

FIES, PROUNI and REUNI: unfinished paths for the democratization of access to higher education

FIES, PROUNI e REUNI: caminhos inacabados para a democratização do acesso à educação superior

FIES, PROUNI y REUNI: caminos inacabados hacia la democratización del acceso a la educación superior

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Abstract: The study aims investigate public policies for the democratization of access to Higher Education and identify how these expansionist policies are presented in the scientific production of the education area. This is a qualitative research, develop through a narrative review in the database of Scientific Electronic Library Online - SciELO and Portal de Periódicos Capes. Fifty-eight articles were selected based on PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) steps and guidelines: identification, screening, eligibility and inclusion. The studies have shown that these public policies of State, focused on the democratization of Higher Education, over the last two decades, aimed the increasing of the number of registrations as a mechanism to promote social inclusion, without change substantially the factors that originate the education and social inequality. More effective results of these public policies demand improvements in the Basic and Higher Education infrastructure, in the qualification and remuneration of teachers, in the student's conditions of permanence and better appreciation of the Basic and Higher Education system.

Keywords: democratization; higher education; public policy.

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Resumo: O estudo tem como objetivo de pesquisa investigar as políticas públicas de democratização do acesso à Educação Superior e identificar como estas políticas expansionistas se apresentam na produção científica da área de educação. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, realizada mediante uma revisão narrativa na base de dados da *Scientific Electronic Library Online* - SciELO e do Portal de Periódicos Capes. Foram selecionados 58 artigos com base nas etapas e diretrizes do PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*): identificação, triagem, elegibilidade e inclusão. Os estudos deixaram evidente que as políticas públicas de Estado direcionadas à democratização do acesso à Educação Superior, ao longo das últimas duas décadas, objetivaram o aumento do número de vagas e matrículas no setor como mecanismo de promoção de inclusão social, sem alterar substancialmente os fatores que originam a desigualdade e a exclusão em questão. Resultados mais efetivos destas políticas públicas demandam melhoria da infraestrutura de Educação Básica e Superior, da formação, qualificação e remuneração dos professores, das condições de permanência dos estudantes e de maior valorização da escola e da própria universidade.

Palavras-chave: democratização; educação superior; políticas públicas.

Resumen: El objetivo de investigación del estudio es investigar las políticas públicas para la democratización del acceso a la Educación Superior e identificar cómo estas políticas expansionistas se presentan en la producción científica en el área de la educación. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa, realizada a través de una revisión narrativa en la base de datos de *Scientific Electronic Library Online* - SciELO y Portal de Periódicos Capes. Cincuenta y ocho artículos fueron seleccionados en base a los pasos y pautas PRISMA (*Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses*): identificación, selección, elegibilidad e inclusión. Los estudios dejaron en claro que las políticas públicas del Estado encaminadas a la democratización del acceso a la Educación Superior, durante las últimas dos décadas, apuntaron a incrementar el número de vacantes y matrículas en el sector como mecanismo para promover la inclusión social, sin alterando los factores que dan lugar a la desigualdad y exclusión en cuestión. Los resultados más efectivos de estas políticas públicas exigen una mejora en la infraestructura de la Educación Básica y Superior, en la formación, calificación y remuneración de los docentes, en las condiciones de permanencia de los estudiantes y en una mayor valorización de la escuela y de la propia universidad.

Palabras clave: democratización; educación universitaria; políticas públicas.

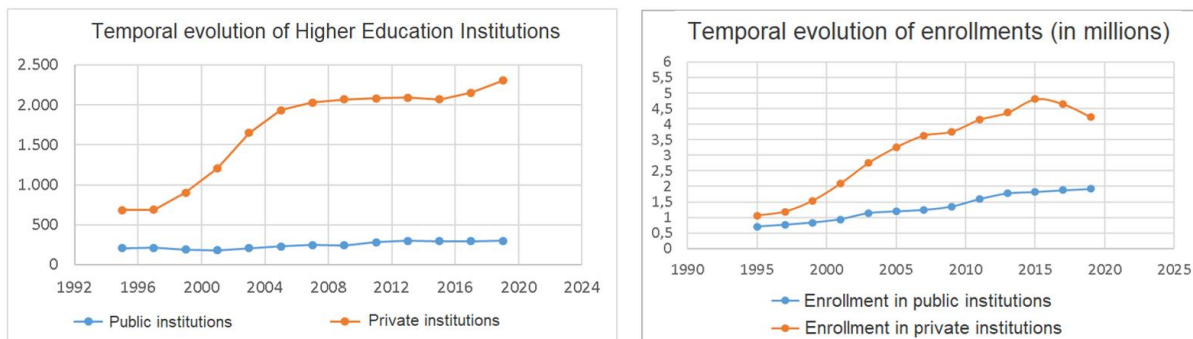
1 Introduction

In recent decades, the economic and social development observed in Brazil has been accompanied by an increase in demand for and access to Higher Education courses in both public and private institutions. On one hand, technological development and autonomous and digital means of production have demanded professionals with higher qualifications in the global job market, who possess both technical skills for performance in the productive sector and personnel management competencies, especially in the context of flexible production (COMOGLIO, 2019). On the other hand, a large number of individuals who were previously denied access to universities due to limited public institution spots or high monthly fees in relation to family income have now come closer to the possibility of accessing Higher Education. This has been made possible through subsidized financing at lower interest rates, partial or full scholarships in private institutions, or reserved spots in public institutions. It is within this scenario that the expansion programs of Higher Education have been consolidated: Fies (Law n°. 10,260, July 12, 2001), Prouni (Law n°. 11,096, January 13, 2005), and Reuni (Decree n°. 6,096, April 24, 2007). Combined, these programs have brought about significant changes in the structure of Higher Education provision, the quantity, and the socioeconomic standards of students in these institutions (BRASIL, 2001a, 2005a, 2007a).

In 1995, the country had 684 private Higher Education institutions and 210 public institutions, representing a distribution of 23,5% public institutions to 76,5% private institutions. Regarding enrollment numbers, public institutions had a total of 700.540 enrollments, while private institutions had 1.059,163 enrollments – representing 39,9% and 60,1% respectively (BRASIL, 1995). At the end of a 20-year expansion cycle, in 2015, Brazil had a total of 2.364 Higher Education institutions, with 295 (12,5%) being public and 2.069 (87,5%) private – indicating a greater expansion of the private sector compared to the public sector. In terms of enrollment expansion, starting in 2001, enrollments in private institutions already accounted for over twice the number of enrollments in public institutions, and in 2015, private institutions had 4.81 million enrollments (72,6%) compared to 1.82 million (27,4%) in public institutions (BRASIL, 2015).

Graphs 1 and 2 compare the evolution, every odd biennium from 1995 onwards, of the numbers of public and private Higher Education institutions, and the respective number of enrollments. It can be observed that from 1997 onwards, the number of private institutions had a significant increase, reflecting the new State Reform Master Plan (1995) with guidelines aimed at privatizing public companies, attracting foreign capital and large international groups, and forming oligopolies in the education and health sectors (SGUISSARDI, 2005).

Graphs 1 and 2 – Evolution of Institutions and Enrollments in Higher Education from 1995 to 2019



Source: BRASIL, 1995; 1997; 1999; 2001b; 2003; 2005b; 2007b; 2009; 2011; 2013; 2015; 2017; 2019.

These dynamics, present in the field of state policies on Higher Education, especially after the 1990s, have allowed the consolidation of a utilitarian, pro-market bias, in terms of "managerial management mechanisms (similar to those of private companies)" and the "resource mobilization by these universities" (SERAFIM, 2011, p. 259). The legal provisions, developed in agreement with international organizations, have enabled a process of commodification of Higher Education, with the transfer of public functions and resources to the private sector, especially "in cases where the State fails to expand access to universities" (SERAFIM, 2011, p. 259). In the early years of the 2010s, the education sector present on the stock exchange achieved the highest appreciation rates among more than fifteen other sectors of the stock market. Groups such as Estácio and Kroton experienced appreciation rates of over 200% between 2012 and 2014, and in 2013, they reported profits of 1.7 and 2.0 billion reais, respectively – at the time, these institutions already accounted for more than 20% of the number of students in private institutions (1.3 million students) (SGUISSARDI, 2015, p. 870 and 875).

