



Prof-Filo: Discrepancies and Perspectives of a Professional Master's Program in Philosophy

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to present some peculiar traits of the Graduate Program in Philosophy in the National Network, the Prof-Filo, highlighting the discrepancies observed in its emergence and the way they relate to the format it takes on in its early years of existence. As we will see, such discrepancies that set clear limits to the new program, also allow it to fulfill a peculiar role for the consolidation of the discipline of Philosophy in High School and, indirectly, for the area of Philosophy in the country, offering new elements for the debates. on the identity of Philosophy in Tupiniquin lands.

Keywords: Prof-Filo; Professional Master's Degree; Teaching Philosophy; Teacher Training; Continuing Education.

Prof-Filo: discrepâncias e perspectivas de um mestrado profissional em Filosofia

Resumo: O propósito deste artigo é apresentar alguns traços peculiares do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Filosofia em Rede Nacional, o Prof-Filo, com destaque para certas discrepâncias observadas no seu surgimento e para o modo como elas participam no estabelecimento dos contornos que ele adquire em seus primeiros anos de existência. Conforme veremos, tais discrepâncias, que imprimem claros limites ao novo programa, possibilitam também a ele cumprir um papel peculiar para a consolidação da disciplina de Filosofia no Ensino Médio e, indiretamente,

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para a Área de Filosofia no país, oferecendo novos elementos para os debates sobre a identidade da Filosofia nas terras tupiniquins.

Palavras-chave: Prof-Filo; Mestrado Profissional; Ensino de Filosofia; Formação de Professores.

Prof-Filo: discrepanze e prospettive di un Master Professionale in Filosofia

Riassunto: Lo scopo di questo articolo è quello di presentare alcune caratteristiche peculiari del Programma post-laurea in Filosofia, in rete nazionale, il PROF-FILO, evidenziando alcune discrepanze osservate nella sua nascita e come queste partecipino alla definizione dei contorni che acquisisce nei suoi primi anni di esistenza. Come vedremo, queste discrepanze, che danno chiari limiti al nuovo programma, gli permettono anche di svolgere un ruolo peculiare per il consolidamento della disciplina della Filosofia nell'Educazione Secondaria e, indirettamente, per il campo della Filosofia nel Paese, offrendo nuovi elementi per i dibattiti sull'identità della Filosofia in Brasile.

Parole chiave: Prof-Filo; Master Professionali; Insegnamento di Filosofia; Formazione Degli Insegnanti.

Introduction

An account of the emergence of the Mestrado Profissional em Filosofia (Prof-Filo) [Professional Master's Program in Philosophy] should certainly begin by linking the establishment of the Program to the return of Philosophy as a subject in Brazilian upper-secondary education in 2008,¹ as well as to the changes introduced in undergraduate Philosophy programs, which were required to devote particular attention to teacher-training degrees

¹ This was formally established by Law No. 11,684, of June 2, 2008, which amended Article 36 of the LDB (Lei de Diretrizes e Bases da Educação Nacional – National Education Guidelines and Framework Law), introducing “Philosophy and Sociology as compulsory subjects in all years of secondary education.” (Brasil, 2008)

aimed at preparing those who would go on to teach the subject.² These developments clearly brought the *Philosophy Teacher* to the fore as a graduate of Philosophy programs, increasing the demands placed on academia to prepare such professionals and requiring the creation of dedicated spaces at both undergraduate and graduate levels for debates on issues related to the teaching of Philosophy.³ At the graduate level in particular, this space is now represented, in part, by Prof-Filo, which enables graduates who have chosen to devote themselves specifically to Philosophy as an educational activity for upper-secondary school students to continue their studies.

Although this account is accurate insofar as it highlights Prof-Filo's connection with the demands surrounding the education of Philosophy teachers and its role as a graduate-level forum for debates on the teaching of Philosophy in upper-secondary education, it may fail to convey the contradictions and disputes that marked the context in which the new program emerged and ultimately proved decisive in shaping it. Any account of the emergence of Prof-Filo must therefore also consider certain elements present at its inception that were, to a large extent, foreign to the idea of creating a setting devoted to philosophical debate on the teaching of Philosophy in Brazilian upper-secondary education.

In this sense, such an account must also include some of the incongruities and discrepancies inherent in the process through which the new program emerged, considering them not merely as sources of

² I am referring to Parecer CNE/CES 492/2001 [CNE/CES Opinion 492/2001] and, in particular, to Resolução CNE/CP 1, de 18 de fevereiro de 2002 [CNE/CP Resolution No. 1, of February 18, 2002], which establishes the required course load and the specific profile of the new teacher-training degree programs, clearly distinguishing bachelor's degree education from teacher education. I also refer to the requirements concerning the comprehensiveness, content, and specific quality standards of teacher-training degree programs (See Parecer CNE/CP 09/2001 [CNE/CP Opinion 09/2001] and Parecer CNE/CES 492/2001 [CNE/CES Opinion 492/2001].)

