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POVERTY IN BRAZIL IN THE 80s

Lauro Ramo

Federal Government of Brazil

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POVERTY IN BRAZIL IN THE 80s

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1 - INTRODUCTION

The severity of the social problem in Brazil was made clear by the termination of the post-war process of fast economic development at the end of the 70s. The high rates of growth that prevailed till then contributed to make it bearable the acute unfairness of the income distribution and the extent of poverty in the country, both decreasing at that point.¹

The virtual economic stagnation along the 80s and the beginning of this decade produced a sharp deterioration in the social conditions. The negative effects of the lack of growth on poverty were reinforced by a further worsening in the income distribution: while the 10% in the upper tail increased their income share from 46.6% in 1981 to 53.2% in 1989, the bottom half had it cut from 13.4% to 10.4% in the same period.²

What makes these figures even more worrisome is precisely the absence of a sound economic growth. Contrary to the 60s and 70s, when increasing inequality took place in the midst of expanding output, in such a way that the absolute incomes of all strata were boosted up, the recent period was marked by losses in equity and no significant gains in efficiency, implying an unambiguous decrease in the level of social welfare.

Even though standard of living indicators such as schooling, sewage disposal, access to electricity, ..., reveal improvements during the 80s [Eichemberg (1992)], we should keep in mind that this is so largely because these outcomes depend on investments that take time to mature and produce results. In other words, this achievement is likely to be a consequence of the efforts and investments put forward in the 70s. Therefore, as the level of public spending and investment was greatly reduced during the period of economic stagnation, we should expect a very poor overall performance of the country in the social front this decade.

This study is concerned with the effects of these macroeconomic settings on social welfare, particularly on what concerns to poverty and indigence matters. More specifically, we will investigate the evolution of poverty and indigence in Brazil throughout the entire

¹In fact, Bonelli and Ramos (1993) and Barros and Mendonça (1992) identify an increase in social welfare on Paretian grounds.

²The Gini coefficient went up from 0.57 in 1981 to 0.63 in 1989.

previous decade, trying to identify the most hardly poverty-stricken social-demographic groups, and attempting to offer a crude measure of the amount of resources to be committed if one wants to eradicate poverty in urban Brazil.

2 - METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

2.1 - Poverty Lines

The measurement of poverty entails several aspects, but the fundamental step for the assessment of the problem is the identification of the poor, i.e., the development of means that yield an answer to the basic question: "who is poor?".

The concept of poverty is closely linked to the idea of fulfilling the basic needs for an acceptable individuals' standard of living. Even though aspects of subjective nature may be important for the individual's well-being, a pragmatic approach leads to the characterization of poverty via the establishment of a monetary value that reflects the monetary resources necessary to purchasing the set of goods and services that will assure an acceptable standard of living. Those whose incomes lie below this level - the "poverty line" - will be considered poor.

The determination of the poverty line is, however, quite a complex task,³ and it is well beyond the scope of this paper. Here we will adopt two sets of poverty lines: (i) the first was developed for the Brazilian metropolitan areas by Rocha (1992), based on the ENDEF⁴ survey, collected in 1974; (ii) the second was generated by Rocha (1993a), using the information disclosed by the POF⁵ survey, conducted in 1987/88.

There is a clear trade-off between them. Whereas the first set is based on much older information, the figures for poverty derived from the second one are available only for two years - 1987 and 1990. For the other years we have information only on indigence lines, which correspond just to the satisfaction of nutritional requirements (other needs as housing,

³See Rocha (1992) for a detailed discussion on this subject.

⁴Estudo Nacional de Despesas Familiares.

⁵Pesquisa de Orçamentos Familiares.

transportation, ..., are not considered by them).⁶ Thus we will develop the analysis in two ways: (i) assesment of poverty, based on the poverty lines derived from the ENDEF survey,⁷ for the whole decade, and (ii) the assesment of indigence, or extreme poverty, based on the indigence lines obtained from the POF survey.⁸ Besides, we will compare the results obtained from the POF and ENDEF poverty lines for 1987 and 1990. The figures for the poverty and indigence lines are shown in for the metropolitan areas in Tables 1 and 2 below.⁹

Another way of approaching the problem is to use a continuum of poverty lines that covers the lowest income strata (from the 10% to the 50% poorest group of the population, for instance).¹⁰ A clear advantage of this approach is that it allows a richer characterization of the poverty profile, as it is possible to identify the groups that are increasingly represented when we move towards to the extreme portion of the lower tail of the distribution (female-headed households, for instance).

⁶See Rocha (1993a) for details. In the original paper the indigence lines are available only for 1987 and 1990 too. The figures for the remaining years were kindly provided by the author under request. We hereby express our gratitude to her and take full responsibility for any missaplication that may have occurred.

⁷These parameters are available only for the metropolitan areas. For the urban areas we will adopt poverty lines equivalent to 80% of that of the metropolis of reference.

⁸Rocha (1993a) provides poverty lines both for metropolitan and urban areas.

⁹Though the figures are not strictly comparable, as Table 1 uses the average minimum wage in the respective year and Table 2 referes to the minimum wage in the reference month, they portray a rough idea on the relative magnitudes of the two lines.

¹⁰This corresponds to an inversion of the usual approach: instead of defining a poverty line in order to evaluate the percentage of poor, we "fix" this proportion and get rid of the poverty line (and the problems associated to its determination).

Table 1

Poverty Lines for Metropolitan Areas (as a multiple of the annual average of the highest minimum wage)

Metropolis	1981	1983	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Belém	0.63	0.73	0.72	0.81	0.97	0.91	0.85	1.22
Fortaleza	0.59	0.56	0.52	0.49	0.59	0.54	0.51	0.72
Recife	0.60	0.60	0.62	0.54	0.68	0.65	0.62	0.93
Salvador	0.63	0.63	0.64	0.66	0.81	0.74	0.74	1.01
Belo Horizonte	0.52	0.61	0.63	0.58	0.70	0.67	0.65	0.96
Rio de Janeiro	0.58	0.68	0.74	0.62	0.77	0.76	0.75	1.11
São Paulo	0.68	0.83	0.79	0.77	0.99	0.94	0.90	1.29
Curitiba	0.43	0.54	0.53	0.48	0.59	0.57	0.57	0.77
Porto Alegre	0.59	0.69	0.71	0.64	0.79	0.75	0.73	1.03

Source: Rocha (1992).

Table 2

Indigence Lines (as a multiple of the highest minimum wage)

	1981	1983	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990
Metropolises								
Belém	0.21	0.35	0.34	0.32	0.37	0.32	0.31	0.30
Fortaleza	0.19	0.35	0.35	0.29	0.35	0.32	0.32	0.35
Recife	0.19	0.38	0.37	0.31	0.39	0.37	0.37	0.44
Salvador	0.23	0.38	0.38	0.33	0.39	0.37	0.36	0.45
Belo Horizonte	0.19	0.34	0.34	0.28	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.37
Rio de Janeiro	0.25	0.44	0.42	0.34	0.40	0.41	0.40	0.51
São Paulo	0.24	0.43	0.40	0.33	0.40	0.40	0.39	0.54
Curitiba	0.18	0.35	0.35	0.27	0.32	0.33	0.31	0.42
Porto Alegre	0.20	0.35	0.35	0.28	0.34	0.35	0.32	0.41
Urban Areas								
Rio de Janeiro	0.18	0.32	0.30	0.25	0.29	0.30	0.29	0.37
São Paulo	0.20	0.35	0.33	0.27	0.33	0.32	0.32	0.44
South	0.17	0.31	0.30	0.24	0.30	0.30	0.29	0.38
Minas Gerais/								
Espírito Santo	0.16	0.29	0.29	0.24	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.32
Northeast	0.16	0.28	0.27	0.23	0.28	0.26	0.26	0.31
Brasília DC	0.18	0.33	0.31	0.25	0.30	0.30	0.28	0.30
Frontier	0.21	0.34	0.33	0.31	0.36	0.31	0.30	0.35

Source: Rocha (1993a) and extensions.

2.2 - Poverty Measurement

Having identified the poor, there are several dimensions of poverty to be considered, ranging from just counting them to their complete characterization. Roughly speaking, we can summarize the main aspects involved through the following set of questions:

- (i) how many are the poor?
- (ii) how poor are they?
- (iii) how heterogeneous is the poverty among them?

Besides knowing the number of poor in the society (or, equivalently, the percentage of the population whose incomes lie below the poverty line), it is important to develop a notion of the intensity of their poverty (or how their average income compares to the poverty line) and the degree of income inequality among them, at least as far as we accept the idea that the privation and disutility caused by lack of income and the satisfaction of basic needs become progressively more severe as these shortages increase.

Of course any poverty index will be more satisfactory the bigger its capacity of capturing and conveying information on this range of aspects.¹¹ Here we are going to make use of three of the most popular indices: **P0** or **H** (the headcount index, that reflects the percentage of poor in the population), **P1** or **PG** (the poverty gap, that is to the proportion of poor times the distance between their average income and the poverty line - the index **I**),¹² and **P2**, that ponders the number of poor, intensity and heterogeneity of poverty (as measured by the coefficient of variation of income among the poor).¹³

¹¹A detailed analysis of the most used indices can be found in Blackburn (1989).

¹²The poverty gap index is useful as we can evaluate the amount of resources necessary to eradicate poverty by multiplying by the value of the poverty line and the population size.

¹³All of them belong to the class of indices suggested by Foster, Greer and Torbecke (1984).

2.3 - Identification of the Chronically Poverty-Stricken Groups

One of the targets of this study is the identification of the socio-economic groups that are more acutely affected by poverty and penury, as this will provide valuable information for targetting policies aimed at reducing the perverse effects of lack of income and access to basic needs. One way of achieving this goal is through the evaluation of the composition of the lowest strata of the distribution according to different population cuts: those groups that have their share increased as we move towards the poorest segments of the population can be said to be more intensively affect by poverty.

There are two sorts of variables that can be used for sorting the population: (i) those associated with the operation of the labor market (regional differences, occupational structure, ...), and (i) those related to the individual's endowments and attributes (education, experience, ...). The reason behind the choice of these variables is the understanding that labor is the more valuable asset of the poor and, therefore, the existence of any barrier to the willingness of transforming labor capacity into income, as well the impediment to the development of productive characteristics, should be carefully examined.

Here we will evaluate the representation ratio¹⁴ for the following cuts:¹⁵ (i) education (illiterates, elementary school, intermediate school, high scholl, college); (ii) age (young, prime age, elderly); (iii) gender; (iv) position in occupation (employer, employee, self-employed, unemployed); (v) sector of activity (industry, trade, services, ...); and (region of residence (South, East, São Paulo, Northeast, Frontier - the agregation of the North and the Mid-West).

2.4 - Decomposition Analysis

An alternative method for assessing the importance of different socio-economic groups for poverty is through the use of decomposition analysis. This tecnique is directly based on the employment of decomposable

¹⁴The ratio of the group share in the stratum considered to its share in the whole population.

¹⁵The unit of analysis will be the household, classified into the groups according to the characteristics of its head.

indices, that, for a given partition,¹⁶ can be written as:

$$P_i = \bar{o}_g P_{ig} \cdot \bar{O}_g$$

where P_i is the poverty index for the population as a whole, P_{ig} corresponds to the same index evaluated within the g -th group, and \bar{O}_g is the population share of the g -th group.¹⁷ Or, putting it in other way, the decomposable indices allow us to express total poverty as an weighted average of poverty within the groups that form the partition, the weights being the respective population shares.