Based on these considerations, there arose an interest in investigating how public policies for the expansion of Higher Education have been analyzed in scientific productions in the field of education and what results can be observed in the democratization of this level of education. To this end, we conducted a narrative review in the Scielo and Capes Portal databases, focusing on the search for journals that link the Fies, Prouni, and Reuni programs¹ to the process of democratizing access to Higher Education.

¹ Law n°. 12,711 of August 29, 2012 is undoubtedly important for consolidating material equality between whites, blacks, browns, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities in access to Higher Education. In this review, however, programs associated with the expansion of the structure, investments, resources and enrollments in Higher Education are analyzed.

2 Narrative literature review on access to Higher Education

To analyze the results of public policies in the process of democratizing access to Higher Education, we conducted a narrative review with the objective of identifying and systematizing the discussions presented in articles published in academic journals since 2001, the year in which Law n°. 10,260 approved the creation of Fies. The guiding research question is: What are the results of state policies (Fies, Law n°. 10,260 of July 12, 2001, Prouni, Law n°. 11,096 of January 13, 2005, and Reuni, Decree n°. 6,096 of April 24, 2007) aimed at Brazilian Higher Education students for the process of democratizing access to undergraduate courses in public and private institutions?

We included studies that presented discussions highlighting the relationships between these programs and the process of democratizing access to Higher Education. To identify studies relevant to the research problem, we adopted the criteria defined by the PRISMA/2020 guidelines (PAGE *et al.*, 2021), based on the following elements: population (Brazilian education students), intervention (state public policies: Fies, Prouni, and Reuni), and outcomes (process of democratizing access to undergraduate courses in public and private institutions) (GALVÃO; RICARTE, 2019).

We used the Scielo and Capes Periodicals Portal databases, employing the keywords "Fies," "Prouni," "Reuni," and "*Democratização*," combined using the Boolean operator "AND" as follows: "Fies" AND "*Democratização*"; "Prouni" AND "*Democratização*"; "Reuni" AND "*Democratização*." The searches were conducted without selecting specific parts of the texts, resulting in articles containing the keywords present in any part of the text.

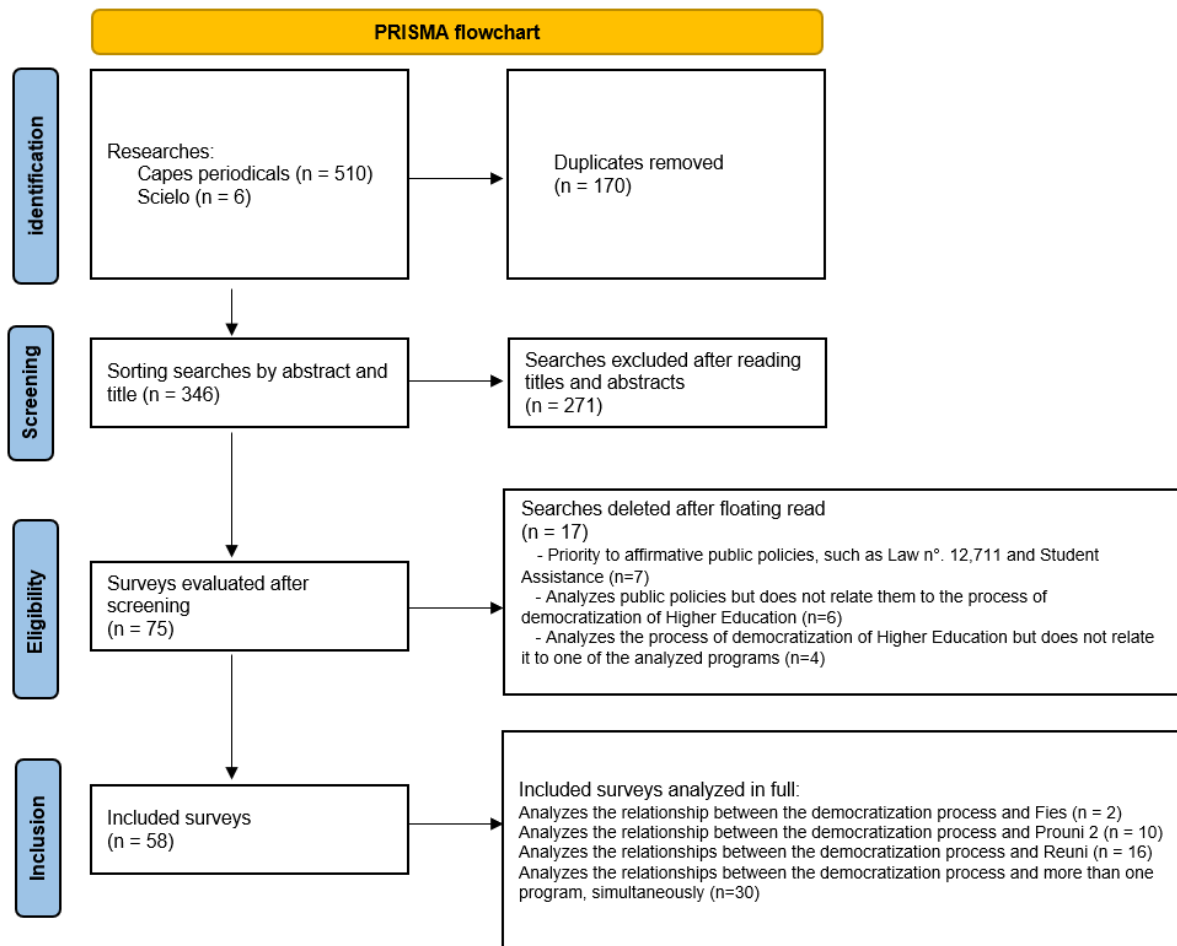
We followed four stages to assess the results of the literature search, based on the PRISMA/2020 flow diagram (PAGE *et al.*, 2021): identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. Throughout these four stages, the following criteria were applied to define the inclusion and exclusion of articles: a) Is it a study published in a Portuguese-language academic journal?; b) Is the study available in its entirety (open access or access through the *Comunidade Acadêmica Federada - Cafe*)?; c) Does it contain the identification keywords (Prouni, Fies, Reuni, *Democratização*)?; d) Does the study fall within the temporal limits of the research (2001 to 2022)?; e) Does the study analyze public policies related to the Fies, Prouni, and Reuni programs?; f) Does the study analyze processes of democratizing Higher Education within the temporal limits of the research?; g) Does the study interrelate criteria "e" and "f"?

In the **identification** phase, based on the combination of the four adopted keywords, we identified 516² Portuguese-language articles. In the Capes Periodicals Portal, we found 99 studies with the combination "Fies" AND "*Democratização*," 159 with the combination "Prouni" AND "*Democratização*," and 252 with the combination

² Research conducted on July 4, 2022.

"Reuni" AND "*Democratização*," totaling 510 studies. In the Scielo database, we found 0 (zero) studies with the combination "Fies" AND "*Democratização*," 5 with the combination "Prouni" AND "*Democratização*," and 1 with the combination "Reuni" AND "*Democratização*," totaling 6 studies. In the **initial screening**, 170 studies were excluded for being duplicates (found in more than one search within a platform or across different platforms). After reading the titles and abstracts, 271 studies did not fit the theme of the narrative review, resulting in seventy-five studies. In the **eligibility phase**, after a floating reading, 17 studies were excluded for not meeting criteria 5, 6, and 7, resulting in a total of 58 **included** articles, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – Eligibility Flowchart



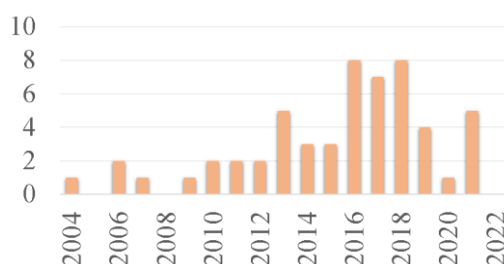
Source: The author (2022).