³ At the undergraduate level, programs emerged such as PRODOCÊNCIA (Programa de Consolidação das Licenciaturas) [Teacher Education Degree Consolidation Program], PARFOR (Plano Nacional de Formação de Professores da Educação Básica) [National Plan for the Education of Basic Education Teachers], OBEDUC (Observatório da Educação) [Education Observatory], and PIBID (Programa Institucional de Bolsa de Iniciação à Docência) [Institutional Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program.]

resistance that had to be overcome, but as crucial factors insofar as they interacted with, and consequently helped shape, the proposal for the new program. This can be seen, on the one hand, in the fact that the relationship between theory and practice to be established within the new program required methodologies that were unfamiliar to the prevailing model of graduate education in the field of Philosophy, generating not only expectations surrounding the new program but also suspicions regarding, for example, the products of its research. On the other hand, it can also be seen in the fact that the proposal had to conform to an existing model – that of a Professional Master's Program – which was itself largely foreign to the demand that had prompted the creation, within the field of Philosophy, of a dedicated locus for graduate-level debate on issues concerning the teaching of Philosophy.

In addition to these factors, it is important to bear in mind that the establishment of Prof-Filo coincided with intense pressure to diminish the place of Philosophy in upper-secondary education. This pressure materialized in the reduced presence of the subject in schools, both through a decrease in the number of instructional hours devoted to it and through an erosion of what had been its formative role. An account of the creation of Prof-Filo must therefore consider not only the factors that drove its emergence – namely, the return of Philosophy as a compulsory subject in upper-secondary education – but also elements at odds with its initial proposal, with which it has had to contend, and, finally, a movement aimed not at welcoming Philosophy into upper-secondary education but at expelling it. These factors were crucial in shaping Prof-Filo's initial features, determining its place on the national stage, and defining the role it came to assume within that context – a role that did not always mirror these factors but instead largely problematized and, to some extent, resisted them.

Origins in an ambiguous context

The return of Philosophy to upper-secondary education, with the status of a compulsory subject, resulted from a series of initiatives undertaken by members and groups within the philosophical and educational communities, as well as from political actions involving alliances at various levels among sectors of government and civil society. This does not mean, however, that there was a unanimous, or even predominantly positive, view of Philosophy's formative role in the education of young people in Brazil, not even within the field of Philosophy itself. Rather, it would be more accurate to speak of an ambiguity that was particularly evident within the field: on the one hand, a certain lack of attention to the issue could be observed; on the other, there was active engagement in the debates surrounding the return and continued presence of Philosophy in upper-secondary education.

Indeed, at the beginning of the new millennium, most undergraduate Philosophy programs in Brazil aimed to prepare their graduates primarily for philosophical debates internal to philosophical systems, devoting comparatively less attention to problems concerning the transmission of Philosophy. The latter was regarded as a secondary issue within these programs and was addressed in courses offered, for the most part, by departments or programs in Education. Moreover, the transmission of philosophy – philosophizing, in this sense – was not properly regarded as a philosophical issue and did not even have a specific place within the field of Philosophy. This was also evident in the fact that graduate programs intended for Philosophy graduates likewise retained this academic orientation, without addressing debates concerning Philosophy's formative role and the problems associated with it, particularly when it came to teaching Philosophy to young people in upper-secondary classrooms.

However, it cannot be denied that the field of Philosophy was one of the principal arenas both for the debates that led to the return of Philosophy to upper-secondary education and for the emergence of the proposal to establish Prof-Filo. The program embodied the hope, among

members of the field, of addressing this lack of debate concerning the transmission of Philosophy and thereby contributing to the consolidation of Philosophy as a subject in Basic Education. Indeed, although the field had remained somewhat removed from the teaching of Philosophy, it nevertheless acknowledged, through self-criticism, the need for this kind of debate within its own domain. This is evidenced by the fact that the proposal to establish Prof-Filo was approved at a meeting held within the Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação em Filosofia [National Association of Graduate Studies in Philosophy] (ANPOF)⁴, as well as by the decision that the proposal would be submitted to the Philosophy Area of the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior [Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel] (CAPES)⁵.