The basic distinction between this procedure and that proposed in the previous section is the fact that here the overall size of each group (\bar{O}_g) plays an important rule for the definition of its relative importance, whereas the representation ratio is concerned only with their relative size in a specific income stratum *vis-à-vis* the respective population share.¹⁸ The other difference is a matter of choice, as we will undecarry the decomposition exercises taking the individual as the accounting unit, instead of the household.

2.5 - Data Basis, Universe, Unity, and Period of Analysis

We will use in this study the information disclosed by the Pesquisa Anual por Amostra de Domicílios (PNADs), which is a survey that has been yearly conducted by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística - IBGE¹⁹ - since the mid-60s. Even though it has passed by several changes in terms of regional coverage and

¹⁶The disaggregations to be privileged in this part are exactly the same ones previously outlined (according to education, age, gender, sector of activity, region of residence, and position in occupation).

¹⁷The indices P_0 , P_1 , and P_2 used in this study belong to the class of decomposable measures of poverty and, therefore, satisfy this relation.

¹⁸Thus, if a large segmented of the population is under-represented among the poor, it may be considered an important nucleus of poverty according the decomposition analysis, but not in terms of the representation ratio: a big part of the poor will belong to it, but most of its members will not be poor.

¹⁹The Brazilian Bureau of Statistics.

the nature of the data collected, its main body has stayed the same along the 80s.

The PNADs are rich in quality information both at the household and individual level, including data on earnings, personal attributes, access to services in general, and kind of insertion in the labor market, among others. This way it becomes possible to develop the analysis linking data on household per capita income²⁰ to individual characteristics (mainly of the head of the household).

The study will be carried out for the period that goes from 1981 to 1990, and will cover the Brazilian urban area.²¹ The unit of analysis will be the household, as a result of its distinctly distributive nature, even though the poverty indices are evaluate at the individual levels at times.²²

3 - RESULTS

3.1 - The Evolution of Poverty

The evolution of poverty and indigence in Brazil is shown in Tables 3 and 4 and the respective graphs. The percentage of poor oscilates between 24.0% in 1986 and 41.7% in 1983, while the percentage of indigent stays between 8.0% in 1986 and 21.4% in 1983.

Both sets of indicators display the same kind of behavior. There is an increase both in poverty and indigence during the recession of the beginning of last decade (1981-1983), followed by a marked decrease until 1986 (the year of the "Plano Cruzado"), a slight

²⁰The household per capita income is defined here as the sum of the incomes of all household members divided by the respective number of members, with no use of any equivalence scale.

²¹The rural areas were excluded mainly because of the different characteristics of rural poverty and the lack of reliable information in the PNADs for adequately evaluating it (there is no precise data on income in kind, for instance).

²²Most of the times, when we refer to the percentage of poor, we will be alluding to the number (proportion) of individual that belong to households whose average income is below the poverty line. Roughly speaking, this is equivalent to use the household as unit of analysis together with weights that are just their size.

expansion right after that (1987-1989), and a relative stability at the end of the decade.

It is worth noticing that the changes in the proportion of poor between 1987 and 1990 is basically the same for ENDEF and POF-based poverty lines, as can be seen in Table 3: even though the absolute values are quite different (27.5% and 37.8% for 1987 for the ENDEF and POF-based poverty lines, respectively, and 29.7% and 41.3% for 1989), the relative increases are very similar - 8% and 9%.²³

Also interesting is the fact that the variations are higher for P2 than for the other indices, as revealed for the coefficient of variation for each of them. This fact suggests that the poorest are the most affected by the ups and downs of the economic performance, as this index considers the degree of inequality among the poor.²⁴

²³The same remark applies to PG and P2.

²⁴When inequality goes up, *ceteris paribus*, P2 increases too, and vice-versa. Even though this does not imply that every increase in P2 is associated to higher inequality, we can easily show that it is true in the present case.

Table 3

Temporal Evolution of Poverty
(Urban Brazil - several indices)

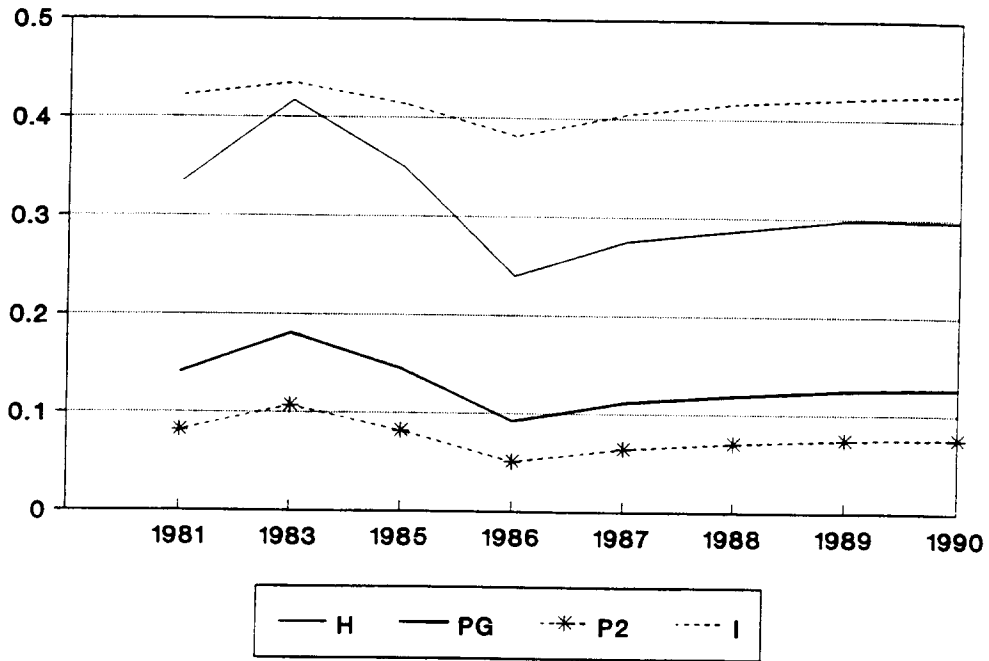
Year	H	PG	P2	I
1981	0.334	0.141	0.082	0.422
1983	0.417	0.181	0.107	0.435
1985	0.350	0.145	0.082	0.414
1986	0.240	0.092	0.051	0.362
1987	0.275	0.112	0.064	0.405
1988	0.287	0.119	0.070	0.416
1989	0.298	0.125	0.074	0.421
1990	0.297	0.127	0.075	0.426
μ	0.312	0.130	0.076	0.413
CV	0.174	0.202	0.214	0.054
1987 (POF)	0.378	0.166	0.098	0.440
1990 (POF)	0.413	0.187	0.114	0.453

Table 4

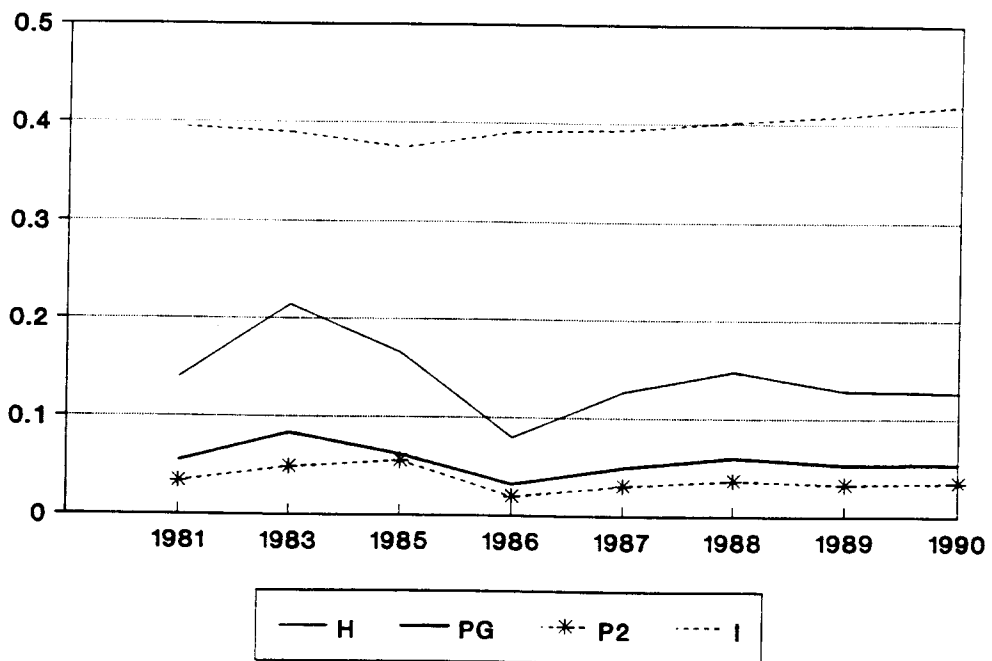
Temporal Evolution of Indigence
(Urban Brazil - several indices)

Year	H	PG	P2	I
1981	0.140	0.055	0.034	0.395
1983	0.214	0.084	0.049	0.390
1985	0.165	0.062	0.055	0.375
1986	0.080	0.031	0.020	0.391
1987	0.127	0.050	0.031	0.394
1988	0.148	0.059	0.037	0.402
1989	0.128	0.052	0.033	0.409
1990	0.127	0.053	0.034	0.419
μ	0.141	0.056	0.037	0.397
CV	0.271	0.260	0.303	0.034

POVERTY INDICES: 1981-1990



INDIGENCE INDICES: 1981-1990



3.2 - Characteristics of the Poor Households

In this section we will inspect the characteristics of the groups, formed according to the attributes of the head of the household, where the incidence of poverty is more acute. Table 5 shows the composition of the whole population, as well as the composition for the contingent of poor and indigent, according to cuts by gender, education, age, position in occupation, and region.

There we can see that the female-headed households, as well as those whose heads are illiterates, young, live in the Northeast, have no labor earnings and/or are employees without work card are over-represented amongst the poor and, in an even more pronounced fashion, amongst the indigent (in other words, the proportion of households of this kind within the subpopulation of poor and indigent is higher than in the population as a whole).²⁵ On the other hand, the households headed by individuals who are male, elderly, employer or employee with work card, better educated, and/or live in São Paulo and in the South region are under-represented in the cluster of poor and, similarly, even more in the cluster of indigent.²⁶ Complementary, the households whose heads have intermediate schooling, are in their prime age, live in the East or in the Frontier, as well those headed by workers that are self-employers, are practically equally represented among the poor, indigent and in the population.²⁷

²⁵The category of illiterates is the most pronounced example of such a case: it represents 17.3% of the population, 33.8% of the poor, and 36.7% of the indigent.

²⁶A somewhat surprising exception is the case of those who have some college education, whose percentage among the indigent is higher than among the poor. This fact is likely to be related with unemployment, whose effects on individuals' labor earnings -- the most important source of income in the PNAD data -- is the same.

²⁷The most neutral groups are the prime-age headed households, which represent 57.1% of the population, 56.4% of the poor, and 57.7% of indigent, and those in the Frontier, with 10.8%, 11.5%, and 10.8%, respectively.

