

Dossiê “Jovens, Trabalho e Educação”¹

The doors remain half open: working students at federal universities^{2 3 4 5}

As portas permanecem semiabertas: estudantes trabalhadores nas universidades federais

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Abstract

The article analyzes the occupational profile of federal university students according to the following divisions: working student, non-working student, and student seeking work. Thus, it was possible to identify distinct socioeconomic profiles and asymmetries that affect how working students and, especially, non-working students access academic opportunities and university life. Considering the microdata of the Andifes Profile Surveys, it is concluded that the doors of the Ifes remain half open for working students and for students who, although non-working, are seeking work, which makes them even more vulnerable and dependent on public policies of assistance and permanence.

Keywords: higher education, workers, academic life, federal universities

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Resumo

O artigo analisa o perfil ocupacional dos estudantes das universidades federais segundo as seguintes clivagens: estudante-ocupado, estudante-desocupado e estudante-não-trabalhador. Deste modo, conseguiu-se identificar perfis socioeconômicos distintos e assimetrias que afetam o modo como os estudantes ocupados e, sobretudo, os desocupados acessam as oportunidades acadêmicas e a vida universitária. Tomando-se os microdados das Pesquisas de Perfil da Andifes, conclui-se que as portas das Ifes permanecem semiabertas para estudantes que trabalham e para estudantes que, embora não estejam trabalhando, estão em busca de trabalho, o que os torna ainda mais vulneráveis e dependentes de políticas públicas de assistência e permanência.

Palavras-chave: ensino superior, trabalhadores, vida acadêmica, universidades federais

Introduction

It is practically consensus in the literature that the public policies for higher education gestated in the governments of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Labor Party) expanded access to the university for large portions of the Brazilian population (Heringer & Honorato, 2015), although some authors identify the beginning of this process in the mid-1990s (Carvalho, 2011; Comin & Barbosa, 2011). Although the ratio between public and private education has changed little when comparing the number of vacancies and enrolments between 2003 and 2016, the concomitant expansion of both networks has provided a substantial modification in the amount⁶ and profile of university students in the country.

However, it is known that these changes have not meant that Brazilian higher education has approached the standard of the major capitalist countries: (i) the access of young people aged 18 to 24 to this level of education remains well below the average of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and even of some Latin American

⁶ From 2003 to 2016, enrollment in public higher education institutions (IES in Portuguese) increased from 1,136,370 to 1,867,477, an increase of 64.3%, while in private institutions the increase was 70.4%. In the same period, vacancies in public IES increased from 281,213 to 529,239, a growth of 88.2%. In contrast, in private IES, vacancies increased from 1,721,520 to 3,407,890, corresponding to practically double (Cf. Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira, 2017).

countries; (ii) the low-income population continues to face enormous difficulties in accessing and maintaining itself in the university; (iii) the distance between the ethnic-racial profile of the population and that of universities remains considerable; (iv) there is still a discrepancy between the socioeconomic profile of the student body of public primary education and that of public higher education (C. Y. Andrade & Dachs, 2007; Souza, 2012).

Nevertheless, there has been an accelerated expansion of higher education in Brazil for individuals belonging to lower-income groups (Associação Nacional dos Dirigentes das Instituições Federais do Ensino Superior [Andifes], 2019), who attend evening courses and privately bear the costs of their studies, leading to an inversion in the school-work model (Comin & Barbosa, 2011). The “new undergraduates” would be mainly working (only 31.4% did not work in 2009) and adults (long inserted in the labor market), who would have, due to economic and occupational factors, returned to school⁷.

In the context of this more general transformation, we will highlight, in this article, the public universities, fundamentally the Federal Institutions of Higher Education (Ifes). Historically identified as elitist (C. Martins, 2006; Prates & Barbosa, 2015), this characterization is, at least, problematic for the current context since there are several indicators of the recent democratization of public higher education⁸: (i) expansion of the number of vacancies and programs; (ii) increase in the number of universities and campuses, allowing greater access in the countryside of the states and the peripheries of the metropolitan regions; and (iii) changing the profile, given the growth in enrollments of self-declared black students, students from public schools, and those of lower income groups (Andifes, 2016, 2019; Oliveira, 2019). Scholars have highlighted the changes that have occurred, also demonstrating the difficulties that Ifes students from more subordinate social groups face to remain at university, specifically in public ones (W.

⁷ As the authors do not distinguish working students of higher education according to public and private networks, the weight and profile of the majority (of the private sector) may have overshadowed the differences and distinct trajectories of the minority, i.e., of working students of public higher education institutions, the focus of this article. For an analysis of the motivations of working students beyond economic needs, see Cardoso & Sampaio (1996).

⁸ Some authors discuss the limits of the democratization process (Cruz & Paula, 2018; Dubet, 2015; Prates & Barbosa, 2015) since, if the massification process has led to the entry of a larger and more diverse number of students, it is also evident that inclusion continues to produce asymmetries (Paula & M. G. Silva, 2012) or what authors call exclusionary inclusion (Paula, 2015), marginal inclusion (Cruz & Paula, 2018). Dubet identified the paradoxical effects of massification because, depending on the criterion of justice adopted by public policies, “what is gained in one criterion of democratization may be lost in another” (2015, pp. 263, our translation). The higher education system is increasingly heterogeneous (Sampaio et al., 2000), egalitarian, and legitimate (Prates & Barbosa, 2015), but continues to contain professional (type of diplomas, for example) and institutional (public or private higher education institutions) distinctions.

