INEQUALITIES AND US

OXFAM BRASIL/DATAFOLHA SURVEY
PERCEPTIONS OF INEQUALITIES IN BRAZIL

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CONTENTS

PRESENTATION

Oxfam Brasil presents the results of its fourth opinion survey conducted with Datafolha Institute. The data analysis is intended to contribute to the public debate on reducing inequalities in Brazil.

The survey shows a consolidated trend in Brazilian society's perception of inequalities in the country, including differences in opportunities and realities experienced by women and men or white and black people and the need for the government to focus on reducing the gap between rich and poor.

The results also show near-unanimity regarding the perception that governments must guarantee income and social services to those who need them most and that increasing taxes for the very rich should contribute to it. In addition, it reveals indisputable support for universal public health care and education policies.

The Brazilian population supports measures such as the law on racial quotas for universities to provide equal opportunities. They are still skeptical about the role of pure and simple meritocracy in improving people's lives. According to the survey, Brazilian women and men see employment and income as priorities for a prosperous future.

These perceptions emerged from the survey, which interviewed 2,564 people in person all over the country in the first half of March 2022. The portrait we present shows a population committed to solidarity and the principles of social justice that underpin the legal framework established by Brazil's Federal Constitution of 1988.

This picture gets even more evident when we consider the younger population aged 16-24, whose participation in discussions about the future of Brazil tends to increase in the coming years. In that age group, the perception of inequalities exceeds the average in several aspects presented in the survey. It is a strong message, especially in a year of general elections in the country, considering the record voter registration among people aged 16-17.

Another highlight of the survey is the support (96%) for government funding of income transfer and welfare programs, especially for those who need them most. Likewise, for 95% of Brazilians, the federal program *Auxílio Brasil* (Brazil Aid) should assist all people living in poverty.

Such perceptions confirm the expression of a society experiencing deterioration of the country's social and economic situation, with more than 33 million Brazilians facing hunger.

To change this scenario, the message for the executive and legislative branches of government is resounding and crystal clear: the Brazilian State must effectively commit to reducing inequality, poverty, and hunger through consistent and well-funded public policies. And the resources must be obtained by increasing taxes for the richest.

We hope that the results of this perception survey contribute to the public debate as the country prepares for the most critical elections in recent decades. May candidates running for public office throughout Brazil listen to the majority call of the Brazilian population, which asks for a country with **more justice and less inequality**.

Katia Maia
Executive Director
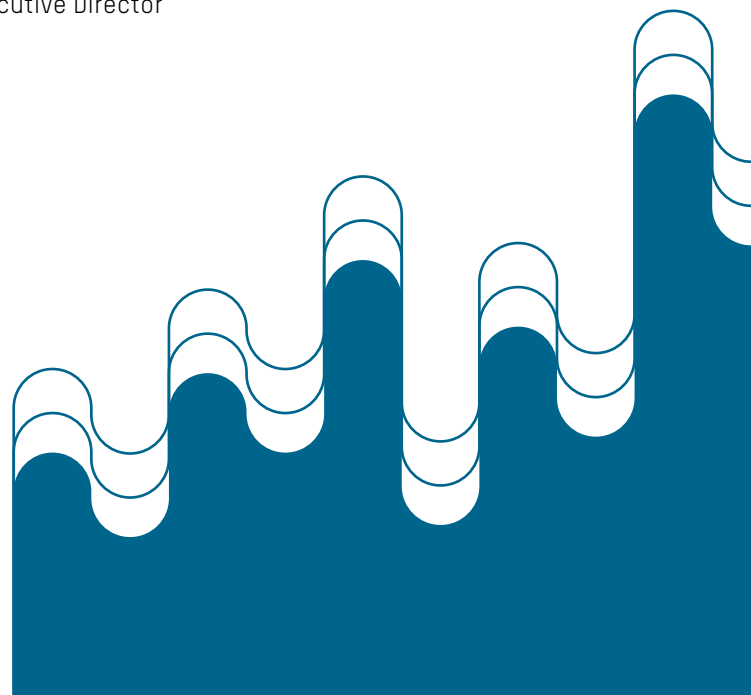
METHODOLOGY

Datafolha Institute conducted this survey. It approached individual respondents in areas of high circulation[1] with a structured questionnaire produced by Oxfam Brasil with Datafolha and applied it to each respondent for 20 minutes.

The nationwide sample of 2,564 subjects allowed for a regional breakdown (Centre-West, North, Northeast, South, and Southeast). The interviews were conducted in 130 small, medium, and large municipalities, including metropolitan areas and other cities.

The interviews were conducted on March 8-15, 2022. The margin of error for the general sample is plus or minus 2%, considering a confidence interval of 95%. That is, if 100 questionnaires were applied with the same methodology, the results of 95 would be within the predicted margin of error.

As this is a sample-based survey conducted in places with a large circulation of people, Datafolha Institute defined a sample that seeks to reflect the profile of Brazilian society according to the last Demographic Census conducted in 2010.

The questionnaire contained 30 items, including open-ended questions, blocks of agree/disagree questions, and closed-ended questions (except for identification questions). Both the questionnaire and information on the sampling adopted by Datafolha Institute are available on **Oxfam Brasil's website (www.oxfam.org. br)**, together with a general presentation of Datafolha and the microdata.

Finally, the results for sex, race, and income chosen for this report were calculated by Datafolha Institute, which tabulated the survey's microdata.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

96%

95%

GOVERNMENT PROTECTION FOR THE POOREST

of Brazilians believe that the government must guarantee funds for income transfer and welfare programs, especially for those who need them most.

argue that the Brazil Aid program should assist all people living in poverty.

EMPLOYMENT AS A PRIORITY

HAVING A JOB

ADVANCING IN THE PROFESSION

HAVING A JOB

INCREASING JOB OFFER

stands out among points for a better life, totaling 54% of the top three priorities.

is also well placed among the top priorities, with 55% when the first four options are added.

had an above average (16%) number of mentions as a top priority for a better life by people aged 25-44 (19%), with higher education (19%), earning up to one minimum wage (21%), receiving Brazil Aid (20%) or Gas Aid (*Auxílio Gás*, 22%), and those who believe that their social class standing has worsened in the last five years (19%).

and "increasing the minimum wage" are among the top priority measures for reducing inequality, with averages of 9.6 and 9.5, respectively.

SUPPORT FOR TAXATION

56%

85%

94%

agree with raising taxes, in general, to fund social policies (the same percentage found in the 2021 survey).

agree with increasing taxes on the very rich to support social policies (up from 84% in 2021).

agree that tax revenues should benefit the poorest.
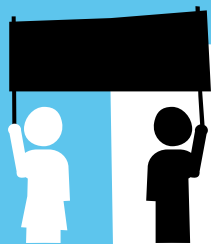
WITHOUT REDUCING INEQUALITIES, THERE WILL BE NO PROGRESS

85% believe Brazil's progress is conditional on reducing inequality between rich and poor.

87% agree that governments must work to close the gap between the very rich and the very poor (up from 85% in 2021).

INDIVIDUAL OPTIMISM IS ON THE DECLINE; SOCIAL SKEPTICISM IS ON THE RISE

64% believe they will be in the "middle class" or "upper middle class" within the next five years (same as 2021).

65% do not believe that inequalities will decrease in the coming years (64% in 2021).

MERIT DOESN'T HELP

62% doubt that working will equalize poorer people's chances (60% in 2021).

54% do not believe that educating poor children increases their chances of success (52% in 2021).

74% believe that the Quota Act for admission to federal universities has significantly reduced inequalities.

GENDER AND RACE AFFECT INCOME

69% agree that being a woman impacts revenue (67% in 2021).

59% agree that black people earn less (58% in 2021).

GENDER AND RACE IN POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

71% think women are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office because they are women.

68% believe that blacks are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office because they are black.

SKIN COLOR MATTERS

75% believe that skin color influences companies' hiring, they were 81% in 2019.

86% believe that skin color affects the police's decision to stop someone; they were 84% in 2021.

79% agree that justice is tougher on black people, compared to 78% in 2021.

TOP PRIORITIES FOR REDUCING INEQUALITIES

9.6 was the average score for "public investment in education,"; "public investment in health care,"; "increasing job offers," and "fighting corruption."

9.5 was the average score for "ensuring equal rights for men and women,"; "fighting racism," and "raising the minimum wage."

GENERAL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The 2022 edition of *Inequality and Us*, a survey produced by Oxfam Brasil with Datafolha Institute, reflects Brazilian public perception two years after the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, at a time when the coronavirus is relatively under control after the country achieved moderate vaccine coverage and reduced new cases and deaths. The findings also reflect national perception at the beginning of the fourth and final year of the first term of Jair Bolsonaro's administration and, more importantly, in the context of the debate about the 2022 elections.

This is the fourth edition, and its findings allow us to examine a time series that started in 2017, which presents Brazilians' perception in the face of changes in the country's social, economic, and political scenario. It was conducted 15 months after the third edition, the shortest period between surveys since the beginning of the series.

The time gap between editions of the field survey by Datafolha

	FIELD SURVEY BY DATAFOLHA INSTITUTE	MONTHS SINCE PREVIOUS EDITION
1st edition	August 2017	-
2nd edition	February 2019	18 months
3rd edition	December 2020	22 months
4th edition	March 2022	15 months

Consolidating the perception found in the three previous surveys, **Brazilian society sees reducing inequality as a crucial step for the country's progress**, according to almost 90% of Brazilians. The data also indicate consolidation of society's perception of income distribution inequality in the country compared to 2021.

Compared to 2019, most of the population feels less individual optimism about the future, with a reduction of six percentage points. The percentage of Brazilians who consider themselves in the lower or lower middle classes remained stable, fluctuating within the margin of error from 2021 to 2022 (69%-70%) and more significantly compared to 2019 – five more percentage points. A fifth of Brazilians believe they have fallen in social class status. Almost two-thirds believe that **Brazil will not reduce inequalities soon**.

The population acknowledges the impact of machismo and racism on women and black people, consolidating the perception found in previous surveys. Therefore, Brazilians show their understanding that women earn less because they are women and that they should not be solely responsible for housework and care. They also understand that skin color has an adverse impact on income, in addition to reducing people's chances of being hired by companies, increasing their chances of being stopped by the police, and adversely impacting the way the Justice system treats them.

The data show consistent support for **tax reform based on fairness and solidarity that ends the regressive nature of our tax system**, with 80% of Brazilians agreeing with the need to reduce taxes on goods and services and increase taxation of income and property, especially for the richest.

Finally, the survey provides new data on society's perception of **new inequalities, including the political representation of women and black people, in addition to the unequal impact of climate change.**

The main results of the survey are presented in this briefing. Part of them refers to new questions asked this year. Another aspect includes questions asked over the four editions – 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2022 – described throughout the text and in graphs for comparison.

This Briefing is divided into four parts: **1. Perceptions of inequalities and social mobility; 2. Perceptions of gender and race; 3. Perceptions of taxation and social policies; 4. Inequalities and us: ways to reduce.** Further details on the margins of error per sample segment and the description of the sample analyzed can be found on Oxfam Brasil's website.
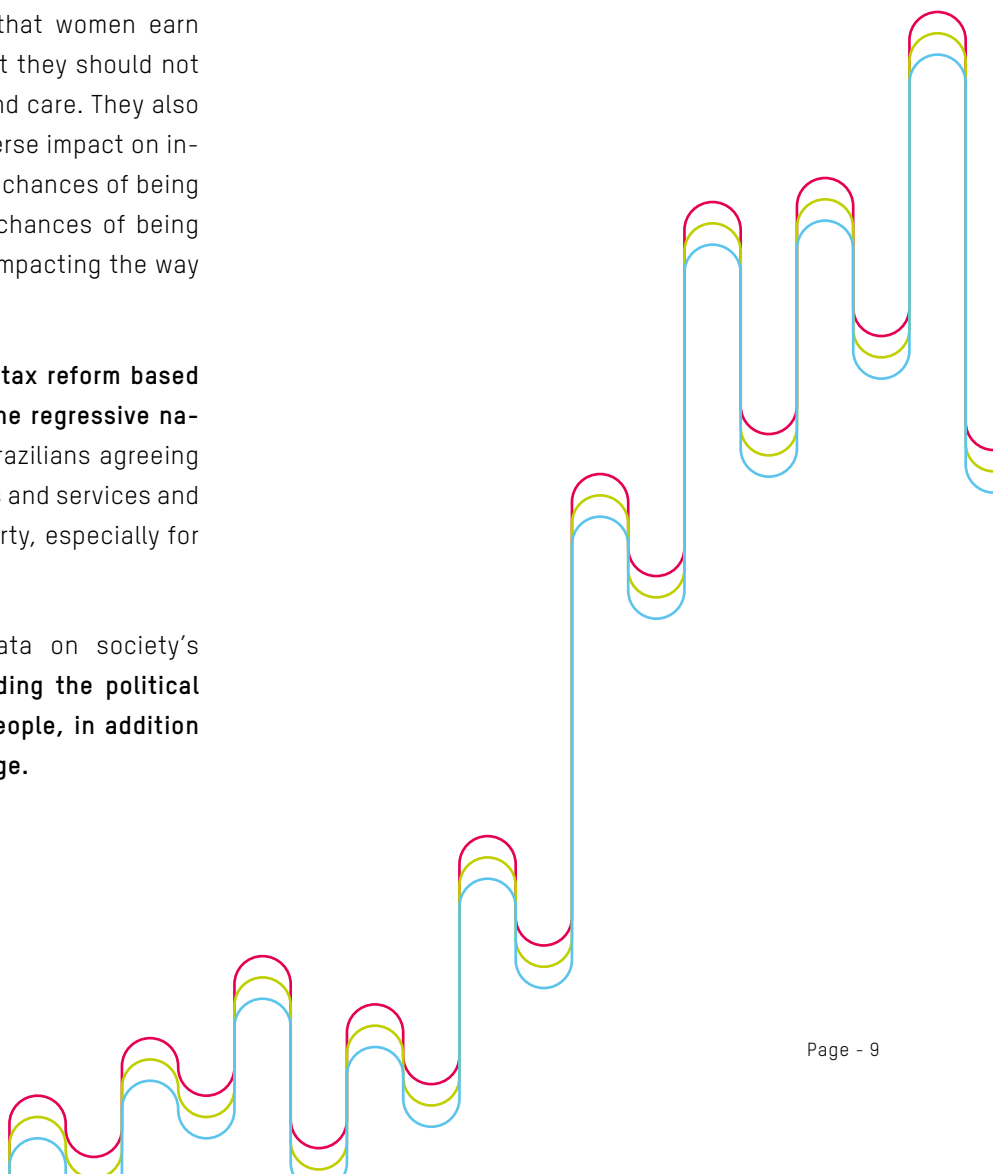
1.
PERCEPTIONS OF INEQUALITIES AND SOCIAL MOBILITY

1.1.
WITHOUT REDUCING INEQUALITIES, THERE WILL BE NO PROGRESS

The desire for material equality and a decent life finds shelter in Brazil's Federal Constitution of 1988, which defines the reduction of inequalities, eradication of poverty, and marginalization as fundamental principles of the Brazilian State.[2] A little more than three decades after the Constitution was enacted, the data from this survey show that Brazilians – especially younger ones born after 1988 – remain aligned with the principles of social and economic justice enshrined in the Constitution.

According to the 2022 Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha *Inequality and Us* survey, Brazil's progress is conditional on reducing inequality between rich and poor people for 85% of Brazilians, a downward fluctuation within the margin of error from the percentages found in the last two editions. As shown in **Graph 1**, most respondents agree with that assumption.

GRAPH 1.
Brazil – On the need to reduce inequality between rich and poor for the country's progress – 2019, 2021 and 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
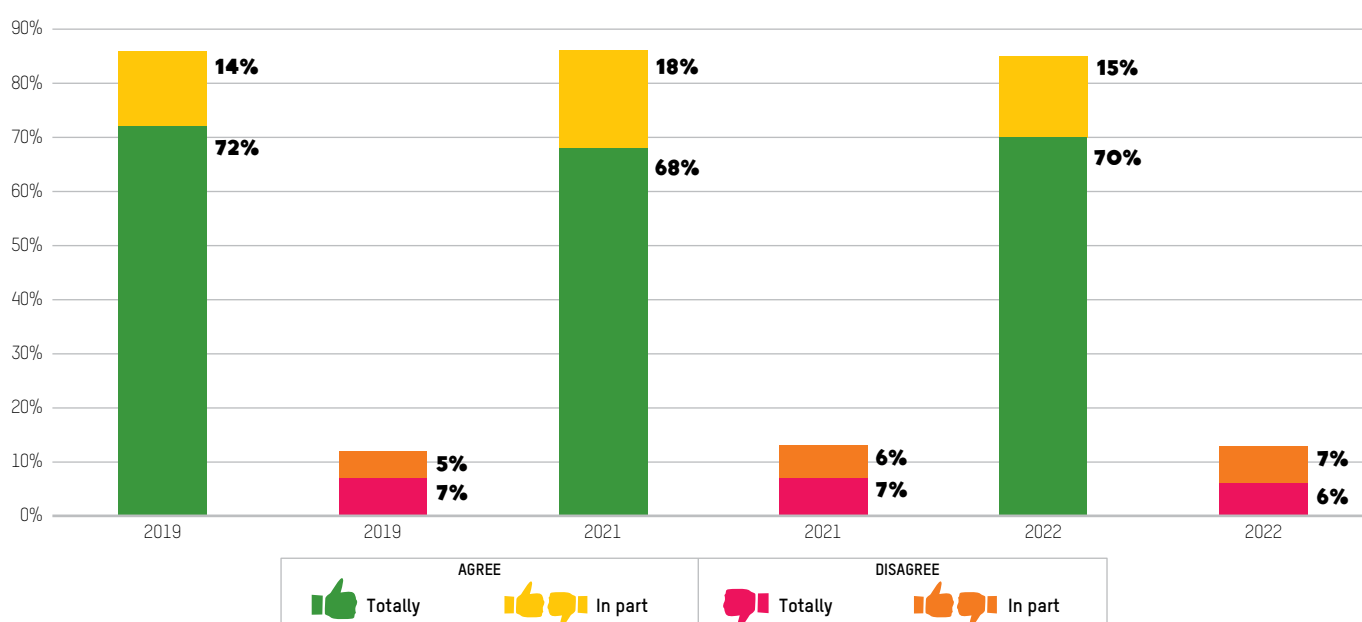
Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "For Brazil to progress, reducing the economic difference between rich and poor is crucial."

1.2.
PERCEPTIONS OF CLASS AND INCOME

1.2.1. ON POVERTY

A practical commitment to a fairer and less unequal country requires a shared understanding of class and income, without which the demands for social change may prove incompatible with the country's reality and class structure, and income distribution. Therefore, the survey shows again that the Brazilian population has a distorted perception of poverty levels and their individual class status.

Public perception of poverty in Brazil is not in line with standard international criteria. According to IBGE data for 2020,[3] about 12 million Brazilians (5.7% of the population) lived in extreme poverty, surviving on a per capita income of only R$ 155 per month – the poverty threshold according to the World Bank's basic criteria – approximately US$ 1.90 per person/day.[4] About 51 million Brazil-

ians (24.1% of the population) lived in poverty, with a per capita income of roughly R$ 450 per month, according to the World Bank's benchmark of US$ 5.50 per person/ day. Note that the percentages of the population living in extreme poverty and poverty dropped in 2020 compared to 2019, respectively, by 1.1 p.p. and 1.8 p.p., as a result of emergency aid provided by the government as of April 2020.[5]

For only 12% of Brazilians, a person with an income of up to R$ 210 can be considered poor, and for 18%, poverty is defined by individual incomes not higher than R$ 400. Almost 3/5 believe that the poverty line starts at R$ 1,001 per month – close to the current minimum wage – with 49% placing it between R$ 1,001 and R$ 2,000, as shown in **Graph 2.**

GRAPH 2.
Brazil – Poverty line perception – 2019-2022
Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
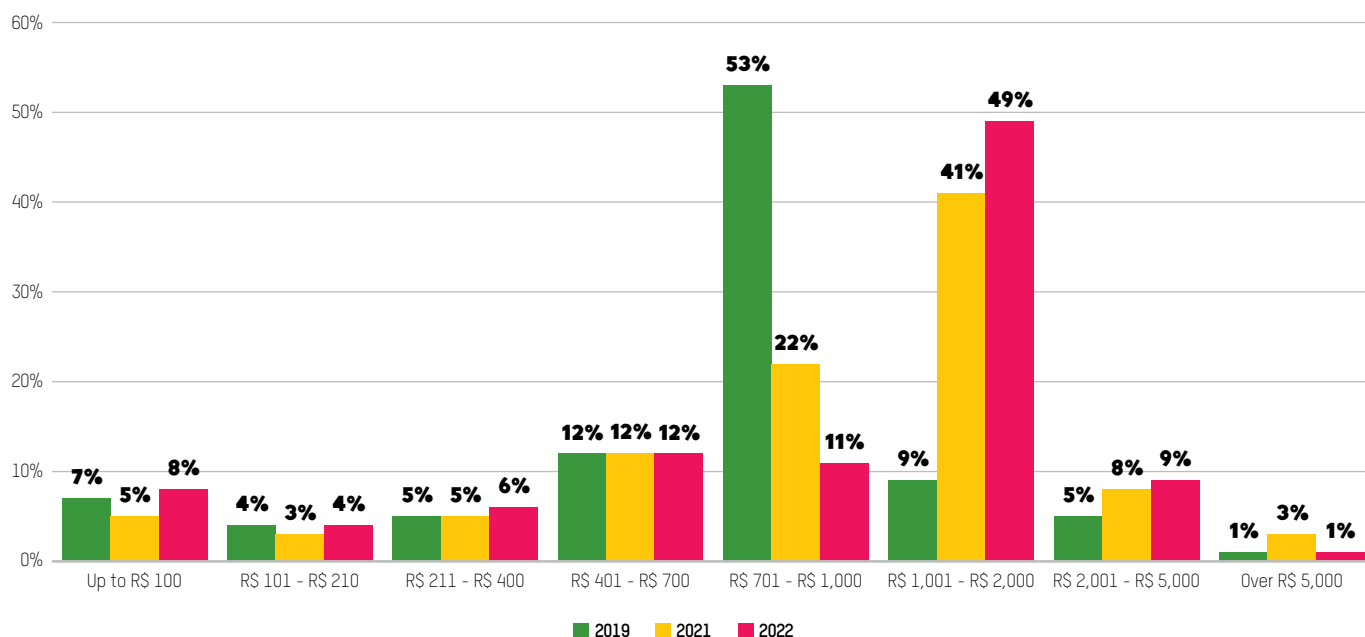
Question: In your opinion, what is the most a person can earn per month to be considered poor in Brazil?