Table 6, and the respective graphs, show the representation ratios for the very same groups within each decile of the per capita household income distribution. The knowledge of these ratios for the whole income range, particularly in the bottom half of it, has at least two advantages relative to the data of Table 5: (i) the poverty and indigence lines, necessarily imprecise, are endogeneized, and (ii) it provides a more complete description of the variations in the composition as we move in the direction of the lower tail, allowing the establishment of a "poverty profile": if the representation ratio of a given group goes up when we do that, then this group can be said to be chronically poverty-stricken.

This is clearly the case for the group of illiterates: the representation ratio raises steadily from 0.09 in the top decile to 2.10 in the 1st one. The same monotonic behavior, in a less marked fashion, is observed for the households headed by employees without work card (it increases from 0.42 to 1.56).

The Northeast stands out among the geographic regions. It is the only significantly over-represented in the lower tail, displaying representation ratios equal to 2.33 in the bottom decile, 1.95 in the second, and 1.49 in the third. S o Paulo and the South are, on the contrary, the least affected, in relative terms, by poverty and indigence, whereas the Frontier is quasi-neutrally represented in all strata.

The composition by age is interesting. If we look from the 4th to the 7th decile, age seems totally neutral. In the first and last three, however, the picture is rather distinct: the young-headed households are over-represented in the bottom of the distribution, while the elderly-headed are over-represented in the upper tail.

The female-headed households are heavily over-represented in the lowest deciles, have representation ratios close to 1 in the middle and are under-represented from 6th decile on.

Table 5

Characteristics of Brazilian Households - 1990

Head of the Household	Group	Total (%)	Poor (%)	Indigent (%)
Gender				
	Male	77.5	69.3	60.0
	Female	22.5	30.7	40.0
Education				
	Illiterate	17.3	33.8	36.7
	Elementary	37.8	41.7	38.4
	Intermediate	21.8	19.0	19.2
	High School	13.6	5.0	4.8
	College	9.5	0.5	0.8
Age				
	Less than 25	9.6	13.7	19.0
	Prime-Age	57.1	56.4	57.7
	More than 50	33.2	29.9	23.3
Position in Occupation				
	No Earnings	23.1	33.2	47.4
	Employee w/ card	42.3	29.9	15.9
	Employee w/o card	10.6	18.3	19.7
	Self-Employer	18.1	17.8	16.5
	Employer	5.9	0.9	0.4
Region				
	São Paulo	28.8	12.2	10.3
	East	25.0	24.6	21.7
	South	15.0	11.5	7.4
	Northeast	20.5	40.2	49.6
	Frontier	10.8	11.5	10.8

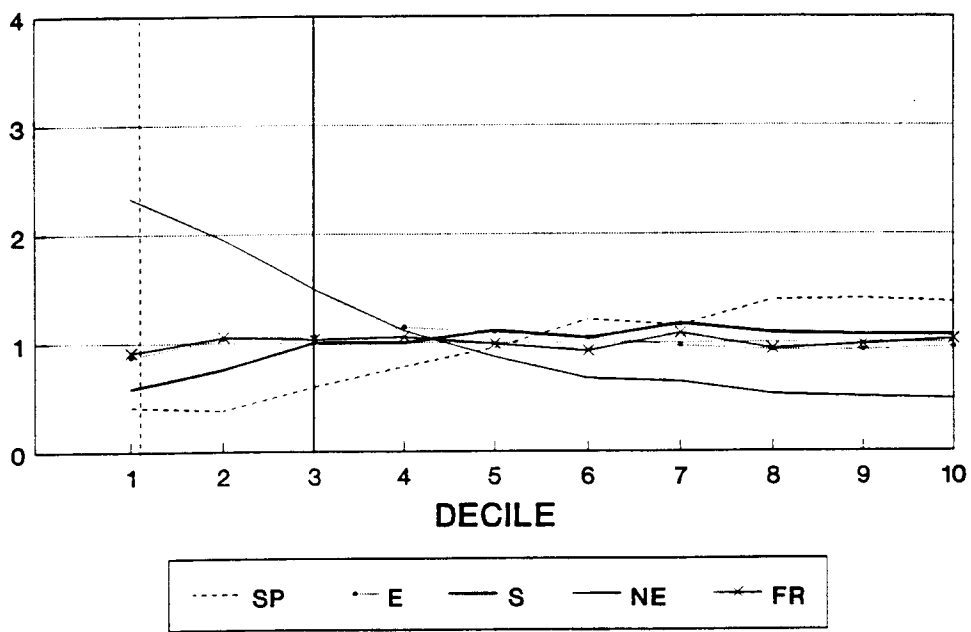
Table 6

Characteristics of Brazilian Households - 1990
Representation Ratio by Decile

Decile	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Gender										
Male	0.81	0.90	0.97	0.98	1.01	1.03	1.05	1.07	1.07	1.05
Female	1.65	1.34	1.10	1.08	0.97	0.89	0.84	0.78	0.77	0.82
Education										
Illiterate	2.10	2.21	1.66	1.39	1.12	0.86	0.67	0.44	0.21	0.09
Elementary	1.05	1.11	1.22	1.22	1.21	1.18	1.10	1.01	0.78	0.37
Intermediate	0.87	0.76	0.91	1.04	1.13	1.23	1.21	1.18	1.05	0.64
High School	0.39	0.33	0.44	0.55	0.72	0.82	1.16	1.49	1.78	1.75
College	0.11	0.05	0.06	0.10	0.11	0.27	0.44	0.78	1.92	4.71
Age										
Less than 25	1.95	1.26	1.08	0.93	1.08	1.02	0.92	0.87	0.82	0.51
Prime-Age	1.02	0.91	0.99	0.99	0.99	1.00	1.03	0.98	1.05	1.03
More than 50	0.71	1.08	0.99	1.04	0.99	0.99	0.97	1.06	1.00	1.09
Position in Occupation										
No Earnings	1.15	1.35	1.01	1.01	0.85	0.80	0.80	0.86	0.77	0.77
Empl. (w/card)	0.40	0.73	0.91	1.01	1.09	1.18	1.15	1.16	1.12	1.09
Empl. (no card)	1.56	1.85	1.51	1.18	1.10	0.88	0.76	0.65	0.54	0.42
Self-Employer	0.82	0.95	1.15	1.09	1.12	1.05	1.08	1.02	1.03	0.75
Employer	0.09	0.16	0.25	0.24	0.49	0.62	0.91	1.05	1.82	3.25
Region										
São Paulo	0.41	0.38	0.59	0.78	0.95	1.21	1.16	1.39	1.40	1.37
East	0.87	1.04	1.05	1.14	1.10	1.04	0.97	0.93	0.93	0.96
South	0.58	0.76	1.00	1.00	1.11	1.04	1.18	1.09	1.07	1.07
Northeast	2.33	1.95	1.49	1.11	0.87	0.67	0.64	0.52	0.50	0.48
Frontier	0.91	1.05	1.03	1.05	0.99	0.92	1.09	0.94	0.98	1.03

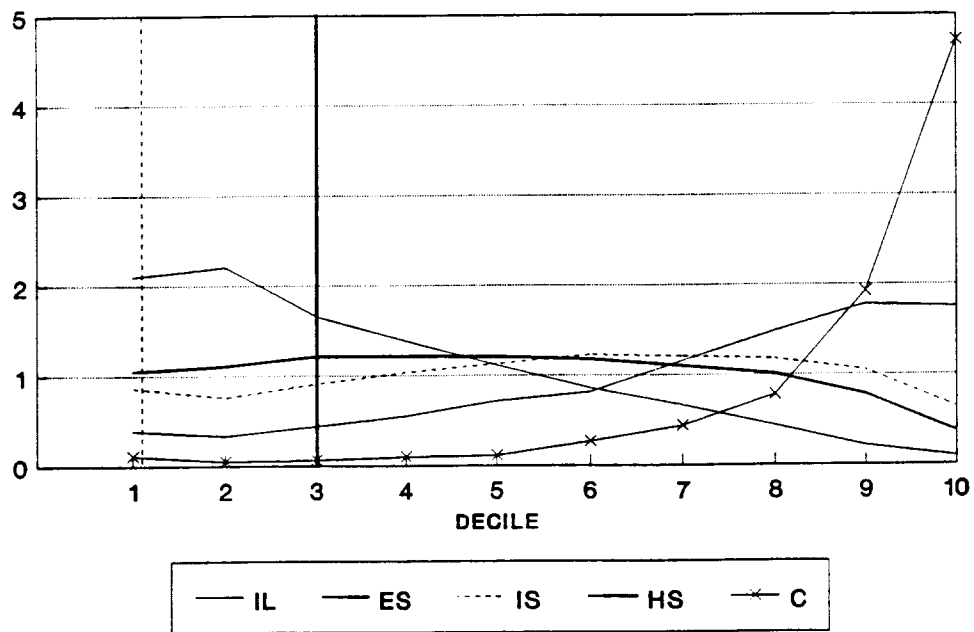
HOUSEHOLD FREQUENCY BY REGION

Representation Ratio by Decile

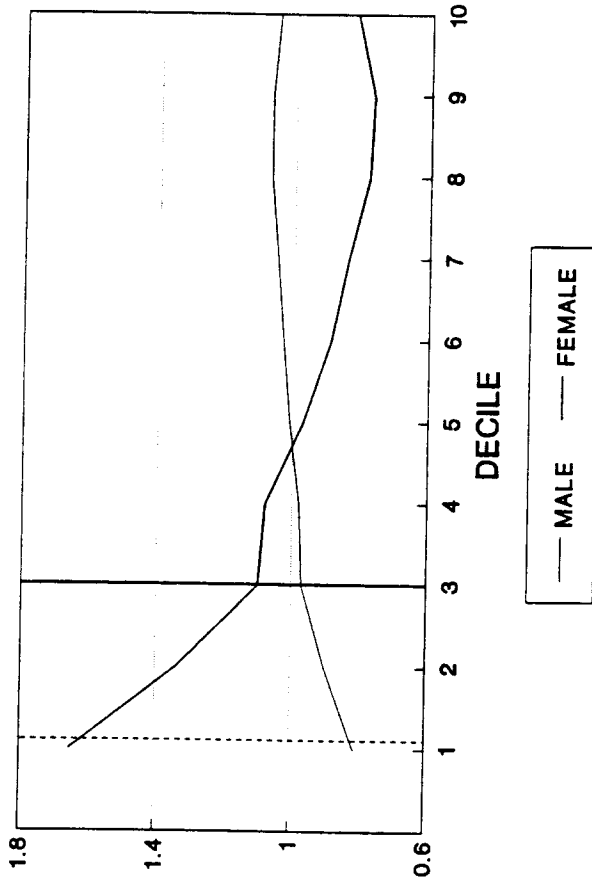


HOUSEHOLD FREQUENCY BY EDUCATION

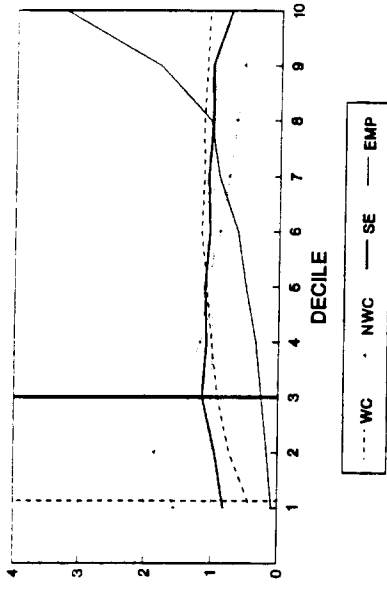
Representation Ratio by Decile



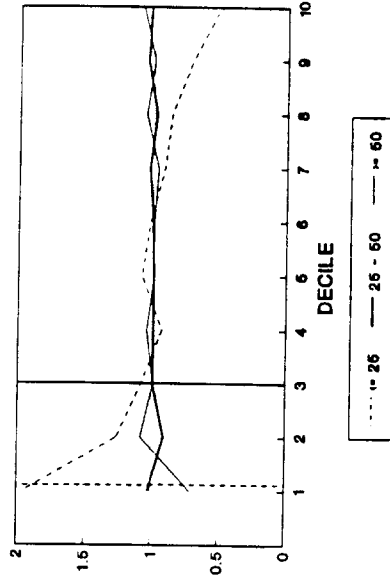
HOUSEHOLD FREQUENCY BY GENDER
Representation Ratio by Decile