Almeida, 2007; Giroto, 2017; Sampaio et al., 2000; Zago, 2006); take advantage of the different academic opportunities (scholarships and admission to graduate school); and even complete the program (Santos & L. C. Silva, 2011). The student permanence policy, especially after the implementation of the Plano Nacional de Assistência Estudantil (Pnaes, National Student Assistance Plan) in 2010, managed to correct part of these discrepancies to some extent. However, even before consolidating and reaching the volume of resources adequate to the needs of a significant portion of students, the Pnaes has been undergoing an inflection (Andifes, 2019).

Relevant studies (Sampaio et al., 2000) have analyzed the inequalities in the university course according to racial self-declaration and socioeconomic profile, using the per capita family monthly income as an outlining criterion. These are markers that show inclusions but also the persistence of asymmetries. The relationship of Ifes students with their work has also been the object of analysis. However, the specificities of the share of unemployed students have been less deepened⁹.

There are two central dimensions to the analysis of the relationship between students and work: (i) whether or not the student must work; and (ii), if necessary, whether or not the student is unemployed. The first dimension establishes a division between those for whom the need does not condition the study for work and those for whom studying without working is out of the question. The second establishes a divide between those for whom the need to work is fulfilled, albeit partially and in many cases precariously, significantly increasing the material difficulty to continue their studies and those for whom the need to work is not fulfilled to any extent.

In summary, three groups of students must be considered: (i) working students; (ii) students seeking work; and (iii) students who do not work and are not seeking work. We will denominate these three groups, respectively, working-employed-students (hereinafter working students), working-unemployed-students (hereinafter unemployed students), and non-working students. The working dimension, taken from the divisions proposed here, allows us to expose old and new asymmetries concerning university permanence, trajectory, and experience.

⁹ Recent research highlights the relationship between private higher education students and work (Terribili Filho & Raphael, 2005; Terribili Filho, 2007; Urchei, 2018).

Additionally, giving centrality to the working category has advantages since income inequalities are an expression of economic relations structuring capitalist society. Thus: (i) the non-working student would be the one with the best conditions to enjoy all the potentialities of academic life by enjoying full time for studies; (ii) the employed student does not have conditions of full dedication to studies since their routine is divided with work; and (iii) the unemployed student has their academic trajectory affected by the search for work and concern with material survival.

We will discuss the occupational profile of students from three variables: (i) family origin (parental education); (ii) the socioeconomic profile of the student (age, sex, race/color, type of school in which they studied in high school, family per capita income, shift of university studies); and (iii) academic opportunities (with special attention to access to scholarships and grants).

Considering the division proposed here, the data reveal expected trends and some findings that show the tilting condition of unemployed students. These sometimes enjoy academic activities in proportion to the employed and non-working students but sometimes live a more dramatic university condition, dependent on policies of permanence and assistance.

Despite the expansion of federal higher education, there is a damming of the offer of vacancies in evening programs to employed students and persistent barriers for them to experience equitably the academic opportunities offered. The difficulties of access to academic opportunities are, in turn, even greater for unemployed students, which leads us to affirm that the doors of federal public universities remain half open to employed and unemployed students.

The article is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the contradictory dynamics of the expansion of higher education in Brazil, focusing on asymmetries between public and private networks and selective expansionism in federal public higher education. In the second, we will analyze the persistent asymmetries concerning the permanence, trajectory, and experience of employed, unemployed, and non-working students based on data from the latest editions of the Ifes' Socioeconomic and Cultural Profile Survey (Andifes, 2016, 2019). In the third part, we will try to support the hypothesis that the doors remain half open for working students in public universities since the expansion of private higher education, in addition to strong and growing, was done primarily in courses offered during the evening, fundamentally incorporating working students, while the expansion of federal public higher education, despite the enormous advances, has been contained since the beginning of the 2010s by the limited

number of vacancies during the evening and by the insufficiency of student permanence policies.

1. Public-private asymmetries and selective expansionism in federal public higher education

In recent decades, Brazilian higher education has undergone many modifications. However, some of its characteristics persist. The asymmetries between public and private networks stand out among the continuities – the latter diverse, with a predominance of isolated colleges (Sampaio, 2014). In 2019, 88.4% of Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (IES) were private and paid (among which 83.8% were isolated), and only 11.6% were public and free (Instituto Nacional de Estudos e Pesquisas Educacionais Anísio Teixeira [Inep], 2020). In addition, 94.8% of the vacancies were offered by the private sector, although public institutions received much more applicants and had high competition.