Indeed, there is no denying that the field of Philosophy, as represented by ANPOF, devoted particular attention to the teaching of Philosophy, even when such teaching concerned a domain – upper-secondary education – that lay outside the Association's own remit, namely graduate education. By way of example, in 2004 the Association responded to requests from the Diretoria do Ensino Médio do MEC [MEC Directorate of Upper-Secondary Education], initially by participating in seminars held throughout Brazil on the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais para o Ensino de Filosofia no Ensino Médio [National Curriculum Parameters for the Teaching of Philosophy in Upper-Secondary Education]. These seminars resulted in a critical reading of the parameters in 2004 (Salles *et al.*, 2004) and, subsequently, in the drafting of the document that became known as the Orientações Curriculares Nacionais para o Ensino Médio [National Curriculum Guidelines for Upper-Secondary Education], published in 2006 (MEC, 2006, pp.

⁴ Within the context of the XVII Encontro da Anpof [17th ANPOF Meeting], held in Campos do Jordão (São Paulo), in October 2014.

⁵ Following the ANPOF meeting in Campos do Jordão, the proposal to establish the new Program was taken up again by a group of more than 30 delegates from different institutions in December 2014, in Curitiba. The group continued the deliberations concerning the new program and prepared the document to be submitted to CAPES. At this meeting, in addition to defining the area of concentration and lines of research, the participants decided on the name of the Program and designated the Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR) [Federal University of Paraná] as its host institution.

13-40). In that same year, ANPOF, acting as an organization representing the field of Philosophy, also contributed to the preparation of the document approved by the Conselho Nacional de Educação, [National Council of Education] (CNE) which granted Philosophy and Sociology the status of distinct curricular subjects in upper-secondary education.⁶

Within the Association itself, the debate on the teaching of Philosophy in upper-secondary education also gained momentum, for example, with the approval, among its Working Groups, of the WG entitled *Filosofar e Ensinar a Filosofar* [Philosophizing and Teaching to Philosophize], whose activities began at the XII Encontro Nacional de Filosofia [12th National Meeting of Philosophy], held in Salvador in 2006. Another important development within ANPOF in the following years was the creation of ANPOF-EM, whose first edition took place during the Encontro Nacional da Anpof [ANPOF National Meeting] in Curitiba in 2012. It should be noted that it was at the ANPOF-EM event in 2014 that the vote to establish Prof-Filo took place. The program was conceived as a space within graduate education that would meet the demand for a specific forum within the field devoted to debates on issues concerning the teaching of Philosophy in upper-secondary education.⁷

This initial enthusiasm, however, did not find corresponding institutional support, since the proposal could not be accommodated within CAPES's Philosophy Area, as other graduate programs in Brazil were.

⁶ Parecer CNE/CEB nº 38/2006 [CNE/CEB Opinion No. 38/2006], dated July 7, 2006, approved by the Minister of Education and published in the Diário Oficial [Official Gazette] on August 14, 2006. In the rationale submitted to the council members by the Secretaria de Educação Básica [Secretariat of Basic Education], ANPOF is the organization mentioned as representing the field of Philosophy. The Opinion amended Article 10, paragraph 2, and added paragraph 3, with the following wording: "*In the case of schools that adopt, wholly or in part, a curriculum organized by subjects, Philosophy and Sociology shall be included among them.*" Original: "*No caso de escolas que adotarem, no todo ou em parte, organização curricular estruturada por disciplinas, deverão ser incluídas as de Filosofia e Sociologia.*"

⁷ The fact that the new program was established within ANPOF is also important insofar as it shows that it was not an initiative undertaken by an isolated group within the field, but rather reflected a collective interest, with the Program open to any institution wishing to become affiliated with it.

Indeed, the institutional sphere also revealed this ambiguity. Although the return of Philosophy was now a reality, public policy did not address the demands arising from its return to upper-secondary education. The same law that had established the return of Philosophy and Sociology as compulsory subjects,⁸ was not accompanied by specific attention to these newly reinstated subjects and the particular circumstances surrounding their return.

Nevertheless, even without the special attention that the particular circumstances of these subjects' return to upper-secondary education would have required, Philosophy was able to occupy teacher-training spaces available to the other subjects as well. Thus, the legal provisions concerning the continuing education of upper-secondary teachers also applied to Philosophy. One example is the Plano Nacional de Educação [National Education Plan], one of whose targets (Target 16) is to

provide graduate-level training to 50% (fifty percent) of Basic Education teachers by the final year of the period covered by this PNE, and ensure continuing education for all Basic Education professionals in their respective fields of practice, considering the needs, demands, and contexts of the education systems. (Brasil, 2014)⁹

It was within this context that the proposal became viable. Thus, despite a certain resistance toward Philosophy as a school subject and toward the idea of funding research on its teaching, the new Program became feasible. Its proposal was submitted partly within CAPES's Philosophy Area and partly within the Diretoria de Educação a Distância

⁸ This status disappeared during the very process of consolidating the subject, in 2017, with the Base Nacional Comum Curricular [National Common Curricular Base], under then-President Michel Temer. See <http://basenacionalcomum.mec.gov.br>. Accessed on: August 20, 2022.