Note: 2% answered, "Don't know."

Within the most often mentioned income bracket – R$ 1,001-R$ 2,000, with 49% – responses from individuals from different income groups vary between 46% and 55 %. Keeping the pattern from previous surveys, the poverty line goes up as people's income increases: 75% of those with incomes higher than five minimum wages believe that a poor person earns more than R$ 1,000.

Understanding what Brazilians consider poverty is crucial to assess the challenges and obstacles in the debate on improving income distribution in the country. A broader understanding by society about the meaning and depth of poverty in our country is essential to design social and redistributive public policies such as those aimed at social protection and income distribution.

1.2.2. ON WEALTH

On a scale from 0 ("very poor") to 100 ("very rich"), 85% of Brazilians place themselves in the poorer half (0-50). This is very similar to the three previous surveys, with variations not larger than three percentage points, indicating the persistence of a distorted view of the country's social class makeup. While the fluctuation is positive when compared to the 2017 survey (88%), there is still a long way to go for us to equalize awareness and perceptions on the subject.

This relative distortion, however, must be read in light of essential changes in Brazil's economic context, with average monthly income has fallen to its lowest level in IBGE's time series, which began in 2012: R$ 1,353 per month.[6] Such reduction was even more substantial in the North and Northeast regions, which traditionally have the lowest average incomes in the country: R$ 871 and R$ 843 per month, respectively, having dropped 9.8% and 12.5% between 2020 and 2021. According to data from the 2021 PNAD (National Household Sample Survey), 36% of employed Brazilians earned up to one minimum wage – that is 33 million people, including 10 million who earned up to half a minimum wage.[7]

Between 2017 and 2022, there were slight variations in the middle-income brackets (26- 75), with changes just beyond the margin of error (88%-85%), as can be seen in **Graph 3**. The most pronounced differences occurred at the ends: a decrease of 4 percentage points in the poorest 25% (41%-37%) and an increase in the same proportion in the wealthiest 25% (1%-5%).

GRAPH 3.
Brazil – Perception of one's position in the national income distribution
Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
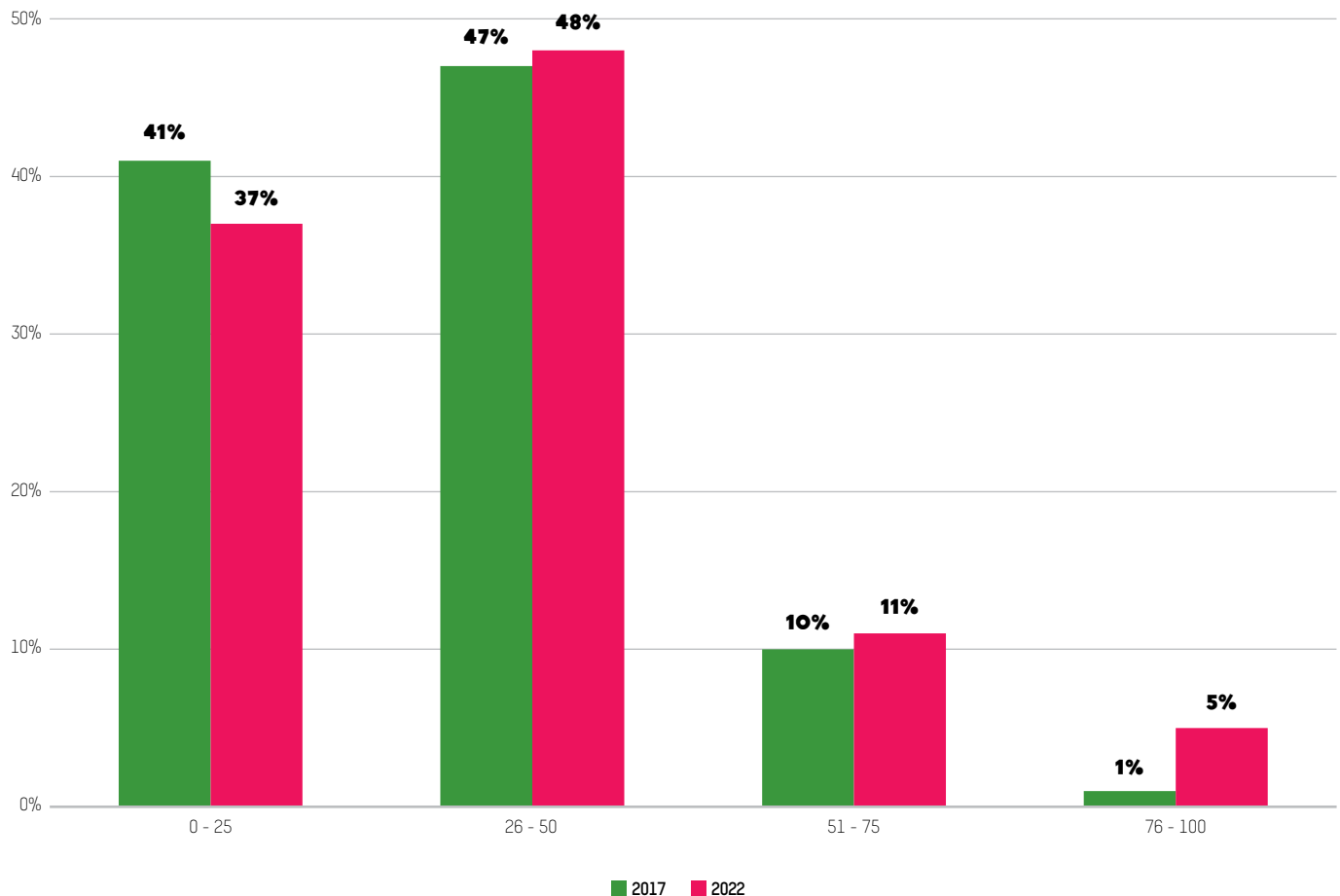
Question: On a scale from 0 to 100, where 0 is for those with the lowest income in the country, i.e., the very poor, and 100 is for those with the highest revenue in the country, i.e., the very rich, where do you place yourself?

Note: 1% answered, "Don't know."

While the perception of minimum income to be among the wealthiest 10% has improved in comparison with the previous edition of the survey, it is still far from reality. Considering the per capita earnings of people with some income, the minimum amount needed to be part of the wealthiest 10% in Brazil was 4.3 minimum wages in 2017[8] – R$ 5,212 in current values.[9] In other words, a population pyramid with an extremely wide base and a small minority at the top concentrating a significant share of the income means that one does not have to earn much money to be included in the highest income bracket.

However, the data show that the Brazilian population is unaware of the country's income concentration, affecting individual perception of poverty and wealth.

GRAPH 3A.

Brazil – Perception of the wealth line – 2019-2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

	2019	2021	2022
Up to R$ 5,000	19%	23%	21%
R$ 5,001 - R$ 10,000	12%	14%	14%
R$ 10,001 - R$ 20,000	8%	10%	10%
R$ 20,001 - R$ 50,000	14%	16%	14%
R$ 50,001 - R$ 100,000	9%	8%	10%
R$ 100,001 - R$ 500,000	8%	5%	7%
Over R$ 500,000	14%	10%	13%
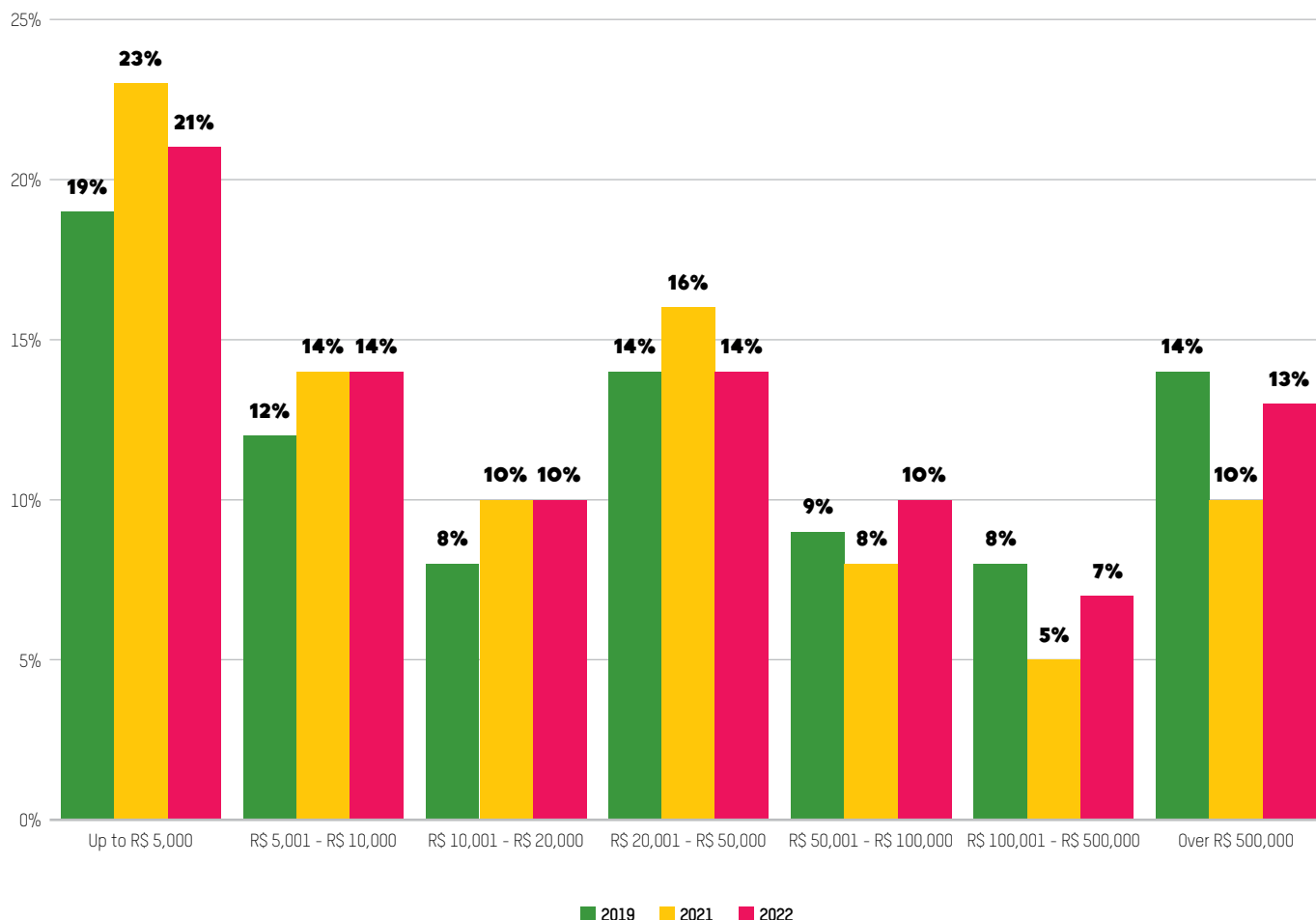
Question: In your opinion, how much would you have to earn per month to be in the richest 10% of Brazilians ?

Note: 1% answered "Don't know."

Only 21% of respondents said that people earning less than R$ 5,000 were among the wealthiest 10% – a reduction of 2 p.p., that is, within the margin of error compared to 2021 (see **Graph 3a**). One-third (30%) believe that it takes a monthly income of more than R$ 50,000 to be among the wealthiest 10%; in 2020, less than a quarter of respondents (23%) held this perception. On the other hand, 68% believe that more than R$ 5,000 a month is needed to be part of the wealthiest 10% – they were 62% in 2021; 44% think that the minimum income to be among the wealthiest 10% would be R$ 20,000 – almost 400% over the actual figure.

1.2.3. INDIVIDUAL OPTIMISM, SOCIAL SCEPTICISM

In 2022, 70% of Brazilians said they were in the "lower middle class" or "poor" categories – a 6-pp increase over 2019; 58% of those with individual incomes above three minimum wages and 24% of Brazilians earning more than five minimum wages believe they are part of the country's lowest social classes. When considering only black women, 77% see themselves as "lower middle class" or "poor"; only 61% of white men see themselves in that condition. The numbers reflect a general decline in Brazil's average income, as mentioned above.

In this survey, the fall in Brazilians' optimism regarding social mobility is consolidated when compared to 2019: 64% believe that they will be between the "middle class" and the "upper middle class" within five years, over 70% in 2019. That is, after the Covid-19 pandemic and its socioeconomic impacts, the number of people who were optimistic about/believed in the possibility of social mobility dropped by almost 10% (6 p.p.). The data are shown in **Graph 4**.

The same happens in the stratum with monthly individual earnings of up to one minimum wage: 62% believe that they will have risen in social class status by 2027 – a variation within the margin of error compared to 2021 but 10% (6 p.p.) below the 2019 figure. The share of Brazilians who believe they have left poverty dropped from 8% to 3% between 2019 and 2022, that is, the perception of social mobility in the poorest strata is very low.

The data confirm findings from previous surveys, with the majority of the population being optimistic about their individual possibility of social mobility, and 64% of Brazilians saying they want to rise to the "middle class" and the "upper middle class" within five years – even with the increase in the percentage of people who see themselves as economically poor today – confirming the scenario of impoverishment and fall in family income.

There is still a minority group of 6% of people who see themselves rising to the "rich" group within five years (they were 5% in 2021), even though no respondent classified him or herself as "rich" today (or five years ago).

GRAPH 4.

Brazil – Self-perception of social class today, five years ago and five years from now – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
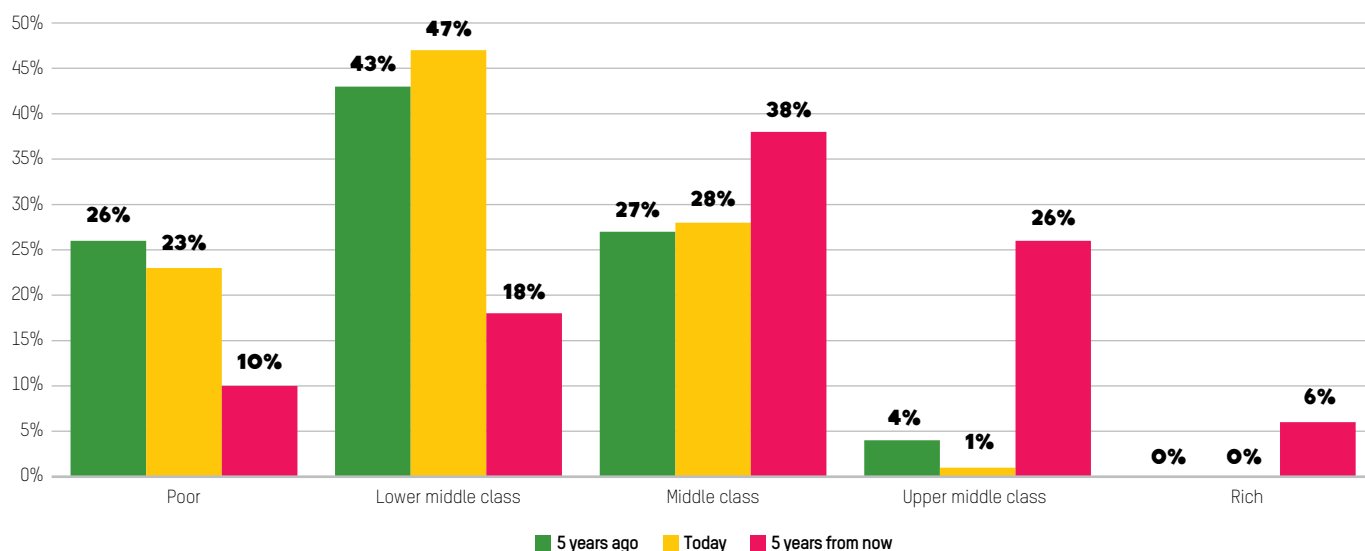
Question: Considering your income and standard of living, to which of these groups do you belong? Approximately 5 years ago, which group were you in? Five years from now, which group to you think you will be part of?

One fifth of Brazilians believe that their social class standing has worsened since 2017 (see **Graph 5**). Considering only this group, deeper economic crisis and higher inflation are the main reasons pointed out for the fall in income and the impoverishment of the population: perception of worsening in households' financial conditions increased by 20% (from 36% in 2021 to 43 % in 2022) and the percentage of people who saw inflation as a reason for the drop in income has increased fivefold (from 1% in 2021 to 5%). Other reasons lost relevance in the face of the economic crisis: lack of job opportunities or work experience (from 42% in 2021 to 40%, fluctuating within the margin of error); lack of study opportunities (from 18% in 2021 to 12%); place of residence (from 16% in 2020 to 10%). The percentage of Brazilians who saw their social class standing decrease exceeds the average and is higher among older people (aged 60 or more, with 26%), self-identified as economically poor (29%), and living in the Southeast (25%).

One fifth of Brazilians believe they have moved up in terms of social class in the last five years. The reasons include the financial conditions of their families (28% in 2021, 32% in 2022), study opportunities they had (28% 2021 and 2022), and place of residence (fluctuating within the margin of error from 17% in 2021 to 16% now). The percentage of people who see job opportunities or work experiences they had as reasons for social mobility dropped almost 20% (from 61% in 2021 to 50% in 2022).

However, 61% of Brazilians with higher education who moved up in social class status point out job opportunities they had as the main reason for that rise while 50% point to study opportunities. Brazilians with elementary education see their families' financial status (35%) and job opportunities or work experience (32%) as the main reasons for progress. Job opportunities or work experiences are also pointed out as the main reasons for having risen in social class standing in the two ends of the individual income spectrum: 44% up to one minimum wage and 76% above five minimum wages.

GRAPH 5.

Brasil – Brazil – Self-perception of social mobility in the last five years – 2017-2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022.
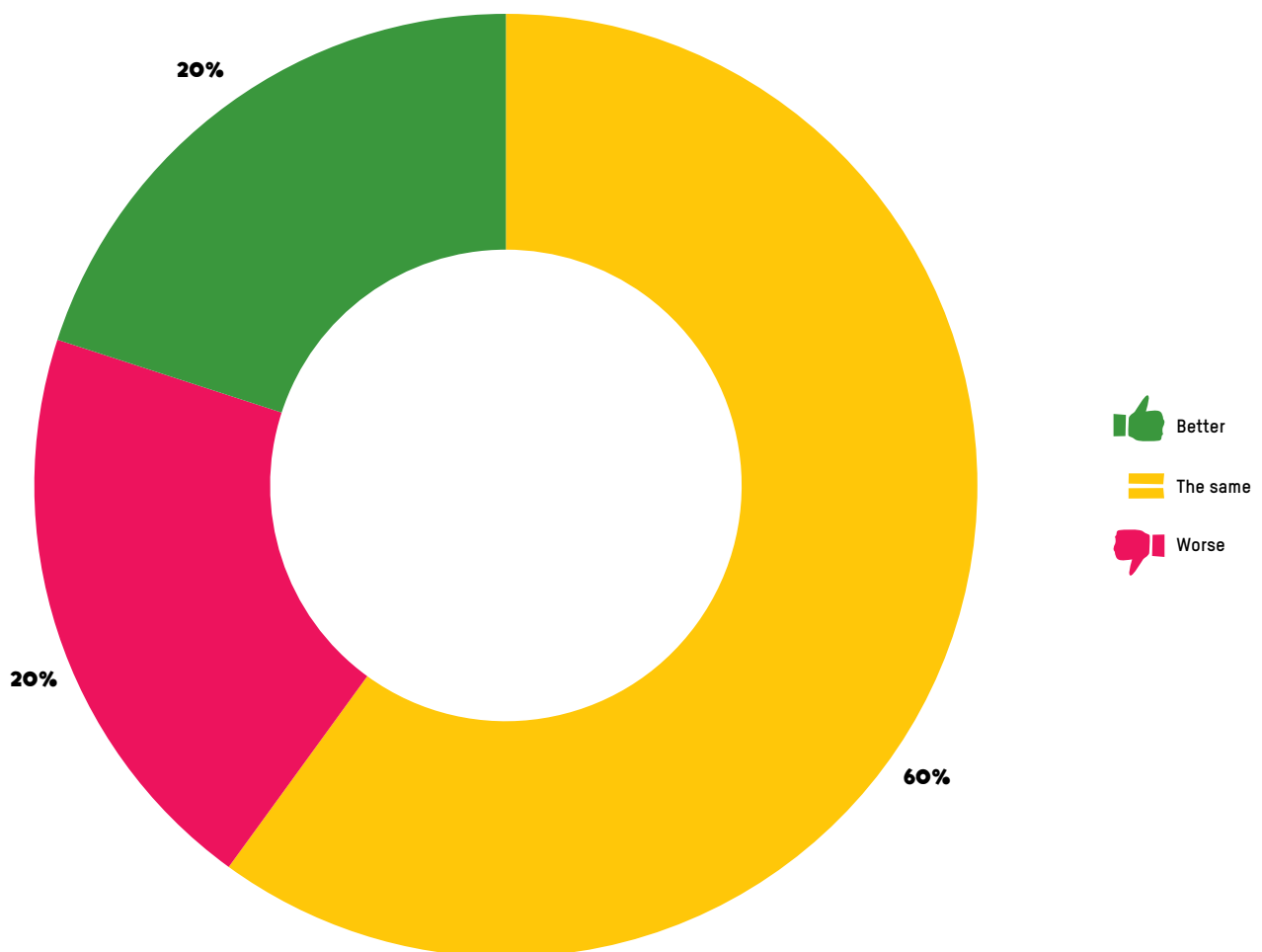
Question: Considering your income and standard of living, to which of these groups do you belong? Approximately 5 years ago, which group were you in?

Compared to 2021, the main justification for falling or rising in social class status is the role of household financial conditions. Considering Brazilians whose status worsened, the lack of material conditions in the household went from 34% in 2021 to 42% in 2022, being the main cause. Considering Brazilians who have risen socially, financial support from their families was also mentioned more often by respondents: from 28% in 2021 to 32% in 2022. In a context of worsening economic crisis partially caused by the continuous adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, family support ended up making a difference either for rising or for falling socially.