The competition for a vacancy in public institutions is, on average, five times higher than in private ones. F. Martins & Machado (2018) show that, in 2000, the candidate/vacancy ratio in public institutions was 8.87, while in 2010, it reached 7.56. In addition to high competition, there was an occupancy rate of 101% in federal institutions in 2010 against 44.2% in private, indicating that all the vacancies offered were occupied. In 2018, the candidate/vacancy ratio in public institutions was 11.5, while in private institutions, it is 1.77. Although the vacancy rate grew at the federal level, the occupancy rate fell to 91.6%. There was also a drop in the occupancy rate in private institutions, reaching 37.9% (Inep, 2019). This decrease reflects the conjuncture of the economic crisis, the increase in unemployment, the growth of informality, and the decrease in income (Pochmann, 2015).

Meanwhile, the data that most draws our attention is expanding the number of vacancies in IES. The vacancies offered in Brazilian higher education grew by 156.53% between 2000 and 2010. This expansion occurred, above all, in private IES, of which expansion was 176.57%. The increase was 81.3% in the public sector (F. Martins & Machado, 2018).

The policy responsible for the positive results in federal public education was the effective implementation, in 2008, of the Programa de Apoio a Planos de Reestruturação e

Expansão das Universidades Federais (Reuni, Program to Support Plans for Restructuring and Expanding Federal Universities). To measure the impact of Reuni, it is worth noting that, in 2002, the country had 45 Ifes, reaching 63 in 2017 – a growth of 40% (Cf. Andifes, 2019; Inep, 2019). New *campuses* were opened, rising from 148 in 2002 to 408 in 2018 – a variation of 175.6%. Five new universities were created throughout 2018, totaling 68. In addition, there was a 200% growth in the number of vacancies offered in on-site undergraduate programs from 2003 to 2018, jumping from 109,184 in 2003 to 327,552 in 2018 (Inep, 2019).

In addition to creating Ifes, *campuses*, and programs, new student recruitment mechanisms were instituted. The great novelty was the Sistema de Seleção Unificada (Sisu, Unified Selection System). This system uses the grades obtained by students in the Exame Nacional de Ensino Médio (Enem, National High School Exam) to select candidates for accredited institutions.

The combination of Reuni, Sisu, and Enem opened the doors of Ifes to thousands of students from public high schools, who found more vacancies available in all regions of the country, expanding both the potential for territorial mobility and access to locations close to their homes. The demographic design of the Ifes has become more diverse and inland (Marques & Cepêda, 2012). Finally, Federal Law n° 12,711/2012 instituted quotas in all federal universities, promoting the affirmative action policy (Daflon et al., 2013).

Ifes have become blacker (Andifes, 2019). In 2003, black students corresponded to 34.2% of the total enrolled, rising to 47.5% in 2014 and becoming an absolute majority in 2018 (51.2%) – a notable advance, although below the sociodemographic profile of the country, which, according to IBGE (2019), is composed of 55.8% of black and brown-skinned individuals. Ifes had also become more popular. In 1996, students in the average monthly family *per capita* income range "up to 1.5 minimum wages" were 44.3%, decreasing to 42.8% in 2003, growing again in 2010, representing 43.7% of the student population. The big jump was observed in 2014 when 66.2% of students were in the "up to 1.5 minimum wage" range, an increase of 24.6 percentage points in four years. Finally, it reached 70.2% in 2018. There is also a significant evolution of those who attended exclusively public schools in High School, 37.5% in 2003, rising to 60.4% in 2018.

In short, Ifes have become more heterogeneous, plural, and open institutions. However, the inclusion of students belonging to the popular classes, from public schools, and with lower

academic preparation “would reflect on the possibility of permanence (or evasion)” (Moraes, 2016, pp. 15, our translation), which led to the creation of the Pnaes, contemplating a set of student assistance actions¹⁰.

2. Socioeconomic profile and academic trajectory of Brazilian Ifes students under the prism of employment

Recent research has shown that the socioeconomic profile of university students and, above all, of Brazilian Ifes has changed. Scholars have been using various methodologies to draw a student profile and measure its changes over time, ranging from *surveys* that seek to analyze a more local dynamic to the data of the demographic Census, the Higher Education Census, the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios (Pnad, National Survey by Domicile Samples), the Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios Contínua (Pnad-C, Continuous National Survey by Domicile Samples), and the Exame Nacional de Desempenho dos Estudantes (Enade, National Student Performance Exam) for a more comprehensive understanding of the transformations.

Castellanos et al. (2013) investigated students from federal universities of the Public Health program to draw a sociodemographic profile and locate the motivations to work in public institutions after graduation. Although studies of this nature make it possible to analyze the reality of a certain area of knowledge, they do not allow us to understand it in relation to the students as a whole. In turn, Ristoff (2014) considers four dimensions of the Enade socioeconomic questionnaire: (i) skin color; (ii) family monthly income; (iii) school origin; and (iv) parental education. However, we consider that this is not the most appropriate source for analyzing the issue, considering that: (i) among the alternatives, “black” and “brown” are considered, which contradicts the IBGE concept of “black”, which includes black and brown-skinned individuals, making it difficult to compare with the demographic profile; (ii) we work

¹⁰ The set of actions aimed at federal public higher education, from the second term of the PT governments, has a material dimension, aimed at inclusion and redistribution of opportunities to minimize the effects of social inequalities and increase the insertion of social groups until then prevented or expelled by the system (Moreira, 2016). But not all social groups are equally benefited by these public policies. As Lotta (2017) warns, inequalities can both result from the adoption of public policies and influence the decisions and behaviors of bureaucrats and users.

with total monthly income, and not with monthly income *per capita*, and with very extensive ranges, which cloud important socioeconomic inequalities among students; (iii) to address the student's school origin, it does not distinguish whether the attendance in private school took place with or without a scholarship, in addition to including the category “half in public school and half in private school”, which makes it difficult for respondents to fill in the alternatives; (iv) schooling is divided into ranges that do not contemplate whether the attendance in a certain stage of education took place entirely or incompletely.

