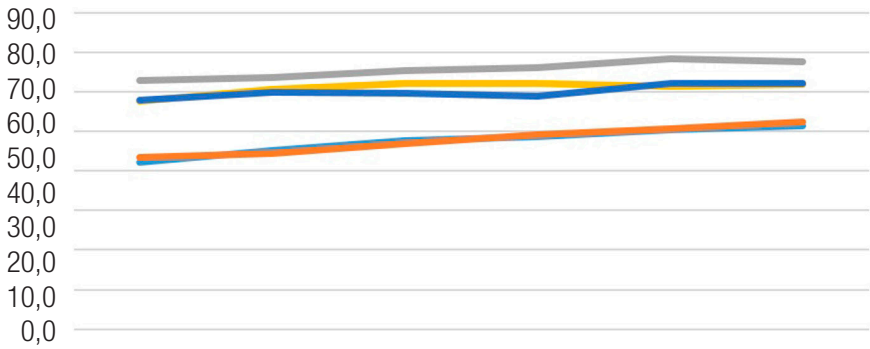
Graph 3, on the other hand, shows that Net Enrollment Ratios are also still far from the 85% goal proposed by the National Education Plan. The Southeast (77.7%) has had the best and the North has had the worst (61.5%) ratio.

Faced with this panorama, in recent years, the difficulties and challenges of upper secondary education have been central issues in discussions on Brazilian education. One of the main agendas is related to the improvement of quality indicators in education, especially when compared to other countries.

Civil society organizations have supported actions and programs aimed at improving school management at this stage, as well as actions focused on students. Their initiatives also seek to influence educational policies through actions to politically

21- Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER): number of students enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population belonging to the relevant official age group.

Graph 3 – Students aged 15 to 17 years who attended upper secondary education or had completed compulsory education (2012-2017)



	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
North	52,2	55,1	57,7	58,6	60,5	61,5
Northeast	53,5	55,4	57,0	59,1	60,6	62,4
Southeast	72,8	73,5	75,4	76,2	78,3	77,7
South	67,6	70,7	72,1	72,2	71,4	71,9
Midwest	67,9	69,9	69,6	68,8	72,2	72,0

Source: *Relatório do 2º ciclo de monitoramento das metas do Plano Nacional de Educação* (BRASIL, 2017, p. 62- 63) (Prepared by the authors).

influence the Ministry of Education, State and Municipal Education Departments, Consed (Conselho Nacional de Secretários de Educação [National Council of Education Department Leaders]), Undime (União Nacional dos Dirigentes Municipais de Educação [National Union of Municipal Education Leaders]), and Education Councils at federal, state and municipal levels.

In universities, upper secondary education has been increasingly present in research and academic debates. Carlos Brandão (2011) reflects on the Constitutional Amendment 59/2009 and the challenges for the National Education Plan, indicating that the age-grade distortion is one of the biggest obstacles to be overcome. In the same way, Kuenzer (2010) shows the stagnation in access indicators in the 2000s as one of the great challenges to meeting the goals for upper secondary education proposed by the National Education Plan in force. Krawazyk (2011) presents an overview of upper secondary education today and discusses the demands brought about by international reorganization and employability in the current times.

In the texts analyzed for this study,[22] we have found no reflections that considered the social markers of gender or color/race. The economic section, with a worse performance

22- Bases Scielo Brasil and Google Acadêmico.

for the poor population, is addressed by Kuenzer (2010) and Frigotto (2016). Although the low quality of education offered in upper secondary education is discussed, no studies ask: who are the students who fail? Are they boys? Are they *negro*?

Table 4 shows the same ideal hypothetical reasoning previously presented, but now focusing on higher education, taking as a parameter the minimum percentage of 25% attendance in upper secondary education for each group, according to the variables of gender and color/race.

Table 4 – People attending upper secondary education for a set of variables, Brazil 2000 and 2010

	Attends upper secondary education		
	2000	2010	Variation
Gender			
Man	45.2	46.1	15.4
Woman	54.8	53.9	11.5
Color / race			
White	58.5	46.2	-10.4
Negro	40.2	52.4	47.6
Gender and color/race			
White woman	31.7	24.7	-11.8
White man	26.7	21.5	-8.7
Negro woman	22.1	28.4	44.3
Negro man	17.9	24.7	51.7
Total *	100	100	13.3

Source: Artes (2016), using microdata from IBGE, 2000 and 2010 Demographic Censuses
Note*: The total considers the self-declared yellow and indigenous.