While an optimistic perception of individual progress remains, the same cannot be said about the expectations of progress in the fight against social inequalities, where a pessimistic view seems to prevail. **Graph 6** shows that 65% of the population totally or partially disagree with the idea that the difference between the richest and the poorest will decrease in the coming years in Brazil – a 4-p.p. drop over the first survey in 2017. Among those who agree that the gap between the richest and the poorest in Brazil will decrease in the coming years, there was a small fluctuation of 2 p.p. from 2017 to 2022, within the margin of error: from 31% to 33%.

GRAPH 6.

Brazil – Perception of a possible reduction in inequalities over the next few years – 2017 and 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022.

	Totally agree	Agree in part	Totally disagree	Disagree in part
2017	16%	15%	51%	15%
2022	19%	14%	49%	16%
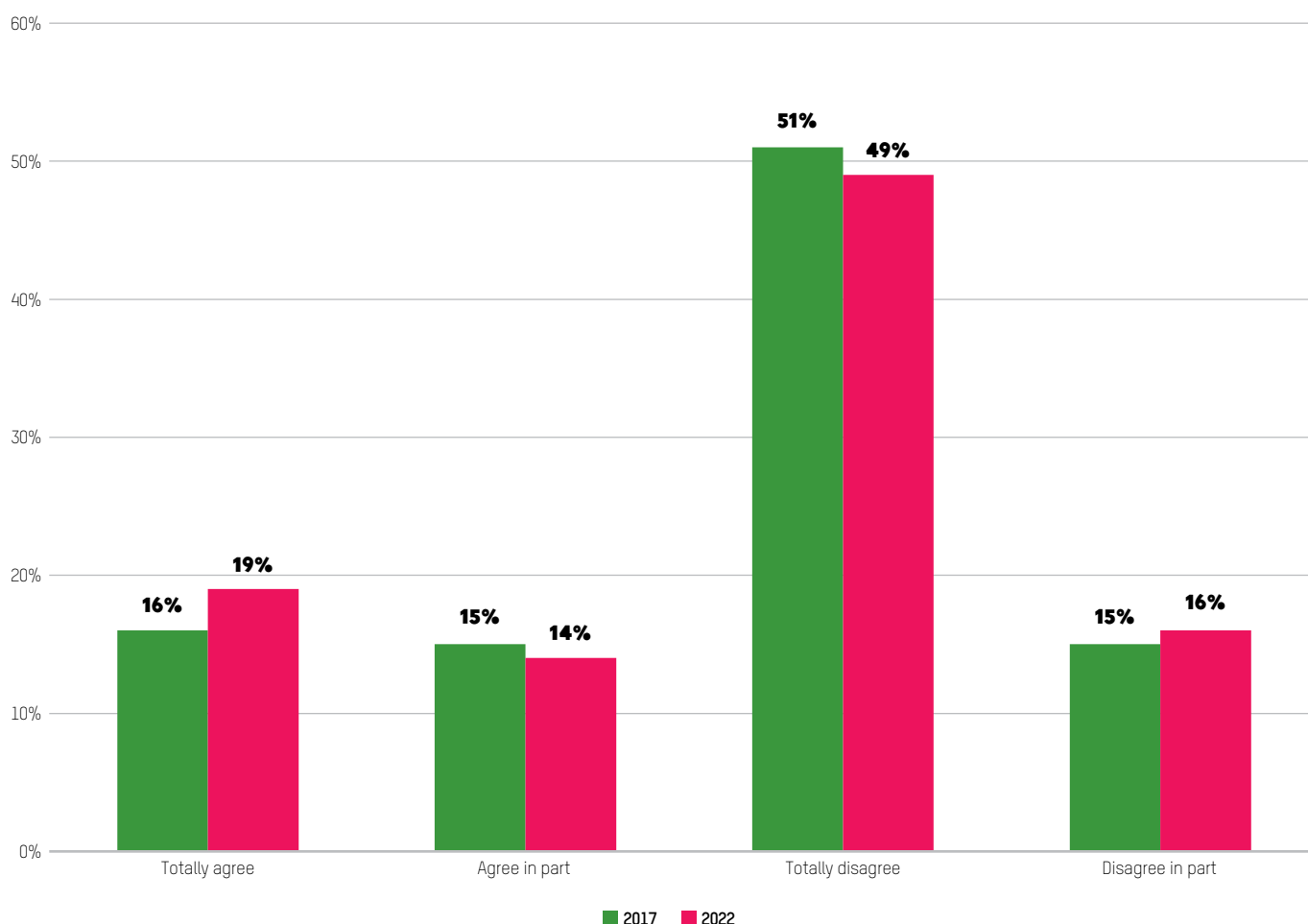
Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "In the next few years, the gap between the richest and the poorest will decrease in Brazil."

Note: 1% answered "Neither agree nor disagree" in 2019 and 2020; Those who answered "Don't know" were 2% in 2019 and 1% in 2020 .

1.2.4. NEW INEQUALITIES: CLIMATE AND TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

The scenario of social pessimism resonates in Brazilians' perception about the impact of climate and technological change on inequalities, which were included for the first time in this *Inequality and Us* survey conducted by Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha Institute.

Concern about climate change is on the rise around the world. In April 2022, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) presented a report advocating swift, deep and immediate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions, without which it would be impossible, by 2025, to avoid the worst impacts already in progress on the planet.[10] In July 2022, in the face of the heat wave in the European summer, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres reiterated that half of the world's population lives in danger zones for floods, droughts, extreme storms and forest fires. "But we continue to feed our addiction to fossil fuels; we have a choice: collective action or collective suicide," said Guterres.[11] In Brazil, activists[12] and coalitions[13] highlight the increasingly adverse effect of the climate crisis on black and underserved people, pointing to the impact of extreme weather events such as floods and landslides on populations living in precarious housing.[14]

For 65% of Brazilians, the gap between the richest and the poorest in the country is expected to increase in the coming years because of climate change, which is being caused by global warming; 32% disagree. This perception of the impact of climate change on social inequalities is higher than average among Brazilians aged 60 and over (70%), people with elementary education (71%) or with household income of up to one minimum wage (71%), self-declared wealthy Brazilians (79%), people who receive the Continuous Welfare Benefit (*Benefício de Prestação Continuada* – BPC/LOAS) (70%) or Brazil Aid (70%), and black women (68%). Disagreement about climate impacts is higher among people aged 35-44 (39%), with higher education (42%) or with individual income of 3-5 minimum wages (48%), people self-declared as higher middle class (42%), conservative Christians (43%) or men earning more than one minimum wage (37%).

GRAPH 6A.

Brazil – Climate change increasing inequality between the richest and the poorest – 2022
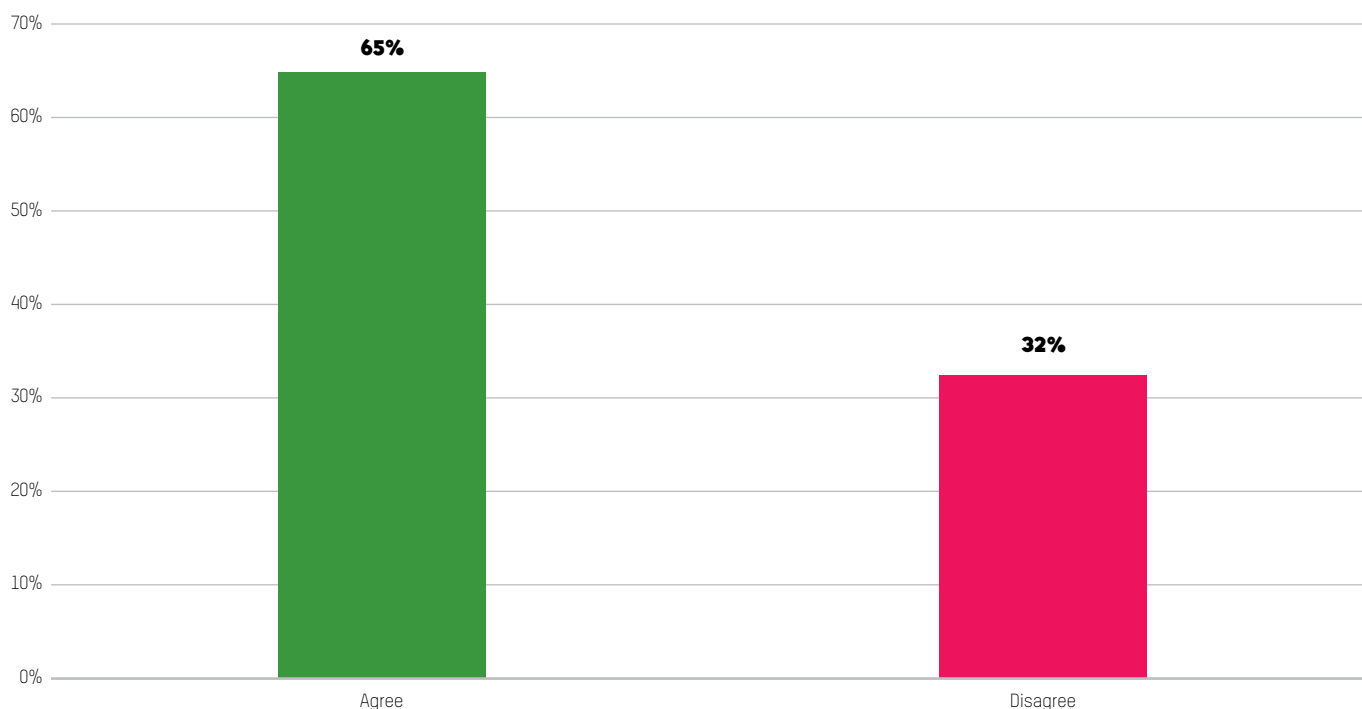
Source: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2022.

Question: Agree/disagree with the statement "The gap between the richest and the poorest in Brazil is expected to increase in the coming years because of climate change, which is a result of global warming.

The Covid-19 pandemic has made the impact of technology on the lives of billions of people around the world more visible. The necessary social isolation, one of the main measures in the fight against the coronavirus – especially in the pre-vaccine context – worked as a catalyst for structural changes in the labour market, with the use of new automation technologies in the industry, artificial intelligence and business digitalization.[15] The app economy, whose spread precedes the pandemic, has its worldwide expansion associated with poor working conditions, causing workers in Brazil and the world to face the impacts of the health crisis in a situation of greater vulnerability. The possibility of teleworking, often restricted to activities that concentrate higher revenues, meant that people with better socioeconomic conditions could face Covid-19 with security that is not available to the average Brazilian population.[16]

For 75%, technological changes are making the rich richer and the poor even poorer; 23% disagree. Agreement is higher than average among people aged 45-59 (78%), with elementary education (79%) or with household incomes of up to one minimum wage (81%), Brazilians self-identified as poor (81%), residents of the South region (78%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (89%), black women (79%) or women who earn up to one minimum wage (81%). Disagreement is larger than average among people with higher education (31%) or with individual incomes above five minimum wages (42%), Brazilians self-identified as rich (53%), and white men (27%).

GRAPH 6B.

Brazil – Technological changes increasing the gap between the richest and the poorest – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
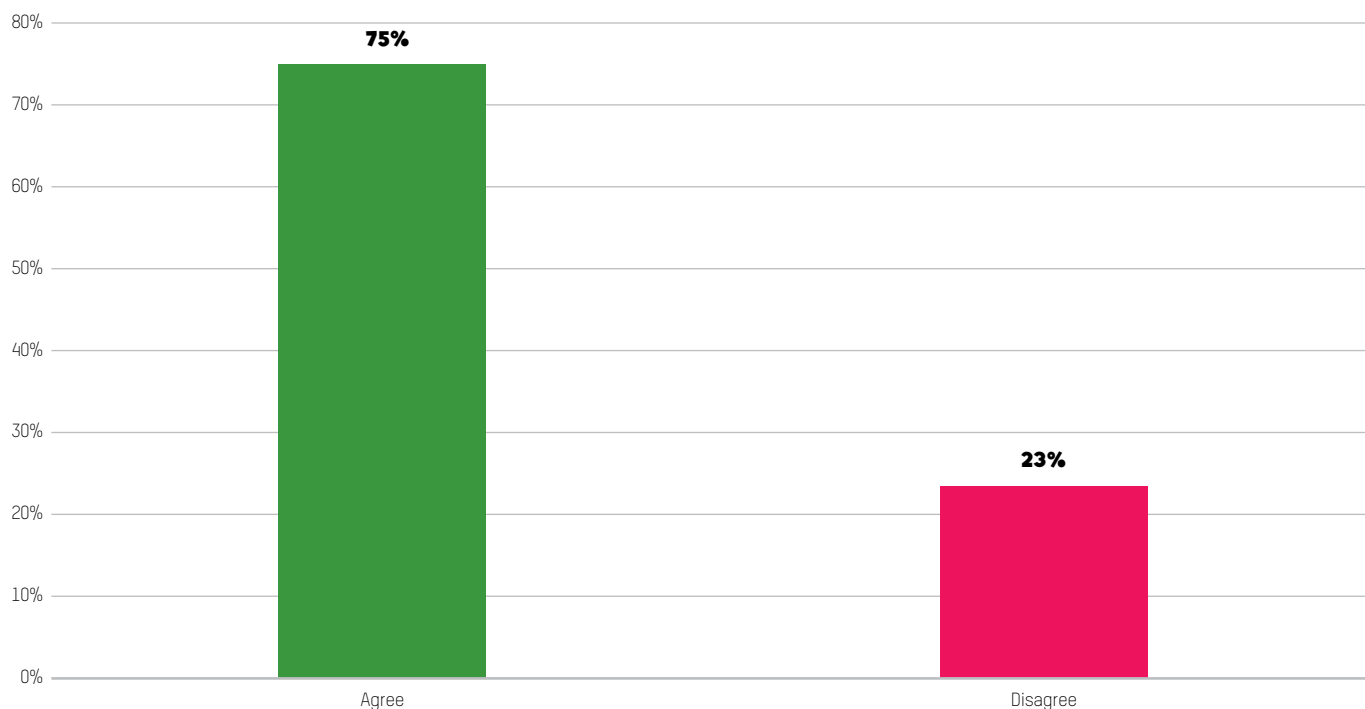
Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "Technological changes are making the rich richer and the poor even poorer."

1.3.
THE ILLUSION OF MERITOCRACY

The data point to consolidated perceptions regarding the view that a poor person's chances are levelled with those of a rich person through work and study, with variations within the margin of error between 2017 and 2022.

In 2022, 62% of the population disagreed and 37% agreed that "a person born into a poor family who works hard stands the same chances of having a successful life as a person born rich, who also works hard". In 2017, they were 60% and 38%, respectively. Disapproval of the meritocracy discourse was above average among those with higher education (74%), individual income of more than five minimum wages (70%), who lived the Southeast region (68%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (76 %), and white women (65%). Agreement about equal opportunities exceeds the average among people with up to elementary education (44%), who earn up to one
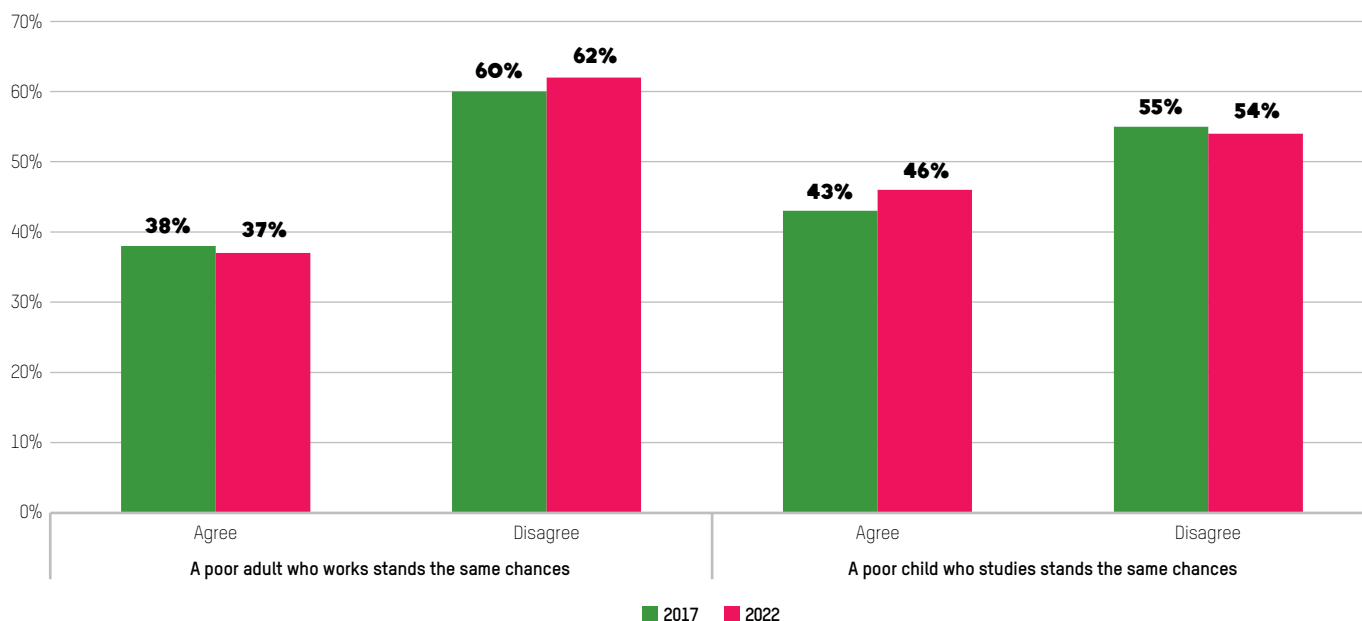
minimum wage (42%), residents of the North region (44%), and those who declare themselves as conservative Christians. (56%).

Regarding education as a path to equal opportunities, 54% of Brazilians disagreed that "in Brazil, a child born into a poor family who manages to study stands the same chances of having a successful life as a child born into a rich family", while 45% agree. In 2017, they were 55% and 43%, respectively (see **Graph 7**). Disagreement about the meritocracy discourse related to education is higher than average among people aged 45-59 (59%), with higher education (63%), living in cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (60%), and men with individual income above the minimum wage (59%). Approval of meritocracy is higher than average among people over 60 (49%), with only elementary education (49%), and residents of the North region (53%) and cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants (51%).

GRAPH 7.
Brazil – Confidence in the role of working and education for the poor to achieve equal social conditions – 2017 and 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

A poor adult who works stands the same chances | A poor child who studies stands the same chances

■ 2017 ■ 2022

Question: Agree/disagree with the statements: "A person born into a poor family who works hard stands the same chances of having a successful life as a person born rich, who also works hard" and "In Brazil, a child born into a poor family who manages to study stands the same chances of having a successful life as a child born into a rich family."

Note: 1% answered "Neither agree nor disagree" with the statement on working in 2020, 2019 and 2017; 0% provided that answer in 2020 and 2019, and 1% in 2017, for the statement on studying. 1% answered "Don't know" in 2019 and less than that in 2020 and 2017 regarding working. Less than 1% answered "Don't know" in the three years of the survey to the statement on studying.

The debate on the creation and maintenance of quota programs in higher education has to do with the illusion of meritocracy. Signed into law in August 2012, the Quota Act (12711/12) established that 50% of places in federal universities and institutes are directed to people who went to public schools. Half of them is intended for the population with per capita household income of up to 1.5 minimum wage. Additionally, places reserved for racial and disability quotas will be distributed according to the proportion of indigenous, black, *pardo* (mixed-race) and disabled people in the state where the federal university or institute is located, according to IBGE data. The system applies to all 69 federal universities and 38 so-called federal institutes of education, science and technology.

Ten years after its establishment, the results of the Quota Act are undeniable. Black women are now the largest group in Brazilian public universities, according to analysis of data from PNAD (the National Household Sample Survey), accounting for 27% of students in 2019.[17] In comparison with 2001, the number of black women in public universities increased by 8 percentage points, while the shares of white men and white women fell by 5 p.p. and 13 p.p., respectively. Possible explanations for this advance include the effect of affirmative action – both the Quota Act (applicable to federal educational institutions) and equivalent state regulations, as well as higher schooling rates of women, who have the best school completion indicators in the country.[18]

In this scenario, and in view of the ten-year evaluation process of the Quota Act provided for in its own text, this survey included, for the first time, questions about the role played by that law in reducing inequalities – 74% of Brazilians agree that the Quota Act for admission to federal universities has played an important role in reducing inequalities; only 22% disagree (see **Graph 8**). Support is even higher among young people aged 16-24 (77%), people with household income between 3 and 5 minimum wages (77%), residents of the Centre-West and North regions (78%), people who say their social class status has worsened in the last five years (78%), and black women (78%). Opposition to the Quota Act is higher than average among men (26%), Brazilians aged 60 and over (25%), people earning more than five minimum wages (36%), and those who define themselves as upper middle class (36%).

GRAPH 8.