HOUSEHOLD FREQUENCY BY OCCUPATION
Representation Ratio by Decile



HOUSEHOLD FREQUENCY BY AGE
Representation Ratio by Decile



3.3 - Decomposition Analysis

The next graphs show the contribution of each group to total poverty and indigence, in 1981, 1986, and 1990, as measured by P0, P1, and P2, as well the respective contributions in terms of P0, P1, and P2 for 1990. This way we can easily assess the temporal evolution of these contributions and also compare how they vary according to the measure employed.²⁸

The analysis of the two first sets of graphs, related to the partition of the population according to the sex of the head of the household, reveals that the contribution of female-headed households increases as we make use of measures that capture more aspects related to poverty. Thus, their contribution to the percentage of poor in the population (P0) in 1990 was equal to 22.9%,²⁹ increasing to 26.4% when the contribution relative to P1 is evaluated, and to 29.5% when P2 is considered. Regarding indigence, these figures are equal to 27.3%, 32.5% and 36.9%, respectively.

So, besides being more affected by poverty and indigence than male-headed households, the female-headed ones are also poorer (lower average per capita income) and tend to be increasingly represented in the poorest strata. The last point, besides being hinted by the higher importance of these units in terms of P2, is also backed by the fact that their contributions are more substantial to indigence than to poverty.

Regarding the temporal evolution, we can see that there was an upward tendency in the relevance of female-headed households for poverty and indigence matters, at least as far the end points are taken into account. However, the year of 1986, quite surprisingly, is the one where their contributions are the highest.

When we analyze the educational categories there are two points that seem striking at first glance: (i) the importance of the more educated classes for poverty and indigence increased along the decade, and (ii) their contribution to overall poverty and indigence became higher as we move from P0 to P1.

²⁸The figures for each contribution, used in the construction of the graphs, are shown in the Appendix.

²⁹Which is higher than the total percentage of female-headed households: 17.0%.

A possible partial explanation for the first trait is that there was an educational expansion in the country throughout the last decade, in such a way that the most educated group increased their population shares: the families headed by individuals with intermediate schooling represented 17.9% of the population in 1981 and 21.7% in 1990; those headed by individuals that went to high school increased their share from 8.1% in 1981 to 13.5% in 1989; and the households headed by individuals with some college education went up from 6.4% to 8.6% of the population. As the contribution of each group to overall poverty and indigence is weighted by its population share, an expansion in the latter implies a tendency to higher values in the former.³⁰

The second intriguing finding may be partially attributed to unemployment: if one accepts the idea that the highly educated individual-headed household that are poor are more likely to have their head unemployed than the other households, as their labor income tend to be large when they are working, then their average income tends to be smaller than for the other. In other words, the poor families whose head are well educated are different from the others, as they are more likely to be poor just because their heads are unemployed.³¹

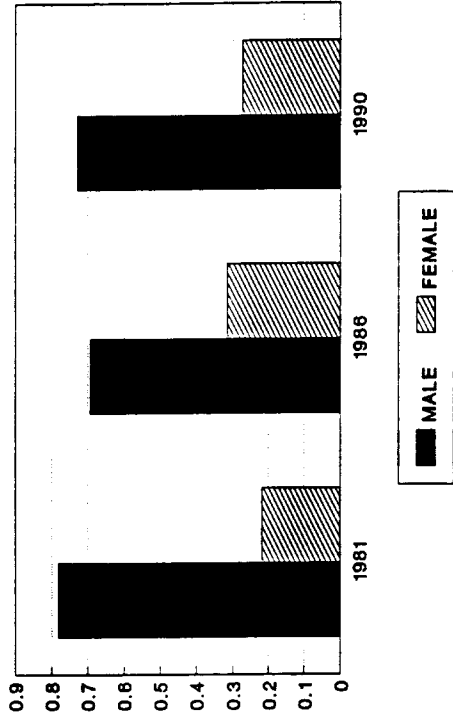
Looking at the partition by geographic region we can see that the Northeast accounts for close half of indigence and 40% of poverty in Brazil according to all measure, with no significant variations in the contributions along the decade.³² Comparing the three indices at one point of time reveals decreasing participation of the Northeast region for indigence as we go from P0 to P2, and the other way around for poverty. São Paulo displays just the opposite behavior. Again, the incidence of unemployment among the poor

³⁰There was, nevertheless, a generalized increase, though small, in the poverty and indigence indices in these groups.

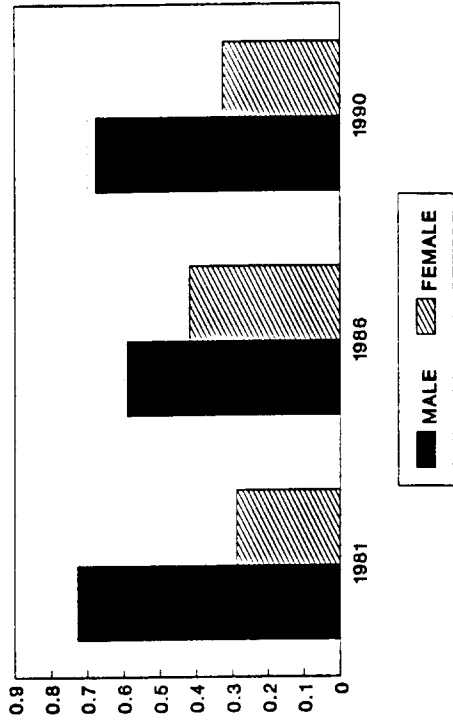
³¹This argumentation seems to be backed by the fact that this phenomenon is more intense among the indigent than among the poor. Of course a further disaggregation by position in occupation would be of help here.

³²It is interesting to notice, however, that the "Plano Cruzado" seems to have helped the Northeast less than the other regions. This remark is in line with the observation of others that this region, which has a less dynamic economy, has not benefitted as much of the plan as did the others.