⁹ All translations of quoted material were made by the translator of this article, unless otherwise noted.

Original: “*formar, em nível de pós-graduação, 50% dos professores da educação básica, até o último ano de vigência deste PNE, e garantir a todos(as) os(as) profissionais da educação básica formação continuada em sua área de atuação, considerando as necessidades, demandas e contextualizações dos sistemas de ensino.*”

[Directorate of Distance Education] (DED), which hosts analogous programs in the format known as PROFS.

The Discrepancy of a *Professional Master's Degree in Philosophy*

The model adopted by the new program – that of a PROF – corresponded to a form of graduate education designed to meet the continuing-education needs of teachers of an upper-secondary school subject. It operated as a nationwide network, with a single coordinating institution and multiple centers distributed across the various states of the Federation. This form of graduate education did not, however, have a regulatory status of its own, but was instead established under the legislation governing what was known as a Professional Master's Degree (Mestrado Profissional, MP). This type of program was initially circumscribed to the interests of the private sector and geared toward meeting human-resource training needs in different fields of professional practice.

This model, that of Professional Master's Degrees, was regulated by Portaria Normativa nº 17, de 28 de dezembro de 2009 [Normative Ordinance No. 17 of December 28, 2009], issued by the Ministério da Educação [Ministry of Education], with the purpose of “encouraging the training of professional master's graduates qualified to develop technical and scientific activities and work on matters of public interest.” To fulfill this purpose, the Ordinance encourages a form of articulation between theory and practice that establishes a correlation “between up-to-date knowledge, mastery of the relevant methodology, and application directed toward the specific field of professional practice,” while also promoting cooperation between educational institutions, on the one hand, and “public and private agencies, companies, cooperatives, and nongovernmental organizations, whether individually or collectively organized,” on the other (Brasil, 2009)¹⁰.

¹⁰ Original: “estimular a formação de mestres profissionais habilitados para desenvolver atividades e trabalhos técnico-científicos em temas de interesse público”; “entre conhecimento atualizado, domínio da metodologia pertinente e aplicação orientada para o

We are, evidently, dealing here with a controversial issue. To begin with, the Ordinance places particular emphasis on “companies,” especially when it states that Professional Master’s Degrees should be particularly geared toward meeting highly qualified demands in “areas more directly connected to the world of work and the productive sector.” Indeed, this is a crucial point for understanding the discrepant character of the context in which Prof-Filo emerged: although the training of human resources remained on its horizon, the Ordinance emphasizes the connection between the MP and the productive sector, with the aim of applying “scientific knowledge to the production of goods and services in accordance with Brazilian industrial policy.” (Brasil, 2009)¹¹

It should not go unnoticed that, by promoting the “strengthening of relations between universities and the productive sector,” (Brasil, 2009)¹² the Ordinance directs the structure of Higher Education Institutions not so much toward society at large as toward the demands of the labor market, adding value and competitiveness to companies and organizations. This occurs by directing universities toward demands such as the specific professional qualification needs of a particular branch of the industrial sector or even of a major industry operating in Brazil. It is a way of making use of Higher Education Institutions that brings them closer to what Marilena Chauí called the “Operational University.” This represents a clear departure from the University’s social role, which would no longer have “education, reflection, creation, and criticism” on its horizon, (Chauí, 1999) but would instead be placed at the service of a particular sector of society seeking to benefit from it and from the knowledge accumulated within it. Such a departure is all the more serious when one considers that the universities in question are public institutions maintained through public funding.

campo de atuação profissional específico”; “órgãos públicos e privados, empresas, cooperativas e organizações não governamentais, individual ou coletivamente organizadas.”

¹¹ Original: “*áreas mais diretamente vinculadas ao mundo do trabalho e ao sistema produtivo*”; “*conhecimentos científicos no processo produtivo de bens e serviços em consonância com a política industrial brasileira.*”

¹² Original: “*estreitamento das relações entre as universidades e o setor produtivo.*”

The paradoxical character of its emergence – the incongruity at issue – thus lies in the fact that the institutional apparatus that made the creation of Prof-Filo possible was itself the object of criticism within the field of Philosophy and did not necessarily reflect the motivations that had led the professors gathered in Campos do Jordão to propose the creation of the new Program. From the outset, this already points to a tension between the proposal as originally conceived and the framework within which that proposal had to be accommodated.