The result of the participation of the groups is closer to the desired parameter (25%) in our exercise. Disparities appear between the years 2000 and 2010 for white women (from 31.7% to 24.7%) and *negro* men (from 17.9% to 24.7%). In other words, *negros* had a better access rate, which rose from 40.2% participation in 2000 to 52.4% in 2010, which can be understood as a result of improving the flow in primary and lower secondary school and of the mandatory attendance to upper secondary education, as previously mentioned. Considering only the 2010 results, the values different from the expected 25% regard white men (21.5%) and *negro* women (28.2%). To explore this finding, it is necessary to present the age groups of young people who attend school and were not considered in the construction of the table: are *negro* girls, even at a later age, attending upper secondary education? And have white boys already completed this level? These questions require specific studies and are outside the scope of this article.

As the trajectory in the schooling of students in upper secondary education impacts their access to higher education, a possible reflection path is to use indicators that measure the possibility of passing from one level of schooling to the next one, considering upper secondary education as a condition to access higher education. The information, based on the 2010 Census, is organized considering the four gender and color/race groups: white men, *negro* men, white women, and *negro* women.

Table 5 – Proportion of people in the transition from upper secondary education to higher education, by gender and color/race, Brazil 2010

Gender and color/race	Upper secondary education graduates and higher education undergraduates* (out of every 100 people)
White man	100 – 47
Negro man	100 - 26
Man total**	100 – 38
White woman	100 – 51
Negro woman	100 – 30
Woman total**	100-41
White total	100 – 49
Negro total	100 – 28
Total	100 – 38

Source: Artes (2016), using microdata from IBGE, 2000 and 2010 Demographic Censuses.
* Proportion of people aged 18 to 24 years who completed upper secondary education and are attending higher education. Calculation A / A + B, where A = People who are attending or who attended higher education at the defined age; B = People who completed upper secondary education, but have not attended higher education at the defined age.
** total number of groups, including yellow, indigenous and without color declaration.

The table was organized as a simulation exercise to show that there is a potential group of students who have completed upper secondary education and are able to enter higher education, but part of them do not access it. To this end, we consider that the four groups of gender and color/race start from the same (hypothetical) level of 100 upper secondary education graduates. Therefore, if all the groups started at the same level (100 people), 47 out of every 100 white men who complete upper secondary education are in higher education; and only 26 out of every 100 *negro* men are in higher education. Ratios for white and *negro* women are better in comparison to those of white and *negro* men. In other words, the profile of those who access higher education is marked first by color/race and then by gender, regardless of the completion of upper secondary education. This way of measuring inequalities makes it possible to measure how many upper secondary

education graduates actually reach the subsequent stage of schooling and to compare them with the markers of gender and color/race.

In a complementary way, specific information obtained from the report *Desenvolvimento humano das macrorregiões brasileiras* [Human development of Brazilian macro-regions] (2016), organized by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP/ IPEA), allows us to contrast economic/social development, measured by the Human Development Index,[23] and the racial distribution of the population by demographic regions (Table 5).

In terms of economic and social development, it should be noted that the Southeast (0.766), Midwest (0.757) and South (0.754) regions have the best indicators in contrast to the North (0.667) and Northeast (0.633) regions.

Table 6 – HDI by geographic region, 2010

	HDI
North	0.667
Northeast	0.663
Southeast	0.766
South	0.754
Midwest	0.757
Brazil	0.699

Source: IPEA, 2016.

The regions with the lowest participation of *negros* in the population (South and Southeast) have the best HDI, and the opposite happens in the North and Northeast regions, where the participation of *negros* is almost 70% and HDIs are worse.