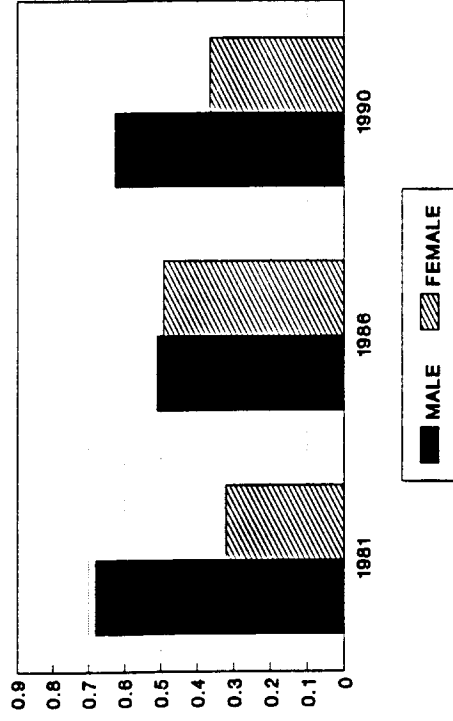
INDIGENCE DECOMPOSITION P0



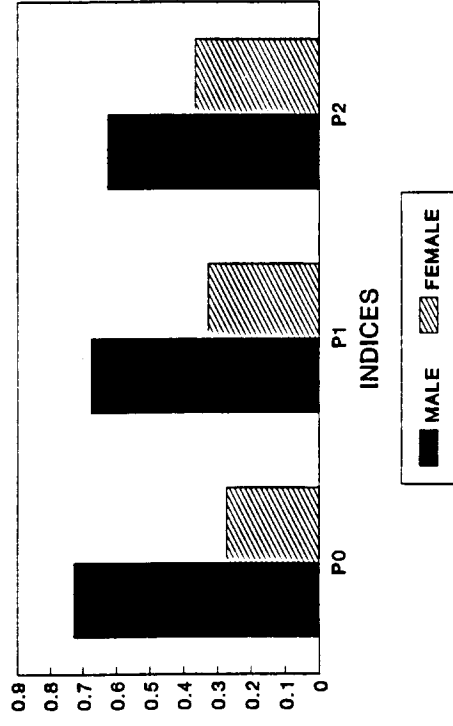
BY GENDER P1



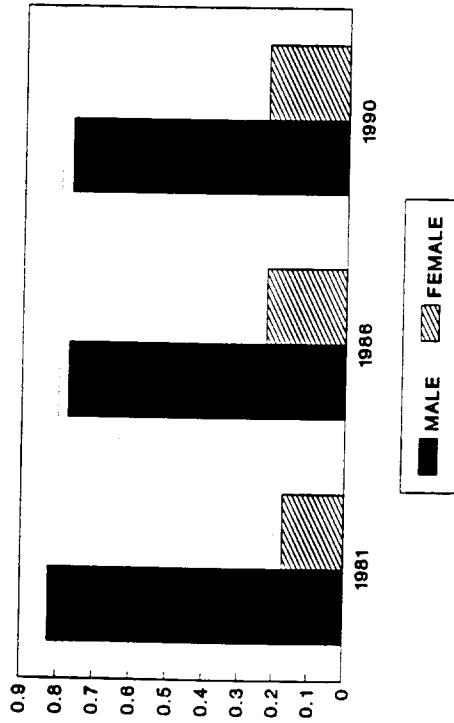
P2



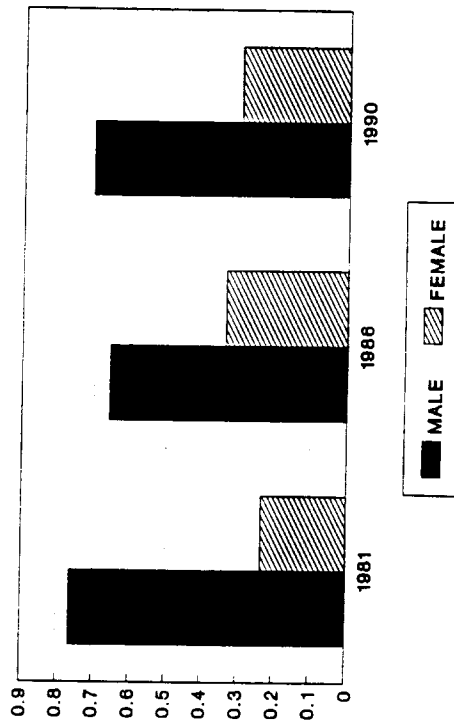
1990



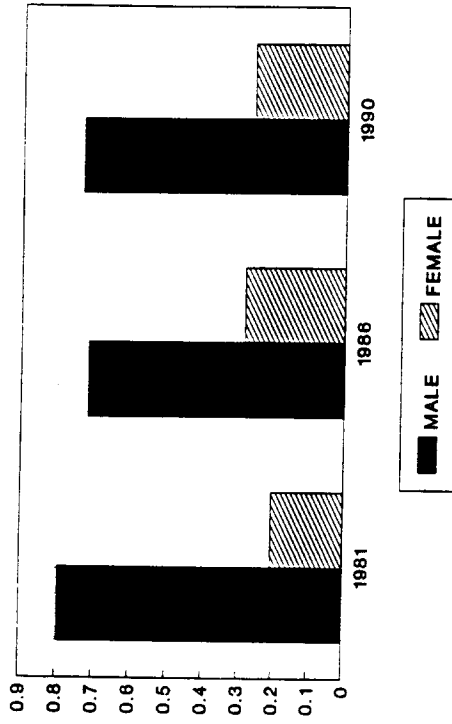
POVERTY DECOMPOSITION P0



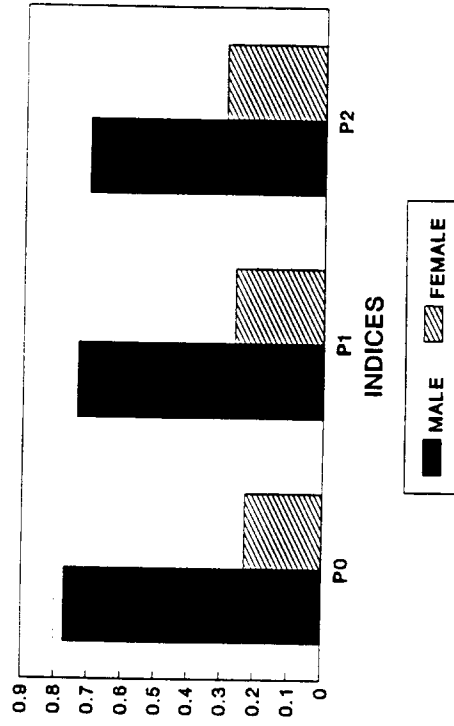
P2



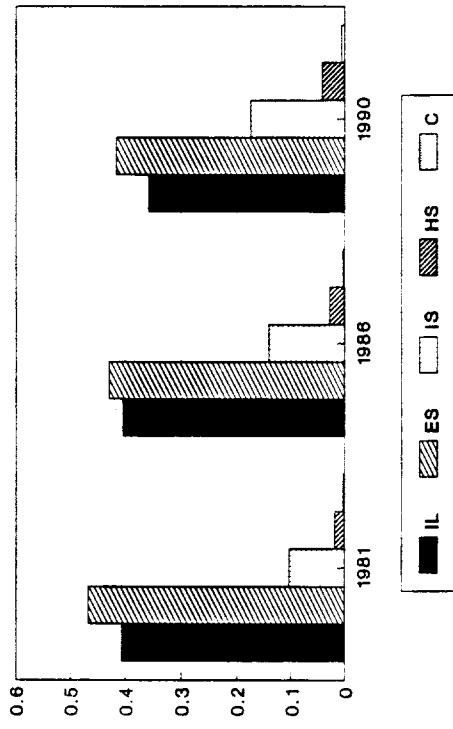
BY GENDER P1



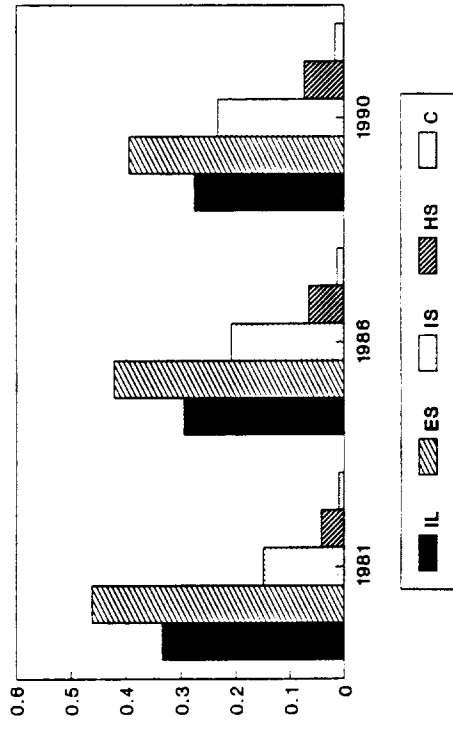
1990



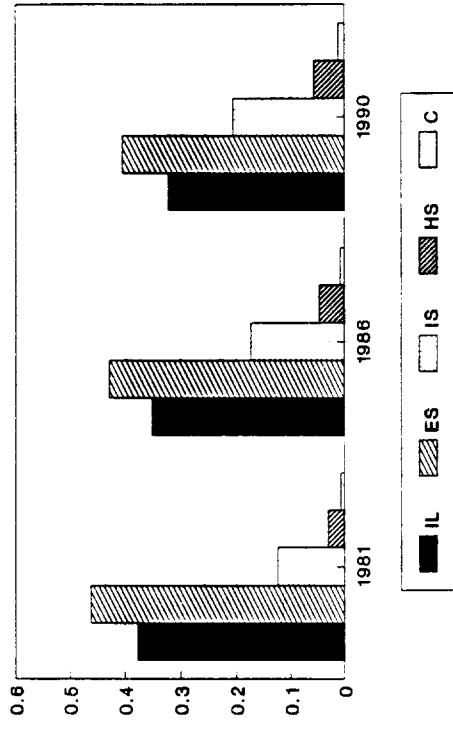
INDIGENCE DECOMPOSITION P0



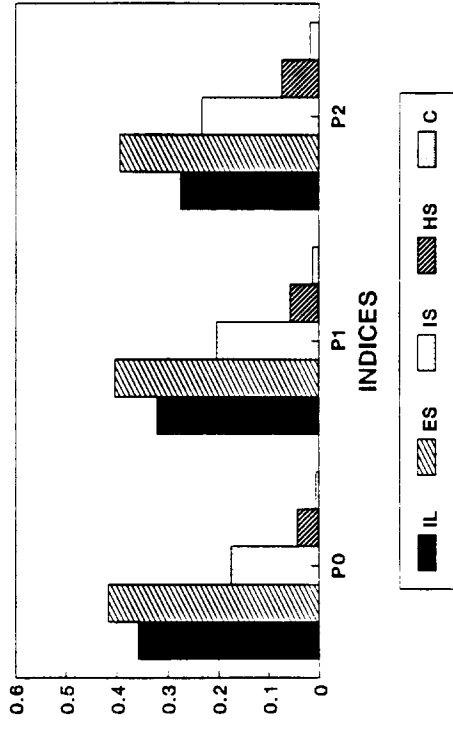
P2



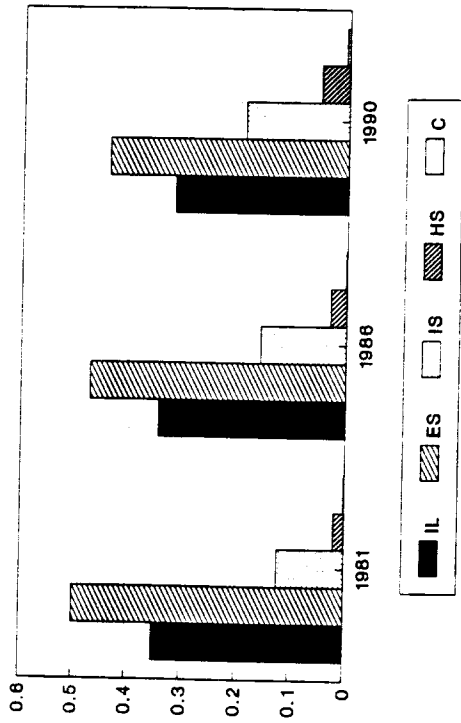
BY EDUCATION P1



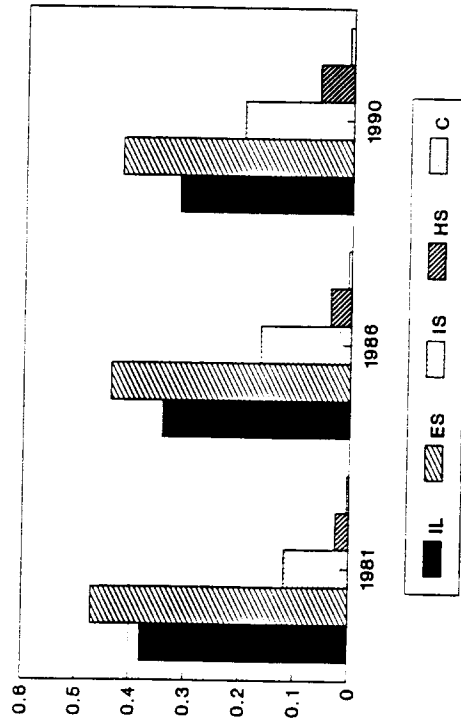
1990



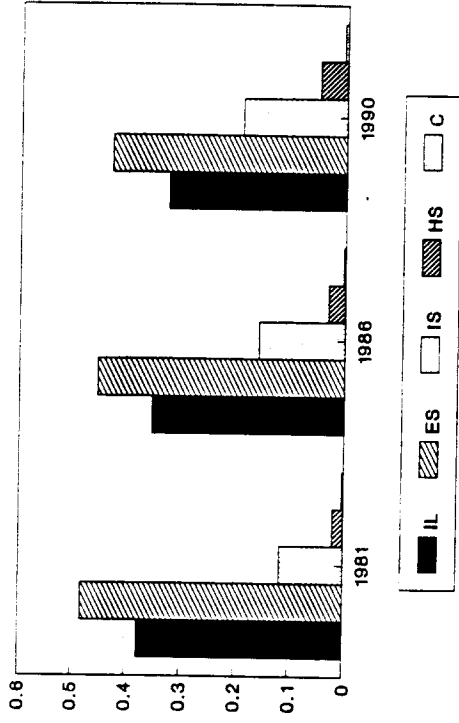
POVERTY DECOMPOSITION P0



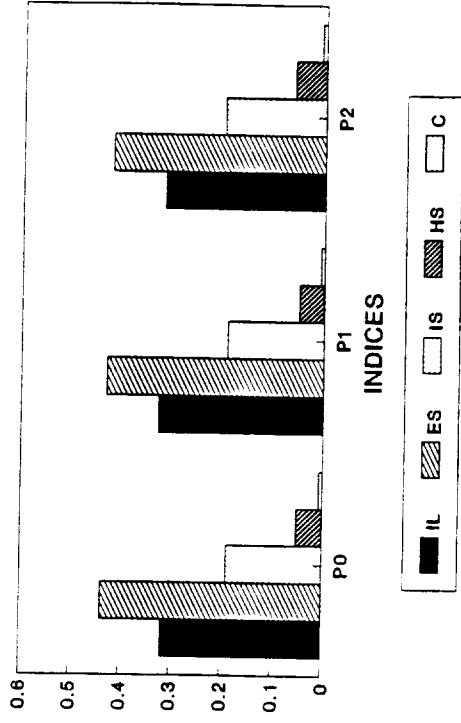
P2



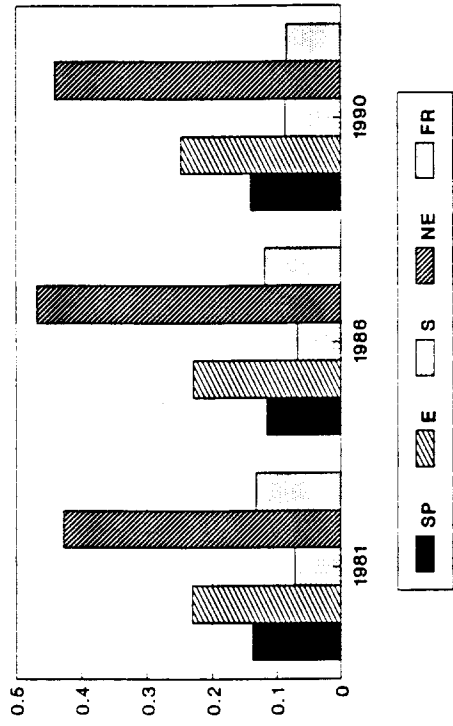
BY EDUCATION P1



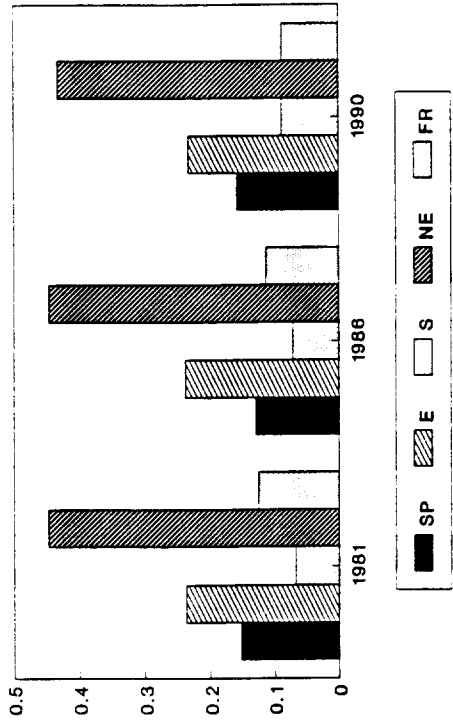
1990



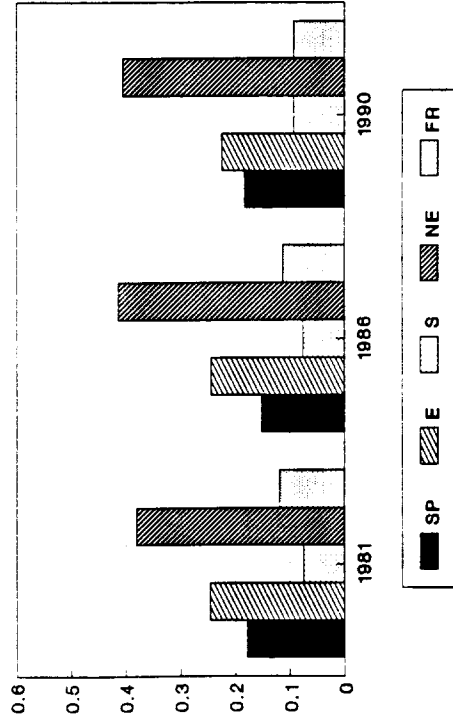
INDIGENCE DECOMPOSITION P0



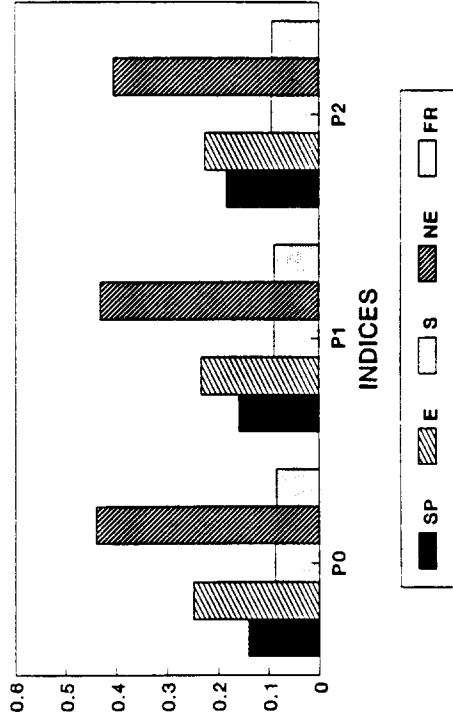
BY REGION P1



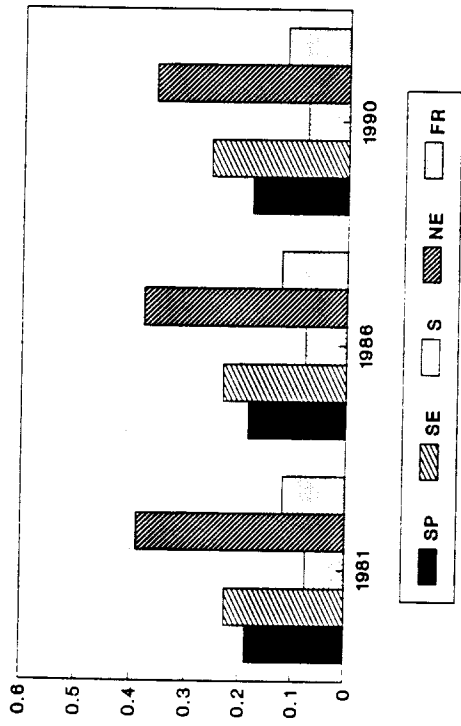
P2



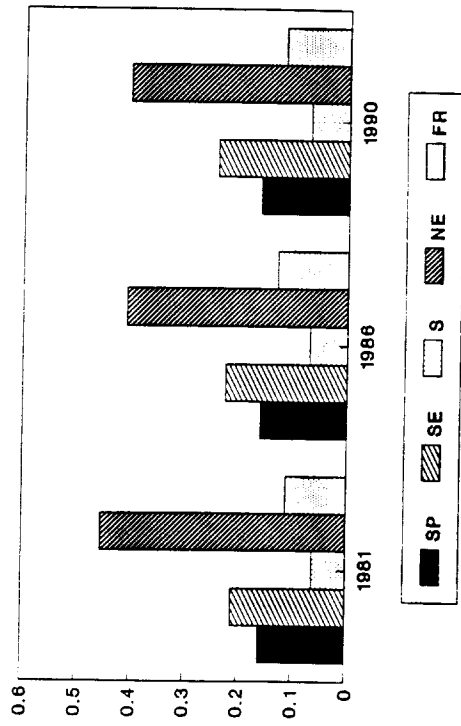
1990



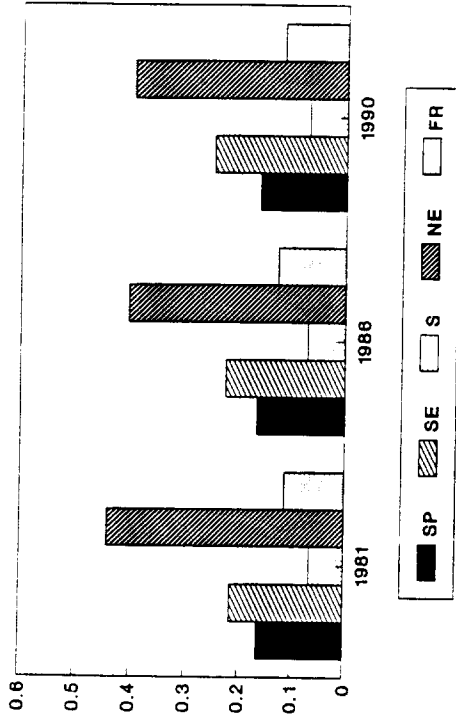
POVERTY DECOMPOSITION P0



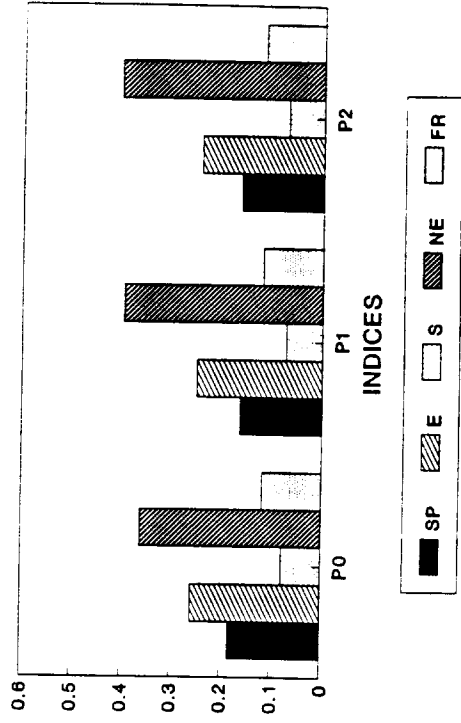
P2



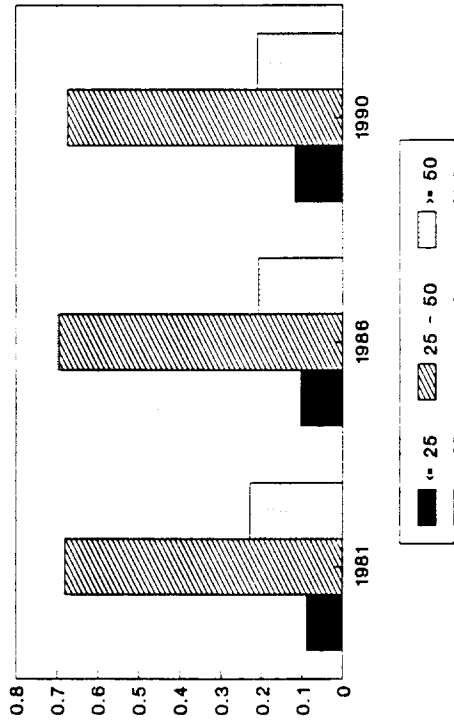
BY REGION P1



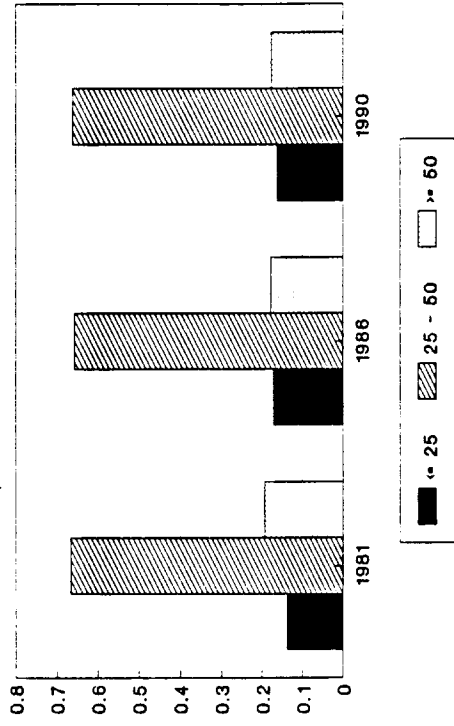
1990



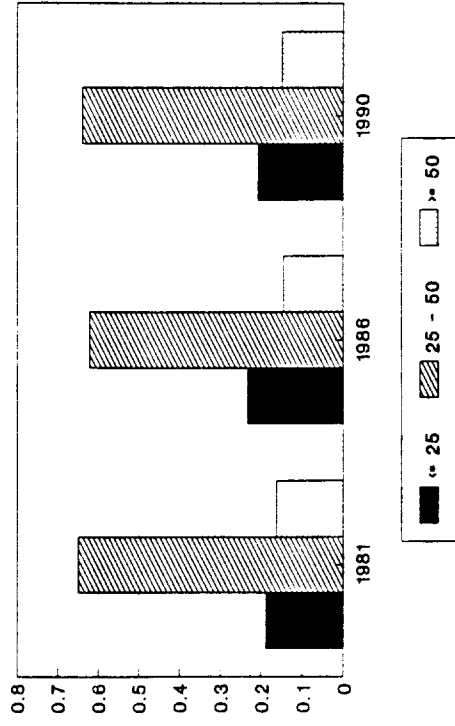
INDIGENCE DECOMPOSITION P0



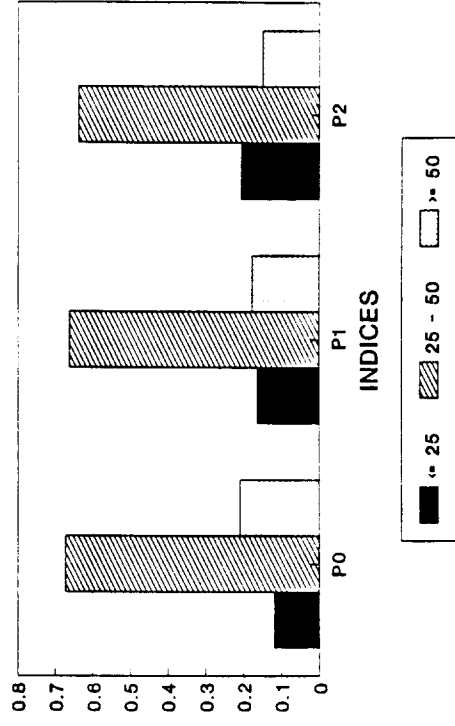
BY AGE P1



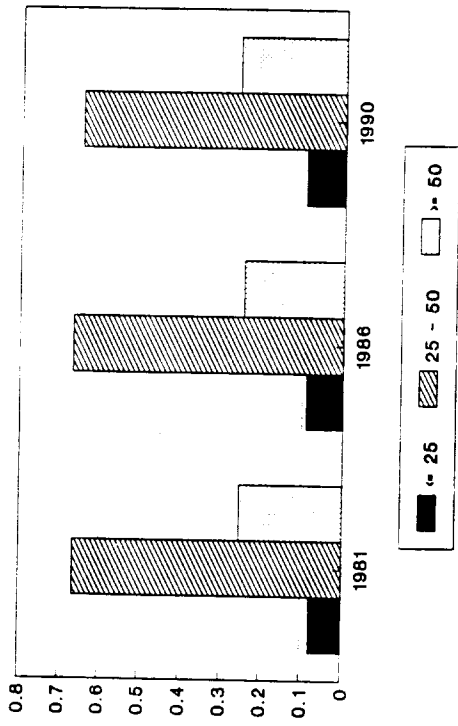
P2



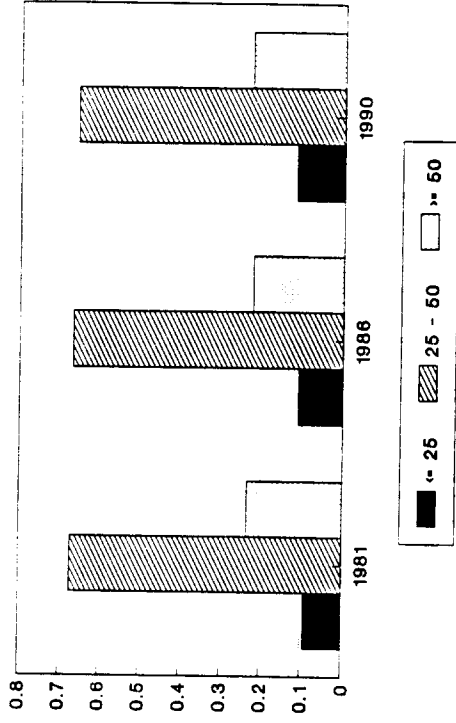
1990



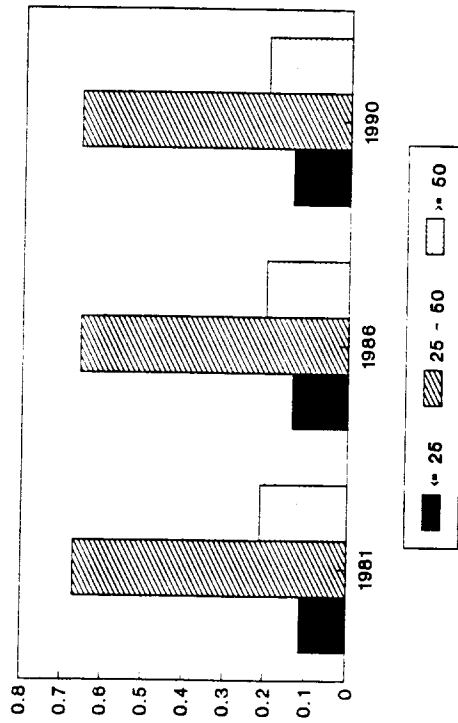
POVERTY DECOMPOSITION P0



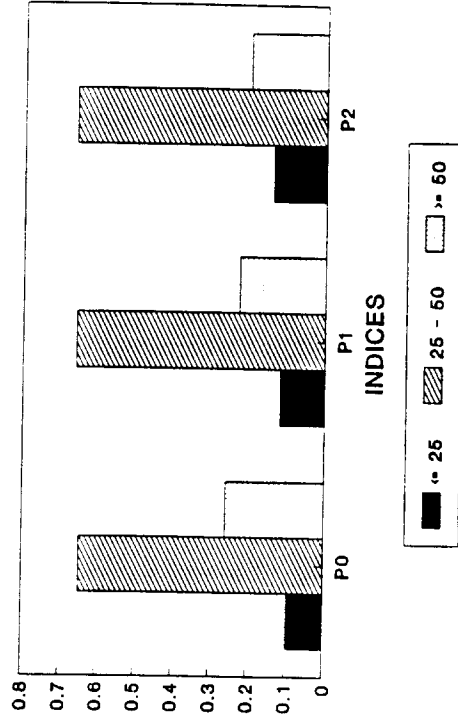
BY AGE P1



P2



1990



households may be the key for understanding this pattern: there must be a higher concentration of unemployed-headed households among the poor in São Paulo than in the Northeast.