Finally, the analysis and interpretation of the texts, supported by Bardin (2010), were structured in three phases: pre-analysis, exploration/treatment of results, and interpretation. The exploration and treatment of results were conducted through the comprehensive reading of the articles, resulting in the identification of six main themes of analysis, coded from A to F.

3 Results found in the literature on the democratization of access to Higher Education

Although we searched for articles from 2001 onwards, we found studies that met the established criteria only from 2004 onwards. During this period, we also observed two years with no publications: 2005 and 2008. The years with the highest number of publications were 2016 and 2018 (8 articles each), followed by 2017 (7 articles), 2013 and 2021 (5 articles each), and 2019 (4 articles). We believe that the increase in publications after 2012 is a reflection of the completion of the investment cycle of the Reuni program, the increase in scholarships (starting from 2010) provided by the Prouni program, and the resources invested in the Fies program. Figure 2 presents the distribution of these publications throughout the analyzed time series.

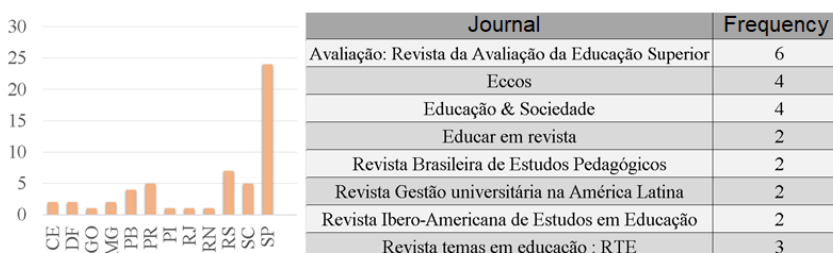
Figure 2 – Temporal Evolution of Publications



Source: The author (2022).

The 58 scientific articles surveyed are distributed across 12 states, with a notable concentration in the state of São Paulo, which accounts for 24 publications, 17 more than the state of Rio Grande do Sul, which has 7 publications. Two studies were published in international journals: one from the United States of America and another from Portugal. In terms of journals, the most frequent was Revista da Avaliação da Educação Superior from Campinas, with 6 articles, followed by Eccos from São Paulo and Educação & Sociedade from Campinas, both with 4 articles, as shown in Figure 3 and Table 1.

Figure 3 – Regional Distribution, Table 1 - Journal Frequency



Source: The author (2022).

Regarding public policies, out of the 58 studies, two exclusively analyze Fies; 10 focus on Prouni; 16 examine Reuni, and 30 studies articulate analyses on more than one public policy. These studies, coded from P1 to P58, address discussions on six themes, labeled as A to F. Theme A: International organizations and influences on national public policy dynamics; Theme B: Processes of globalization, privatization, commodification, and the effects of neoliberalism on higher education public policies; Theme C: Expansion of access to higher education and potential advancements; Theme D: Democratization of access to higher education in Brazil: limits and contradictions of public policies; Theme E: Analysis of the implementation of public policies to democratize access to higher education in local contexts; Theme F: Perspectives, profiles, and realities of students benefiting from public policies for the democratization of access to higher education. Table 2 presents the year, author(s), title, analyzed public policy, and the themes covered in each study:

Table 2 – Included Research

Nº	Year	Authors	Title	Policy	Theme
P1	2016	AGUIAR, Vilma	Um balanço das políticas do governo Lula para a educação superior: continuidade e ruptura	Fies Prouni	B e D
P2	2016	ALVAREZ, Adrian RADAELLI, Andressa Benvenuti	Políticas da educação superior no Brasil (2003-2010): democratização ou expansão?	Reuni	B e C
P3	2013	ALVES, Liduina Lopes FONTES, Dominik Garcia Araujo NASCIMENTO, Telma Araújo	Das reformas do ensino superior a criação do PROUNI: inclusão social ou mercantilização do ensino superior?	Prouni	B e D
P4	2018	ARIÑO, Daniela Ornellas DELVAN, Josiane Da Silva	As Trajetórias dos Acadêmicos Bolsistas do ProUni: desafios e estratégias de enfrentamento	Prouni	D e F
P5	2011	ARRUDA, Ana Lúcia Borba	Políticas da educação superior no Brasil: expansão e democratização: um debate contemporâneo	Reuni Prouni	A, B e C
P6	2015	ARRUDA, Ana Lúcia Borba GOMES, Alfredo Macedo	Democratização Da Educação Superior: Um Estudo Sobre A Política Reuni	Reuni	A, C, D e F
P7	2021	BANDEIRA ANDRIOLA, Wagner CASTRO ARAÚJO, Adriana	Avaliação dos impactos do Programa de Apoio a Planos de Expansão e Reestruturação das Universidades Federais Brasileiras	Reuni	C e D
P8	2019	BARBOSA, Maria Ligia de Oliveira	Democratização ou massificação do Ensino Superior no Brasil?	Fies Prouni	C, D e F
P9	2016	BARBOSA, Maria Ligia De Oliveira	Destinos, Escolhas e a Democratização do Ensino Superior	Reuni Prouni	C, D e E
P10	2012	BORGES, Maria Célia AQUINO, Orlando Fernandez	Educação Superior no Brasil e as políticas de expansão de vagas do REUNI: avanços e controvérsias	Fies	A, B, C e D
P11	2017	BROCCO, Ana Karina	"Aqui em casa a educação é muito bem-vinda": significado do ensino superior para universitários bolsistas	Fies Reuni Prouni	F
P12	2018	CAMARGO, Arlete Maria Monte de ARAÚJO, Israel Martins	Expansão e interiorização das universidades federais no período de 2003 a 2014: perspectivas governamentais em debate	Reuni	C

P13	2017	CAÑAVERAL, I. Cristina Puertas SÁ, Thiago Antônio De Oliveira	REUNI: Expansão, segmentação e a determinação institucional do abandono. Estudo de caso na Unifal-MG	Reuni	C, D e E
P14	2020	CARNEIRO, Luci Annee Vargas BRIDI, Fabiane Romano de Souza	Políticas públicas de ensino superior no Brasil: um olhar sobre o acesso e a inclusão social	Fies Reuni Prouni	C e D
P15	2006	CARVALHO, Cristina H. Almeida	O PROUNI no governo Lula e o jogo político em torno do acesso ao ensino superior	Prouni	A, B e D
P16	2013	CASTELO BRANCO, Uyguaciara V. JEZINE, Edineide	A expansão da (na) UFPB: avaliando o REUNI (2008 a 2012)	Reuni	C, D e E
P17	2014	CASTRO, Alda Maria Duarte Araújo SILVA, Josielle Soares de	Políticas de expansão para o ensino superior no contexto do REUNI: a implementação do programa na UFRN	Reuni	A, B, C e E
P18	2006	CATANI, Afrânio Mendes HEY, Ana Paula GILIOI, Renato de Sousa Porto	PROUNI: democratização do acesso às Instituições de Ensino Superior?	Prouni	D
P19	2004	CORBUCCI, Paulo Roberto	Financiamento e democratização do acesso à educação superior no Brasil: da deserção do Estado ao projeto de reforma	Fies Prouni	B, C e D
P20	2018	CORRÊA, Ricardo Leitoles NASCIMENTO, Décio Estevão do	Política de interiorização do ensino superior: taxa de sucesso na graduação na Universidade Federal do Paraná	Reuni	D e E
P21	2011	COSTA, Danilo de Melo COSTA, Alexandre Marino AMANTE, Cláudio José SILVA, Cláudio Heleno Pinto da	Aspectos da reestruturação das universidades federais por meio do Reuni: um estudo no estado de Santa Catarina	Reuni	C e E
P22	2019	CRUZ, Andreia Gomes da	Desafios da inclusão no processo contemporâneo de expansão da educação superior brasileira: democratização ou massificação do acesso?	Fies Reuni Prouni	A, B, C e D
P23	2010	DIAS SOBRINHO, José	Democratização, qualidade e crise da educação superior: facas da exclusão e limites da inclusão	Reuni Prouni	A, C e D
P24	2018	FAVATO, Maria Nilse RUIZ, Maria José Ferreira	REUNI: política para a democratização da educação superior?	Reuni	B, C e D
P25	2014	FERREIRA, Jose Ângelo PETRAGLIA, Izabel Cristina	O Programa Universidade para Todos: PROUNI e a democratização do Ensino Superior	Prouni	D
P26	2019	FERREIRA, Suely	As políticas de expansão para educação superior dos governos do Partido dos Trabalhadores (2003-2016): inclusão e democratização?	Fies Reuni Prouni	B, C, D e F
P27	2016	FONTELE, Tereza Lúcia Lima CRISÓSTOMO, Vicente Lima	PROUNI - pontos controversos sob a análise de alunos bolsistas	Prouni	D e F
P28	2016	GENTIL, Viviane Kanitz LACERDA, Miriam Pires Corrêa de	Expansão do ensino superior do sistema federal brasileiro no período 2003-2006	Reuni Prouni	C
P29	2018	GREGÓRIO, José Renato	O papel do Banco Mundial na contra reforma da educação superior no Brasil: uma análise dos documentos que precederam o reuni	Reuni	A e B
P30	2016	HAAS, Celia Maria PARDO, Rosângela Da Silva	As pesquisas sobre Fies, Reuni e Prouni registradas no banco de teses da Capes: discutindo o financiamento da educação superior no Brasil	Fies Reuni Prouni	A, B e C
P31	2013	HAGE, Salomão Mufarrej PEREIRA, Ricardo Augusto Gomes BRITO, Márcia Mariana Bittencourt	Educação superior e democratização: o acesso de populações negras, indígenas e do campo no ensino superior na Amazônia paraense	Prouni	B, D, E e F