Brazil – Role played by the Quota Act for Admission to Federal Universities in Reducing Inequalities – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
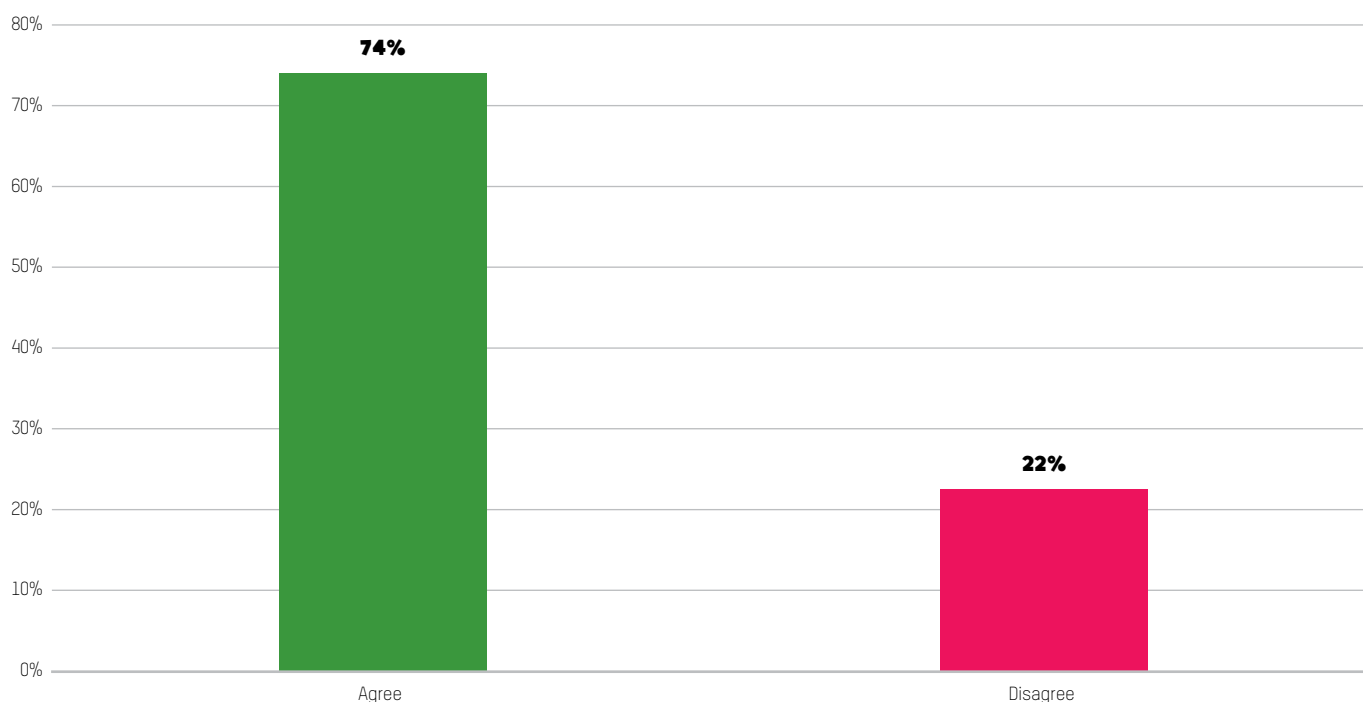
Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "The Quota Act for admission to federal universities has played an important role in reducing inequalities."

1.4.
FAITH, EDUCATION AND FUNCTION: PRIORITIES FOR A BETTER LIFE

When asked to rank ten factors listed in the questionnaire for "a better life from now on," the top choice of most respondents (21%) was "religious faith" with 21% (**Graph 9**).

Then came "studying" and "having a job," according to 20% and 16%, respectively. Together, "religious faith," "studying" and "having a job" are top priorities for 57% of Brazilians. The first, second, third and fourth priorities were "having a job" (with 58%), "advancing in the profession" (55%) and "studying" (54%), "earning more money" (46%) and "religious faith."

GRAPH 9.
Brazil – Priorities for a better life – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022.

Legend:
- Religious faith
- Studying
- Having a job
- Access to health care
- Advancing in the profession
- Earning more money
- Financial support from family
- Access to retirement
- Financial support from government (social benefits)
- Culture and leisure

Column 1: 21%, 20%, 16%, 12%, 8%, 8%, 4%, 4%, 3%, 3%

Column 2: 7%, 16%, 18%, 15%, 14%, 12%, 5%, 5%, 5%, 4%

Column 3: 6%, 10%, 14%, 13%, 18%, 13%, 7%, 6%, 7%, 6%
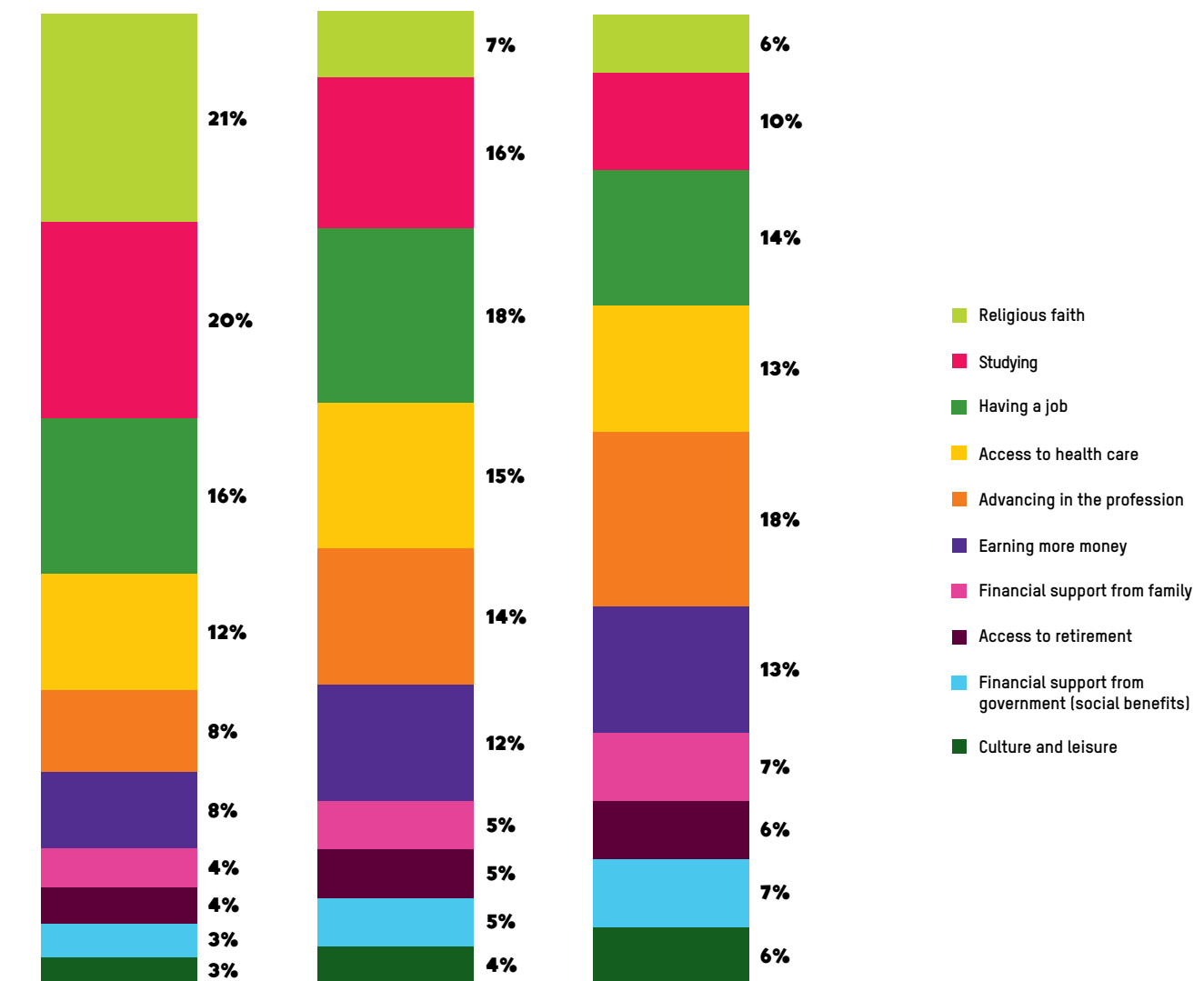
Question: Now I would like you to rank factors you find important for a better life from now on, from the most to the least important factor.

The scenario of unemployment and lower income impact-ed Brazilians' perception of priorities for a better life: "having a job," with 48% among the three top priorities, ahead of "religious faith" (34%) and "studying" (46%) – respectively the first and second options most frequent-ly mentioned as top priorities. The option "advancing in the profession" is also well placed among the priorities, with 55% of the four top options. By way of comparison, in 2021, in a context of uncertainty as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, "access to health care" stood out in the first three priorities (54%).

It is worth remembering that, in the first year of the pan-demic, between April 2020 and April 2021, it is estimated that 377 Brazilians lost their jobs per hour.[19] Even with the drop in unemployment in the first quarter of 2022 (11.1% or 11.9 million people),[20] the average work income dropped 8.7% over the same period in 2021 (January, February and March), indicating an increase in informal labour, which employs around 38.2 million Brazilians.

"Having a job" was pointed out as a top priority for a bet-ter life at an above-average rate (16%) by people aged 25-44 (19%), with higher education (19%), who earn up to one minimum wage (21%), who receive *Auxílio Brasil* (20%) or *Auxílio Gás* (22%), and those who believe that their social class status had decreased in the last five years (19%).

2.
PERCEPTIONS OF GENDER AND RACE

2.1.
IMPACT OF GENDER AND RACE ON INCOME

Perceptions about gender and race inequalities have been consolidating over the course of the four editions of the survey (**Graph 10**), which is quite relevant since identifying the problem is a condition for government support to solve it.

In 2022, 69% of Brazilians agreed that "women earn less in the labour market because they are women," compared to 29% who disagreed. In 2019, total or partial agreement was 67% (64% in 2017) and total or partial disagreement was 31% (35% in 2017). Therefore, the difference between those who agree and those who disagree grew more than twice between 2017 and 2022, with an increase of 40 percentage points.

As expected, agreement among women is higher than among men, with the gap increasing even more when compared to the last survey: 76% of women agree with the statement compared to 62% of men – a difference of 14 percentage points. In 2021, the difference between women's and men's perception was 11 percentage points (73%-62%) – the same gap found in 2019 (69%-58%).

Agreement with the statement "women earn less in the labour market because they are women" is also higher than average (69%) among young people aged 16-24 (74%), with higher education (72%), with individual income up to one minimum wage (72%), residents of the Centre-West (74%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (80%), and black women (74%). Disagreement exceeds the average (29%) among those with individual income above five minimum wages (40%), residents of the North (34%) and municipalities with up to 50,000 inhabitants (33%), people who declare themselves as conservative Christians (42%), and white men (37%).

GRAPH 10.

Brazil – Perceptions of the impact of gender and race on income – 2017-2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
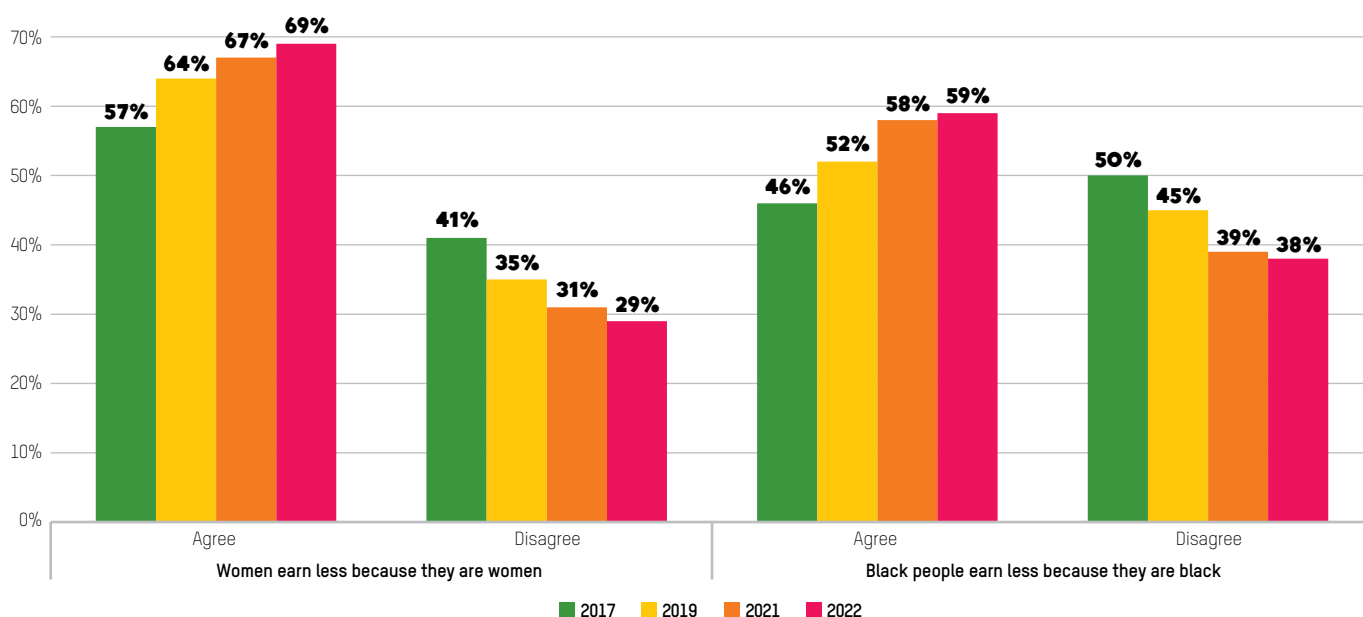
Question: Agreement/disagreement with the statements: "Women earn less than men in the labour market because they are women" and "Blacks earn less than whites in the labour market because they are black."

The perception of racial inequality in the labour market repeated the scenario found for gender inequality. In 2022, 59% of Brazilians fully or partially agreed with the statement that "blacks earn less in the labour market because they are black," while 38% disagreed. In 2021, 58% agreed and 39% disagreed; thus, the gap between agreement and disagreement increased from 19 to 21 percentage points.

Agreement with the statement exceeds the average (59%) among people self-identified as black (66%), Brazilians aged 60 and over (65%), people who classify themselves as poor (65%), residents of the Northeast region (63%) and municipalities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (60%), and black women (63%). Disagreement was higher than average (38%) among people aged 25-34 (47%), with individual incomes above five minimum wages (51%), evangelicals (45%), and men with individual incomes above one minimum wage (44%).

2.2.
RACE AND GENDER INEQUALITY: CONSOLIDATING THE TREND

Reinforcing the perception of previous editions of this survey, Brazilians believe that skin colour largely defines a person's chances of being hired by companies and being stopped by the police; it also influences treatment by the justice system and makes life hard for those who are poor, according to data in **Graph 11**.

GRAPH 11.
Brazil – Perceptions of racism – 2022
Source: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2022
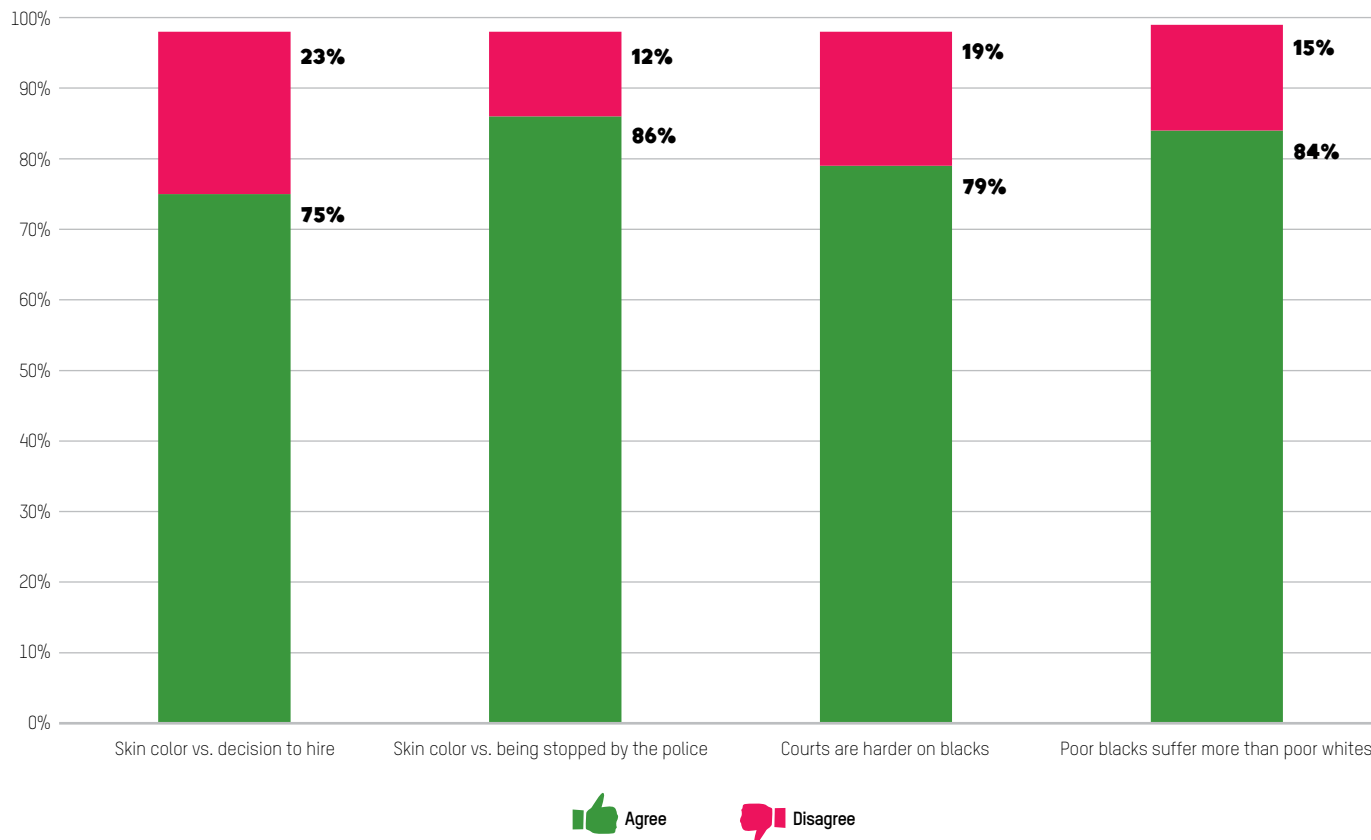
Question: Agree/disagree with the statements: "Skin colour affects a police officer's decision to stop someone"; "Courts are harder on blacks"; "Poor blacks suffer more from inequality in Brazil than poor whites" and "Skin colour affects companies' hiring decisions."

Directly related to income, skin color influences companies' hiring decisions according to the perception of 75% of Brazilians, compared to 76% in 2020; 23% disagree (they were 22% in 2020). There were fluctuations within the margin of error in both cases. The agreement is 82% among self-declared black people, 86% among adherents of African-Brazilian religions, 78% among young people aged 16-24, and 81% among black women. Disagreement is 31% among white men and 27% among people aged 35-44, and 36% among people with incomes above five minimum wages.

The perception of racism when Brazilian police stop someone remains significant, with variations within the margin of error. In 2022, 86% of the population believed that skin color influenced that decision, compared to 84% in 2021; 12% disagree with the statement, compared to 14% in 2021. From one edition of the survey to another, the gap between those who agree with the statement "skin colour influences the decision of a police officer to stop someone" increased from 70 to 74 percentage points.

Agreement is even higher among young people aged 16-24 (90%), people with income of one to two minimum wages (89%), residents of the Southeast region (88%), Brazilians self-identified as "black" (91 %), adherents of Afro-Brazilian religions (93%), and black women (91%). Disagreement is higher than average among people aged 60 and over (15%), with elementary education (17%), residents of the North region (17%), and white men (18%).

For 79% of Brazilians, Justice is tougher on black people; 19% disagree. Between 2021 and 2022, the gap between those who agree and those who disagree fluctuated from 58 to 60 percentage points. That perception increases among young people aged 16-24 (88%), people with individual income of up to one minimum wage (82%), residents of cities with more than 200,000 inhabitants (82%), people self-identified as black (87%), and black women (87%). Disagreement is higher than average among people aged 25-34 (23%), with higher education (22%), with individual income between 3 and 5 minimum wages (29%), and white men (26%).

The perception that poverty weighs more heavily on black people has widened even further: 84% of Brazilians agree with the statement that "poor blacks suffer more from inequality in Brazil than poor whites", over 81% in 2021; 15% disagree, compared to 19% in 2021. The gap between those who agree and those who disagree with that statement increased from 62 to 69 percentage points. The agreement is higher than average among young people aged 16-24 (90%), people with individual incomes between one and two minimum wages (87%), residents of cities with 200,000-500,000 inhabitants (86%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (91%), and black women (89%). Disagreement is higher among those with incomes above five minimum wages (24%), residents of the North region (20%), and white and black men (19%).
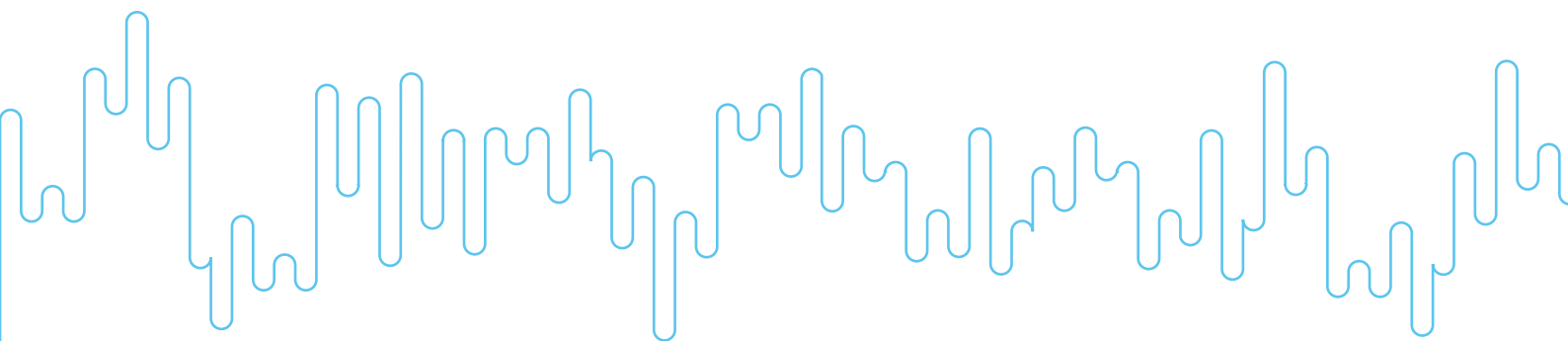
Following the pattern of our latest editions of the "Inequality and Us" survey, the vast majority of the population rejects the traditional role ascribed to women in the domestic environment – 88% of Brazilians disagree with the statement "women should only care for their homes and children and not have outside employment," compared to 86% in 2021; 12% disagree, compared to 13% in 2021. In both cases, there were fluctuations within the margin of error between 2021 and 2022 (see **Graph 12**).