Finally, the specificity of the data extracted from the Pnad on the student profile in higher education is worth mentioning. This is a domicile sample survey, of which data does not capture the specificity of federal public school students, which is why we used data from the editions of the National Survey of Socioeconomic and Cultural profile of Undergraduate Ifes Students, conducted by the Fórum Nacional de Pró-Reitores de Assuntos Comunitários e Estudantis (Fonaprace, National Forum of Pro-Rectors of Community and Student Affairs)/Andifes. Focusing on Ifes, the data from the Profile Survey allows a more comprehensive understanding according to various divisions (Andifes, 2019).

Study and work are not exclusive or dichotomous activities (Cardoso & Sampaio, 1994) since the presence of workers, even in public higher education, is a growing reality. However, there is tension between such activities. Sometimes, work hinders study, or it is the "absence of work that prevents schooling" (Vargas & Paula, 2013, pp. 465).

In dialogue with existing studies, our approach to university students and work has a specificity because working students are both employed and unemployed. See:

According to Spósito (2002), education and work constitute a field of research on the rise. However, the balance of graduate production on the subject showed that studies on working students in elementary and high school evening programs (Corrochano & Nakano, 2002) had prominence over those that addressed higher education (Carrano, 2002). Among these, research on workers in public higher education was a minority¹¹.

Having observed the contemporary production, it is necessary to recognize that this imbalance is maintained and that, even with the predominance of working students in private

¹¹ According to Carrano (2002), from 1980 to 1998, research focused on working students of evening programs in public institutions (Paiva, 1994; Ribeiro, 1997), the conditions of evasion among students who reconciled work and study in public institutions (C. Martins, 1984; Maia, 1984), and student trajectories.

institutions¹², student profile studies at public institutions of higher education are in the minority.

A reference in studies on university students, Foracchi (1965, pp. 128) observes that work “represents for students the effective possibility of maintaining themselves as students”. Foracchi establishes a division to discuss the specificity of the work situations of university students in such a way that the *meaning* given by the student to their labor activity also changes depending on the *nature* of the employment. The student who works part-time – a characterization that later led to the category “working student” - understands work as partial and incomplete and, therefore, balances between the two activities, which is why their family emancipation will also be partial. On the other hand, the student who works full-time tends to prioritize work and has less time for studies. However, this dependence on work and this autonomy in relation to the family give the “student worker” a unique way of relating to the program. In addition to the divisions derived from employment situations, Foracchi also discusses students who do not work, who dedicate themselves entirely to their studies. Because the family fully maintains them, they cannot emancipate themselves, subordinated to family expectations and needs. In this sense, Foracchi establishes three divisions: “working student”, “student worker”, and “non-working student”, the latter being the one who can dedicate themselves “full time”, have time available to carry out studies, choose careers that require full time and benefit from internships that precede a good professional placement.

Foracchi shows that maintenance, dependence, emancipation, and autonomy, therefore, correspond to the *nature* of the work, be of students who work or seek future employment through professionalization.

Based on empirical evidence found by research conducted by the Perseu Abramo Foundation in 1999, Spósito (2003, pp. 23, our translation) states that “the juvenile condition cannot be inferred only from the school reality (...) but must also be understood from the world of work”, to the extent that 78% of the young people interviewed were working, unemployed, or seeking some form of contact with the world of work. Moreover, in the 1990s, an essential change in the Brazilian labor market caught the attention of analysts: young people constituted

¹² Comin and Barbosa (2011) show the evolution of the hours spent weekly on the main work among undergraduate students who work 40 hours or more. In 1995, they accounted for 37.5% of total undergraduate students, while in 2009, they were 44.6%. In private institutions, which accounted for 3/4 of higher education enrollments, 2/3 attended evening programs.

the population segment most affected by unemployment. Spósito (2003) analyzes the student profile from the following divisions used by Camarano (2003): young people who study and work, young people who only work, young people who only study, and young people who neither study nor work. Although he did not place a specific focus on university students, the division proposed by Spósito shed light and drew attention to the most complex challenges concerning the relationship between education and work since unemployment was among the greatest concerns of youth.

The divisions proposed in this article critically incorporate the analyses of both authors. Although the difference established by Foracchi between workers and non-workers is considered central, we also include the unemployed among workers, as noted by Spósito.