P32	2009	JEZINE, Edineide	A expansão, a diversificação da educação superior e os processos de [in]exclusão das camadas populares	Fies Prouni	A, B, C e D
P33	2016	LIMA, Edileusa Esteves MACHADO, Lucília Regina de Souza	Reuni e Expansão Universitária na UFMG de 2008 a 2012	Reuni	A, B, C e D
P34	2013	LIMA, Paulo Gomes	Políticas de educação superior no Brasil na primeira década do século XXI: alguns cenários e leituras	Fies Reuni Prouni	A, C e D
P35	2018	MARANHÃO, Carolina Machado Saraiva de Albuquerque FERNANDES, Talita Almeida PEREIRA, Jussara Jéssica	Universidade Federal e Políticas Públicas no Brasil: Análises Sobre o Reuni	Reuni	A, B, C e D
P36	2020	MÁXIMO, Rérisson	Efeitos territoriais de políticas educacionais: a recente expansão e interiorização do ensino federal em cidades não metropolitanas no Ceará	Reuni	C e E
P37	2021	MERTZIG, Patrícia Lakchmi Leite MENDONÇA, Camila Tecla Morteau FURLAN COSTA, Maria Luisa	Políticas públicas para a educação no Brasil: do terceiro setor ao processo de privatização do ensino superior	Fies Prouni	A e B
P38	2020	MIRANDA, Paula Roberta AZEVEDO, Mário Luiz Neves	Fies e Prouni na expansão da educação superior brasileira: políticas de democratização do acesso e/ou de promoção do setor privado-mercantil?	Fies Prouni	A, B, C
P39	2021	MOREIRA, Claudia Regina Silveira SOUZA, Ângelo Ricardo de	Democratização do acesso à educação superior em debate: avaliação do Prouni	Prouni	D e F
P40	2007	NEVES, Clarissa Eckert Baeta RAIZER, Leandro FACHINETTO, Rochele Fellini	Acesso, expansão e equidade na educação superior: novos desafios para a política educacional brasileira	Prouni	C
P41	2021	OLIVEIRA, Ana Luíza Matos de	Perfil dos estudantes de graduação entre 2001 e 2015: uma revisão	Fies Reuni Prouni	F
P42	2017	OLIVEIRA, Anandra Santos Ribeiro SILVA, Ivair Ramos	Políticas de inclusão social no ensino superior brasileiro: um estudo sobre o perfil socioeconômico de estudantes nos anos 2010 a 2012	Fies Prouni	C, D e F
P43	2018	PACHECO, Márcia Maria Dias Reis CHAMON, Edna Maria Oliveira FUZARO, Carolina Moraes SANTANA, Leonor M	O crescimento do número de matrículas no ensino superior: subsídios para o debate	Fies Reuni Prouni	C e D
P44	2021	PAULA, Camila Henriques MARTIN, Débora Gonzaga	Reuni: um instrumento de promoção do princípio constitucional da igualdade	Reuni	C e D
P45	2017	PAULA, Maria de Fátima Costa de	Políticas de democratização da educação superior brasileira: limites e desafios para a próxima década	Fies Reuni Prouni	B, C, D e F
P46	2018	PEREIRA, Tarcísio Luiz BRITO, Sílvia Helena Andrade	A expansão da educação superior privada no Brasil por meio do FIES	Fies	B, C e E
P47	2010	PEREIRA, Thiago Ingrassia CORREA DA SILVA, Luís Fernando	As políticas públicas do ensino superior no governo Lula: expansão ou democratização?	Reuni Prouni	C e D
P48	2016	PICANÇO, Felícia	Juventude e acesso ao ensino superior no Brasil: Onde está o alvo das políticas de ação afirmativa	Fies Prouni	C, D e E
P49	2012	PRESTES, Emília Maria da Trindade JEZINE, Edineide SCOCUGLIA, Afonso Celso	Democratização do Ensino Superior Brasileiro: O caso da Universidade Federal da Paraíba	Reuni Prouni	A, B, C, D e E
P50	2017	REDIN, Ezequiel	Políticas educacionais e juventude rural no ensino superior	Prouni	D e E

P51	2014	RISTOFF, Dilvo	O novo perfil do campus brasileiro: uma análise do perfil socioeconômico do estudante de graduação	Fies Reuni Prouni	C e F
P52	2017	ROGGERO, Rosemary ROCHA, Aline Sarmento Coura SILVA FILHO, Geuid Cavalcante	Políticas de inclusão e as recomendações dos organismos internacionais para o ensino médio e superior no Brasil	Fies Reuni Prouni	A e C
P53	2015	SGUISSARDI, Valdemar	Educação Superior no Brasil. Democratização ou massificação mercantil?	Fies Prouni	A, B, C e D
P54	2013	SILVA, Maria das Graças Martins da VELOSO, Tereza Christina Aguiar	Acesso nas políticas da educação superior: dimensões e indicadores em questão	Reuni Prouni	C e D
P55	2017	SILVA, Rosa Maria Segalla AMAURO, Nicéa Quintino SOUZA, Paulo Vítor Teodoro RODRIGUES FILHO, Guimes	Democratização do ensino superior: no contexto da educação brasileira	Fies Reuni Prouni	C
P56	2019	SOUZA, Ana Paula Ribeiro de COIMBRA, Leonardo José Pinho	"Democratização" do ensino superior em tempos neoliberais	Reuni	A, B, C, D e E
P57	2020	SOUZA, Lorena Passos PASSOS, Luana FERREIRA, Rosilda Arruda	Segregação no acesso ao ensino superior no Brasil: perfil dos ingressantes	Fies Reuni Prouni	C, D e F
P58	2015	TREVISOL, Joviles Vítório NIEROTKA, Rosileia	Democratização do acesso ao ensino superior público: análise das políticas de ingresso da UFFS	Reuni Prouni	A, B, C, E e F

Source: The author (2022).