The utmost importance of those with no earnings for poverty and indigence, particularly the latter, is confirmed by the disaggregation according to position in occupation, particularly for 1986 when there was an widespread increase in real incomes and the percentage of poor was dramatically reduced. Another point to be stressed is the fact that the access to the work card makes a difference in terms of income, as besides those who have it being under-represented among the poor and indigent, their contribution to overall poverty decreases as we consider P2 and P1 instead of P0. Just the opposite takes place with the employees without work card.

Regarding to age, there is a remarkable stability in the contributions to poverty and indigence along the decade. When we compare the three indices, we see that the results are the same for households headed by prime-aged individuals. The contribution increases for young-headed households when the notion of intensity and heterogeneity of poverty/indigence is incorporated, indicating that these households are most hardly affected by them. The inverse takes place with the elderly-headed households, whose importance decreases from P0 to P2, probably as a consequence of retirement earnings.

3.4 - Resources Necessary to Eradicate Indigence and Poverty

Table 7 and the graphs in the next page show how some of the measures of poverty vary in 1990 as we consider different portions of the lower tail of the distribution. Not surprisingly, the poverty gap and P2 increase as we consider bigger parts of the lower extreme of the distribution, as the percentage of poor (that is no more than that associate to the decile in question) goes up, the distance to the "poverty line" tends to