To demonstrate that the "starting line" is not the same for all, our focus initially turns to analyzing the family origin and socioeconomic profile of students. Subsequently, we sought to show that the acinequalities also permeate the academic trajectory of employed, unemployed, and non-working students that the condition of employed or unemployed workers is determinant. In other words, we intend to show that academic opportunities are also unequally experienced, with work being a central variable in understanding such asymmetries.

In 1996, the percentage of employed students in Ifes was 42%, decreasing to 35.4% in 2003 and reaching 37.6% in 2010 (Andifes, 2019). In 2014, employed, unemployed, and non-worker students represented, respectively, 35.4%, 34.3%, and 30.3%, while in 2018, they represented 29.9%, 40.6%, and 29.5%.

To test the hypothesis according to which the social origin of students differs according to the working condition, we will initially consider some data from the socioeconomic profile.

2.1 Family origin and socioeconomic profile

The family origin of employed, unemployed, and non-working students, considered from the schooling of parents (or those responsible for raising them), shows that the university experience is a game changer. Of the total number of Ifes students, 68.6% come from families whose mothers have an education level up to incomplete higher education, meaning that just over 2/3 have already achieved their mothers' education level. On the other hand, 30.8% of all students have mothers with completed higher education, a percentage that varies according to

occupational status: 28.1% of employed students, 27.3% of unemployed students, and 38.4% of non-working students have mothers with higher education. Concerning parental education, the same logic is reproduced, as 23.3% of the total number of students have parents with completed higher education, a percentage that corresponds to 22.2% of employed students and 19.4% of unemployed students, rising to 29.7% among non-working students. Proportionally, non-working students have mothers and fathers with a higher level of education, while the unemployed are from families with lower maternal and paternal education levels.

The level of education of the parents indicates the cultural capital inherited from the family. The data show an important divide between employed and unemployed students, on the one hand, and non-working students, on the other, since the latter notoriously come from families whose parents have higher education, especially concerning the most important demarcator of the school trajectory, which is access to higher education. In this sense, the starting point of these two sets is unequal: for working students, higher education is something initially, distant and, therefore, presents itself as a novelty in relation to the previous generation; for students who do not need to work, it is something more natural and transmitted as a family inheritance.

The average age is higher among the employed. The average age among the employed is 27.6 years, 23.5 years among the unemployed, and only 22.0 years among non-workers (Cf. Andifes, 2019).

Regarding gender, the primary difference is between employed students and those who do not work (unemployed and non-working). While female students (54.6% of the total population studied) are the majority among the unemployed (57.6%) and non-workers (55.6%), they are the minority among the employed (49.7%).

Regarding the variable skin color and race, among non-workers, 46.5% are black, 50.7% white, 2.1% yellow, and 0.8% Indigenous. Among the employed, 51% are black (brown skin, black-quilombolas, and non-quilombola blacks), 46% white, 2.2% yellow, and 0.8% Indigenous (villaged or not). Finally, among the unemployed, 57.9% are black, 38.8% white, 2.3% yellow, and 1.2% Indigenous. In other words, the highest percentage of blacks is among the unemployed and the lowest among non-workers.

Regarding the type of school attended in High School, among non-working students, 58.3% studied all or most of the time in a public school, while 36.3% studied in a private school

without a scholarship and 5.3% with a scholarship. Among employed students, 65.6% attended public schools, 29.6% attended private schools without scholarships, and 4.8% with scholarships. Finally, among unemployed students, 68.8% attended public schools, 25.9% private schools without scholarships, and 5.4% with scholarships. In other words, working students had the highest attendance in public education, and non-working students had the most significant presence in private.

In summary, the employed are the oldest and the non-workers the youngest; the employed are predominantly male and the unemployed and non-workers, female; the employed and unemployed are primarily black and had a higher attendance in public schools, while non-workers are mostly white and had a more significant presence in private schools.

Income is a classic variable in studies on the socioeconomic profile of students in higher education. It marks some critical analyzes on the subject (Oliveira, 2019; Ristoff, 2014). However, when the analysis of income levels is done separately from students' occupation, it can leave some asymmetries obfuscated.

In principle, it is plausible to assume that non-working students constitute the group with the highest level of family monthly income. However, this is different from what the data reveal. The insertion into the labor market guarantees the employed students higher monthly family income *per capita*, percentage and nominal, than unemployed and non-workers. The nominal average income *per capita* of the undergraduates of the Ifes is BRL 1,328.07. However, BRL 1,664.00 among employed, BRL 1,483.75 among non-workers, and only BRL 965.95 among unemployed.

Although the percentage of students in the "up to 1.5 minimum wage" range is 70.2%, among the unemployed, this percentage is 80.1%, among the employed, it is 61.5%, and among non-workers, 65.3%. In turn, although the overall percentage of students in the "over three minimum wages" range is 10.1%, among employed, it is 14.3%; among non-workers it is 12.6%; and, among unemployed, only 5.2%.

In summary, in the smallest income *per capita* bracket, unemployed predominates, while at the highest, employed students are more frequent.

2.2 Academic trajectory

The student employment profile marks the academic trajectory in the Ifes since the entry, given that working students predominantly in the evening programs and non-workers in the full-time.