The inclusion and exclusion criteria allowed for the selection of studies that, in one way or another, interrelate state policies with processes of democratizing access to higher education. The methodology employed, in its research phases - identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion - resulted in a wide diversity of analyzed studies, which are discussed below.

3.1 Theme A: International Organizations and Influences on National Public Policy Dynamics

In this theme, there are 20 studies that provide research³, contributions, and insights into the influence of international organizations on national public policies and the structuring of key programs for expanding and democratizing higher education. These studies reveal the role of international organizations such as the World Bank, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), among others, in proposing and implementing policies in the field of higher education in Brazil and other developing countries.

³ They are: P5, P6, P10, P15, P17, P22, P23, P29, P30, P32, P33, P34, P35, P37, P38, P49, P52, P53, P56, P58.

The World Bank⁴, in this scenario, is one of the main international social financing organizations, with the reduction of global poverty and inequality as its primary goal. In the 1990s, this organization played a significant role in the economic restructuring of several nations, guiding actions towards budgetary balance, reduction of public spending, trade liberalization, elimination of tariff barriers, relaxation of regulations for foreign capital entry, deregulation of domestic markets, elimination of state intervention instruments, and privatization of companies and public services (SOARES, 2003 apud BORGES; AQUINO, 2012, p. 122). Analyzing the document "*Construir Sociedades de Conocimiento: nuevos desafíos para la educación terciária*" (BANCO MUNDIAL, 2003 apud ARRUDA; GOMES, 2015, p. 548), Arruda and Gomes highlight the construction of a discourse that reinforces the need for countries to assume responsibility for reforming higher education in the context of a "knowledge-based global economy" (BARRETO; LEHER, 2008 apud ARRUDA; GOMES, 2015, p. 548). These World Bank guidelines are reflected in educational policies throughout the 1990s through actions that resulted in resource constraints for higher education institutions, salary freezes for administrative staff and faculty, increased autonomy of these institutions based on neoliberal principles, and serving international capital interests.

Catani, Hey and Gilioli (2006), Carvalho (2006), Gregório (2018) and Castro and Silva (2014) analyze the macroeconomic policy implemented in Brazil in the 1990s in line with the goals established by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), characterized by maintaining a fiscal policy aimed at maintaining primary surplus as a means of control, crisis management, and debt management. Consequently, there was difficulty in implementing public policies that required greater financial investment, such as expanding the public education system. According to Catani, Hey and Gilioli (2006, p. 127) and Carvalho (2006, p. 982), the Prouni simultaneously addresses the social pressures for increasing the supply of higher education and the need to maintain control over public finances, a mechanism necessary to ensure that "the market believes that there will be no risk of default on the debt" (CARVALHO, 2006, p. 982).

Arruda and Gomes (2015), Castro and Silva (2014), Gregório (2018), and Mertzig, Mendonça, and Furlan Costa (2021) point out UNESCO as another international organization with considerable influence on developing countries. This influence occurs predominantly through reports, conferences, and declarations, such as "*Declaração Mundial sobre Educação Superior no Século XXI: Visão e Ação*" (UNESCO, 1998 apud CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 212) and the World Conference on Higher Education in Paris, titled: "*As Novas Dinâmicas do Ensino Superior e Pesquisas para a Mudança e o Desenvolvimento Social*" (2009 apud CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 212). In summary, the strategies advocated by the agency are internationalization,

⁴ The influence of the World Bank on national policies is investigated in greater depth by research studies P6, P10, P17, P46, P37, P52, P53 e P58

regionalization, and globalization as mechanisms for transforming higher education and research, involving partnerships and "actions at the national, regional, and international levels" to ensure the quality of higher education systems (CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 212).

The research by Arruda (2011), Arruda and Gomes (2015), Borges and Aquino (2012), and Silva and Veloso (2013) highlight the importance of the Bologna Process in the field of higher education public policies, particularly the trajectory of the Support Program for the Restructuring and Expansion Plan of Federal Universities (REUNI). The Bologna Process had relevance to the model adopted in Brazil while raising current issues such as the "duration of studies, degrees and titles, academic architecture," and "political strategies that serve as recommendations in the field of higher education" (DALE, 2009 *apud* ARRUDA; GOMES, 2015, p. 549). According to Arruda and Gomes (2015, p. 551-553), the texts of the Decree and General Guidelines of REUNI indicate influences from the Bologna Process by recommending: the opening of courses based on diversification of undergraduate modalities; the expansion of student mobility between courses and credit transfer; breaking with traditional structures of early professionalization; and the provision of courses with short initial duration and intermediate diplomas.

3.2 Theme B: Globalization, privatization, commodification, and the effects of neoliberalism on public policies in higher education

This theme presents twenty-four studies⁵ that delve into the relationships between national and international macroeconomic structures and public policies aimed at democratizing and expanding higher education. The processes of globalization, financialization, privatization, commodification, and the effects of neoliberal policies on the expansion of the private higher education sector are highlighted in this theme.

The acceleration of economic and financial globalization and its effects on national public policies are particularly present in the works of Castro and Silva (2014), Ferreira (2019), Gregório (2018), Jezine (2009), Miranda and Azevedo (2020), Prestes, Jezine, and Scocuglia (2012), and Trevisol and Nierotka (2015). According to Souza Santos (2005 *apud* TREVISOL; NIEROTKA, 2015, p. 38), the reduction of state power over the economy - which resulted in a process of divestment in public universities - and the "mercantilization globalization of universities are two sides of the same coin." The globalization process during the late 20th century produced a hegemonic thought that predominates in understanding that "an education is of higher quality when it

⁵ These studies are: P1, P2, P3, P5, P10, P15, P17, P19, P22, P24, P26, P29, P30, P31, P32, P35, P37, P38, P45, P46, P49, P53, P56, P58

provides individuals and companies with greater gains in efficiency and competitive capabilities" (DIAS SOBRINHO, 2010, p. 1226 and 1227). It is in this sense that the conception is built that public initiative is burdensome, inefficient, and backward, while private initiative is versatile, dynamic, and enhances modern and innovative solutions.

The transfer of public resources to the private sector is explored in the research by Aguiar (2016), Arruda (2011), Carvalho (2006), Gregório (2018), Hass and Pardo (2016), and Miranda and Azevedo (2020). According to Miranda and Azevedo (2020), in 2015, FIES mobilized over R\$ 15 billion in financing, while PROUNI allowed for a tax exemption of over R\$ 1 billion, indicating the intense collaboration of the federal government in the expansion of private institutions, "privileged in their demands, either through increased resources from the public fund or through demands that allowed for an increase in the number of financing and financial resources" (MIRANDA; AZEVEDO, 2020, p. 10). During the 1980s and 1990s, the actions of international institutions fostered the consolidation of national university markets with state consent. Subsequently, supported by the administrative and financial reform that took place in the 1990s, as well as driven by the massive influx of public funds from the early 2000s onwards, the national and global higher education market led to the establishment of publicly traded companies that issued shares in the stock market to raise (further) funds from national and transnational private funds (MIRANDA; AZEVEDO, 2020, p. 13). According to the authors, "this financialization is conceived from the mergers and/or acquisitions of national and foreign educational companies that form large oligopolies, with capital market listings, causing the financialization of the education sector" (MIRANDA; AZEVEDO, 2020, p. 13). In this sense, Sguissardi (2015, p. 870) reveals that from 2012 to 2014, the education sector achieved greater profitability compared to other economic sectors on the Bovespa: while the total Bovespa index experienced a reduction of 3.67%, Kroton (KROT3) had an appreciation of 314%, and Estácio (ESTC3) of 240%.