In the case of the Profs, however, despite their format being defined by the Professional Master's Degree model, they were structured around the public interest and were aimed exclusively at teachers working in upper-secondary education, as part of a public policy for teacher education. Thus, for better or worse, features of the Professional Master's Degree can be found in the Profs generally and also in the proposal to establish Prof-Filo. One example is the emphasis on a curricular structure involving a clear “articulation between up-to-date knowledge, mastery of the relevant methodology, and application directed toward the specific field of professional practice.” (Brasil, 2009, Art. 7, IV)¹³ Another is the “part-time study regime” *parcial*” (Brasil, 2009, Art. 7, VI)¹⁴ of students enrolled in a PROF, intended to ensure their continued engagement in their professional environment. There is also the relatively unconventional format, for research in Philosophy, of the final degree requirement, which must be “always linked to real problems in the professional-student's field of practice and, in accordance with the nature of the field and the purpose of the program, may be presented in various formats.”¹⁵ This broadens the familiar horizons of a *master's thesis*, while at

¹³ Original: “*articulação entre conhecimento atualizado, domínio da metodologia pertinente e aplicação orientada para o campo de atuação profissional específico.*”

¹⁴ Original: “*regime de dedicação parcial.*”

¹⁵ Among the possible formats, the Portaria do MEC [MEC Ordinance] suggests: “a systematic and in-depth literature review, article, patent, intellectual property registrations, technical projects, technological publications; development of applications, teaching and instructional materials and products, processes, and techniques; production of media programs, editorial work, compositions, concerts, final research reports, software, case

the same time introducing terminology that is foreign to research in Philosophy, since an outcome such as, for example, a “product to be patented” could hardly satisfy the requirements inherent in philosophical reflection¹⁶.

Discrepancy or Solution? A Nationwide Network Master's Program

Although the creation of a PROF follows the legislation governing the form of graduate education known as the Professional Master's Degree, adopting the provisions of the aforementioned Portaria nº 17, de 2009, do MEC [MEC Ordinance No. 17 of 2009], the fact remains that certain differences between MPs and Profs became increasingly evident as the latter developed characteristics of their own. Indeed, the Profs can be said to have been highly distinctive programs and, precisely for this reason, had to operate somewhat outside the legislation then in force for graduate

studies, technical reports subject to confidentiality rules, technical operation manuals, experimental or service-application protocols, proposals for intervention in relevant clinical or service procedures, projects for technological application or adaptation, prototypes for the development or production of instruments, equipment, and kits, technological innovation projects, artistic production, without prejudice to other formats, according to the nature of the field and the purpose of the program, provided that they have been previously proposed and approved by CAPES.” (Brasil, 2009, Art. 7, VIII, §3)

Original: “*revisão sistemática e aprofundada da literatura, artigo, patente, registros de propriedade intelectual, projetos técnicos, publicações tecnológicas; desenvolvimento de aplicativos, de materiais didáticos e instrucionais e de produtos, processos e técnicas; produção de programas de mídia, editoria, composições, concertos, relatórios finais de pesquisa, softwares, estudos de caso, relatório técnico com regras de sigilo, manual de operação técnica, protocolo experimental ou de aplicação em serviços, proposta de intervenção em procedimentos clínicos ou de serviço pertinente, projeto de aplicação ou adequação tecnológica, protótipos para desenvolvimento ou produção de instrumentos, equipamentos e kits, projetos de inovação tecnológica, produção artística, sem prejuízo de outros formatos, de acordo com a natureza da área e a finalidade do curso, desde que previamente propostos e aprovados pela CAPES.*”

¹⁶ These aspects, which illustrate the ambiguous character of the context in which Prof-Filo emerged, not only broaden the narrative concerning its origins but also help us understand some of the difficulties and challenges present at the beginning of Prof-Filo, such as the need to define its own identity and that of the research conducted within it. Such research certainly had to possess that practical dimension, but at the same time could not fail to constitute philosophical reflection.

education in general. Considering this broader framework, but Professional Master's Degrees in particular, since the Profs originated from them, the first difference between the two concerns the funding of these programs. An MP, because it addresses specific demands of the productive sector and aims at immediate returns from its products, does not receive direct funding from CAPES. The Profs, by contrast, are programs designed to implement public policies for teacher education administered by CAPES. More specifically, as already mentioned, the Profs respond to the requirements of the Plano Nacional de Educação [National Education Plan], which was introduced in 2014¹⁷, particularly the aforementioned goal (Target 16) of “providing graduate-level education [...] to Basic Education teachers.” (Brasil, 2014)¹⁸