In 2014, 29.5% of the total number of students were enrolled in the evening program, a percentage that practically remained in 2018 (29.3%). Although 29.3% of students attend evening programs, the percentage of employed students in this shift is 48.4%. 43.9% of Ifes undergraduates study full-time, but among non-workers, this percentage is 63.1%, in contrast to 25.6% of employed students. Daytime is the shift attended by the minority of Ifes undergraduates, but it is the shift of 29.8% of unemployed, 26.0% of employed, and 23.7% of non-workers students.

Therefore, there is a relationship between position in the employment and program shift, as highlighted by the literature, so that the evening shift is when almost half of the employed students study, and the full shift is when almost 2/3 of the non-workers study.

Table 1. Ifes undergraduates per position in employment, second round of the program (2018), in %

	Employed students	Non-worker students	Unemployed students	Total
Day shift	28.9%	26.1%	45.0%	100.0%
	26.0%	23.7%	29.8%	26.8%
Evening Shift	49.4%	13.3%	37.3%	100.0%
	48.4%	13.2%	26.9%	29.3%
Integral	17.4%	42.5%	40.1%	100.0%
	25.6%	63.1%	43.4%	43.9%
Total	29.9%	29.5%	40.6%	100.0%
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Source: Andifes (2019)

The occupational condition also greatly significant affects the university experience since work time competes with study time.

Employed students devote fewer hours per week to studying outside the classroom and attend libraries less often. They have fewer study conditions because they divide their routine between study and work. Of the total employed students, 44.1% dedicate “less than five hours” to studies outside the classroom and 21.2% “more than ten hours”. An almost inverse proportion is found among non-workers: 41.9% dedicate “more than ten hours”.

The data show that employed students attend libraries less and unemployed students attend more. Of the total employed students, the percentage of those who do not use libraries is 27.7%, while 25.5% use them “more than twice per week”. The contrast between the unemployed and non-workers is evident, as 42.4% of the unemployed and 41.2% of non-workers use the libraries “more than twice a week”. The fact that the unemployed are those who use the library the most may also indicate the greater dependence of this group in relation to public facilities.

Student participation in academic activities or programs also varies according to employment. Of the students, 45.1% participate in some academic activity or program. However, this number drops to 42% among the employed and 42.6% among the unemployed. In turn, this percentage rises to 51.8% among non-workers, confirming that this group participates more fully in university life.

Let's look at participation in academic activities.

Some asymmetries are noted when detailing these programs according to the position in employment: (i) extracurricular internship is proportionally more frequent among employees; and (ii) participation in research programs (Pibic), PET program (education, research, and extension), and monitoring and extension programs is more recurrent among non-workers.

Table 2. Ifes undergraduates by position in employment according to hours of study outside the classroom, weekly attendance at the library, and participation in academic activities (2018), in %

		Employed	Unemployed	Non-worker
Study hours outside the classroom	Less than 5 hours	44.1	30.2	22.8
	More than 10 hours	21.2	31.6	41.9
Weekly visits to the library	No use	27.7	18.4	19.8
	Up to 1 time	46.8	39.3	38.9
	More than twice	25.5	42.4	41.2
Academic activities	Junior Company	4.4	4.0	4.5
	Monitoring	6.3	7.9	10.8
	PIBID/PLI	2.1	3.0	1.8
	Voluntary internship	20.6	9.9	10.0
	Extension	6.2	8.4	11.6
	PIBIC (research)	9.0	12.5	18.4
	Tutorial Education Program (PET)	1.0	1.6	2.8
	Other activity	9.7	10.4	12.0

Source: Andifes (2019)

Access to Student Assistance is unequally enjoyed by students: it is lower among employed students (21.1%) and more frequent among unemployed (34.4%), which seem to fit the criteria of “vulnerability” of the Pnaes itself.

Not only do difficulties of a material nature produce asymmetries and unequal conditions of permanence (Andifes, 2019; Sampaio et al., 2000; L. B. Silva & Costa, 2018), but they have centrality in the student perspective concerning evasion from the program and freezing of enrollment.

Of the total number of Ifes students, 52.8% have already considered evading the program. Among these, 23.6% indicated "difficulty reconciling work and study"¹³. Considering only students with "difficulty reconciling work and study", 70.8% are employed, 5.7% are non-working, and 23.6% unemployed. In turn, 32.7% of those who thought about leaving the program indicated "financial difficulties". However, this thought is equally unequal, affecting more unemployed students (43.1%) than non-working (25.6%) and employed students (23.6%).

Among Ifes students, 14.3% had already frozen enrollment, 22.1% of which for work reasons. However, the proportion of students who froze enrollment due to work varies according to occupation condition, as it corresponds to 37.0% of employed students, 11.2% of unemployed, and 7.3% of non-workers. In turn, the financial impediment was the general reason for freezing enrollment of 6.6% of employed, 8.6% of non-workers, and 15.6% of unemployed students.