GRAPH 12.
Brazil – Women's role is only to care for their homes and children – 2022
Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
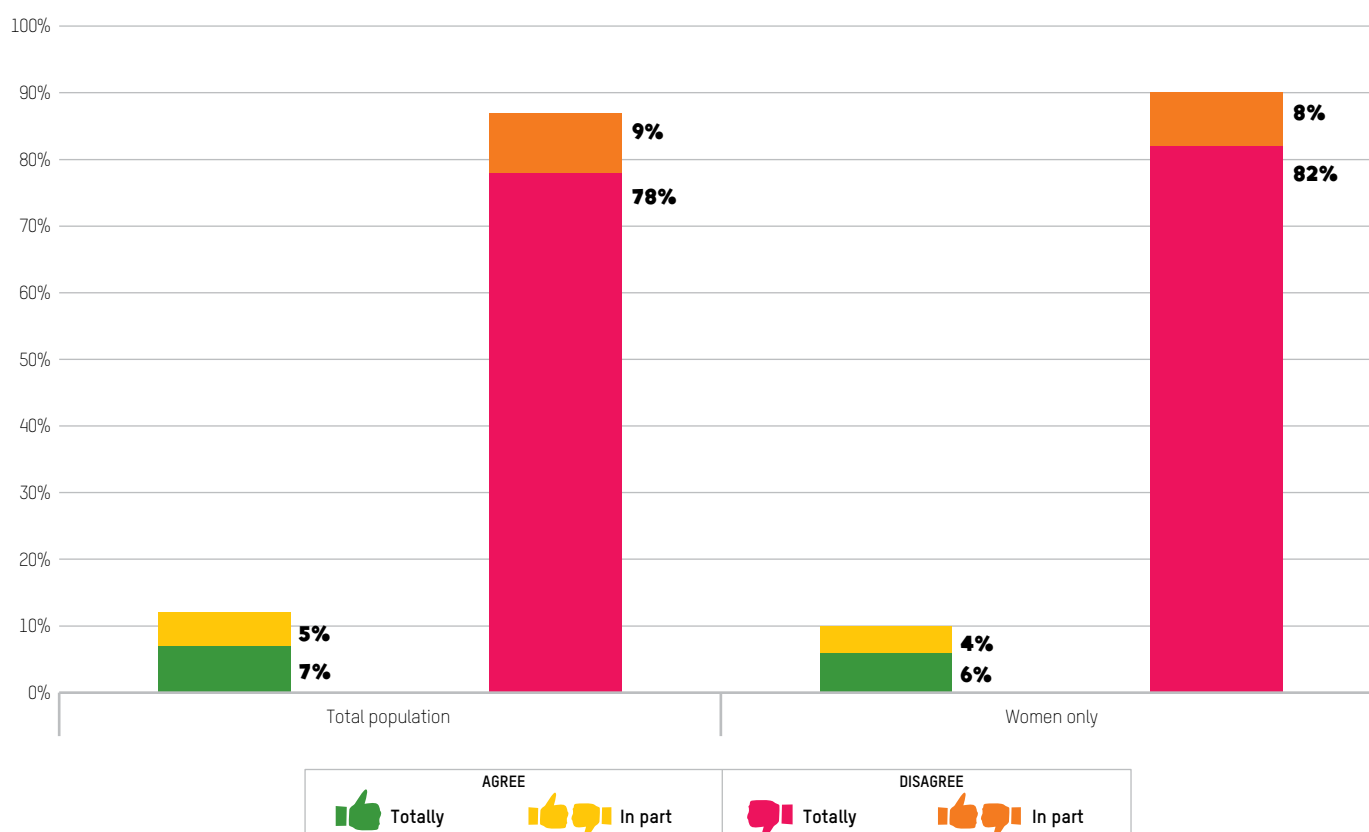
Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "Women should only care for their homes and children, and not have outside employment".

Young people aged 16-24 reject the view that restricts women's social experience to the domestic context (93%), as well as people with higher education (95%), residents of municipalities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (91%), adherents of Spiritism (94%), and white women (90%). Agreement with a backwards and sexist view of women's role in society is higher than average among people aged 60 and over (21%), people with only elementary education (22%), residents of municipalities with up to 50,000 inhabitants (16%), and men with individual income of up to one minimum wage (18%).

2.3.
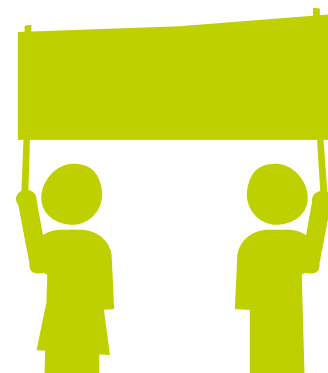## RACE, GENDER AND POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

As we have seen, almost nine out of ten Brazilians understand that reducing inequalities is a condition for the country's progress and that it must be a priority for governments. In government action, this priority translates as inclusive social public policies – the most effective means to combat inequalities, especially in a scenario of economic crisis. The adoption of these policies, however, faces obstacles in a country where inequality in political representation is a reality, causing democracy to remain incomplete.[21]

Seeking to gauge social perception about inequality in politics, Oxfam Brasil included specific questions about political representation in this survey for the first time, especially in terms of gender and race.

Regarding political participation, 71% of Brazilians agree that women are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office because they are women, while 28% disagree. On average, 53% totally agree with the statement "women are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office than men because they are women"; 59% of women agreed, and 47% of men.

Agreement with the statement is higher among young people aged 16-24 (78%), among those with individual incomes of up to one minimum wage (74%), residents of the Centre-West region (74%) and cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (75%), people self-identified as "black" (76%) or adherents of African-Brazilian religions (81%), and white (75%) and black women (77%). Disagreement exceeds the average among people who earn more than five minimum wages (47%) or who classify themselves as "upper middle class" (50%), residents of the North region (33%), and men (34%) – especially white men (38%).

For 68% of Brazilians, black people are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office because they are black, 30% disagree. Among self-identified black people, agreement is 78%, among white people only, it is 63%. Once again, agreement is higher than average among young people aged 16-24 (73%), those who earn up to one minimum wage (72%), residents of municipalities with 200,000-500,000 inhabitants (71%), and black women (82%). Disagreement is higher among white men (41%), among those earning more than five minimum wages (54%), residents of the North region (40%) and cities with 50,000-200,000 inhabitants (35%). See **Graph 13**.

GRAPH 13.
Inequality in political representation in Brazil – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

71% — Women are less likely to be elected to governments and legislatures than men are because they are women (Agree)

28% — Women are less likely to be elected to governments and legislatures than men are because they are women (Disagree)

68% — Blacks are less likely to be elected to governments and legislatures than whites are because they are black (Agree)

30% — Blacks are less likely to be elected to governments and legislatures than whites are because they are black (Disagree)

Agree Disagree

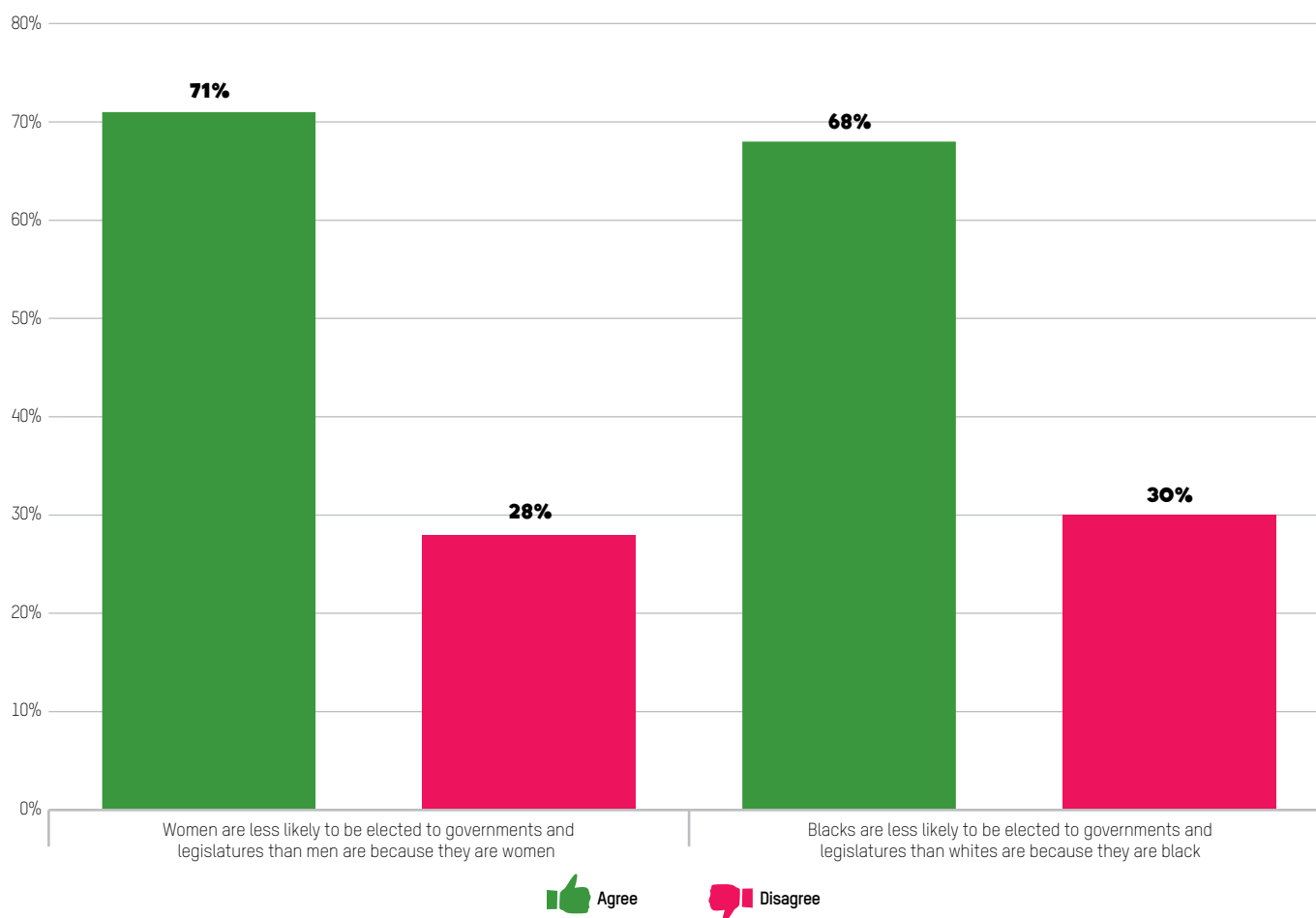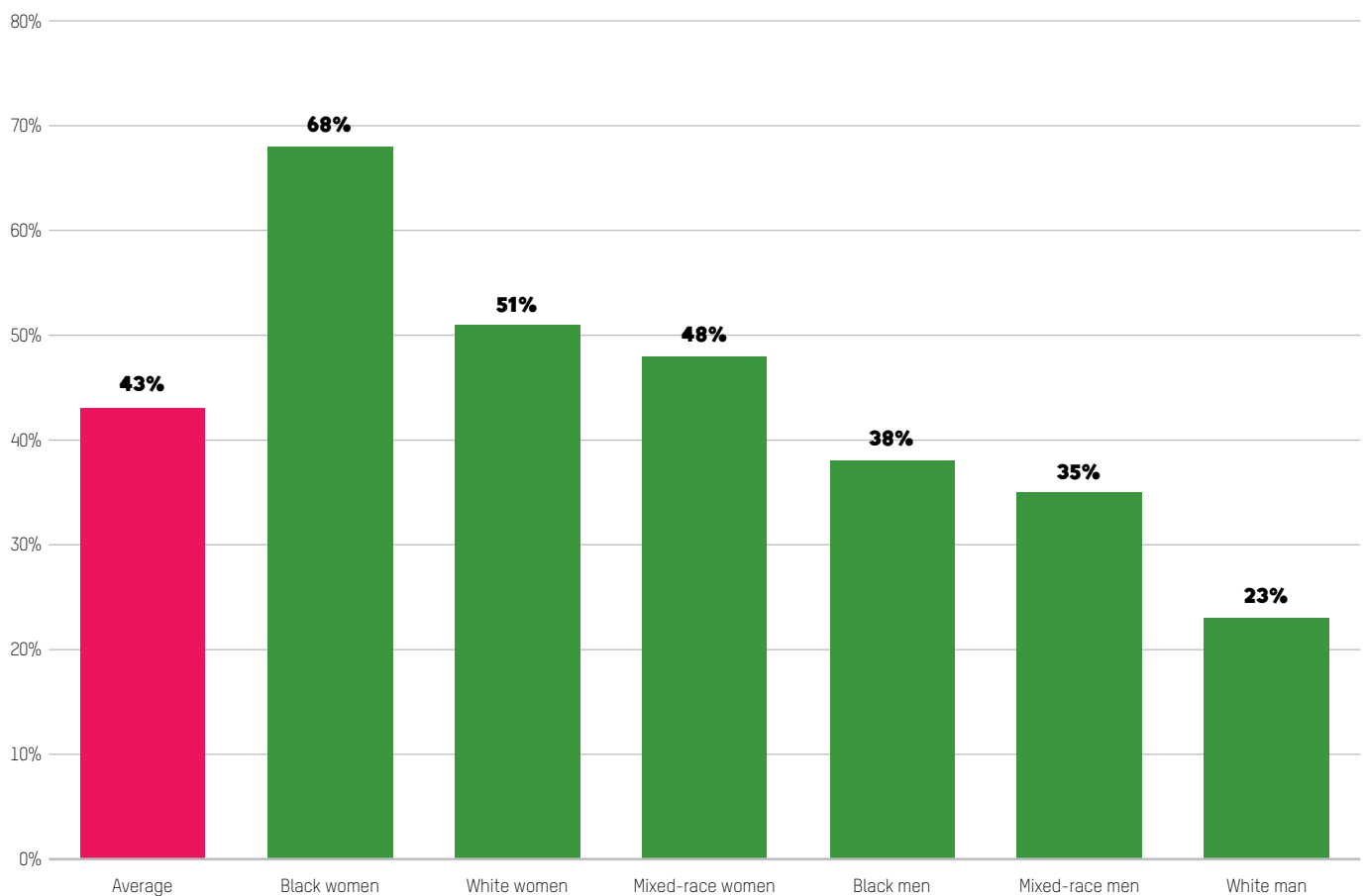Question: Agree/disagree with the statements "women are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office than men because they are women" and "blacks are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office than whites are because they are black."

While, on average, a consolidated majority recognizes gender and race inequality in political representation – in a proportion higher than two to one – important variations emerge when we look at the intersection between race and gender. Considering the statement "women are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office than men because they are women," the average difference between agreement and disagreement is 43 percentage points (see **Graph 14**). Among women only, the difference rises to 53 percentage points: 51 p.p. among white women, 68 p.p. among black women, and 48 p.p. among mixed-race women. When considering only men, the difference is 31 percentage points: 23 p.p. among white men, 38 p.p. among black men, and 35 p.p. among mixed-race men.

GRAPH 14.

Difference between agreement and disagreement about political inequality and gender – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

Regarding the statement "blacks are less likely to be elected to executive and legislative public office than whites because they are black," the gap between agreement and disagreement is 38 percentage points on average (see **Graph 15**). Considering only black people, it rises to 57 percentage points: 46 p.p. among black men and 65 p.p. among black women. Among mixed-race people, the difference is 37 percentage points: 29 p.p. among mixed-race men and 44 p.p. among mixed-race women. Finally, among white people, the gap is 28 percentage points: 17 p.p. among white men and 39 p.p. among white women.

GRAPH 15.
Difference between agreement and disagreement on political inequality and race – 2022
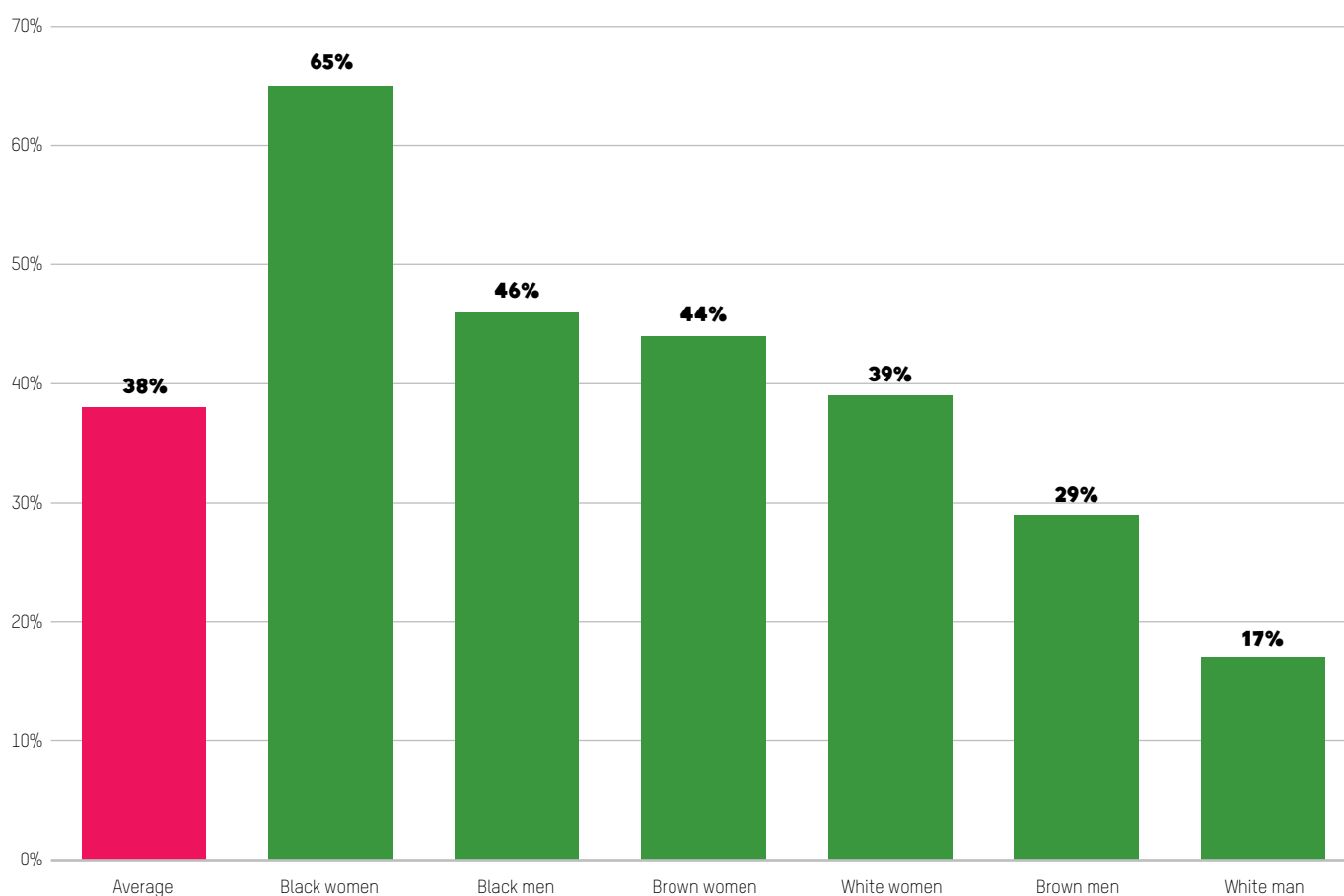
Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

3.
PERCEPTIONS OF SOCIAL POLICIES AND TAXATION

3.1.
THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PROTECTION POLICIES

The health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic demanded the adoption of measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus, including social isolation and, later, mass vaccination all over the world – although vaccine inequality is still a sad reality, with only about 15% of the population in low-income countries having received at least one shot,[22] while more than 80% of shots were purchased by G20 countries.[23] The economic impact of the pandemic caused the adoption of social protection measures across the globe,[24] including reflection on the inadequacy of maintaining austerity policies in the context of the Covid-19 crisis.[25]

In Brazil, the pandemic further worsened the social and economic crisis that began in 2015. The country was structurally vulnerable even before the pandemic, with a scenario of lower budgetary investment in social policies, mainly after Constitutional Amendment 95 of 2016 (known as "Expenditure Ceiling") passed in Congress. With Covid-19, the impacts were multiple: record unemployment in April 2021,[26] almost 600,000 businesses closed,[27] poorly designed and implemented programs and policies that promoted precarious working conditions for young people and vulnerable groups,[28] increase in cases of domestic violence[29] and skyrocketing levels of food insecurity in Brazil, with 60% households without a guaranteed meal for the next day and 33.1 million people living in hunger in early 2022.[30]

Experts have underscored the importance of establishing a social protection network that is dynamic enough to be quickly expanded to protect mainly poorer people in the event of health, social or economic crises.[31]