increase (the "poverty line" is just the value of income that determines the that decile), and the heterogeneity of incomes gets higher (we aggregate people that are richer than the previously considered). Its remarkable, however, the small variation in I, at least up to the 4th decile.

The other index considered is PE (defined as $P1.z/\mu$, where μ is the average population income and z is the "poverty line"), that corresponds to the fraction of total income that would have to be transferred to the

poorest in order to eradicate that level of poverty.³³ Thus, we can see that about 3.8% of total income would have to be committed to eliminate poverty, and around 0.6% would be necessary for eradicating indigence.³⁴ It is well known that almost all of the income reported in the PNADs represents current labor income and retirement benefits, i.e., past labor income. There is no reliable data on Brazilian functional distribution of income, but it is common believed that the labor share is close to 1/3. If this is so, we can say that something between 0.2% and 1.5% of GDP would be the amount of resources required for the termination of indigence and poverty in the country - less than US\$ 5 billion per year.

Table 7

Poverty Indices by Decile -1990

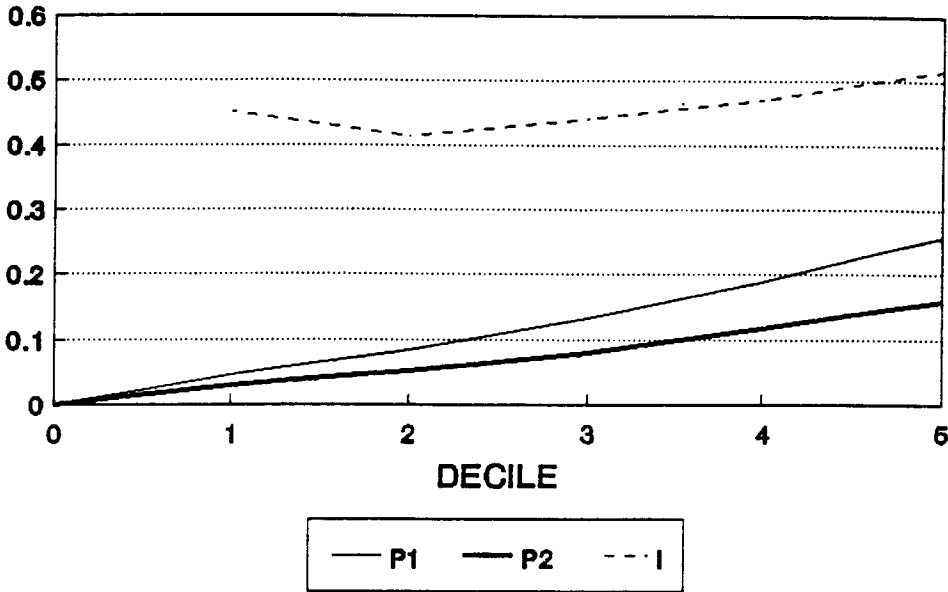
Decile	PG	P2	I	PE
1st	0.045	0.030	0.452	0.006
2nd	0.083	0.051	0.413	0.017
3rd	0.133	0.080	0.442	0.038
4th	0.189	0.117	0.472	0.073
5th	0.258	0.158	0.516	0.124

³³For sure it would be more meaningful to evaluate the percentage of the non-poor total income that should be transferred. This would make the formula a bit more complex. Given that the percentage of total income of the poor is very low, in such a way that the changes in such figures would be minimal, we opted for this more simple evaluation.