The research studies by Aguiar (2016), Alves, Fontes, and Nascimento (2013), Borges and Aquino (2012), Castro and Silva (2014), Cruz (2019), Favato and Ruiz (2018), Mertzig, Mendonça, and Furlan Costa (2021), Miranda and Azevedo (2020), Pereira and Brito (2018), Sguissardi (2015), Souza and Coimbra (2019), and Trevisol and Nierotka (2015) highlight factors related to the effects of neoliberal policies and the commodification of social rights. However, Neves, Raizer, and Fachinnetto (2007) counterbalance these factors with aspects such as the internationalization and interdependence of economies, as well as the emergence of an international division of labor - based on global production mediated by multinational companies - and its respective results in societies and national economies (NEVES; RAIZER; FACHINETTO, 2007, p. 126). Furthermore, Sguissardi (2015) denounces the expansion of private higher education, which occurs with "the enjoyment of a public right, that is, merely as

the purchase of a service, commercial product, or commodity" (SGUISSARDI, 2015, p. 869 and 870).

Castro and Silva (2014) and Prestes, Jezine, and Scocuglia (2012) analyze the complexity of the "disputes of concepts, projects, and policies that meet and differentiate in contradictory ways" regarding social rights and the commodified provision of these rights (PRESTES; JEZINE; SCOCUGLIA, 2012, p. 205) in a context of productive restructuring, globalization, and neoliberal ideology (CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 207 and 208). Both studies criticize the policies of expanding higher education, especially the REUNI, due to its neoliberal bias and the underdimensioned and insufficient resources for the proposed expansion. In this regard, according to Castro and Silva (2014), the policies of expanding higher education have manifested in three distinct tendencies: 1) "expansion through the privatization of education"; 2) "expansion through the use of distance education"; and 3) "expansion through the restructuring of federal public universities," which occurred under a logic of rationalizing existing physical and human resources, aimed at controlling the outcomes of universities (CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 213, 217).

3.3 Theme C: Expansion of access to higher education and possible advancements

The relationship between the democratization of access and the expansion of higher education is investigated in forty-four studies⁶ in this review. In this aspect, the expansion of higher education is associated with the following: the expansion of physical infrastructure through the construction of universities, colleges, and university centers; an increase in the number of courses and programs in public and private institutions; a rise in the number of students, enrollments and graduates; and an increase in resources - personnel, financial, and infrastructure - in the sector.

The research studies by Costa, Costa and Amante *et al.* (2011), Maranhão, Fernandes and Pereira *et al.* (2018), Miranda and Azevedo (2020), Paula and Martin (2021), Prestes, Jezine and Scocuglia (2012), and Souza and Coimbra (2019) provide reflections on the expansion of resources, investments, staff, and budgets in the field of higher education. Maranhão, Fernandes and Pereira *et al.* (2018) indicate that from 2005 to 2009, the financial resources made available to public institutions as a result of the REUNI program increased by 90%, and the direct public investment in education, compared to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which was 3.9% in 2000, reached 5% in 2009 (MARANHÃO; FERNANDES AND PEREIRA *et al.*, 2018, p. 62). Similarly, Costa, Costa and Amante *et al.* (2011) present data regarding the evolution of resources allocated to the REUNI program: in 2008, investments amounted to R\$ 209 million, and

⁶ The research studies that explore this relationship are: P2, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P12, P13, P14, P16, P17, P19, P20, P21, P22, P23, P24, P26, P28, P30, P32, P33, P34, P35, P36, P38, P40, P42, P43, P44, P45, P46, P47, P48, P49, P51, P52, P53, P54, P55, P56, P57, P58

by 2011, they reached R\$ 1.627 billion, representing an increase of 678%. Paula and Martin (2021, p. 8) provide a breakdown of investments in 2013: out of the 1.2 billion reais spent on the program, R\$ 440 million were allocated to the expansion and consolidation of institutions, R\$ 509 million were used for the establishment of new campuses, and R\$ 300 million for the creation of new universities. Regarding the budget of the Ministry of Education (MEC), Paula and Martin (2021) and Maranhão, Fernandes and Pereira *et al.* (2018, p. 62) present the budgetary evolution of the ministry, which exhibited a linear growth trend throughout the 2000s as an attempt to increase the budget to achieve the expansionist goals of higher education (PAULA and MARTIN, 2021, p. 8).

The studies by Alvarez and Radaelli (2016), Borges and Aquino (2012), Favato and Ruiz (2018), and Maranhão, Fernandes and Pereira *et al.* (2018) delve into the correlations between the expansionist movement of higher education in Brazil and the implementation of the REUNI program. According to Alvarez and Radaelli (2016, p. 227), the number of federal higher education institutions was 39 in 1995, 45 in 2003, and 59 in 2010. During the same period, the number of municipalities served by universities increased from 114 in 2003 to 237 in 2011. Furthermore, the number of enrollments in federal institutions increased from 544,251 to 849,679 (ALVAREZ; RADAELLI, 2016, p. 227). Maranhão, Fernandes and Pereira *et al.* (2018, p. 55) present the temporal evolution of the number of institutions created according to the presidents and identify that the administrations with the highest increase in the number of universities were Luiz Inácio da Silva (2003-2010), with 14 new institutions, followed by Juscelino Kubitschek (1956 and 1961), with 11 new institutions, and Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002) and Artur da Costa e Silva (1967-1969), both with 6 new institutions.

Miranda and Azevedo (2020), Ferreira and Petraglia (2014), Pereira and Corrêa da Silva (2010), and Neves, Raizer, and Fachinetto (2007) analyze the correlation between FIES (Student Financing Fund) and PROUNI (University for All Program) and the expansion of higher education. Neves, Raizer, and Fachinetto (2007) conduct an extensive investigation of the expansion of higher education, characterizing the gross and net enrollment rates of Brazilian youth aged 18 to 24 in higher education, the relationship between the expansion of institutional structure (number of institutions) and the number of enrollments in public and private institutions in the 2000s, the growth rate of enrollments in undergraduate courses by administrative category, among other data. Pereira and Corrêa da Silva (2010) and Ferreira and Petraglia (2014) also analyze the growth of enrollments in private institutions, drawing attention to the evolution of PROUNI scholarships and the rate of partial and full scholarships offered to students.

Finally, the relationships between the expansion of higher education and FIES are primarily analyzed in the works of Pereira and Brito (2018) and Miranda and Azevedo (2020). Pereira and Brito (2018) study the management of a higher education institution with the aim of increasing the number of FIES entrants, while Miranda and Azevedo (2020) investigate the expansion of the private sector and the processes of financialization and commodification of higher education, viewing these aspects as a reflection of the transfer of public resources to private initiatives and tax exemptions in exchange for scholarship concessions.

3.4 Theme D: Democratization of access to Higher Education in Brazil: limits and contradictions of public policies

Many of the studies analyzed here discuss the process of democratization in both the public and private higher education systems, shedding light on the difficulties, limits, resistances, and challenges of the democratization process. These studies encompass thirty-nine⁷ research papers that identify issues related to the difficulties of student retention and dropout rates, the low quality of courses in private institutions or the deterioration of public universities after the expansion caused by the Reuni program, and the social and economic inequalities that persist within universities.

According to Dias Sobrinho (2010), policies aimed at expanding access to higher education can only succeed with a "complete coverage and quality" of the entire education system. Simply increasing the number of spots and massifying access to universities and colleges in the country does not necessarily lead to the democratization of higher education as a public right. Paula (2017) presents four dimensions that support her conception of democratization in higher education: "access/entry", "retention/graduation," "quality education," and "inclusion of socially subaltern groups." The author argues that the "emphasis on massification alone does not exhaust the project of democratizing higher education." (PAULA; SILVA, 2012, p. 7 apud PAULA, 2017, p. 305).