Along with other inclusive social policies, social protection programs are governments' primary means to combat inequalities in Brazil, and the overwhelming majority of the population see the government as the key player in reducing the gap between rich and poor. Therefore, Oxfam Brasil included specific questions in this survey about government engagement in the adoption of public policies.
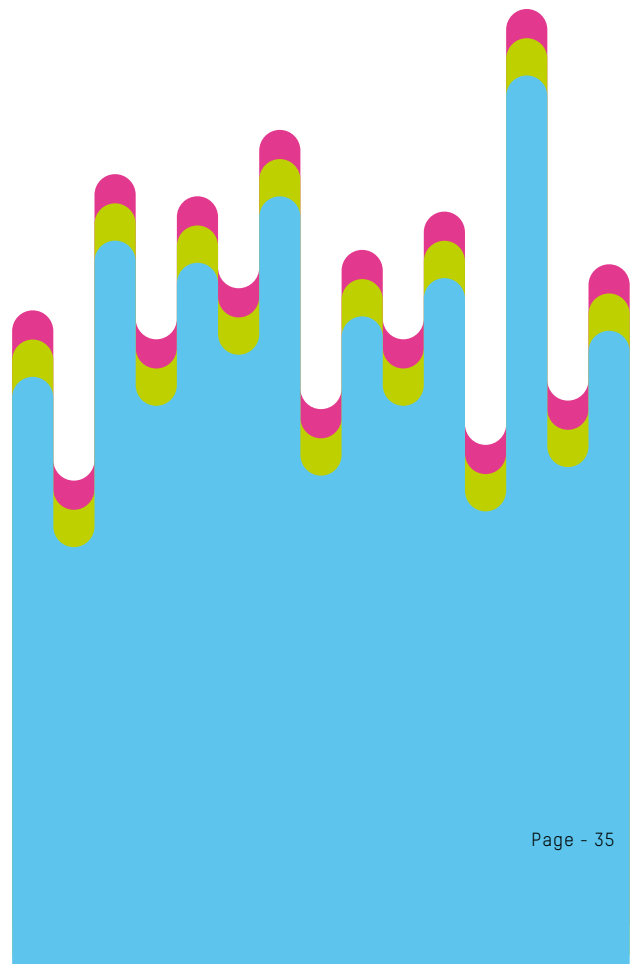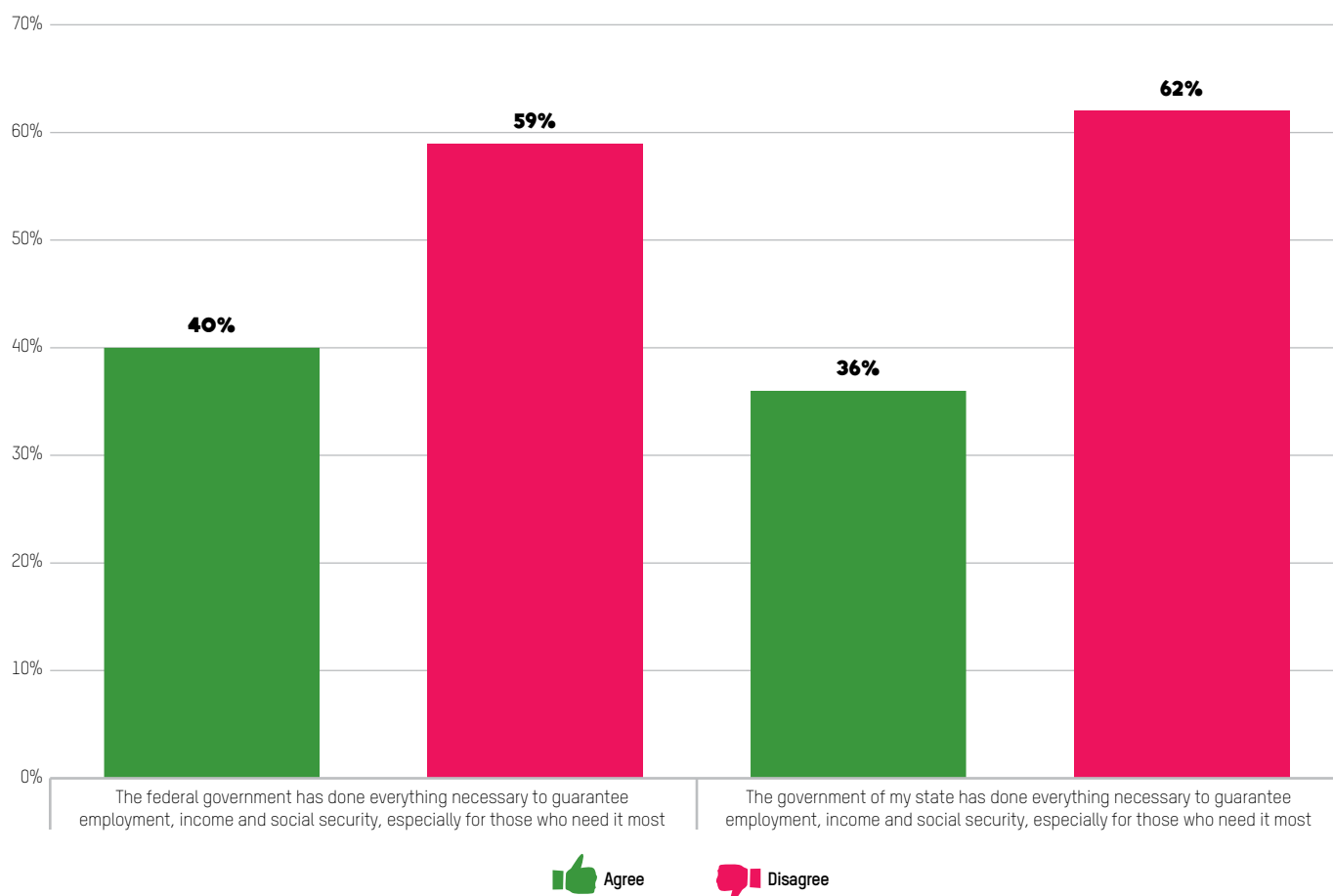
For 59% of Brazilians, the federal government has not done enough to guarantee employment, income and social protection for the population, especially for those who need them most; 40% are satisfied with the actions of the federal government (See **Graph 16**). Dissatisfaction is higher among young people aged 16-24 (61%), people with higher education (70%) or those who earn more than five minimum wages (68%), residents of the Southeast region (65%) and cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (65%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (75%), Brazilians whose social class status dropped in the last five years (64%), and black women (66%). Approval of federal government actions to guarantee employment, income and social protection is higher among those who have elementary education (50%), live in the Centre-West (48%) or North (48%) regions, beneficiaries of Brazil Aid (49 %), and white men (44%).

The actions of governments of states and the Federal District to guarantee employment, income and social protection for the population are disapproved by 62%, especially the poorest; 36% approve (See **Graph 16**). Disapproval is higher than average among Brazilians aged 35-44 (67%), people with higher education (74%), residents of the Southeast region (69%) and cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (66%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (73%) and women earning more than one minimum wage (68%). Approval of actions taken by the governments of states and the Federal District is higher than average among those who have elementary education (47%), residents of the South region (45%), beneficiaries of the Continuous Welfare Benefit – BPC/LOAS (44%) or Brazil Aid (44%), among those who consider their social class status has improved in the last five years (43%), and men who earn up to one minimum wage (44%).

GRAPH 16.
Role of governments in guaranteeing employment, income and social protection – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2022

	The federal government has done everything necessary to guarantee employment, income and social security, especially for those who need it most	The government of my state has done everything necessary to guarantee employment, income and social security, especially for those who need it most
Agree	40%	36%
Disagree	59%	62%

👍 Agree   👎 Disagree

3.2.
INCOME TRANSFER PROGRAMS

In a scenario of economic and social crisis worsened by the impacts of Covid-19, the debate on income transfer programs is again the order of the day in Brazil. In the first two years of the coronavirus pandemic, Emergency Aid played a prominent role. The emergency program created after mobilization of civil society and Congress reached almost 68 million Brazilians (31% of the population) at its peak between April and August 2020, with investment of almost R$ 322 billion,[32] which corresponds to 4% of the country's GDP. The program contributed to reducing Brazil's poverty rate from 11% at the end of 2019 to 4.5% in August 2020[33] – a remarkable effect considering the pandemic context faced at the time.

However, Emergency Aid payment was reduced in the final quarter of 2020 and was interrupted in the early months of 2021, with direct impact on hunger, poverty and extreme poverty: in January 2021, the poverty rate in Brazil jumped to 12.8%, a level not seen since 2011.[34] While federal government officials stated that the continuity of Emergency Aid would worsen the lives of the poorest,[35] the benefit was renewed[36] for April-December 2021, but with reduced values and coverage, going from just under 68 million beneficiaries to 46 million, that is, two thirds of the original coverage, which undermined its effect as a barrier against hunger and poverty.

With the end of Emergency Aid in 2021, all eyes turned to the pre-existing pandemic income transfer structure. In the last quarter of 2021, the Family Aid Program (*Programa Bolsa-Família, PBF*) – internationally recognized in its 18 years of existence – was terminated, giving way to a new program: Brazil Aid.[37] Experts pointed out[38] significant flaws in the new policy, including difficulty to measure impacts, problems with the so-called Single Register and only a slight increase in Family Aid's coverage, precisely at a time when a more robust program was needed to support the vulnerable population.[39] After the end of Emergency Aid, it is estimated that about 20 million people were excluded from income transfer programs in 2022,[40] considering the difference in scope of the emergency benefit (Emergency Aid) and the ordinary program (Brazil Aid). Even the promise of eliminating the waiting list of new beneficiaries[41] is far from being achieved: estimates by the National Confederation of Municipalities (CNM) indicated that the supressed demand for Brazil Aid reached 1.3 million families in May 2022.[42] In July, Congress approved Constitutional Amendment 123 of 2022, temporarily increasing Brazil Aid benefits from R$ 400 to R$ 600 until December.[43] While the measure was in line with civil society demands since the beginning of the pandemic, it was adopted during the period of electoral restrictions, making it impossible to dissociate it from the merely electoral purposes of President Jair Bolsonaro's administration.[44] This fear intensified with the 2023 Annual Budget Bill submitted to Congress by the Federal Government in September 2022, which did not provide for an increase in Brazil Aid benefits in 2023.[45]

Given this scenario, the survey sought to assess public perception about income transfer programs, especially the role of the new Brazil Aid.
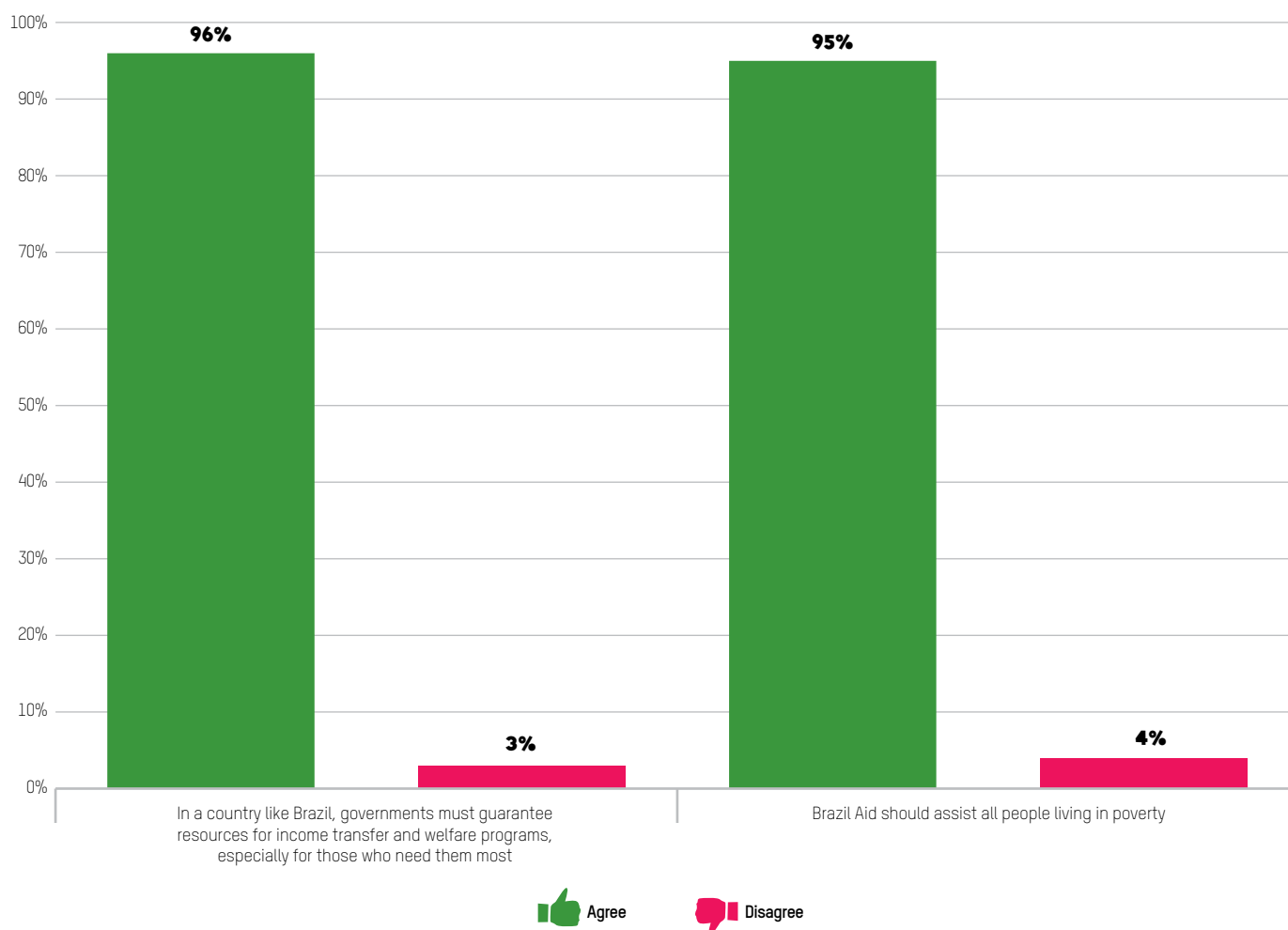
For 96% of Brazilians, it is the government's duty to guarantee funds for income transfer and welfare programs, especially for those who need it most; only 3% disagree (see Graph 17). This is the highest consensus found in the entire survey. In some strata, there is virtually full agreement, including people with secondary education (97%), with income of up to one minimum wage (97%), residents of the Northeast (97%) and North regions (97%), and municipalities with up to 50,000 inhabitants (97%), Brazilians who receive Continuous Welfare Benefit – BPC/LOAS (98%) or Brazil Aid (98%), people self-identified as black or mixed-race (97%), adherents of Spiritism (98%) and African-Brazilian religions (97%) or evangelicals (97%), and black women. Although very low on average (3%), disagreement about the state's duties towards income transfer and social protection programs is higher among people with higher education (5%), those who earn more than five minimum wages (7 %) or who place themselves in the upper middle class (11%), residents of municipalities with 50,000-200,000 inhabitants (5%), and white men (5%).

Such highly widespread perception of government's duty to provide cash transfer programs is repeated when the role of Brazil Aid is mentioned specifically. For 95% of Brazilians, Brazil Aid should cover all people living in poverty; only 4% disagree (see **Graph 17**). Support is even higher – reaching virtually the entire range when we consider the margin of error – among people aged 25-36 (98%), Brazilians who earn up to one minimum wage (97%), residents of the Northeast region (97%) and cities with 200,000-500,000 inhabitants (97%), beneficiaries of

Brazil Aid (98%) and Gas Aid (98%), and people self-identified as Asian-Brazilians (98%) or indigenous people (98%). Disagreement is higher than average among people over 45 years of age (6%), with individual incomes of 3-5 minimum wages (8%) and above 5 minimum wages (7%), adherents of Spiritism (9 %), and women who earn more than one minimum wage (7%).

GRAPH 17.
Income transfer programs and government role – 2022
Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

In a country like Brazil, governments must guarantee resources for income transfer and welfare programs, especially for those who need them most — Agree 96%, Disagree 3%

Brazil Aid should assist all people living in poverty — Agree 95%, Disagree 4%

👍 Agree 👎 Disagree

3.3.
HIGHER SUPPORT FOR TAXATION IN GENERAL AND OF THE RICH

The much-needed reform of Brazil's tax system remains on hold. Several legislative propositions involve relevant aspects of the tax reform debate, but public officials' statements supporting it do not find enough support for the topic to be voted in the Chamber of Deputies and the Federal Senate. Two propositions illustrate that dynamic.

The first is Bill 2337 of 2021, which changes income tax rules.[46] Introduced by the Federal Government in June 2021, it had positive aspects in terms of increasing the progressive nature of the tax system, including the re-establishment of a 20% tax rate on profits and dividends in individual income tax – it was abolished in 1995; the end of the possibility of reducing companies' tax base by declaring accounting profits; and measures to combat tax evasion. When the bill reached the Chamber of Deputies, it underwent numerous changes, eroding the social justice gains of the original proposal, in part due to pressure from economic groups not happy with potential increase in corporate taxes whose current rates are below the OECD average.[47] The bill was voted in September 2021 by the Chamber of Deputies and then went to the Federal Senate, which, in mid-April 2022, awaited the opinion of the rapporteur, Senator Ângelo Coronel, who has already expressed his opposition to its approval.[48]

The second bill is the Proposed Constitutional Amendment (PEC) 110 of 2019, one of the main pieces of legislation linked to the reform, which focuses on simplifying consumption taxes. Its approval gained momentum in early 2022[49] when it entered the agenda of the Senate's Constitution and Justice Committee (CCJ), and rapporteur Senator Roberto Rocha presented his report.[50] This perspective of progress, however, ceased after the topic was withdrawn from the CCJ agenda in meetings in April[51] and May 2022[52] – when it was last debated on the Committee until this survey was published.

It is worth noting that the tax reform debate has stopped in Congress precisely when the Federal Government encourages three legislative propositions related to the subject[53] as priorities on its parliamentary agenda[54] – although it made little effort for their approval –, in addition to the matter being frequently mentioned by presidential candidates in the 2022 election.[55]

This survey shows consolidated support for higher taxation – especially of the very rich – to fund public social policies: 85% of Brazilians agree with tax increases for very wealthy people to ensure better education, health care and housing for those who need them – a difference of 14 percentage points over the first survey in 2017. See **Graph 18**.

Such support is even higher among people aged 60 and over (90%), with elementary education (90%), with family incomes of up to one minimum wage (91%), residents of the Northeast region (88%) and cities with up to 50,000 inhabitants (87%), beneficiaries of Brazil Aid (89%), people who claim that their social class status has deteriorated in the last five years (88%), and black women (88%). The idea was rejected above average (14% over 28% in 2017) by people with higher education (19%), earning more than five minimum wages (34%), Brazilians who rank themselves as upper middle class (29%), people who say their social class status has improved in the last five years (18%), and white men (16%). The largest difference between agreement and disagreement is found among those with family incomes of up to one minimum wage (83 percentage points); the smallest gap is found among Brazilians with individual income over five minimum wages (32 percentage points).

GRAPH 18.

Brazil – Support for higher taxes on the very rich to fund social policies – 2017-2022
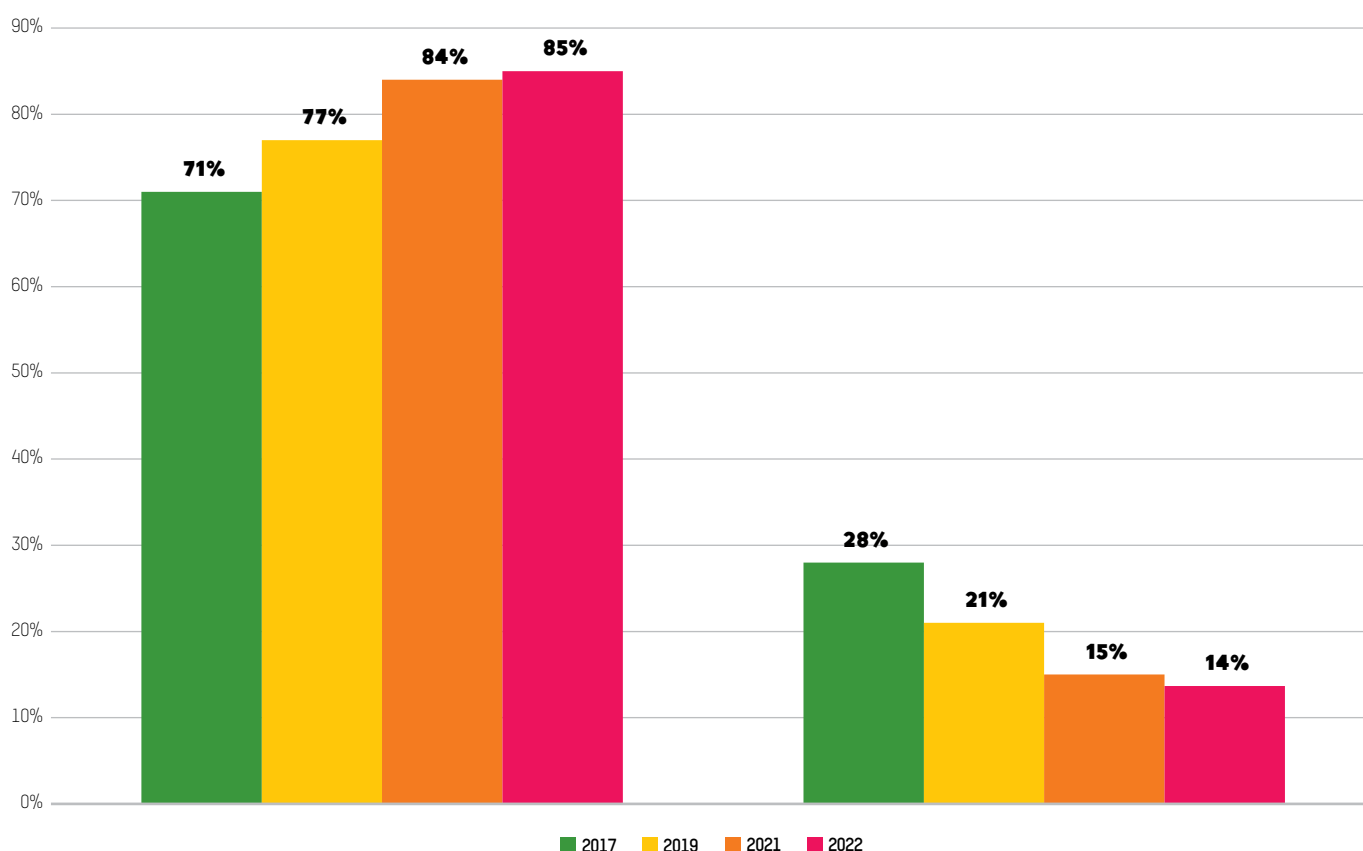
Sources: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2022

Legend: 2017 2019 2021 2022

Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "The federal government should increase taxes for the very rich only, to ensure better education, health care and housing for people in need."

Note: Figures refer to the sum of partial and total agreement.

The trend towards increased support for higher taxation to fund social policies, which led to unprecedented reversal in support for more taxes regardless of income in the 2021 survey, remains in this survey: 56% of Brazilians agree with increasing taxes in general to improve education, health care and housing – the same percentage found in 2021; they were 24% in 2017; 43% disagree, also repeating the percentage of 2021; in 2017, they were 75%. That is, in five years, support for higher taxes to fund social policies has increased more than twice, by 32 percentage points, the same as the percentage of those who disagree with the proposal. See **Graph 19**.

Support for more taxes to fund social policies is even higher among young people aged 16-24 (60%), with primary education (66%), with family incomes of up to one minimum wage (64%), living in the Northeast region (62%), beneficiaries of Brazil Aid (66%) or Gas Aid (66%), receiving the Continuous Welfare Benefit (65%), mixed-race women (62%), and black men (63%). Rejection of higher taxes exceeds the average among people aged 25-34 (47%), with higher education (59%) or individual incomes of 3-5 minimum wages (60%), residents of the Southeast region (48 %), people who do not receive Brazil Aid (46%), and white men (51%). The largest gap between agreement and disagreement is found among those who receive Brazil Aid or Gas Aid (34 percentage points). The largest difference between disagreement and agreement – that is, among those who mostly disapprove of higher taxation – is found among people with individual incomes of 3-5 minimum wages (20 percentage points).