The answers given by employed, unemployed, and non-working students to the question regarding academic difficulties also clearly express their material conditions of existence. Excessive workload constitutes academic difficulty indicated by 34.0% of the employed students but by only 3.1% of non-workers and 3.8% of the unemployed. On the other hand, the excessive load of student work, which varies according to the shift and the program, is the academic difficulty indicated by 29.5% of non-workers, 22.5% of unemployed, and 19.7% of employed students, indicating that, for the latter, the biggest issue is the pressures of work, and to a lesser extent the demands of study.

Financial difficulties also interfere in the life and academic context of practically 1/4 of the students (24.7%), being a difficulty more experienced by the unemployed. The data shows that 33% of the unemployed, 19.3% of the employed, and 18.8% of non-working students have financial difficulties that affect their academic life. The unemployed are also the students most frequently affected by difficulties accessing materials and means of study. Of the total number of Ifes students, 8.6% have difficulties of this nature, while among the unemployed, it is 11.2%. The same can be said about travel time, which affects 18.9% of the total surveyed, but is indicated by 20.3% of the unemployed.

¹³ C. L. Andrade & Spósito (1986) showed that studying and working means a heavy load of physical wear and a poor and irregular diet.

In summary, the analysis of the socioeconomic profile of Ifes students according to their occupation condition shows this division's relevance to understanding their inequalities. If under the different aspects analyzed, the non-working students present the best socioeconomic conditions, the working students – employed and the unemployed – have several disadvantages. In addition, if these are similar from the perspective of racial self-declaration as blacks and attendance in public schools, they are distinct regarding income and study time: the employed students have a higher *per capita* income, study during the evening, and have less time for studies due to the difficulty of reconciling study and work; the unemployed, in turn, have a lower *per capita* family income, and therefore have their permanence at the university more threatened due to the tendency to a more precarious material condition.

Based on the results of our analysis, we will discuss the references that discuss workers' access to higher education in Brazil in the recent period to point out its advances and limits.

3. Doors remain half-open for employed students

Since the 1990s, the real opportunities for working-class students to access public and private higher education have grown. However, this remains selective and asymmetric (Giroto, 2017)¹⁴, and its course has been fraught with mishaps. If today Reuni is recognized as a policy that has boosted access to higher education, it must be remembered that, in 2007, the government proposal encountered resistance from the professor and student movement¹⁵.

The movements of resistance to Reuni were defeated. The expansion of vacancies in evening programs remained timid. Still, they may have had some weight on the internal decisions of Ifes that privileged daytime programs and the entry of non-working students, who dedicate

¹⁴ According to Minto, in the 1950s, for every 100 young people between the ages of 20 and 24, “less than 1% (0.88) were enrolled in higher education in Brazil. In 1960, this figure did not reach 2% (1.49), and more than a decade later, in 1971, it did not reach 7% (6.78)” (2014, pp. 218, our translation). Selectivity has decreased since the 1990s. However, it is important to highlight that it persists and manifests itself in various ways.

¹⁵ Such criticisms would hide a middle-class resentment, as students felt threatened by increased competition in the labor market (Trópia, 2009). Student resistance involved the occupation of at least 14 rectories throughout the country, in addition to the publication of articles and the complaint dossier entitled “Livro cinza do Reuni” (Coordenação Nacional de Entidades pela Revogação do Reuni, 2009).

themselves full time to their studies, or “working students” (Romanelli, 1995; Terribili Filho, 2007), who have study as their primary activity, but who exercise some remunerated activity.

Older and busy students continue to have private institutions as their priority destination, where 88.4% of those who attend evening programs are enrolled (Inep, 2020), whose permanence depends on Fies and ProUni.

Moraes (2016) warns that their professors would be reticent in offering vacancies in evening programs in federal public institutions, a shift that concentrated the greatest demand. He adds that there were many restrictions on evening programs in public universities in the state of São Paulo, and state law was required for existing programs to open evening classes. The São Paulo Constitution of 1989 defined, in its sole paragraph, that public universities in São Paulo should offer a minimum number of vacancies at night, equivalent to at least one-third of the total number of vacancies offered – which resulted in a significant increase in the supply of vacancies, although insufficient (Catani et al., 1997), as it would be necessary to create 1,330 new vacancies to achieve constitutionality, considering the year 1996 as a reference. According to Oliveira & Catani (2001), the percentage of vacancies offered at night at Unicamp went from 8% in 1989 to 35.3% in 2000. In the cases of Unesp and USP, the minimum percentage of one-third would already be guaranteed, although there were significant distortions according to the areas of knowledge. At Unesp, the constitutional percentage was guaranteed only in the humanities area. At the same time, at USP, even with the creation in 2004 of USP East, “there is an imbalance between the areas of knowledge since the area of biological sciences is far below one-third (19.1%), exact sciences are close to one-third, with 29.6%, and the humanities exceeds the target with 48.3%” (Barreiro & Terribili Filho, 2007, pp. 95, our translation).

In federal higher education, although the supply of vacancies in the evening period grew from 23.1% in 2000 to 28.4% in 2010, the disparity with private education is evident. The latter increased vacancies in this same shift from 66.2% to 72.8% in the same period (Vargas & Paula, 2013, pp. 461). According to Moraes (2016), this strength is not accidental, insofar as the private network has offered workers vacancies since the 1960s, when the first evening programs were created (Terribili Filho & Nery, 2009), which is why it would be so extensive.