The research papers by Alves, Fontes, and Nascimento (2013), Ariño and Delvan (2018), Cañaverl and Sá (2017), Cruz (2019), Dias Sobrinho (2010), Favato and Ruiz (2018), Ferreira (2019), Hage, Pereira, and Brito (2013), Jezine (2009), Lima (2013), Oliveira and Silva (2017), Pacheco, Chamon and Fuzaro *et al.* (2018), Paula (2017), Pereira and Correa da Silva (2010), Picanço (2016), Sguissardi (2015), Silva and Veloso (2013), and Souza and Coimbra (2019) demonstrate that programs aimed at democratizing access to higher education often lead to a pseudo-democratization, an exclusionary inclusion that manifests as a massification of access without achieving "the

⁷ They are: P1, P3, P4, P6, P7, P8, P9, P10, P13, P14, P15, P16, P18, P19, P20, P22, P23, P24, P25, P26, P27, P31, P32, P33, P34, P35, P39, P42, P43, P44, P45, P47, P48, P49, P50, P53, P54, P56, P57

necessary scope to legitimize the overcoming of the nefarious historical traits that mark this level of education in Brazil" (Favato and Ruiz, 2018). In this sense, Sguissardi (2015) also states that such focal policies, targeting specific segments of the excluded population, have limited reach and do not address the underlying causes of the inequality that produces this exclusion. According to Ariño and Delvan (2018), these policies create groups of "excluded from the inside," students who enter universities but feel they do not belong or experience discrimination from their peers, professors, and staff. Paula (2017) and Cañaverall and Sá (2017) associate the high dropout rates in undergraduate programs with this perception of not belonging to the university environment.

Dias Sobrinho (2010), Barbosa (2019), and Paula (2017) draw attention to the process of exclusion experienced by students from lower-income backgrounds in accessing and progressing through higher education. Students who have historically been socially and economically excluded internalize the ideology that their exclusion is natural, believing that they should belong to marginal environments and that they have the intellectual capacity to attend only more accessible courses in private institutions with less competition in the admissions process and lower social prestige, even if these may eventually lead to employment opportunities with lower earning potential (DIAS SOBRINHO, 2010, p. 1230). According to Barbosa (2019, p. 251), the segmentation between private and public institutions, reproducing society's value references, allows the expansion of higher education to direct students from elite backgrounds to sectors of higher social prestige, while students from other backgrounds are directed to less privileged sectors (BARBOSA, 2019, p. 251).

Lastly, the research studies conducted by Barbosa (2016; 2019), Castelo Branco and Jezine (2013), Dias Sobrinho (2010), Ferreira (2019), Lima (2013), Moreira and Souza (2021), Oliveira (2021), Oliveira and Silva (2017), Pereira and Correa da Silva (2010), Picanço (2016), and Sguissardi (2015) highlight limitations in the process of democratizing access to higher education due to aspects related to economic stratification, economic inequality, and the meritocratic structure. According to Paula (2017), the inclusion and exclusion process within Brazilian universities is permeated by instruments and selection mechanisms that predetermine the place of each student. Even with policies promoting inclusion in higher education, this traditional order of social stratification will not be altered until the factors causing inequality are changed (PAULA; HOURI; CRUZ, 2015, p. 217 *apud* PAULA, 2017, p. 310). Regarding the eligibility process for students in these programs, Silva and Veloso (2013) emphasize that the logic of access to higher education maintains the selection criterion based on individual merit, even when applied to more disadvantaged and lower-income groups. Both Prouni scholarship recipients in private institutions and beneficiaries of affirmative action programs in public institutions must undergo exclusive selection processes. Such processes maintain a system in which merit is the driving principle, legitimizing

the "capture of the best" and representing the exclusion of those who are left behind (SILVA; VELOSO, 2013, p. 742).

3.5 Theme E: Analysis of the Implementation of Public Policies for Democratizing Access to Higher Education in Local Realities

Out of the fifty-eight studies analyzed here, 14 provide accounts⁸, experiences, and results of the implementation of public policies in Brazilian universities. Among them, 8 studies analyze, with greater emphasis, the results of implementing the REUNI program in federal institutions, 1 study examines the importance of Prouni for a region in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, 1 study analyzes research data on FIES in a private institution in São Paulo, and 4 studies investigate access policies implemented by Brazilian universities in general.

The research studies conducted by Cañaverl and Sá (2017), Castelo Branco and Jazine (2013), Castro and Silva (2014), Corrêa and Nascimento (2018), Costa, Costa and Amante *et al.* (2011), Hage, Pereira, and Brito (2013), Lima and Machado (2016), Máximo (2020), and Souza and Coimbra (2019) examine the expansion of higher education in public institutions following the implementation of the Restructuring and Expansion Support Program for Federal Universities (REUNI). According to Castro and Silva (2014), in the case of the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte, the implementation of REUNI led to the creation of numerous undergraduate courses without a proportional increase in infrastructure and faculty hiring. UFRN created thirty-nine courses in a period of 4 years in areas related to "new technologies" with the intention of "improving its ranking among the country's universities" (CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 219). A similar phenomenon is reported by Prestes, Jezine, and Scocuglia (2012) at the Federal University of Paraíba, where they highlight the creation of 32 new in-person undergraduate courses, resulting in an 18% increase in student access.

According to Lima and Machado (2016, p. 403), REUNI is part of a context of profound transformations in the Brazilian university and has sparked a debate on efficiency, productivity, and academic structure. In this regard, the authors draw attention to the program's vulnerabilities in terms of personnel shortages, which compromise the quality of academic and administrative processes, as well as the implementation of pedagogical and didactic innovations promoted by REUNI (LIMA; MACHADO, 2016, p. 403). The same issue is reported by Castro and Silva (2014) in their research conducted at UFRN, indicating difficulties in meeting quality indicators in a

⁸ Works associated with this theme include: P9, P13, P16, P17, P20, P21, P31, P33, P36, P46, P49, P50, P56, P58

context of increased student-to-faculty ratio and rationalization of working conditions and existing physical structures (CASTRO; SILVA, 2014, p. 220-221).

The phenomenon of regionalization is discussed in the studies by Barbosa (2016), Castelo Branco and Jazine (2013), Corrêa and Nascimento (2018), Costa, Costa and Amante *et al.* (2011), Máximo (2020), Redin (2017), and Souza and Coimbra (2019). According to Máximo (2020), who conducted research in municipalities in the interior of the state of Ceará, the democratization of higher education is significantly related to the regionalization caused by the expansion of public universities, which have started offering free courses to students from lower-income backgrounds in small and medium-sized municipalities. They also contribute to the creation of evening courses for working students and help reduce dropout rates in universities in major urban centers, addressing the difficulties faced by students from rural areas (MÁXIMO, 2020). Redin (2017), in a study analyzing educational policies for access to higher education and their relations with poor rural youth in the region of Território Centro-Serra, Rio Grande do Sul, demonstrated that Prouni provided an opportunity for rural and small-town youth to enter higher education in private institutions (REDIN, 2017, p. 237). Similarly, Trevisol and Nierotka (2015) present equivalent results in their analysis of the establishment of the Federal University of Fronteira Sul. According to the research, the university's access policy has brought children of rural and urban workers, mostly from low-income families with limited education, "where the child is the first member, from the first generation, to reach university" (TREVISOL; NIEROTKA, 2015, p. 51).

3.6 Theme F: Perspectives, Profile, and Reality of Students Benefiting from Public Policies for Democratizing Access to Higher Education

The fifteen studies⁹ in this theme emphasize the reality of higher education from the perspective of students benefiting from public policies and investigate their social, economic, and ethnic profiles, as well as their views of themselves and the field of higher education in the country.

The research studies by Ariño and Delvan (2018), Brocco (2017), Fontele and Crisóstomo (2016), and Moreira and Souza (2019) examined the difficulties, social conditions, opinions, and profiles of scholarship recipients benefiting from the University for All Program (ProUni). Brocco (2017) interviewed 11 scholarship students from a community institution in Santa Catarina, aiming to understand their social conditions and the importance of higher education for them and their families. According to the author, the interviewed scholarship students have a pragmatic perception of reality and higher education, seeing it as a mechanism for social mobility.

⁹ Studies related to this topic include: P4, P6, P8, P11, P26, P27, P31, P39, P41, P42, P45, P48, P51, P57, P58

In the students' own accounts, the democratization of opportunities is limited by broader social and structural factors (BROCCO, 2017, p. 106). Critical perception is also present in the contributions of students interviewed by Fontele and Crisóstomo (2016), who believe that there are structural reforms to be made in Basic Education and more specific adjustments in Prouni (FONTELE; CRISÓSTOMO, 2016, p. 759).