³⁴We are taking the 1st and 3rd decile as representations for the contingent of indigent and poor, as they represent close to 10% and 30% of the population in that year. This is not entirely correct, however, due to the fact that the poor and indigent are defined according to the respective lines in each region of Brazil, whereas the distribution of per capita household income does not take the regional differences into account. This way, we may have some poor households from São Paulo in the 4th decile and some non-poor households of the Northeast in the 3rd.

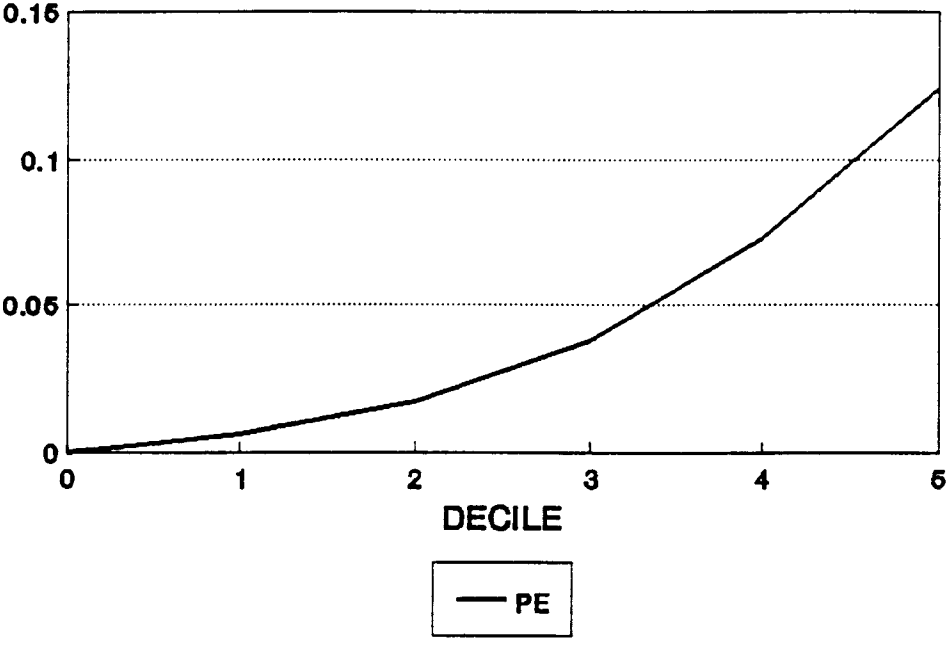
POVERTY INDICES

1990



RESOURCES FOR ERADICATING POVERTY

1990



BRASILIA ECONOMIA

APPENDIX

Table A1.1
Contribution to Indigence Indices by Group - 1981

Head of the Household Group	P0	P1	P2	Ó
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	0.784	0.728	0.679	0.859
Female	0.216	0.272	0.320	0.141
<u>Education</u>				
Illiterate	0.398	0.371	0.332	0.208
Ellementary	0.468	0.465	0.464	0.467
Intermediate	0.110	0.129	0.153	0.179
High School	0.018	0.029	0.042	0.081
College	0.003	0.007	0.011	0.064
<u>Age</u>				
Less than 25	0.087	0.141	0.186	0.071
Prime-Age	0.686	0.671	0.652	0.629
More than 50	0.227	0.193	0.162	0.301
<u>Position in Occupation</u>				
No Earnings	0.339	0.486	0.628	0.199
Employee (w/card)	0.253	0.166	0.104	0.440
Employee (no card)	0.190	0.164	0.126	0.099
Self-Employer	0.215	0.182	0.140	0.211
Employer	0.003	0.022	0.002	0.050
<u>Region</u>				
São Paulo	0.137	0.152	0.178	0.277
East	0.231	0.237	0.246	0.252
South	0.072	0.068	0.075	0.141
Northeast	0.427	0.447	0.381	0.224
Frontier	0.132	0.125	0.120	0.106

Table A1.2
Contribution to Indigence Indices by Group - 1986

Head of the Household	Group	P0	P1	P2	ó
<u>Gender</u>					
	Male	0.686	0.588	0.512	0.841
	Female	0.314	0.412	0.488	0.159
<u>Education</u>					
	Illiterate	0.390	0.341	0.290	0.186
	Ellementary	0.428	0.425	0.420	0.425
	Intermediate	0.150	0.178	0.210	0.204
	High School	0.030	0.049	0.067	0.106
	College	0.004	0.008	0.013	0.079
<u>Age</u>					
	Less than 25	0.106	0.171	0.234	0.070
	Prime-Age	0.686	0.671	0.652	0.630
	More than 50	0.209	0.175	0.145	0.300
<u>Position in Occupation</u>					
	No Earnings	0.363	0.544	0.697	0.187
	Employee (w/card)	0.247	0.149	0.082	0.444
	Employee(no card)	0.190	0.143	0.096	0.111
	Self-Employer	0.198	0.162	0.124	0.206
	Employer	0.002	0.001	0.001	0.053
<u>Region</u>					
	São Paulo	0.116	0.130	0.152	0.281
	East	0.229	0.238	0.245	0.242
	South	0.068	0.072	0.077	0.142
	Northeast	0.468	0.446	0.414	0.221
	Frontier	0.119	0.114	0.114	0.114

Table A1.3
Contribution to Indigence Indices by Group - 1990

Head of the Household	Group	P0	P1	P2	Ó
<u>Gender</u>					
	Male	0.727	0.675	0.631	0.830
	Female	0.273	0.325	0.369	0.170
<u>Education</u>					
	Illiterate	0.342	0.311	0.273	0.173
	Elementary	0.423	0.410	0.401	0.389
	Intermediate	0.185	0.209	0.235	0.217
	High School	0.045	0.058	0.074	0.135
	College	0.007	0.012	0.017	0.086
<u>Age</u>					
	Less than 25	0.118	0.161	0.207	0.070
	Prime-Age	0.671	0.661	0.643	0.624
	More than 50	0.210	0.176	0.149	0.306
<u>Position in Occupation</u>					
	No Earnings	0.377	0.528	0.664	0.201
	Employee (w/card)	0.254	0.175	0.113	0.422
	Employee(no card)	0.178	0.139	0.101	0.106
	Self-Employer	0.184	0.139	0.120	0.204
	Employer	0.007	0.004	0.003	0.067
<u>Region</u>					
	São Paulo	0.140	0.158	0.183	0.274
	East	0.248	0.233	0.225	0.244
	South	0.087	0.089	0.094	0.142
	Northeast	0.440	0.432	0.405	0.225
	Frontier	0.085	0.089	0.093	0.116

Table A2.1
Contribution to Poverty Indices by Group - 1981

Head of the Household	Group	P0	P1	P2	Ó
<u>Gender</u>					
	Male	0.824	0.794	0.785	0.859
	Female	0.176	0.206	0.235	0.141
<u>Education</u>					
	Illiterate	0.351	0.377	0.379	0.208
	Elementary	0.502	0.482	0.471	0.467
	Intermediate	0.124	0.117	0.120	0.179
	High School	0.020	0.021	0.024	0.081
	College	0.003	0.004	0.005	0.064
<u>Age</u>					
	Less than 25	0.080	0.093	0.113	0.071
	Prime-Age	0.665	0.673	0.671	0.629
	More than 50	0.254	0.234	0.217	0.301
<u>Position in Occupation</u>					
	No Earnings	0.250	0.321	0.396	0.199
	Employee (w/ card)	0.347	0.280	0.227	0.441
	Employee (no card)	0.168	0.175	0.171	0.099
	Self-Employer	0.228	0.219	0.203	0.211
	Employer	0.008	0.005	0.004	0.050
<u>Region</u>					
	São Paulo	0.187	0.164	0.160	0.277
	East	0.227	0.215	0.211	0.252
	South	0.076	0.066	0.062	0.141
	Northeast	0.390	0.441	0.454	0.224
	Frontier	0.119	0.115	0.113	0.106

Table A2.2
Contribution to Poverty Indices by Group - 1986

Head of the Household	Group	P0	P1	P2	ó
<hr style="border-top: 1px dashed black;"/>					
<u>Gender</u>					
	Male	0.773	0.716	0.656	0.841
	Female	0.228	0.284	0.335	0.159
<hr/>					
<u>Education</u>					
	Illiterate	0.343	0.352	0.342	0.186
	Elementary	0.469	0.452	0.438	0.425
	Intermediate	0.157	0.158	0.168	0.204
	High School	0.030	0.032	0.038	0.106
	College	0.003	0.004	0.006	0.079
<hr/>					
<u>Age</u>					
	Less than 25	0.090	0.108	0.135	0.070
	Prime-Age	0.666	0.667	0.656	0.630
	More than 50	0.246	0.222	0.200	0.300
<hr/>					
<u>Position in Occupation</u>					
	No Earnings	0.252	0.330	0.417	0.187
	Employee (w/ card)	0.366	0.298	0.235	0.444
	Employee (no card)	0.179	0.177	0.161	0.111
	Self-Employer	0.200	0.190	0.175	0.206
	Employer	0.005	0.003	0.002	0.053
<hr/>					
<u>Region</u>					
	São Paulo	0.185	0.167	0.160	0.281
	East	0.233	0.226	0.224	0.242
	South	0.079	0.072	0.069	0.141
	Northeast	0.379	0.403	0.409	0.221
	Frontier	0.125	0.129	0.130	0.114

Table A2.3
Contribution to Poverty Indices by Group - 1990

Head of the Household	Group	P0	P1	P2	ó
<u>Gender</u>					
	Male	0.771	0.736	0.706	0.830
	Female	0.229	0.264	0.295	0.170
<u>Education</u>					
	Illiterate	0.316	0.325	0.316	0.173
	Elementary	0.437	0.428	0.421	0.389
	Intermediate	0.189	0.190	0.200	0.217
	High School	0.052	0.050	0.062	0.135
	College	0.006	0.007	0.009	0.086
<u>Age</u>					
	Less than 25	0.094	0.116	0.139	0.070
	Prime-Age	0.647	0.657	0.660	0.624
	More than 50	0.259	0.226	0.201	0.306
<u>Position in Occupation</u>					
	No Earnings	0.280	0.359	0.441	0.200
	Employee (w/ card)	0.340	0.279	0.230	0.422
	Employee (no card)	0.167	0.169	0.156	0.106
	Self-Employer	0.201	0.185	0.167	0.204
	Employer	0.011	0.008	0.006	0.066
<u>Region</u>					
	São Paulo	0.183	0.164	0.163	0.274
	East	0.259	0.249	0.238	0.244
	South	0.079	0.072	0.071	0.142
	Northeast	0.362	0.396	0.406	0.225
	Frontier	0.118	0.119	0.118	0.116

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