Another distinctive feature of a PROF is its format. Whereas Professional Master's Degrees, like graduate programs more generally, are affiliated with a single institution, Profs are necessarily organized as nationwide network programs. More precisely, each PROF addresses the particular characteristics of a Basic Education subject and is therefore organized as a network comprising centers distributed across the different regions of Brazil and linked to a coordinating institution. The first graduate programs following the PROF model emerged predominantly from scientific societies, as in the case of ProfMat, associated with the Sociedade Brasileira de Matemática [Brazilian Mathematical Society], and Prof-Física, affiliated with the Sociedade Brasileira de Física [Brazilian Physical Society]. The others, even when organized within scientific societies or associations in their respective fields—as in the case of Prof-Filo, which originated within ANPOF—were submitted to CAPES by Higher Education Institutions to which their coordinating institutions are affiliated. This is the case of Prof-História, whose coordinating institution is the Universidade do

¹⁷ With regard to the PNE, the emergence of the Profs in response to the demand for teacher education occurred *avant la lettre*, since the first Profs appeared before the 2014 PNE. The oldest and one of the best known is Prof-Mat, created in 2010, followed by Prof-Física in 2013, Prof-História, also in 2013, ProfLetr@s in 2015, and ProfArtes, created between 2015 and 2016. Prof-Filo was approved by CAPES in 2016 and began its activities in April 2017.

¹⁸ Original: “*formar, em nível de pós-graduação [...] os professores da educação básica.*”

Estado do Rio de Janeiro [Rio de Janeiro State University], and Prof-Letras, whose coordinating institution is affiliated with the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte [Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte]. This format is certainly open to question from an administrative standpoint, both because of the scale these Programs have assumed and because of the geographical distance separating those involved in them. In principle, however, it is justified by the aim of ensuring that the education provided to teachers in different regions is as similar as possible.

For this reason, despite the predominant administrative role played by the network's coordinating center, a PROF must operate equivalently across its different centers, both in terms of its structure and from a pedagogical standpoint. Accordingly, there is a unified admissions process for students entering all centers in the network, as well as equivalent course offerings and the same requirements for completing the program and the final degree requirement, which must follow an analogous format and meet the same quality standards. It is also with a view to maintaining this equivalence in the education provided at each center that a PROF may offer, in addition to face-to-face courses, though not necessarily, courses in a "distance education" format, so that all its students ultimately complete the same program.

Other characteristics distinctive of the Profs, which initially brought them closer to MPs but in practice distinguish them from that form of graduate education, concern the faculty and the final degree requirement. With regard to faculty, although professional experience in upper-secondary education is valued, CAPES does not allow a PROF to include among its faculty "professionals and technical specialists from specific sectors" who have experience in the field but lack academic training, something that was permitted for an MP under Resolução CNE/CES nº 24/2002 [CNE/CES Resolution No. 24/2002], Art. 9, sole paragraph. The criteria used to evaluate the faculty of a PROF also largely resemble those established by the Diretoria de Avaliação da CAPES [CAPES Directorate of Evaluation] for an Academic Master's Degree, emphasizing not only experience in the

field but also publications in the relevant area and experience supervising undergraduate and graduate students.¹⁹

As for the final degree requirement, although in both an MP and a PROF the research conducted is connected to practice, as already mentioned, in a PROF greater emphasis is placed on documenting the process, its theoretical foundations, and the methodologies employed, rather than solely on its implementation or final product. Thus, in a PROF, the relationship between theory and practice is emphasized from a perspective different from that found in programs geared toward creating a product for private use. A PROF emphasizes the presentation of the processes leading to particular products and the dissemination of their results to the community. This involves a structure that includes the presentation of a problem, an account of an experimental process, and the comparison of the results obtained through that process, for example, with other experiments or with the literature on the subject. Theory and practice thus enter into a circular relationship that gives rise to a network of knowledge and contributes to strengthening the field as a whole. In this way, a PROF constitutes not only a privileged space for the development of new technologies, but also a space for rethinking existing practices and producing knowledge that can be replicated in other contexts, used by other actors in education, and subsequently revisited and reassessed through new experiments.