Arruda and Gomes (2015), Barbosa (2019), Oliveira and Silva (2017), Oliveira (2021), Picanço (2016), Ristoff (2014), Souza, Passos, and Ferreira (2020), Trevisol and Nierotka (2015) investigated the democratization of higher education in Brazil based on information about the socioeconomic profile, income, ethnicity, and gender of Brazilian students. Oliveira and Silva (2017) used microdata from the National Student Performance Exam (ENADE) provided by the National Institute for Educational Studies and Research Anísio Teixeira (INEP) to correlate variables such as age, school of origin, type of higher education institution, self-declared ethnicity, family income, and public policies related to admission to undergraduate courses. The research, using data from 2010 to 2012, revealed that 56.47% of university students were 25 years old or older, 59.4% of students came from public schools, but 77.6% were enrolled in private institutions. Regarding ethnicity, 62.6% identified as white, 27.9% as mixed race, 7.1% as Black, 1.8% as Asian, and 0.6% as Indigenous. In terms of income, the authors observed that over 30% of students had a family income of up to three minimum wages, with variations between fields of study: while in Engineering courses the income ranges with the highest incidence were 6 to 10 (25.18%) and 10 to 30 (27.82%) minimum wages, in Humanities courses the income ranges with the highest incidence were 1.5 to 3 (32.05%) and 3 to 4.5 (21.89%) minimum wages.

Ristoff (2014) conducted a similar study that delves into the analysis of changes in the profile of higher education students over time as the programs evolved. Using data from the first three cycles of ENADE¹⁰ from 2004 to 2012, the author presents changes in the profile of students (both scholarship recipients and non-recipients) in Veterinary Medicine, Dentistry, History, Psychology, Medicine, and Law programs concerning factors such as skin color, monthly family income, school of origin, and parents' educational attainment. In all the analyzed programs, the percentage of White university students exceeded the percentage of this ethnicity in the population (48%, according to the 2010 IBGE census), with notable numbers in Veterinary Medicine, Medicine, and Dentistry programs, which had rates of 80%, 74%, and 75%, respectively (RISTOFF, 2014, p. 731). The historical series of the three ENADE cycles allows us to conclude that the percentage of White students in these elite programs has decreased. In the Medicine program, for instance, the percentage was 80% in 2004, 76% in 2007, and 74% in 2010, according to the author. A similar trend can be observed regarding

¹⁰ The first cycle runs from 2004 to 2006; the second cycle from 2007 to 2009; and the third cycle from 2010 to 2012.

income concentration: in 2004, for the same program, 67% of students came from families with a monthly income of over ten minimum wages; in 2010, this figure decreased to 44%. In other programs, the income concentration starts from lower values in the first cycle: in Law, for example, in the first cycle, 37% of students came from families with income over ten minimum wages, but in the third cycle, this value decreased to 24% (RISTOFF, 2014, p. 734 - 735).

The research conducted by Oliveira (2021) also highlights a reduction in the representation of the White population in undergraduate programs in public institutions in the 2000s and early 2010s. Between 2003 and 2014, the proportion of White students decreased from 59.4% to 45.67%. During the same period, the representation of mixed-race individuals increased from 28.3% to 37.8%, and the representation of Black individuals increased from 5.9% to 9.82% (OLIVEIRA, 2021, p. 242). Regarding data from the Higher Education Census, which encompasses all higher education institutions in the country, the results also indicate an increase in the representation of Black and mixed-race students in undergraduate programs. Between 2011 and 2017, the percentage of Black students increased from 6.95% to 8.62%, the percentage of mixed-race students increased from 27.85% to 34.95%, and the percentage of White students decreased from 61.89% to 53.34%. In terms of the gross family income of students in federal higher education institutions, research by Fonaprace (2014 *apud* OLIVEIRA, 2021, p. 243) indicates an increase in the representation of students from lower-income families. Between 2010 and 2014, the percentage of students from families with a gross family income of up to 1 minimum wage rose from 8.33% to 13.21%; from up to 2 minimum wages (including the previous range), it increased from 26.47% to 36.65%; from up to 3 minimum wages (including the previous ranges), it increased from 40.66% to 51.66%. During the same period, the percentage of students from families with a gross family income equal to or greater than ten minimum wages decreased from 16.72% to 10.5%.

Finally, Picanço (2016) provides similar data in her studies investigating the chances of accessing higher education between 1993 and 2011 based on factors such as skin color and income. The author found that in 1993, the chance of accessing higher education was four times higher for White individuals compared to other ethnicities, and in 2011, this ratio decreased to 2.3 times (still favoring White individuals). Regarding income, the research reveals that in 1993, individuals in the richest quintile had 81 times more chances of accessing higher education compared to those in the poorest quintile. In 2011, this ratio decreased to 19 times more chances of accessing higher education for individuals in the richest quintile (PICANÇO, 2016, p. 116 - 117).

4 Conclusion

The results found in this research indicate that in the last two decades, concerns about access to and democratization of higher education have become important topics for public actions and, consequently, academic research. In the analyzed period, fifty-eight articles were identified that bring significant contributions to the research field. The analysis of this material allows us to observe that concepts, themes, and contributions are reiterated in a complementary manner in studies with different methodological approaches, constituting a consolidated and solid body of knowledge with theoretical and empirical foundations. Regarding this knowledge, we highlight some key points:

- a) State policies aimed at democratizing higher education need to go beyond actions specifically targeting increasing enrollment numbers. This democratization requires expanding the number of available spots associated with a series of transformations in the national education system, considering improvements in basic education infrastructure, teacher training, qualification, hiring, and remuneration (at all levels), as well as conditions for students' retention, particularly at the secondary and tertiary levels. It also involves valuing schools and universities as spaces for nurturing and defending democratic knowledge;
- b) Socioeconomic status is reproduced within the university, both in the hierarchy of programs and institutions (of higher or lower prestige), and it turns the university into a tool that reinforces the socioeconomic structure of society. Studies included in this review indicate that students from lower-income backgrounds tend to pursue programs in the humanities and education, while those from higher-income backgrounds tend to pursue programs in engineering and health, which, compared to the former, are more likely to result in higher income in the job market;
- c) The public policies analyzed are understood by various authors as reformist and provisional. They do not solve the problems and economic contradictions that determine inequalities in the university and that are reproduced outside of it. However, they create a perception of illusory resolution, fulfilling a socio-political conformity function;
- d) The process of globalization in the last 30 years has delineated more clearly the respective roles of each nation on the international stage. This distribution of roles, carried out by the actions of transnational organizations aligned with specific sectors of national economies, directly reflects on domestic policies, particularly those related to higher education;
- e) The financialization of education emerges as a recent and irreversible phenomenon. A sizable portion of undergraduate students attend branches of large conglomerates, which have consolidated themselves no more than 20 years ago and

take advantage of a symbiosis between international capital and the domestic market;

- f) Given the current political and economic scenario, considering the actions of resource containment in the education sector and the approval of constitutional amendments limiting public investments, there are few aspirations for broader or more profound actions regarding the improvement of the quality of public higher education;
- g) In the face of the current economic instability, the small achievements made in access and democratization policies, even when accompanied by the commercialization of the education sector, may be lost as discourses and policies that oppose the public good, increasingly disseminated by conservative sectors of society, become hegemonic and prevalent in government guidelines.

Based on the findings of this review, we acknowledge that public policies aimed at democratizing access to higher education have contributed to the increase in the number of public higher education institutions, but have also led to the rise of private conglomerates and an increase in the number of available spots and enrollments. However, the outcomes of these policies are limited when examining their impact on changes in the Brazilian social structure, as most students in higher education institutions, particularly in prestigious courses with a tendency for higher professional remuneration, still come from socially privileged groups. Thus, it is reiterated that public policies need to overcome structural constraints, both nationally and internationally, as well as promote the improvement of the quality of higher education and provide opportunities for students to enter this level of education regardless of their social background.

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