GRAPH 19.
Brazil – Support to increasing taxes in general to fund social policies – 2017-2022

Sources: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2020
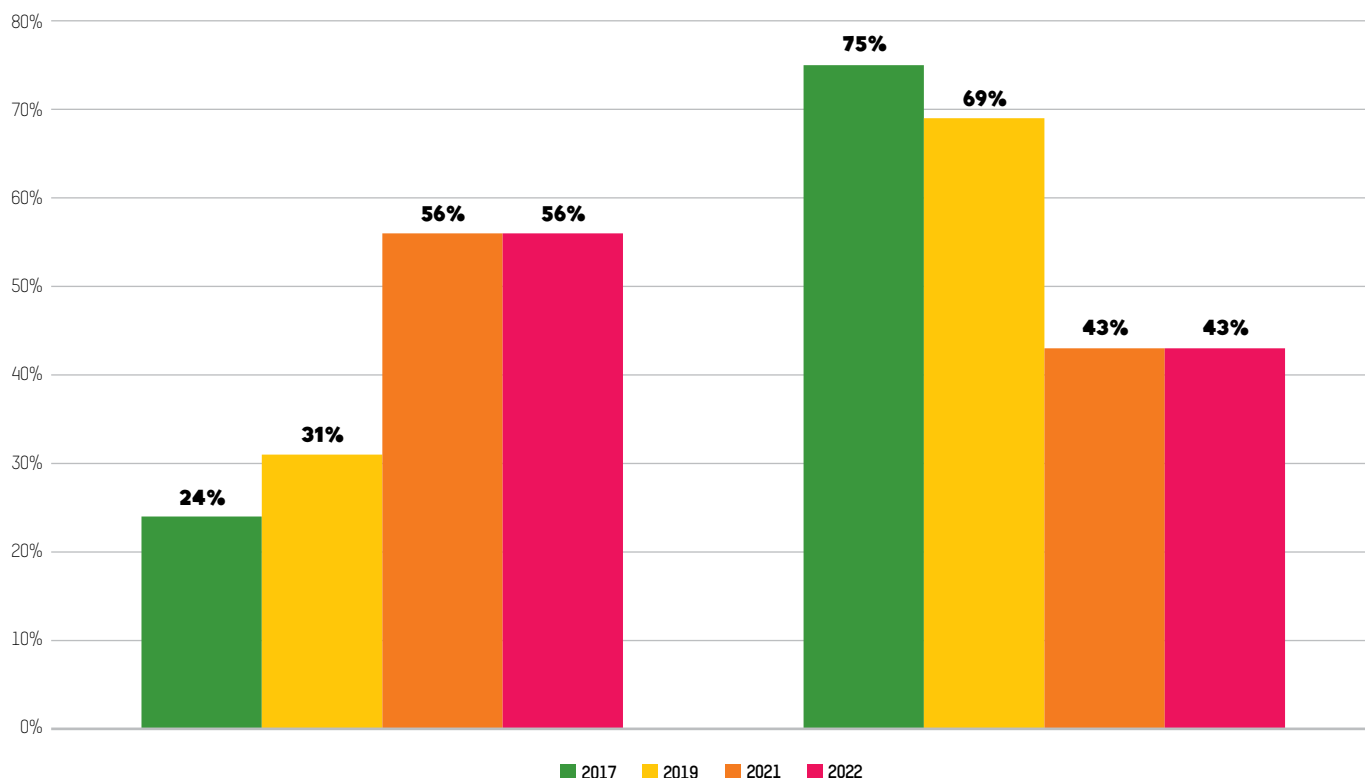
Legend: 2017 · 2019 · 2021 · 2022
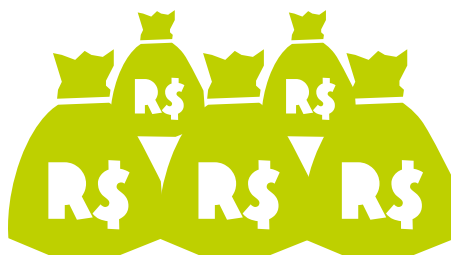
Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "The federal government should increase taxes in general to provide better education, more health care and more housing for people in need."

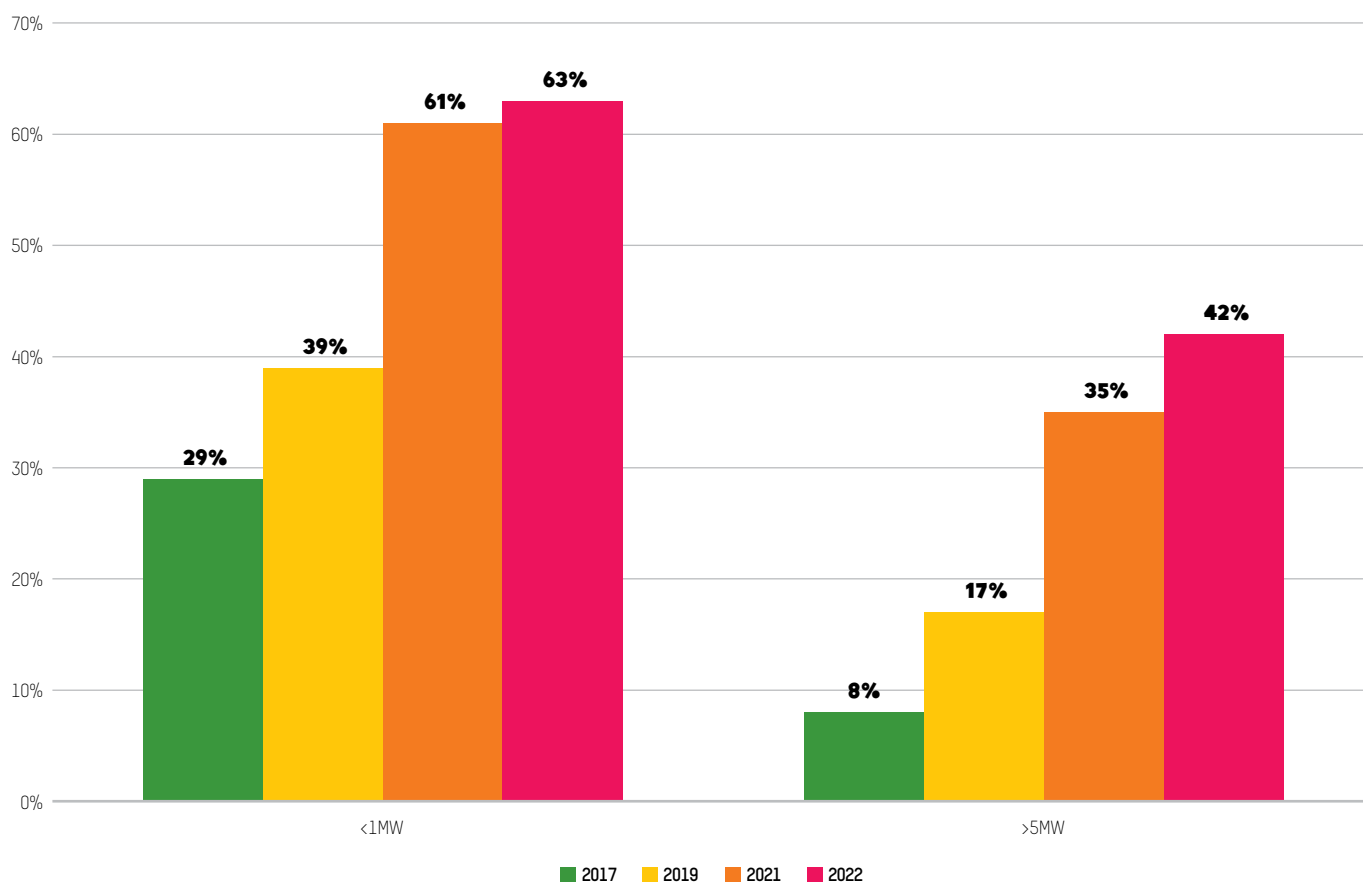Note: Figures refer to the sum of partial and total agreement.

From 2017 to 2022, there was steady growth in support for taxation in general also when we look at distinct income strata (see **Graph 20**). Considering the group with incomes of up to one minimum wage, it jumped from 29% in 2017 to 63% in 2022 – a significant increase of 34 percentage points. While the increase among Brazilians with incomes above five minimum wages has been also 34 p.p. since the first survey, it represents more than five times the percentage found in 2017, jumping from 8% to 42% in 2022. It should be noted, however, that among Brazilians who earn more than five minimum wages, disagreement (58%) still exceeds agreement (42%).

GRAPH 20.

Brazil – Support for taxation of people in general to fund social policies – 2017-2022

Sources: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2017, 2019, 2020 and 2022

Question: Agree/disagree with the statement: "The federal government should increase taxes in general to provide better education, more health care and more housing for people in need."

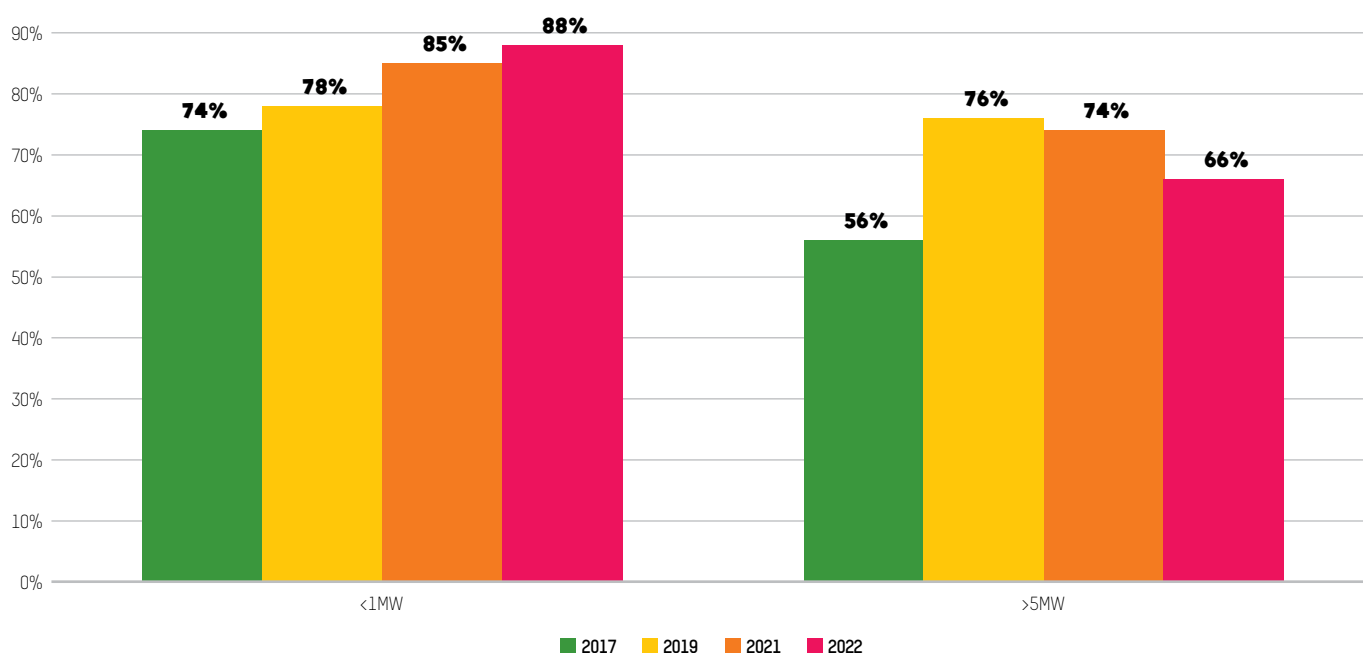Note: Figures refer to the sum of partial and total agreement.

Support for taxation of wealthier people to fund social policies varied to a lesser extent (see **Graph 21**). From 2017 to 2022, support rose from 74% to 88% among Brazilians earning up to one minimum wage – a increase of 14 percentage points on a continuous rising trend. On the other hand, two trends are seen among the richest: a sharp increase in support between 2017 and 2019 (from 56% to 76%) and a successive drop in the following surveys: 74% in 2021 and 66% in 2022.

GRAPH 21.

Brazil – Support to taxation of the very rich to fund social policies – 2017-2022

Sources: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2017, 2019 and 2020

Question: Agree/disagree with the statement that "the federal government should increase taxes on the very rich to improve education, health care and housing for people in need."

Note: Figures refer to the sum of partial and total agreement.

When asked about the destination of taxes, Brazilians displayed broad support for the use of funds in social public policies that mainly benefit the poorer, a trend that has remained stable in all editions of this survey – 94% support the use of tax revenues to benefit mainly education, housing and health care for the poorer; that is the same percentage found in 2019 and 2021. Only 5% disagree. Support is even higher among young people aged 16-24 (96%), people with individual incomes between 2 and 3 minimum wages (97%), residents of municipalities with 200,000-500,000 inhabitants (96%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (97%), people who say their social class status has deteriorated in the last five years (96%), and black women (96%). Disagreement exceeds the average among those earning more than five minimum wages (16%), residents of municipalities with 50,000-200,000 inhabitants (7%), and white men (7%).

The solidarity bringing together more than 90% Brazilians in favour of using tax money to fund social public policies aimed at the most vulnerable population is in line with the very broad support to the idea that the government must guarantee resources for income transfer and social assistance programs (see **Section 3.2**), whose support reaches 96% of Brazilians.

3.4.
ACTIVE GOVERNMENT AND UNIVERSAL POLICIES

The upward trajectory that mobilized the support of the vast majority of the population to governments' actions to combat inequalities was present once again in this survey (see **Graph 22**). Such perceptions confirm alignment with Article 3, item III, of Brazil's Federal Constitution of 1988, which places reducing inequalities as one of the country's guiding principles.

In 2022, 87% of Brazilians agreed that, in a country like Brazil, governments must work to close the gap between the very rich and the very poor; they were 79% in 2017. This support is even higher among people with family incomes of 1-2 minimum wages (89%), black women (90%), and women earning up to one minimum wage (89%). Disagreement exceeds the average (12%) among people with higher education (15%), who earn more than five minimum wages (24%), residents of the North region (17%), and beneficiaries of Gas Aid (16%).

The government also has to make reducing regional inequalities a priority according to 90% of Brazilians; they were 81% in 2017. This support is even higher among people with family incomes of 2-3 minimum wages (92%), residents of municipalities with 200,000-500,000 inhabitants (92%), and black people (92%) or Asian-Brazilians (96%). Disagreement is higher than average (9%) among people with individual incomes above five minimum wages (16%), residents of cities with 50,000-200,000 inhabitants (12%), and self-declared indigenous people (15%).
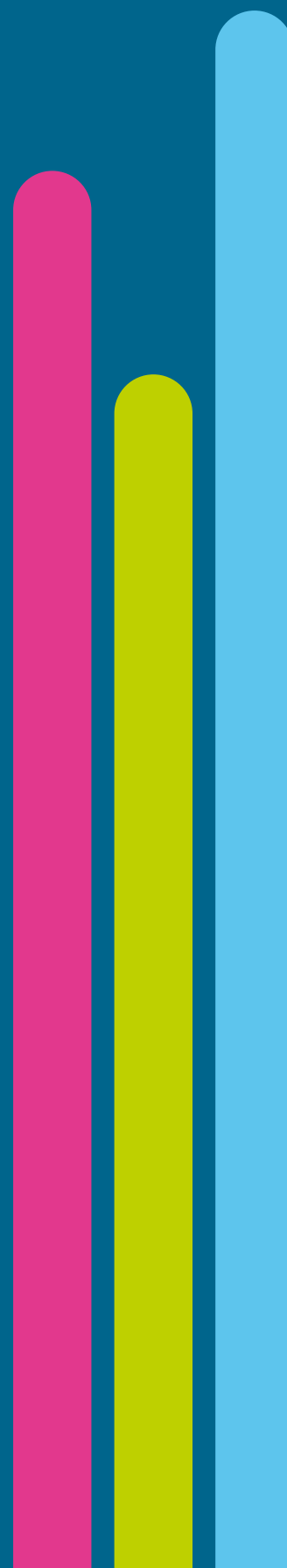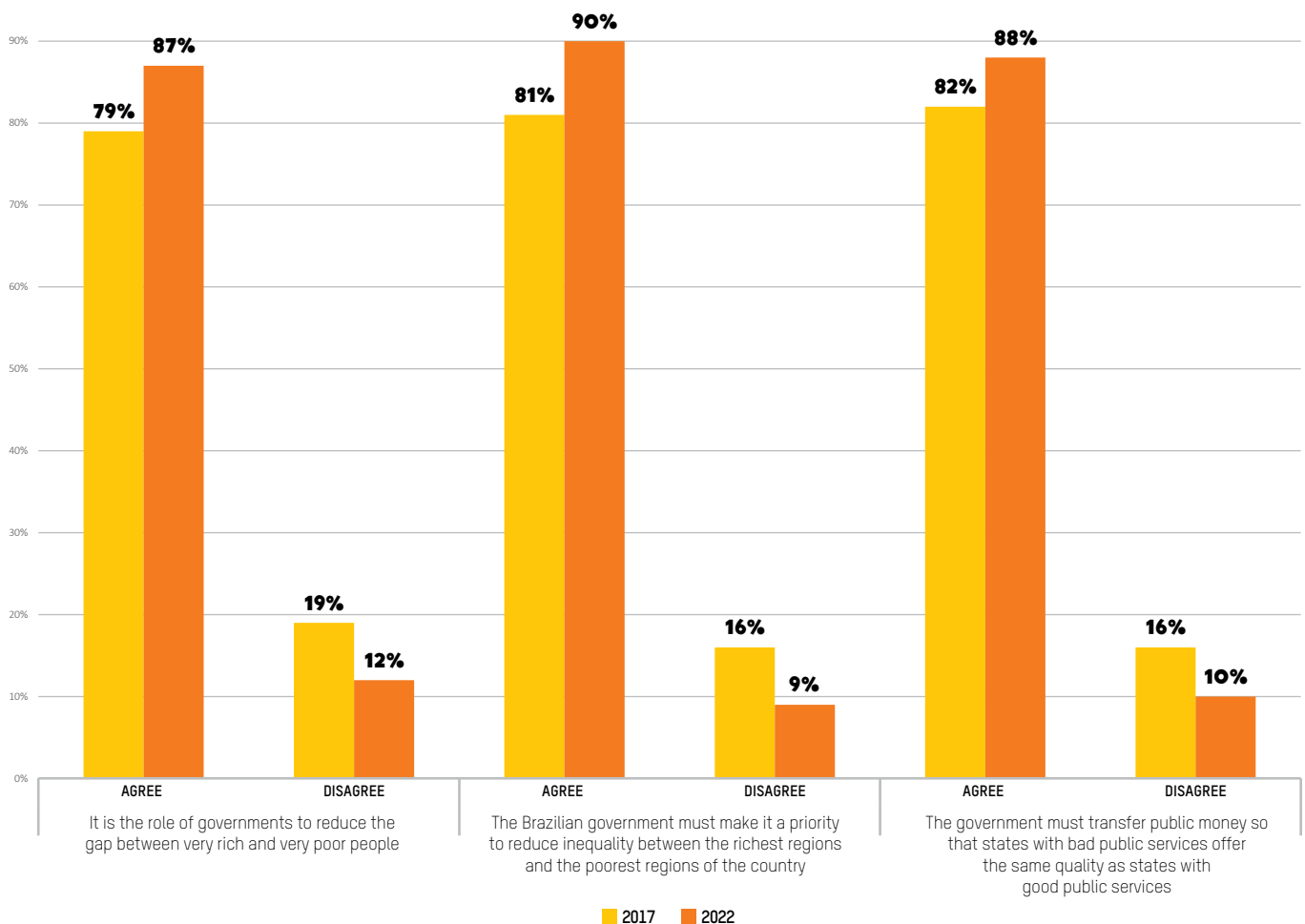
There is also strong support for the need for government investments to ensure that states with inadequate public services offer their populations quality services similar to richer states, as indicated by 88% of Brazilians; they were 82% in 2017. The agreement exceeds the average among young people aged 16-24 (92%), with family incomes between 1 and 2 minimum wages (90%), residents of the Centre-West region (91%), people who receive Continuous Welfare Benefit – BPC/LOAS (91%) or adherents of African-Brazilian religions (94%). Disagreement is higher than average (11% over 16% in 2017) among people aged 45-59 (16%), Brazilians earning more than five minimum wages (21%), and white men (14%).

GRAPH 22.
Brazil – Role of the State in reducing inequalities – 2017 and 2022

Sources: Oxfam Brasil/Datafolha 2017 and 2022

AGREE — It is the role of governments to reduce the gap between very rich and very poor people: 2017 79%, 2022 87%
DISAGREE: 2017 19%, 2022 12%

AGREE — The Brazilian government must make it a priority to reduce inequality between the richest regions and the poorest regions of the country: 2017 81%, 2022 90%
DISAGREE: 2017 16%, 2022 9%

AGREE — The government must transfer public money so that states with bad public services offer the same quality as states with good public services: 2017 82%, 2022 88%
DISAGREE: 2017 16%, 2022 10%

2017   2022

Note: Figures refer to the sum of partial and total agreement.

In line with the trend seen in previous surveys, support for universal public policies remains strong and increasing, showing the persistence of popular support for the principle of solidarity enshrined in the Federal Constitution of 1988.

As shown in **Graph 23**, support for universal policies varies between 62% and 76% of responses, depending on the services tested. In the case of education, in 2020, 65% of Brazilians believed that the government should provide day care centres and universities for all – they had been 58% in 2021, while 33% wanted those services only for those who could not afford to pay for them, compared to 39% in 2019. Support for universal elementary and secondary education was 74%, over 69% in 2021, and only 24% of respondents supported targeting those who could not afford it, compared to 29% in 2021. As for health care policies, support for universality and targeting was 68% and 31%, respectively (compared to 65% and 35% in 2021) in the case of surgeries and treatments for serious illnesses; 68% and 31% (compared to 62% and 37% in 2021) in the case of medical tests, and 76% and 24% (compared to 72% and 27% in 2021) for care at health units and hospitals.

GRAPH 23.