An Experience Distinctive to Philosophy

On April 27, 2015, a meeting was held with CAPES's Director of Evaluation, leading to the final adjustments to the proposal, which on that date was granted the *status* of a program officially encouraged by CAPES,

¹⁹ This debate remains open, since, on the one hand, faculty and student scholarly output is an item considered in the evaluation of a Graduate Program; on the other hand, in the case of the Profs, such output must also encompass items that attest to the theory-practice relationship that is fundamental to this type of graduate education.

thereby allowing it to be submitted under the PROF model.²⁰ On May 20, 2015, an assembly of the coordinators of the local centers was held, at which the principal elements of the proposal were approved. The democratic character that had marked the process of establishing Prof-Filo was called into question for the first time when CAPES itself issued a request for clarification concerning the fact that some centers had “a significant number of faculty members with no supervisory experience.” The response to this request, approved by the centers participating in the proposal, resulted in a reduction from the original 22 local Prof-Filo centers to 17. In addition, internal implementation problems within the Higher Education Institutions themselves led to a final reduction in this number. Thus, by the end of the process, 15 Prof-Filo centers began operating and offered places in the first student admissions process, held at the end of 2016. This number rose to 16 at the end of 2017 with the establishment of the UFSCar center.²¹

²⁰ The meeting was attended by CAPES's Director of Evaluation, the president of ANPOF, the representative of CAPES's Philosophy Area, institutional representatives from the Universidade Federal do Paraná (UFPR), as well as members of the committee responsible for systematizing the proposal to establish Prof-Filo.

²¹ The center at the Universidade Federal de São Carlos began its activities in 2017. The other 15 Prof-Filo centers began operating in April 2017, following the inaugural lecture delivered to the entire network by Professor Marilena Chauí (available at YouTube), and were affiliated with the following Higher Education Institutions: Fundação Universidade Federal do ABC [Federal University of ABC Foundation], Fundação Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul [Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul Foundation], Fundação Universidade Federal do Tocantins [Federal University of Tocantins Foundation], Universidade do Estado do Rio Grande do Norte, Universidade Estadual de Montes Claros, Universidade Estadual do Paran, Universidade Federal de Campina Grande, Universidade Federal do Amazonas [Federal University of Amazonas], Universidade Federal do Ceará, Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo, Universidade Federal do Maranhão, Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso, Universidade Federal do Paraná, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco, and Universidade Federal do Piauí. The initial faculty of the PROF, affiliated with these centers, consisted of 124 professors, and 184 places were offered in the first admissions process, 156 of which were filled. It should also be noted that, by the end of 2023, Prof-Filo had expanded through the addition of nine centers affiliated with the following institutions: Instituto Federal de Pernambuco, Instituto Federal do Sertão Pernambucano, Universidade de Brasília, Universidade Estadual de Roraima, Universidade Federal do Acre, Universidade Federal do Cariri, Universidade Federal do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia, and Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul.

Despite its distinctive features, it should be noted that Prof-Filo was not Brazil's first experience with graduate-level education aimed at teachers of Philosophy in upper-secondary education. Similar experiences had already been developed in several Graduate Programs in Education with research lines devoted to teacher education. Nor was it the first Professional Master's Degree in the field of Philosophy in Brazil. The first program of this kind was submitted to CAPES by CEFET-RJ in 2015 and began its activities in 2016. Prof-Filo is, however, the first Graduate Program aimed at the professional development of teachers of Philosophy in upper-secondary education to take the form of a Professional Master's Degree organized as a nationwide network.

The argument that justified the proposal to establish Prof-Filo, as well as its primary objective, is the improvement of the quality of Philosophy teaching as a subject in Basic Education, particularly in upper-secondary education. To this end, it provides professionals who teach this subject with resources for philosophical and pedagogical reflection on their teaching practice. Its purpose, however, is not limited to the professional development of upper-secondary teachers enrolled as students at its centers. More broadly, Prof-Filo seeks to constitute an extensive forum for discussion about the teaching of the subject, exploring experiences that can be shared within the field.

One distinctive feature of Prof-Filo, given the way in which it was conceived, is that it regards the teaching of Philosophy in upper-secondary education as a problem to be debated by professionals in Philosophy and through the resources that Philosophy itself makes available for this purpose. It therefore approaches the teaching of Philosophy as a philosophical topic. In this sense, its work certainly considers the wide variety of teaching methodologies applicable to upper-secondary students, while at the same time seeking to ground its discussions in the philosophical tradition, which offers numerous alternatives for thinking about both the transmission of Philosophy and its formative role. This work is organized into two complementary research lines. The first, "Filosofia e Ensino" [Philosophy and Teaching], encompasses primarily research emphasizing the formative role of Philosophy, particularly in the education of young

upper-secondary students, such as studies on the role of classical philosophical texts in this formative process and their use in the classroom, as well as studies on textbooks and other teaching materials.