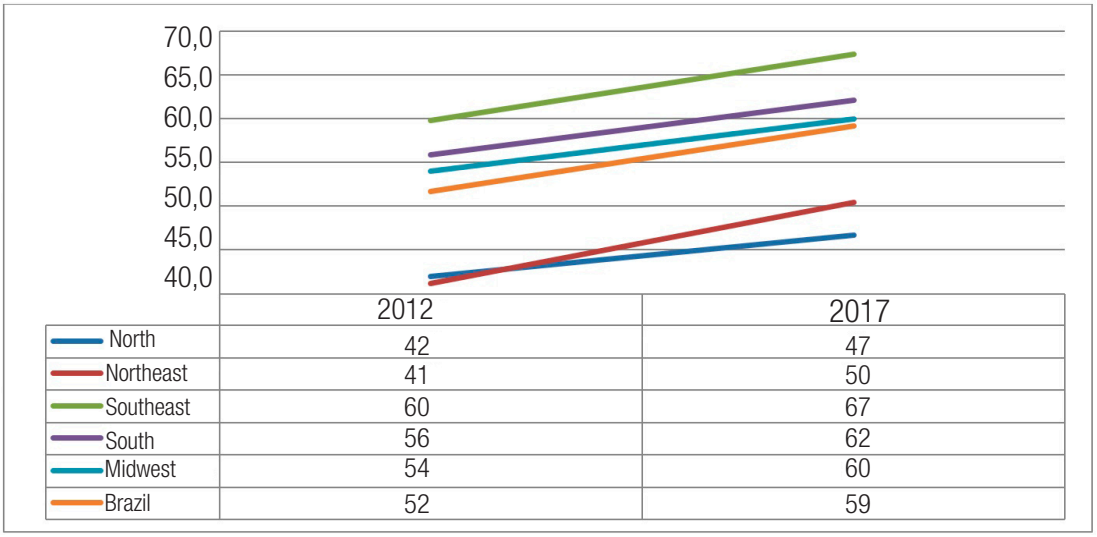
Table 7 – Distribution by color/race and geographic region

	North	Northeast	Southeast	South	Midwest	Total
White	23.2	29.2	54.9	78.3	41.5	47.50%
Black	6.5	9.4	7.8	4	6.6	7.50%
Brown	67.2	59.8	36	16.7	19.4	43.40%
Negro	73.7	69.2	43.8	20.7	56.0	50.90%
Total	8.3	27.8	42.1	14.4	7.4	100

Source: Prepared by the authors using microdata of the Demographic Census (IBGE, 2010).

23 - Measured annually by the UNDP (United Nations Development Program, a body of the United Nations), the HDI ranges from 0 to 1. The higher the value, the more developed a country is considered, based on health, education and income indicators. Complex indicators began to be developed in the 1980s/1990s with the aim of making the well-being of the population operable and measurable with a view to formulating public policies (SANTAGADA, 1993).

Graph 4 – 19-year-olds who completed upper secondary education – 2012-2017



	2012	2017
North	42	47
Northeast	41	50
Southeast	60	67
South	56	62
Midwest	54	60
Brazil	52	59

Source: Prepared by the authors, using data from *Todos pela Educação, Anuário Brasileiro da Educação Básica*, 2018, p. 42.

Note: the table selects the results from the items used by IBGE (white, black and brown) plus the *negro* category, as proposed by Guimarães (2002).

In a complementary way, graph 4 shows the upper secondary education completion rates from 2012 to 2017. The North and Northeast regions have the lowest upper secondary education completion rates (46.7% and 50.4% in 2017). Thus, the joint analysis of information on human development, racial belonging and completion of upper secondary education (Graph 4) becomes more complex and provides important elements to think about the intersectionality between gender, race and economic conditions. Considering these data, a question must be asked: may a lower offer of places in upper secondary education in the North and Northeast regions (where most of the population is *negro*) and, consequently, a lower completion rate be numerically influencing the access of young *negros* to higher education?[24]

Considering that the Southeast and Northeast regions concentrate the largest population, 42.1% and 27.8% respectively, we have decided to compare these regions in terms of the possibility of accessing higher education after the completion of upper secondary education, as previously presented for the variable gender and color/race (Table 2).

24- In a previous study (ARTES; RICOLDI, 2015), we saw that, in the case of the Northeast, despite the fact that white men are 13.8% of the population, their presence in higher education is overrepresented, reaching 17.3%; while for *negros* the values are 34.3% in the population and 21.9% in higher education. Thus, the issue is not just numerical; on the contrary, it involves other dimensions such as structural racism.