Brazil – Support for universal, targeted or no state intervention in health care and education – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022
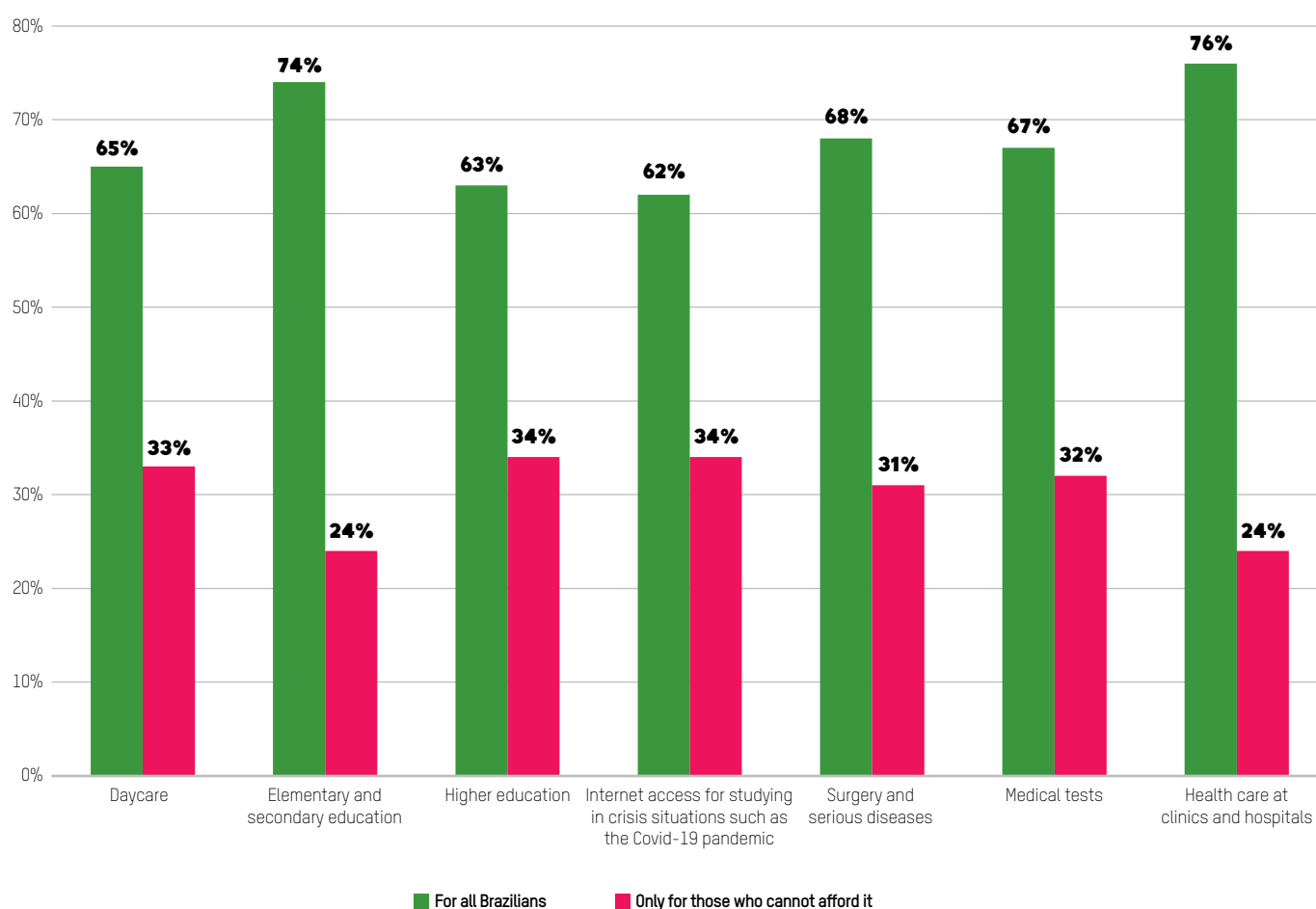
Question: "In your opinion, should the government provide [specific service] for all Brazilians, only for Brazilians who cannot afford to pay or for no one – and everyone should pay for that service?.

This survey includes, for the first time, a question about support for government-promoted universalization of internet access, with a view to guaranteeing students' right to education through remote classes in crisis situations, as in the case of the pandemic – 62% agree with universal internet access policies for students in crisis situations such as the pandemic; 34% support it only for those who cannot pay. Support for universal access is even higher among young people aged 16-24 (67%), people with family incomes of more than five minimum wages (67%), residents of the Centre-West region (66%) or cities with 50,000-200,000 inhabitants (65%), adherents of African-Brazilian religions (72%), those who claim that their social class status has worsened in the last five years (66%), and black men (66%). Support for targeting exceeds the average among residents of the South region (37%) or cities with 200,000-500,000 inhabitants (37%), beneficiaries of government pensions (37%), and women with individual incomes of up to a minimum wage (38%).

4.
INEQUALITY AND US: PATHWAYS TO REDUCE IT

Oxfam Brasil's guiding principle is reducing inequalities in the country. Our advocacy work is based on the guidelines inscribed in the Federal Constitution of 1988, which establishes eradication of poverty and marginalization, reduction of social and regional inequalities and promotion of the wellbeing of all people without discrimination os any sort as principles of the Republic.

The constitutional text, together with the wide repertoire accumulated since redemocratization – including principles and structural public policies – consolidates a powerful agenda to build a society based on fairness and solidarity. For the fourth time, Oxfam Brasil tested this agenda with the public interviewed by Instituto Datafolha, seeking to identify Brazilians' views about the importance of some measures for reducing inequalities. **Graph 24** summarizes the results.
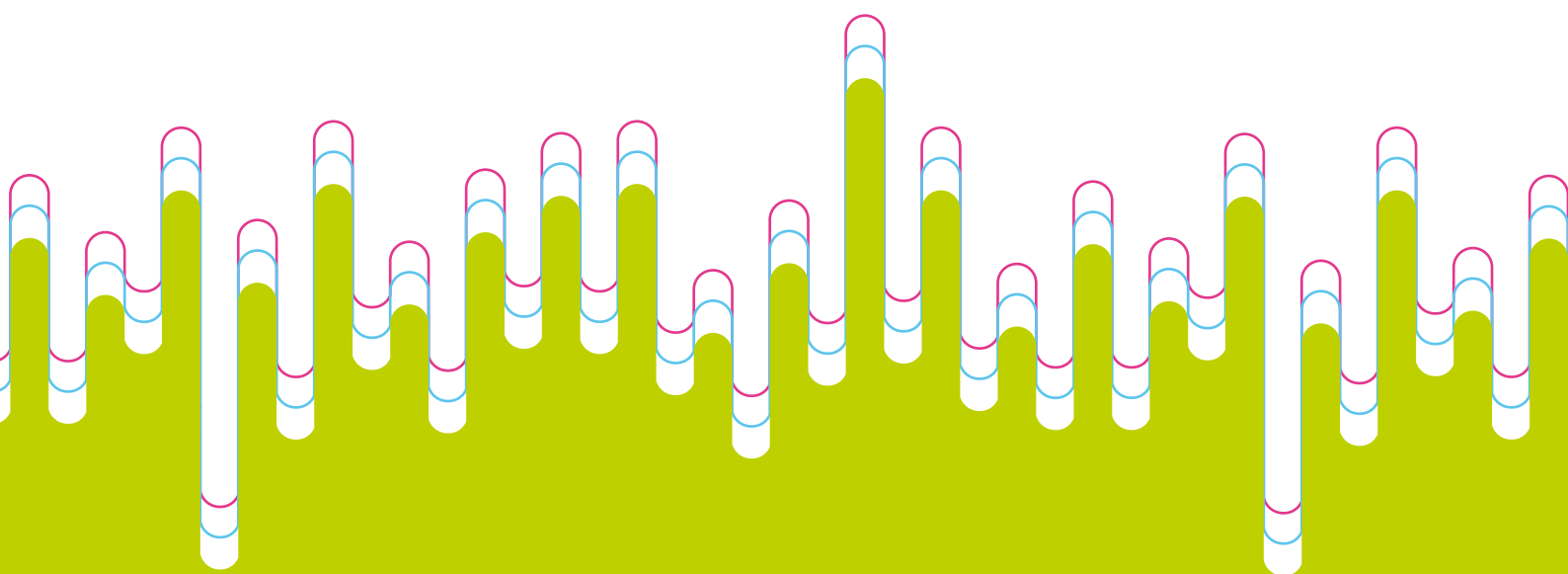
GRAPH 24.
Brazil – Average degrees of importance for ten priority measures to reduce inequalities – 2022

Source: Oxfam Brazil/Datafolha 2022

Measure	General average	Average < 1 MW	Average > 5 MW
Increasing the value of Brazil Aid benefits	8.5	9.0	6.8
Increasing taxes on the richer	8.5	8.7	7.6
Public investment in social assistance	9.3	9.3	9.3
Minimum wage increase	9.5	9.6	8.6
Fighting racism	9.5	9.5	9.5
Guaranteeing equal rights for men and women	9.5	9.6	9.4
Increasing job offer	9.6	9.6	9.4
Public investment in health care	9.6	9.6	9.5
Public investment in education	9.6	9.6	9.7
Fighting corruption	9.6	9.5	9.7

General average   Average < 1 MW   Average > 5 MW

Question: "On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means not at all important and 10 means very important, how important do you consider each measure to reduce the gap between the richest and the poorest in Brazil?"

As a rule, respondents ascribed high importance to all measures, with no item averaging below 8. Oxfam Brasil has proposed some approaches to these measures, in dialog with other social organizations and the population's expectations.

Public investment in health care [9.6] and education [9.6]: These public social policies enjoy broad support among Brazil's population, regardless of social strata, and have proven positive distributive impacts on the lives of the poor and the lower middle classes.[56] The extent and depth of inequalities in Brazil and the large number of people in situations of poverty demand continuous, long-term, progressive and high-quality social investment.

Proposed agenda: Public investment must be a top priority to fulfil people's constitutional social rights to quality and universal health care and education and to expand other social policies. To that end, the Spending Ceiling amendment must be repealed. Fiscal adjustment must prioritize other policies such as those related to taxation. Social spending must be broader, more efficient and more effective. Allocation and execution of public policies and funding must be transparent, allowing society to control them.

Increasing Job opportunities [9.6] and raising the minimum wage [9.5]: Inclusive, distributive policies in the labour market, such as more formal jobs and a real raise in the minimum wage, have the greatest potential for short-term income redistribution,[57] which may be why they enjoy broad support in society. Brazil must tackle its low job opportunities and ensure that unemployment is overcome through the creation of decent jobs. The decline in the unemployment rate in recent months, undoubtedly a positive development, came with more precarious jobs, contributing to a general fall in labour income in Brazil.[58] The rate of severe food insecurity in households where the reference person holds a formal job is almost half of that observed in households where the reference person does informal work.[59] For the first time in three decades, the current administration will end with a real minimum wage lower than it was when it started.[60]

Proposed agenda: Oxfam Brasil advocates decent, formal jobs for all, which includes a review of the labour reform in terms of precarisation of labour and flexibilization of rights. Real raises in the minimum wage have been a pillar for reducing Brazil's income inequalities in recent years and must be resumed.

Fighting corruption [9.6]: The fight against corruption has broad popular support in all income brackets, but more so among people with higher incomes (9.7). Corruption is a historical issue in the country that must be confronted since it not only takes important resources away from social policies but also undermines people's trust in our democratic institutions.

Proposed agenda: Oxfam Brasil advocates a State that works for all rather than defending the interests of a few. We must develop accountability and transparency mechanisms, including effective regulation of lobbies and stronger structures for civil society to participate. The Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches must work to recover confidence in public institutions rather than destroy them, to make the fight against corruption effective. Public budgets and government actions must be transparent and open to monitoring by society.

Equal rights for women and men [9.5] and fighting racism [9.5]: Policies to fight discrimination against women and racism are crucial to tackle Brazil's inequalities. In terms of gender issues, challenges remain regarding policies for day care and other services (which women have to provide), policies to fight violence against women and promote gender equality, among others. On race, there are monumental challenges involving inclusive education, quotas in universities, companies and public service, as well as fighting institutional racism.

Proposed agenda: Oxfam Brasil advocates setting targets to reduce race or gender inequality and implementing policies that vehemently fight institutional racism and promote equality. Gender and racial inequalities are also a reflection of power structures marked by underrepresentation of women and black people. To change this situation, priorities must include democratizing political parties, ensuring material equity in campaign financing, and adopting stricter limits for electoral donations.

Public investment in social assistance [9.3] and increase in the value of Brazil Aid benefits [8.5]: Broad support for social protection policies is confirmed here. Differently from previous surveys, support from those with incomes below one minimum wage as well as those who earn more than five minimum wages equals the average, demonstrating broader solidarity regarding the role of social assistance programs, whose progressive nature – that is, their higher impact on the poorer – plays a relevant role in protecting millions of Brazilians. Also noteworthy is the support to increase the value of Brazil Aid, a non-contributory cash transfer program that replaced the Family Aid Program in late 2021. Although, on average, the benefit paid by Brazil Aid is higher than that of defunct Family Aid, coverage is much lower than Emergency Aid, a program that played a major role during the pandemic – especially in 2020 – as a barrier against the explosion of poverty and extreme poverty. The demand for increasing and expanding the new program is consistent with a persistent scenario of economic and social crisis that forced 33.1 million Brazilians to live with hunger – numbers that the country had not seen since the early 1990s.

Proposed agenda: Oxfam Brasil advocates reviewing the current program to re-establish important achievements and learnings recognized in the Family Aid years. This will enable implementing an income transfer program based on social assessment and on evaluation of possible designs in terms of impact on poverty and inequalities, establishing criteria and periodic readjustment of benefits for inflation and reviewing poverty lines for beneficiaries. The budgetary status of the income transfer program must be upgraded to "mandatory without flow control" in order to ensure that all people who meet the criteria are able to claim it, thus mitigating exclusion errors and making income security a right of people living in poverty.

Increasing taxes for the richer [8.5]: Tax reform is a top priority for Congress, in light of its potential positive impact on income distribution. The very broad support for increasing taxes for richer people to fund social policies corroborates this view. A tax reform based on fairness and solidarity is a crucial tool to ensure fiscal soundness with income redistribution.
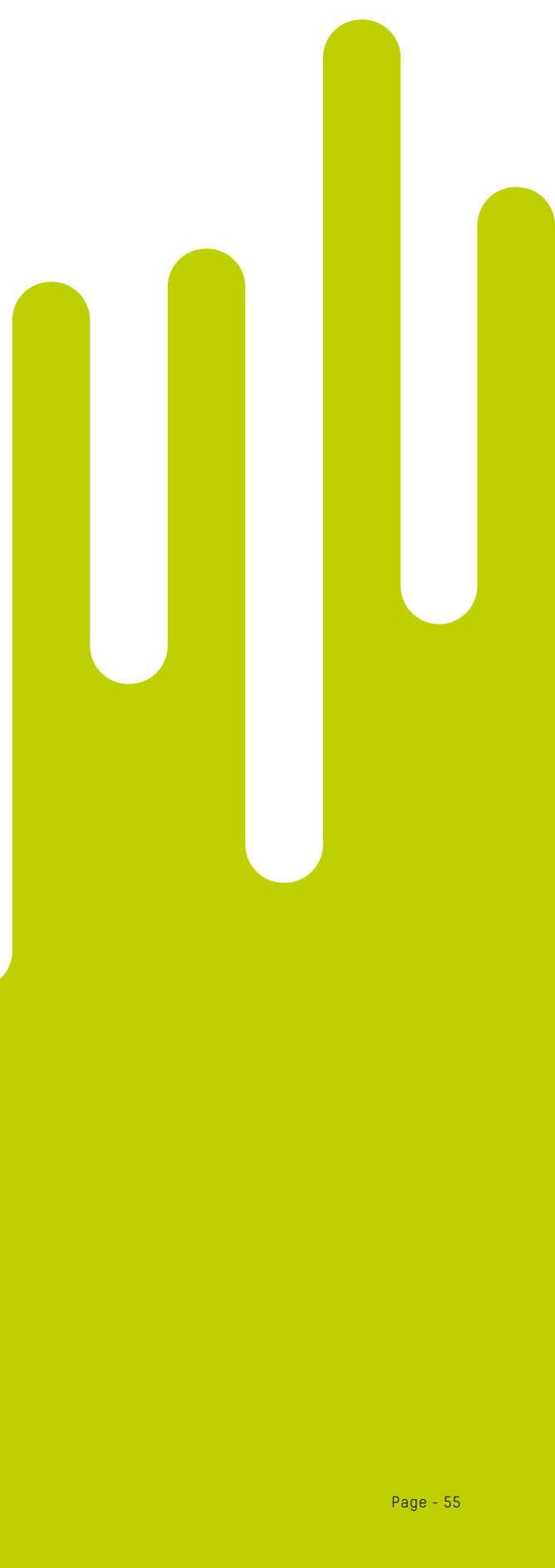
Proposed agenda: A tax reform that puts an end the regressive nature of our tax system is necessary both to improve its current level of injustice and to face economic recovery and fiscal balance challenges. The changes to be defined by Congress and governments must be in line with the Federal Constitution in terms of fair contribution.
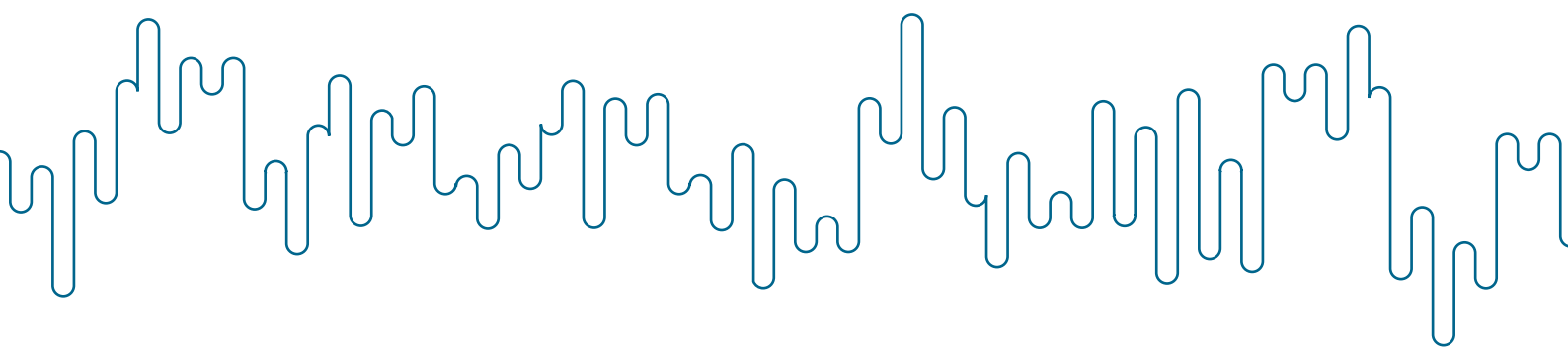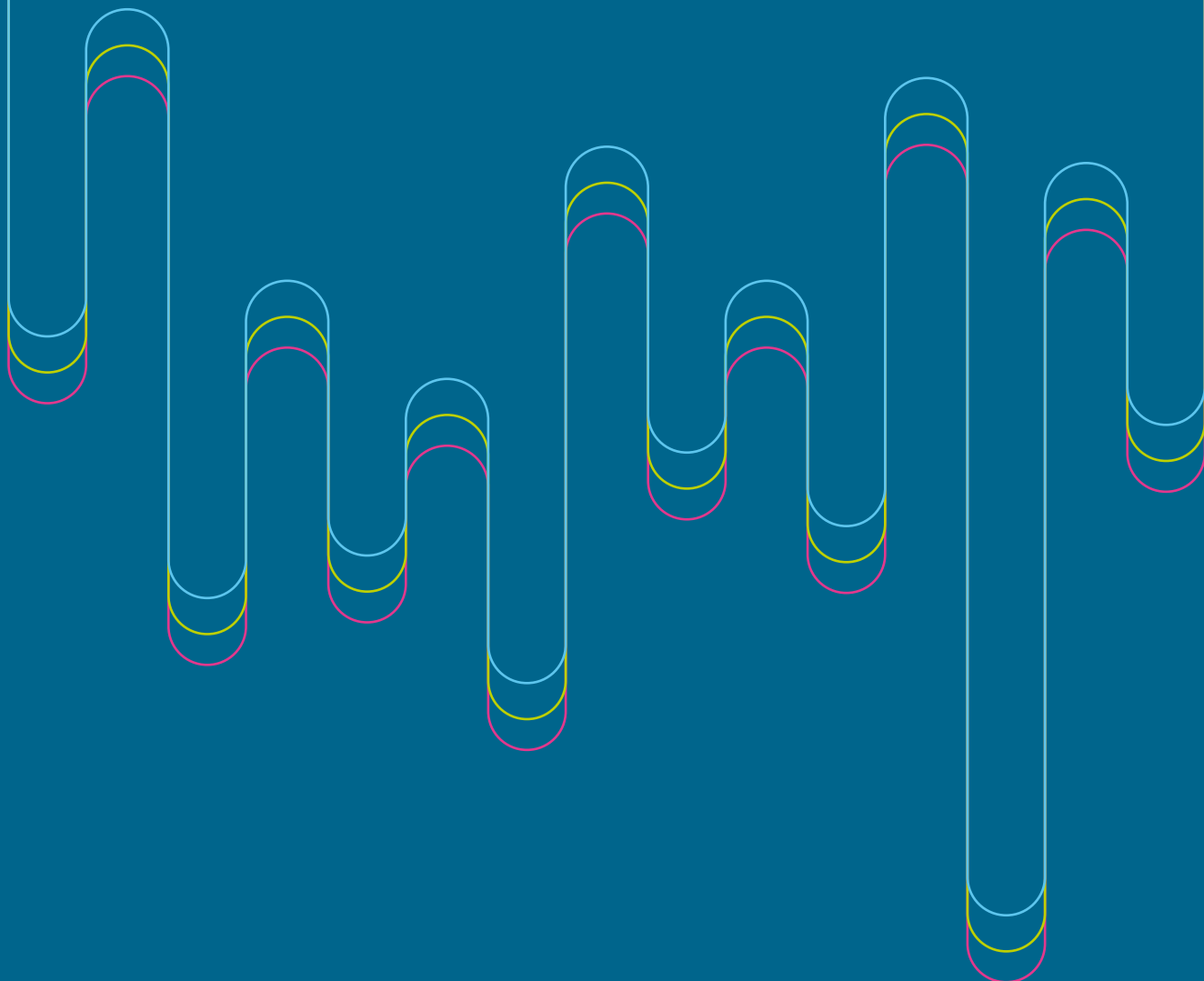
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