In the Ifes, the barrier of containment to workers is clearly expressed when we analyze the data on the shift. As seen above, 29.5% of the total number of students were enrolled in the evening program in 2014, a percentage that practically remained in 2018 (29.3%).

Vargas & Paula (2013) state that although democratization has expanded the entry of sectors of the lower classes in Brazilian higher education, public policies for access and permanence do not contemplate the specificities of the working student and student worker, even though most Brazilian university students work or are seeking work.

It cannot be disregarded that the expansion of the higher education network in Brazil, as evidenced above, changed the expectation of the popular sectors regarding the possibility of entering higher education. What was a distant dream, or not at all, has become a definite possibility.

If access to higher education is today a reality for thousands of young black and brown individuals, individuals from the popular classes and students of public schools, access and especially permanence in higher education remain a social and political challenge for these populations. As evidenced by some studies, permanence in higher education depends on students' effort and family members' support (C. L. Andrade & Spósito, 1986; Urchei, 2018; Zago, 2006) in the valorization of the school (W. Almeida, 2007).

The trajectory of working students in higher education, especially the difficulties related to permanence and living at the university, has been the subject of several studies (L. Almeida, 1998; W. Almeida, 2007; C. L. Andrade & Spósito, 1986; Filipak & Hennerich Pacheco, 2017; Foracchi, 1965; Giroto, 2017; Mendes, 1986; Pereira & Passos, 2007; Romanelli, 1995; Urchei, 2018; Zago, 2006). As Giroto (2017, pp. 2014) points out, the dual condition of working and studying is central since, for a portion of students, “there is no option to leave work to continue their studies”. Strictly speaking, work is a prerequisite for attempting a job and surviving, including in public higher education.

Studies on students from public and private higher education institutions generally analyze the conditions of access and permanence, materials (lack of time for study and to develop academic activities linked to education, research, and extension; length of the workday; financing of studies, compatibility between family life, work, and study; physical and mental wear), and pedagogical conditions of workers – certain unpreparedness of IES to welcome and respond institutionally to difficulties (C. L. Andrade & Spósito, 1986), and their predominance in evening programs.

The routine of students in evening programs implies daily wear, "few hours of sleep, difficulties with transportation, lack of time to eat, little time with family, and deprivation or delay of some consumer goods" (L. Almeida, 1998, pp. 24, our translation).

When analyzing the previous and current trajectory and future expectations concerning the study and work of 1,363 young people from public high schools in the metropolitan region of São Paulo, Souza & Vazquez (2015) concluded that they have great enthusiasm about entering higher education. However, in the same way that the interviewees see that the only way to continue studying after completing high school is to reconcile studies with work, the latter is seen precisely as the primary obstacle to entering the university.

Urchei (2018) identified strenuous work and study routines in the trajectories of Prouni scholars, but also reports of overcoming adverse situations and willingness to continue their studies. According to Urchei, "hard" work and physical effort are necessary for students to be able to attend classes and pay tuition, transport, and food, despite fatigue (Mendes, 1986). Terribili Filho & Raphael (2005) also reveal the adversities faced by students of evening programs who work in the daytime (Barreiro & Terribili Filho, 2007) and face daily problems in traffic and transport, implying delays and losses of classes.

All these studies show that reconciling work and study is not only a bottleneck to access but also a challenge for the permanence of employed students.

Work is the primary reason for freezing enrollment among employed students and excessive workload is their primary academic difficulty, indicating that work – and not study itself - is the obstacle that most interferes in their lives and in the academic context.

Final remarks

The academic debate has indicated the asymmetries in access to higher education, focusing on socioeconomic criteria such as income and racial self-declaration. However, when addressing the working student, we reference the employed student, but less attention is paid to that significant portion of the student body that does not work but seeks employment.

In this sense, several studies show the importance of evening education so that employed students can reconcile study and work, although this is exactly the primary obstacle

to experiencing university life fully, as shown by the data presented here. In addition, we have seen that, despite advances, evening education in Ifes has been limited by the 30% containment barrier, leaving the doors half open for this segment of students who must work.

The issue for unemployed students is even more complex since the unsatisfied need to work imposes greater financial difficulties. Thus, given the last years of crisis of Brazilian capitalism, in which the problem of unemployment affects youth more strongly, it becomes even more necessary to expand student permanence policies. The group of unemployed students revealed, in some aspects, a higher frequency and, in this sense, dependence on university equipment. However, what we have seen, especially after the coup of 2016 and with the election of the Bolsonaro government, is just the opposite. Thus, the reduction of the Pnaes funds not only causes the doors to remain half open but constitutes a real threat that they will close even more, given the degree of regression that is underway.

In short, working students, either due to difficulties in reconciling work and study (employed) or material subsistence difficulties (unemployed), still find the doors of the public university half-open, requiring the radicalization of the public, free, and inclusive nature of the Ifes, the expansion of evening education in all areas and programs, and permanence policies focused on this student segment.

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