The second research line, “Práticas de Ensino de Filosofia,” [Philosophy Teaching Practices] encompasses research focusing on the actual realization of philosophical experience, particularly within the upper-secondary classroom. It includes, for example, discussions of experiences in Philosophy teaching involving methodologies, teaching activities, assessment models, and the production and use of teaching materials, among other topics.

Like other graduate programs, Prof-Filo follows a basic curriculum comprising courses devoted to academic development, project discussion, and supervision of the final degree requirement. The emphasis of these activities, however, is on the work developed by the students themselves. In this sense, rather than simply conveying general content, the courses offered by the PROF seek to provide theoretical support and resources for the work undertaken by its students. The point of departure for this conception is that the *holder* of knowledge within a PROF is not the professor who teaches its courses, but the students themselves, who are education professionals working in Basic Education schools, from which the questions to be investigated emerge. Prof-Filo students are therefore the principal *experts* on the object of their research. This gives a particularly important role to the Project and Research Seminars, in which the questions raised by the students are discussed.

With regard to the final degree requirements, which undergo qualification and defense procedures as in other graduate programs, in addition to a theoretical foundation grounded in elements of the philosophical tradition and debates specific to the field, the master's thesis must address a teaching and learning process corresponding to one of the two research lines and planned and implemented by the student within the context of their own teaching practice as a Philosophy teacher. Thus, from the initial seminars through to the completion of the work with the master's thesis defense, Prof-Filo's curriculum is centered on the theoretical and practical work developed by the student.

The Paradox as an Impetus for New Challenges

Prof-Filo is indeed a new experience in the field of Philosophy, one marked both by its innovative character and by the incongruities surrounding its emergence: first, from the standpoint of the legal framework within which the Program arose, which had not initially been conceived to accommodate topics such as the teaching of Philosophy; and second, from the standpoint of the field of Philosophy itself, which for many years was resistant to the idea of regarding the teaching of Philosophy, particularly in upper-secondary education, as a legitimate object of study within the field. This combination of novelty and incongruity is also apparent in its format, which is as wide-ranging as it is difficult to implement.

Yet if an understanding of Prof-Filo requires looking to its past and exploring its genesis, it can only be complete if its present and future challenges are also considered. In this sense, the concerns inherent in Philosophy teaching, which characterize the research conducted within Prof-Filo, must be accompanied by concerns of a political nature. First, because in 2017, with the new Base Nacional Comum Curricular (BNCC) [National Common Curricular Base],²² Philosophy was stripped of its formative role in upper-secondary education; and second, because under the previous federal administration, between 2019 and 2022, not only was the presence of Philosophy in upper-secondary education threatened, but so too was its place in universities, where it became the target of attacks by a government that openly expressed its intention to “decentralize investments in Philosophy and Sociology programs.” (Bolsonaro diz..., 2019)²³

²² By becoming a specific body of knowledge within the Área de Ciências Humanas e Sociais Aplicadas [Applied Human and Social Sciences Area] (Brasil, 2017, p. 33), Philosophy ceases to have a formative role and comes to be regarded merely as specific content within a specific field. It is in this sense that we refer to the way in which, within the BNCC, the most significant and also the most subtle attack on Philosophy lies in the failure to recognize its formative role for students.

²³ Original: “*descentralizar investimentos em faculdades de Filosofia e Sociologia.*”

Thus, beyond the challenges inherent in teaching Philosophy as a subject, one must also consider the already familiar objective of eliminating Philosophy from upper-secondary education, as well as some of the consequences of the previous federal administration, which acted in ways detrimental to Philosophy by reducing its space within universities. This entails considerable strain for those working in Philosophy, since rather than concentrating on formative goals, they must devote themselves to debates that can only result in losses, insofar as their efforts tend to be directed toward “maintaining,” rather than “expanding,” the presence of Philosophy in formal education.

Yet it is precisely at this moment, as we emerge from a public policy environment marked by constraints on Philosophy, that the challenge of resisting, re-signifying, and creating new forms becomes all the more pressing. It is therefore essential to highlight the first lesson Prof-Filo offers the philosophical community: how to work within a paradoxical – not to say hostile – environment and find within it the elements that make it possible to explore Philosophy’s formative role, as a means for the “exercise of citizenship” (Brasil, 1996, Art. 2)²⁴ and, moreover, “for life.” (Brasil, 2006, p. 28)²⁵ At this particular moment, this takes place especially through debates over whether the reforms imposed by the previous administration should be maintained, debates that involve both an academic and a political perspective, in the sense discussed in this study.

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²⁴ Original: “*exercício da cidadania*.”

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