Chart 2 – Rates of transition from upper secondary education to higher education by gender and color/race, Brazil 2010

Region	Proportion – Completion of upper secondary education by students accessing higher education
Northeast	100 – 32
Southeast	100 – 41

Source: Prepared by the authors, using microdata from Censo Demográfico 2010 - IBGE.
Note: Proportion of people aged 18 to 24 years who completed upper secondary education and are attending higher education. Calculation A / A + B, where A = People who are attending or who attended higher education, at the defined age; B = People who completed upper secondary education, but have not attended higher education at the defined age.

Out of every 100 people in the Northeast who complete upper secondary education, only 32 do access higher education. In the Southeast this ratio reaches 41 people. This indicates that in the region with the highest participation of *negros*, 69.2%, access is lower than in the Southeast region, regardless of gender and color/race characteristics. This data helps to explain the values found in Table 7 for the variable gender and color/race. In other words, the region of residence, as well as the possibility of completing upper secondary education are important variables to understand the inequalities of access, observed in higher education and marked by the racial belonging of the group.

Final thoughts

The profile of students who access higher education in Brazil has changed positively in the past decade. In terms of racial belonging, *negros* have expanded their presence; however, it is very far from what would be a fair rate when one considers their participation in the Brazilian population.

The text does not explore the conditions of permanence – its economic aspects or everyday life in the university environment. Such environment, as we know, has been historically and culturally constituted by white hegemonic values and culture. Universities welcome young people (as access indicators show), but do not necessarily welcome *negro* people, their values and cultures.[25]

This article contributes to demonstrating that inequality in the access of *negro* women and men to higher education is marked by difficulties that this population group faces in the previous levels of schooling, especially to attend, remain in and complete upper secondary education. However, the marks are not related only to color: boys, especially young boys, have a more difficult trajectory. Thus, intersectionality has been used here as a descriptive category to analyze educational reality, using the educational data generated or used in this study. From this perspective, we have seen that reality is particularly more difficult for *negro* boys.

25- See Gomes (2010) and Passos (2015).

The challenges for the inclusion and permanence of *negros* in higher education, already described in the literature, shows that, in general, the courses they attend are less prestigious and more concentrated in the humanities (BELTRÃO; TEIXEIRA, 2004). This is an agenda in progress, which needs to be considered in terms of the color/race characteristics of the groups that occupy the different spaces of knowledge. Making reality explicit is not a solution per se, but revealing evidence is essential for the formulation of effective public policies not only for the recognition of cultural injustices against the *negro* population, but also for redistribution, considering the access and completion of upper secondary education as a criterion for access and permanence in higher education as the right to quality public education.

By presenting a set of quantitative information to characterize higher education in Brazil, considering the inclusion of white and *negro* men and women, this article draws attention to the need for a better understanding of the racial inequality that characterizes the access to higher education. To this end, this article presents data on the characteristics of secondary education, a condition for accessing higher stages of schooling. Data indicates that there is more racial inequality regarding the completion of upper secondary education between whites and *negros* than between women and men. However, intersectionality makes us advance in the understanding of inequalities: reducing current school inequalities requires giving differentiated attention to *negro* men.

Supported by the complex debate about social justice, especially the ideas of John Rawls and Nancy Fraser, data analysis indicates that both recognition and redistribution need to be problematized considering the real and objective conditions of life of young people throughout their schooling trajectory. An intersectional view in the field of education is essential to make the view on the access of young people, men and women to education more complex. The data show that, for an effective redistribution in the field of education, not only the *negro* population in general but also *negro* boys in particular need specific attention from their presence (possible absence) in early childhood education up to graduate studies.

The latest Census was conducted ten years ago and many changes have occurred in the access to the different levels of schooling, as demonstrated by data from the monitoring report of the National Education Plan, and information from the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (PNAD [National Household Sample Survey]). It is necessary to confirm these changes, by means of a new edition of the Census so that more improved analyses can be carried out, aiming at an updated and more reliable panorama on the inequalities by gender and color/race at the different levels of education, especially because of the various educational and social equity policies enforced in the last decade.

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